

# HEISEY

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**Clarence W. Vogel –  
Pioneer Heisey Researcher**  
By George J. Reynolds



Clarence Vogel, whom I usually referred to as “the old grouch,” was born in Celeryville, Ohio on May 15, 1908. He was educated in Ohio, attended Ohio State University, and received a BA degree in education from Ashland University. Mr. Vogel and his wife Alice raised ten children, seven are living today. Their children gave them eighteen Grandchildren and two Great Grandchildren.

The first years of his working life were spent teaching school in Mechanicsville, Richmond, and later in Clyde, Ohio. During WW2 he was hired as a civilian employee by the Federal Government. This period took him to Mobile, Alabama, Columbus, Ohio and finally to the Air Force base in Newark, Ohio, where he retired in 1970. The move to Newark was a momentous event in his life, it brought Heisey Glass into his world. Vogel was always a collector. His collections included coins, stamps, china, guns, the study of Genealogy, and the Lord only knows what else. During his stay in Newark, he acted as President of the local Numismatic Society

and was very active in the study of coins. In 1957 he wrote and published his first book on Genealogy. This experience was a great help in later years when his study of Heisey Glass was undertaken.

In October of 1966 he attended an auction in Hebron and purchased his first two pieces of Heisey Glass. They were both two compartment relishes in the Crystolite pattern. After this purchase, he was hooked on Heisey for life. Much of his spare time was spent in Bert Hoffman’s Budget Shop in Newark, where Bert taught him as much as she could and introduced him to Heisey dealers, collectors, and former Heisey employees. During this period he felt all Heisey Glass was marked with a Diamond “H” and bought all he could afford. His first large purchase was from the collection of George Hoffman, with the expenditure of several hundred dollars, when Heisey was cheap! With the help of Bert Hoffman, he continued to investigate the history of Heisey. In March of 1967 he discovered Paul Fairall’s shop, and checked it for finds every week. Irene Rauck’s Moundbuilders Antique shop became a regular stop for him as well.

Clarence was not only interested in the glass, but its history as well. Several members of the Newark Coin Club were former Heisey Co. employees. This allowed him the chance to pick their brains about the individual pieces he purchased. One of the former Heisey employees informed him that the Hawthorn color was a dredge on the market and did not sell. Today, this color is much sought after.

While at work he met Loren Yeakley, who was a glass collector with Cambridge Glass his specialty at the time. The two of them spent many hours discussing their collections over coffee at the plant. In 1978 Loren and Virginia Yeakley published the first color book about Heisey Glass, “*Heisey Glass In Color.*” This book became a great help to all collectors of colored glass.

In June 1968 Loren and Clarence set up the first public display of Heisey Glass in Newark at the Licking County Historical Society under the guidance of Laura Beggs, County Historian. This was during the celebration of Land of Legend week.

During the summer of 1967, Clarence, with the prodding of Bert Hoffman, decided to write a book about Heisey Glass. This task was undertaken only eleven months after his first

exposure to Heisey. Two other Newark dealers were talking about writing a book and he was hesitant to begin. It soon became apparent the dealers were only talking, so he started his research.

Vogel soon found that not all former Heisey employees were willing to discuss their work at the Heisey factory. His first big break came when Gus Heisey, II agreed to help with his research. Thus, on October 3, 1967, research for the first of four Vogel books began. Gus turned out to be an honest, agreeable source of Heisey inside information, and sold him his first old Heisey catalog, #14B circa 1914. He then purchased all the old Heisey catalogs he could find. Irene Rauch tells me that she met Vogel at the Air Force gate many times, after work and during his lunch hour, to sell him catalogs. These books were not cheap and prices ran from \$35.00 to \$150.00. During this period, Vogel spent as much money for catalogs as he did for Heisey glass, and these catalogs are worth many times their purchase price today.

Several Heisey employees gradually welcomed him into their homes, where he took notes that turned out to be of invaluable assistance in his research. Mr. E. E. Olson, former Heisey chemist from 1922-1957, was also a great help to Vogel. He spent hundreds of hours with Olson and learned many things not generally known about the Heisey plant and its leaders. Mr. Olson also cleared up the confusion regarding Heisey colors, since he formulated most of the colors developed after 1922, he was a mine of information. These men and women are honored in Vogel's second book, "*Heisey's Colonial Years.*"

Over the next two years, Vogel spent much of his spare time interviewing anyone he could find who could give him insight on the Heisey firm. The research had become an obsession, and he spent hundreds of hours on it because he felt the Heisey Collector needed an accurate source of information concerning this beautiful glass.

In 1968, after almost two years of exhaustive research, Vogel was ready to publish his first book about Heisey glass, however, publishing a book was not as easy as he thought. The manuscript was first sent to Mid America Publishing Co. of Iowa for review. Due to many factors, this did not work out. He then met with Mr. Fisher, of the Fisher Printing Co, in Galion Ohio. Vogel's first thought was to publish one complete book, but Mr. Fisher advised him to publish a series of books. They established five books would be written.

