

THE DATING GAME: Will the Real AGCo Please Stand up And the ACCo Sit Down?

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with contributions by Tod von Mechow

Although the AGCo mark is generally uncommon and is relatively unknown to collectors and researchers in most of the U.S., the logo has been found on a variety of bottles. The range of use is generally limited to the American South, although bottles with the AGCo marks have been found as far north as Baltimore and in at least one context in Arizona. This study of the marks and the possible manufacturers unravels previous confusion and reveals an interesting diversity.

Containers and Marks

The authors were led to this study by the ambiguity between ACCo and AGCo marks as reported in the literature.¹ Initial studies failed to find any glass house with a name that could correspond to the ACCo logo or any glass supply house that fit the initials. The similarity between the two sets of initials led to the hypothesis that "AGCo" was the intended set of initials in both cases.

ACCo on Flasks

Teal (2005:74) discussed what he interpreted to be an "ACCo" mark found on pre-Dispensary (i.e., before July 1, 1893) liquor flasks in South Carolina. Since these initials appeared on flasks used by at least seven merchants, the mark almost certainly indicated a glass company, rather than a local distributor. Each flask was strap-sided (union oval), aqua in color, and had a tooled, double-ring finish.

¹ The marks were used both with punctuation and without (i.e., A.G.Co. or AGCo). For consistency, we have left out the punctuation, except in the case of the fruit jars, where full punctuation is present in every example or photo we have found. The jars also consistently used a capital "O" in "CO."

Teal (2005:74) noted that, "since all of the above ACCo embossed bottles have double ring necks and do not have applied tops, their period of use likely was 1890-93" (Figure 1).

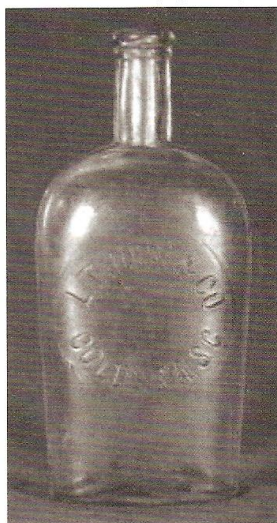


Figure 1

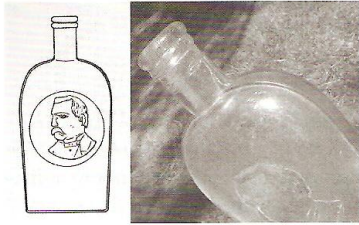
The date range requires a bit of explanation. Manufacturing techniques developed at different dates and were adopted by different glass houses at different times. One such change occurred when gaffers (blowers) began tooling the finishes of bottles directly out of the mold, replacing the older technique, where a blob of glass was applied to the top of the neck, then tooled. In replacing applied finishes with tooled finishes, the glass industry went through a long transition phase from the 1870s to ca. 1896. The new technique seems to have first been adapted to smaller bottles and gradually increased in use on larger containers. Glass houses began tooling finishes on medicinal bottles in the 1870s but did not apply

the technique to the larger quart beer bottles until the mid-1890s, possibly not entirely until the turn of the century. The approximate date of change to tooled finishes on liquor flasks was 1890 (Lindsey 2010).

Teal's end date is easier to explain. On July 1, 1893, the state of South Carolina officially adopted the Dispensary system, whereby the only sale of liquor within state borders was controlled entirely by the Dispensary. All bottles used by the Dispensary were embossed with a very distinctive logo composed of a Palmetto tree (the state tree) above crossed logs. Any pre-Dispensary bottles with tooled finishes had to have been made between ca. 1890 and early 1893.

Teal also noted that McKearin & Wilson (1978:554) described a Grover Cleveland flask marked ACCo from the 1880-1900 period and noted that "most bottles found with this company's initials have turned up in the Southeast." McKearin and Wilson (1978:554-555) discussed the flask and illustrated the front (but not the base). They described the sides of the flask as "wide flat band;" in other words, this was a strap-sided or union oval flask. They noted the finish as "double round collar" and the base as "smooth 'A.C.CO.' in concave disk." The color was blue-aqua, but they did not know the maker (Figures 2 & 3). Because of the embossed portrait of Grover Cleveland, they stated that the bottle was "probably brought out during the 1884 presidential campaign." One of these flasks was offered on eBay (although the seller said the basemark was "AGCO"), and the photos showed a cup-bottom base.

