

The A.G.Co. Logo

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Along with von Mechow, Lockhart and Teal (2011:49-58) investigated A.G.CO. manufacturer's marks on a variety of glass bottles and jars in 2011. The researchers determined that the logo was used by at least three glass houses depending on the type of bottle or jar made. Most of these identifications were relatively certain. The investigation began in response to earlier research into the A.G.CO. mark on flasks. The current study is especially relevant to the heretofore unattributed jar embossed "SUPERIOR A.G.CO."

Containers and Marks

A.G.CO. on Flasks

Because of the configuration of the "G" in "A.G.CO." on the bases of flasks, most of the earlier researchers – Freeman (1964:77), McKearin & Wilson (1978:554), Teal (2005:74), Toulouse (1971:34), and Van Rensselaer (1926:37) – reported this mark as "A.C.CO." Toulouse, however, noted that the "C" could have been a "G" – and Knittle (1927:441) recorded the mark as "A.G.CO." As part of a new study, Teal (Lockhart & Teal 2011:50-51) re-analyzed his collection and other flasks with the logo and concluded that the mark was, indeed, "A.G.CO."¹

Each flask with the logo was strap-sided (union oval), aqua in color, and had a tooled, double-ring finish (Figure 1). Most of the flasks were used by Carolina firms that sold liquor prior to the formation of the South Carolina Dispensary in 1893. Teal dated



Figure 1 – Pre-Dispensary South Carolina liquor flask (Teal 2005:78)

¹ Lockhart and Teal (2011) may be accessed online through Bill Lindsey's Historical Bottle website – at the References page (Lindsey 2012).



Figure 2 – AGCo flask with anchor on side (eBay)

these containers between ca. 1890 and 1893 based on the use of the tooled finish (beginning ca. 1890 on flasks) and the Dispensary opening.²



Figure 3 – Base of anchor flask (eBay)

An eBay auction offered a different variation. This one was also a strap-sided (union) flask with “A.G.CO.” embossed in a concave circle on the base (Figure 2). The colorless flask had the typical double-ring finish, probably tooled. On the front in a large circular plate was an embossed anchor, with the top tilted slightly to the right (Figure 3).

McKearin & Wilson (1978:554) described a Grover Cleveland flask marked ACCo (actually



Figure 5 – Finish on a Grover Cleveland flask (eBay)

A.G.CO.) from the 1880-1900 period and noted that most examples had been found in the southeast (Figure 4). Aside from the image and name, the flasks fit the description of the ones used in South Carolina – aqua color, tooled finishes, strap sides (Figure 5). Toulouse

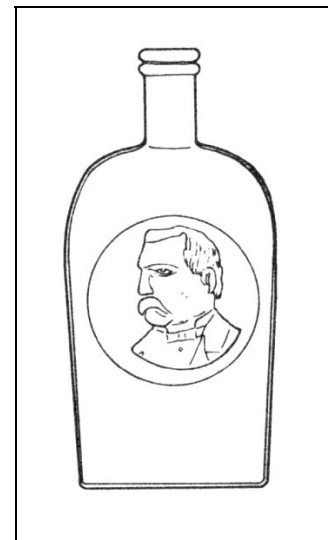


Figure 4 – Grover Cleveland flask (McKearin & Wilson 1978:554)

² The technique of tooling the finish directly from the bottle neck (versus the older method of applying a new gob of glass to the neck and tooling *that* into a finish) gradually emerged in 19th century glass houses between the 1870s and the late 1890s. Gaffers first began tooling finishes on smaller bottles and gradually increased the use of the technique to larger ones. Manufacturers of quart beer bottles were some of the last to shift – during the ca. 1890-1896 period.

(1971:34) assigned date ranges of 1885-1889 or 1893-1897 to the mark, based on the years when Cleveland was president. The flasks may well have been made to influence voters, so a range of ca. 1892-1893 seems logical. If the flasks had been made during Cleveland's first presidency, they would likely have had applied finishes.

Histories

Annapolis Glass Co., Annapolis, Maryland (1885-ca. 1887)

The Annapolis Glass Co. incorporated on May 12, 1885, with a capital of \$3,000. The plant began operations about October and made green and amber glass. The factory was offered for sale on July 18, 1887, but the offer was withdrawn when the only bid was \$4,000. The plant apparently remained idle and was again presented for sale in 1891. The factory reopened in 1897, although this apparent reactivation was probably initiated to process the sale of the property to new owner – and a name change to the Severn Glass Co. (Roller 1998; von Mechow 2021).

Atlanta Glass Co., Atlanta, Georgia (1887-1892)

Rankin-Nichols Glass Co. Atlanta, Georgia (1893)

Southern Glass Co., Atlanta, Georgia (1894-ca. 1894)

Reed (1889:465) discussed the early development of the Atlanta Glass Co.:

The Atlanta Glass Works Company was incorporated in 1887, the incorporators being S.M. Inman, E.P. Howell, D.W. Curry, A.G. Candler, J.L. Pinson, Theodore Schuman, H.G. Hutchinson and J.W. Rankin. The officers of the company are J.W. Rankin, president ; H.G. Hutchinson, vice-president ; J.L. Pinson, secretary and treasurer, and A.E. Finkel, superintendent. The capital stock of the company was authorized to be \$50,000, with the privilege of increasing it to \$100,000. Since the organization the capital has been increased to \$60,000. The factory is outside the city limits on South Pryor street, where are employed one hundred and fifty hands, the weekly pay roll amounting to \$1,500, and the weekly output of bottles and chimneys amounts to about \$3,000.

Atlanta Glass advertised in the Proceedings of the Georgia Pharmaceutical Association in 1890 and 1891 as “Manufacturers of Druggists’ Glassware.” The plant made “flint prescription bottles, lamp chimneys, green and amber ware” and noted, “private molds for proprietary medicine a specialty” (Georgia Pharmaceutical Association 1890:79). The following year, the glass house replaced “lamp chimneys” with “long-neck panels” and stressed that they manufactured “all styles of Druggists’ Glassware, making a special feature of our lettered prescription ware.” Of special interest to Georgia drug stores, the firm noted that, “Owing to our short haul we can furnish you with glass quicker, with less breakage and better freight, than any other house” (Georgia Pharmaceutical Association 1891:124).

On December 30, 1891, however, the plant burned. The company began rebuilding in January 1892 but went into receivership by March. A new corporation, the Rankins-Nichols Glass Co., bought the plant a year later (March 1893) and had resumed operations by April 13. By December, however, this group, too, had gone into receivership, and the Southern Glass Co. took control of the property by February 1894 (Roller 1997b).

Little is known about *this* Southern Glass Co. (there were at least two others by that name), except that it sold a half carload of half-pint and pint flasks along with pint and quart round whiskey bottles to the South Carolina Dispensary in 1894. The receipt for the bottles showed the word “Southern” superimposed over “Atlanta,” suggesting that the Rankin-Nichols company had continued to use the Atlanta Glass Co. name. The Dispensary bottles were not embossed with any manufacturers’ marks (Teal 2005:96). Nothing else is currently known about the company, although it likely closed soon after 1894.

Augusta Glass Works, Augusta, Georgia (1890-1894)

Baab (2007:32) noted that J.H. Alexander and ten other Augusta residents incorporated the Augusta Glass Works on March 22, 1890. By May 1892, the firm’s letterhead indicated that the factory made flasks, bottles, druggists’ glassware, beer and soda bottles in green and colorless glass. The plant made 20 railroad cars of union oval flasks and “wine” bottles³ in amber, flint (colorless), and green (aqua) glass for the South Carolina Dispensary in 1893.

³ This refers to bottles made in a “wine” shape. These bottles were round in cross-section with a long neck. When used by the Dispensary, they actually contained liquor.

These were the first bottles produced for the Dispensary. In June 1894, George J. Howard purchased the plant from receivers (Roller 1896; Teal 2007:93-94).

As an interesting post-script, on January 14, 1895, the Supreme Court of Georgia reviewed an earlier suit by the Augusta Glass Works against Thomas P. Branch for the sum of \$500 plus interest. Branch, an original subscriber to the corporation, had not paid the requisite sum for his share of the corporate stock. Branch was ordered to pay, demanded a retrial, then took his plea to the Supreme Court of Georgia (*Southeastern Reporter* 1896:128-129).

