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# C

51ST ANNIVERSARY — ESTABLISHED IN 1972

Volume 51, Number 9 SEPTEMBER 2023



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Presented by the  
Loveland Lions Club  
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## American Mid-Century Modern Glass An Update

By Tom Cotter

Photos by Tom Cotter,  
including collections of  
Roberta Hankins



When I wrote an article about Mid-Century Modern Glass for the September 2020 *Mountain States Collector*, I feel that I scratched the surface. I'm still doing so three years later. The glass companies that continued into the late 20th and early 21st centuries scrambled to survive in an era of increasing costs and foreign competition. Since decorating and dining changed so much after World War II, the industry focused on colorful embellishment pieces to stay alive. Items were pour or blown molded. Some freehand work was done on a small scale. Most Mid-Century Modern glass companies went out of business by 1990. Blenko and some other enterprises are still going.

In order to capture the attention of buyers on a smaller scale, a lot of companies made figurines, such as glass animals. Two books on glass animals by Dick and Pat Spencer and Lee Garmon, provide insight. Some firms remade items from earlier eras, but often with new, different colors. For instance, L.E. Smith and others brought back some traditional Early American Pattern Glass (EAPG) pieces in a variety of hues not seen before. In the zoology area, Imperial made panthers, horses, elephants, ducks, gazelle, and mules in a variety of colors from Heisey molds. Viking's long necked-egrets, ducks and geese, and long-tailed birds in colors are much in demand, but whales, crystal bookends/paperweights and other animals are more reasonable. Fenton made a plethora of animals in a plethora of colors; cats, rabbits, deer, bears, mice, and so on. Kanawha made a number of glass animals, including elephants, squirrels, ducks, rabbits, and swans, as did Pilgrim. Some of those animals are obviously molded, while others appear more free-formed. L.E. Smith made a flock of turkeys in crystal, amber, amethyst, ruby, and green carnival, and some lustre finishes, along with squirrels, birds, horses, and

### Fenton Bunnies

roosters. Indiana glass made a herd of covered elephants, as well as several votive candleholders like cats, turtles, and frogs. Companies around Cambridge, Ohio, that made many small figurines and novelties from purchased and new molds included Mosser Glass (still open), Degenharts' Crystal Art Glass (molds later sold Bernard Boyd, becoming Boyd Crystal Art Glass), and Guernsey Glass. Summit Art Glass also bought molds from Cambridge, Imperial, Westmoreland, and St. Clair, making many novelties in a wide variety of colors. One of their novelties was a reproduction of the Frederick Remington Buffalo Hunt Bowl from a Cambridge mold. In the area of produce (okay, not animals), several companies made glass vegetables, fruits, and fungi. Viking made flowers and various fruits, as well as the now very popular mushrooms, all in vibrant colors. Bischoff, Pilgrim, and Rainbow all created pieces, some similar to Blenko items, as well as creations and colors that varied. Pilgrim featured sand carved cameo items signed by artist Kelsey Murphy.

Fenton Glass flourished in the MCM years with their Horizon line in cranberry, lime, amber, and blue in many, many shapes. Among Fenton's products were bells in a wide variety of shapes and decorations, still quite popular among collectors. Fenton Hobnail is in demand, as French, Green, and Cranberry opalescent in the beginning were followed by Amethyst, Blue, Cameo, Plum, and Topaz. The Crest line pieces have different color rims from the base

*Continued on page 7*

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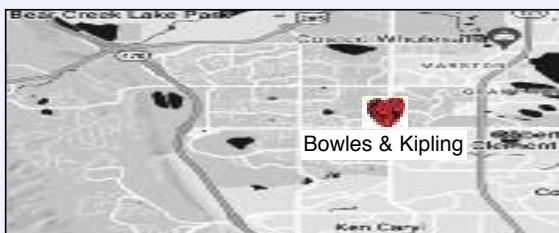
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SEPT. 2: **OLD CROWS' ANTIQUES ROAD SHOW**, 12-3 p.m. (First Saturday of Every Month) 10081 West Bowles Avenue, Littleton. Get estimates on your favorite treasures. Talk to experts about your antiques, art, vintage and collectibles. Limit 1 item per person. Call 303-973-8648

SEPT. 2-4: **LAST BASH OF SUMMER at the Brass Armadillo**, 15% off everything Let's Go Antiquing! More info, go to [www.brassarmadillo.com](http://www.brassarmadillo.com).

SEPT. 8 & 9: **ROCKY MOUNTAIN BOOK & PAPER FAIR**, Friday 2 p.m. - 7 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Douglas County Fairground, 500 Fairgrounds Rd., Castle Rock, Colorado. More info: [www.RMBPF.org](http://www.RMBPF.org)

SEPT. 9: **LITTLETON CAR SHOW** 3 to 6 p.m., weather permitting, at Old Crows Antique Mall, 10081 West Bowles Avenue, Littleton. Featuring vintage and collectible vehicles. An event that is fun for the whole family. 303-973-8648.

SEPT. 16: **LIVE AT THE CROWS** at the Old Crows Antique Mall & Root Beer Bar, live performance by Jerry Neeman, 2-5 p.m., 303-973-8648.