In 1926, Van Rensselaer (1926:37)



Figures 2 and 3

was the first to record the embossing on the base of the Grover Cleveland flask as ACCo. Knittle (1927:441) was unclear about which flask she meant, but she attributed an AGCo mark to the Arsenal Glass Co., Pittsburgh. McKearin & McKearin (1941) failed to record the flask or the mark. Freeman (1964:77) apparently copied his identification from Van Rensselaer, and Toulouse (1971:34) cited Van Rensselaer as the source of his information. Toulouse, however, noted the possibility that the “C” may have been misread and should actually be a “G.”

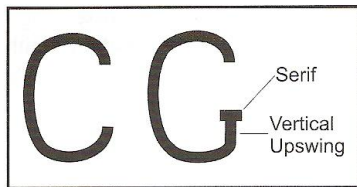


Figure 4



Figure 5

Part of the problem has to do with the way the letter “G” is created and its similarity to the letter “C.” In a typical modern font, the “G” is like a “C” but has a vertical upswing on the bottom rather than the curved one (Figure 4). In addition, the “G” has either a bar (serif) at the lower termination or a “tail” that extends downward in a curve. When late-19th century engravers carved the letters, they generally began with a “C” and either extended the serif to the left or added a “tail.” A final method was to merely

turn the lower curve of the “C” into a vertical line and not add a serif. This type of “G” closely resembles a “C” (Figure 5).

In addition, there were other ways that the mark could be disfigured. Many letters, written to Charles Yockell, a noted mold maker in Philadelphia, have survived. Most of the ones from the 19th century were hand written in script. As a result, they were *very* easy to misunderstand. Thus, the letter “G” in the correspondence could easily have been mistaken by the engraver as a “C” – creating an error baseplate. Since molds were often the most expensive hardware involved in the process, they were generally used despite any errors.

Molds were also lubricated, and that lubricant built up over time. Eventually, the old lubricant buildup had to be cleaned out. Since cleaning slowed down production, it was generally done quickly, so it was easy for buildup to be missed, especially in places on the baseplate that were small – like the serif of a “G.” This could result in fainter embossing, and all of these issues could create a “G” that could easily be seen as a “C.”

Toulouse (1971:34) assigned date ranges of 1885-1889 or 1893-1897 to the mark “because Van Rensselaer lists these initials on the bottom of a ‘Grover Cleveland’ flask, and the years cited are the years of his presidencies.” Since the flask has a tooled finish, it was more likely to have been issued toward the end of Cleveland’s first term or just prior to his second term, although a campaign ploy right before the second election seems likely. If the flask had been issued during the early part of Cleveland’s first term, it would probably have had an applied finish.

Grover Cleveland was the first Democrat to be elected President since the Civil War, and, consequently, he enjoyed great popularity in the solidly Democratic South. The town of Grover, in Cleveland County, North Carolina, was named for him. Cleveland hunted in the low country of Georgetown County in South

Carolina and had many ties with other areas of the South. A flask bearing his likeness stood a good chance of enjoying popularity in that region.

In mid-2010, Teal began readdressing the question of the ACCo/AGCo initials using approaches that included:

- 1) re-examining the Grover Cleveland flask and the 14 other bottles in his collection bearing the mark in question;
- 2) seeking information from Bill Baab;
- 3) examining hundreds of illustrations and actual bottles from the period that were embossed with the letter “C” or “G”;
- 4) seeking the opinions of eight advanced collectors in the area;
- 5) researching Atlanta city directories for further information; and
- 6) consulting with six curators and staff at a historical library at the University of South Carolina; these individuals daily collect, catalog, and handle print and other items containing the letters “C” and “G” from the period between 1670 and 1970.

Upon the examination of Teal’s 15 bottles and flasks, and the information he had discovered, the above-noted collectors agreed unanimously that the embossed initials are AGCo.

Based on his personal re-examination of his bottles and flasks, his study of the letters “C” and “G” on bottles from the period, and the opinions of the other collectors, Teal concluded that the initials embossed on the containers are AGCo. Teal stated, “I hereby pronounce the benediction at the death and burial of the ACCo and administer the ‘last rights’ to it.”

