

James R Farr, President
7077 Manderlay Drive
Florence, Ky. 41042

F n Cooper, Vice President
11,00 S.W. Lancaster Road
Portland, Oregon 97219

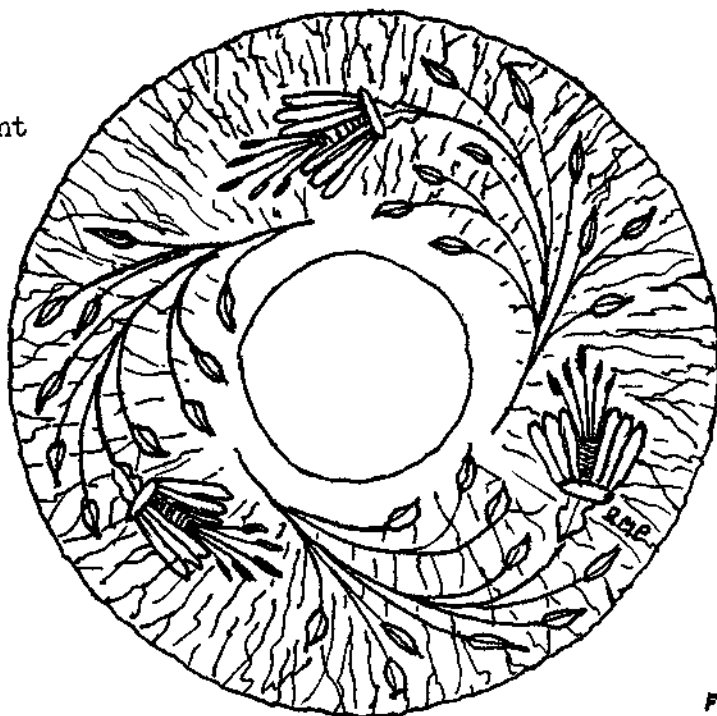
Paul B. Miller, Sec'y-Ed.
119 S. Maple Street
Akron, Ohio 44302

Harry Heatwole, Treas.
Box 112
Dayton, Va. 22821

Jean Eckhardt, Director
Box 277
Indian Lake, N.Y. 12842

Carl Schleede, Director
975 Gallup Road
Spencerport, N.Y. 14559

Jabe Tarter, Director
119 S. Maple Street
Akron, Ohio 44302



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STRETCH GLASS SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1975

A message from your President . . .

This year has been the most fruitful yet for our hobby. Our membership is continually growing. This in itself is a strong indication that the formation of our group was a timely one. Secondly, we are attracting members from other related fields in ever increasing numbers. In our fold are Super Collectors, Advanced Collectors, Average Collectors, and Beginners. Many advanced and specialized Carnival Collectors are becoming members as evidenced in the membership roles.

Mixed displays (Carnival and Stretch) were to be seen in great number at the National Conventions.

Some of the top names in Carnival are showing more than a casual interest in Stretch or Stretch Carnival - if you prefer. Also don't be too surprised at who turns up with the super collections in Stretch. Speaking of Super Collections; ever try buying a super rarity in Iridescent Stretch Glass?? You may find this to be one of the greatest challenges of your collecting careers. Or better yet, try finding a rare water set, bedroom set, or punch bowl set for sale.

The conventions were all great as usual. Christmas in July at the American, and what a magnificent job the Dayton Carnival Club did with such a small membership!

The International with the friendliness and solicitous atmosphere that prevailed everywhere had the largest Association Auction ever held with good quality Carnival and some Stretch (a red colonial chop plate, and other things). Well done Keystone Carnival Club!

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October, 1975

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I don't think there is one among us who can deny that the Stretch Glass Convention was heads above the rest in the educational aspect of collecting iridescent glass. And what affords us the appreciation of our glass and our hobby better than first-hand factual knowledge of every aspect of this collectible.

Speaking of Conventions, news concerning our 1976 Convention will follow shortly.

Those of you who haven't, please pay your current dues. Quite a number of you have forgotten this most necessary duty.