SEPT. 15: **LADIES NIGHT at the VINTAGE MARKETPLACE**, 6520 S. College Ave., Ft. Collins, Colorado, More info, [vintagemarketplaceftc.com](http://vintagemarketplaceftc.com)

SEPT. 16: **VINTAGE MARKETPLACE OUTDOOR MARKET**, Earn VM Market Cash, Storewide Sales. More info. [vintagemarketplaceftc.com](http://vintagemarketplaceftc.com)

SEPT. 23: **CELEBRATE THE ARTS at Old Crows Antiques Mall**, special prices on all artwork.

Call 303-973-6648 for more information.

SEPT. 23 and OCT. 28: **WINE EXPERIENCES at the Hotel de Paris Museum**, Georgetown, Colorado, 5-7 p.m., \$55 per person [hoteldeparismuseum.org](http://hoteldeparismuseum.org) or call the Museum - 303-569-2311.

SEPT. 30: **TIMBER DAN FALL TOY SHOW AND SALE**, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the First National Bank Exhibition Building, North and South Halls at "The Ranch" Larimer County Fairgrounds, Farm toys, die-cast racing, Star Wars and Star Trek, Hot Wheels, Matchbox, Tonka, large pressed steel, tin litho, windup, pedals, GI Joe, cast iron, airplanes, construction, games, models, advertising, promos, dolls. Thousands of toys and other good stuff. Call Sherlyn Sampson, 970-663-9392 for more info. Or go to [sks80538@gmail.com](mailto:sks80538@gmail.com) and [www.lovelandlionsclubs.org/sites/ToyShow.htm](http://www.lovelandlionsclubs.org/sites/ToyShow.htm).

SEPT 30-OCT. 1: **FRONT RANGE GLASS SHOW & SALE**, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-3:30, \$7 Admission, kids 17 and under FREE, hourly door prizes, featuring American made glassware, pottery and dinnerware from 1880-1980, The Ranch Event Center Complex, McKee Building, 5280 Arena Circle, Loveland, Colorado (Exit 259 off I25 Crossroads Blvd., more info, 319-939-3837 or [fronrangeglassshow@gmail.com](mailto:fronrangeglassshow@gmail.com), [www.fronrangeglassshow.com](http://www.fronrangeglassshow.com)

OCT. 9: **VINTAGE ADVENTURE DAY at the Brass Armadillo**, 15% off everything in the mall today. Thousands of items from your past just waiting to be rediscovered from kitchenware to corning ware, tools to furniture and Star Trek to Star Wars, the treasures await you. More info, go to [www.brassarmadillo.com](http://www.brassarmadillo.com).

OCT. 14: **GUEST RANDY GRADISHAR**. Meet our newest Hall of Fame inductee at Old Crows Antique Mall for an autograph event. 12-3 p.m. Call 303-973-6648 for more info.



### An Alert for Antique Dealers

The 2023 Annual General Meeting of The International Correspondence of Corkscrew Addicts (ICCA) will be held in Denver in mid-September. Members (Addicts) will be visiting your shops. The ICCA is a social/educational group composed of people (helixophiles) who, in addition to collecting corkscrews, also contribute new knowledge related to inventors and manufacturers of corkscrews, corkscrew patents, corkscrews as art objects and corkscrews as products of engineering.

*The meeting is only open to members.*

September is here and the dealers at the Gallery are stocked and priced to sell. Get the Fall vibe with vintage blankets, retro artwork and antique furniture. If timeless jewelry is your joy, our dealers have it all— quality turquoise, classic and kitschy pins, earrings and necklaces.

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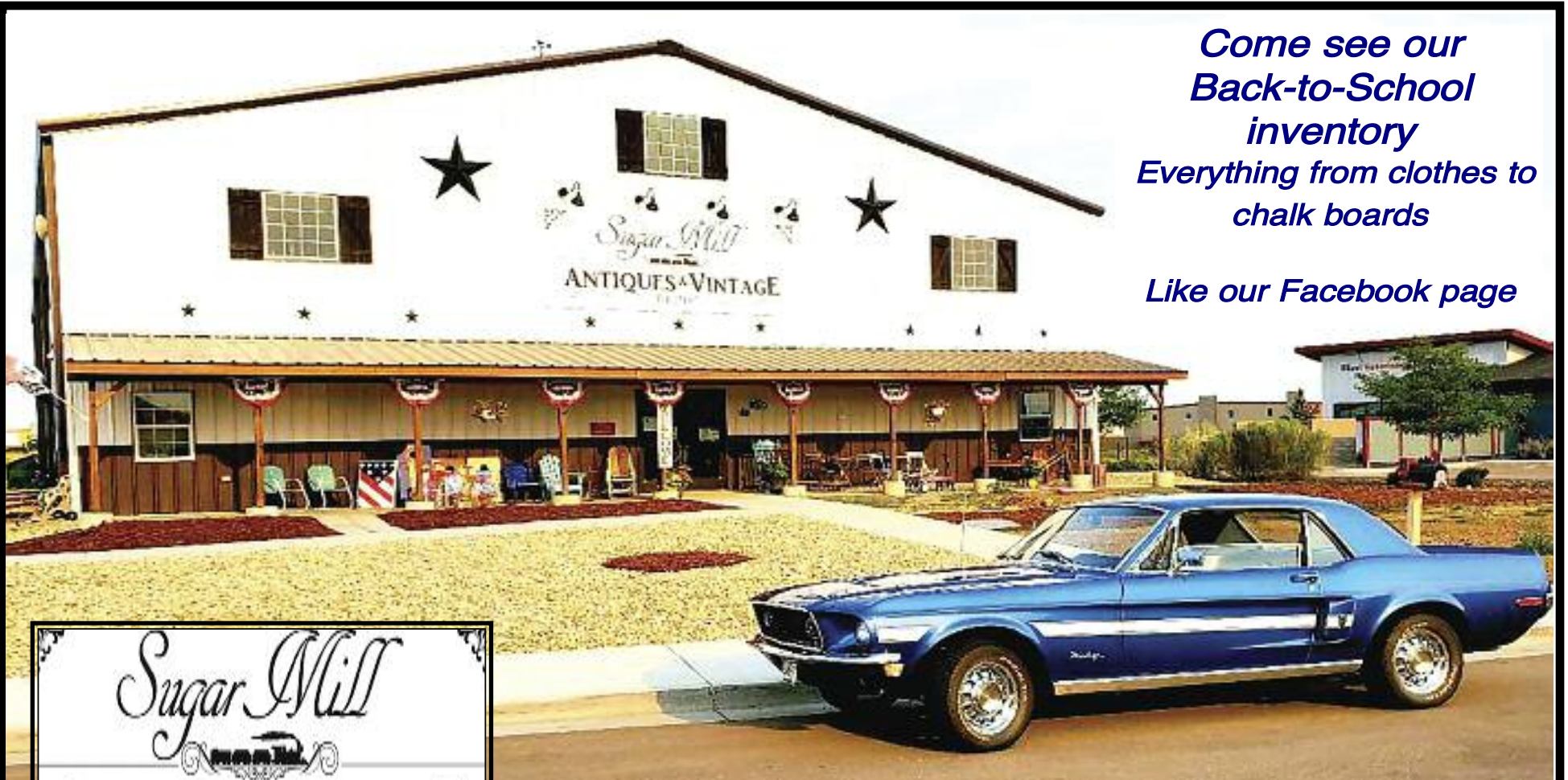
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# American Mid-Century Modern Glass — An Update

