

INSIDE

25-PAGE PRICE GUIDE TO ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES

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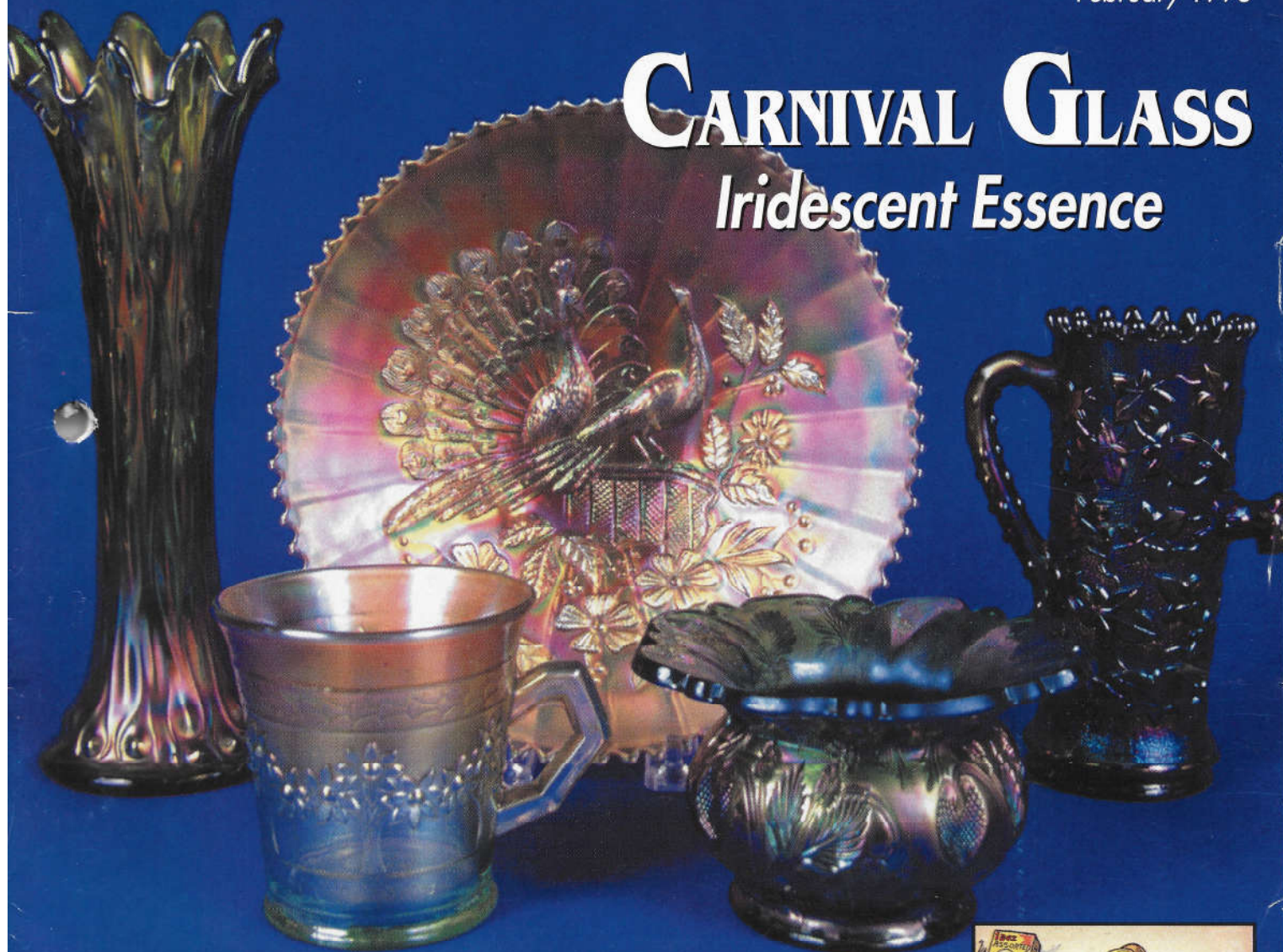
COLLECTOR

MAGAZINE & PRICE GUIDE

February 1996

CARNIVAL GLASS

Iridescent Essence



**NASTY
VALENTINES**
*When a Penny's
Thoughts were
Dreadful*



SLOW SUICIDE

If health and strength a man would lose,
One certain means there is to choose—
Inhale the cigarette's deadly smoke,
And prematurely he will croak.

