

## SECTION 5: CARNIVAL GLASS – WHAT'S IN A NAME?



As far as carnival glass is concerned 'a lot' since this was not the name given when it was launched in the early 1900s. When companies such as Fenton, Northwood and Imperial introduced pressed iridised glass to emulate the beauty of expensive, hand crafted Art Glass produced by makers such as Tiffany and Steuben they were bringing a 'lifestyle' dimension into the decision to purchase – and it was snapped up by the aspiring middle classes.

Now you could afford to bring into your home a luxury item that had previously only been in the reaches of the managers for whom you worked. So, it was important to have names that were evocative of the exotic nature of this glass and which transported the buyer to faraway places that he or she could only dream of. Consequently, it was promoted under enticing names such as Iridill, Golden Iris, Rubigold, Etruscan, Pompeian and Venetian Art.

It only acquired the name 'Carnival Glass' in the 1950s when some of the later produced items, either because they were excess stock or inferior quality, were given as prizes at funfairs although this constituted only a very small proportion and is not representative of the glorious legacy handed down from the earlier years. That said, it's a name which reflects the carnival of colours, shapes, patterns and surface finishes that caused such excitement when these pioneers pushed the boundaries of this magnificent iridescent pressed glass manufacture.

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