AGCo

The AGCo mark has long been identified with a number of containers. These include flasks, soda bottles, beer bottles, peppersauce bottles and fruit jars. These containers have been found in a variety of venues, but, as with the flasks noted above, most have connections with the American South

Flasks

Knittle (1927:441) attributed the AGCo mark on flasks to the Arsenal Glass Co., Pittsburgh. Toulouse (1971:39) followed Knittle, but dated the mark (probably without ever seeing an example) ca. 1865 to 1868. Toulouse noted that “no other reference has been found.” Innes (1976:216, 229), however, (correctly) called the company the Arsenal Glass Works. Jones (1966:15) agreed with the Arsenal identification and dated the mark “1755-1865 - - ?” then added, “also Avis Glass co [*sic*], Avis, PA 1906-1910.” But this is all a red herring. The firm discussed by these researchers was the Arsenal Glass Works, and it never used an AGCo logo (Lockhart 2010).

Freeman (1964:103) listed a flask he described as “anchor in depressed circular panel, flukes to left ‘AGCo’ on bottom 182 pint amber,” but he did not assess the maker. Freeman was mostly describing flasks from the 19th century, although he was not specific about this one. McKearin & Wilson (1978:668) described the same flask in better detail, making it clear that the “large anchor” was in a “medallion” on the side of the flask. Their bottle was “golden amber” in quart size. They described the finish as “narrow round collar, lower bevel” and the base as “smooth. large concave disk inscribed ‘AGCo’” They marked the glass house as “unidentified” and made no attempt to date the bottle. Unfortunately, it was also one of the few that they failed to illustrate.

Soda Bottles

The AGCo mark has appeared on several eBay auctions, always on solarized amethyst Hutchinson bottles. On all amethyst bottles, the mark was embossed horizontally across the base. The “o” in “Co” appeared in both upper- and lower-case forms. All appear to have cup-bottom bases, although the photos are of poor quality (Figure 6). Although our sample is small, all of these Hutchinson bottles appear to have been used by soda

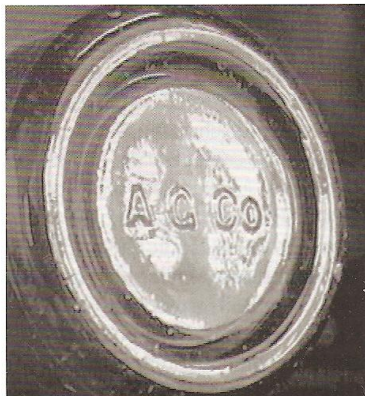


Figure 6

bottlers in the southeast.

In addition, Teal has two Hutchinson bottles with tooled finishes and “AGCo” embossed horizontally across the bases. Both were aqua in color and were made for South Carolina bottlers. A single eBay auction illustrated an aqua Hutchinson bottle with an AGCo heelmark. Unfortunately, the location of the bottler is illegible in the photo.

According to von Mechow, a collector in Annapolis, Maryland, “has a number of ten-pin-shaped crown top soda bottles (1900-1910) 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 Company outside of Washington D.C.” The “ten-pin” shape was popular on soda and milk bottles during the first two decades of the 20th century, especially in the South.

Beer Bottles

Tod von Mechow (2010) reported a single beer bottle with an AGCo logo. This champagne-style beer bottle was embossed “B.B.Co.” (Bartholomay Brewing Co.) and “BALTIMORE BRANCH” on the side, with the base embossed “AGCo / 2” (Figure 7). The maker, according to von Mechow, was the



Figure 7

Annapolis Glass Co. Annapolis Glass produced bottles and flasks from 1885 to ca. 1887 (Roller 1998a; von Mechow 2009). The Bartholomay Brewing Co., however, was in business at Rochester, New York, from 1874 to at least 1933, although the term Bartholomay Brewery was also used starting in 1889 (Van Wieren (1995:251-252).

Unfortunately, Van Wieren did not include the Baltimore branch in his book, although it certainly existed. Baltimore directories show that the branch was in business during the early 1890s, but we have been unable to find any further dates of operation. Assuming that the Baltimore branch was in business during approximately the same period as the one in Rochester, the use of a bottle made by the Annapolis Glass Co. is easily within the date range. However, the Alexandria Glass Co. could also have made the bottle.



Figure 8

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). Unfortunately, the brewery was in business from 1896 to 1961, far too long a span to help with dating the bottle.

