

MOM'S JOY ROOM

2964 Fairmont Road, Morgantown, WV 26501 | (304) 282-3671

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY & VALUATION

Antique German Bisque Character Baby Doll

"BONNIE BABE"

Designed by Georgene Averill, Copyright 1926 | German Bisque Head

"Some faces are frozen in a smile so joyful, time itself couldn't wipe it away."



MARKET VALUE

\$475 – \$800

Realistic private/shop sale reflecting visible limb wear

ESTIMATED WORTH

\$950 – \$1,450

Ceiling for well-marked examples at specialty auction



"Bonnie Babe" Character Baby Doll — 20"

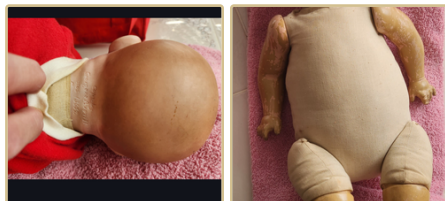
Designed by Georgene Averill, Copyright 1926 — German Bisque Head, Cloth Body

HISTORY

"Bonnie Babe" ranks among the most beloved and commercially successful character baby doll designs to emerge from the 1920s American doll trade. She was the creation of Georgene Averill (1875–1963), a prolific and influential American doll designer who, together with her husband James Paul Averill, built one of the era's most important doll enterprises — first as Georgene Averill Doll Company, and later as Averill Manufacturing Company, home of the famed "Georgene Novelties" line of cloth character dolls including Raggedy Ann and Andy. Averill copyrighted the Bonnie Babe design in 1926, and it quickly became one of the defining character babies of the decade, produced continuously through the late 1920s and into the early 1930s in a wide range of sizes, from petite 12" examples up through large 24" specimens like this one.

What made Bonnie Babe so distinctive — and so successful — was her expression. Where earlier German bisque baby dolls of the 1900s and 1910s tended toward a more solemn, doll-like countenance, the "character baby" movement of the 1910s-20s pushed German porcelain makers to sculpt genuinely lifelike infant expressions: open laughing mouths, dimpled cheeks, and the unmistakable joy of a real baby caught mid-giggle. Bonnie Babe was one of the finest realizations of this movement, with a broad open-mouth smile revealing two small painted teeth and a molded tongue, deeply dimpled cheeks, and gently modeled sleep eyes that added to her lifelike charm. Rather than a wigged head, Bonnie Babe was given molded, painted hair directly on the bisque — a solid-dome head finished with soft brushstroke detailing, giving her a permanently "bald baby" sweetness that set her apart from her wigged bisque cousins.

The bisque heads themselves were manufactured in Germany by Alt, Beck & Gottschalck (ABG), one of the most prolific and technically accomplished German porcelain doll-head makers of the era, in continuous operation from 1854 until the late 1930s. ABG produced bisque heads for numerous American and German doll companies throughout the "golden age" of bisque character dolls, and their partnership with Georgene Averill on the Bonnie Babe line is considered one of the most successful transatlantic doll collaborations of the 1920s — an American designer's vision brought to life through elite German porcelain craftsmanship. The finished dolls were assembled onto a soft, sawdust- or cotton-stuffed cloth torso, with the bisque head, and composition (molded, painted wood-pulp compound) lower arms and legs completing the body — a common and cost-effective construction method of the period that allowed for a soft, huggable "baby" feel while keeping the delicate, expressive bisque work isolated to the head.



20" Bisque Head "Bonnie Babe" — Cloth Torso, Composition Arms & Legs

Impressed "Copr. by Georgene Averill" with mold reference numbers, "Germany"

Bonnie Babe dolls were sold both fully assembled and as bisque heads alone for the home doll-making trade, which is part of why surviving examples today vary somewhat in body construction, clothing, and accessories — no two are ever quite identical. She remains, nearly a century later, one of the most recognized and collected character baby faces of the German bisque era, prized as much for her charming, genuinely joyful expression as for her historical importance in the Averill design legacy.

NOTABLE INFORMATION

- ◆ Impressed marking on the back of the head: "Copr. by Georgene Averill," accompanied by mold/production reference numbers and "Germany"
- ◆ Bisque head manufactured by Alt, Beck & Gottschalck (ABG), Germany, active 1854–late 1930s
- ◆ 20" size — a large, desirable example; Bonnie Babe was produced from 12" up to 24"
- ◆ Solid-dome bisque head with molded, hand-painted hair (no wig)
- ◆ Sleep eyes, open laughing mouth with two painted teeth and molded tongue, deeply dimpled cheeks
- ◆ Cloth torso with composition arms and legs; original-style cloth booties on the feet
- ◆ Visible age-consistent darkening, crazing, and surface wear to the composition limbs, consistent with nearly a century of age and handling
- ◆ Bisque head and facial painting remain in strong, well-preserved condition

Collector's Note: the impressed numbers accompanying the Georgene Averill copyright mark are standard mold/production reference numbers used across the Bonnie Babe manufacturing run — not a unique serial or limited-edition number, as Bonnie Babe was a commercially produced line rather than a one-off design. Large, well-marked examples with intact bisque and original-style cloth/composition bodies have realized anywhere from several hundred dollars into four figures at auction, with condition of the composition limbs being the primary swing factor — bisque head condition tends to matter most for collector desirability, and this example's head and painted features remain notably strong despite the expected limb wear.