



Back Story

Footprints from the Past

March 2017



I think the groundhog lied last month when it predicted six more weeks of weather. At least the prediction didn't hold true here. Although, from a snow picture my friend in Pennsylvania just posted, the six more weeks of winter bit held true back east. Maybe we need to hire out a few regional groundhogs.

For my little part of the world, here in north Texas, I'm perfectly happy with the mild winter we had. I'm especially happy for this early spring. I have rose buds already, sunflowers are popping up all over the yard – some over six inches tall already! And blue bonnets have already been spotted starting to bloom. And we're only in March.

The only downside to this beautiful, sunny, warmer weather is the attack of Spring Fever I get. Between the weeds sprouting faster than I can keep up with them, and the urge to be outside in the middle of sunshine and growth, it's hard to remain seated at the computer locked to a screen.

This month Back Story takes a look at milk glass. Come back next month as we take a peek at the 1940's.

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Publication News

Good Old Days March/April issue is out. It has a story, *Easter on the Road*, based on Iona Mae (Jones) Burk's story about Easter morning in 1942. Traveling to Missouri, the family was camped by the side of the road. Little Mae was worried that the Easter Bunny wouldn't find them. But it did, courtesy of mother Bea Jones. A paper-mache rabbit, filled with candy was left by the sleeping girl – clear out in the middle of nowhere. This Easter tale is in the March/April 2017 issue.

Purpose magazine accepted two articles for future publications. *Mildred's Sweet Spirit* will be in the July 2017 issue, and *Seeing Through New Eyes* will be in the November 2017 issue.

Where to Find Milk Glass Collectibles

Milkglass.org offers these tips on where to find milk glass collectibles.

Where to Find Milk Glass Collectables

Milk glass is a popular milky-white glass that can be used to make a variety of decorative items. This include dishes, plates, cups, salt and pepper shakers, vases, figurines, ornaments, boxes among many other items. Milk glass is characterized by its creamy, thick milky texture and often is opaque or white in color. However, milk glass also comes in pink, blue, green, purple and several other colors.

Collecting milk glass is a fascinating American pastime. Milk glass is a beautiful, elegance and delicate decorative item and many pieces of milk glass come with a rich history and valuable price tag. Whether you are looking to start a collection, add to a pre-existing collection, or purchase milk glass for a friend or family member, you will need to know where to start your search:

Manufacturers

Many people will start their milk glass collection search at the large manufacturers including Fenton Glass Company, the Kanawha Glass Company, Fostoria Glass Company, Imperial Glass Company, Kemple Glass, McKee Glass Company, Mosser Glass, Westmoreland Glass Company and Morgantown Glass Works, among many others. Manufacturers will produce both original older designs as well as replications.

Antique and Collectable Stores

For a more authentic shopping experience, many people will choose to look for milk glass collectables in antique shops as well as yard sales and flea markets. There is a good chance that you will go home empty handed but antique shopping can be a more fulfilling experience and also more exciting when you do locate that perfect milk glass candy dish for your collection. Antique and collectable store owners will usually have a knowledgeable understanding on the milk glass and can help date the piece as well.

Online

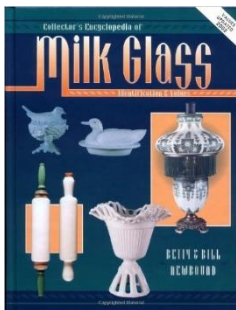
You can find anything online and this is also the case with milk glass collectables. Although you can try auctions and online garage sales such as e-bay or craigslist, you don't know for sure what you are buying. Online sites such as the National Milk Glass Collector's Society can help you determine if the milk glass you are looking at is valuable. Before consulting any auction site, it's best to do your research.

Additional Tips to Finding Milk Glass Collectables

Regardless of where you buy your milk glass items, it's a good idea to ask for a certificate for the milk glass, or at least a receipt. Many milk glass collectors will start a journal to record their milk glass findings. This may include price, place bought, history and additional information regarding the quality and purchase of the milk glass. This can help you reference it and also aid in the appraisal process later on.

Another great way to find milk glass collectables is to immerse yourself in the milk glass community. There are various groups, forums and even conventions held across America for milk glass collectors. Try to attend one near your home town where you will meet avid milk glass collectors, trade tips and learn the secrets to purchasing valuable milk glass items.

