

THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF FOUR
BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIVE PLATES



OFFICIAL
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIVE PROJECT
OF THE
GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

THE SPIRIT OF '76 ...in your own home!

The "Spirit of '76," and the history of liberty itself unfolds in your own home in the form of four separate decorator plates. Each piece of this "Portrait of Liberty" depicts one of the four major movements of our American Revolution.

THE SECOND IN A SERIES OF FOUR - ISSUED JANUARY 1, 1974

INDEPENDENCE IS DECLARED. The second "Piece of the Portrait" is without question the most dramatic chapter in the story of an entire country's quest for freedom.

The original thirteen colonies were formed and governed under the strict surveillance and maternal guidance of the English throne. But dependence on a Mother Country soon became not only unnecessary but also painfully inhibiting. And so when Patrick Henry made his historic statement "Give Me Liberty Or Give Me Death," this brave new country's zeal for independence reached a momentum which could no longer be contained.

On July 2, 1776, the Congress of the United Colonies voted 12 for, none against (New York abstaining), to declare independence. And on July the 4th 1776, fifty-six courageous men lent their signatures to the Declaration of Independence. This document drafted by Thomas Jefferson with the assistance of Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, is considered to be the most profound statement of democratic

principles ever written. Carefully conceived and written in clear and concise terms, it states a basic and fundamental philosophy of government that has guided this nation ever since. It not only declared men free but it also stated in no uncertain terms why they should be free.

Sensing the far-reaching consequences of this historic event, John Adams wrote the following words: "This epocha will be the most memorable in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward, forevermore."

But all would not be wine and roses for the charter members of this new nation, for the same document that gave birth to the United States of America also signaled the termination of colonial subordination to British rule. And much much more than words and wishes would be tested before these first Americans would have the freedom of "*Life, Liberty and The Pursuit of Happiness*" which they so desperately desired. Abraham Clark, a representative of New Jersey and one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence said it this way: "As to my title, I know not yet whether it will be honourable or dishonourable: the issue of war must settle it. Perhaps our Congress will be exalted on a high gallows."

Thanks to the foresight, the grit and the determination of Clark and many other bold and courageous men like himself, his worse fears proved to be as false as John Adams' predictions of success and ensuing celebration proved to be true.

A Portrait of Liberty... SCULPTURED IN GLASS



In an effort to instill a pride of country and a rekindling of the wondrous "Spirit of '76," the General Federation of Women's Clubs has commissioned the hands of a Master American Craftsman to sculpture in glass . . . a series of four

exquisite collectors plates, which will in their entirety depict a complete and moving "Portrait of Liberty."

These beautiful handmade commemorative plates will be designed and produced by the prestigious Fenton Art Glass Company of Williamstown, West Virginia, who will arrange for the release of one new plate each year for four consecutive years (1973-1974-1975-1976). Then on July 4th, 1976, a final ceremony will take place at Independence Hall, presided over by the Presidents of the General Federation of Women's Clubs for the years 1973 through 1976. At this ceremony all the moulds for these plates will be publicly destroyed, thereby creating a limited edition. This means that not only will these plates become treasured heirlooms with great personal value, but also their real value is sure to increase.

Fenton glass begins in a hopper where the sand "batch" which will become glass is mixed. Pure silica sand, mined near Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, is the main ingredient. Before it enters the factory, it has been washed, acid-treated and passed over metal-removing magnets. About 14 ingredients are used in making Fenton glass, but it is mainly sand, soda ash and lime. Formulas for some of the early Fenton Glass were handed down for generations from the glassworking guilds of Europe and 19th century America to the company's first master glassmaker. Today's recipes are still guarded secrets preserved on microfilm. Most of the formulas are known by only two men, the company president and the glass chemist.

The world's first nameless glassworker could not chip out two identical pieces of glittering glass, nor can his present-day counterpart in the Fenton factory produce two pieces of identical ware. Only an unfeeling machine can produce glass armies of unvarying detail. The skilled hand glassworker is blessed with human frailty which makes each piece of glassware an individual creation. Even in sets that appear to match perfectly, there are slight variances which distinguish handmade glass.

Like most experts, the master glassworker makes his craft appear simple. However, if you watch the men making Fenton glass, you will see the hundreds of appraising glances that carefully assay each piece as it passes from hand to hand. Many of the workers say proudly, "That's mine. I created it." At a display in the Fenton factory it is not uncommon to

overhear a Fenton worker showing an item to his wife and saying with pride of achievement, "There's one I made."

Time, as well as glass, is fused and drawn in the Fenton factory. The past and present are annealed with the ware. An order for a hundred-year-old design is memorized by a space-age computer. A recipe for glass handed down secretly for generations is mixed from a record on microfilm. A blower in Bermuda shorts and loafers uses a blow pipe — a Roman glassblower, who made ware for the Caesars, would recognize. The gaffer on his finisher's bench works the tweezer-shaped tool as did his predecessors during the Renaissance. The ageless charm of this cherished art accompanies each piece as it is received in a home of today.

