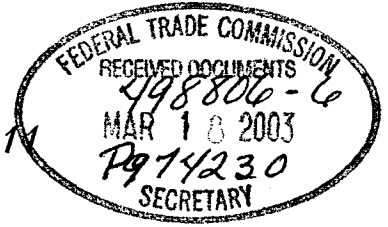


ORIGINAL

Granny's Attic
Antiques and Collectibles
8 Sandy Circle, Berlin, Maryland 21814



March 13, 2003

Office of the Secretary
Federal Trade Commission
Room H-159
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20580

I support expanding the Hobby Protection Act to protect purchasers from all categories of intentionally deceptive reproductions. Since the last review of the Hobby Protection Act, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of reproductions, imported mainly from the Far East, with forged, fake, or misleading backstamps or other markings and only a paper label indicating country of origin. These labels are routinely removed and the items sold in flea markets, antique malls and shops, and on the internet, represented as antiques.

The quality of these reproductions has improved significantly in recent years and existing state and federal laws and educational warnings no longer protect consumers from this fraud. I have been an antique dealer for a number of years and I still sometimes have trouble identifying the reproductions. With the flood of reproductions hitting the market, it is not reasonable to expect consumers to be aware of every item that is being reproduced and be able to differentiate the real from the fake – especially when the fake contains an identical or almost identical backmark.

I would ideally like to see the Hobby Protection Act expanded to require that all reproductions be permanently marked with the date of manufacture or the word "copy". That would provide the best protection to consumers and to ethical antique dealers. I recognize there will be significant opposition to this from reproduction manufacturers, importers, and dealers who profit from misleading consumers.

I would like to suggest the FTC consider requiring that *if there are any markings at all on a reproduction, those markings must include the date of manufacture or the word "copy"*. Reproduction importers and manufacturers should not be able to justify the claim that this is an undue burden, because it would only apply to items they are marking anyway. And it would protect consumers from the worst of the fraud: the forged, faked and intentionally misleading marks whose sole purpose is to deceive consumers.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Bitting Page
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