Continued from page 1

glass. Painted decorations enliven many Fenton pieces. Fenton also created pieces from the Indiana Tumbler and Goblet catalog, primarily Cactus shapes, in Canary (vaseline), Chocolate, Colonial Blue, Amber, Pink, Custard, Teal Green and Willow Green Opalescent, Spruce Green, Dusty Rose, Red Sunset Carnival, and Rosalene. More EAPG redefined.

Whether vases or flower frogs, Mid-Century Modern flower holders have a great demand. Particularly popular are swing/swung vases made by many companies. L.E. Smith, Viking, Westmoreland, Fostoria, and others used traditional molds as a start to create vases up to five feet tall in vibrant colors like Peacock, Persimmon, and the hugely popular Smith Bittersweet and Lilac. Research is critical. Viking made translucent Persimmon; Smith made opaque Bittersweet. Besides vases, Fostoria Heirloom came in bowls, plates, candleholders, and other pieces in gentle pastels and lastly in ruby. Tiffin didn't swing their glass, but made amazing colors in the Empress and Modern lines. In addition to vases, Viking made flower holders with frogs. These came in a variety of shapes, from simple globe bowls to elongated candle bowls. And all the colors you could imagine.

Although dinner plates and much stemware were no longer made as extensively, tumblers became a big seller as casual dining replaced formal dinners. For the hexagonal or diamond patterned Georgian line in 1950, Paden City was out of business, Cambridge finished with Smoke in 1954, and Fenton completed their Georgians in the early 1950s. Viking and some Anchor Hocking continued, with Mosser leaping into the competition late, marketing through The Vermont Country Store and looking essentially identical to Cambridge Georgians. Another popular style was textured tumblers, stems, and pitchers, including Anchor Hocking Milano, Bryce El Rancho, Morgantown Crinkle, and Seneca Driftwood Casual. While many colors were pastels, there were also vibrant reds, deep blues, smoke, rich amethyst, forest green, and even black. Oh, and there was also the red-tinged Bryce El Rancho Flame.

I wish to thank Roberta Hankins for sharing a picture of her Fenton rabbits and Fostoria Heirloom vases. Peggy and Jon DeStefano provide a vital forum for us through *the Mountain States Collector*. It's great to be writing an article to be published in *the Mountain States Collector* just prior to the **Front Range Glass Show** on September 30 and October 1, 2023, sponsored by Jodi and Mark Uthe at the Loveland Ranch Event Center Complex McKee Building. I can assure you that many of the items I have described will be for sale there. **The Rocky Mountain Vintage Glass and Pottery Club** (also known as *the Rocky Mountain Depression Glass Society*) always is at the **Front Range Glass Show**. Books that might be fun are the aforementioned *Glass Animals* in two editions by the Spencers. Enjoy your collecting, whatever your choice.



## CALENDAR LISTINGS

### Calendar Listing Information

Promoters: send us your calendar information. We will publish it free (and in bold-face type) with your display ad. Otherwise the cost is \$35 per issue. Calendar entries are published on a three-month basis (month of show and two months previous). So send in your info as soon as possible. It's never too early. Stories and features about shows are provided free with your display ad.