James R. Farr, President

* * * * *

In the July, 1975 issue of the Newsletter the remarks by Mr. Frank M. Fenton at the Convention were given you. Below are his answers to fifteen questions sent to him prior to the Convention by SGS members. Also, please note that the SGS Newsletter is now protected by copyright. See bottom of page 1.

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I'll start with the questions that have been asked and try to answer them the best way that I can. Again, I'm not an expert. I think I know, not I'm sure I know.

Question No. 1 - In what year did the manufacturing of iridescent Stretch Glass start at Fenton and in what year was it discontinued?

I think that we started about 1917. I have a drawing in my records of a mold, the No. 640 mold, which you'll see illustrated here on the slides after bit, which was made in 1916. There is reference in The Pottery, Glass & Brass Salesman of June 28, 1917, and I think Berry perhaps mentions this in his book in case you've forgotten it. It describes "A beautiful line of iridescent glassware from The Fenton Art Glass Company. Novel baskets with hand formed handles in a dainty silvery iridescence. The line has been correctly named "Silver Sun" and is shown in a number of delicate iridescent colorings. Every piece is in a different shade, while some have been produced in a striking crackled effect." Now that is dated June 28, 1917. I can't find any real solid verification for that, our records at that time are not very good and I don't find any catalogue illustrations that let me put a date on that. I have one that I'll show you that might have been used sometime in that period. It's different from the rest of the catalogue illustrations. It's a line drawing instead of a photograph, and it may be that that would show the glass was made before 1920 or 1921.

Most of the pieces that we saw that were Fenton pieces and that you know of as Stretch Glass seem to show up in our catalogues and in our inventory records about 1920 and 1921, somewhere along in there. So I can't really date that catalogue that we have any closer than about 1921. Maybe some of you can, and if so I'll be glad to know about it. We made Stretch Glass, the bulk of it being made from 1921 to 1928 but we actually made some into the early 1930's and I have an illustration again that you'll see here showing an assortment of glass, some of it being sold on that little five-legged base, that little black base with the five legs, and we didn't make that base until 1932. I have the mold drawings right here with me that will show you the mold drawings of that base and the date of the drawings at the time that we made it. So it does identify. I'd say the early 1930's sometime is when we stopped making the Stretch Glass. The bulk of it though was probably stopped in the 1928-29 period. Any time anybody wants to interrupt me and ask a question that's related, why please do.

Question No. 2 - Would you please tell us just how the iridescent Stretch Glass was made, the is, the technical process?

Well, you don't need me to tell you that now. Are there any questions about that?

. For those of you who did not attend the Convention Mr Fenton's answer to Question No. 2 is given after all members attending the Convention witnessed the demonstration of the making of Stretch Glass. This will be dealt with later. Hope everyone saw and read the article in The Antique Trader dated June 17, 1975, by Russ & Kitty Umbraco. A tremendous article!)

Question No. 3 - In your opinion would Stretch Glass be included in your Florentine art glass line and, if so, why would the Imperial Jewels art glass not be called Stretch?

That's a good question - I wrote out an answer. Stretch Glass would be included in the Florentine line. Have no opinion on Imperial Jewels. I think it depends on your definition of Stretch, how you want to define it. Again, get us out of the "expert class" on that.

Question No. 12 - (Can I jump to that for a minute because it relates to Question No. 3? Is it your opinion to classify a piece of Carnival Glass and a piece of Stretch Glass as a stylistic change in glass design from the elaborate design to the simple plain design?

