



The Rich Cut Glass of Charles Guernsey Tuthill

Maurice Crofford

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The American brilliant cut glass tradition is perhaps nowhere better showcased than in the intricate art of Charles Guernsey Tuthill. Born in 1871 in Corning, New York, Tuthill entered the glass trade as a young apprentice, launching a career that would not only produce some of the finest rich cut glass in America but also innovate that art form in ways that adapted to the changing life of the new century.

In this fascinatingly detailed narrative of the business Tuthill founded, the patterns he created, the techniques he used, and the other artisans and consumers he knew, Maurice Crofford has written the story of an earlier, more elegant and leisurely era. For those knowledgeable about cut glass, the development of the forms will be instructive; for others, who simply appreciate the beauty of the glass, the numerous black and white photographs will appeal. Beyond both of those dimensions, however, Crofford provides a fascinating insight into the ways industrialization and mass production and, more especially, the automobile, changed forever the ways upper-class Americans lived, entertained, and displayed their good fortune. In Tuthill's career, moreover, Crofford finds an example of American ingenuity and creative genius in responding to changing times.

The glass itself is of extraordinary beauty, and the descriptions here include the patterns, effects sought, and methods of hand production. Crofford details not only those patterns best known to aficionados of American cut glass of the Brilliant Period but also other patterns retrieved through exhaustive dogging of Tuthill's trail. Through the written records of Tuthill's succession of businesses and in interviews with surviving members of the Tuthill family, Crofford has reconstructed a remarkable catalog of this master craftsman's work and the story of his life and career.

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