CARNIVAL GLASS

Iridescent Essence

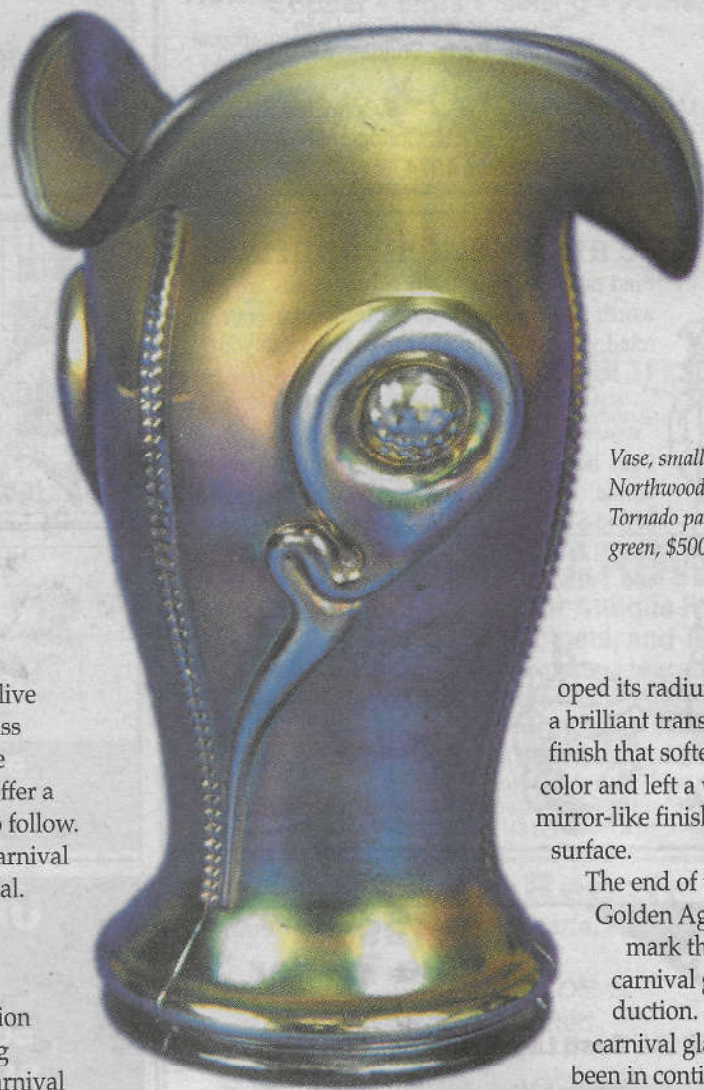
By Harry L. Rinker

CARNIVAL GLASS COLLECTING is vibrant, alive and growing. Why and how has carnival glass retained its strong level of collectibility in the 1990s? The answers are many. Taken together they offer a model for those involved in other collecting fields to follow. However, before analyzing the current state of the carnival glass market, a brief historical background is essential.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The Fenton Art Glass Company, under the direction of Frank Fenton, developed an formulas for iridizing pressed and mold-blown glass and introduced its carnival wares to the market during the winter of 1907/08. By the spring of 1908 the Northwood Glass Company, under the direction of Harry Northwood, had its own line of iridescent glass. Imperial Glass Company and the Millersburg Glass Company, headed by John Fenton, joined the field in 1909.

The Golden Age of carnival dates from 1910 through 1920. Collectors refer to the glass made between 1908 and 1925/30 as old carnival. The Fenton Art Glass Company was the production leader, offering carnival pieces in over 150 patterns. Most collectors agree that Millersburg and Northwood were the quality leaders. In January 1910 Millersburg devel-



Vase, small size, Northwood, Plain Tornado pattern, green, \$500

oped its radium finish, a brilliant transparent finish that softened the color and left a watery, mirror-like finish on the surface.

The end of the Golden Age did not mark the end of carnival glass production. In fact, carnival glass has been in continuous production since 1908.

