

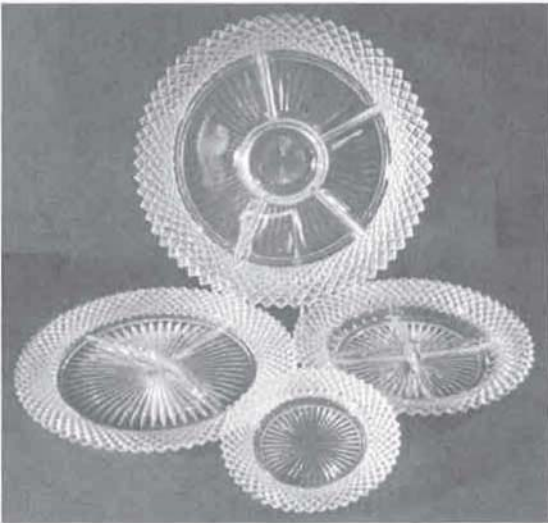
Miss America Depression Glass

by Mark Buersmeyer

Most collectable glass enthusiasts get their start with a few pieces of glass handed down from a relative. For instance, a young couple received several pieces of pink glass from his mother. After questioning what the glass was, the mother replied, "That is just dime store junk." The answer left much to be desired, however they considered their pieces quite pretty and kept looking for more information. Antique dealers provided some answers; unfortunately what they learned about the world of collectable glass was overwhelming. Many books exist to assist collectors in identifying patterns, history of particular patterns and their manufacturer, and even price lists. Access to this information may help the avid collector or dealer, but new collectors may very easily become lost with information overload. After speaking with dealers at antique shows the couple learned that the vast patterns and styles of collectible glass fall into three main genres, Early American Pattern Glass, Depression Glass, and Glassware of the Forties-Fifties-Sixties or 'post war'. Focused research on specific patterns help make the world of collectible glass less confusing.

The collectable glass genre of Early American Pattern Glass includes patterns, pieces, and styles made before nineteen twenty. Though many patterns exist within this genre, two of the more popular patterns collected today include King's Crown and Manhattan. Each US state that existed during this time period had a pattern that bore its name. The most popular of these patterns was known as Delaware. The post war genre, popularly known as Forties-Fifties-and Sixties, also consists of many patterns to choose from. Some of the more popular patterns available include Bubble, Forest Green, Royal Ruby, Moonstone, and Capri. One of the more popular patterns of this genre, Moroccan Amethyst, is prized by many New Orleans, Louisiana collectors for its resemblance to Mardi Gras colors.

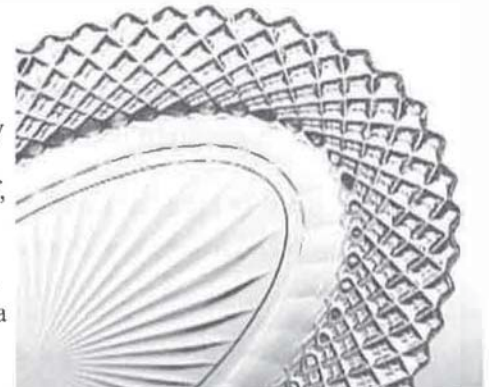
The third genre of collectable glass, known as Depression Glass, can itself be divided into two categories. Elegant, the first of these categories, has patterns which include Orchid, Versailles, June, Rose Point, Candlewick, and Cape Cod. The young couple soon learned that the pieces of pink glass they received from his mother were part of a pattern known as Miss America belonging to the general definition of Depression Glass, which makes up the remainder of this genre.



Assortment of Miss America pieces

As their collection of the pattern grew in number, the couple learned quite a number of pieces were made. The most common and easy to find pieces included plates, cups and saucers, water tumblers, cream and sugars, the four-part relish dish, and the candy comport. Some of the harder to find pieces included coasters, stemware, juice and wine goblets, the candy jar and its cover, both ice-lipped and non-ice lipped pitchers, and the curved sided bowl. After several years the collection of Miss America contained a nearly complete table setting for eight. The only remaining piece of the pattern the couple could not obtain was the rarest of all pieces, the five-part relish tray. Whether few were ever made, or many were lost over time none of the dealers could explain this rarity. There are a few examples still in existence though. Pictures in a Depression Glass book showed what the piece looks like, however the author explained that he knew of only three in private collections. The last pink five-part relish dish that was sold, sold on E-Bay for seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500).

As with many collectors of pink Miss America, the couple chose to stop their search for the elusive five-part relish dish, and call their collection complete. They purchased an antique china cabinet to house and display their beautiful collection. The enjoyment of collecting pattern glass not only comes from the collecting itself, but also in using it. Many holiday tables have been set with, and holiday meals eaten off of pattern glass. And as the young couple soon found out, collectable glass, like a virus, gets into your system very easily. Soon they chose another pattern to start collecting, and with research focused on this new pattern, thus started a new adventure into the world of collectable glass.



Detail of the Miss America pattern