The court noted that the corporate charter for the firm required a subscription of \$50,000 at \$100 per share. The charter demanded the full subscription before the firm could legally conduct business. It was disclosed that only \$48,000 was actually subscribed prior to the opening of the firm, so all subsequent business was rendered legally null. The contract with Branch, therefore, was not a legal one, and the Supreme Court reversed the lower court ruling. However, the court noted that no action was required, since the firm had been in the hands of three receivers prior to the court date (*Southeastern Reporter* 1896:128-131).

Table 1 – Glass Factories with A.G.Co. Initials

Glass Company	Location	Date Range	Products
Alexandria Glass Co.	Alexandria, VA	1905-1916	beer, soda, wine, brandy, packers
Anacortes Glass Co.	Anacortes, WA	1910-ca. 1923	packers; fruit jars (poss. sodas)
Annapolis Glass Co.	Annapolis, MD	1885-ca. 1887	green & amber glass
Atlanta Glass Co.	Atlanta, GA	1887-ca. 1892	prescription; lamp chimneys
Atlas Glass Co.	Washington, PA	1896-1902	fruit and product jars
Augusta Glass Works	Augusta, GA	1890-1894	flasks, druggist, soda, beer

Discussion and Conclusions

Although several glass houses had the correct initials (Table 1), only three fit the ca. 1890-1893 probable use period – the Annapolis Glass Co. (1885-ca. 1887), the Atlanta Glass Co. (1887-ca. 1892), and the Augusta Glass Works (1890-1894). Because of the period of probable

use (ca. 1890-1893), the locations where the flasks were filled (the American South), the initials (A.G.Co.), and the location of the glass house (Atlanta, Georgia), it is virtually certain that the Atlanta Glass Co. embossed “A.G.Co.” on the bases of strap-sided (union oval) flasks. Other contenders either had unlikely initials (e.g., Augusta Glass Works), were too early (Annapolis Glass Co.), or were in business during a later period (e.g., Alexandria Glass Co.) – although the Annapolis Glass Co. cannot be completely ruled out.⁴ For a list of probably users of all A.G.CO. logos, see Table 2.

Table 2 – Probable Users of the A.G.Co. Mark by Bottle Style

Bottle Type	Glass Company	Date Range
flasks	Atlanta Glass Co.	1887-ca. 1892
Hutchinson soda or beer bottles	Atlanta Glass Co. or Alexandria Glass Co.	1887-ca. 1892 1905-1916
crown soda bottles	Alexandria Glass Co.	1905-1916
blob-top beer bottles	Alexandria Glass Co. or Annapolis Glass Co.	1905-1916 1885-ca. 1887
unknown round and peppersauce	Annapolis Glass Co. or Atlanta Glass Co.	1885-ca. 1887 1887-ca. 1892
fruit jars	Whitney Glass Works, poss. for American Grocery Co.	ca. 1885-1918 ca. 1905-1918

⁴ Lockhart & Teal (2011:49-58) included a very complex discussion about the logo.

A.G.CO. on “Ten-Pin” Soda Bottles

According to von Mechow, a collector in Annapolis, Maryland, “has a number of ten pin shaped crown top soda bottles (1900-1910)



Figure 7 – Heel of ten-pin bottle (eBay)

with different names in the plate from Maryland and Virginia that had ‘AGCo’ on the base. I suspect that these were made by the Alexandria Glass Co.” At least one example featured on eBay – made for a bottler in Birmingham, Alabama –

had “AGCo” embossed on the heel (Figures 6 & 7). The “ten-pin” shape was popular on soda and milk bottles during the first two decades of the 20th century, especially in the South.

History

Alexandria Glass Co., Alexandria, Virginia (1905-1916)

The Alexandria Glass Co. received its corporate charter on May 11, 1905, with a capitalization of \$30,000 (Eggleston 1905:258; Harkness 1915:237). In 1909, during the firm’s “fourth season,” the plant made “standard blown ware which includes beer, soda and wine bottles, ovals, Blakes and some panels” and had “been attended with a goodly measure of success” (Mayer 1909:1). In 1907, the firm (referred to as Alexandria Glass Works)⁵ made beer, soda, wine, and brandy bottles – as well as packers’ and preservers’ ware – and continued with the same listing in 1909 (Thomas Publishing Co. 1907:161; 1909:202).

⁵ The terms “Co.” and “Works” were often used in a generic sense by reporters in glass industry publications and newspapers. To further complicate matters, many glass houses, during the late 19th and very early 20th centuries, used two names – “Co.” for the operating firm and “works” for the actual factory building. It is thus probable that the Alexandria Glass Co. operated the Alexandria Glass Works.



Figure 6 – Ten-pin soda bottle (eBay)

The firm apparently reorganized and received a separate incorporation as the Alexandria Glass Co., Inc. on July 28, 1913 (State Corporation Comm. 1922:231). The same year, the Alexandria Glass Works was using one continuous tank with nine rings to make a “general line” of bottles (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:954). The company was last listed as making beer, sodas, and packers’ ware in 1915 (Thomas Publishing Co. 1915:579).

J.E. Lippincott died on August 1, 1916, and the Old Dominion Glass Co. purchased the Alexandria Glass Co. that same year, – although we have not yet discovered whether the two events were related. The plant was completely devastated by fire shortly thereafter. A group of German-American entrepreneurs had erected the original Old Dominion Glass Co. factory in January 1901. Old Dominion produced beer, soda, medicine, and food bottles as well as flasks (City of Alexandria 2010; *Potomac Pontil* 2003:1).

Discussion and Conclusions

There is virtually no doubt that von Mechow’s identification of the Alexandria Glass Co. as the maker of these bottles is correct. The sloped heel of the “ten-pin” style container was most popular on soda and milk bottles during the first two decades of the 20th century, and the only “ten-pin” soda bottles reported to us were used by bottlers in Maryland and Virginia. Not only was the Alexandria Glass Co. of Alexandria, Virginia (1905-1916) located at the right place and time, it was a noted manufacturer of soda bottles.

A.G.CO. on Hutchinson Soda Bottles

Harvey Teal recorded two Hutchinson soda bottles with tooled finishes and “AGCo” embossed horizontally across the bases. Both were aqua in color and were made for South Carolina bottlers. In addition, Layton Bare reported a similar aqua Hutchinson bottle that was made for the Florida Brewing Co., Tampa. This, too, had the horizontal “AGCo” embossing across the center of the base (Figure 8).



Figure 8 – Base of Florida Brewing Co. Hutchinson bottle – AGCo (Courtesy of Layton Bare)

Several eBay auctions have also offered Hutchinson bottles that were amethyst in color (Figure 9). These were originally colorless but have changed hues due to manganese dioxide used as a decolorant in the glass formula. When exposed to prolonged sunlight, the manganese content caused the glass to become an amethyst or purple color. These bottles were also embossed “AGCo” horizontally across the bases. At least one Hutchinson bottle offered on eBay had “AGCo” on the heel.



Figure 9 – AGCo logo on amethyst Hutchinson soda bottle base (eBay)

Discussion and Conclusions

The use of manganese dioxide as a decolorant (that turns purple or amethyst with prolonged exposure to solar radiation) began at least as early as 1880 and continued until at least 1933. The use of manganese in the making of soda bottles, however, was generally limited to the first two decades of the 20th century. (Lockhart 2006). It thus seems likely that the amethyst Hutchinson bottles were made by the Alexandria Glass Co. – a well-known producer of soda bottles – between 1905 and 1916.

Assessment of the aqua Hutchinson bottles is less clear. Lockhart and Teal (2011:53-58), assigned the aqua bottles to the Atlanta Glass Co. based on the use of such bottles in the deep south. However, Ron Fowler’s Hutchbook – a huge database of all known Hutchinson bottles – listed 13 bottles with A.G.Co. basemarks, three made of colorless glass, the remaining 10 aqua in color. All were made for bottlers in Georgia, Florida, or South Carolina. Hutchbook listed the Atlanta Glass Co. as the maker of all the bottles, and the deep south locations seem to support that. The Alexandria firm advertised soda bottle production, and that cannot be ignored, although the Atlanta plant seems most likely based on current data.