Milk Glass Reference Books

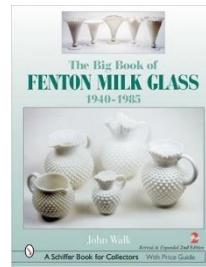


Collectors Encyclopedia Of Milk Glass Identification/Values

By Betty and Bill Newbound

This comprehensive, easy-to-use book is the first published to cover milk glass that was mass produced in the United States since 1930. Patterns and shapes made by Fenton, Westmoreland, L.E. Smith, and Kemple are all featured in

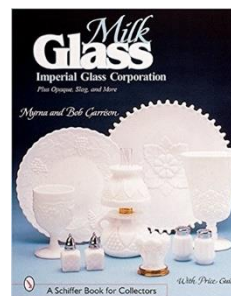
full-color photographs as well as vintage company catalogs and advertisements. This beautiful presentation will be a great addition to any glassware dealer's or collector's library.



The Big Book of Fenton Milk Glass 1940-1985

by John Walk

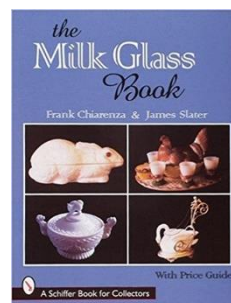
The most complete listing of Fenton Milk Glass is now revised and expanded. The beautiful white and pastel Milk Glass made by Fenton Art Glass from 1940-1985 is described and displayed in over 470 striking color photographs. During this period, Fenton was the preeminent manufacturer of Milk Glass wares. One look at this book will show you why. Superb examples in the popular Hobnail and Silver Crest patterns abound along with Block & Star, Cactus, Daisey & Button, Regency, Rose, and many other popular patterns. Forms from ashtrays and candy boxes to tidbits and vases are featured with a history of the company, glossary, and bibliography. Newly updated market values are in the captions.



Milk Glass: Imperial Glass Corporation Plus Opaque, Slag & More (Schiffer Book for Collectors)

By Myrna Garrison and Bob Garrison

Explore the world of milk glass in over 575 beautiful color photos, including pieces from the major manufacturers, ranging from hens on nests to miniature bank buildings and from plates to pigs, with examples of most of the colors and forms. 19th century to the late 20th century pieces offer something for every collector.



The Milk Glass Book (Schiffer Book for Collectors)

By James Slater and Frank Chiarenza

Milk glass today is considered neither white nor entirely opaque, as illustrated by more than 450 photos in this book. Drawn from the extensive collections of members of the National Milk Glass Collectors Society, most pieces pictured here have not appeared in any previous book. Even long-time collectors will be surprised to see items they have never encountered. American, English, French and other foreign manufacturers are represented. Some pieces are shown here in extremely rare colors. A special section shows items that have puzzled collectors or whose distinctive qualities merit special attention. Twenty-four pages from early catalogs of the French glasshouses Vallerysthal and Portieux are reprinted in color illustrating exquisite pieces. A checklist of major manufacturers, selected readings, index, and value guide are also provided. A must for lovers of milk glass, this book will appeal to all who appreciate finely-made glass.

Hazel's Spice of Life



Front of house of tenant farmer living near Sallisaw, Oklahoma.
Photographer Russell Lee, June 1939

Hazel's Spice of Life Sallisaw, Oklahoma, 1940

Potatoes sizzled in the cast iron skillet, splattering hot grease around the wood burning stove. Hazel pushed a loose lock of hair from her forehead with the back of her hand and hollered at the blond toddler wrapped around her knees. "Emily June, go on. Git back away 'fore you get popped."

The two-year old didn't listen and merely tightened her grip on her mother's leg.

"Sarah Mae. Come git yore sister and tend to her while I fix supper."

Sarah's raven colored locks bounced as she stomped across the one room shanty, dragging her cloth doll by its limp, soiled muslin arm. "C'mon, Sissy. Let's go play with Dolly. You can be the mama."

The two retreated to the far corner of the room and settled on the floor close to their two older brothers who were intent on their marble game.

Seeing that all four children were occupied and would be out of her hair – at least for a short time – Hazel returned her attention to the hot stove in front of her and scraped the charred potatoes from the bottom of the skillet with a well-worn spatula.

