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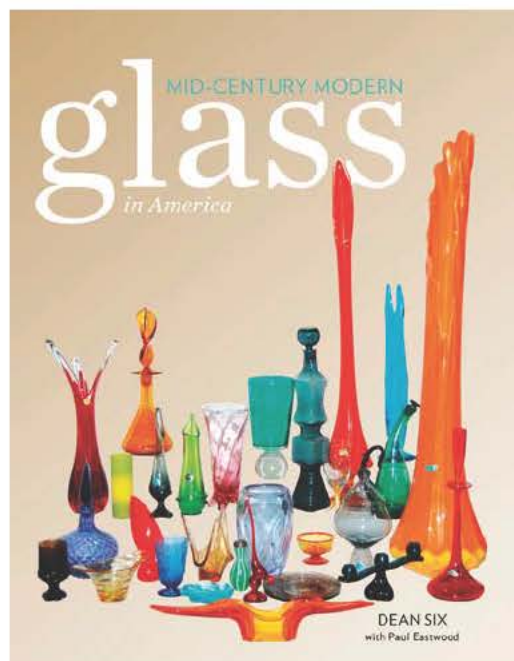
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the intricacies of steel-focused investment banking, sustained comparisons with other Great Lakes steel companies (Lackawanna Steel, for instance), and labor's struggles for better working conditions. Kobus's assertion that Pittsburgh became the Steel Capital of the World during the Gilded Age is dominated by his detailed exposition of the steel making processes. It is a wonderful look at the processes but leaves open the possibility of a sequel that looks at the industry itself. ❖

Mid-century Modern Glass in America

By Dean Six with Paul Eastwood

Schiffer Publishing, 2014

272 pp., 690 color and b&w illustrations

Hardcover \$39.99

Reviewed by Emilia Boehm Emig,
Curator of Collections at the Marblehead Museum in
Marblehead, Mass.

"Can it be a little modern or must it scream?"

In *Mid-century Modern Glass in America*, veteran glass collector and author Dean Six (along with contributor Paul Eastwood) tackles this and other intriguing questions as he welcomes readers to the subset of glassware known as American Mid-Century Modern (AMCM). Defining AMCM is Six's first task and presents no small challenge, beginning with establishing the timeframe under discussion. Ultimately, Six focused on American (plus a few Canadian-made) glass designed, produced, and marketed between 1945 and 1974. The term *modern* also requires delineation; here, Six settled on a broad meaning of "denouncing and rebelling against the form, embellishment, and visual appeal that came before."

The majority of the book is dedicated to examinations of more than 30 glass manufacturers, accompanied by illustrations

BOOK REVIEWS

of the styles and lines of AMCM glass they produced. As is to be expected given the region's longstanding glassmaking tradition, companies from the tri-state region of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia figure predominantly, with a smaller number of firms from New York, Indiana, Texas, and Canada also represented. Included with each manufacturer's vignette is a "good, better, best" scale in which two or three examples of that maker's AMCM products are illustrated. These graphics successfully give the reader a sense of the hierarchy of quality and desirability for each firm's output. Also helpful are the suggestions for further reading included with many of the manufacturer entries.

Beyond his attention to manufacturers, the author also gives brief treatment to select designers who provided cold decoration, an industry term for surface embellishment added to a glass object long after its original ("hot") production. The section of biographical snapshots for 16 AMCM cold decorators (both individuals and companies) adds an interesting look at a few of the artists responsible for the designs that made AMCM products so unique.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the book is its nearly 700 illustrations, which

document various AMCM product lines and allow for comparison between makers and types of objects. Reproductions of catalog pages and advertisements offer a fascinating look at the way in which AMCM was marketed to the American public and further place the objects in the context of their times. For the majority of illustrated glassware, the author also provides price guidelines—valuations which, as the author acknowledges, are subject to many variables. While the value guidelines will be of interest to some collectors, the book's most lasting contributions are found in its summaries of the glass manufacturers, the copious product images, and the brief look at select cold decorators.

A welcome contribution to the scant reference literature available on American glassware inspired by and produced during a time of great social and cultural change in the nation, Six's volume offers an insightful introduction for collectors venturing into the "brave new world that was American Mid-century Glass."



Book Events

January 14, 2016 • 7:00 p.m.
6th Floor Detre Library & Archives
Steel City Jews
Discussion and book signing with
Barbara Burstin

Thursday, February 18, 2016 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.
6th Floor Detre Library & Archives
*Mayoral Ink: Cartooning Pittsburgh's
Mayors with Rob Rogers*

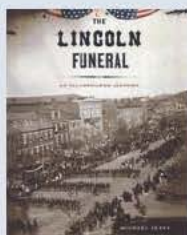
Saturday, February 13, 2016 • 1:00–3:00 p.m.
5th Floor Mueller Education Center
*Gesture and Power: Religion, Nationalism,
and Everyday Performance in Congo with
Yolanda Covington Ward*

All three events are free and open to the public but do not include admission to the rest of the museum.

For more information, please contact
Caroline Fitzgerald at ccfitzgerald@heinzhistorycenter.org or 412-454-6373.

Look for more reviews at www.heinzhistorycenter.org/blog/category/online-book-reviews

NEW
ONLINE



*The Lincoln
Funeral: An
Illustrated History*



*Pittsburgh Irish:
Erin on the Three Rivers*