

# Carnival Glass: The Last Ten Years (1970-1980)

by Don Moore

We lived in San Francisco and had been collecting only a year and a half when picture #1 appeared in the October, 1970 issue of the *Western Collector*. Since then this publication has been absorbed by the *Antiques Journal*. Little did we know at that time how addictive Carnival glass collecting could become and that our collection of a couple of hundred pieces would grow to some two thousand.

Picture #2 was taken ten years later in May of 1980. The hair is a bit longer, and certainly more grey. The waistline is larger, I'm afraid, but the most interesting part of the two pictures is the change in the Carnival glass shown. In the second picture we had moved to a larger condominium in Alameda, California, solely for the purpose of having more room for our glass. The difference in the quality of the glass shown tells its own story. The purple Grape and Cable covered compote I am holding in the earlier picture has been replaced with one in marigold, and a couple of Morning Glory water pitchers have changed places with a Diamond Lace water set.

Were we wise to stay in Carnival and enlarge and upgrade our collection? My wife, Connie, and I feel strongly that these past ten years have been the best of our nearly forty years of marriage, and Carnival has played the major role.

But what about our collection from purely a financial point of view?

That is what this article will attempt to examine. In order to do so, I have used representative prices from several auctions held in 1969 and 1970 and compared them with auctions held in 1979 and 1980. The earlier auctions used were as follows: August 16, 1969 (St. Louis — Thrawley collection); April 11, 1970 (St. Louis — Lloyd Miller Collection); July 3, 1970 (Indianapolis — American Carnival Glass Association Convention); July 13, 1970 (Milwaukee — International Carnival Glass Association Convention) and September 26, 1970 (Winchester, Indiana — owner of collection unknown). The recent auctions used for comparison were these: June 23, 1979 (St. Louis — Mogg auction); March 14, 1980 (St. Louis — Roebuck auction); April 19, 1980 (Bath, New York — Burns auction) and April 26, 1980 (Overland Park, Kansas — Cooley Miller glass at Heart of America Convention).

While I feel these prices are representative, the point should be made that it was not easy to find identical items for price comparisons. Only those pieces were used where the pattern, color and shape were identical and only those in mint condition. More items in certain categories would have been helpful, but they just weren't available. It would have been interesting to survey tumblers, punch sets, vases, etc., but too few pieces were sold at auctions on which to make a comparison.



Picture #1



Picture #2

#### WATER PITCHERS AND WATER SETS

Concave Diamond, pastel blue, set  
Diamond Lace, purple, set  
Grape and Cable, purple, set  
Stork and Rushes, blue, set  
Singing Birds, purple, set  
Oriental Poppy, white, pitcher  
Northwood Peach, blue, set  
Springtime, purple, set  
Peacock at the Fountain, blue, set  
Footed Orange Tree, blue, set  
Floral and Grape, blue, set  
Vineyard, marigold, set

	1969-70	1979-80
Concave Diamond, pastel blue, set	\$235	\$230
Diamond Lace, purple, set	250	275
Grape and Cable, purple, set	185	275
Stork and Rushes, blue, set	285	300
Singing Birds, purple, set	295	500
Oriental Poppy, white, pitcher	150	500
Northwood Peach, blue, set	475	700
Springtime, purple, set	450	500
Peacock at the Fountain, blue, set	270	400
Footed Orange Tree, blue, set	275	500
Floral and Grape, blue, set	155	300
Vineyard, marigold, set	60	180
	3,085	4,660

10 year increase — 51%



A water pitcher and tumbler in purple in the Diamond Lace pattern.



A purple Grape & Cable water set.



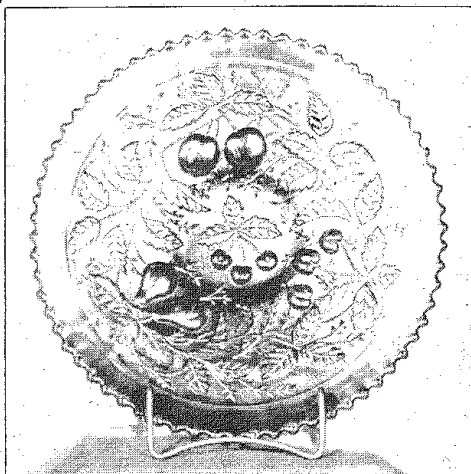
A purple covered compote in the Northwood Grape & Cable pattern.