I think that only partly I would say that's so. I believe, again this is opinion, one of the major differences between Stretch Glass and Carnival Glass is the overall pattern that is primarily on Carnival Glass compared to an essentially plain surface, perhaps with some details or design or pattern but nothing like the kind of thing you see on Carnival. I think that is a very important part of the definition of Stretch Glass. I believe that another important part would be that it would be molded in a production type of thing similar to the operation you saw yesterday but I would say that a pressed mold, or blown mold either one, would qualify. And, of course the third thing is that you do need to have the type of finish that comes as the result of having warmed the piece in the second time, after the spray has gone on. Most of the Carnival Glass that I'm familiar with was made, I believe, having been warmed in first, finished, and then sprayed with the spray going on perhaps while the piece is very hot and then being finished, or with the spray going on after the piece has reached it's final shape. The Stretch Glass involves the spray going on and then re-heating in the glory hole, and then coming out and either being finished or staying plain, whatever it is, but it's that second re-heat that I think is important to it. Now, maybe that's too fine a detail to worry about, but I realize that the crackled effect of Stretch is something that it really needs to have. On the other hand, we have a lot of pieces that were made by us and by others where you can find very little evidence of the crackled effect and yet they were produced and sold at the same time right along with the Stretch pieces, like the tall candleholders, things like that. So it's an opinion and I don't think that it is anything that I'm wedded to at all, it's just an idea for you to consider.

Question No. 4 - Is it true that each glass company that made Stretch Glass had their own formula for the process or was it a "trade secret" and is it still considered so?

I don't know - I assume that each had his own formula but you people have read the books, even Mr. Freeman I think talks about it, the people who write about Frederick Carder tell you about it the salts of iron or tin or platinum or gold or silver, each one says some different kind of material - strontium, there are any number of different metallic salts that will create an effect and I suppose we have some where there might have been a mixture of tin and iron. I don't remember of our ever having used any gold, at any time, we can eliminate that from consideration. I don't think we ever used any gold in our "dope" as we called it. We used to call it "dope." So the mixture can vary, could be from company to company. I think we all tried to keep it secret, not tell anybody else just what was in there. There's a certain aura of mystery about it, you know, if you don't say anything to anybody else about it. Have I answered that question satisfactorily? Anybody want to pin me down any further?

Question No. 5 - What were the peak years of production at Fenton?

I believe you could say 1920 to 1926 would be the peak years of production at Fenton.

Question No. 6 - Is it your opinion that The Fenton Art Glass Company produced more Stretch Glass than either the Imperial Glass Corporation or the Northwood Glass Company? If so, what would you say would be the approximate percentage of the overall amount produced, using 100% as the ratio?

I just can't respond to that, I don't know. I don't know what Northwood produced, I don't know what Imperial produced at those times so I have no idea as to the relative quantities. I suppose you could tell me better by your experience out in the market on how much of one kind you find compared to another. That would be as good a judge as you could have. I know we made a lot of different items in the Stretch Glass. Imperial and Fenton would have made much more than Northwood did. They produced over more years. My uncle who worked for Northwood said that that end of Northwood's business was the minor business, that they made a great deal of lighting goods, they made a lot of shades and a lot of things for the lighting trade. (I assume that will increase the price of Northwood Stretch substantially).

Question No. 7 - Could you properly name all the colors Fenton produced during the Stretch Glass years? Did the colors have actual names instead of what collectors now call them? For instance, would the color commonly called lemon-yellow have actually been vaseline glass, etc.?

I'll show you all those colors very shortly (we ought to get at this, too).

(Ed. Since most of you did not attend the Convention and did not see the slides which Mr Fenton put on the screen at the end of the question answering period which gave all the colors, by name this would perhaps be a right place to list for you the Fenton colors in Stretch Glass and the names given in the old catalogues. This list of colors was compiled by Kitty & Russ Umbraco and sent to me at my request. They are as follows:

Celeste Blue - a beautiful sapphire blue
Turquoise - a light blue opaque color of great beauty, exceptionally rich
Royal Blue - a deep rich dark blue tone, very dignified
Florentine Green - a delicate shade of green
Persian Pearl - a rich pearl color showing all the iridescence of mother-of-pearl
Iridescent Wisteria - a wonderful rich effect dark in color tone
Plain Wisteria - a transparent color reminding one of rich old Burgundy sparkling with life and fire
Grecian Gold - a rich amber iridescent effect with a golden sheen
Topaz - a rich greenish amber color
Jade Yellow - a rich opaque yellow color that makes a very pleasing combination when used with the black stands
Ebony - a rich black glass with a brilliant mirror-like finish
Ruby - a deep red color all the way through)

Question No. 8 - In your opinion could any pieces of pattern Carnival Glass be classified as Stretch Glass since there are pieces in collections of Carnival Glass that have the definite Stretch characteristics?