The Fenton Art Glass Company's product line almost always included carnival pieces. As glass companies were bought and sold, their molds became the property of new companies who used them to make reproductions of period pieces. L. G. Wright Glass Company and the Mosser Glass Co. produced pieces from period Dugan/Diamond Glass Company and Northwood molds.

Collectors refer to carnival glass made after 1930, especially from the mid-1950s to the present, as *new* carnival. Boyd Crystal Art Glass (Cambridge, OH), Gibson Glass (Milton, WV), L. E. Smith Glass Company (Mt. Pleasant, PA), Mosser Glass (Cambridge, OH), St. Clair Glass Works (Elwood, IN) and Summit Art Glass (Mogadore, OH) are among the American manufacturers of this new carnival glass. In point of fact, the *new* carnival glass market has lasted longer than the *old* market.

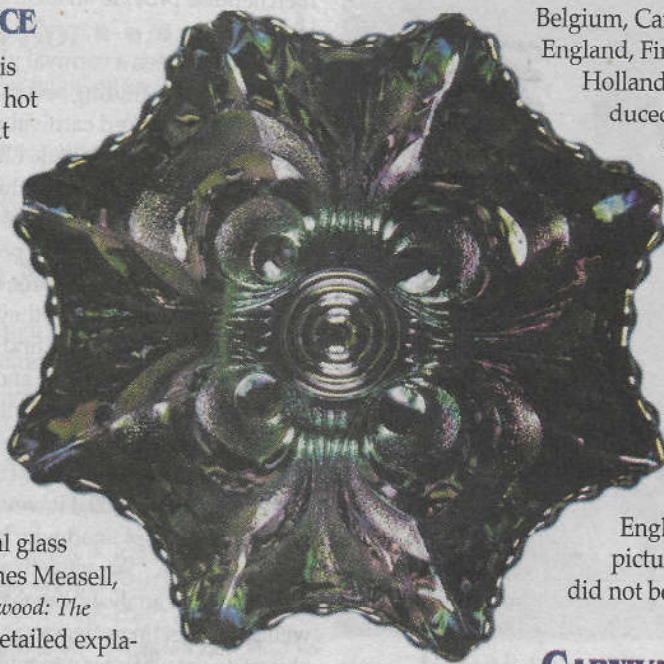


Cambridge, spittoon, Inverted Strawberry pattern, \$1,200.

ACHIEVING IRIDESCENCE

Iridescence in carnival glass is achieved by spraying a piece of hot pressed glass with a metallic salt solution. The exact salt formula varied from manufacturer to manufacturer. Ferric (iron) chloride and stannous (tin) chloride are two of the salts that are known to have been used.

Manufacturing variables such as the temperature of the glass and the spraying process itself led to a high level of inconsistency in the iridescent quality of pieces. See the carnival glass chapter in William Heacock, James Measell, and Berry Wiggins' *Harry Northwood: The Wheeling Years, 1901-1925* for a detailed explanation of the iridizing process.



Imperial, ruffle-edged bowl, 9" diameter, Scroll Embossed pattern, purple, \$150.

Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Mexico and Sweden also produced carnival glass. English manufacturers include Davisons (Gateshead-on-Tyne), Guegenheim, Ltd. (London), and Sowerby Company (Gateshead-on-Tyne). Look for the list of foreign manufacturers to expand as more research is done.

In most foreign countries, carnival glass production began much later than in the United States. Australia and England entered the carnival glass picture in the 1910s. Finnish carnival did not begin until the 1930s.

CARNIVAL GLASS COLLECTING IN THE 1990s

A strong network of national and regional collectors' clubs explains carnival glass' vitality in the 1990s marketplace. American interest in carnival glass collecting is nationwide. There are three major carnival glass collectors' clubs: (1) the American Carnival Glass Association, (2) the International Carnival Glass Association (ICGA) and (3) the Heart of America Carnival Glass Association (HOACGA). There is a strong crossover membership between these clubs.

Regional clubs such as the Lincoln Land Carnival Glass Club (N 951 Highway 27, Conrath, WI 54731) produce highly informative newsletters and conduct regional conventions to supplement the activities of the "national" clubs. There were 15 carnival glass collectors' club conventions in 1994. Lee Markley, ICGA's secretary, noted that Canada has a national and a regional (Quebec) collectors' club while Australia, England and New Zealand also have national clubs.

