



THE NATIONAL DEPRESSION GLASS  
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# NEWS & VIEWS

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## Stretch Glass has patterns and optics, too! Part Two

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In Part One of this article we discussed how early period (1912 to mid-1930s) stretch glass is usually found without patterns or optics in the glass. This is in comparison to Depression-era glassware, which often has patterns and optics. We explored the circumstances leading up to, and influencing, the design of stretch glass. Despite the influences of the Arts & Crafts Movement and the desire by decorators and consumers that ornaments "must be secondary to the thing decorated," that there must be "fitness in the ornament to the thing ornamented," some of the companies which produced stretch glass included simple optics or patterns in their designs.



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Certain of this other-than-plain stretch glass is sometimes confused with, or even classified as, carnival glass or art glass. It is neither. It is iridescent stretch glass because it was made during the years when stretch glass was being produced and it was included in the producers' lines of stretch glass. We know this because we have access to catalogs and other records which were produced contemporaneously, list or show this glass and refer to it in the terms used during the period to describe what we today call stretch glass.



Patterned and decorated stretch glass is an important and interesting subset of stretch glass. And it is more prevalent today than the early researchers and collectors of stretch glass may have believed because we have had more time to re-discover and catalogue it.

The Stretch Glass Society ([www.stretchglassociety.org](http://www.stretchglassociety.org)) was formed in

1974; stretch glass was bought and sold prior to its formation and collections of stretch glass existed prior to this date. With the formation of the Society, stretch glass gained a group of enthusiastic 'advocates,' information began to be published about this 'other' iridized glass (other than carnival glass, that is) and collecting stretch glass expanded as interest in it grew. We know the early collections had examples of stretch glass with optics and patterns because some of those collections still exist today or we have records of the items in the collections when they were disassembled at auctions or private sales. They did not, however, include nearly as many different patterns as we are aware of today.

In addition to the optics and patterns which appear in or on early period stretch glass, there is an extensive array of patterns in which late period stretch glass was made by Fenton between 1980 and 2010.

Some of this stretch glass was made for retail sales, some was sold only on QVC and still other pieces were made to fill special orders for clubs or other companies.



Dinnerware was never produced in stretch glass; luncheon sets, salad sets and beverage sets were available and can be re-assembled today in stretch glass, but this often requires years of diligent hunting to find matching (color, shape, pattern) items.

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Even without these sets, there is more than enough stretch glass with optics or patterns to accent tables set with Depression-era glassware. Whether the host or hostess wishes to present a monochromatic table or utilize stretch glass as an accent color, the more than 30 different colors of stretch glass provide many options.

In some cases, stretch glass was made in shapes not produced during the Depression Era as a result of the extensive re-shaping of stretch glass or changing tastes of consumers.



We are going to look at some of the over 50 optics and patterns of stretch glass from the early and late periods of production. Many of the optics and patterns from the early period should be familiar to collectors of Depression-era glassware because a number of the makers of stretch glass continued to produce glass in the Depression Era using some of the same molds.

For purposes of clarification, we are going to be looking at stretch glass where the surface is NOT plain or smooth or flat. Instead, the surface of the glass has ribs, panels, grooves, impressed floral or geometric designs or other interruptions to the smooth surface often associated with stretch glass. I will identify the patterns by the names currently used by collectors; in many cases these are not the original manufacturers' names (OMNs), which were often only line numbers.

Only five of the nine companies which produced stretch glass incorporated any designs into their stretch glass. Those companies were:

- Diamond Glass-ware Company (Diamond)
- Fenton Art Glass Company (Fenton)
- Imperial Glass Company (Imperial)
- H. Northwood & Company (Northwood) and
- United States Glass Company (US Glass)

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Northwood produced stretch glass with several optics or patterns, however, they ceased operations in 1925, so they produced little Depression-era glassware. They did produce some -iridized glassware which may find its way into Depression-era glass collections.



Let's begin at the beginning with Adam's Rib. This is an excellent example of a pattern made during both the early stretch glass period and the Depression Era by Diamond. The pattern consists of narrow convex ribs which extend completely around the item. On candy jars, bowls, vases, water pitchers, vase-candleholders and mugs the ribs are on the exterior of the item; on plates the ribs are on the under-side.



In stretch glass, Adam's with a marigold irides-glass. The items made from the Depression Era. Collectors of glass from both periods will find that all items made in Adam's Rib work well together. The stretch glass items might be used as accents on a table set with Adam's Rib Depression-era glassware or Depression-era glassware could be used to supplement the limited number of pieces available in stretch glass. The pattern is considered generally hard to find in stretch glass with certain items in Adam's Rib being extremely rare.

