

Atlantic Bottle Co.

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Although the Atlantic Bottle Co. began as a jobber or distributor, it eventually became a major producer of milk bottles and tobacco jars. The plant used automatic machinery during its entire existence. As with many other glass houses of the early-to-mid-20th century, the plant was purchased by the giant Owens-Illinois Glass Co.

History

Atlantic Bottle Co., Brackenridge, Pennsylvania (1916-1922)

The Atlantic Bottle Co. began as a jobber in 1868 and did not actually manufacture bottles during the early period. By 1898, the firm sold flasks, bottles, lamps, lamp ware, chimneys, tableware, and saloon ware. The company was located at 136 First Ave., Brackenridge, Pennsylvania, from 1869 to 1879, then at 95 Water St. An 1885 billhead identified S.D. Strasberger & Co. as the proprietors (Hawkins 2009:37).

According to Toulouse (1971:28-29), Atlantic Bottle was chartered as a New York corporation “to manufacture bottles, bottle supplies, glassware, etc.” with a capital of \$10,000. Edward Glacken, John Delaney, and Jeane J. Delaney were the principals of the corporation. Unfortunately, Toulouse failed to mention the year of the incorporation; but the *Yonkers Herald* (8/25/1925) noted the lady’s name was *Joana J. Delaney* and dated the incorporation at August 24, 1908.

Toulouse (1971:28) noted that the company was unable to secure milk bottles from its usual sources, so it bought the former Fidelity Glass Co. at Brackenridge, Pennsylvania, in 1916 and began actual production. This statement seems odd. Milk bottle production was booming in 1916. However, the Fidelity Glass Co., in operation since 1895, had run into financial difficulty during the year before the sale and was in receivership at the end of 1915 – for sale in February of 1916. Assuming that Fidelity had been an important supplier of the Atlantic Bottle Co., this could explain the Toulouse statement. Atlantic Bottle almost certainly purchased Fidelity to ensure that its supply of milk bottles continued (*National Glass Budget* 1915; 1916).

The Fidelity Glass Co. had built two continuous tanks with 19 rings by 1912 and had added semiautomatic machinery the following year. Almost immediately after the purchase of Fidelity, the Atlantic Bottle Co. increased its capital to \$60,000 to finance the renovation of the plant. Part of the renovation was the addition of automatic feeders to transform the operation to fully automatic production (Hawkins 2009:37, 212). Also see the Fidelity Glass Co. section.

Bristow (1917:1) noted in 1917 that the Atlantic Bottle Co. used “four 1-man machines on three shifts, on which milk bottles and tobacco jars are being made” at Tarentum, Pennsylvania. A second tank was not in operation at that time but normally also used “four 1-man machines” to make milk bottles. Bristow added, “This is one of the best equipped and up-to-date semi-automatic machine bottle plants to be found in the United States.”¹

A year later, along with milk bottles, “one shop [was] making tobacco jars and jar lids.” Apparently, the plant was having trouble finding sufficient boys to work, thus, “the company has solved its small help problem by the placing of girls in this department [i.e., tobacco jars and lids] and is getting excellent results.” By that time, the plant was “operating continuously on milks, with one shop making tobacco jars and jar lids” (*Glassworker* 1918:11).

The Thomas Register elaborated in 1918, stating that the plant made “prescription, packers’, and preservers” containers and milk jars, and the same listing continued until at least 1920, when a fruit jar listing first began² (Thomas Publishing Co. 1918:811; 1920:828, 830, 4616; 1921:781, 4572). The firm again increased its capitalization to \$600,000 in September 1921, installed two more Miller machines in August of the following year, and added two machines in October. By 1922, the plant operated two continuous tanks with ten bottle machines (*Bottle Maker* 1922:15; Toulouse 1971:29).

On August 28, 1922, the *Pittsburgh Press* reported that a fire earlier in the day had destroyed the main building – with the continuous tanks – adding up to \$300,000 worth of

¹ The plant probably used Miller machines; those were certainly in use by Atlantic in 1921 – only four years later.

