



## July – Patriotic Celebrations!

By Marcia Harmon, Cottage Jewel

Time to wave Old Glory and show off your red, white, and blue! It is swim team season, and the kids are winning as many ribbons as possible. If you yearn for more 4<sup>th</sup> of July spirit and an easy decorating solution, then come purchase a handful of the vintage 1950's Alameda County Faire ribbons that I unearthed in an old Castro Valley barn.

Most veteran collector's fill their antique canning jars with fresh red strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries, and I love to add a pile of white shells and starfish. Pull out your grandmother's old ironstone platters and pitchers, they are true to their name and made to last for many generations. Ironstone was perfected by 1800 when English potters experimented with a calcinated flint and produced a durable white-ware that was heavy, textured and resembled porcelain. Various manufacturers produced versions of the pearly ironstone throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century with countless patterns from very simple to extremely decorated mold designs of fruit, foliage, ribbing, or scallops. By the 1830's transfer-printed ironstone became most popular with colorful scenes in blue, mulberry, pink, green, black, and even polychrome.

Your patriotic spread won't be complete without a piece of blue transfer ironstone. Most coveted is Victorian Flow Blue which is a darker blue transfer that is distinctive for it's blurred, flowing imagery. The obscured image is achieved through the introduction of a chemical vapor into the kiln while the cobalt transfer is being baked onto the ironstone. If there are no clear hallmarks on the platters, then hints for dating might include the transfer pattern, style, weight, addition of gilding, or color/condition of the material. Kovel's remains the best resource for dating porcelains and translating old hallmarks.

To add a splash of red to your blue and white, your most valuable antique art glass is cranberry which is gold infused. On a more practical note, I recommend ruby glass from the Depression era or some antique ruby-stained flash glass souvenir pieces. The old pressed glass comes in an array of tableware options and hundreds of patterns. Both my vintage and Victorian pressed

glass tumblers have survived years of modern dishwashing, but be extra careful with your flash glass because the ruby lining and the gilded souvenir logos will disappear in the hot suds.



If you are not setting up a patriotic table, then at least embellish yourself this month and consider these accessories: WWII Sweetheart jewelry, Victory jewelry, flag pins, 1950's rhinestone star bursts or antique handmade red-white-blue banded Chevron glass trade beads.

Join us Thursday nights for these upcoming soirees – a mermaid party with guest artists and an introduction to the Maidens of the Mer, a Bodice

Display workshop, a Button & Charm String Trunk show and the Summer Serenade Street Festival with wine tasting at Cottage Jewel located at 100 Prospect in downtown Danville. Call us at 925-837-2664 or visit us online at [www.CottageJewel.com](http://www.CottageJewel.com).

*A Meaningful Month*  
**July**

**Birthstone: Ruby**  
**Flower: Larkspur,**  
*“the emblem of haughtiness  
and fickleness”*