For three millennia, glass has delighted and served man in his home, at his industry and in his place of worship. The first industry in the colonies was a hand glass shop started at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1608. In America, glassware reached a new zenith during the last half of the 1800's as a newly united nation grew to fulfill its destiny. It is this tradition of the glassmaker's art which is painstakingly recreated in Fenton Art Glass. The Fenton family has been making fine glassware for other families this way for over half a century. In doing so Fenton glass has itself become a modern American tradition. As collectors know, many of the company's early pieces are catalogued in texts on antique American glass and are eagerly sought after.

Shown below is a cost and value chart indicating the current and future market for the Official GFWC United States of America Bicentennial Commemorative Plates.

1973 Plate

From issue	January 1, 1973 until January 1, 1974	\$10.00
From	January 1, 1974 until January 1, 1975	\$12.00
From	January 1, 1975 until January 1, 1976	\$13.50
From	January 1, 1976 until July 4, 1976	\$15.00
From	July 4, 1976 and thereafter	\$15.00 or market bid.

1974 Plate

From issue	January 1, 1974 until January 1, 1975	\$10.00
From	January 1, 1975 until January 1, 1976	\$12.00
From	January 1, 1976 until July 4, 1976	\$13.50
From	July 4, 1976 and thereafter	\$15.00 or market bid.

1975 Plate

From issue	January 1, 1975 until January 1, 1976	\$10.00
From	January 1, 1976 until July 4, 1976	\$12.00
From	July 4, 1976 and thereafter	\$15.00 or market bid.

1976 Plate

From issue	January 1, 1976 until July 4, 1976	\$10.00
From	July 4, 1976 and thereafter	\$15.00 or market bid.

This means that even though the total investment (if purchased during the year of issue) comes to only \$40.00, the actual market value of a complete set, in 1976, should be at least \$60.00. This represents an increase in value of 50%.

BICENTENNIAL PLATE – MARKET INFORMATION

For each of the years of the project and indefinitely after 1976, a service of selling the plates previously purchased will be offered. The owner of a plate, if wishing to sell, is to mail the plate to:

**GFWC Bicentennial Commemorative Plate Project
Box 1776 / Summersville, West Virginia / 26651**

The plate is to be in “mint condition” and will then be sold at the current market price, assuming, of course, that a buyer is available. When selling a plate for an owner, a fee of 18% will be deducted from the selling price to cover the cost of handling, insurance and the return postage necessary to deliver the plate to its new owner.

Even after July 4th, 1976, when the moulds have been broken and all production has been terminated, the service of handling the market for persons wishing to buy or sell plates will continue indefinitely. After July 4th, 1976, further information regarding the prices being bid or asked for plates can be obtained by sending a self-addressed envelope with postage affixed, to the same post office box listed above.



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COMMEMORATIVE PROJECT OF THE GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS**

Top row left to right — (1) Mrs. Kermit V. Haugan, GFWC President and Mrs. Carroll E. Miller, First Vice President, critique one of the artist's proposed plate designs.

(2) Once the design has been determined, a Master Craftsman begins the meticulous task of cutting the original mould.

(3) The basic ingredients of sand and potash mixed with other chemicals are transformed into molten glass in a giant oven heated to 2500° Fahrenheit.

(4) Still a shimmering yellow mass, the glass is gathered from this oven on the end of a long steel rod.

Bottom Left — Suspended over the mould, the glass flows off the rod and the excess is cut away with a pair of shears.

Second Row Left — While the glass begins to flood the mould, another craftsman applies the exact amount of pressure necessary to form the plate.

Second Row Center — Plucked from the press on an oversized spatula, the plate is quickly carried by hand to a flaming furnace before it is allowed to cool.

Second Row Right — With another delicate touch the plate is set on a pallet which will move it through the flames where the plate is fired and finished.

Bottom Center — The plates are then picked up and individually sprayed with sand — finally, smoothing any sharp edges or rough surfaces.

Bottom Right — Mr. Frank Fenton, President of the Fenton Art Glass Company shows Mrs. Haugan and Mrs. Miller the elegant beauty of a superbly finished, handmade plate.





ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF EACH PLATE IS A STIRRING DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAMATIC AND HISTORIC EVENTS FEATURED ON THE FRONT.

"The Seeds are Sown"

PLATE NO. 1 – ISSUED JANUARY 1, 1973 – In 1775, the people of the American Colonies were becoming convinced that they could no longer be subjected to the dictates of a foreign power. Patrick Henry echoed their convictions, when he issued the ultimate challenge . . . "GIVE ME LIBERTY OR GIVE ME DEATH".

"Independence is Declared"

PLATE NO. 2 – ISSUED JANUARY 1, 1974 – Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson meet to draft the Declaration of Independence. This document, approved on July 4th, 1776, is the most profound statement of democratic principles ever written. It announced the birth of a new nation . . . The United States of America.

"A Test of Courage"

PLATE NO. 3 – ISSUED JANUARY 1, 1975 – Once declared, Independence had yet to be won. At Valley Forge during the bitter cold winter of 1777 and 1778, General George Washington and his troops placed their trust in their Creator, then successfully pitted their courage against seemingly overwhelming odds.

"Liberty is Proclaimed"

PLATE NO. 4 – ISSUED JANUARY 1, 1976 – "Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." Two centuries later this same proclamation still rings. The Liberty Bell with its simple inscription has become one of the most cherished and revered symbols of American freedom.