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Success Story: American-Made Glass Tableware from the Gilded Age Will Be Featured in New Morse Vignette

Note to editors: Attached is a high-resolution image of late-19th and early-20th century cut and pressed glass tableware to be featured in the new Morse vignette. For other images, contact us at pubaffairs@morsemuseum.org.

WINTER PARK, Fla. — In the late-19th and early-20th centuries, American manufacturers produced glass tableware of unparalleled quality for consumers of all tastes and means. More than five dozen examples of this glassware will be featured in *A Brilliant Setting—American Cut and Pressed Glass Tableware 1876–1917*, a new Morse vignette opening on Oct. 14.

On view through mid-September 2009, *A Brilliant Setting* will showcase hand-carved luxury glassware by such makers as Libbey Glass Company, T.G. Hawkes & Company, and J. Hoare & Company, as well as a variety of pressed-glass tableware in the charming Three-Face pattern by George Duncan & Sons. Both the hand-cut glass, also known as Brilliant-cut glass, and pressed glassware were the height of fashion in their day, though among different income groups. The installation will feature an array of glassware—candle lamps, bread trays, fruit and punch bowls, pitchers, vases, and more—in a warm modern-day dining room as it might be decorated by a glass enthusiast and collector who may have inherited many of the objects.

Vignettes at the Morse are a tradition established by the museum's founder, the late Jeannette Genius McKean. An accomplished artist and interior designer, Mrs. McKean fashioned creative themed interiors using objects from the collection as decorative elements.

At the Philadelphia world's fair in 1876, America's centennial birthday celebration, the exhibits of U.S. cut glass were so superior in craftsmanship and beauty to their European rivals that they generated a major revival in the cut-glass industry in this country. The demand for this luxury glass was fueled by fabulously wealthy industrial barons and affluent members of an emerging middle class who wished to decorate their homes to reflect their new-found prosperity. The Pittsburgh company George Duncan & Sons also won awards in Philadelphia for its more affordable and completely novel Three-Face pattern of glass tableware. Around the stem of these pieces are three classically inspired female faces cast from a mold and "frosted" with an acid-etched finish.

A hundred years ago, a host would set a table with these objects to make the best possible impression, and they continue to dazzle us today.

The Morse Museum is open 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, with additional Friday hours of 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. November through April. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$1 students, and free for children under 12. All visitors are admitted free 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Fridays November through April. Visit www.morsemuseum.org for details.

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