HR and the Freising Factory Revisited

by John McGregor

Seventh Installment

HAUBER & REUTHER - EARLY ERA 1882-1886

In the previous installment I covered the Freising Hauber period, 1878 to 1882. This installment is the first of five covering the Hauber & Reuther early era, 1882 to 1886.

After a period of time as sole operator Albert Hauber took on a new partner, his name was Hans Reuther. Reuther may have joined the firm prior to 1882 but this date is used because it is the first time his name appears as a partner in the Freising factory.

In the mid to late 1970s Werner Sahm came up with an advertisement that appeared in the official catalog published by the Bavarian Arts & Crafts Museum of Nuremberg in 1882, which reads: "Hauber & Reuther, Stoneware Factory, Freising, Established 1876. Specialty: Beer Services. 20 male and 10 female workers. Consumes about 1,200 Zentner of clay annually, from the Rhine region. Markets in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, Belgium and England. Received 1876 prize diploma in Munich." The 1876 date of establishment has caused some confusion in the past, but we now know that it refers only to the founding of the Freising factory, not to the partnership of Hauber & Reuther.

Hauber & Reuther produced contemporary blue, purple and grey stoneware but it was now marked with the "type 1a," incised HR logo (figure 1). The small font model numbers continued in use, as did the "decorator's initials" and "quality control marks." The large, "type 3" capacity mark (figure 2) now became the standard and was used only during this production period. Note that the "L" now has a serif on the top and that the capacity line has vertical terminators.

Hauber & Reuther produced steins for three other marks; "LB&C," (figure 3) "TW" (Theodor Wieseler) (figure 4), and one "Plato & Co." (figure 5). Note also that some of the character steins have now acquired thumblifts (figure 6).

Stoneware production at the Freising factory ended in 1886 when the Westerwald clay supplies were simultaneously cut off to Regensburg and Freising. The clay had been supplied to Regensburg for over eleven years and to Freising for ten. I believe Reinhold Hanke had given his personal guarantee to supply the clay, but when he died the guarantee died with him and his heirs stopped the deliveries.

There were economic and political factors at work during the mid to late 1880s that played a part in what happened at the Freising factory just as it had in Regensburg. Wages were on the rise, countries to which they exported their wares began to charge import duties, there were too many steinzeug factories in operation and the supply was outstripping the demand. Records from the Regensburg factory show that business had declined and workers were in danger of being let go. The factories in the Westerwald were undoubtedly facing the same issues. Some factories had to go and the Bavarian factories were probably that something. Reinhold Hanke's death provided a convenient out and the clay supplies to Regensburg and Freising were cut off.

Whatever the reason, the loss of the Westerwald clay supply caused the Regensburg factory to close its doors for good and Hauber & Reuther to change their product line from stoneware to porcelain.

Prior to the loss of the clay supply, possibly in an attempt to make their steinzeug more competitive, Hauber & Reuther took the "Old German" style stoneware (figure 7) and narrow bodied character steins (figure 8) remaining from earlier production periods, enameled them in full color and marked them with an inked on HR decorator mark and new décor/model number (figure 9). This was probably the first use of the "type 5a," inked on mark. This mark was only one of seven additional HR marks, plus variations, that would appear over the next few years. The enameled steinzeug must have proven popular, because Hauber & Reuther added it to their regular product line sometime prior to 1886 (figure 10).

HR EARLY ERA EXAMPLES

Figures 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 are all examples of steins from the 1882 - 1886 production period. In the next installment, I will cover how, when and why, the seven "HR" marks were used.

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