I think there is an overall pattern essentially Carnival even if it had Stretch characteristics I'd call it Carnival, not Stretch. I hope that's not the wrong thing to say but I think it would have been an accident rather than intentional.

Question No. 9 - Was it more expensive to make Stretch Glass than pattern Carnival Glass. Were the iridizing chemicals used on Stretch the same as used on Carnival?

I think the iridizing chemicals would have been the same. Perhaps there might be more iridizing chemicals or more different ones used on Stretch. They are not always the same. You may use one chemical spray for this color and a different chemical spray for another color. And it may depend on the base glass that you are working with. If you're making what we think of as a marigold color, that had to have a different spray to get the marigold color on crystal than the spray on what you call white Carnival, or white Stretch which is also on crystal, so it has to be a different spray, the difference is in the contents of the spray.

The question as to whether it was more expensive to make Stretch than pattern Carnival Glass - it would be today in our factory, more expensive to make Stretch because we pay more attention to defects. I think that we would have more defects showing up in a piece that had less pattern than a piece that was heavily patterned so that our loss, which is a very important part of the cost of any production, would be greater with Stretch than it would be with Carnival. On that basis I'd say that the Stretch would be more expensive, however, back when they made it, it looks to me like everything went, whether it was Stretch or Carnival.

Question No. 10 - Was paste mold work used in Fenton's production of Stretch Glass? Is that process used today in any production of your company, or in any company you might know about?

I think paste mold was used on blown items, of course, it is only a blown technique or blown procedure so that any blown items could have been made either paste mold or iron mold. If you don't see any mold joint in a piece, it was probably a paste mold piece. The drapery tumblers were probably paste mold, although we made them both ways, that is, we made tumblers both ways. Do you know what the paste mold is we are talking about? It's an iron mold that is made with less attention to the joints matching, and with many holes drilled in the iron, holes drilled all the way through the piece. Then the iron is pasted with a paste made of linseed oil and a number of other things. Somebody recently in one of the books described it very easily and I can't tell you who it was that described it now. This paste which includes sawdust and a number of other

materials that can be used is pasted on the inside surface of that mold, then it is dried and baked and the holes are drilled through so that the air can get out all the way through. Then, before each piece is blown, the mold drops into water, comes back out again - either the man picks it up again and puts it in water or there is a specially built platform, what we call a "dummy" that he stands on and he operates this with both feet, both hands and his mouth, all at the same time. And they are really busy when they work. The "dummy" is a platform on top of a small tub of water. The mold is in the water and is connected to two foot pedals on the platform. One pedal moves the mold in and out of the water and the other opens and closes the mold. He depresses the pedal with one foot and that makes the mold come up into position out of the water. Then he drops the glass down in, depresses the other pedal with his other foot, blows it in there and constantly keeps it turning, and as he turns the glass there is a very fine curtain of steam from that water which develops between the glass and the mold and the paste. The paste is the carrying agent for the water and keeps it so that there are no mold marks. Sometimes you will see some little circular curves if the man has let it get a little bit too cold before he stops his turning process. Then he takes the piece out and it is still on the end of the pipe. The blown pieces you saw being made yesterday were made iron mold. Did I explain the paste mold satisfactorily?

Question No. 11 - Can the so-called drapery pattern of Stretch Glass actually be attributed to Fenton? Can you tell us how this type of pattern was made? Was it paste mold work or by some other process?

