

Fairy Lamps

THE ANNA SAFLEY HOUSTON COLLECTION



Fairy lamps, popular during the Victorian era, were glass candle votives designed to provide safer, longer-lasting light than free-standing tapers. They were often used in nurseries, sickrooms, and hallways.

Before the days of readily available electricity, when candles and gas lamps were the only forms of indoor light, fires were a dangerous and inevitable hazard. In 1885, an English lighting designer, Samuel Clark, patented a design for fairy lights that featured a glass cup covered with an open dome. These lamps could accommodate shorter, stouter candles that burned longer than standard tapers. They soon became widely popular—it is rumored the Queen Victoria ordered 1,500 for her personal use!



Houston Museum
of Decorative Arts

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201 High Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37403



Mold-blown, turquoise satin glass, late 19th century

*Satin Burmese glass, late 19th century
by Mt. Washington Glass Co.*



*Mold-blown, pink satin glass,
late 19th century*

*Mold-blown, spatter art glass, late
19th century, attributed to
Fran Welz, Bohemia*



*Mold-blown, pink satin glass with
clear pressed glass Cricklite base,
late 19th century*

Anna Safley Houston, pioneering businesswoman and antiques collector, curated a remarkable collection of over 15,000 items, spanning glassware, pottery, textiles, furniture, and much more.

