

MOM'S JOY ROOM

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY & APPRAISAL

Tillie — Antique Kestner "154" Bisque Doll

J.D.K. (Johann Daniel Kestner), Waltershausen, Germany • c. 1890s–1910s • 26"

ESTIMATED WORTH

\$450 – \$750

Reflects her large 26" size, confirmed Kestner crown-and-ribbon trademark, and good antique condition with intact leather body and stitched toes.



Tillie, 26", in her lace bonnet and white gown



Detail of her bisque face — fixed eyes and feathered brows



Her kid leather feet, with individually hand-stitched toes

History & Background

Tillie is an antique German bisque child doll produced by the workshop of Johann Daniel Kestner (J.D.K.), founded in Waltershausen, Thuringia, in 1816 and generally regarded as the oldest documented doll-making firm in Germany. Kestner supplied bisque heads not only for its own dolls

but for numerous other manufacturers and department-store lines of the era, and the company is often called the "King of Doll Makers" for the sheer range and quality of its output from the mid-1800s through the 1930s. Kestner's products are identified today by the maker's distinctive crown-and-ribbon (streamer) trademark, and by the plaster pate beneath the wig, a construction feature often associated with Kestner dolls.

Tillie carries Kestner's mold number "154," impressed with the "DEP" designation — short for the French "déposé," meaning "registered" or "patented" — a mark widely used across the German and French bisque doll trade of the period to indicate the mold design was formally registered, regardless of the doll's actual country of origin. Mold 154 was one of Kestner's standard "dolly-face" sculpts, produced over a long span from roughly the 1890s into the early 1900s, and it survives today in a wide range of sizes, with larger examples such as Tillie's 26" size being considerably less common and more sought-after than the smaller, more frequently encountered sizes.

She is built on a full kid leather body, jointed at the shoulders, hips, and knees, with bisque lower arms — the higher-quality body construction Kestner used on its better dolls, offering a softer feel than the cruder cloth-and-sawdust bodies found on cheaper contemporaries. Her feet carry individually hand-stitched toes, a labor-intensive detail that finer workshops used to distinguish their dolls from mass-market competition, and one of the same hallmarks of quality craftsmanship seen elsewhere in exceptional antique bisque and wax dolls of this era. She wears a white lace-trimmed bonnet and a pin-tucked white christening-style gown, and she is in good antique condition overall, consistent with a doll that has been carefully kept for well over a century.

Notable Information

- ◆ Maker: J.D.K. (Johann Daniel Kestner) — Waltershausen, Germany
- ◆ Marking: Impressed mold number "154" with "DEP" designation on the back of the head, plus Kestner's crown-and-ribbon trademark on a paper label affixed to the torso
- ◆ Plaster pate beneath the wig — a construction feature associated with Kestner dolls
- ◆ Era: circa 1890s–1910s
- ◆ Height: 26" — a notably large size for this mold
- ◆ Body: full kid leather, jointed at shoulders, hips, and knees; bisque lower arms
- ◆ Feet: individually hand-stitched toes
- ◆ Wig: brunette mohair or human hair, styled in period fashion
- ◆ Eyes: fixed (non-sleep), brown
- ◆ Costume: lace-trimmed bonnet and white pin-tucked christening-style gown
- ◆ Condition: good antique condition overall

Collector's Notes

Kestner mold 154 was produced in high volume over a long period, and smaller examples are common in today's antique doll marketplace, which keeps typical values moderate. Tillie's large 26" size is the key factor lifting her above the baseline range for this mold — big, well-preserved examples are meaningfully scarcer and more actively sought by collectors who specialize in large German bisque children. Her confirmed Kestner crown-and-ribbon label on the torso, together with her original kid leather body and individually stitched toes, gives her attribution real physical documentation rather than stylistic guesswork alone, which further supports the higher end of her estimated worth. Tillie joined the Mom's Joy Room collection in 2026.

*"Some ladies wait a hundred years to be noticed again — Tillie simply held
her bonnet just so, and waited."*

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