A.G.CO. on Beer Bottles

Von Mechow (2021) has reported two “blob-top” beer bottles, each embossed with “AGCO” horizontally across the bases. One was used by the Baltimore branch of the

Bartholomay Brewing Co. (Figure 10); the other was used by J.L. Fryar of Weldon, North Carolina. The finishes were made for Lightning fasteners, a closure that sealed using a wire bale arrangement to hold the plug in place, although a variation of the Fryar bottle was also made for the Baltimore Loop seal – an internal plug.

Discussion and Conclusions

We have been unable to discover any dating of the bottlers that would help focus on the manufacturer. The type of bottle and finish were used from the 1870s to ca. 1914. Although von Mechow assigned the maker of the bottles as the Annapolis Glass Co., the characteristics – coupled with locations at Baltimore, Maryland, and Weldon, North Carolina – seem to fit the other bottles we have assigned to the Alexandria Glass Co. Again, the Annapolis Glass Co. cannot be fully eliminated, but we consider the Alexandria firm to be more likely.

A.G.CO. on Other Bottle Types



Figure 11 – AGCo base found at Fort Bowie, Arizona

The Bottle Research Group photographed a round base with an AGCo logo (lower-case “o”) at the Fort Bowie, Arizona, collection (Figure 11). The container appeared to

have a wide post bottom that extended almost to the outer edge of the base. Unfortunately, we were unable to ascertain a good provenience for the container, although Fort Bowie was in use from 1862 to 1894. An eBay auction offered a crudely made, gothic-style peppersauce bottle, with “A.G.Co.” embossed horizontally across the base (Figures 12 & 13). The bottle was mouth blown into a two-piece mold with a cup-bottom base. Either the Atlanta Glass Co. or the Annapolis Glass Co. could have made the bottles.

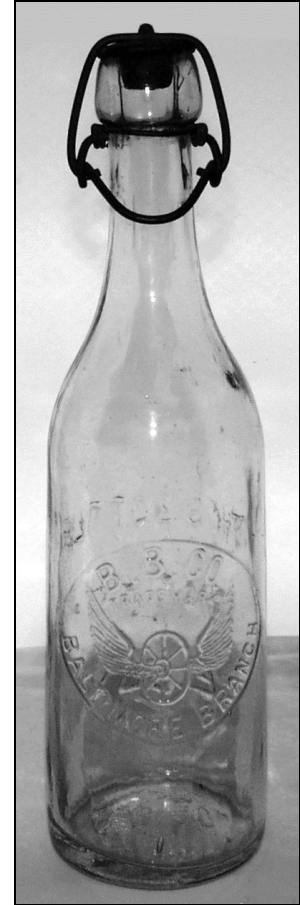


Figure 10 – Baltimore bottle from the Bartholomay Brewing Co. (Tod von Mechow)



Figure 12 – AGCo basemark on Peppersauce bottle (eBay)

Discussion and Conclusions

Both examples of “other” bottle types had a lower-case “o” in “Co.” On virtually all other examples, the “O” was capitalized. As noted above, the Fort Bowie example could only have been in use between 1862 and 1894. The crudely made, gothic-style peppersauce bottle, mouth blown into a two-piece mold with a cup-bottom base was also likely from the same period. Both could fit the time periods of either the Annapolis Glass Co. or the Atlanta Glass Co., although evidence above suggests that the Atlanta firm used the lower-case “o” on flasks – possibly making it the better choice.



Figure 13 – Base of Peppersauce bottle (eBay)

SUPERIOR A.G.CO. Jars

“SUPERIOR (arch) / A.G.CO. (inverted arch)” was embossed in a round plate on the side of an aqua jar (Figure 14). According to Creswick (1987b:127), this type of jar had a “smooth lip” (i.e., machine made), was topped with an “old style lightning seal,” and may have been manufactured by the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. – almost certainly equating the A.G.CO. initials with the Atlas Glass Co., a predecessor of Hazel-Atlas.

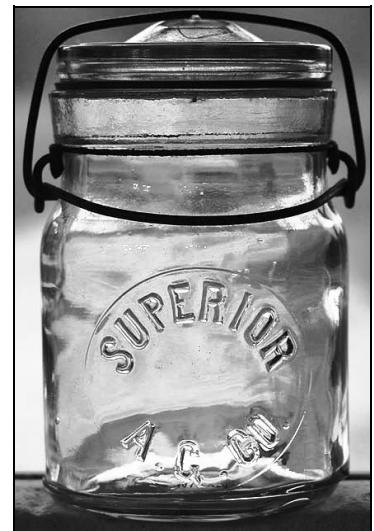


Figure 14 – SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jar (eBay)

Roller (2010:498) described the same closure as a “top seal, straddle lip glass lid, old style neck, full wire bail.” This entry, however, made no attempt to assess the manufacturer. Occasional eBay auctions have reported faint letters and letter/number combinations on the bases of these jars – including “E2” and “C.” The jars have been offered at auction in three sizes – ranging from pints to half-gallons.



Figure 15 – Base of a SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jar

Our example was pint size and was blue-aqua in color. The jar was machine made with a typical ejection (valve) scar in the center of the cup-bottom base (Figure 15). The finish had an exterior horizontal seam encircling the top just



Figure 16 – Finish of a SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jar, showing the rim seam

below the lip or rim and an identical horizontal seam around the inside the throat at the same level (Figure 16). If there is a parting line at the bottom of the finish, it can only be concealed at the lowest edge. There was no obvious parting line – even under close inspection with magnification – at that location.

Two vertical seams extended from the top horizontal seam of the finish to the parting line at the heel/base juncture. A very faint line encircled the body just below the shoulder, right at the top of the circular plate, but this was probably only a milling imperfection. Some, but not all, eBay photos show similar ephemeral lines at various levels of the body. The body was somewhat crude. The surface was not rough, but it was not evenly contoured – possibly imperfections caused by a cold mold. All of the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jars offered on eBay appeared to be the same blue-aqua color. The lid was molded and perfectly matched the jar in color. Neither the jar nor the lid displayed any identifying logos or codes.

Jars of the style embossed “SUPERIOR A.G.CO.” were very likely contemporary or made slightly later than the very similar ATLAS E-Z SEAL “wide-mouth” jar (actually regular mouth size but a step up from the previous narrow mouth models) that came into being circa 1907

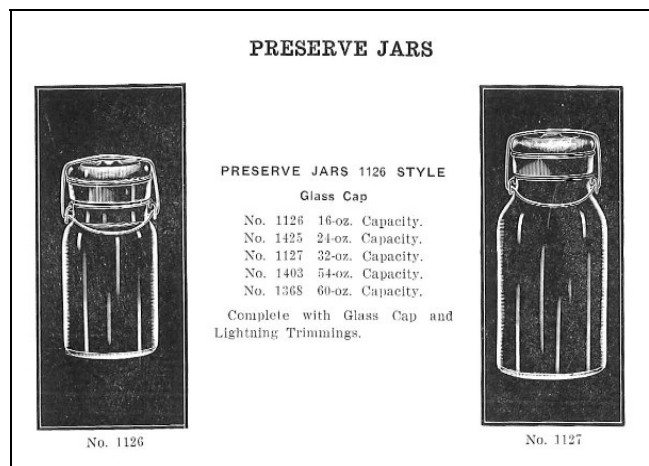


Figure 17 – ATLAS E-Z SEAL “wide-mouth” jar (Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. 1908)

(Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. ca. 1906; 1908 – Figure 17). This is the time frame normally attributed to the transition to this size of mouth for all Lightning style jars that followed. The SUPERIOR jar had a regular size mouth; thus, it would likely have been made during the 1907 period and/or later. Tom Caniff (personal communication, 1/23/2012) confirmed a ca. 1910-1920 probable use period, although he noted that those dates were not absolute.

Possible Manufacturers

Anacortes Glass Co., Anacortes, Washington (1910-1923)

Construction of the Anacortes Glass Co. commenced in 1907, with N. Jerns as president of the corporation and E.A. Mackay as secretary and general manager. The factory operated a single continuous tank with four rings (Roller 1997a; Toulouse 1970:34-35; 1971:427). Although Toulouse claimed that the plant opened in 1911, the *Anacortes American* placed the opening in 1910 to produce jars (*Anacortes American* 2000). The firm was apparently beset with problems from the very beginning.