² The location shifted to New York City in 1920, but that probably reflected the sales office rather than a factory.

damage. At 2:30 AM, “the bottom of No. 1 tank fell out and molten glass ran over the floor of the building” starting the fire. After two hours, the water supply to the fire trucks failed, and the re-ignited structure burned to the ground. Although plant manager, Harry Ganter, said the the firm would rebuild immediately, Atlantic Bottle shifted its focus to nearby Tarentum for its new factory.

Atlantic Bottle Co., Tarentum, Pennsylvania (1923-1930)

The *Bottle Maker* (1922:15) noted that the Atlantic Bottle Co. was erecting a new plant and building “a new 75 ton tank furnace” at the location of the former Tarentum Glass Co. factory – which had been destroyed by fire in August. They expected the new plant to be completed by April 1, 1923. Despite the report from *Bottle Maker*, the new factory was actually atop the old Fidelity/Atlantic plant – not the Tarentum location – as shown on the 1924 and 1929 Sanborn maps (Figure 1).

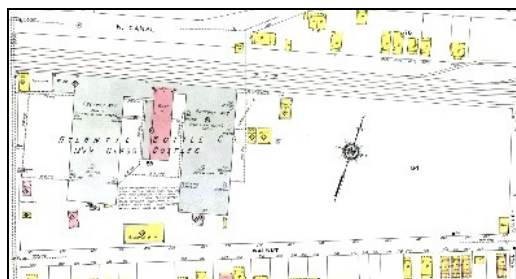


Figure 1 – Atlantic Bottle Co. 1929 (Sanborn map)

The new factory at Tarentum was not only more modern, it showed great foresight on the part of the directors. At its peak, the plant operated 18 machines (although this may have included both factory locations). By 1927, the plant was completely run by machines (two continuous tanks with 12 feeders – one, 80-to capacity) and made milk bottles, tobacco and cigar jars (*American Glass Review* 1927:125; Hawkins 2009:37; Toulouse 1971:30). Adams (1927:210) further described the operation:

Each of the melting tanks . . . is equipped with six Miller feeders working in conjunction with the Miller P.D. Geneva model, electric-driven, eight mold, eight blank machine. Bottles from the machines are conveyed to the lehrs by equipment from the Automatic Machinery Company. . . . Natural gas is the fuel used.

On November 4, 1930, the *Milwaukee Journal* announced that the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. had purchased the Atlantic Bottle Co. (Figure 2). The sum was set about \$2,000,000, but “a

substantial part of the purchase price is to be in stock of Owens-Illinois.” According to Toulouse (1971:30), the actual date of the purchase was November 25, and the plant continued to be listed as a “unit of Owens-Illinois Glass Co.” in 1931 (*American Glass Review* 1931:79). At some point during the 1920s, the location of the factory was listed as Brackenridge and continued to be referred to in that manner throughout the Owens-Illinois tenure. Toulouse (1971:395) noted an Owens-Illinois plant at Brackenridge from 1932 to 1940, but the initial date is incorrect. The Owens-Illinois annual reports listed the factory from 1930 to 1940, but it was idled in August 1931 and remained idle until the factory was reactivated during World War II to make land mine top covers.³

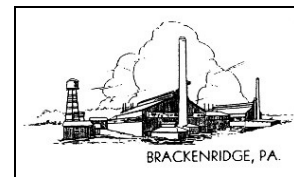


Figure 2 – Owens-Illinois Brackenridge plant (Owens-Illinois ca. 1937)

Containers and Marks

According to Toulouse (1971:29), in 1918, the Atlantic Bottle Co. “immediately began to install feeders and Miller wide-mouth machines, installing eight machines the first year, and two more the following year, when the adjoining, long-closed Richard & Hartley Glass Co. property was purchased” (actually, the Tarentum Glass Co. – see above). Thus, we could expect most, if not all, marked Atlantic Bottle Co. milk bottles to have machine-made characteristics.