Other Bottle Types

The Bottle Research Group photographed a round base with an AGCo logo (lower-case “o”) at the Fort Bowie, Arizona, collection (Figure 9). The container exhibited mold lines for a wide post-bottom. The post extended almost to the outer edge of the base. Unfortunately, we were unable to ascertain a good provenance for the



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

Fruit Jars

“SUPERIOR / A.G.CO.” was also embossed on the lower part of a round plate on the side of an aqua jar (Figure 12). According to Creswick (1987:127), this type of jar had a “smooth lip” (i.e., machine made) and may have been manufactured by the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. – almost certainly equating A.G.CO. with the Atlas Glass Co., a predecessor of Hazel-Atlas. Occasional eBay auctions have reported faint letters and letter/number combinations in the ejection scar – including “E2” and “C.”

Histories 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)² made “Beer; Soda; Wine; Brandy; Packers’; [and] Preservers’” ware and continued with the same listing in 1909 (Thomas Publishing Co. 1907-1908:161; 1909:202).

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

² 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. One (often a “company”) was the operating firm – the management or owner – while the other (usually “works”) meant the actual factory building. It is thus possible that the Alexandria Glass Co. operated the Alexandria Glass Works – although the use of “Works” may have just been a generic reference to the plant.



Figure 12

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. We have not yet discovered whether the two events were related. The plant was completely devastated by fire shortly thereafter. 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).

Anacortes Glass Co., Anacortes, Washington (1910-ca. 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 (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 29”³ 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

³ 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.

admitted the place was 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 company was in financial trouble.

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. Although Pearson claimed to have purchased the plant to make beer bottles, that product never appeared in any listings. The plant made packers and fruit jars until it closed about 1914, although it remained in sporadic production until ca. 1923.

Things were looking up again in 1919. The *Anacortes American* (2010) quoted a newspaper article from April 24, 1919:

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.

The factory was still open on May 22, 1920, when the workers struck,

although it may not have been in actual production at that date (Younger 1920:18). Anacortes Glass must have again been removed from the state corporate record; a 1920 report lists the firm under "Reinstatements" – following the list of those who had been stricken from the record (Savjidge 1920:93). As noted above, Toulouse commented on the plant's erratic production lasting until 1923, but Roller (1997a) presented a listing for the company as a supplier of fruit jars in 1926.

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 later that year to the Severn Glass Co. (Roller 1998; von Mechow 2010).

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.

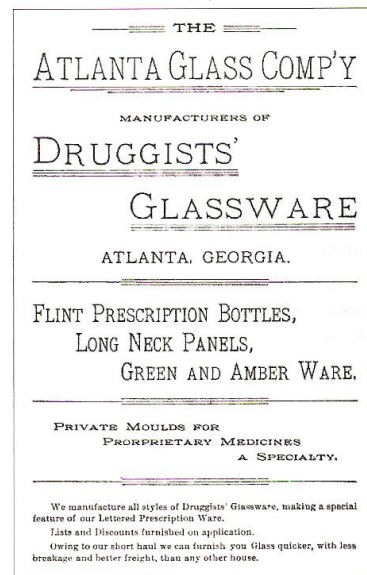


Figure 13

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" (Figure 13) 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.⁴ 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 1/2 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 manufacturer's 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.

⁴ The ad in the Proceedings of the Georgia Pharmaceutical Association had to have run after the Atlanta Glass ceased production. A question that remains is: Did the Rankin-Nicholson Glass Co. continue to use the Atlanta Glass Co. name?

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 also made 20 railroad cars of union oval flasks and "wine" bottles⁵ in amber, flint (colorless), and green (aqua) glass for the South Carolina Dispensary in 1893. These were the first bottles produced for the Dispensary. In June 1894, however, 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.

⁵ This refers to bottles made in a "wine" shape. These bottles were round in cross-section with a long neck. They actually contained liquor.

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).

Discussion and Conclusions

The immediate question about the user of the AGCo mark concerns whether the logo was used by a single glass house or had multiple users. To determine the answer, we need to examine each style of bottle that bears the mark. Table 1 places the various glass houses with AGCo (or similar) initials in a perspective by dates, location, and products.

Flasks

The association of the bulk of "AGCo" flasks with the southeast, coupled with Teal's notation that they were probably made during the ca. 1890-1893 period, gives us a very close date/regional range within which to work. All flasks with the mark appear to be the "union oval" or strap-sided variety with concave post bases and double-ring, tooled finishes. The date ranges suggested by Toulouse (1885-1889 or 1893-1897) also fit fairly well into the general time period assessed by Teal.

