

Historical Glass Museum

September 2025 Volume 9 Issue 4



Museum Location:

1157 Orange Street
Redlands, California
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Mailing Address:

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The Museum has a page on Facebook, for those who like to indulge in social media. Search for REDLANDS HISTORICAL GLASS MUSEUM

Keeping in Touch

Leading off with GOOD NEWS: We have contracted with accountant Marco Lopez Valderrama to handle some of the functions of the Treasurer. This is a paid consulting position, solving a problem we've had since our Treasurer left in January. Welcome Marco.

Visitation has been quite good at the Museum during the hot months. We had 86 visitors in June, 98 in July, and 124 in August.

GIFT SHOP NEWS

Despite the heat, sales have been steady in the Gift Shop, as we had a couple of nice donations of glass earmarked for that purpose. These sales support our day-to-day operations.

30% SALE

There is a **30% off Sale in the gift shop** from now until the end of September. Some really nice items have been added for this sale, so "come on down." The Gift Shop is open during our regular visiting hours, Saturday and Sunday from 12 noon to 4 PM.

WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS

No workshops were scheduled during the hot summer months.

FROM THE COLLECTION



This Round paperweight has cobalt blue ground with pulled feather design. Decoration of gold and white flowers with red center, on blue and gold stem with leaves. Made by Grant Randolph Studios, circa 1980.

IN MEMORIAM

We are sad to announce that **Jan Korfmacher**, a longtime Board Member and Museum supporter, has passed. Look for a tribute in the November newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

New Member:
Anne Blackmore

A LITTLE MAINTENANCE

The Museum had some exterior maintenance done recently, to remain in compliance with our insurance. A new set of steps and gate facilitate entrance to our side yard.



In addition, a security gate now secures the entrance to the basement of the Museum.



CANTON'S CASUAL LINE

A Beautiful, Mysterious Glass
By Anne Blackmore

Mid-century modern is all the rage right now, and that goes double in glass collecting. Swung vases dominate the skylines at glass shows around the country.

One line of mid-century glass is gaining some well-deserved recognition after finally being attributed to a manufacturer. For many years, it was unknown whether this line was Scandinavian - it certainly had the look with its strong shapes and color delineation. Or perhaps it was Tiffin? Tiffin's Green Fantasy line was produced in a similar manner, with green over crystal. No one suspected the Canton Glass Company, Inc. of Marion, Ind. until Helen Jones discovered an advertisement in the August 1951 issue of *Chain Store Age*.

Many of the finer points regarding Casual are murky. We know it was made in four different color combinations – crystal and green, crystal and light blue, crystal and light amber, and amber and black. Crystal and green is the most commonly found.

Its production dates are hypothesized, but not known with certainty. The Jones advertisement discovery, dated August 1951, is the earliest advertisement showing the Casual line. This leads us to believe production of this line likely began in late 1950 or early 1951.

A second advertisement was found by The Glass Paper Fanatics in the *1953 John Plain Book of Gifts and Housewares*. This catalog's cover states, "Over 51,000 retail stores buy and sell from this catalog," indicating the volume is targeted to retail stores. The ad shows a five-piece set made up of a cigarette server and four small matching ashtrays being sold to the retailer for \$4.50. That translates to approximately \$57.00 in 2025 dollars. And that was a wholesale price to the retailer, not the final price to the consumer, which was normally at least double the wholesale price.

Does this mean the set in the 1953 advertisement retailed for approximately \$10.00 at that time, or nearly \$100 in today's money? That might provide one reason why there is little of this beautiful glass out there for collectors. It was expensive, few folks could afford it, so it did not sell well. Thusly, there is little of it available for today's collectors.

My husband and I have been collecting Canton's Casual line since early 2017, when we purchased a small crystal and green bud vase thinking it was part of Tiffin's Green Fantasy line. While we made its initial identification incorrectly, we did embark on a difficult collecting journey. Since 2017, we've purchased every piece we've found while out glass shopping, and to date, we only have 21 pieces in our collection, and two of those were gifts.

Interestingly, we have found several crystal and green bud vases. That vase seems to have been the most popular item in the Casual line. We found an image of the crystal and green bud vase in the 1954 Canton Glass Company, Inc. catalog. This was the only piece of Casual in the entire 86-page catalog.

(continued on next page)



Canton Casual collection of Max and Anne Blackmore. All four color combinations are shown. The large crystal and green vase in the center back is one of two known to exist. Photo courtesy of The Blackmores.

[Canton Glass – continued from page 2]

In his book, *Mid-Century Modern Glass in America*, Dean Six states “Canton Casual is the only mid-century modern design by Canton Glass we are currently aware of. They were known for their conservative and more traditional lines.” He goes on to hypothesize the line was produced “circa 1951 and probably ending prior to 1958.” Canton moved to Hartford City, Ind. in 1958, so Six indicates he thinks production of the Casual line ceased prior to that move.