ABC

According to Toulouse (1971:28), ABC “letters not punctuated” was a mark used by the Atlantic Bottle Co. from 1918 to 1930. Giarde (1980:10-11) also noted the logo with the same date range, almost certainly following Toulouse. In contrast, Toulouse (1971:28) claimed that the mark *with* punctuation (A.B.C.) was used by the Albion Bottle Co., Ltd., Oldbury, Worcester, England, from 1928 to 1969. However, it is unlikely that Giarde would have mistaken a British bottle for one used in the U.S. If this mark actually exists, it is probably found on mouth-blown

³ The World War II manufacturing information was supplied by Russell Hoenig, a former Owens-Illinois employee. Toulouse (1971:30) had noted that the property was sold in 1941, although he maintained that the usable steel was moved to the Owens-Illinois plant at Waco, Texas, in 1943, due to wartime shortages. It seems strange that Owens-Illinois would use steel from a property it had sold two years earlier.

milk bottles, made during the first two years that the factory was in operation. However, we doubt that this is a valid logo.

A.B.C.2 (1918-1931)

Giarde (1980:10-11) included “A.B.C.2” as a mark used by Atlantic Bottle and dated it, along with the “ABC” mark as being used between 1918 and 1930. However, in his text, he noted that “the A.B.C.2 mark has been confirmed on a variety of milk bottles . . . with dates ranging from 1927 to 1931.” In our sample, the A.B.C.2 mark was embossed, usually, on the front heels – although it appears on the reverse in some cases – and was often low on the heel roll (Figure 3). By at least 1927, Atlantic stamped outlined two-digit date codes on the ejection rods. These left a corresponding mark inside the ejection scar on the bottle bases (Figure 4).

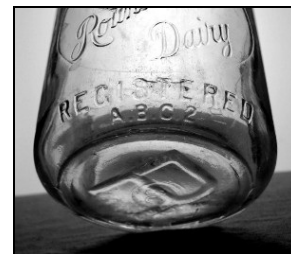


Figure 3 – A.B.C.2 logo on milk bottle heel

The initials, of course, indicated the Atlantic Bottle Co., but the number “2” requires a bit more explanation. Beginning January 1, 1910, the state of New York required “the name or initials and a designating number” to be embossed on the milk bottles by any glass manufacturer wishing to sell dairy containers within its borders (*Orange County Times-Press* 1910). In just a few years, many states required some form of factory logo *and* designated plant number to be embossed on all milk bottles sold within their boundaries. Most glass houses that made milk bottles began including the number as a standard part of their logo – regardless of where their bottles were sold. The Lockport Glass Co. received the number 1, and the Fidelity Glass Co. was granted number “2.” The Atlantic Bottle Co. inherited number “2” when it purchased Fidelity. See Lockhart et al. 2010 for more information on the system.



Figure 4 – “27” date code in ejection scar (eBay)

Although Toulouse (1971:30) stated that Owens-Illinois purchased the Atlantic Bottle Co. on November 25, 1930, we can confirm Giarde’s claim for a 1931 date code. H.P. Hood & Sons required its bottle suppliers to emboss four-digit date codes on its bottles as early as 1904. We have a pint bottle embossed with the A.B.C.2 Massachusetts seal (see below), an A.B.C.2

heelmark, “31” stamped in the ejection scar, and the Hood date of 1931 on the base (Figure 5). Owens-Illinois likely continued to use the A.B.C.2 logo until it had filled all the existing orders for Atlantic bottles, then closed the operation in 1931. See the section on Owens-Illinois for more information on that firm).