The echoes of boots clomping across the timber porch announced her husband's arrival. He stomped into the room, letting the wooden screen door slam shut behind him. Dropping his hat on the oilcloth covered table, he frowned. "Supper not done yet?"

"Just about. Taters are done, just waiting for the biscuits."

"You know I like to eat when I get home."

"In two minutes you will be." Hazel wrapped a ragged feed sack around a spoon and ladled a scoop of pinto beans onto a chipped enamelware plate. Adding a helping of potatoes, she handed the plate to her husband, who had settled onto one of the mismatched chairs. "Here. Eat up while I get the rest."

As she bent to open the stove door to check and see if the biscuits were done, she offered an explanation for the late meal. "Florence got home late today. Set me back some on fixin' supper."

"Second time this week. She needs to realize you have your own home and family to tend to. Can't be spending all hours of the day caring for her home while she fritters away her time working at the newspaper office. Isn't seemly...her working out all day?"

Hazel lifted the hot pan of biscuits from the oven and set them on the metal trivet on the table before she looked up and glared at her husband. "Oh...so she *shouldn't* work...but I *have* to work out all day?"

"T'wasn't what I meant. With Wheeler Mayo's fingers in so many business ventures in town, Florence doesn't need to work. We're both a'workin' trying to survive and keep food in our bellies. There's a difference."

"But, by her running the *Sequoyah County Times* like she does, that gives us the chance to make a few extry dollars. And Lord knows we need them. Tenant farming here doesn't pay near as well as what you got paid clearing land for Lake Murray."



Men on a work crew clearing land for the making of Lake Murray, In Carter County, Oklahoma

George's shoulders sagged and fatigue settled in around him like a mantle of sadness. "Ayep. Those were the days. Getting a whole dollar and a quarter for a day's work. Paid a lot better than what I can get with the sparse cotton crops here in Sallisaw."



Picking cotton near Madill, Oklahoma



Griffith Spice Jars, first produced in 1939

Hazel grabbed a stack of plates and set them on the table. "Kids...vittles are ready."

A scurry of eight bare feet crossed the room and children clustered around the table. The two boys, being older than the girls, grabbed the other two chairs, leaving the sisters to perch on upended wooden boxes. Hazel scooped food onto each plate and sat it before each child before scraping the bottom of the pans to come up with food for her own plate.

Reaching for the milk glass salt shaker, one of a treasured set passed down from her mother, an uncharacteristic wistful smile filled her face, easing the worry lines from her eyes and taking years off her countenance. "Florence got some new spice jars. Milk glass like these. With shiny red caps. From Griffith. They're so pretty. Shore would be nice to have a few. Even one. Maybe cinnamon, since I use that most."

"Hummmph," her husband grunted. "Her and her fancery. Must have paid a pretty penny for them."

"Said she got 'em at Marshall Fields when she and Wheeler went into Oklahoma City last week."

"Must be nice...having money to burn like that. Hoity-toity newspaper woman."

"Why, George Lee Baker...I declare. That's not very charitable talk. I do believe you're just jealous that they've got more money than we do."

"No more jealous than you are over her new, fancy spice jars."

Hazel sighed and nodded her head. "You're right, dear. That 'ole green eyed monster bit me good when I looked on the counter and saw that new set. Twelve gleaming white jars sitting in their pretty red holder...with nice paper labels stating what was in each jar."

"You want spice jars? Or you want food on the table?"

Hazel looked around the table, resting her eyes on each of her four children in turn, stopping with a final glance at her husband. "Food on the table. And a roof over our heads." She looked up at the ceiling above her. "Even though it does leak a good bit when it rains."

She sat and fiddled with the edges of her apron. "Seems mighty unchristian of myself, coveting someone else's belongings while I'm not appreciating the blessings the Baker family has. Our stomachs are full. We have a bed to sleep in tonight. All of us are healthy. Even the little one here." She patted her midsection, resting her hand on the slight bulge. "Who needs fancy-smancy spice jars?"

Although, a few months later, Hazel's beaming smile told another story when Florence presented her hardworking housekeeper with a Christmas gift; four Griffith spice jars that held cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice and cloves, sitting in a tiny wicker basket lined with a festive cloth.

Hazel bounced all the way home, excited to show George that now she, too, had some fancy-smancy spice jars of her own.