I would agree with Six about production ending prior to 1958 for a couple of reasons. First, available advertisements do not support its production later than 1954. While the 1951 advertisement found by Jones showed four pieces (two-part divided bowl, covered dish with lid, bowl with center handle, and a bud vase), the 1954 Canton catalog only shows one piece, which seems to indicate the line was being wound down.

Secondly, if the Casual line had been produced from 1951 to 1958, there would be far more of it available for sale on the secondary market. More likely it was made for two or three years, and with the consumer price being so high, smaller quantities were sold and production gradually dwindled.

When wondering about production, my husband and I began to be curious about how these pieces were actually made. How were the two colors of glass combined to create one amazing item? Six states, “The forms are a gather of one color, with a second gather of a contrasting color heavily applied to the exterior and partly encasing the original color.” I would disagree.



[Advertisement courtesy of The Glass Paper Fanatics]

HANDMADE CIGARETTE SET . . . 5-Pcs.

“Casual”, the newest custom-design by Canton glass, combines ice-clear and emerald green crystal in interesting, sculptured contours that give each piece a light-and-shadow loveliness. The 1 1/4” high cigarette holder can be filled with small bouquets . . . the 3 1/4” diam. ashtrays, with nuts or mints.

47124 B315 Crystal Set. 5-Pc. . . . \$4.50

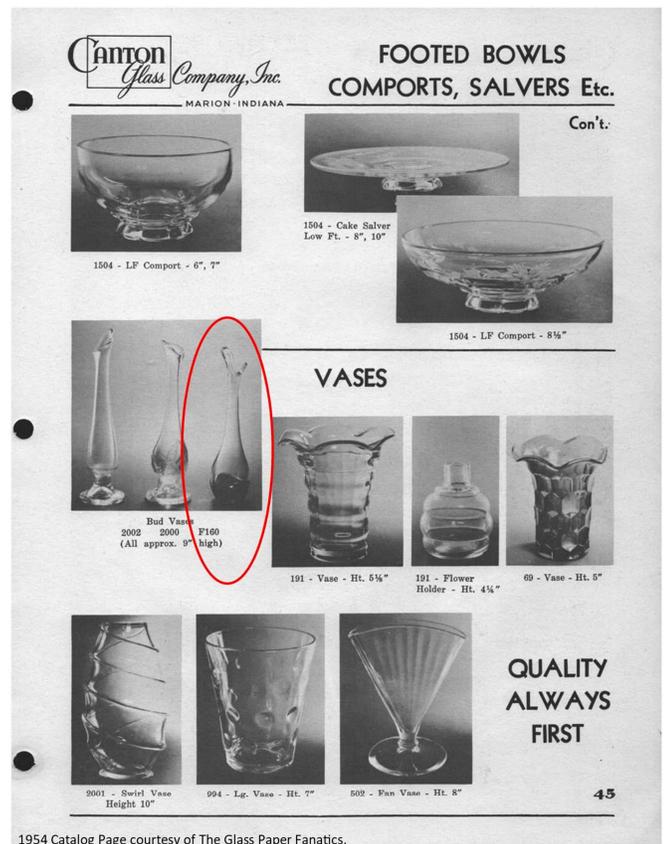
Canton Casual advertisement from the 1953 *John Plain Book of Gifts and Housewares*. Courtesy of The Glass Paper Fanatics.

Upon close examination, my husband and I have noted, within each piece, for example, the small ashtray/nut dish, both the crystal part and the colorful part, on each piece, is the same – the same shape and the same thickness. They can be stacked on one another and all the points line up exactly the same. The same goes for the bowls, larger ashtrays, divided dishes, center-handled dishes, candle holders, and cigarette servers. There are only two of the larger vases known to exist, so we were not able to compare our large vase with the other.

We theorize two press shops worked in conjunction with each other, one shop pressing the base and one shop pressing the top part. As a base was completed, the top would be pressed into the base, allowing the hot glass itself to serve as the adhesive. This is sometimes called the “hokey-pokey” method.

Canton’s Casual line has provided us with a wonderful collecting opportunity. It has provided a great learning journey and a glass that is difficult to find. We seem to treasure even more that which we work very hard to find. Every piece feels like gold to us.

This article is from a presentation given by the Blackmores at the Morgantown Show and Convention in 2025 Our thanks to Anne and Max.



1954 Catalog Page courtesy of The Glass Paper Fanatics.

Page from Canton’s 1954 catalog. The sole piece from the Casual line in the entire 86-page volume was a crystal and green bud vase (circled). Courtesy of The Glass Paper Fanatics.