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September 16th

October 21st

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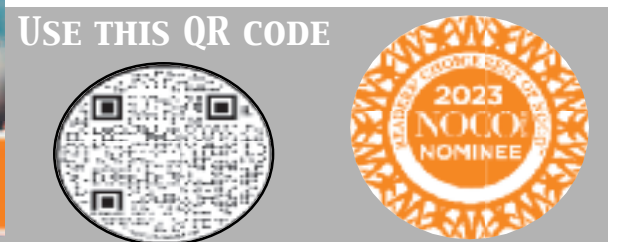
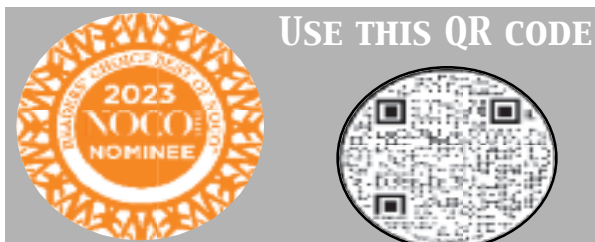
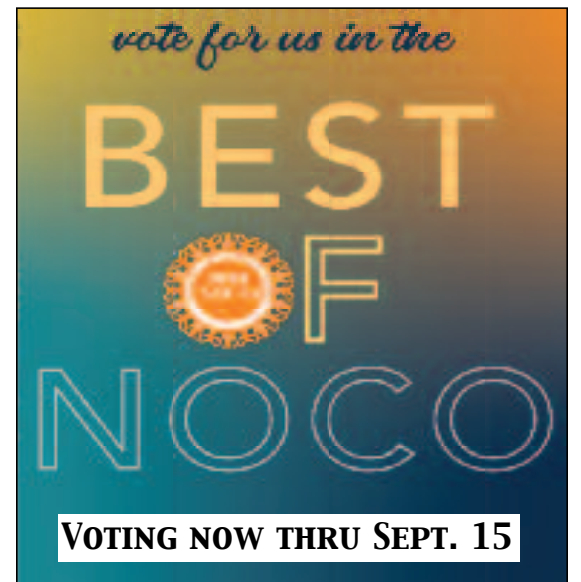
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# The Magic of Mahogany

By Robert Reed

Centuries ago, mahogany was considered almost magical. Elegant but not expensive, it added an entirely new dimension to fine Colonial furniture and furniture made elsewhere.

During what some consider the Age of Mahogany, amid the 18th and 19th centuries, the amazing wood cast its charm in America, as well as England, France, Italy and Spain. It was vital to the Federal Period and virtually dominated the Empire Period that followed.

Besides grace and charm, it brought two major features to the craft of cabinetmaking. One was width. Sections of mahogany were of such tremendous size that only one or two sections were needed for tabletops and cabinet doors. The other was strength. It was strong enough to allow delicate decorative work, yet resist most damage and decay.

Some historians credit Spanish explorers for their appreciation of the fine wood in trips to the West Indies. As early as the 16th century some Spanish Renaissance cabinet workers made use of mahogany.

Around 1699, Jonathan Dickinson of Philadelphia was said to have imported some mahogany for furniture making. Other records in that city and in New York note the existence of inventories of the wood starting with the very early 1700s. It is said to have been in limited use in England as soon as 1715; however, Queen Elizabeth was said to have shown little interest in the wood when Sir Walter Raleigh made use

of it for repairing his ships. One account notes that the wood was first accepted in England not as lumber but as a health-boosting medicinal substance somewhat similar to quinine.

During the early 1720s, native woods like oak and walnut were still the most likely choice of cabinetmakers in America, but some cities such as New York and Philadelphia, and even the coastal town of Newport, Rhode Island, continued to increase their importation of mahogany. Within a few years tariff tax restrictions were eased somewhat on mahogany, and usage naturally increased.

Throughout most of the 18th century, the major sources of mahogany came from Cuba, Honduras and St. Domingo. Honduras, with its slightly heavier rainfalls, was said to have provided a lighter-colored, more finely textured type of wood. Because of the general region, much of the mahogany at the time was referred to as "Jamaica wood," but still it grew in popularity. By the 1740s it was a frequent alternative to walnut, partly because of its beauty and partly because of its uncanny ability to resist rot and insects.

The fact that mahogany was virtually worm-free may not seem important today, unless it is noted that comparatively little fine walnut furniture of that same period has survived because the wood was so highly susceptible to worm attack.

The colors of mahogany too only served to make it more magical. While some types of the wood could be finished to a reddish-brown hue, a number of the better cabinetmakers preferred the lustrous "warm brown" tones that emitted



from the lighter choices. In any event, the overall result of using the finely grained wood was ultimately a lovely deep and radiant patina.

*Continued on page 13*

## DENVER



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**DEALER FEATURE**

# Old Wagon Antique Mall Offers Wonderful Variety



Old Wagon Antique Mall, 10685 Melody Drive in Northglenn, is the first antique mall visitors discover when traveling to Denver from the east and north.

Harold "Hal" Reed is the owner of Old Wagon Antique Mall and he and all his dealers and associates are glad to welcome you. The Mall has 8,000 square feet and has over 100 dealers to choose from. The booths are full of antiques, collectibles and vintage for a variety of interests. The place is open and inviting.

On a recent visit, we took pictures of the Mall. We thought our readers would enjoy seeing what Old Wagon Antiques has to offer.

Next time you're in the Northglenn area, stop by Old Wagon Antique Mall, you'll be as impressed as we are. You can call Hal at 303-280-8114 for more information. The Mall is open 10:00 to 5 Monday thru Friday. Saturday 10:30 to 5, 12 to 4 Sundays, Closed Tuesdays.