We could not find a single glass houses with names that fit the ACCO initials. Assuming that Teal's dates for the flasks were correct, only two

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

Glass Company	Location	Date Range	Products
Alexandria Glass Co.	Alexandria, VA	1905-1916	beer, sodas, 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 and amber glass
Atlanta Glass Co.	Atlanta, GA	1887-ca. 1892	prescription; lamp chimneys
Augusta Glass Works	Augusta, GA	1890-1894	flasks, druggists ware, sodas, beer

glass houses were in business in the southeast (or nearby)⁶, made flasks, had even close to the right initials, and were in business during the right time period – the Augusta Glass Works and the Atlanta Glass Co.

The Augusta Glass Works was certainly open during the correct period and made flasks and other bottles. However, only a single entry ever recorded the firm as “Company” (Roller 1996). That reference was to a letter from the “Augusta Glass Co.” Teal has a copy of that specific letter that is clearly marked “Augusta Glass Works.” Roller, a careful researcher, almost certainly made a typographical error in that instance. It seems unlikely that the plant would have ever used the initials “AGCo.”

The other possibility is the Atlanta Glass Co. As noted in the histories section, the Atlanta Glass Co. began as a business in 1887 and remained in production until at least December 1891. The company may have still been using the Atlanta Glass Co. name under the management of the Rankins-Nichols Glass Co. during 1893. This five- to six-year period was certainly sufficient for the plant to have made the relatively few AGCo flasks in existence.⁷ The succeeding firm, the Southern Glass Co., made containers for the South Carolina Dispensary. This suggests that Southern Glass made flasks; its predecessor also may have made flasks. Although the selection of the Atlanta Glass Co. as the user of the AGCo mark is imperfect, it remains by far the best choice based on the evidence currently available.

AGCo on Soda Bottles

As noted in the Containers and Marks section, the “ten-pin” style of crown-capped soda bottles was

⁶ We checked states as far away as Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri to the west as well as Maryland and Delaware to the north – plus all the southern states.

⁷ For example, in the Harvey Teal collection, there are only 14 South Carolina flasks used by local pre-Dispensary liquor dealers that are marked with the AGCo logo. And that collection contains 90% of the known examples.

in common use during the first two decades of the 20th century, although some were made earlier. Hutchinson-style bottles were made much earlier, patented in 1879, with a popularity that extended until at least ca. 1912 or later. On both bottle types, the AGCo logo was embossed across the base. Most examples of the Hutchinson bottles that we have seen were made of colorless glass that had solarized to an amethyst hue, and all were used by bottlers in the Southeast and as far north as Maryland.

Like the ten-pin style, the amethyst color on soda bottles was most common during the 1900-1920 period. Since the production of Hutchinson bottles declined sharply after ca. 1912, the most likely manufacturer was the Alexandria Glass Co., a known maker of soda bottles, in business from 1905 to 1916. The firm was perfectly situated to serve Maryland and the South. Although both the Annapolis Glass Co. and the Atlanta Glass Co. were in business at the right time to have made Hutchinson bottles, neither could have made crown-topped containers and were unlikely to have made soda bottles that would turn purple.⁸

However, the two Hutchinson bottles cited by Teal, and the only Hutchinson bottle offered on eBay with AGCo embossed on the heel, were aqua in color, and Teal’s bottles were made for South Carolina firms. Bare’s Florida bottle, although used for beer, was a Hutchinson, and should be included here. These almost certainly indicate that the Atlanta Glass Co. also made Hutchinson soda bottles and embossed them with the AGCo logo. The main indicators for an Atlanta manufacture seem to be glass color (aqua) and location of the

⁸ Although manganese dioxide (the ingredient that causes glass to turn amethyst or purple when exposed to prolonged sunlight) was used in some container glass at least as early as 1880 and as late as 1933, its popularity as a decolorant for various kinds of bottles was in vogue at different times. Since the containers in question were soda bottles, the most likely period was ca. 1900-1920. See Lockhart (2006) for a discussion on purple glass.

users (i.e., soda bottlers or breweries) in the Deep South.

AGCo on Beer Bottles

A single “blob-top” (one-part finish for Lightning-style stoppers) Baltimore beer bottle suggests a second possibility. Radically different in style from the soda bottles described above, the bottle may have been made by the Annapolis Glass Co. – as suggested by von Mechow (2010). The Annapolis glass house was open from 1885 to 1887, possibly again in 1893 and possibly in 1897, ideal times to have produced such a bottle. Arguing against this identification, however, is a lack of other similarly marked bottles that can be traced to the Annapolis glass house.

