## FENTON FAIRY LIGHT MOLDS

by Joanne Nehler

During the Victorian Era, fairy lamps became very popular and many elegant pieces were produced. The person credited with starting the molds and holding the patents for many of these patterns was Samuel Clarke of England. Quite the businessman, he wanted a way to sell more and more of the candles produced in his factory. Thus he started marketing fairy lamps and commissioned many other glass companies to make his patented design.

The Fenton Art Glass Company started producing "in-line" fairy lights[1] in 1953. The term "in-line" means they are offered in the Fenton catalogs. Fenton did, however, produce fairy lights prior to this time for companies such as L.G. Wright.

Fenton introduced the first fairy light in 1953 with the one-piece design #2092 made in several opalescent colors including Blue, Green, Cranberry and Blue Opalescent with a treatment called Swirled Feather.

[1] The Fenton Art Glass Company uses the term "Fairy Light" for their products.

Also at that time, there were additional options for a shiny finish and electric lighting. Many other colors and designs, some by special order, were also produced later during the 1970's and 1980's.

Before going on I would like to explain that fairy lights are sometimes referred to as fairy lamps. In the Victorian Era Samuel Clarke used the term "light" when referring to his squatty candles. The term "lamp" was used to describe the holder, principally a dome-shaped shade and lamp cup to hold the candle. The fairy lamp dome was marketed in three basic sizes, the larger "fairy-size," the smaller "pyramid-size" (sometimes referred to as "Fairy Pyramid") and the very small and very rare "Wee Fairy-size."

The "bread and butter" fairy light line for Fenton was the hobnail pattern. Starting in 1969 the two-piece hobnail line #3608 fairy lights began. They were produced in many colors including Colonial Amber, Colonial Blue, Green, Pink, Milk Glass, Peking Blue, Jonquil Yellow, and Cameo Opalescent to name a few that were used with the hobnail molds.

The 1970's brought Fenton into a very active role in producing new fairy light molds. The new shapes included the hand blown fairy light, the Santa Claus Fairy Light, Madonna Candlelight, Owl Fairy Light, Chou Ting Ceremonial Light, Fine Cut and Block Fairy Light, Beaded Fairy Light,

Heart Fairy Light, and Lily of the Valley Fairy Light.

For a brief time, Fenton tried hand blowing the two-piece fairy light and then cutting them apart. Later they decided to go back to using the two-mold method as in the hobnail lights.

The Santa Claus mold #5106, introduced in 1971, was very popular, however, due to the high cost to produce, it was discontinued in 1979. During the process of making them many of the chimneys cracked from the heat. Colors included Colonial Green, Ruby, Milk Glass, white with hand-painted holly berries, Custard Satin and Lime Sherbet.

Madonna Candlelight #5107, introduced in 1978, was also used as a vase. It came in Crystal Velvet, Custard, Blue Satin and so on. As in other fairy lights you can find some that were hand painted. It also came with an interesting wire bracket to hold the candle cup.

The Owl #5108 was introduced in 1973 and came in several colors including Blue Satin, Lavender Satin, Custard, Lime, Crystal Velvet and Rosalene.

The Chou Ting Ceremonial Light #8407, introduced in 1977, can be found in Ruby Carnival, Rosalene, White Satin, and Crystal Velvet.

The Beaded Fairy Light #8405 was very successful and is still popular today. In 1978 Fenton produced this light in Ruby Carnival, and you can also find it in Rose Garden, Willow Green, Pink Chiffon, Crystal decorated with daffodils and several other colors.

The Fine Cut and Block #9102, introduced in 1969 was also in the Olde Virginia Line. Among the colors to look for are Colonial Green, Milk Glass, and Rose Pearl in 1993.

The Heart Fairy Light #8406 was produced in Rosalene in 1976 and comes in many other colors including Wisteria, Spring Green and Teal Marigold. This mold has also been called the Pineapple because of its resemblance to the fruit, as well as the heart.

The Lily of the Valley mold # 8404 in Topaz Opalescent was introduced in 1979. This large 8" fairy light is still produced today and can be found in the 2000-2001 catalog in Ice Blue Pearl.

The 1980's also introduced new molds. The bas-relief Nativity design #9401 came in several colors including Florentine Blue, Antique Green, Florentine Brown, Antique Blue and Crystal Velvet. You can also find this fairy light in decorated and undecorated Antique White. Robin Spindler developed the decorations for a Nativity Fairy Light #9401 N7 in 1996 made from the 1980's bas-relief mold.

The "Quadrafold" style fairy light, by various model numbers, is an elegant shape that Fenton had reproduced from an original design of Samuel Clarke. The first one was Pink Dogwood on Burmese followed by others such as the 1997 family signature piece #2040 in Topaz Opalescent with Hydrangeas.

Persian Medallion #8408, introduced in 1974, can be found in the 1980 Fenton Catalog in Velva Rose. This was a so-called "stretch glass." A treatment begun about 1917 and marketed during the last half of 1980 to commemorate Fenton's 75th anniversary. The Persian Medallion shape is a three-piece fairy light.

The Basketweave mold #9304, introduced in 1981, was first a two-piece fairy light but was also available in a three-piece candlelight #9504 in 1983.

Faberge Fairy Light is a 5 ½" #9404 piece that was made in Carnival and Sunset Peach in the 1980's and in Aquamarine in 1999.

By the 1990's Fenton had several molds for making fairy lights. This was the decade to enhance their product with many different treatments.

The 2000's decade has introduced still more molds and we are only starting the year

2003. The Spanish Lace Fairy Light was first introduced in 2001 on the shopping network QVC in irridized Ice Blue Satin #c58842. From the Fenton catalog the #3520 Spanish Lace Fairy Lights can be found in Pink Chiffon and Violet.

Atlantis, #5204, is very popular and already comes in many colors. The large Snowman Fairy Light #5940 V4 that stands some 7 ½" is called "Jingles." Both are Jon Saffel designs.

I know I am hoping there will be another Snowman to come out next year. Once you have the tea light lit, this whole fairy light is aglow. What will the Fenton staff come up with next? I am anxiously awaiting the new molds of the future.

*Editor's Note:*

*This article presents a representative sample of Fairy Light styles made by Fenton Art Glass Company. A complete listing of Fenton's Fairy Light production, "Fenton Fairy Lights, 1953-2002" by Raymond and Barbara Carver, can be found on-line through our Club's home page.*

*Additional information on Fenton's production of Fairy Lights is available in the "Fenton Glass Compendium – 1970-1985" by John Walk. This valuable reference includes many of the designs referenced here along with many other decorated designs.*

*The photographs used to support this article are representative and do not necessarily reflect the broad range of colors available in each style. The photographs are from my personal collection obtained from many of our members and other Internet resources.*

*Finally, a note of appreciation to Joanne for tackling such a difficult subject as Fenton's Fairy Light production. Considering Fenton's prolific production over many years, it was a monumental task at best and impossible to address in its entirety. Hopefully, however, this article will open the door for future articles related to specific features of Fenton's Fairy Light production.*