It could be either paste mold or iron mold. The drapery pattern is one that is made by blowing in two different molds. You first blow in what we call a spot mold or a rib mold or an optic mold. All those terms are used interchangeably. If it is a rib mold it means that the optic is a round dot, or it can be a diamond optic mold which you call something, I forgot what it is now. (Answer from a member - Concave Diamond). We would call that the diamond optic. So optic is a word which really covers all of the different designs that are made. We made drapery pattern,

in fact, I just dug out the old catalogue this morning, just to make sure I wasn't kidding myself, and looked at the old illustration of the opalescent drapery jug that was made back in the very early years of the company. We made the drapery pattern also in that little tumble-up or litt. pitcher, I don't know if there is an illustration there or not. But usually those optic patterns were made for use with opalescent glass. You have the glass blown in a mold, the optic mold, then it is chilled with a blast of air blowing on it, then it is re-heated back in the glory hole again gotten hot, that creates the opalescent coloring that you see, and from there it is blown in a second mold which can be either a paste mold or an iron mold. Then it can go on from there and come out of the iron mold and be finished. If it is paste mold normally it goes back through the lehrs and is finished in the Cold Metal Department or Grinding Department or something of this kind. There are some hot crack-off methods with work in the Production Department.

Question No. 12 - Answered in Question No. 3.

Question No. 13 - I have seen two orange bowls in Stretch Glass. One is clear with excellent iridescence and the other red (I was invited to make a bid on the red one). These bowls have three legs exactly like the ones made in Grape & Cable pattern Carnival by Fenton and Northwood. My question is: Has the original mold of Grape & Cable been cut out to make it smooth with no pattern? If this was done, that means no Grape & Cable mold by one of the glass companies which would make identifying the maker a lot easier. Likewise, the same question regarding a pair of pink Stretch dolphin candlesticks that have the Fenton holly pattern pressed on the bottoms.

The original mold was not cut out to make the Stretch mold. Our Grape & Cable pattern that we made is different from the one that Northwood made. It is our No. 920 mold that makes the Grape & Cable design. It was still on our price list in 1928. Still being made at that time. The Stretch mold was our No. 603 mold. They are two different molds, two entirely separate molds. And incidentally, the feet are a little longer on the Stretch mold than I think they are on the Grape & Cable. If you want to get one of each and try it out I think you'll find they are. The candleholder, I saw those that Berry had last night, have the dolphins on the sides and the illustrations that I have show a rib pattern in the bottom, but I'm convinced that the rib pattern is the earlier of the two and at some later time they merely used a different plunger and kept the same mold and made the item, perhaps for somebody special as a private mold job just like you would put a plug in the bottom plate of a piece to make yourself a Carnival Glass souvenir, or something of this nature. I would be convinced that both the items came from the same mold and just different plungers. We'll have an illustration of that. I'm almost at the end of this.

Question No. 14 - (This is the question about the vinegar). I remember talking with your brother, (this time it is my brother) back in the early 1960's. (People confuse me and my brother constantly, we are both tall and a person can come in and talk to Bill and feel that he has talked with me and talk with me and later on will tell Bill how they enjoyed the conversation they had with him when really they talked with me, so there is somewhat a similarity and I have it happen to me all the time, it is not unusual to have this happen). At that time I asked him about Carnival and the possibility of Fenton starting to re-issue same. His remarks were: "Oh, you mean that old vinegar glass? We have back records that show large quantities of vinegar were purchased during those years, by the barrels full." Can you say whether vinegar was used in the early years of iridescent glass as an iridizing agent for either or both Carnival or Stretch?

I think I can say truthfully - it's possible. But I don't know about it at all. It's entirely possible, you could use vinegar, you could use water, you could use muriatic acid, ethylene glycol, I don't know if you could use alcohol or not, I doubt it.

Question No. 15 - Does the Fenton Art Glass Company have any intention this year or in the near future, or even the foreseeable future of putting Stretch Glass back on the production line? so, would it carry the trademark "Fenton" in script?