**MILLERSBURG**

	1969-70	1979-80
Cherry, amethyst, compote	\$ 97.50	\$ 725
Trout and Fly, amethyst, bowl	97.50	255
Detroit 1910 Elk, amethyst bowl	295.00	525
Hobnail, amethyst, spittoon	185.00	375
Hanging Cherry, amethyst, 10" bowl	50.00	90
Blackberry Wreath, amethyst, bowl	50.00	35
Millersburg Courthouse, amethyst, bowl	145.00	325
Trout and Fly, marigold, bowl	90.00	190
<b>10 year increase — 150%</b>	<b>1,010.00</b>	<b>2,520</b>

**NORTHWOOD GRAPE AND CABLE**

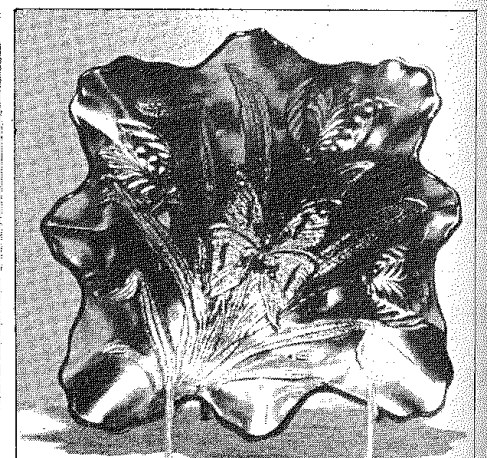
	1969-70	1979-80
Humidor, purple	\$ 410	\$ 375
Cracker jar, purple	290	350
Perfume, purple	275	325
Covered compote, purple	220	175
Punch bowl, marigold, small size	250	250
Orange bowl, amethyst	98	150
Plate, purple, 9"	50	85
Whiskey decanter and 6 shots, purple	1,350	1,000
Berry set (scalloped), purple	95	110
Cup and saucer, amethyst	75	85
Table set (4 pieces), purple	240	480
Whiskey decanter, marigold	300	420
Sweetmeat compote, purple	130	170
Candlesticks (pair), purple	170	330
<b>10 year increase — 9%</b>	<b>3,953</b>	<b>4,305</b>



A Three Fruits pattern plate.



A Northwood basket in aqua opal.

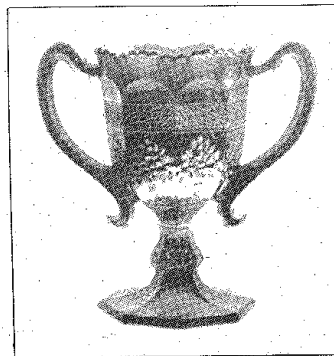


A Butterfly & Tulip square dish.

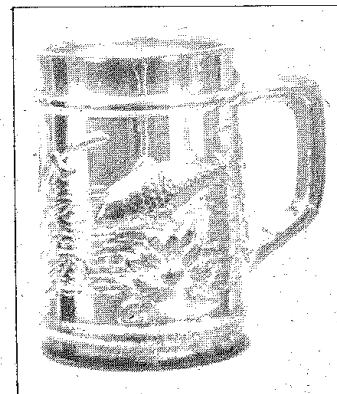
AQUA OPAL		1969-70	1979-80
Leaf and Beads, rose bowl		\$ 40	\$145
Good Luck, bowl		125	525
Northwood Basket		50	175
Hearts and Flowers, compote		38	200
Rose Show, bowl		100	400
Drapery, rose bowl		75	210
Three Fruits, spatula footed bowl		70	175
Dandelion, mug		90	400
Peacock on the Fence, bowl		95	350
10 year increase — 278%		683	2,580

PLATES		1969-70	1979-80
Three Fruits, blue		\$80.00	\$ 135
Northwood Strawberry, amethyst		65.00	95
Horse Medallion, marigold		40.00	60
Peacock on the Fence, ice green		37.50	160
NuArt Homestead, green		450.00	300
Soldiers and Sailors, blue		300.00	350
Atlantic City 1911 Elk, blue		310.00	325
Advertising (Fern Brand Chocolates), amethyst		67.50	90
Butterfly and Tulip (Square, footed), purple		500.00	900
Rose Show, ice blue		155.00	375
Good Luck, amethyst		110.00	150
Peacock and Urn (Northwood), purple, chop plate		170.00	400
Orange Tree, blue		75.00	105
10 year increase — 46%		2,360	3,445

RED		1969-70	1979-80
Basketweave, open edge, hat shape		\$ 60	\$125
Blackberry, hat shape		55	170
Fine Rib, vase		75	120
Acorn, bowl		105	500
Horse Medallion, bowl		205	550
Peacock and Grape, bowl		150	500
10 year increase — 202%		650	1,965



A blue Orange Tree loving cup.