The plant was a union shop. Frank J. Curran (1911:37), the union representative for the American Flint Glass Workers' Union of North America (commonly called "The Flints"), reported that the plant had been making "half gallons and quarts fruit jars" from at least his arrival on the "29th of last June"⁶ until "five weeks later" when the "plant closed down to remodel [and] to install other facilities that were needed, also to build a mould room." At the time he wrote (December 1911), the factory had not reopened. He admitted the place had a "prosperous location," with "shipping by rail or water, limerock for the main material is located on the islands for miles and miles, with oil for fuel." Curran also stated that there were "orders on file yet to be made" when manger Mackay closed the plant.

The production record for the company was apparently quite sporadic. For example, the Anacortes Glass Co. was on a list of "Companies stricken from record since last report Sept. 30, 1912, for failure to pay annual license fee" (Howell 1914:56). Although this does not necessarily mean the plant was inoperable, it does show that the firm was in financial trouble.

⁶ Curran's choice of words is unfortunate. He was writing in December 1911, so "last June" probably refers to 1910, but we cannot be certain.

In 1913, the plant used one continuous tank with four rings to make packers' and preservers' jars and bottles (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:954). Toulouse (1970:35; 1971:428) noted that E.J. Pearson, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, bought the factory in 1912, although the directories continued to list Jerns as president until 1914. Pearson purchased the plant to produce beer bottles, although the plant continued to be listed as making packers and fruit jars until 1914.

By the time the factory shut down in the fall of 1914, it was operating two furnaces, both producing beer bottles. The following year, the plant fired up the smaller furnace and employed a crew of 15 men. At that time, the owners began experimenting in the manufacture of flint glass, using high grade sandstone from Montana (Anacortes Museum 2012).

Production may have been spotty during the intervening four years, but things were looking up again in 1919. The *Anacortes American* (2010) quoted an April 24, 1919 article:

The Anacortes Glass Company will more than double its blowing Monday and will begin a big season of work. One new machine is on its way here, and another is to be secured in Los Angeles. Three new shops are coming from San Francisco, and new employees will be taken on, bringing the force up to about sixty. Some new contracts for soda water bottles and other articles have been made that will keep the plant running to 100 per cent capacity for some time.

Anacortes Glass must have again been removed from the state corporate record; a 1920 report listed the firm under "Reinstatements" – following the list of those who had been stricken from the record (Savidge 1920:93). On the first of May, the glass house was seeking a new location. The Chamber of Commerce offered the firm a \$30,000 loan to repair and expand the plant. The new optimism, however, proved to be short lived. The workers struck on May 22, apparently dooming the plant once again (Anacortes Museum 2012; Younger 1920:18).

On March 22, 1923, Valentine Funk placed a bid for "personal property" of the glass plant at a sheriff's sale. Although this supports the Toulouse comment that the plant's erratic production terminated in 1923, Roller (1997a) presented a listing for the company as a supplier of fruit jars in 1926. However, we have found no confirmation for the latter date.

Atlas Glass Co., Washington, Pennsylvania (1896-1902)

Charles N. Brady – one of the founders of the Hazel Glass Co., first in Wellsburg, West Virginia, then at Washington, Pennsylvania – teamed up with R.J. Beatty, George Beatty and J.W. Paxton to form the Atlas Glass Co., also at Washington. The group opened the plant specifically to produce machine-made fruit jars on July 20, 1896. Atlas Glass merged with the Wheeling Metal Co. and the Republic Glass Co. in October 1901 to form the Atlas Glass & Metal Co. – now with the capacity to make all of its own metal lids as well as jars. The Republic Glass Co. had been formed in 1898 to make jelly glasses and tumblers with semiautomatic machinery. In 1902, Atlas and Hazel merged to form the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. (Caniff 2001:11; Creswick 1987a:262; Florence & Florence 2004:6; Roller 1983:459; Six 1993:6; Toulouse 1969:362; 1971:55, 421). For more detail, see the chapter on Hazel-Atlas.

The partners formed Atlas Glass to use the Blue Semiautomatic Machine, developed by Charles E. Blue of Wheeling, West Virginia. By mid-1897, the plant produced 240,000 jars per week! (Fones-Wolf 2007:16; Hawkins 2009:39). For more information on the Blue machines, see Lockhart & Bernas 2014.

Although Toulouse (1969:362-363) suggested that the plant's first products were the Atlas E-Z Seal fruit jars, secured by a Lightning closure, other sources disagree. In the appeal of the United States Glass Co. v. Atlas Glass Co. et al., the court noted the “manufacture of ‘Mason Jars,’ in which the defendants are engaged” – which almost certainly referred to the earliest jars (*Federal Reporter* 1899:724).

The earliest closure style for fruit jars from the Atlas Glass Co. plant was the shoulder sealing, regular mouth, continuous-thread (CT) so-called Mason type. Although not supported by advertisements or product catalog listings, it appears that while still producing the shoulder sealing continuous-thread Mason models, Atlas or Hazel-Atlas officials likely next introduced the top sealing, regular mouth, straddle lip, glass insert and metal screw band, continuous-thread sealing version of a domestic canning vessel around the mid-point of the initial decade of the twentieth century. Subsequently, along with the two currently existing closure models, Hazel-Atlas directors brought out their Lightning sealing specimens, first in the narrow mouth sizes ca. 1906 and then the regular (then referred to as wide mouth) diameter models thereafter.

This progression would eliminate the standard mouth Lightning style jar from consideration as the first fruit jar made by the Atlas Glass Co.

Hazel-Atlas Glass Co., Wheeling, West Virginia (1902-1957)

Incorporated in West Virginia, in 1902, Hazel-Atlas was a merger between the newly formed Atlas Glass & Metal Co. and the Hazel Glass Co. The company began with four glass plants (three in Washington, Pennsylvania, one in Clarksburg, West Virginia) and one metal plant at Wheeling, West Virginia (Roller 1983:459). The firm acquired the exclusive license for the Owens Automatic Bottle Machine on May 20, 1909. The company continued to expand until 1957, when it sold to Continental Can Co. For more information, see the chapter on Hazel-Atlas.

Whitney Glass Works, Glassboro, New Jersey (ca. 1885-1918)

Thomas H. Whitney acquired a one-third interest in the Harmony Glass Works at Glassboro, New Jersey, in 1835. Samuel A. Whitney joined his elder brother in 1839, and the business became the Whitney Brothers in 1857. The brothers operated at Glassboro until ca. 1885, when they changed the name to the Whitney Glass Works (Knittle 1927:153; McKearin & Wilson 1978:91; Pepper 1971:36; Toulouse 1971:522).

In 1888, the Whitneys expanded, purchasing the Crystal Glass Mfg. Co. plant at Camden, New Jersey. Crystal had begun operations in 1886. Unfortunately, on March 29, 1889, the Camden plant burned. The Whitneys apparently also leased a plant at Salem in 1888, for the manufacture of fruit jars. This may have been either the Craven Brothers or the Gayner Glass Works. The lease was apparently short lived (Pepper 1971:37; Roller 1997d).

The firm incorporated under the Whitney Glass Works name in 1887. The Glassboro factory operated four furnaces in 1889. The Whitneys acquired the former West Penn Glass Co. plant at Blairsville, Pennsylvania, in 1894 and used the factory primarily for the production of milk jars. The Glassboro operation suffered a disastrous fire on October 26, 1895, but was soon rebuilt (Lohmann 1972; McKearin & Wilson 1978:91; Roller 1997c).

In 1897, Whitney operated “three continuous tank furnaces, 45 rings, one on green, one on amber and one on flint.” By 1900, Whitney used 45 pots for flint glass and 40 pots for “green” glass. The firm sold its Blairsville plant in 1901 (*National Glass Budget* 1897:5; 1898:7; 1900:11; 1901:11; 1902:11; Roller 1997d). By 1904, the plant had six continuous tanks with 96 rings, making a general line of bottles (*American Glass Review* 1934:159).

