

America The Beautiful Carnival Glass Plates

By Donna Nestra

The "**America The Beautiful**" series of collector plates celebrate well known American landmarks and national shrines. There are a total of seven (7) beautiful plates in the series. The series was envisioned, authorized and distributed by E. Ward Russell.

In 1969 the Russell's conceived the idea of authorizing a limited edition collectors' plate which would be made in America and would illustrate scenes that showed "**America The Beautiful**." The series of 10 1/2" carnival glass plates were made by the Imperial Glass Company. Less than 300 of each plate were made. On the back of each plate are the words, "America The Beautiful," the Imperial IG mark, and the number of the plate in the series.



The first plate in the series illustrates the United States Capitol building in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. This plate was made in **ruby red**. Forty-eight (48) of the plates were given the acid treatment which produced a frosted appearance known to collectors as "satin" glass. The remaining plates were iridized.

The U.S. Capitol Building, the meeting chambers for the Senate and the House of Representatives, is one of the most recognizable historic buildings in Washington, D.C. The most famous feature of the U.S. Capitol, the cast-iron Neoclassical dome by Thomas Ustick Walter, was not added until the mid-1800s. For almost two centuries, America's governing bodies, the Senate and the House of Representatives, have gathered under the dome of the U.S. Capitol. With 540 rooms divided among five levels, the U.S. Capitol is a massive structure. The third floor is where visitors can watch the proceedings of Congress when in session. On top of the U.S. Capitol dome is the Statue of Freedom, a classical female figure with long, flowing hair wearing a helmet with a crest composed of an eagle's head and feathers. She stands on a pedestal on a globe encircled with the motto "E Pluribus Unum," "out of many, one."



A special "Thank You" to John Valentine for letting us include information from his article, "America the Beautiful Series Plates," and to Todd and Susan Kuwitzky of Omaha, NE, for donating a complete set of seven plates to the Iridescent Nation. Club.

Watch for Part II in the December issue.

Article

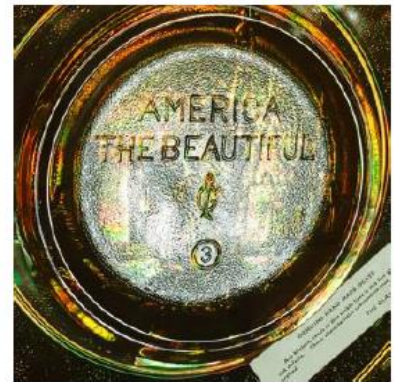
America The Beautiful Carnival Glass Plates, Part II

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The second "**America The Beautiful**" carnival glass plate illustrates Mount Rushmore. This plate, made in 1970, is iridized green and the scene in the center is frosted. The Mount Rushmore National Memorial is carved into the side of Mt. Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Carving of the heads of four American presidents, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln, began in 1927 and work was finalized in 1941. Each head is the height of a six story building. Each eye is 11 feet across, each nose is 20 feet long, and each mouth is 18 feet wide. Trained mountain climbers maintain the monument.

The back of each plate includes the words, America the Beautiful, Imperial's I/G mark, and the number of the plate in the series.



The third "**America The Beautiful**" carnival glass plate illustrates the Statue of Liberty, on Liberty Island, New York. This plate, made in 1971, is dark amber. Three plates were made in Amberglo Carnival, a color like honey amber. The Statue of Liberty was constructed and assembled in Paris, France. It was a gift of friendship from the people of France to the United States to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the American independence of 1776. The Statue of Liberty was officially accepted by President Grover Cleveland on October 28, 1886. The statue is 151 feet high and the entire monument stands 305 feet from the ground to the torch. There is no elevator in the statute but you can walk up 377 stairs to get to the crown. Anyone sailing into New York Harbor by ship is greeted by the Statue of Liberty.

Watch for Part III in the next issue.

America The Beautiful Carnival Glass Plates, Part III

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The fourth *America The Beautiful* carnival glass plate illustrates **Monument Valley**, located on the Arizona and Utah border, is a scene familiar to every fan of western movies. The plates were made in 1972 and are rubigold carnival color. Monument Valley's isolated red, sandstone mesas and buttes surrounded by empty, sandy desert, have been filmed and photographed countless times over the years for movies, advertisements, and holiday brochures. A "mesa" is medium flat-topped hill or mountain and a "butte" is a small flat-topped hill or mountain. Both have flat tops and steep sides.

The back of most, but not all plates include the words, America the Beautiful, Imperial's I/G mark, and the number of the plate in the series. The Monument Valley plate is blank on the back with the makers marks on the front.



The fifth *America The Beautiful* carnival glass plate illustrates the **Liberty Bell**, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The plates were made in 1973 and are white carnival color. The Liberty Bell is a symbol of American independence and the state of being free within society. History tells of a chime that changed the world on July 8, 1776, with the Liberty Bell ringing out from the Tower of Independence Hall summoning the citizens of Philadelphia to hear the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. Throughout history, and even today, groups have used the Liberty Bell as a symbol for anti-slavery movements, unity after the Civil War, and a woman's right to vote. Oppressed groups turn to Philadelphia yet today to give voice to their plights at the Liberty Bell proclaiming their call for liberty.

Watch for Part IV in the next issue.

America The Beautiful Carnival Glass Plates, Part IV

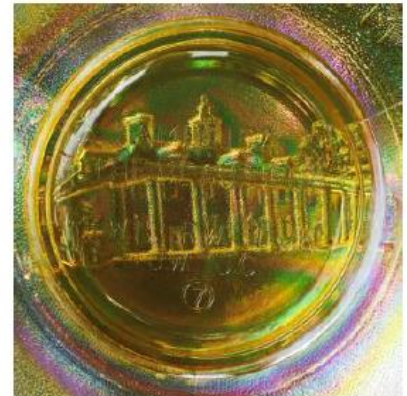
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The sixth *America The Beautiful* carnival glass plate illustrates the **Golden Gate Bridge** in San Francisco, California. The plates were made by Westmoreland Glass Company of Grapeville, Pennsylvania in 1974 and are black. It is one of the seven wonders of the world. Planning for the bridge took 100 years and cost \$35 million dollars to build. The bridge took over 4 years to build and opened in 1937. Because the suspension bridge was built to flex in the wind, it has only been closed 3 times due to weather. There are 6 lanes on both sides including walkways on both sides. The bridge color is International Orange and is probably the most photographed bridge on the planet.

The back of most, but not all, of the plates in the series include:

- the words *America the Beautiful*
- Imperial's I/G mark
- and the number of the plate in the series.



The seventh and last *America The Beautiful* carnival glass plate illustrates **Mount Vernon**, located in Mount Vernon, Virginia, where George Washington lived when he was President. The plates were made in 1975 and are yellow. A small farmhouse was built by George Washington's father in 1735. George Washington inherited the house in 1761 and oversaw its expansion to a 2 ½ story, 11,028 square foot mansion and directed many landscape improvements on the 500 acres facing the Potomac River. The house was named after Admiral Edward Vernon. A weathervane in the shape of a dove of peace rests on top of the cupola (structure on top of the roof). Mount Vernon played a key role in the movie *National Treasure, Book of Secrets*, but the tunnel leading from it depicted in the movie does not really exist. George Washington was the only president who never lived in

the White House as it had not yet been built.

Iridescent Nation is proud to own the complete set of 7 America the Beautiful plates donated to us from Todd and Susan Kuwitzky.