

Identifying "Toy" Ventriloquist Figures

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1. Jerry Mahoney

IDENTIFYING "TOY" VENTRILOQUIST FIGURES FROM THE 1960'S TO THE 1990'S (AND ON)

Main Guide - The Basics and Identifying Jerry Mahoney

This series of guides is about correctly identifying the ventriloquist figures or dolls made during the 1960's and 70's, and on. This guide will focus on the basics of identifying figures. Specifically, it will focus on identifying Jerry Mahoney and the several look-alikes he is often confused with on eBay. The major figure producing companies were Juro/EEgee/Goldberger and Horsman. Other companies produced figures as well. These guides will try to sort out the confusion and put a picture to the name so that a seller can correctly list their item and a buyer will know he/she is buying the correct item. (Note- I dislike the term "dummy" or "doll" for vent figures... so I will use the term "figure".)

INTRODUCTION

First off, I do not claim to be an expert. The word "expert" intones a "know-it-all", and that is not me, I am still researching these items. I collect and restore these figures and most of the photos, where possible, will be from my collection. NONE of these figures are for sell. I have a private collection. This is an area of vast interest to me as a ventriloquist, but also as a collector of vent history. Most of these items were available when I was young. Now I wish to collect and preserve as much information on them as possible. I have taken the time to research these items and realize how little information is out there, and what a confusing mess it is.

I call these "toy" ventriloquist figures because most of them have a string that comes out of the back of the neck. This works the mouth. That is usually the only function the figure has. As a ventriloquist figure, this setup does not work very well. That is why some models will have the head on a stick and will be operated through the back. The chest area is hollow and a cavity is created. Usually the chest is hollow plastic. This is known as a semi-pro set-up. These figures are usually 30" to 32" long. Some restorers and retailers refit the original figure so that the head is on a stick, and the mouth works by a lever. You enter through the back to work the figure. They build a hollow chest cavity, hopefully with wood or plastic/fiberglass material, but some use cardboard. You can buy them on web this way. But the quality varies by the refitter, and there is not any standard except that set by Maher (the best). So it is buyer beware here. But if you wish to use one of these "toy" figures for ventriloquism, the semi-pro set-up is an excellent way to go.

GOAL

This guide's main purpose is to help the seller or buyer identify the ventriloquist toy figure or doll they wish to sell/buy. Way too many of these are mislabeled on eBay. This is the real reason I am writing this guide. For a casual seller to mislabel some figure they found at a yard sell is understandable, for a vender who routinely sells these figures to mislabel them is seriously wrong. Unfortunately buyers may try to get a "Jerry Mahoney" doll and end up with a similar but different item. A resource was needed to help each side know who the figures are.

Ultimately, my hope is to alleviate some of this confusion as to the name of the figures as well as to provide a resource for the seller to check and verify they have listed the correct name. For the buyer, I want them to get the vent figure they actually want. If they want "Jerry Mahoney", they should bid on and receive "Jerry Mahoney", NOT a "Little Ricky", "Charlie McCarthy", or "Danny O'Day" which has been mislabeled.

FIGURE INFORMATION

Basically, I have listed the figure's names and any information about them. I have added a measurement right after the name. This is generally an estimate because figures will shrink or expand over time (we are talking about items that could easily be 30 to 40+ years old). Also, the manufacturers own listed measurement will vary for the same exact figure. Actually, measurement is not very critical except to tell us if the figure is small (around 24") or larger (30" being a good norm, with 32" for a rare few). I will also try to add the name or names of any figures that the listed figure is most often confused with. I will tell you ways to tell them apart. A picture generally follows, showing the face of the figure or important identification information.

Photographs will be the major part of this guide because we are trying to identify an item. Where possible, I have used photographs of my own figures. However, some photographs were originally collected during research over the years. I have lost the names of whose's photo it was (as I originally only used it to help me keep all the figure's names straight). Now that I am trying to help others with this guide, I wish I had kept the names so I could ask permission to use it for this guide. If a photo is yours and you object to it's use, contact me. I will remove it. I am not claiming ownership of any of these photos, other than those actually listed as mine. As mentioned earlier, I am not selling anything (especially the figures shown so do not ask), only trying to help clarify things. I would like to thank all those who allowed their photos to be used. This guide would be incomplete without them.

ORGANIZATION

This series of guides will be split due to limitations imposed by the rules for eBay guides. I am only allowed to post 10 pictures and have 20,000 characters in a guide. This is very limiting as there are over forty types of these figures, that means at least five guides are required to have a picture of each figure. This series of guides will be organized basically as a Main Guide, with Supplements adding more pictures and figure information. The list of guides are as follows:

Main Guide -The Basics.. Identification 101...Identifying Jerry Mahoney. This Guide covers Jerry Mahoney (5 models), Little Ricky, Jolly Jim and Danny O'Day (2 models).

Guide 2 - Juro/Eege/Goldberger A through K (actually Bozo through Knucklehead Smiff).

Guide 3 - Juro/Eege/Goldberger L through Z (actually Lester through W.C. Fields).

Guide 4 - Horsman Company - Willie Talk, Simon Sez, Tessie Talk and others.