According to Toulouse (1971:523) and Lohmann (1972:3-5),⁷ Whitney tried to use two different kinds of semiautomatic machines (one for beer bottles, the other for Mason jars) in 1904, but both were unsuccessful. However, the 1904 Whitney catalog (Lohmann 1972) offered “machine-made bottles” and stated, “The machine production is adapted to an increasing variety of wide-mouth ware.” In addition to Vaseline and candy jars, the catalogs noted that “this method of manufacture is particularly adapted to Pickle Jars[,] Horse Radish[,] Mustards[,] Preserve Jars[,] Jams[,] Jellies of any shape or size.” Fruit jars were apparently still mouth blown, including Mason Jars and the Columbia – a jar made by Whitney.

The company installed “three automatic glass blowing machines . . . to fill a large order for Mason fruit jars” in 1908 (*Commoner and Glassworker* 1908:1). The *National Glass Budget* (1912a:1) noted that there were five machines operating in Glassboro, in 1912: “three fruit jar machines, two bottle machines making 2 to 8 oz. Wide mouth ware.” By 1913, Whitney’s entire line was made by machines at four continuous tanks (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:953; Louman 1972:8). The next year, the Whitney plant was noted as having seven Owens machines, all producing “medicine bottles” (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1914:864).

Whitney received an Owens license in December 1909, and the first Owens machine was shipped to the plant on February 12, 1910, and installed. Seven machines were in operation by the end of 1911. The Owens Bottle Machine Co., by that time the major stockholder, built a second factory in 1916. Mouth production ceased in 1913; from that point on, all bottles were made by Owens machine. Whitney secured exclusive rights to make oval-shaped ammonia bottles but had only a general (i.e., non-exclusive) license to make other prescription bottles (McKearin & Wilson 1978:92; Scoville 1948:106). By November 1916, Whitney had six 6-arm

⁷ These two authors cite each other. Their work appears to have been a collaborative effort.

machines and a single 10-arm machine to make “miscellaneous prescription bottles” (Palmer 1917:212).

Lohmann (1972:5) also explained why the Whitneys sold out to Owens:

Primarily it was because the Whitney family associated with the enterprise was dying out. . . . The administrators of Dudley Whitney’s estate asked Owens Bottle Machine Company to take up Whitney’s personal notes in order to prevent the immediate and ill-advised sale of 1,954 shares of Whitney stock. The company complied and three years later Owens Bottle bought the remaining shares and dissolved the Whitney Glass Works on July 1, 1918.

The Owens Bottle Co. built a new plant at Glassboro in 1918 and dismantled the old one the next year. For more information, see the Owens Bottle Co. section.

Discussion and Conclusions

We initially explored the possibility that the A.G.CO. initials on the jars may have indicated a glass house. However, we could only find three jar manufacturers – that made jars by machine during the probable period when the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jars were manufactured *and* had the correct initials: the Anacortes Glass Co., Anacortes, Washington, the Anchor Glass Co., Mount Pleasant Township, Pennsylvania, and the Atlas Glass Co., Washington, Pennsylvania. We eliminated each of these as candidates for different reasons.

Anacortes Glass Co.

The Anacortes Glass Co. certainly made fruit jars and manufactured them during the 1910-1920 period, although it is very unclear what type of jars they made (see history above). We attempted to find some evidence for the type of jar by contacting Bret Lunsford of the Anacortes Museum, and one of our members, Bill Lindsey, visited the site of the plant in an attempt to discover jar fragments. Unfortunately, a boat yard now occupies the location of the former factory, and he could find no evidence of the earlier factory occupation. We have found no evidence for machine manufacture prior to 1919, and the new machine at that time probably

made beer bottles. It is therefore highly unlikely that the Anacortes Glass Co. made the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jars.

Anchor Glass Co.

Bernas (e.g., 2003) has produced a comprehensive set of studies on the Anchor Glass Co., Mount Pleasant Township, Pennsylvania, and it categorically did *not* make the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jars. The plant concentrated on fruit jars embossed with the word “ANCHOR” on the front body (Figure 18).

Atlas Glass Co.

As noted in the history section, Charles N. Brady and his associates opened the Atlas Glass Co. in 1896 specifically to produce machine-made fruit jars. Although Toulouse (1969:362-363) noted that the plant’s first products were the Atlas E-Z Seal fruit jars, secured by a Lightning closure, Dick Roller (*Fruit Jar News* 1997a:914) claimed that early assertions about the Atlas E-Z Seal jars were in error. The first jars made by Atlas were Mason jars.



Figure 18 – Anchor Glass Co. jar (eBay)

The *Fruit Jar News* (1997b:877) quoted the September 30, 1896, issue of *China, Glass & Lamps* that “. . . the Atlas Glass Co. of Washington, was working 5 of their patent processes [i.e., machines patented by Charles E. Blue] on fruit jars, making about 30,000 Mason jars per day.” A June 2, 1898 *Crockery and Glass Journal* advertisement also listed “Atlas Machine Made Mason Jars” (*Fruit Jar News* 1997b:878). In the appeal of the United States Glass Co. v. Atlas Glass Co. et al., the court noted the “manufacture of ‘Mason Jars,’ in which the defendants are engaged” – which almost certainly referred to the earliest jars (*Federal Reporter* 1899:724).

It is thus certain that the jars made by the Atlas Glass Co. during 1896-ca. 1900 period – and very likely within the next two years prior to the merger that created the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. in 1902 – were Mason jars. We have found no evidence whatsoever that plant made any fruit jars with Lightning-style closures, while still operating under the Atlas Glass Co. name. It is thus virtually certain that the Atlas Glass Co. did not make the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jars.

Hazel-Atlas Glass Co.

The earliest closure style for fruit jars from the Atlas Glass Co. plant was the shoulder sealing, regular mouth, continuous-thread (CT) so-called Mason type. After the merger that created the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co., the factories still produced the shoulder-sealing continuous-thread Mason models, and the officials likely next introduced the top sealing, regular mouth, straddle lip, glass insert and metal screw band, continuous-thread sealing version of a domestic canning vessel around the mid-point of the initial decade of the twentieth century. In addition, the Hazel-Atlas directors brought out their Lightning sealing jars, first in the narrow-mouth sizes ca. 1906 and then the regular diameter models (initially referred to as wide mouth) within the next two years (Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. ca. 1906; 1908).

Because the firm did not make Lightning-style jars until after the Hazel-Atlas merger, there is no intuitive reason to connect the “A.G.CO.” initials with a Hazel-Atlas product. In addition, the plant only offered the earliest, Atlas EZ Seal jar – a product only available with the small-mouth closure – with a round plate on the front. The apparent similarities in the drawings of the two jars are a red herring (Figure 19). The round plates had vanished by the time the firm introduced the next variation and remained gone when the middle-mouth jars became available. This information, combined with the typical Atlas blue color – a different shade from the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. color. It is thus very unlikely that Creswick’s attribution of the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jars is correct.

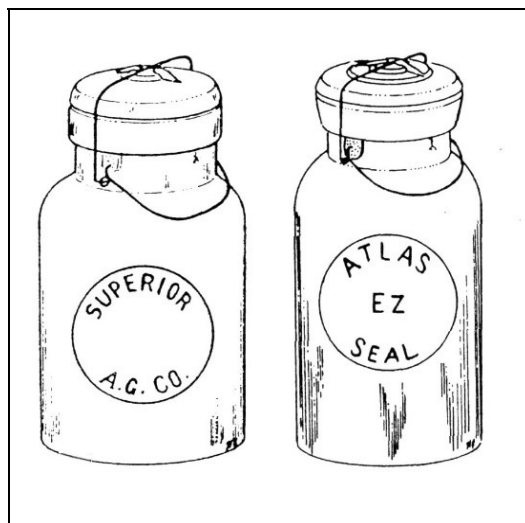


Figure 19 – Drawings of the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. and ATLAS EZ SEAL jars (Creswick 1987:6, 127)

A Product Jar by the Whitney Glass Works

The above discussion eliminates all of the glass houses with A.G.Co. initials. Our only remaining hypothesis is that the A.G.Co. initials indicated a business or jobber. This hypothesis

is supported by several other jars with virtually identical characteristics that include: indistinguishable blue aqua colors, similar range of sizes, virtually identical parting lines around the throat and outer edge of the lip, identical closures of matching colors, and bases with ejection (valve) scars, often with a letter, number, or combination in the center of the base.