The continuing availability of pieces is critical to any collecting category's strength. In 1995 there were 38 major carnival glass auctions, each of which featured between 200 and 400 lots. Prices realized varied from \$25 to \$26,000. Tom Mordini, editor along with Sharon, his wife, of *Carnival Glass Auction Prices*, feels the large number of auctions and their wide range of

MANUFACTURERS OF OLD CARNIVAL

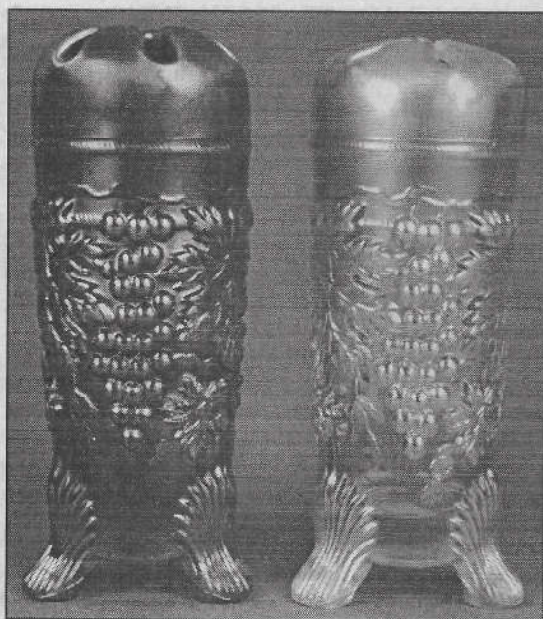
Thus far, twelve American glass companies have been identified as manufacturers of old carnival glass. The list begins with the Big Five — Dugan/Diamond Glass Company (Indiana, PA), often working with Northwood molds, Fenton Art Glass Company (Williamstown, WV), Imperial Glass Company (Bellaire, OH), Millersburg Glass Company (Millersburg, OH) and Northwood Glass Company (Wheeling, WV).

The seven "lesser" companies, identified as such because their carnival production was more limited in patterns, colors and forms, consist of Cambridge Glass Company (Cambridge, OH), Fostoria Glass Company (Moundville, WV), Heisey Glass Company (Newark, OH), Jenkins Glass Company (Kokomo, IN), McKee-Jeanette Glass Company (Jeanette, PA), Westmoreland Glass Company (Grapeville, PA) and U.S. Glass Company (Pittsburgh, PA). It is critical to understand that these companies were major glass producers. The "lesser" designation refers only to their carnival glass production.

Carnival glass production was not limited to America. Companies in Argentina, Australia,



Fenton, loving cup, Orange Tree pattern, marigold, \$275



Hatpin holders, Northwood, Grape and Cable pattern, purple at \$425 and marigold at \$350.

COLLECTORS' CLUBS

OLD CARNIVAL (PRE-1930)

AMERICAN CARNIVAL GLASS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 235
Littlestown, PA 17340

CANADIAN CARNIVAL GLASS ASSOCIATION
107 Montcalm Drive
Kitchner, Ontario N2B 2R4
Canada

HEART OF AMERICAN CARNIVAL GLASS
ASSOCIATION
4305 West 78th Street
Prairie Village, KS 66208

INTERNATIONAL CARNIVAL GLASS ASSOCIATION
R.R. #1
Mentone, IN 46539

SAN DIEGO CARNIVAL GLASS CLUB
5395 Middleton Road
San Diego, Ca 92019

NEW CARNIVAL (POST 1945)

COLLECTIBLE CARNIVAL GLASS ASSOCIATION
2360 North Old S.R. #9
Columbus, IN 47203

Tom and Sharon Mordini's *Carnival Glass Auction Prices* lists the names and addresses of 15 regional carnival glass collectors' clubs. Carnival glass collectors who focus on the products of a single manufacturer often belong to the national collectors' club for that manufacturer, e.g., the National Imperial Glass Collectors Society (P.O. Box 534, Bellaire, OH 43906).

merchandise provide an ideal environment to attract new collectors.