A Fisherman's mug in carnival glass.

A recapitulation of the seven categories used in this survey shows a total of \$15,476 in sales in the 1969-70 auctions compared with \$24,315 in the auctions held ten years later. This means there was a 57% increase over the ten year period or an average annual rate of increase of 5.7%.

Based on these seven categories, I'm sure many of us wish we had more "red," "aqua opal" or "Millersburg." I would point out, however, that whereas these three categories are now enjoying great popularity, a few years ago water sets, plates and tumblers would have headed the list. Sooner or later most items have their "day in the sun." This could be interpreted as a testimonial for a generalized collection instead of one limited to a single category.

Now let's move on and see how our collectible compares with various other investment vehicles and how we have fared compared with inflation. To be sure, not many collectors of ten years standing are into Carnival primarily as an investment. It is truly the best of both worlds, however, when we can have the joy of collecting as well as a hedge against inflation. (See Fig. #1.)

ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE OF INCREASE OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS [1970-1980]

Gold	31.6%
AQUA OPAL [CARNIVAL]	27.8
U.S. Stamps	21.8
RED [CARNIVAL]	20.2
Rare Books	16.1
U.S. Coins	16.0
Diamonds	15.1
MILLERSBURG [CARNIVAL]	15.0
Old Masters	13.4
U.S. Farmland	12.6
INFLATION [Consumer Price Index]	7.7
Stocks	6.8
Bonds	6.4
CARNIVAL OVERALL	5.7
WATER PITCHERS AND WATER SETS [CARNIVAL]	5.1
PLATES [CARNIVAL]	4.6
MISCELLANEOUS [CARNIVAL]	3.0
NORTHWOOD GRAPE AND CABLE [CARNIVAL]	0.9

Fig. #1



A Dragon & Lotus 8" d. bowl.

MISCELLANEOUS		1969-70	1979-80
Kittens, marigold, toothpick		\$ 43	\$ 85
Good Luck, purple, bowl		60	80
Poppy Show, ice blue, bowl		95	210
Mikado, marigold, compote		45	90
Dragon and Lotus, blue, bowl		22	35
Farmyard, amethyst, bowl		1,200	1,800
Orange Tree, blue, loving cup		45	200
Peter Rabbit, blue, bowl		900	650
Town Pump, purple		275	325
Lion, marigold, bowl		35	50
Corn Vase, ice green		85	150
Singing Birds, blue, mug		35	75
Nautilus, purple		70	110
Acorn Burss, purple, punch set		425	550
Buzz Saw Cruet, marigold		350	350
Fisherman's Mug, purple		50	80
10 year increase — 30%		3,735	4,840

Three Carnival categories outperformed inflation by very wide margins. Four Carnival categories trailed the list by small margins, but all were on the plus side. I'm sure many collectibles would show less positive results.

In order to put these figures into proper perspective, a couple of points should be made:

1. All percentage increases, *except those for Carnival*, have been compounded. This makes a substantial difference. I could not compound the Carnival percentages, as I did not have a specific increase for each specific year.

2. It must be remembered that all Carnival figures are auction prices. These prices are historically higher than the prices most of us have paid for the bulk of the pieces in our collections. I know of no collections that were built exclusively from items purchased at auction.

So in summary, I feel it is encouraging to know that the value of the average collection has most certainly outpaced inflation. Even at auction prices we would still show an increase in value of 57% over the past ten years. And after all, the monetary aspect of a collection is not very important when compared with the real values associated with Carnival. A price cannot be put on the friendships that are formed, on the joy of searching for that rarity, on the social fun of our get-togethers, and finally, on the sheer pleasure of just sitting and looking at our glass after a hard day's work. How can you beat all that?