Rib is known in blue, green, marigold and milk glass cence; later the pattern was made in blue and green in stretch glass were more limited than those we find in stretch glass.



Big Cookies (Fenton) is a mold which apparently was used very little during the early period of stretch glass production; maybe the mold was not created until near the end of stretch glass production. The only Big Cookies stretch glass items of which we are aware are in the basket shape; there are only three Persian Pearl baskets and one amber basket known. The Big Cookies mold was used to

make items in Fenton's Chinese colors in the early 1930's. During and after the Depression Era, the mold was used to make cookie jars and baskets in many of Fenton's crystal colors as well as with certain of their satin glass etchings.



Chesterfield (or #600) (Imperial), is a pattern that was primarily produced during the early stretch glass period, however, non-iridized pieces do exist. The Ruby, Green Ice and Iris Ice water sets are wonderfully 'stretchy'; the Blue Ice and Marigold sets

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tend to be a bit more shiny. This pattern is beautiful in non-iridized glass as shown here in an Amberina 'crystal' pitcher.



Concentric Ring or Ring Optic (Fenton) is primarily found in swung vases, but there were a number of other pieces made including flower pots, under trays for the flower pots, small bowls and larger bowls. There is a large size and a small size flower pot from which the swung



vases were made, so there are also large and small size swung vases. Bowls made from these molds were re-shaped into a number of final forms and are available in both stretch glass and Depression-era glassware.



Cut Ovals (Fenton) is not a molded pattern, but rather a cut pattern. This pattern is only known on candleholders and bowls. The bowls are found much less frequently

than the candleholders, which are considered hard-to-find. There are 2 sizes of candleholders, determined by their height, 8 ½" and 10". The stretch glass candleholders are known in Celeste Blue, Florentine Green, Grecian Gold, Persian Pearl, Ruby, Topaz, and Wistaria; the bowls are only known in Celeste Blue, Grecian Gold, Ruby, Topaz and Wistaria but were no doubt made in all the colors in which the candleholders were made. It should only be a matter of time before the 'missing' bowls are re-discovered. (Continued on page 14)

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Three shapes of bowls are known, two were apparently made to go with the shorter candleholders and one was made to go with the taller ones.

Ruby Cut Ovals stretch glass candleholders and bowls are very much desired by stretch and carnival glass collectors; be aware that the exterior of the bowls will not be iridized and it may be difficult to discern the cut ovals at first glance. Fenton did not generally iridize the exterior of their ruby bowls. Why? No one knows the answer but we know it must have been standard because nearly all Fenton ruby stretch glass bowls are not iridized on the exterior.



Cut Ovals appears on both iridized and non-iridized bowls and candleholders indicating that production of this 'pattern' continued into the Depression Era.

It is interesting to note that the cut ovals are vertical on the candleholders and horizontal on the bowls. A rare variant is known on a few candleholders which consists of many more very small cut ovals compared to the typical cut ovals.



There are two patterns which Fenton called Diamond Optic; sometimes today we refer to the second pattern as Diamond Point, which I will do here to avoid confusion. Diamond Optic is a true optic pattern; the diamonds



are generally positioned in such a way that they are viewed through the glass rather than being seen on the glass. It is an optic which Fenton utilized extensively resulting in it being found on bowls, plates, vases, goblets, etc. and in a variety of colors of stretch glass.



The Diamond Optic pattern is always applied by the plunger; there was apparently never a

mold with the Diamond Optic chipped into it.

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During the Depression Era, Fenton continued to make glass with the Diamond Optic pattern and later it also was incorporated into some late period stretch glass. It is possible to have a collection of this optic pattern which includes multiple types of glassware, all of which complement each other nicely.



A cupped vase and top hat with the Diamond Optic treatment were offered in the 1995 catalog in Celeste Blue and had the "Coralene" decoration. Other items in Celeste Blue with the diamond optic design were also produced. As with several other patterns we have discussed, Diamond Optic is one where a massive array of items, some iridized and some not, can be assembled and used together.

**Photos by Dave Shetlar, past co-President and 'official' photographer of The Stretch Glass Society. Thank you, Dave!**

Please return for the August / September newsletter for Part 3 of Stretch Glass has patterns and optics, too! In that upcoming issue, we will finish exploring the alphabet of patterns produced in stretch glass.

You may also join the Stretch Glass Society at their annual convention on July 24-26 at the 45th Annual Convention & Stretch Glass Show in Marietta, Ohio. For more details: [info@stretchglassociety.org](mailto:info@stretchglassociety.org)



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