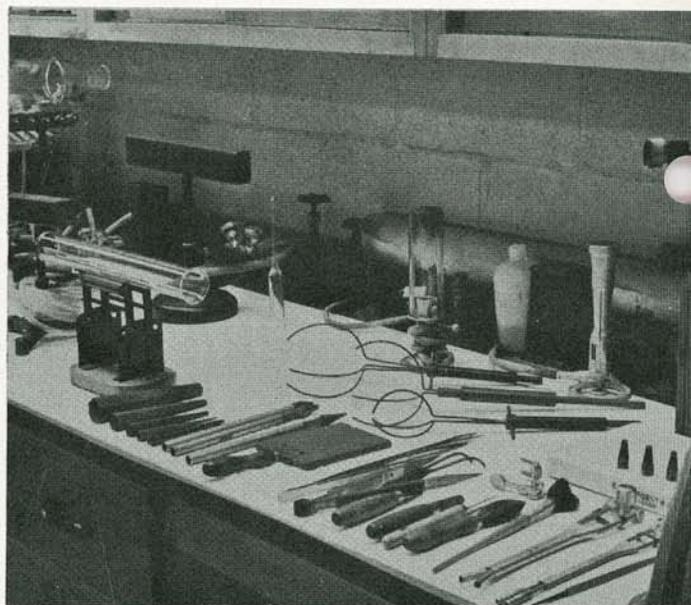


LIPS COMPRESSED around glassblower's mouthpiece, Robert Glover (Analytical Dept.) fashions new laboratory flask. "The art is all in your eyes and hands," he says. When blowing glassware, Glover maintains even surface temperature by constantly rotating glass over torch. This assures uniform wall thickness of glassware.



GLASSBLOWER'S TOOLS differ little from those used by artisans in Christ's day. Glass tube rests on a "roller support" used to handle hot glass. Foreground, l. to r.: carbon reamers; spatula-like device is used for flattening glassware bases; forceps; various shaping tools; brush for removing carbon deposits from finished glassware; hand torches; file. Flask clamps are in center.

Fernald Glassblower Practices

A Fragile Art

ABOUT the time of Julius Caesar, a fellow Roman was inventing the glassblower's basic tool, the blowpipe. A long reed-like instrument, this deceptively simple-looking device is still used by a handful of skilled artisans. With the blowpipe, or a modified version of it, glassblowers transform blobs of useless glass into beautiful, as well as functional, glass objects.

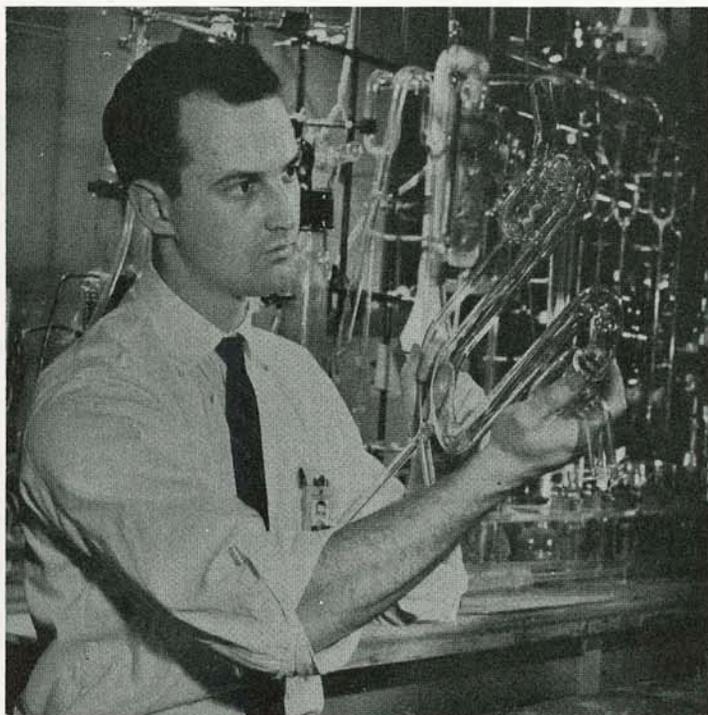
Robert Glover is a newcomer to this select company of presentday glassblowers. During the past two years, Bob — a member of our Analytical Laboratory Department — has been studying and applying the ancient art of glassblowing to our more unique glassware problems at Fernald.

"I don't consider myself a full-fledged glassblower yet," Bob says with a smile. "That takes years of practice. And besides, when I fabricate glassware I always start with a piece of stock-tubing rather than a chunk of raw glass."

Nevertheless, when you look at the imposing array of vessels, tubing and other glassware Bob has fabricated for use in our laboratories you wonder if he isn't being overly critical of his glassblowing ability and accomplishments.

Glassblowing is only one part of Bob Glover's duties here at the plant. More often you find him in the Vacuum-Fusion Laboratory conducting chemical analyses, filling out reports, and otherwise carrying out the various duties of a modern lab technician. But glassblowing is the work he enjoys most.

Recently someone asked Bob if he practiced his unusual art at home. "No," he replied, "but I hope to buy my own equipment someday soon and set up a basement workshop. I think glassblowing would make a wonderful hobby."



MOST GLASSWARE fabricated by Bob Glover — like this mercury trap for Vacuum-Fusion Lab — must be made locally to answer unique laboratory problems. Modest about his skill, Glover says, "I don't consider myself a real glassblower. That takes years of practice."