In addition, we have discovered seven other jars that are virtually identical to the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jar except for the embossing in the round plates. The manufacturing techniques, color, and shapes all match. The ancestral jar to all of these – including the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jar – appears to be the Telephone Jar, made by the Whitney Glass Works.

THE TELEPHONE JAR

Toulouse (1969:304-305) described this jar as being embossed “THE (horizontal) / TELEPHONE (slight arch) / JAR / TRADE MARK / REG. (all horizontal) / WHITNEY GLASS WORKS (inverted arch)” on the front (Figure 20). His example was “handmade round, ground lip.” The jars were green in color, made by the Whitney Glass Works ca. 1905-1910. He also included two variations of the WIDEMOUTH TELEPHONE JAR, both in green, one mouth blown, the other machine made.

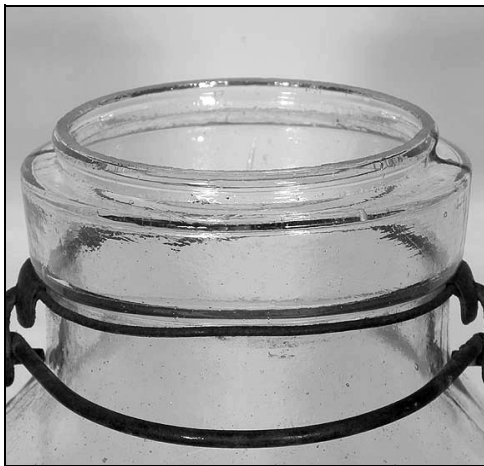


Figure 21 – Finish of a mouth-blown Telephone Jar (North American Glass)

On March 4, 1905, the Whitney Glass Works announced the “Telephone Jar,” a new line of fruit jars (Roller 1997d). Roller (1983:351) described the jars as having an “old style neck, full-wire bail” (Figure 21). He listed a colorless variation that was mouth blown with no plate and included an ad from an undated trade card. He dated the jar “c. 1900s” – almost certainly indicating the period between 1900 and 1910, rather than the entire century. He noted an aqua variation that was machine

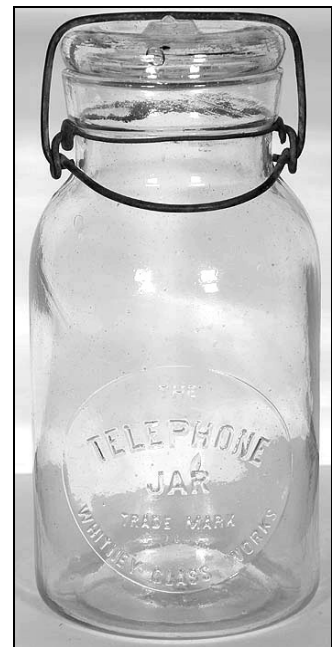


Figure 20 – The Telephone Jar – Whitney Glass Works (North American Glass)

made and had the embossing in a circular plate but was otherwise identical. He dated these at “late 1900s” (probably 1906-1910).

Creswick (1987b:122) added that the jars were made in both aqua and apple green colors. The U.S. Patent Office issued Trademark No. 44,226 to the Whitney Glass Works for the word “Telephone” on February 21, 1905. The firm claimed first use of the mark on January 17 of that year. She noted that jars with no front plate were manufactured by both hand and machine, but the ones with round plates were only machine made. The jars with no plate were made in colorless, aqua, and “medium green” hues. The plated variation came in aqua or apple green. Leybourne (2008:411) added sky blue to the list of colors for plated jars and noted that the colorless ones could solarize to an amethyst hue.

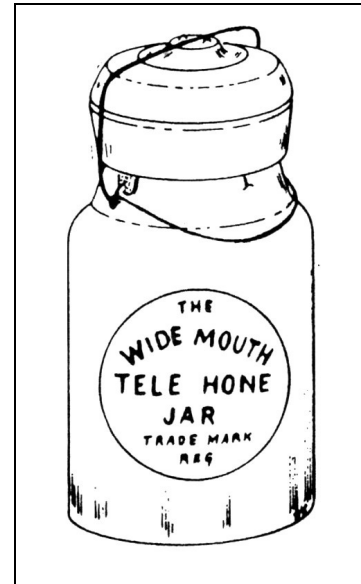


Figure 22 – Error variant of the Widemouth Telephone jar (Creswick 1987:122)

Creswick (1987b:122) also illustrated two variations of the widemouth jar, both with front plates (Figure 22). The first was embossed “THE (horizontal) WIDE MOUTH (slight arch) / TELEPHONE / JAR / TRADE MARK / REG. (all horizontal).”

The second was an error variant with the “P” missing from “TELEPHONE.” Both were made of aqua glass, and she dated all of them ca. 1905-1910. Whitney made both types of jars in pint, quart, and half-gallon sizes.

Of special interest, this type of jar is one of the few that regularly had letters and/or

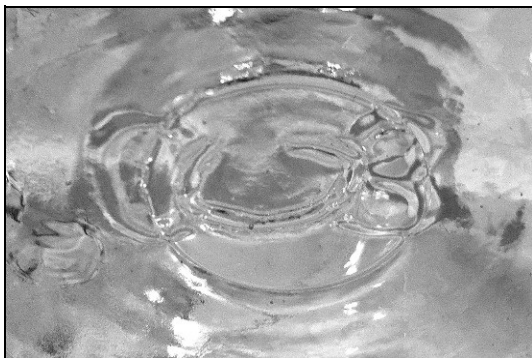


Figure 23 – C 3 on base of a Telephone jar (eBay)

number embossed in the center of the base and/or immediately below the plate. These include “B3,” “C5,” and “5” below the plate on wide mouth jars as well as “P,” “C / 3,” “C,” and “1” on bases. We have reports of photos of regular Telephone jars with “4,” “I,” or “M” in the ejection scar. These were not embossed on the ejection rod. Some of them extend beyond the ejection scar (Figure 23).

There are other jars that are virtually identical with the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jar in every facet – except the embossing inside the round plates. These include:

DURHAM

Toulouse (1969:101) first noted these machine-made jars in light green color, dating them ca 1910-1920, but he did not guess at the manufacturer or user. Roller (1983:111) called the color aqua and added the “DURHAM” was in a circular plate. Creswick (1987b:47) illustrated the jar but added no information (Figure 24). The jars were made in pint, quart, and half-gallon sizes.

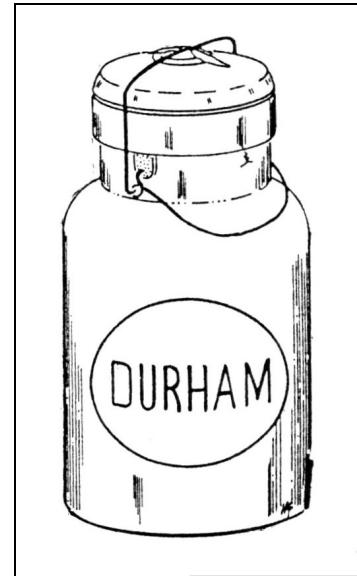


Figure 24 – Durham jar (Creswick (1987:47))

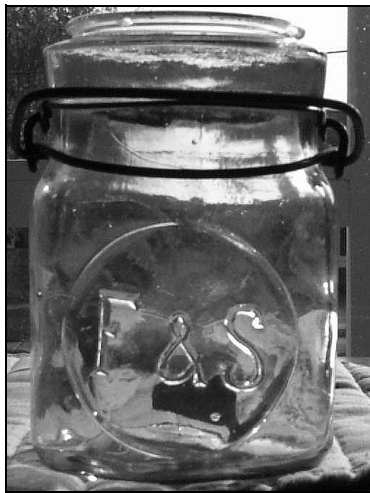


Figure 25 – F&S jar (eBay)

F&S

Roller (1983:132) described these jars as aqua in color with an “old style neck, full-wire bail.” They were machine-made with “F&S” in a circular plate. He did not know the manufacturer nor guess at the date. Creswick (1983:54) added C1, C4, and “various mold letters and numbers” on the bases. She noted that the jar had “been reported with a ground lip” (i.e., mouth blown. Leybourne (2008:158) added an “H” on the base. According to McCann (2013:146), a pint jar with a “ground mouth” (i.e., mouth-blown) sold on eBay. This indicates that at least a few of these were made by hand processes, prior to the use of machinery. At least one jar offered on eBay had a “B” in ejection scar on the base (Figures 25 & 26).