*See you at Old Wagon Antique Mall!*



## NORTHGLENN



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# The Collectibles of Labor Day

By Robert Reed

Then hail to labor! everywhere,  
Honor to those who do their share.

Labor Day poem  
by Clara Denton, 1928

Long unnoticed, the collectibles of the Labor Day holiday are gradually gaining in recognition. After all it is an event that has been celebrated nationally since the latter part of the 19th century.

Some true treasures of the American labor movement actually predate the establishment of Labor Day itself. In the Marion Carson Collection of the Library of Congress is a hat ribbon worn for a labor organization parade in the 1820s. The parade was staged in Philadelphia by the Brotherly Union Society. During that decade the journeymen house-carpenters of that city made the first attempt to get the hours of work reduced to ten a day. The effort was unsuccessful.

Historians generally agree that the first actual Labor Day parade was held in New York City's Union Square on September 5, 1882. Interestingly while the holiday has traditionally been thought of as always being observed on a Monday, the first parade was actually on a Tuesday according to records of the United States Department of Labor. It was held under the direction of the Central Labor Union in that city.

Possibly one of the first Labor Day parade collectibles appeared just one week later in the form of the news magazine Frank Leslie's Illustrated. The September 16, 1882 issue featured drawings of the event. Marchers were depicted in the artist's rendering as carrying banners and signs with such slogans as "Vote for the Labor Ticket," "Labor Creates All Wealth," and "8 Hours Constitute a Day's Work."

Published images of American worker in the 1880s, according to a study done by the Smithsonian Institution a century later was a "stereotype of a lone, white, male craftsman in a mechanic's paper hat, carrying dinner pail." Such characterizations appeared in magazines and on product labels.

In the years that immediately followed the first parade, labor organization moved the event to a



Monday thus providing one of the 19th century's first three-day weekends for workers. The "working men's holiday" idea also spread to other major cities where unionization was fairly well established.

Some accounts say the first Monday in September was favored because it came at the "most pleasant season of the year" midway between the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving, and thus would fill a gap in the chronology of legal holidays. Most research indicates that the general idea in New York, Philadelphia, and other industrial centers was to provide for parade to show strength and solidarity, to be followed by a festive family picnic.

Little by little such labor union related events spread to other cities and came to the attention of individual state legislatures. States such as Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Nebraska and Pennsylvania jointed the 'parade' by establishing Labor Day as an official holiday.

Eventually the American Federation of Labor forecast "it shall be as uncommon for a man to work on that day (Labor Day) as on Independence Day." That prediction became a reality in 1894 when the U.S. Congress passed an act making the

first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and all U.S. territories.

As the 19th century came to a close Labor Day celebrations, especially parades and similar outings, became widespread. Likewise there were numerous decorative items produced to be worn on such occasions. Striking multi-color celluloid pin-back buttons were manufactured by the Whitehead & Hoag Company and others. Typically they included a slogan, ie. "The Union Is Strength", and symbol of patriotism including the U.S. flag or an eagle along with a symbol of unity such as a handshake. There were multi-colored ribbons too which could be attached to the lapel of a jacket or the front of a shirt. The wording on the ribbons might be as basic as simply the words Labor Day or elaborate enough to show a worker with the America flag and a hammer—all in red, white and blue.

Early in the 20th century, in addition to pin-back buttons, lapel ribbons and various badges, citizens could also celebrate the holiday with postcards. Nash Publishing Company produced a set of two embossed fully illustrated Labor Day Souvenir postcards. One proclaimed, "labor shall refresh itself with hope," while second declared, "Labor Conquers Everything." (Indeed the image of the laborer on postcard number two was much as image Smithsonian had earlier described, "a lone, white, male craftsman in a mechanic's hat..." Lounsbury Publishing did a set of four Labor Day postcards similar in style to those by Nash. The Lounsbury titles included Makers of Prosperity, Man in Overalls, Labor Taking a Day Off, and Our Latest Holiday.

According to Susan Nicholson author of The Encyclopedia of Antique Postcards, the Lounsbury set was published in more limited numbers. The fourth card of the series, Our Latest Holiday, featuring a Labor Day parade which also included Santa and Uncle Sam is the most highly sought of the four. Meanwhile numerous other publishers also issued postcards of actual Labor Days parades during the early 1900s including one in Sapulpa, Oklahoma.