On December 27, 1968, Vogel gave Mr. Fisher his manuscript for book #1, "*The First Ten Years,*" to print. Advertising was sent out stating a total of five books would be forthcoming. Therefore, Vogel took on the momentous task of publishing the books himself, and book #1 was copyrighted in April 1969. Most of the information contained in book #1 was taken from Heisey's catalog, #50 1907-1908.

The first year was a success for a publication with a limited readership, with twelve books per month shipped. This encouraged Vogel to start on book #2 right away, and "*Heisey's Colonial Years*" was published later in 1969. He published his final two books, "*Heisey's Art and Colored Glass,*" in 1970, and "*Heisey's Early and Late Years,*" in 1971. Vogel's original intent to publish five books never came to pass, he had burned himself out turning out four books in

two short years. Several years after the completion of book #4, he still received orders for book #5.

These books have become an important part of Heisey Glass collecting. When a novice collector asks "what books should I buy about all of Heisey Glass?" they are usually advised to buy the Vogel books first, and buy specialized Heisey books after becoming familiar with the patterns. These books are still available from the Vogel family in Willard, Ohio, without revisions. These four reference books contain only material found in old Heisey catalogs or from interviews. No information was used from other previous Heisey publications.

While Vogel was accumulating the information for his books, he found the Heisey catalogs used a numbering system, but apparently did not give the patterns a name. He named as many as 110 patterns, many of which are quite familiar to collectors today. Flat Panel, Twist, Urn, Narrow Flute, Double Rib and Panel, Crossed Line Flute, and Recessed Panel, are just a few of the patterns he named. In later years, HCA researchers discovered some of the original names and numbers in the Heisey Company records, and have made changes in there literature and publications to reflect this new information.

With the success Vogel found with his four books, he continued on with a quarterly newsletter in 1971. This quarterly was called "*The Heisey Glass Newscaster,*" and was subscribed to by many Heisey collectors over the following fifteen years. When he started publishing the *Newscaster*, it was soon discovered there were some errors in his four books. During the *Newscaster's* period, many of these errors were corrected by Vogel, not always without a long argument. Horace King, former Heisey designer, and Vogel spent many an hour discussing various patterns; who had designed them, and so on. These discussions did not always end in agreement.

The *Newscaster* became a very popular quarterly for Heisey collectors. It gave Vogel the opportunity to publish new finds sent to him by subscribers from all over the country. The fact that it was successful for fifteen years certainly shows its popularity. Vogel was not afraid to rock the boat on occasion, although at times he was playing the "devil's advocate." These periods gave people the incentive to think about which self-styled expert was right or wrong. This was not always a popular position with many people involved with Heisey in Ohio, however, it was a much needed activity to omit chances of a few thinking they were always right.

After Clarence's retirement, he returned to his home in Plymouth, Ohio, with his wife Alice. There, he continued his Heisey research and established his famous "Museum." This museum consisted of a room in what appeared to be a garage. The room was lined with shelves covered with plastic, yet the items behind the plastic were breath taking. There were many one-of-a-kind Heisey pieces and Clarence was happy to tell anyone the history of each.

During the 1980's, Vogel's health started to fail, and he made many comments over the years that the current *Newscaster* issue might be the last. Sadly, the 1986 Autumn issue was the last one ever printed. In 1987, Vogel started to disperse his collection. Much of it was sold by the Apple Tree Auction House in Newark, in two large gatherings. His research

material, catalogs and so on, were left to his family. This was not the end of collecting for him. He still bought Heisey when he saw a good piece, and his last collectable purchased was a marble top table.

Vogel gave the first impression of being a gruff individual, however, after a few minutes, his warm gentle side and sense of humor appeared. His son-in-law, Ralph McKelvey told me a story about Clarence's gun collecting that should give the reader an insight to his personality. He apparently bought a lot of guns and paid quite a bit for them over the years. After his death, the family found that most of them were just junk. He bought them from friends, at too high a price, to help them out. If the *Newscasters* are read carefully, this side of Clarence appears, but you have to look for it.

Manny Klawans, well known dealer and collector, was another good friend of Vogel's. They sold each other a lot of glass, but not until after much haggling. For example, Manny loaned the Heisey Glass Museum a rare piece several years

ago for a six month period. Clarence saw the piece and wanted to buy it after the loan period was up. When the time came, Manny offered Clarence the piece. Manny refused to put a price on it since Clarence was his friend. Clarence would not either for the same reason. This impasse turned out to be good fortune for the museum, Manny finally donated it in memory of his wife of over sixty years. Today, Manny still speaks with affection about his late friend Clarence.

Clarence Vogel died August 16, 1989 in Plymouth, Ohio. He left a Heisey heritage that will be hard to duplicate. His books will carry his memory long after most of us are gone.

Clarence's daughter, Sandra McKelvey and her husband Ralph are carrying on with the sale of his books. Sandra did much of her Father's typing over the years. It is difficult to see how any beginning Heisey Glass collector can start without the Vogel books. They are by far the most extensive record available today.