Roller (1983:132) described these jars as aqua in color with an “old style neck, full-wire bail.” They were machine-made with “F&S” in a circular plate. He did not know the manufacturer nor guess at the date. Creswick (1983:54) added C1, C4, and “various mold letters and numbers” on the bases. She noted that the jar had “been reported with a ground lip” (i.e., mouth blown.



Figure 26 – Base of F&S jar with B embossed (eBay)

GREEN MOUNTAIN C.A.CO.

Toulouse (1969:138) listed three variations of these jars, two with “Lightning closure, old-style design.” One had a plate in the front; the other did not. Both were blue-green in color, and he dated each ca. 1910. The third style was colorless or solarized amethyst, dated ca. 1925 by Toulouse. He did not know the manufacturer.

Roller (1983:144) described two “GREEN MOUNTAIN C.A.CO.” jars, one with the words in a circular plate, the other with the labeling on a stippled background (Figure 27). The jars were made in aqua and colorless glass, although he did not say which was in what color. The jars were machine made, with an “old style neck, full-wire bail” closure. He added that the “jars were made c. 1910s for the Cross Abbott Co., and jobbed by Smalley, Kivlan & Onthank, Boston, Mass. jar jobbers.”

Creswick (1987b:60-61) included three variations. The first was the same jar described by both Toulouse and Roller, but Creswick claimed that the base of hers was embossed “C.A.Co.” on the base. The second variation had the same embossing within the plate but had “C.A.” added below the plate. She did not mention basal embossing for the second variation. Both were made in aqua. Leybourne (2008:176) added that bases could be marked “C.A.Co.” or could be plain. The jars were made in pint, quart, and half-gallon sizes.

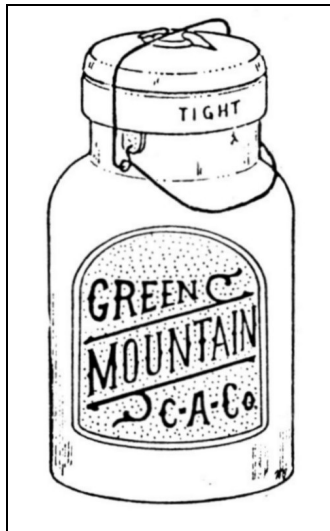


Figure 28 – Elaborate Green Mountain jar (Creswick 1987:61)



Figure 27 – Green Mountain Coffee jar (eBay)

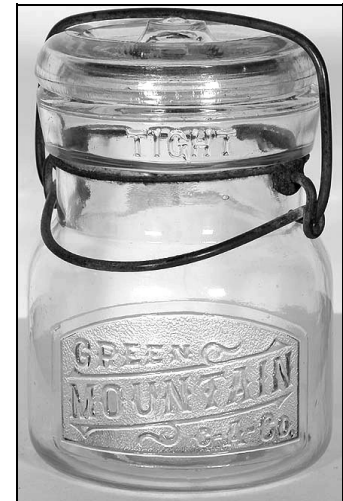


Figure 29 – Elaborate Green Mountain jar (North American Glass)

The final variation had the lettering “within a stippled frame” and was made of either aqua or colorless glass with “C-A-Co.” as the configuration (Figure 28 & 29). Creswick (1987b:61) noted that the “Green Mountain Packing Company, of Portland, Maine, filed a trademark application for the name “Green Mountain” on June 8, 1920, claiming use since 1894. Brier Rose was one of their trademark names used on canned vegetables.”

One jar was embossed “GREEN (arch) / MOUNTAIN (horizontal) / C.A.CO. (inverted arch).” Tom Caniff (in Roller 2010:223) clarified that the initials indicated that the jars were made for Cross, Abbott & Co. ca. 1910 and were later jobbed through Smalley, Kivlan & Onthank. In 1894, Cross Grocery Co. of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and the Abbott Grocery Co. of Keene, New Hampshire, formed Cross, Abbott & Co. at White River junction, Vermont. In 1894, Charles Clements Abbott “originated the firm known as Cross, Abbott & Company, wholesale dealers in groceries of White River Junction, Vermont, which has been a prosperous house with a growing trade from its start until now [1908].” Abbot had become the senior partner in the firm in 1890, replacing C.C. Cross (Sterns, et al. 1908:360).

By at least 1902, the billheads called the firm “Wholesale Grocers and Coffee Roasters,” although the State of New Hampshire cited Cross, Abbott & Co. by at least 1905 as making “not genuine cider vinegar” (State of New Hampshire 1907:181). A July 9, 1906, letterhead listed A.A. Wyman as president and C.C. Abbott as treasurer. Green Mountain brand was not on the billheads as late as 1909, but the name was prominently displayed on the ones used by 1920. The business continued until at least 1928. The firm certainly bottled or acted as a jobber for a variety of goods, including vinegar, strawberry preserves, and coffee.



Figure 30 – H&C jar (North American Glass)

Green Mountain was apparently a brand of coffee (although the name could also have been used for other products). Although the jars are long out of production, the brand – Green Mountain Coffee – continues to be sold in 2021. There is even a blend for Mr. Coffee machines.

H&C

Roller (1983:152) noted that these aqua jars were embossed “H&C” in a circular plate. He described the closure as “old style neck, full wire bail” but made no attempt to date the jar or identify the maker. Creswick (1987b:61) illustrated the jar with and without the circular plate. Both were otherwise identical (Figure 30). She identified a possible manufacturer as the “Findley Bottle Company, Findlay, Ohio for Hancock & Company.” The jars were made in pint, quart, and half-gallon sizes. Aside from the match of the initials, we have been unable to discover any relevant connection between the jar and Hancock & Co.

SILICON

Toulouse (1969:284) identified a jar embossed “‘SILICON’ in an oval” on a colorless jar with “Lightning closure, beaded neck design.” He dated the jar ca. 1930 but did not know the manufacturer. Roller (1983:327) noted that the plate was circular, and the color was aqua. In further contrast to Toulouse, Roller described the closure as “old style neck, full wire bail.” He made no attempt to date the jar or identify the maker. Creswick (1987b:122) illustrated the jar but added no information (Figure 31).

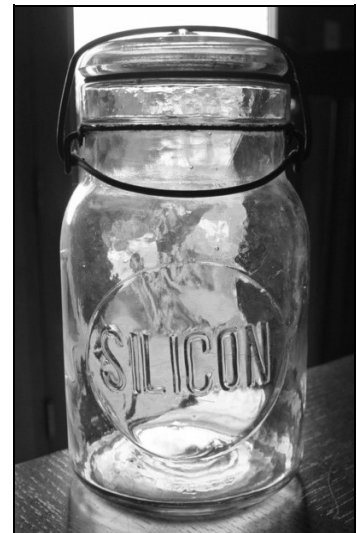


Figure 31 – Silicon jar (eBay)

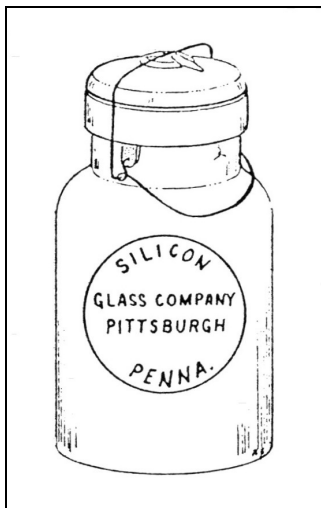


Figure 32 – Silicon Glass Company jar (Creswick 1987b:122)

SILICON GLASS COMPANY PITTSBURGH, PENNA

Toulouse (1969:285) described this colorless jar as having “Lightning closure, beaded neck design.” The front was embossed “SILICON (arch) / GLASS COMPANY / PITTSBURGH (both horizontal) / PENNA (inverted arch),” but he did not mention a plate. The jar was embossed with a Circle-B on the base, the logo of the Brockway Glass Co. Toulouse dated the jars ca. 1925-1930.

