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The National
Early American Glass Club
Newsletter

Indexing

One of the comments received by our President, Ruth Davis, asked that items in the Newsletter be more timely. I couldn't agree more. However, it is up to you readers to funnel the news my way. So if you learn of something of interest to Glass Club members coming up in your area, send me the particulars. Thanks. I'm John Gotjen, 7 Lyndon Street, Warren, R.I. 02885. And now, a book review. . .

For those of us who cannot afford nigh a million dollars to furnish an inglenook with Tiffany lamps, windows, mosaics, and textiles, there are, fortunately, books. One of the best is a new work entitled The "Lost" Treasures of Louis Comfort Tiffany by Hugh F. McKean (Doubleday & Co., New York, 1980. 272 pages of text plus two appendices, bibliography, and index; 301 illustrations, all in color excepting a few period b&w photographs. \$60.)

This volume is a fine biography and evaluation of the man and his work. Each chapter deals with a separate aspect of Tiffany's life and career in a very readable style. The author has also done a good job in portraying the times of this irrepressible man whose desire to creat beauty has enriched us all.

The photographs (mostly by Will Rousseau) are the great strength of this book. Pictured are pieces hardly to be encountered elsewhere, mainly from the wonderful collection of the Morse Gallery of Art in Winter Park, Florida. (This makes the book a natural companion to Robert Koch's Rebel in Glass.) The quality of the color photographs is superb. Obviously, a great deal of time and love went into perfecting each shot. Some of the windows which alter appearance as the dominant light changes from natural exterior to artificial interior are shown in their several stages. The black and white photographs are mostly from the Tiffany archives and, while some are damaged, they are all of great interest for what they tell us of how things looked in Tiffany's day. With the exception of two, they all differ from those in Koch.

No less worthy of praise is Mr McKean's text. It is written with admirable wit and lucidity. Delightful anecdotes abound, the product of the author's research as well as first-hand knowledge. (Example: Tiffany cancelled his reservations on the Titanic because he didn't like the manner in which they planned to serve food in the first class dining salon!) More important, however, are the understanding and perspective which the author shows in his discussions of the divers facets of Tiffany's genius. Much of the resulting information will certainly be new to many of us.

Incidentally, the text is almost free of error. I only noted three: page 67, column 1, line 3 should read "Figure 63" vice "Figure 58"; page 224, the fabric behind the candlestick in Figure 222 is hung upside down, although the design is shown right side up on the end papers; and on page 193 there is perhaps only an amplification rather than misinformation where it states that "Leading" (of lamp shades) "...was done by women...", when the photograph on page 185 of Koch shows ten men at work on shades.

Tiffany ran a Renaissance workshop: the kind of place where teams of disciple-artisans produce various types of art forms under the guidance and inspiration of a Master. This is not likely to occur again, for Tiffany had both the passion, energy, confidence, and daring to make beautiful things, and also the unlimited funds necessary to pursue absolute perfection, thus never having to pander to popular tastelessness.

The debt of gratitude we owe to Louis Comfort Tiffany is enormous and obvious. Only slightly less so is that due Mr McKean for his work to make an appreciation of Tiffany's art more available to us all. What more can I say? Buy the book.

In the January 1981 number of the Magazine Antiques there is an interesting extract from a private diary recounting a 1923 visit to Tiffany's summer home, Laurelton Hall. See pages 233 and 234.

As mentioned in an earlier issue of this newsletter, PBS is filming a new series of programs on antiques with George Michael. With any luck they will be shown across the country soon (although none have been aired from PBS in Boston yet). Three glass shows have been done so far: Lowell Innes on 19th Century Glass, Carl Fauster on Libbey Cut Glass, and David Curley on Heisey Glass. Keep an eye out for them.

This month marks the 50th anniversary of Hobbies Magazine. This fine publication covers a wide area of interests and often has articles to benefit collectors of glass. The editor, Pearl Ann Reeder, and staff are to be congratulated.

Ken Wilson has written to say that the Ford Museum has recently added a number of pieces of American glass to their display, including a six-branch, brass and glass Tiffany candelabrum, which was acquired with funds contributed as a memorial to Walter Simmons, an early collector of Sandwich glass and one who worked to develop the Sandwich Glass Museum.

From Marshalltown, Iowa, comes word that the NEAGC is alive and thriving. Maxine Eckles, the current secretary, reports that the club meets monthly to study a range of topics concerning antiques. Their 28 members under the banner of President Mrs Don Taylor are this year doing research on pewter, scrimshaw, and local artifacts as well as glass.

Our Corresponding Secretary, Mrs James Collins, 195 Follen Road, Lexington, MA 02173, is offering a "Surprise Package of 10 Bulletins" (up to #120) for the price of postage alone. This is in an effort to reduce the numbers in storage which is fast becoming unwieldy. Also available is a complete run of Bulletins (some xeroxed, of necessity) for \$65 plus postage. It sounds like a good deal to me.

The National Board wish it to be known that any Regional Group President will be very welcome at meetings of the Board which generally occur at 10 a.m. on second Wednesdays at the Park Street Church, Boston, Massachusetts.

Word has filtered down to me that the entire Portland, Maine, club are planning to attend a meeting of the Boston Group "in the Spring". This sounds wonderful. Without doubt, similar mass migrations should be encouraged.

The Habatat Galleries of Lathrup Village, Michigan, have an impressive schedule for the remaining year: 4 APR-2 MAY the 9th Natl Glass Exhibition of over 90 American glass artists; 16 MAY-6 JUN Joel Myers & Stephen Edwards, blown glass; 13 JUN-13 JUL Harvey Littleton & Erwin Eisch, new works in blown and sculptured glass; 12 SEP-3 OCT Dan Dailey, blown glass; 10-31 OCT, Kyohei Fujita in his first American showing of glass blowing from Japan; 9-28 NOV, Mary Shaffer's slumped glass sculptures.

More items for your calendar: 19 MAR, Forum on Ohio pottery and glass, Historic Roscoe Village, Coshocton, Ohio 43812; 2-4 APR, Glass Forum (9 speakers, special tours, & superb location) at the Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Va 23510; 25-26 APR, Westchester Glass Show (32 dealers, hours 10-5 & 12-5), at the Women's Club, 305 Ridgeway Ave., White Plains, N.Y. 10600; 20 JUN-2 AUG, Americans in Glass Exhibit '81 at Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, Wisc. 54401; 17-18 SEP, Forum at the Sandwich Museum, Sandwich, Mass. 02563; 19-20 SEP, NEAGC Field Trip to the Jones Gallery of Glass and Ceramics, Douglas Hill, Maine 04024 (more on this to follow or write the JGGC).

Also, 24 MAY-30 AUG: Concurrent exhibits at the Bergstrom Art Center and Mahler Glass Museum, Neenah, Wisc. 54956 of Tom Patti: Retrospective in Glass; Botanicals in Glass by Paul Stankard; and Diversity in Glass by Janet Kelman, Sylvia Vigiletti, and Mark Peiser. This museum has a fine paperweight collection plus the important Mahler collection of Germanic drinking vessels.