Well, let's go backward on that. The trademark "Fenton" in script - it would carry it. If we had such in the line it would carry a trademark of some kind that would identify it. Whether it

would be the Fenton script or not, I don't know. We got so rough on our Mold Shop foreman recently after we decided to mark everything, we instructed them to mark everything, and then we would still find new molds coming out of the shop without the Fenton mark on them. And we wouldn't see it until the pieces were coming through thelehr. So we got so rough on him that they even put it on pieces that we don't think it belongs on. We made a very pretty thumbprint plate, we make it into a basket and two or three other shapes, and the bottom of it was perfectly plain and it's transparent, and we make some in ruby that we sell in the Gift Shop, I think maybe it is still in the line but I'm not sure. Those things all of a sudden showed up with that great big FENTON across there and the oval around it and it looks like the dickens if you put it on a nice table service, it just stands out like a sore thumb and it really doesn't belong there. So we have to find another way of marking so that you know it would not destroy the beauty of the piece. As long as we're working with Carnival Glass, or opaque glasses, why it doesn't make any difference, it's fine to put it in the bottom but when you start using transparent glasses that might be serving pieces, then I think it detracts, and that is the original reason why we never marked them.

Oh, the second part of the question - do we plan...we sort of work from hand to mouth. We plan ahead for a lot of eventualities, and then we try to be flexible enough in order to meet what the market wants and what might sell, so I can't say to you that we're not going to make Stretch Glass some day. My brother is the Sales Manager of the company, and he has a great deal to say about what gets made and what gets offered. He has seen a few old pieces of Stretch Glass and hasn't thought very much of some of them, but he looked at some of the pieces we made yesterday and the day before and he said, "Boy! These are nice looking aren't they?" I don't know what that means except that Stretch Glass would maybe be a little more acceptable. If we thought we could sell it in today's modern markets, we would do so. And it is hard to judge the market. We try very hard to sense what might sell and what might not sell. So I've gone at a great rate here, I think we'd better show the slides. If we do market it, I would not expect it to happen any time in 1975, that's about as far as I can see ahead, I don't know what new things we'll go with in January of '76, although we've got a lot of things waiting there if we decide it's the right time.

End

* * * * *

We are most grateful to Mr. Fenton for giving us his answers to the questions above and for the first-hand factual knowledge contained in them.

Next issue we will give you the technical side of the making of Stretch Glass as it was made for members attending the Convention by The Fenton Art Glass Company. This will be written by the Umbraco's and has been published in The Antique Trader. Perhaps Russ will send some of his pictures he took during the demonstration which can accompany the article and will show some of the techniques involved. Ed.

Stretch Glass As a Late Cinderella

By O. Joe Olson

If all the disparaging viewpoints on Stretch Glass had substance, I would still not be deterred from collecting it providing I could find the better specimens, had the money to spend and the space to display and enjoy the glass.

Collecting a specialized type of glass is a very personal matter. Whatever continues to attract and hold one's interest should be pursued. The inner appreciation that comes from ownership and knowledge is the collector's flame. It should be trimmed and fed. The brighter and steadier it burns, the more enjoyment results.

As for investment potential, some Stretch Glass, especially that in pastel colors, will startle many when more collectors grasp its beauty and understand its true scarcity.

I have heard Stretch Glass called "short-cut Carnival," and even "three-minute" Carnival.

It seems quite obvious that Stretch Glass, on the whole, represents a more simple panoply of iridescent glass than Carnival. Stretch patterns are relatively plain, confined in most instances to panels and ribs, while Carnival runs rampant in many elaborate designs and patterns.

It is quite possible, as some contend, that Stretch Glass was a natural extension and development as glass makers sought more economical patterns and iridizing techniques to prolong the mass production and sale of iridescent glass.

This is how critics apparently came up with the "three-minute egg" concept of Stretch Glass as a part-done example of iridescence when compared with the elaborate and painstaking iridescence found, for example, on some Northwood pieces such as the Farmyard bowl and items in the 3-Fruits pattern.

Stretch Glass, whose finish is crinkled or crizzled, and that does not quite extend to the full perimeter of the piece, quite probably was manufactured more swiftly and with less metallic spray than fully iridized pieces of Carnival Glass.