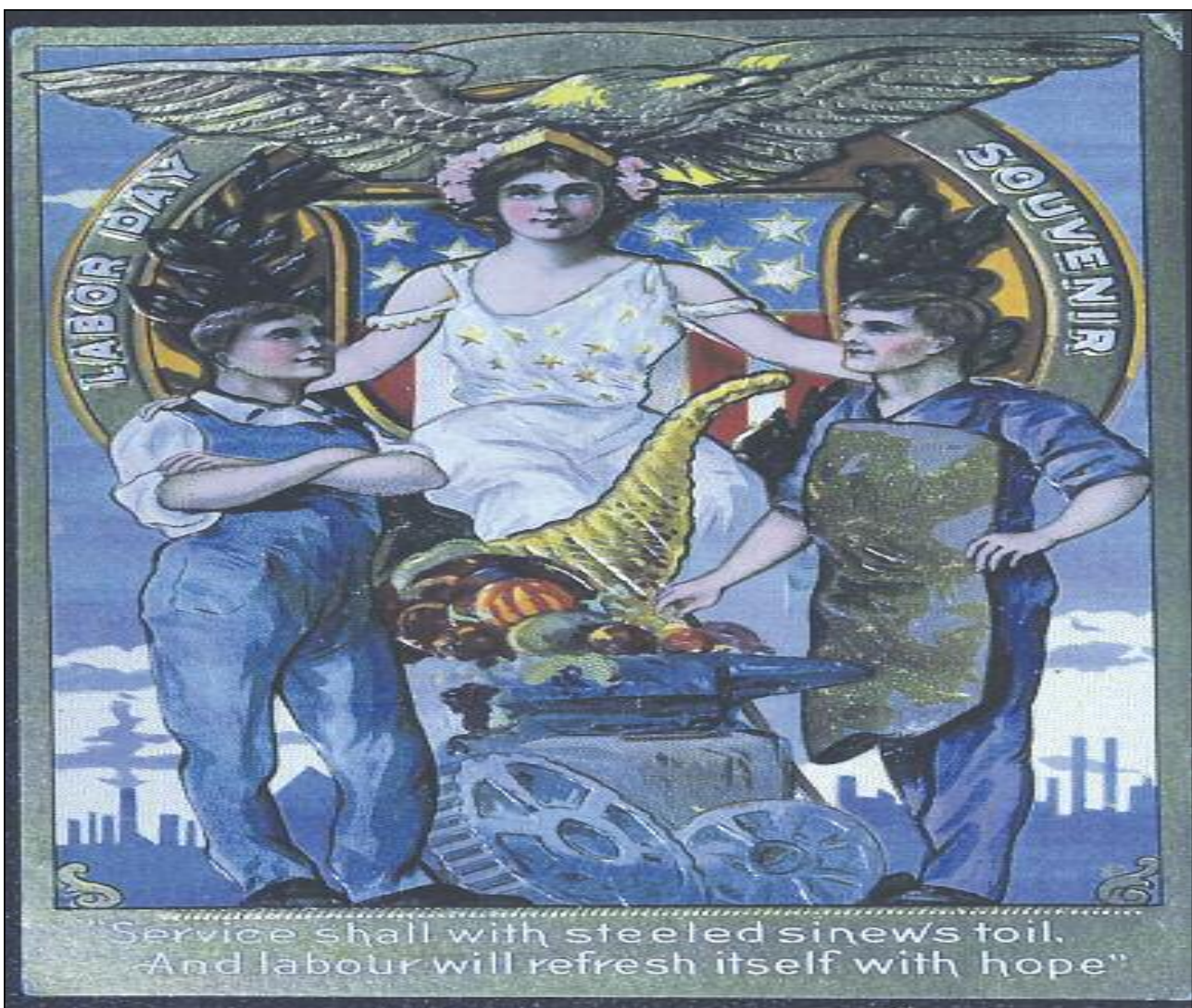
Labor Day buttons and ribbons had taken decidedly more patriotic tone by 1917 and 1918 within the shadow of World War One red, white and blue Labor Day ribbon dated 1918 proclaimed, "We're Behind the Man Behind the Gun." It bore the illustration of a worker rolling up his shirt sleeves with factory smoke stacks in the background.

Later Labor Day parades and events also produced memorabilia ranging from photographs of parade floats to booklets and programs. In 1945 Victory Labor Day Rally celebrated both the efforts of organized labor and efforts of U.S. troops in World War II. Noted the multi-paged program issued by the Baltimore, Maryland Congress of Industrial Unions:

"One this day, labor's traditional holiday, we salute our fellow trade unionists in the armed forces and merchant marine who, scattered over the four corners of the earth, cannot be here to share in the celebration of Labor Day."

In 1982 Carolrhoda Books Inc. published one of the few books devoted entirely to this particular holiday. Labor Day by Geoffery Scott, was illustrated by Cherie Wyman and described the origins of Labor Day including a "monster labor festival" held in New York City a century earlier.

While still a major American holiday, observance of Labor Day has changed from earlier decades according to the U.S. Department of Labor, and elaborate displays and massive parades are no longer as prevalent as they were in the heart of the 20th century.



# AMERICAN HISTORY

## September Anniversaries



### September 2

Congress establishes U.S. Treasury (1789)

### September 4

Labor Day

### September 5

First session of Continental Congress convenes (1774)

### September 9

Congress renamed the nation "United States of America" (1776)

### September 10

Grandparent's Day

### September 11

Patriot Day

### September 15

POW/MIA Recognition Day

### September 17

First day of Constitution Week

### September 18

Congress establishes U.S. Air Force (1947)

### September 24

Gold Star Mother's Day

### September 28

Battle of Yorktown begins (1781)

### September 29

100th Anniversary of the first American Track & Field Championships for women (1923)

# The History of Labor Day

For most Americans, Labor day signifies little more than the end of the summer season but the holiday means much more than just a free day off from work. The century old tradition of Labor Day is rich in history and is the legacy of America's labor movement that rose to prominence during the industrial revolution.

Despite the fact that Labor Day was first created by the trade unions, Labor Day was meant to be celebrated by all who labor. This day of rest is a tribute to the contribution workers have made towards the well-being of society.

Samuel Gompers, founder of the American Federation of Labor described Labor Day as "the day for which the toilers in past centuries looked forward, when their rights and their wrongs would be discussed... that the workers of our day may not only lay down their tools of labor for a holiday, but upon which they may teach themselves in marching platoons and feel the strength for it."

