

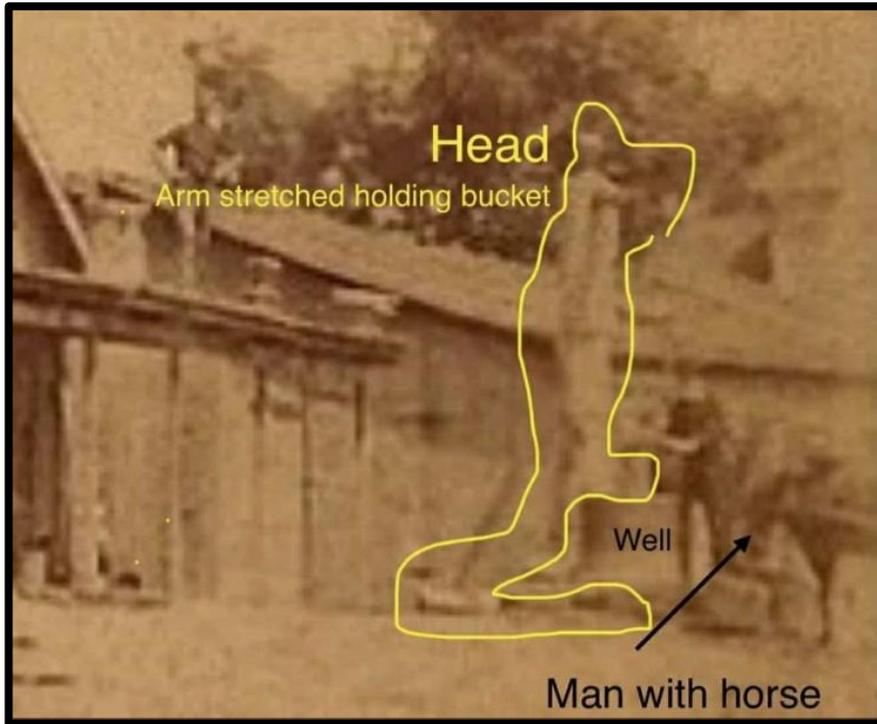
Exquisite Anna Pottery Inkwell,
featuring Masonic symbols and detailed etching of the Anna Pottery Operation.
9 cm W, 3.5 cm H. cc: 1880.
By Greg Mathis



At the well, appears a statue of a finely dressed negro gentleman holding an old oaken bucket. Later, Cornwall Kirkpatrick replaced him with a Chinese man, the "new" lowest social class. Reported in the Jonesboro Gazette, May 8, 1880 issue, an unnamed reporter from the DuQuoin tribune stated how the Kirkpatricks "made good advertising space having that statue out there." This is also mentioned in "*The Kirkpatricks' Pottery at Anna, Illinois.*" Ellen Paul Denker; University of Illinois; 1987.

The detailed archival research of Mr. Brock Buckner conveys "to clean up the city, to support the Temperance movement, and to address the town's severe drought, a second public well was installed with Cornwall's guidance, funds, and efforts. Inscriptions and an original postcard photograph of the pottery depict someone at this very famous important well. Many hastily assumed it was Cornwall, while actually it was a "stoneware" statue figure. Indeed, the brothers took advantage of the advertising potential of this location by decorating the well with a stoneware figure of a "darkey that swings the 'old oaken bucket.'" (DuQuoin, Illinois, Tribune; 1880).

In 1880 the negro statue was removed "owing to old age" and replaced by "a new China-man. A reporter for the Duquoin, Illinois Tribune commented on the well as one of Anna's attractions: "The observant traveler, passing through Anna on the train, will notice, in front of this establishment, the figure, in heroic size, of a Chinaman in blue, with finely molded head and cue [sic] of stoneware, holding at arm's length the bucket pulley over the well." This change from a Negro to a Chinese figure, the reported noted, "was evidently made through the same spirit of enterprise and progression which had always [sic] been characteristic of the Kirkpatrick Brothers."



China man statue wearin short tophat with arm holding wooden bucket.



China man in short hat stoneware statue.

