

There is a bronze painted, "Jocko" style, lawn jockey that can be found on Cleveland Avenue in Glasgow, Kentucky. At a glance, this lawn jockey is nothing special, the bronze paint is chipped here and there revealing bits of green. The sun has even paid a toll on the statue leaving the paint faded in most places. To the average passerby this lawn ornament would appear to be nothing more than mere decoration, but upon further study, one might find that there is more the story than an old statue decorating a yard.

The lawn jockey is a relic from the 1940's that has managed to linger around with the owner's family for about a decade. When the jockey was first purchased, the statue was not bronze. The original statue was of a black jockey in a green and white outfit. The owner related to me a story about the item's past that revealed the statue had been painted entirely with a thick coat of copper colored paint. This was done in order to cover up the unfashionable manner in which the jockey was depicted. The jockey originally featured bulbous white eyes, large red lips, and the face was painted to resemble a white man in blackface. The current owner of statue said when he first saw the statue he knew that he wanted it but he did not feel comfortable displaying such a statue in his front lawn. To allow the statue to be displayed without being racially offensive, the owner said the only way he saw was to paint the statue a color that is not associated with human skin tones. Initially the statue was painted entirely green. The green paint was cheap and faded quickly. In 2005 the jockey statue was repainted the bronze color that it is today.

This statue belongs to friend's family. The family resides on Cleveland Avenue in Glasgow, Ky.

I had seen the statue in front of the house many times before and never thought anything of it.

One day while assisting my friend and his father with some yard work, the father began to tell me the story of the Jocko styled jockey entirely out of the blue. Seeing this an excellent opportunity for my project, I knew I had to pounce on it at once.

While being told the story about the lawn jockey, I could not help but pick up on what I read as racial tension undertones. Knowing the family, I know that they do not carry any racial prejudices but when telling me about the original format of the statue, the tone became a little condescending.

I feel that the lawn jockey statue was initially purchased not only due to its 1940's vintage appeal but also due to the racial implications behind the statue. Back in the 40's people apparently did not see anything wrong with trying to make a mockery of an entire race of people. It was abundant in the world. Hitler was busy 'taking care of the Jews' while here in America African American's were the subject of the bullying. While I understand that racially insensitive lawn jockeys and the Holocaust are on completely different levels, I feel it is important that people really take note when they find something that is insensitive to a race of people or a way of life. It is important that they are made uncomfortable by it, uncomfortable enough to do something about it. In this case, the owner simply painted over the past.