There has been a carnival glass literature explosion in the last five years including several books dealing with glass companies that produced carnival glass as well as articles in trade periodicals and newsletters. Look for this trend to continue.

There is some concern within the carnival glass community that many new collectors have entered the field as investors, not collectors. The high-end portion of the carnival glass field is investment drive. However, there are still individuals who become collectors because they inherited a few pieces from grandmother and want to find out more about them.

Tom Mordini suggested another key attracting younger collectors is that price does not dictate beauty. An Imperial purple Heavy Grape pattern bowl valued at \$20 because of its availability can have as much or more iridescent beauty than a piece valued at \$1,000. However, Ed Kramer of HOACGA probably best explained why his organization has close to 1,800 members. "We actively recruit."

In the final analysis, the reason carnival glass is doing so well as a collecting category is simple. There is something almost every week for a carnival glass collector to do—read a newsletter or book, participate in an auction, attend a meeting or convention or visit with another collector. Given this, there is little question that carnival glass has a strong future as a 21st century antique.

Photographs courtesy of Joseph Benner.

MAJOR CARNIVAL GLASS AUCTIONEERS

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109 East Steuben Street
Bath, NY 14810

COOPER & ALBRECHT AUCTIONS
202 South Mill Street
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516 3rd Street
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SEECK AUCTIONS
1055 Crestmore Way
Mason City, IA 50401

WOODY AUCTION SERVICE
R.T. #1, Box 104
Douglass, KS 67039

• • • • • WHAT'S HOT • • • • •

IN COLORS — aqua opalescent followed by red and the pastels

IN FORMS — hatpins and scarce patterns in water pitchers and water sets

IN PRICE — pieces in the \$2,000 to \$5,000 range

• • • • • WHAT'S NOT • • • • •

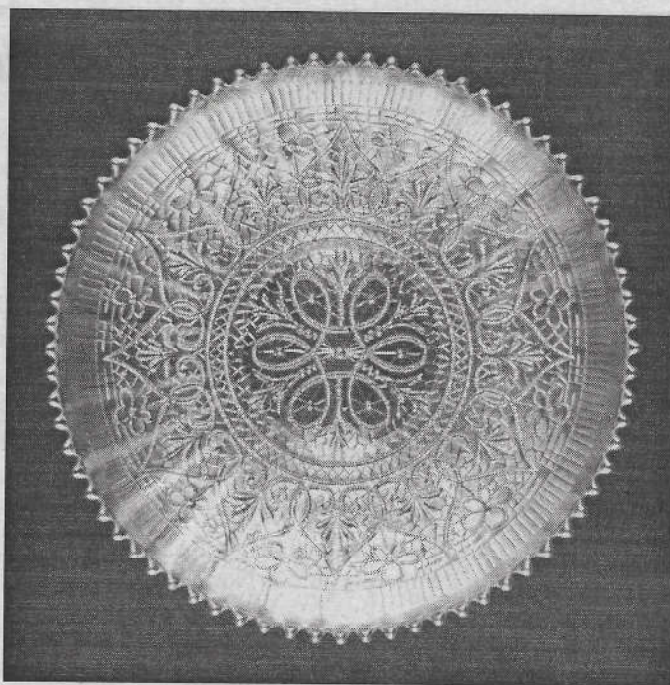
IN COLOR — marigold, although there have been strong prices recently for Fenton plates

IN FORMS — berry sets and tumblers down slightly

IN PRICE — pieces in the \$250 to \$400 range

IN AVAILABILITY — forms in great supply

Thanks to Ruth Evans (Marmora, NJ), Ed Kramer (4305 West 78th Street, Prairie Village, KS 66208), Lee Markley (R.R. #1, Mentone, IN 46539), Tom Mordini (36 North Mernitz Ave., Freeport, IL 61032), and Dorothy Taylor (7809 Arlington Ave., Raytown, MO 64138) for sharing their thoughts with Collector.



Plate, 9", Northwood, Hearts and Flowers pattern, ice blue, \$3,000.

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A BASIC CARNIVAL GLASS REFERENCE LIBRARY:

BURNS, CARL. *The Collector's Guide to Northwood's Carnival Glass*. L-W Book Sales, 1994; 170 pages, \$24.95.