However, such finishes *were* still in use into the 20th century, so the Alexandria Glass Co. cannot be entirely ruled out. Since the Alexandria firm produced crown-topped soda bottles used in Maryland, the Baltimore location was easily within the plant’s service area, and the factory almost certainly used the AGCo logo, as discussed above.

In addition, the Atlanta Glass Co. remains a possibility, although less likely. We have no evidence that Atlanta produced soda or beer bottles that were *not* in the Hutchinson style, and we have no other contenders for Atlanta manufacture from that far north.

Other Bottle Types

Both the crudeness of the peppersauce bottle and the probable date range for the base found at Fort Bowie (1862-1894) eliminate the Alexandria firm as a possible maker. Both the Annapolis Glass Co. and the Atlanta Glass Co., however, fit the right time period. Since we have no provenance for the peppersauce bottle, it could easily fit either glass house. Similarly, the base from Fort Bowie could have originated almost anywhere. Food, medicinal items, and household items were all shipped into Fort Bowie from various locations within the U.S.

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 (aqua)	Atlanta Glass Co.	1887-ca. 1892
Hutchinson or crown soda bottles (solarized amethyst)	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	Anacortes Glass Co.	1910fc-1920s

Superior A.G.CO. Jars

Aqua-colored jars embossed “SUPERIOR A.G.CO.” in circular plates on the front were almost certainly *not* associated with the companies that made flasks and other bottles. According to Tom Caniff (personal communication 3/20/2010), the jars were probably made during the ca. 1915-1920 period – far too late for the Atlas Glass Co. – but he cautioned that his estimate was far from absolute. He suggested that Creswick’s guess – that the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. made the jars – was probably a good one. The jars appear to be somewhat common.

The only other glass houses that possibly made jars and had AGCo initials were the Anchor Glass Co. (Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania), the Acme Glass Co. (Olean, New York), and the Anacortes Glass Co. (Anacortes, Washington). The Anchor Glass Co. was only in business from 1907 to 1909. The company and products have been thoroughly researched, and the plant was only known to have made a single style of jar – albeit with several variations (e.g., Bernas 2003). The Acme Glass Co. was never listed as a jar manufacturer, but the firm eventually acquired the Olean Glass Co. and thereafter made some packers’ ware.

The Anacortes Glass Co., however, made packers and fruit

jars sporadically from ca. 1910 to ca. 1923 or later. Sources from the period indicate a large output during the periods when the plant was in production. One strike at the plant was by the members of “The Flints” (the American Flint Glass Workers Union) which may indicate that the plant made colorless glass (flint = colorless glass in glass industry publications).

Although that may argue against the identification of the Anacortes plant, the “Flints” were involved in 1910. It is easily possible that subsequent plant re-openings included the manufacture of aqua glass. It is also possible that the Anacortes workers chose that union, even though their primary product was not flint glass. All of the Superior AGCO jars offered on eBay are made of aqua glass, and Creswick also only listed the jars in aqua. The factory used semiautomatic machines by at least 1919 and certainly may have operated one machine or more during the earlier period. We therefore propose that current evidence suggests the Anacortes Glass Co. as the best choice as the user of the A.G.CO. mark on jars.

Future Research

Table 2 summarizes the probable users of the A.G.Co. mark on different container types, but the evidence is not fully conclusive. The identification of

the Atlanta Glass Co. as the maker of the flasks seems highly likely as does the recognition of the Alexandria Glass Co. as the producer of most soda bottles (although some Hutchinson bottles were almost certainly made at Atlanta). The maker of the beer and other bottles with the A.G.Co. logos is much less certain, but the Anacortes Glass Co. was the likely manufacturer of the Superior AGCo jars.

Evidence for the manufacture of soda and beer bottles would be greatly enhanced by research on local soda bottlers and breweries. The discovery of reliable dates when these firms were in business would help confirm the dates when their bottles were made – and thus the dates when the glass houses were in business.

Future research should center on the Annapolis and Alexandria areas, especially Annapolis. If bottles made at the Annapolis Glass Co. were embossed with the A.G.Co. mark, there should be some local evidence. Very few companies used a mark on only one or two molds – although that has *occasionally* been the case. The final local area for inspection is Anacortes, Washington. Once again, if the Superior A.G.CO. jars were made at Anacortes, there should be some evidence locally, especially at the site of the factory.

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