

## Exposure To Wind And Dust Through Centuries Creates Unique Color In Stained Glass Windows

By JERRY SHEEHAN  
Newspaper Enterprise Assn.  
PHILADELPHIA (NEA) — There is no such thing as stained glass secrets passed on from father to son behind locked doors.

But if anyone had any such secrets in this 300-year-old craft, it would be Dr. and Mrs. Henry E. Willet, heads of the largest stained glass firm in the United States.

"It's true," said Mrs. Willet in the busy shop located in Philadelphia's Chestnut Hill section, "it is difficult to duplicate the deep blues of Gothic stained glass — such as in France's great cathedrals. But this is not because we can't make the glass we want with today's modern methods.

"The unique color of ancient stained glass is gained through exposure to the wind and dust of centuries. The glass on the exterior develops microscopic chips and a patina.

"Wait around for a few centuries and our windows in, say, West Point Chapel, New York's St. John the Divine or the National Cathedral in Washington will look the same."

Mrs. Willet estimates that the family business has produced thousands of glass Nativity scenes since the founding of the company 65 years ago. Hundreds of figures of the Holy Family have been carefully wrought by the Willet artisans, and there have been Resurrection scenes beyond counting. Yet, because of the infinite variety of glass, each is unique.

According to Mrs. Willet, the

89-man workshop in Philadelphia varies little from the glass works which supplied the decoration for Notre Dame of Paris hundreds of years ago. Artists still bend close to paper, working with pen and ink to make the preliminary sketches for what will become a giant rose window of a great cathedral.

Master craftsmen then transfer the drawings to actual-size paper patterns and select the glass colors. Bewiskered artisans, with the stroke of cutting tool, then slice into shape the thousands of pieces of glass with the precision and ease of a housewife snipping apart link sausages.

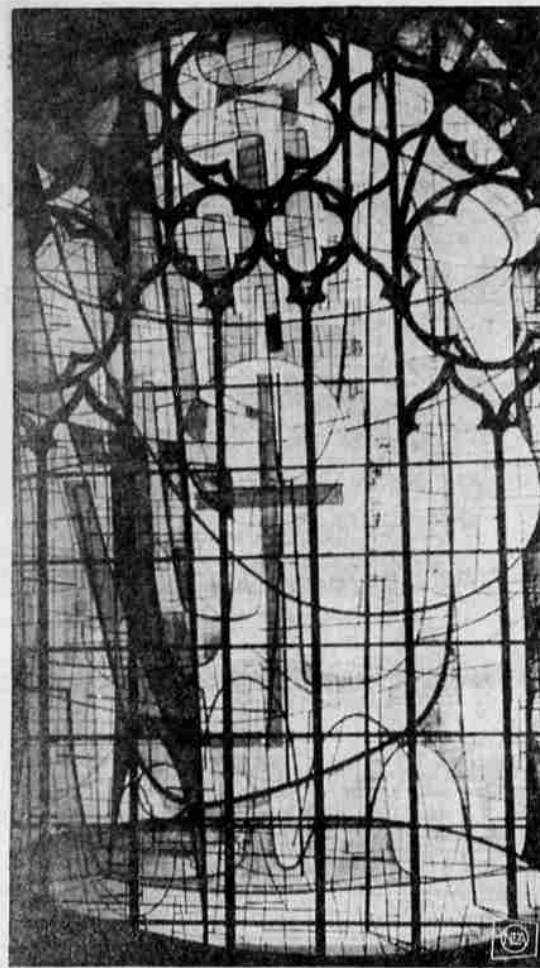
Then comes the preliminary joining of the pieces, and another battery of artists goes to work directly on the glass, which is then fused at 1,100 degrees in a kiln. The final step comes with the individual segments nested into the permanent embrace of lead strips.

Because, today as in the past, stained glass cannot be mass-produced, a fine window does not come cheap. Prices run as high as \$100 a square foot. Some sets of windows in a building will run to thousands of square feet.

Nor will the deliberate artist

Did you know that Christmas accounts for 41 per cent of the gifts an average family buys each year. Americans will give more than 1.5 billion presents this Christmas says the Rust Craft greeting card company.

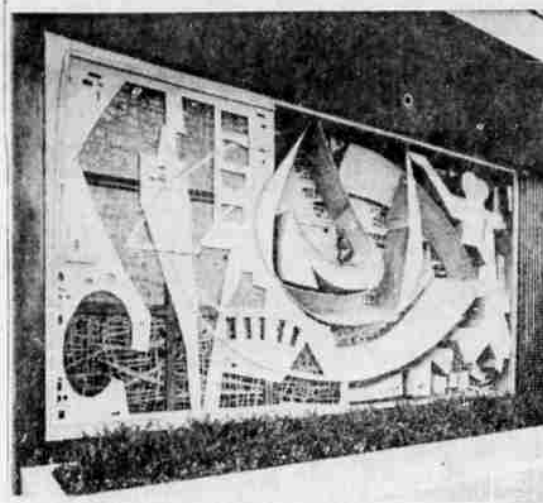
While aware of their tradition extending back for centuries, Willet craftsmen have made at least one concession to the 20th Century—they are all members of a society with the prosaic name of Painters, Paperhangers and Decorators of America.



In its final stages of creation, modernistic window in the Willet shop is destined for Northwestern University.



Mrs. Henry E. Willet



United Nations Religion Center features a Willet Window with raised exterior detail, signifying the "eye of God."

Did you know that Christmas was denounced by the early Puritans. The General Court of Massachusetts passed a law in 1659 making the observance of Christmas a penal offense.

## Gathering Planned By Johnsons

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Although President Johnson's life has undergone some dramatic changes in recent days, he plans to retain one semblance of his past family routine.

The White House announced Tuesday that the Johnsons would have a family style Thanksgiving holiday at their home in the Spring Valley section of Washington.

The President and First Lady will be joined by their two daughters, Lucy Baines, 16, and Lynda Bird, 19. Also present will be Lynda Bird's fiancé, Engsign Bernard Rosenback.

The Zend-Avesta is the sacred book of the Zoroastrian religion.

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