Main Street, Sallisaw, Sequoyah County, Oklahoma, during 1936 drought

Collectors

If you like antiques and collectibles, there's a fair chance that you collect something -or, more accurately, probably *a lot* of things. (Or am I the odd ball here?) Here's a list of the names of twenty collectors you might not have heard of. For instance, I'm a *deltiologist*, although I didn't know it. (A postcard collector) Some items amazed me though – like collecting sugar packets or scratched off lottery tickets. I guess 'to each their own' applies here. (The list comes from Mental Floss.)

1. SUCROLOGISTS: Sucrologists collect those little sugar packets that you see in restaurants.
2. DELTIOLOGISTS: Deltiologists study and collect postcards
3. PHILLUMENISTS: Phillumenists collect matchbooks and other match-related items.
4. PANNAPICTAGRAPHISTS: Pannapictagraphists collect comic books.
5. VEXILLOPHILES: Vexillophiles collect and display flags.
6. PLANGONOLOGIST: A plangonologist collects dolls.
7. VELOLOGISTS: Velologists collect and study expired specimens of the tax discs that British vehicles have been required to display since the beginning of 1921.
8. ARENOPHILES: Arenophiles collect sand samples from around the world. They particularly prize rare samples of black or green sand from certain beaches.
- 9 & 10. TEGESTOLOGISTS & LABEORPHILISTS: Tegestologists collect coasters or beer mats. They should probably team up with labeorphilists, or collectors of beer bottles.
11. FALERISTS: Falerists study and collect medals, badges, pins, and other military and civilian awards and decorations.
12. SCUTELLIPHILES: Scutelliphiles are similar to falerists, but they collect souvenir patches and badges.
13. LOTOLOGISTS: Lotologists collect lottery tickets, both used and unused.
14. ARCTOPHILES: Arctophiles collect stockpile teddy bears.
15. GALANTHOPHILES: Galanthophiles collect various cultivars of the plant known as the snowdrop.
16. TYROSEMIOPHILES: Tyrosemiophiles collect cheese labels.
17. FUSILATELISTS: Fusilatelists collect phone cards issued by telecom companies. The word is apparently largely used in the U.K. In the U.S., card collectors are known as telegerists.
18. HELIXOPHILES: Helixophiles study and collect corkscrews.
19. BRANDOPHILISTS: Brandophilists collect cigar bands.
20. ENTRENTOLIGNUMOLOGISTS: Entrentolignumologists may or may not exist, but some books and several websites use this mouthful to describe collectors of toothpick boxes.

This fictional tale wove itself from some milk glass Griffith spice jars that I found in an antique store in Sallisaw, Oklahoma. My sister, brother-in-law and I stopped there to stretch our legs on our way to visit our dad in Arkansas. When I saw a box full of milk glass spice jars, sugar jars and salt and pepper shakers, all for \$18, I had to adopt them. A few jars went home with my sister for her country kitchen and the rest now live in Texas.



Just a few of the goodies I came home with (Featured on a Stayer family enamelware place, sitting on a feed sack apron from a California antique store.)

Of course, I had to base the story around Sallisaw. Hazel and the Baker family are all fictional. Florence and Wheeler Mayo are real Sallisaw residents. Florence and Wheeler started the *Sequoyah County Times* as a weekly newspaper in June 1932, using hand-set type. Florence operated the newspaper herself until 1935, when her husband joined her as co-publisher. Florence was the publisher for more than 54 years, until her death in 1986. (Wheeler died in 1975.) The paper is still Mayo family owned and operational.

Griffith Laboratories originated in 1919. It developed from a pharmaceutical company that Carroll Ladd Griffith (C.L.) had taken over from a family friend prior to World War I. The company's original goal was to focus on meat and bakery products and make the better tasting, cheaper, and more efficiently produced.

In 1939, Griffith Laboratories began making spice jar sets in varying sizes and with different colored caps. The first sets had paper labels, while later sets had fired on front labels. They were originally sold through the home furnishing departments of Marshall Field's, Macy's and other fine stores.

Lake Murray, about two hundred miles away from Sallisaw, is Oklahoma's oldest and largest state park. The state legislature bought the property for about \$90,000 on April 10, 1933. Workers from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) worked on clearing the land and constructing the lake and Tucker Tower. During construction, almost 17,000 men worked on the park project for \$1.25 a day in wages. The lake was completed in 1937 and opened to the public in 1938.