Guide 5 - The Other "Toy" Ventriloquist Figures - Tommy Talker, Raggedy Ann, PeeWee Herman, Mr. Parlanchin, and others.

PHRASES TO HELP WITH IDENTIFICATION

Jerry Mahoney - Orange/red hair, part on left, eyes to side (on most models)

Little Ricky - Part on right, eyes straight

Danny O'Day - part on right, down on left (see Danny O'Day 2 above)

Here are some phrases to help with figures mentioned in this guide, but to be covered in other guides, due to the lack of picture and character space.

Charley McCarthy - Dark hair, part on left, look for the monocle slots over and under the right eye

Willie Talk - Light colored hair, part on the left (there is a dark skin version as well)

Simon Sez - Light colored hair, part on the left, head is on a stick, looks like Willie Talk but hair partially covers the top of the ears and is a larger, semi-pro version

Final Note - All of these figures are worth owning in their own right. There were other, less known, versions of Jerry produced. this guide is about those most often seen. The guide was made possible by the help of others, whether it was photos or information. One collector has been helpful with info and it has been appreciated. Thank you for reading this guide, I hope it helps.

2.

IDENTIFYING "TOY" VENTRILOQUIST FIGURES - Guide 2 Juro/Eegee/Goldberger figures A through K (actually Bozo through Knucklehead Smiff)

This guide continues the identification process started in Guide One. Guide One is the Main Guide and contains vital identification information that is not repeated here. One such example is the **Identification 101** section, which is in Guide One. As such, Guide One is intended to be the main guide with the remaining guides being more like supplements. This guide adds photos and information on the main figures made by Juro/Eegee/Goldberger in a semi-alphabetical order. As in the previous guide, I will add bits of information that may be useful for easy identification or other areas. EBay limits guides to 10 pictures and 20,000 characters. Both of which are easily used up in a guide such as this. Therefore, I have been forced to put the figures produced by Juro/Eegee/Goldberger into several guides. I apologize for the inconvenience as I would love to have made one large guide containing all figures. Guide 3 will be the supplement that completes the Juro/Eegee/Goldberger list of figures. Not all of the Juro figures are covered in these guides. Only the most common produced figures are covered. A few of the lesser know versions of figures are not covered due to the limited guide space available. Those figures are more often traded between collectors and are not often available to the public, or would not be noticed as being such.

Figure Order - Alphabetical by First Name

Instead of going by last name first, then first name (such as McCarthy, Charlie), I am just listing the figures in alphabetical order as we would say their name. This means they are listed in order by their first name. The reason for this is because some figures do not have a last name. Also, some people may be unfamiliar with a few of the figure's last names and would possibly have a hard time finding them.

A Little History

Juro was making vent figures and dolls back in the 1950's. They offered three versions of Jerry Mahoney back then, as well as dolls of other celebrities of the era. Their celebrity line continues today with the Goldberger company. You will notice a great number of figures with 1967 and 1968 copyrights with the Juro name stamped on them. I prefer the 1968 models of the Charlie McCarthy's and Mortimer Snerd's to the later versions. The head shape is slightly more curved in at the temples and appears more real to me (not as round headed as the "new" ones). In the early seventies, Eegee (Goldberger) trademarks started to appear on vent figures. It appears 1972 was the start of the Eegee period, at least that is when it starts to show up on the neck of figures. In 1977, Juro Novelty Co. with all the patents, molds, and everything was sold to Goldberger. However, Goldberger was still using the Juro name in 1979 advertising brochures, listing Juro as a division of Goldberger. The 1977 Charlie McCarthy's still have a Juro copyright stamp. It appears that instead of a hard time line for a change over in name, it is a more fluid line with both names being used by the same company through the seventies. And later, Eegee and Goldberger were used in the early eighties. Susie Sez was introduced in 1982 by Goldberger as part of their line up, and she has an Eegee copyright mark on the neck. All of this is not important for the enjoyment of collecting the figures, but it would be interesting to know the full story.

TIME PERIOD NOTE - When I list Juro/Eegee/Goldberger, I am talking about the "company" or better yet, the "entity" and it's history through the years, or the time period covered by all three together. I treat the whole Juro/Eegee/Goldberger situation as a whole entity because I am not too concerned about the marketing situation or the individual companies. Today they are all under one banner.

When I list Juro, I mean the 50's through the early 70's, up to 1972, when the Eegee trademarks began to appear. Generally, this is used to talk about the 1960's figures made by Juro Novelty Company.

Eegee/Goldberger means 1972 through 1982, when the Eegee copyright was used on most items, but a few Juro's were used until 1977. Goldberger items appeared around 1980.

Goldberger means post 1982 to the present day and covers those items still in production.

3.

IDENTIFYING "TOY" VENTRILOQUIST FIGURES - GUIDE 3 Juro/Eege/Goldberger - L through Z (actually Lester(s) through W.C. Fields)

This guide is the third in a series. It will complete the Juro/Eege/Goldberger line, starting with the Lesters. The Main guide offered the basics as well as Jerry Mahoney and the look alikes. Guide 2 covered Juro/Eege/Goldberger - A through L (actually Bozo through the Lesters). As with the previous guide, there are not many figures here which will cause problems with identification. Most are fairly straight forward.