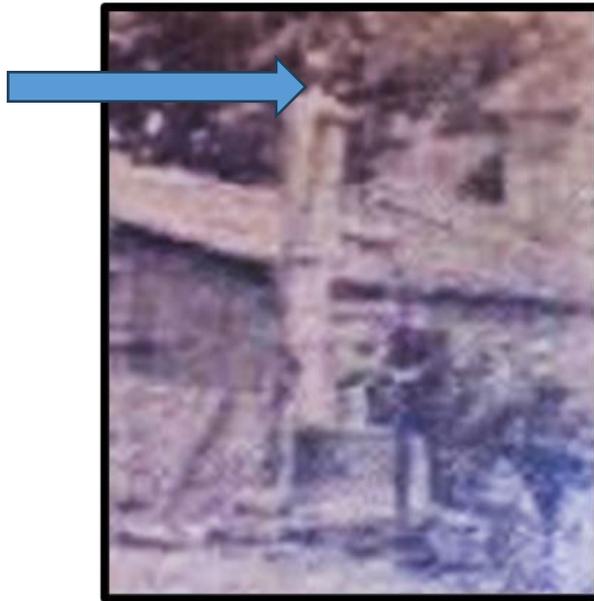


Negro in stovepipe hat holding bucket at well.

The "topper" or "stovepipe" top hat was a staple of 19th-century men. By the 1880s, while becoming more associated with formal or business attire, the tall top hats were still widely worn, as a symbol of status: After the abolition of slavery, clothing, including hats, was used to express status, respectability, and prosperity by negroes. In 1880 the hat style had evolved to shorter crowns with more varied brims, often pictured worn by the American China man. Pictured on the original Anna Pottery post card is the famous statue wearing a short hat, depicting a China man. Similar short hat styles appears on the Anna Pottery etching on snake jugs and pig flasks. Here the Kirkpatricks are likely designating the new lower social class of the China man, replacing the negro. On the Kirkpatrick inkwell Anna Pottery etching shows the statue wearing a very tall stovepipe top hat, decorating the important well with a stoneware figure of a "darkey that swings the 'old oaken bucket," as reported in 1880 DuQuoin Illinois Tribune with this highly racist and most appalling descriptive statement by their reporter.



At the inkwell's reverse upper edge, at 12 o'clock, appears incised a bright shooting star that likely represents the "Dark Star." Cornwall Kirkpatrick likely refers to this Blazing Star, a key symbol in Freemasonry that represents a star shining in the midst of darkness, signifying light, knowledge, and truth. The statue at the well symbolizes social darkness, and within masonic beliefs this "bright" star denotes life's new beginning, the start of a new calendar in 1880/1881. This star places the creation of the inkwell around 1880.



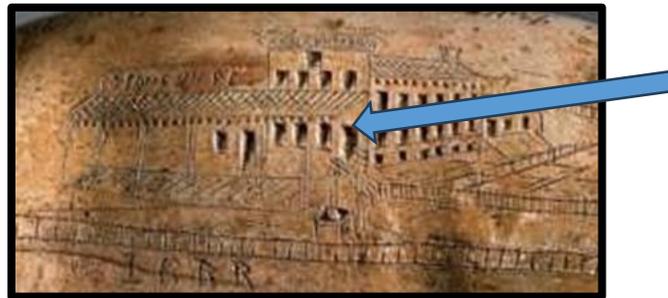
Original Anna Pottery post card, private collection. cc: 1880

The Anna Pottery produced chimney caps and vases in the 4-to-5 foot range and probably produced the tall statue at the well in stoneware. On the post card photograph, the statue appears to be approximately 6' in height, placed atop several blocks. This promoted the statue more aesthetically pleasing and eye catching to the passerby's eye, and capitalizing on future business.

Cornwall Kirkpatrick once inscribed on an important creation his statement "*No art can with our handicraft compare, We make our pots of what we potters are.*" This certainly applies to the exquisite Anna Pottery inkwell.



Smithsonian Museum Collection.



Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; photo, Hans Lorenz.



Fireplace hearth tile featuring etching of the Anna Pottery and its famous Indian weathervane.

Kirkpatrick creations with their Anna Pottery incisions are quite uncommon.