In the mid-19th century, the working class realized that if they wanted their hard job conditions to improve then they would have to work together. By the 1830's, labor unions began to form, offering the workman bargaining power with their employers for the first time. Strikes and demonstrations were a regular occurrence and in the labor force let their power be known, slowly but surely. By the average American began to get better.

In 1882, The Central Labor Union held its first Labor Day celebration in New York City which included a parade of 10,000 workers. The marchers carried banners displaying union slogans and demands for better working conditions. The idea of a workday's celebration spread quickly within industrialized cities and in only 5 short years the day was legislated when in 1897 Oregon was the first state to pass Labor Day into law as an official holiday.

For much of its history, Labor Day has been a day not just to celebrate the accomplishments of the labor force, but also to air grievances and demonstrate for better working conditions and salaries.

Today, union demonstrations and parades have largely been replaced by picnics, barbecues and civic events. Today, less than 15% of American workers belong to unions, though nearly all of us have benefited from their past victories. This year as you enjoy your day off, remember those laborers of the past who fought to dignify to make this day possible.

The "New York City Labor Day, 1882" by J. J. M. [unclear] is in the public domain. The "The Central Labor Union, 1882" by J. J. M. [unclear] is in the public domain. The "The Central Labor Union, 1882" by J. J. M. [unclear] is in the public domain.

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Advertising information: call or text Jon DeStefano at 720-276-2777 or for any other information, call Peg DeStefano at 303-910-2604 or email us at sprepub@mac.com

**Publisher** Spree Enterprises, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1003  
Bailey, CO 80421  
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**Production** Spree Enterprises, Inc.  
Peg DeStefano  
Jon Patrick DeStefano  
Sam DeStefano

**Printing** Wyoming News

# The Magic of Mahogany

Continued from page 9

It was some of these qualities along with the variety of grain available in mahogany which lent itself to stunning veneers, which led the legendary Thomas Chippendale to extensive use of the wood. As Chippendale rose to fame, the tastes of the 18th century's upper class had moved from heavy furniture to the more delicate and graceful styles that mahogany could provide. In both America and England, mahogany was an expensive import, but as Chippendale and others came to realize, the wealthy could well afford it.

"Beginning his career when his principal medium was still fresh, and delightful new styles were taking hold," observes Nathaniel Harris, author of the fine book, Chip-

pendale, "Chippendale became the first great figure of the Age of Mahogany."

During the 1750s in Colonial America, the wood was certainly in vogue among the well-to-do. Native timbers such as walnut, cherry and maple were used for less expensive work. But for rich colors and the precision of decorative carving, there was really no substitute for mahogany. However, for all the good news on the "home front," there was bad news in the West Indies. By the late 1750s and early 1760s much of the gigantic mahogany trees had been depleted. Trunks which once grew from six to 12 feet in diameter and provided such grand widths for tables and other construction were rapidly dwindling.

Possibly in view of these short-



ages, an advertisement ran in the Virginia Gazette in the fall of 1767 which offered "a quantity of good Jamaica mahogany, fit for tables and desks, which has been by me seven years." The advertiser added he was willing to "work it up for any gentlemen pleased to employ me, for ready money, as I intend to leave off this business."

Yet more determined was this advertiser in a 1773 issue of the Maryland Gazette: "Gerald Hopkins hath for sale in Gay Street, Baltimore town, mahogany boards and planks, sawed to suit every branch of cabinet and chair work, and also mahogany logs: he still continued carrying on the cabinet business in its various branches as usual."

By the latter 18th century, craftsmen had perfected the method of cutting thin slices of mahogany so well that veneering became fairly commonplace and the solid, carved pieces were generally a thing of the past. The magical wood was used to fashion all manner of fine furniture, from beds and bookcases to wardrobes and washstands. It was probably more frequently used in chairs, desks and tables than anything else. However, it certainly became the wood of refined taste in bookcases, chests, sofas, mirrors and

sideboards as well.

Well into the dawn of the 19th century, many leading cabinetmakers in New York City held to the crafting of solid mahogany furniture despite the higher costs it would involve. In research prepared for the Chipstone Foundation, the 1996 document American Furniture uses a letter written in March of 1812 to a woman in Charleston, South Carolina, from her cousin in New York City to make that interesting contrast.

"Enclosed are two drawings of furniture," wrote Sarah Hunger. "Our neighbor Mr. Gelston has two communicating rooms furnished by Mr. Phyfe with considerable taste; but if mahogany is too expensive, I can find painted chairs and settees. A dozen chairs with two settees of the latest fashion will cost \$144, the shape is quite plain and nothing like mahogany. In fact, there is a great difference in the appearance as there is the price; two Sofas and twelve chairs of Mahogany of the best taste will be \$500."

For all of its charm and elegance, production of mahogany furniture had generally faded from view in America and Europe by the 1820s, ending finally the one and only Century of Mahogany.

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# Collectors Bite on Fishing Lures

By Henry J. Pratt

Nearly 170 years ago, a Vermont fisherman—Julio T. Buel—accidentally dropped a kitchen spoon in a near-by river, only to watch in awe as a pan-sized trout swallowed it and swam merrily away.

Just exactly when fishing-lure manufacturing got started in the U.S. is unknown, but Buel received the first fish-lure patent in 1852. His breakthrough in lure research enabled Buel to build a successful factory in Whitehall, N.Y., and his early metal lures can be seen in a museum there today.