Roller (1983:327) again contrasted Toulouse, calling the color aqua, the neck “old style,” and the embossing being in a circular

plate. Roller noted that “this company was listed in 1906-1916 Pittsburgh city directories, but it was not listed during the same period in the Glass Factory Directory. They were probably glass jobbers, and got their jars from one of many Pittsburgh glasshouses.” Creswick (1987b:122) included both “B within a circle” and “F within a circle” as basemarks (Figure 32). She agreed that Silicon was a jobber and suggested the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. or the Brockway Machine Bottle Co. as possible manufacturers but noted Hazel-Atlas as the “more likely choice.” Leybourne (2008:39) recognized the initials as “mold letter in valve mark.” According to Tom Caniff (in Roller 2010:474), the firm moved to Galion, Ohio, in 1917. The Ohio location was engaged in the manufacture and distribution of “woodenware, glassware, etc.”

Summary

All of these models had the front embossing in a circular plate, had a regular mouth size, have an old-style Lightning finish with a full wire-bail closure, all came in three capacities (pint, quart, and half-gallon), all had the smooth lip of a machine made jar, and the plate embossing on each appeared to refer to something other than the manufacturer’s name. In addition, examples of many of these had numbers, letters, or letter/number combinations embossed at the center of their bases. For example, we have photos or records of Telephone jars with “I” and “M”; F&S jars with “B,” “C1,” and “C4”; and a SILICON GLASS CO. PITTSBURGH, PENNA PT with A4. An unusual jar was embossed “-ATLAS- / MASON / FRUIT JAR” on the front with a “B” on the base. The Atlas jar was machine made in a Whitney Glass Works refurbished mold.

The logical conclusion to the above evidence is that the same glass house manufactured all of the jars with the round front plates. Since the Telephone jars were embossed with the Whitney Glass Works name, the Whitney identification is virtually certain. In our entire investigation, however, we have not discovered any clues about why Whitney chose the name “Telephone” for these jars.

Who Used the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. Jars?

Having identified the manufacturer, the remaining question centers around the user of the jars embossed “SUPERIOR / A.G.CO.” The only reason to include a plate on a container is so the maker can interchange the plate to make an item for a different customer. These plated jars

with similar characteristics are not common, so each of them was made in a limited quantity and for a short period of time.

It is therefore likely that each of these jars (with the exception of the Telephone Jar) was either made to hold a product or was sold as a proprietary container. A product jar would have held some type of food – literally any food that could be packaged in such a container, e.g., peanut butter, various types of fruit, coffee, or almost any other non-liquid product. A proprietary jar would have been sold for home canning but would carry the logo or name of the jobber or wholesaler that sold the container. The jars could also have been used in combination – packed with a product but marketed to be used for canning after the contents were depleted.

The user could have included any jobber whose initials were A.G.CO.; a grocery chain beginning with the letter “A”; or something completely counterintuitive such as balls of chewing gum packed by the American Gumball Co.⁸ There were certainly grocery firms with the correct initials that were in business during the probable use period of the jars, but we have only found one with any specific connection to the use of A.G.CO. as a logo.

One of the authors (Barry Bernas) discovered a court report where Alexis Godillot sued the American Grocery Co. over the use of the “A.G.CO.” logo in monogram form on coffee and cigars (*American Law Reports* 1921:1289-1290). We were able to obtain the transcript of the appeal by the American Grocery Co. in 1887 (Livermore n.d.). The transcript contained many more details which were useful in determining the firm’s history

According to Thomas L. Marsalis, then president of the corporation, the American Grocer Co. was a “reorganization of the Thurber-Whyland Company, in the winter of 1893-4.” Although the firm was formed with a capitalization of \$410,000, most of that money went to pay debts incurred by the former company. The firm was “organized under the laws of the State of New Jersey, with an authorized capital of \$3,500,000.” Frank W. Hopkins was the vice president, with E.F. Cummings as treasurer and W.B. Nash as secretary (*New York Times* 10/11/1897). The firm’s main building was five stories tall (Figure 33).

⁸ This name, of course, is entirely fictitious.

The American Grocery Co. purchased the Thurber Whyland Co. on April 30, 1894, from receivers who had been appointed when the older company failed on November 13, 1893 (Livermore n.d.:8). The new owner occupied the block between West Broadway, Hudson, Reade, and Duane Streets. A billhead from October 3, 1894, advertised “all the Thurber, Whyland Co. brands of goods” including Momaja “a Delicious Blend of High Grade Whole Roasted Coffee.” “Momaja” was a word made up from the first two letters of the words ‘Mocha,’ ‘Maracaibo,’ and ‘Java’ coffees” (Hasseltine 1906:13).

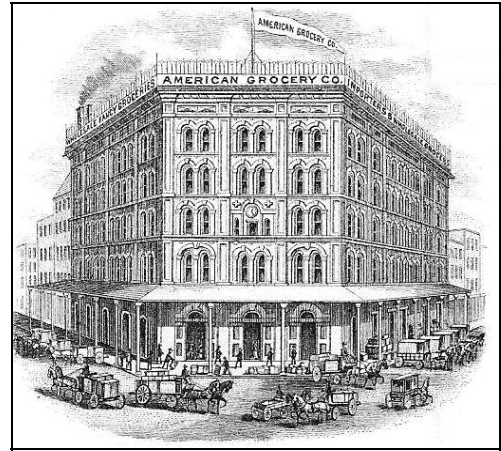


Figure 33 – American Grocery Co.

By 1897, American Grocery had “about 200 trade marks in roasted coffees, ground spices, teas, canned goods, French goods, farinacious goods, cigars, &c.,” but the corporation was involved in a major disagreement among its stockholders (*New York Times* 10/11/1897). Although the *Times* did not mention the Godillot suit, the legal issues must have been involved.

As noted above, Alexis Godillot sought an injunction against the American Grocery Co. because the firm used an “A.G.CO.” monogram the closely resembled Godillot’s “AG” monogram, specifically on coffee and cigars. The court granted the injunction, but the American Grocery Co. appealed the decision. In the appellate court, American Grocery admitted that it had used the A.G.CO. monogram on “a certain brand of coffee known as “Momaja” and to a certain brand of whiskey and to a certain brand of cigars” (Livermore n.d.:3). The attorney for American Grocery also noted that the firm had “its own registered trade-mark ‘A-G-Co.’ upon its ‘COFFEE, WHISKEY OR CIGARS’” (Livermore n.d.:13). The court again found against the American Grocery Co.

On October 19, 1897, the American Grocery Co. applied for a receiver and apparently either ceased operations or reorganized. The firm, however, seems to have survived the stockholder rift and the legal action. The American Grocery Co. incorporated in the State of New Jersey on April 2, 1910, with a capitalization of \$100,000. The firm opened new stores in such widely dispersed locations as El Paso, Texas, Hoboken, New Jersey, and Boston,

Massachusetts, and remained in business until at least 1941 (New Jersey Secretary of State 1911:25; *Spokesman-Review* 10/20/1897; *Sunday Chronicle* 4/27/1941).

To summarize the points of evidence:

1. The American Grocery Co. had the correct initials and operated during the ideal period (ca. 1905-1920) to have used the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jars.
2. The American Grocery Co. used an A.G.CO. monogram during the 1894-1897 period and had registered a trademark for “A-G-Co.”
3. The American Grocery Co. owned a brand of coffee called “Momaja” and possibly other coffee brands. The 1897 newspaper article cited “roasted coffees” (plural) in the group of registered trademarks owned by the firm.
4. At least one other jar – made in the same pattern as the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jar – held coffee. The jar embossed “GREEN MOUNTAIN C.A.CO.” was certainly for Green Mountain Coffee.

Although all of this is circumstantial evidence, it is the best lead we have been able to locate for the user of the SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jar. We therefore submit that these jars were almost certainly made by the Whitney Glass Works, probably for the American Grocery Co. Perhaps future research will discover a SUPERIOR A.G.CO. jar with a paper label from the American Grocery Co.

Acknowledgments

Our gratitude to Doug Leybourne for granting us permission to use the Alice Creswick drawings and to Greg Spurgeon for allowing us to use the great photos from the North American Glass webpage. Further thanks to Bret Lunsford, Educational Coordinator for the Anacortes Museum, for providing information about the Anacortes Glass Co.

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