

Bowl of American Legends

Date

1942

Primary Maker

Sidney Waugh

Medium

Engraved glass

Description

This fine example of twentieth-century American crystal was produced by Steuben Glass, a highly respected manufacturer located in Corning, New York. Founded in 1903, the company was initially known for its colored glassware. However, after being reorganized in 1932, Steuben adopted a new glass recipe which enabled a full spectrum of light, including ultraviolet rays, to pass through its products. The company subsequently became known for its exceptionally clear colorless glass, exemplified by this mold-blown crystal bowl designed by Sidney Waugh. The bowl's engraved design created by Waugh features a modern aesthetic popular in the 1930s and 1940s, with clean linear forms strongly influenced by Art Deco style. Its decorative scheme presents a particular interpretation of American identity and the idea of the "American Legend" constructed through nineteenth- and twentieth-century folklore, literature and "tall tales." Seven vignettes featuring celebrated American characters are engraved around the bowl's rim: from clockwise, Ichabod Crane pursued by the Headless Horseman, from Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* of 1820; Davy Crockett with a bear and an alligator; Pecos Bill riding a mountain lion and carrying a rattlesnake lasso; Paul Bunyan with Babe the Blue Ox; Johnny Appleseed dispensing a bag of seeds and preaching the gospel; Uncle Remus with Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox, from stories published by Joel Chandler Harris between 1880 and 1948; and Rip Van Winkle drinking and playing ninepins with a group of tiny Dutchmen, from the eponymous story of 1819 by Washington Irving. Produced in 1942, Bowl of American Legends is one of a number of objects manufactured by Steuben around this time that exhibits a nationalist theme. Examples of Steuben Glass were often given as gifts to foreign dignitaries by the US government: President Harry S. Truman gave a version of this bowl to Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran, in 1951.

Dimensions

Overall: 10 × 9 11/16 in. (25.4 × 24.6 cm)