Following lucky Buel's early lead, thousands of fishermen through the years have filed patents for their own sure-fire fishing lures. Harry Comstock's wooden-bodied Flying Helgramite looked like a deranged insect. Archer Wakeman's Skeleton Bait resembled a miniature helicopter with sharp barbs attached.

Several of the old fish-lure companies started mak-



ing their authentic baits from cedar, on hand-operated lathes. Later, the lures were primecoated to prevent them from swelling and cracking when they got wet. Factory workers then painted the lures and attached hooks. Gill marks were added around the lure's face, and the eyes, usually made of glass, were imported from Germany.

"The old lures had a lot more character than the plastic ones most fishermen use today," says Paul Caruso, an enthusiastic lure collector. While running only a modest fishing tackle store in New England, Caruso last year paid \$5,500 for an old Miller's Reversible Minnow. Two years earlier, a rare Haskell Minnow sold for

\$20,350, according to a recent article in the Wall Street Journal.

Today, collectors everywhere are biting on old fishing lures as they become big business in the burgeoning field of popular collectibles. There's even a national fish lure club with more than 3,000 members, along with several new lure collectible books on the market. A National Fishing Tackle Museum is open to the public in Arcadia, Oklahoma, but paradoxically, has had few visitors so far.


When it comes to biting on old fish lures, Seth Rosenbaum, a New York computer consultant, has a bigger appetite than Alaska's King Salmon. He has accumulated about 20,000 of the fish-fooling gadgets, worth a small fortune and then some.

Some of Rosenbaum's artificial lures resemble natural baits, such as mice or minnows. Others have been hammered from metal or chiseled from wood into delicious-looking bait morsels. Lures of every color and description line the walls of the collector's walk-in closet, spill over onto his kitchen counter or lie on Rosenbaum's living-room floor in a tangled but very valuable mumbo-jumbo of hooks, sinkers, feathers and bobbers.

Many fish-lure makers in yesteryear had a sense of the whimsy, the exotic, and even entrapment. There are barebreasted Mermaid lures, baits shaped like miniature beer bottles, and "cruel" lures that keep live frogs trapped in place ready for hungry bass to hit and swallow.

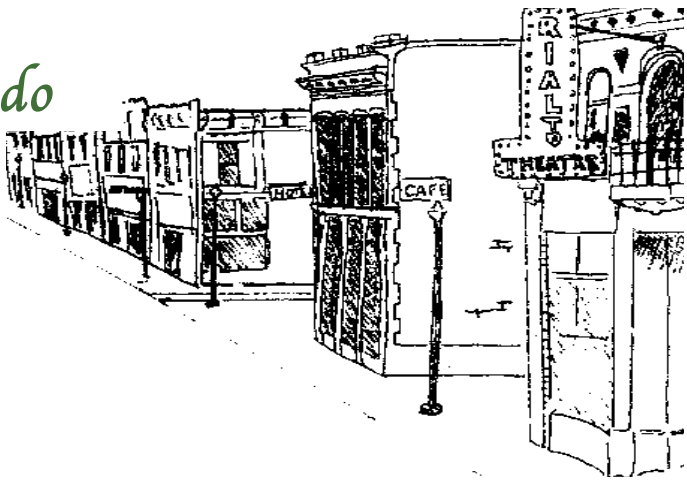
Lure trade names run from the pencil-shaped Woods PoppaDoodle to the Paw Paw Weedless

*Continued on page 15*



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## August's What Is It?



We had several correct answers to our August's What Is It. The objects, pictured above, are needlecases. These are all late-19th Century needlecases. They include: a wooden carved fish, fluted silver; wood topped with silver, carved ivory; Irish milk glass with English oak leaves and acorns; and a chased silver case that stores needles in compartments graded according to size.

Carolyn Kundel of Roland, Iowa correctly identified these as decorative needle holders. She points out, "Years ago people mended and saved nice clothing. A good sewing box would have these decorated needle holders." Leone McIntyre of Fort Collins, Colorado also identified these as needlecases. She says, "These are antique needlecases, mostly from the 1800s. American, English, French and possibly German. Made of silver, glass, bone, and wood. All Beautiful!" Jerome McLaren of Conifer, Colorado also correctly identified the What Is It as antique needle holder. Thank you all for your guesses. You are the best!



## Collectors Bite on Fishing Lures

Continued from page 14

Wow to the modern-day Dare Devil, Rooster Tail, and Mepps.

One fish-lure bug says, "A lot of lures I collect now were surely designed to catch fishermen, not fish." He adds, "The general public doesn't care when a plug was made, but if the eyes blink or the legs kick, that's entertainment and a catchy introduction to another good fish story."

Bob Lang, an engineering professor and cataloger

of fishing memorabilia, says nostalgia—not practicality—is driving the old fish-lure market. "A lot of collectors are reliving their childhood," Lang adds. "When they were kids, they'd walk into a sports shop, and gaze at all those exotic, wonderful fish lures with only 39 cents in their pockets."

Today, they can walk into a sporting goods store,

and plunk down whatever it takes to buy the lures they like. Then, they try them in their favorite river, lake or stream and get ready to tell another tall tale about the big one that got away.

## September's What Is It?



Send your answers to the What Is It contest, postmarked by September 20, to the *Mountain States Collector*, P.O. Box 1003, Bailey, CO 80421. At least three winners will be drawn. Winners will receive a year's subscription to the *Mountain States Collector*.



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