FENTON “MELON” PITCHER – STEP BY STEP

by Avriella Ford

Avriella Ford is a student at San Bernardino Valley College and the following report was done as an assignment for her course in Beginning Glassblowing. We thank her for her contribution and encourage her classmates to join in.

Frank L. Fenton and John W. Fenton began their careers in 1905, painting designs on glass from other manufacturers in Martins Ferry, Ohio. They decided to make their own glass in order to work with more colors. In 1907, they opened the Fenton Art Glass factory in West Virginia where they introduced iridescent glass which would later be known as carnival glass. Frank L. Fenton took inspiration from other glass companies like Tiffany and Steuben to create his own colorful glass designs. However, Fenton didn't just make colorful art glass, they also created practical items for everyday use during the Great Depression and WWII. In the 1940s, ownership of the Fenton Art Glass company was transferred to the next generation of glassblowers in the family who would grow the company exponentially during their time. Their traditional glassmaking stopped operations in 2011 and the property was sold in 2017 to be demolished.

The Fentons' goal was to create a new generation of colorful glass. Their passion for new designs and decorations pushed them to create and grow their own company, one that would be around for more than a century. Fenton Glass became the largest manufacturer of handmade colored glass in the United States. It is known for its beautiful and unique colors and patterns. The Fenton Brothers paved the way for other glassblowers and glassblowing companies with their new and revolutionary designs.



This is the shelf at the Museum that shows the step by step process to produce the Melon Jug at far right.

The piece I chose for this report is a honey amber beaded melon pitcher. The melon design was created in the 1940s as a mold. This specific type of pitcher is made by getting one gather of milk glass on a blowpipe followed by a gather of amber glass. It was then shaped using the mold and then the neck was extended. From there the topmost area would be flared and flattened before being crimped and the final shape being made. After this, more amber glass would be gathered to make a handle for the pitcher. Lastly, the pitcher was painted with its final design.

One thing about this piece that caught my attention was the tool marks in the handle. There are many of them. It is possible they were put there by accident, but the placement of them seems almost intentional. They are even on either side of the handle but at the same time do not go all the way around. It seems as though they may have transformed something unintentional into another design unique to this piece. I also noticed that the connection at the top of the handle is not completely smooth. It has a raised bump where it was attached. I wonder if this was done on purpose or not. It is perfectly imperfect. The rim of the pitcher is also asymmetrical. This type of piece has been produced many times, but each one is a little different than the last. This specific piece was made for the Historical Glass Museum in Redlands, California and shows each step of the process. However, the slight differences in the tool marks between those last couple steps showcase how each piece made by these many generations of glassblowers was just a little different from the others. At first glance they seem identical, but upon closer inspection each mark shows the difference in processes the glassblower used to achieve this specific piece.



Avriella with the finished Jug

Group Tours of the Museum



Weekday group tours for groups of 8 or more visitors are available by appointment. The charge is \$5.00 per person, with a minimum charge of \$40.00. To schedule a group tour, visit our web site and use the "Contact Us" page to send us a request, and someone will be in touch. The phone number for the Museum is only answered on weekends when we are open.

We had one tour in May, from Agoura Hills Senior Center, for 12 people. We are limited in our staff for tours, but you can still contact us and we will try to schedule you.

RESTORATION FUND

The Board of Directors established a Restoration Fund designated to set aside funds for restoration and maintenance of our century-old building.

The current balance in the fund is: **\$6,382.74**.
Donations are gratefully accepted.

SEPTEMBER 2025 FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Do you have your Museum newsletters handy – perhaps the pdf's are saved on your computer? If so, I would like to invite you to re-read my past three "From the President" columns.

In the February issue, I talked about our need for more persons to serve as Museum docents – even one day a month, or every other month, would be helpful! If we can't find a docent for a given Saturday or Sunday, the Museum will not open, and visitors (some of whom may have traveled from a distance to visit) will be met with closed doors, and we'll have no helpful Gift Shop sales that day.

In the April issue, I talked about needing a member to volunteer to coordinate occasional tours of the Museum. This doesn't mean you have to CONDUCT all the tours, just that you work with prospective visitors to schedule a time when both the group, and a docent or two, is available to give the tour.

In the June issue, I talked about the need for more persons to attend Cleaning Day on the third Thursday of each month for two or three hours. There have been days when no one at all showed up on Cleaning Day.

We still need more people to serve occasionally as a docent. We still need someone to coordinate tours. We still need people to show up for Cleaning Day. The Museum cannot function without more volunteers. Would you step up to help? Email us at historicalglassmuseum4@gmail.com Thank you.

Michael

DONATIONS

Non-Cash Donations

June: Mary Stearns

July: Jacque Rocha

August: Patti Anderson
Jeri Roth
Michael Krumme
Kathi Jablonsky

The Board extends a hearty Thank You to all of these folks.

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(*) Paid Consultant performing some duties of Treasurer