Figure 5 – “31” date code in ejection scar and “1931” date on base

A.B.C.2 Massachusetts Seal

From 1910 to 1947, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts required that all glass factories selling bottles to dairies within the state mark their containers with a Massachusetts seal. From ca. 1914, factories embossed the seal on the shoulder of each milk bottle, usually in a circular form as “MASS (arch) / {factory designator} / “SEAL (inverted arch).” These often appeared in a small circular plate. The mark used by Atlantic Bottle was “ABC2” (Blodget 2006:8; Schadlich [ca. 1990]). The use of the logo within the seal most likely reflects Giarde’s original date range of 1918 to 1931 (Figure 6).



Figure 6 – A.B.C.2 Massachusetts Seal

A.B.C.30

Giarde (1980:123) noted a single bottle embossed “A.B.C.30” (probably on the heel) as well as the Inverted-Triangle-T mark on the base. This combination makes no sense. The Inverted-Triangle-T logo was used by the Travis Glass Co., and the Thatcher Mfg. Co. purchased Travis in January 1920. Travis Glass and Atlantic Bottle were located in different states, and there is no reason whatsoever to connect the two logos. It is, of course, remotely possible that Atlantic Bottle somehow received an old Travis baseplate and used it.

The “30” immediately following the “A.B.C.” was similarly unlikely and was probably a misreading or a typographic error by someone. Atlantic Bottle used the number “2” as its manufacturing code. The number “30” had been assigned to the DuBois Glass Co. Since the *Brockway Record* reported on July 29, 1921, that the Pittsburgh Lens Glass Co. had purchased the Dubois property, it is highly unlikely that Atlantic had somehow acquired the DuBois number. Since Giarde received much of his information from a network of collectors, it seems more likely that a communication went askew, and an “A.B.C.2” heelcode with a “30” date code

on the base was recorded as “A.B.C.30.” See the section of the DuBois Glass Co. for more information about that firm.

Location Histories

One of the unusual aspects of this study was that the two factory locations used by the Atlantic Bottle Co. were side by side – the former Fidelity plant to the west, the former Tarentum Glass to the east – but were frequently listed as being in separate towns (Atlantic in Brackenridge, Tarentum at Tarentum), and each had a unique history. Please note that this section is intended as a comparative study rather than a complete history of each plant location. The early information below came from the Dick Roller files and Hawkins (2009).

The firm that built the west factory was originally Challinor, Hogan & Co. in 1870 at a different location but reorganized as Challinor, Taylor & Co. – Standard Glass Works – 1884. Challinor, Taylor & Co. began construction of the west plant in 1884 and began production the following year. Although Richards & Hartley Glass Co. also began at a different location (ca. 1870, it, too, began construction of the plant to the east in 1884.

A website (USA Catalogs n.d.) provided two pictures – a photo of the Richards & Hartley Glass Co. and a line drawing purporting to be of the Chalinator, Taylor & Co. Plant. Both were obviously the same factory, but the line drawing had been mis-identified. This actual photo included a sign on the roof identifying the Richards & Hartley Glass Co. A post card of the Tarentum Glass Co. (with an identifying sign) clearly showed the former Richards & Hartly plant. A comparison of the three pictures showed some changes over time, but many features remained the same (Figure 7).

In 1891, both factories joined the giant tableware conglomerate that created the United States Glass Co. – the western plant as Factory C, the eastern one as Factory E. The *Pittsburgh Press* (3/20/1893) reported that Factory C was completely destroyed by fire on March 19, 1893. As the U.S. Glass combine deteriorated, the Fidelity Glass Co. built a new factory at the site of the western plant,