SETUP - It is recommended that you read the Main Guide which covers the basics as that explains items which are not repeated in later guides. That is the guide which also covers Jerry Mahoney. Other guides act more as a supplement, providing more pictures and information. The reason for this is due to the way eBay set up the guide system. I am allowed 10 pictures and 20,000 characters (each space counts as a character). Since this identification system depends on pictures, I am forced to break the information into numerous guides based around 10 pictures in each guide. Thus, we end up with more of a main guide and supplement system.

ORGANIZATION

Name - The figures will be listed by their first names, as in the previous guides. Actually this guide does contain the two figures that most people know better by their last names... Laurel and Hardy. These were the two exceptions that immediately came to mind when I decided on the first-name-basis listing.

Measurement - Beside each name is a measurement to show the length of the figure. This is just a reference and is not very accurate or important. Generally it just lets us know if the figure is a small one (around 24") or a larger one (about 30").

Information and Picture- Following the measurement, there will be information about the figure or the person the figure is meant to represent. If it is necessary, I will include information to differentiate that figure from similar ones. However, most of these figures do not require much introduction as they are well known figures or comic personalities. The last item will be the picture of the figure. Where possible, photos of the face are shown. This gives us the best means of identification. In some cases, I have had to resort to the only photo I had which may not be a photo of the face or it may be less than perfectly focused. Photos are always updated when I find (or take) a better one.

4.

IDENTIFYING "TOY" VENTRILOQUIST FIGURES - GUIDE 4 Horsman Figures

This Guide is the fourth in a series. This Guide will cover the other main manufacturer, Horsman. The Main Guide offered the basics as well as Jerry Mahoney and the look-alikes. Guides 2 and 3 covered Juro/Eege/Goldberger figures.

SETUP - The Main Guide contains some basic information such as the section "**Identification 101**". It is suggested that you read that guide to get the basic information. Due to the eBay guide system restrictions, I can only have 10 pictures per guide and 20,000 characters (each space counts as one character). Therefore, numerous guides were required. The system I chose was a Main guide containing most of the information with additional guides acting more as supplements to add pictures and information on additional figures.

ORGANIZATION - This guide is organized the same as the previous ones. So if you are familiar with it, just skip this section.

Name - The names are listed by the first name, not by the last names. Most of these characters are known by their first name, not by their last name. In the case of Moe, Stooze fans know his last name but others probably do not. Most of all, it just did not seem right to list Mickey as "Mouse, Mickey".

Measurement - After each name, there is a measurement. This is an estimate to help judge the figure's size. It is not crucial for identification except for the comparison of large figures(around 30") to small ones (around 24"). If your figure is 23", it rules out the 30" figures.

Information - This section will contain information that helps identify the figure or differentiate it from another as the case may be. Other information may be provided as well, such as history or background. Also included here is the picture of the figure. This will generally be a photo of the face so we can see the details. This is one of the most important items for identification.

5.

IDENTIFYING "TOY" VENTRILOQUIST FIGURES - Guide 5 The Other Figures

This is the fifth in the series of guides and will focus on the other figures, those not made by Juro/EEgee/Golberger or Horsman. There are some quite popular figures in this group. Some of these figures were originally from areas outside of the US. The web and eBay makes them available worldwide, so I will cover the main ones here. Naturally, I will not be able to cover all overseas "toy" vent figures as I am unfamiliar with them.

SETUP - By now, if you have read one of the other guides, you are aware of the setup and the reason for this. If you are, please skip this section. If not, please continue reading. This series of Guides starts with a Main Guide which contains Basic Information that is recommended for reading. Due to the limitations imposed by eBay on the guide structure, I am only allowed 10 pictures and 20,000 characters (each space is a character). Therefore, I had to make a Main Guide containing the Basic Information, as well as Jerry Mahoney, then add other Guides. These Guides act as supplements, adding more pictures and information, until all the "toy" vent figures I wanted to cover are included. That coverage will be completed in this Guide.

ORGANIZATION - This section is basically the same as in the other guides, except the omission of the measurement. If you are familiar with the organization, skip this section.

Name - As in the previous guides, the names are listed by the first name, or as the figure is commonly known.

Measurement - Measurement really does not play a part in the identification of these figures, so I have not added any measurements. I have left them out to cause less confusion.

Information - This section will contain the country of origin, if not from the US, as well as manufacturer information. Other information may also be added, especially if it helps to differentiate the listed figure from another. Also included here will be a picture of the figure (in most cases). This is to help with the identification. Where possible, I have tried to get pictures of the figure's face. If that was not possible, I have tried to get any photo I could.

THE FIGURES - Some of the figures listed below are from Europe. I have listed a little information on them. I wish to apologize now for any mistakes I make on information about the European figures. In the US, we do not have much information on these figures, so I had a hard time finding information about them. I had no way to verify what I read or heard. I am indebted to those who tried to help with the history of these figures. In some cases, I had to purchase a figure from a seller in Europe so I could obtain the photographs I wanted. I chose to list the figures with a little information, as opposed to leaving them out entirely.