Certainly the plain patterns in which much Stretch Glass is known represented a considerable saving for the manufacturer as compared with the elaborate pattern moulds of much Carnival Glass.

One researcher, a specialist on economics, believes that Stretch Glass was manufactured more quickly and cheaply than most of the 1907-25 Carnival Glass as glass plants competed for the iridescent glass market. He contends that the emphasis on short cuts in manufacturing and greater production came about in Stretch Glass as wages and manufacturing costs increased in 1921-30.

Whatever the reason, or reasons, for the manufacture of Stretch iridescent glass, it remains an interesting and unique area of glass collectibles. It can be clearly identified and the period of its manufacture delineated.

Stretch Glass remains an area of collectibles that one day is certain to confound and silence all detractors. Stretch Glass will certainly be the late Cinderella of American iridescent glass.

From the mail ---

Miss Elizabeth Northwood Robb

Wheeling, West Virginia 26003

June 28, 1975

Dear Mr. Miller:

I must apologize for being slow to thank you for the two Newsletters of The Stretch Glass Society and your nice letter. I wanted to read them thoroughly and then go over them again - for they are quite interesting and informative - so they have been waiting on my desk for the proper attention.

October, 1975

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I had just recently heard of what is called "Stretch Glass," and have only seen a few pieces at shows. However, I have one small bowl in vaseline color which is obviously "stretch" in effect, one of my Mother's cousins has a blue one, the same shape. I believe we at one time had a whole lemonade set, candlesticks and salad plates in this type of glass and this bowl is probably the sole survivor of that set.

I'm now very sorry I didn't listen more carefully to family history as I grew up. I loved my Grandfather and remember him well, but was only 5½ when he died. He had a brother John II in England whom we met in 1953, who was then 83 or thereabouts. He was very talented and highly respected in the Stourbridge region. He was writing a book on their father, John Northwood - his life, inventions, techniques, designs, etc., and finished it before he died. It was published in 1958 and he sent us an autographed copy. Being no longer in print, it is quite a treasure to me. Mr. Revi, when he visited our home in 1964, talked of visiting with Uncle John, and a lot of what he learned about glassmaking he attributed to this visit.

Thank you for your kindness. I am in good health, not too old yet, only somehow very much involved in a lot of things. I enjoy life!

With best wishes,

Elizabeth Northwood Robb

R.F.D. #1
Dayton, Virginia 22821
April 29, 1975

Dear Paul:

Gene and I are still reminiscing the Stretch Glass Society Convention. We both enjoyed this more than any vacation we've had and I believe everyone had a wonderful experience at the Fenton factory just observing Stretch being made. We have had different people wanting to buy the three new pieces we have. Not any amount of money can buy them.

I am wondering if you would loan me your negatives from the pictures you took at the Convention. I would like to start a scrapbook for The Stretch Glass Society and will take good care of them and return them. I haven't started on it yet but am getting anxious to do so very soon.

I mailed Mr. Fenton a thank-you card and told him of our appreciation of what he did in making our Convention so very interesting and profitable. Enjoy reading the Newsletters and wish they would come more often. It was nice meeting all the nice people at the Convention and we are looking forward to seeing everyone next year.

Joyce and Gene Sheffer

Ed. I didn't send the negatives, I sent the pictures. This is a tremendously generous offer Joyce and the SGS accepts and grateful thanks to you. You will be our Archivist and duly elected to that office at the next Convention I'm sure. Anyone who has pictures they can part with, articles from papers, or anything which would provide a record of the history of the SGS, won't you please send them to Joyce for incorporation into the scrapbook? Many thanks, and you can enjoy it at our next Convention and recall the memorable times at the last two Conventions. Please keep your letters coming with any new finds in Stretch or anything you can write about. All material will be used as space permits. God bless you.

STRETCH GLASS
IN COLOR

By Berry Wiggins

This is the first book on Iridescent Stretch Glass for immediate mailing. Who made Stretch and how to identify Stretch Glass are answered in this book. Articles on Fenton, Imperial and Northwood taken from original catalogues and old magazines.

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