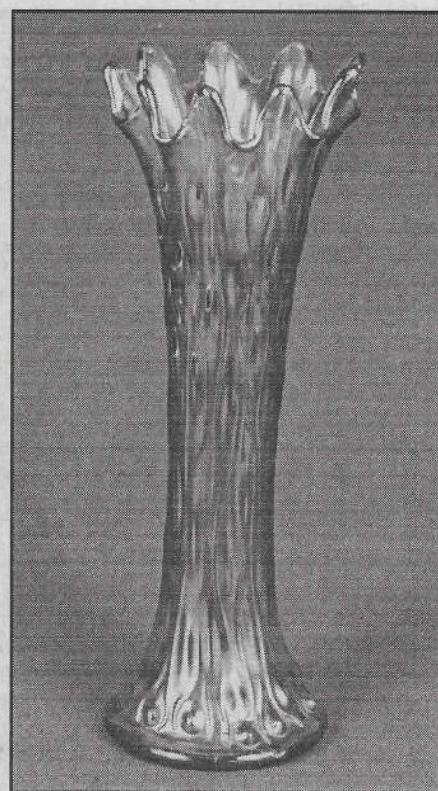
EDWARDS, BILL. *Standard Encyclopedia of Carnival Glass, 4th Edition*. Collector Books, 1994; 286 pages, \$24.95.

HEACOCK, WILLIAM, JAMES MEASELL, AND BERRY WIGGINS. *Harry Northwood: The Wheeling Years, 1901-1925*. Antique Publications, 1991; 207 pages, independent price guide, \$34.95.

MCGEE, MARIE WITH JAMES MEASELL (ED.). *Millersburg Glass As I Have Known It*. Antique Publications, 1995; 160 pages, \$29.95.

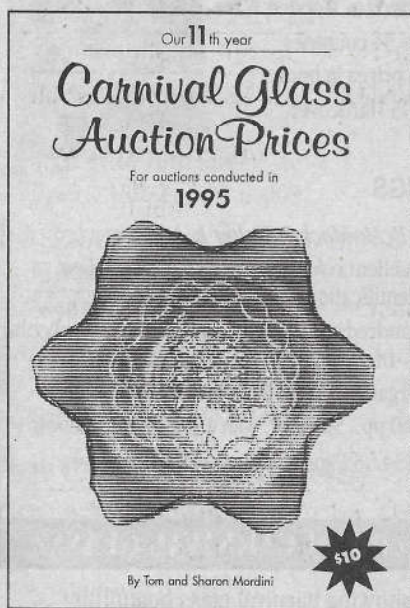
MORDINI, TOM AND SHARON. *Carnival Glass Auction Prices For Auction Conducted in 1995, 11th Edition*. Available annually for \$10.00 postpaid from: Tom & Sharon Mordini, 36 North Mernitz, Freeport, IL 61032.

TAYLOR, DOROTHY. *Encore by Dorothy*. Three volume set. Available for \$25.20 postpaid from: Dorothy Taylor, 7809 Arlington Ave., Raytown, MO 64138.



Northwood, vase, 10 1/2" high, Tree Trunk pattern, green, \$75.

The Carnival Glass price report the experts use.



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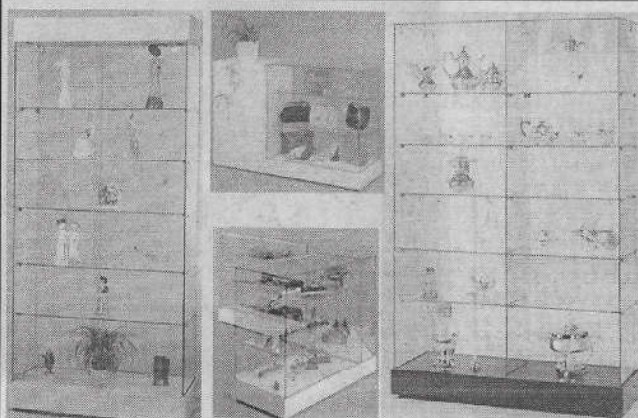
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