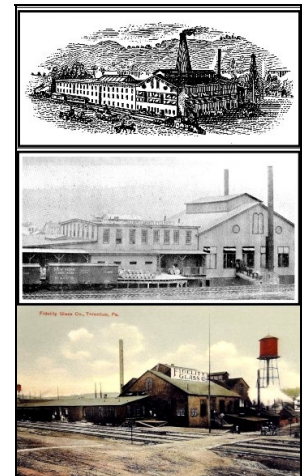


Figure 7 – Richards & Hartley/Tarentum Glass plant (U.S.A. Catalogs; TribLive 2021)

while the Tarentum Glass Co. formed to operate the still-standing plant on the east – both in 1894. Oddly, despite confirmation from *China, Glass & Lamps* that Tarentum Glass was in business in 1894, an 1897 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showed the plant as still being part of U.S. Glass (Figure 8). The 1902 Sanborn map showed Fidelity the same as in 1897 and the US Glass Factory E correctly as Tarentum Glass. The 1909 map showed Tarentum Glass still the same, but Fidelity had greatly expanded its plant (Figure 9). By the 1914 Sanborn map, Tarentum Glass had greatly expanded its plant (Figure 10).

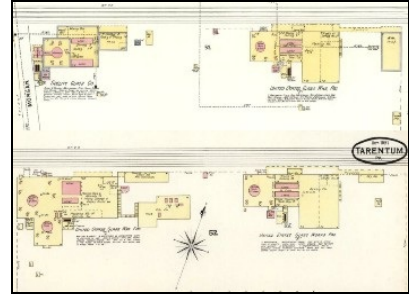


Figure 8 – 1891 & 1897 Sanborn maps

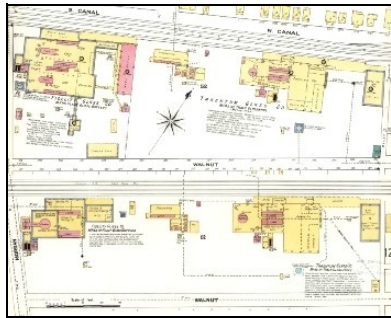


Figure 9 – 1902 & 1909 Sanborn maps

The Atlantic Bottle Co. purchased Fidelity and operated the factory until the plant burned in 1922. Atlantic Bottle then took over the old Tarentum Glass property and built its new plant in the general location as shown in the 1924 Sanborn map – a very different factory from either of the older ones (see Figure 1). The Owens-Illinois Glass Co. bought the factory as part of its entry into the milk bottle business in 1930 and called the former Tarentum location Brackenridge (see Figure 2). Owens-Illinois closed the plant the following year. For a tabular view, see Table 1.

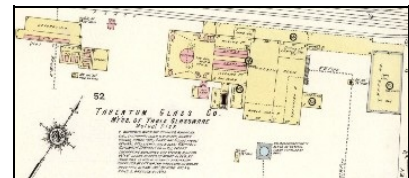


Figure 10 – 1914 Sanborn map

Discussion and Conclusions

It is virtually certain that the Atlantic Bottle Co. used the A.B.C.2 mark, probably from 1918 to 1930 and that the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. continued to use the logo until the molds wore out or until the factory was idled in August of 1931. In every context we have been able to view, the three initials have had full punctuation and were accompanied by the number “2.” The firm used two-digit date codes on the bases of milk bottles beginning in 1927, and some (possibly all) were stamped on the ejection rod, leaving the numeric code inside the ejection scar. It is possible that some date codes were embossed on baseplates.

We have discovered no evidence for any Atlantic Bottle Co. logos on containers other than milk bottles – although the plant certainly made tobacco jars and some other containers. Since many states required both the glass house logo and an identifying number on milk bottles by at least 1916, and other bottle types had no similar restrictions, it is unlikely that Atlantic bottle embossed its logo on its other containers.

Table 1 – Comparisons Between the Brackenridge/Tarentum Factories

Year	West Factory	East Factory
1865		Richards & Hartley Flint Glass Co.
1870	Challinor, Hogan & Co.	
1884	Challinor, Taylor & Co.	Richards & Hartley Glass Co.
1891	U.S. Glass Co., Factory C (burned 1891)	U.S. Glass Co., Factory E
1894	Fidelity Glass Co.	Tarentum Glass Co.
1916	Atlantic Bottle Co.	
1922	Factory burned	
1923	Atlantic Bottle Co.	
1930	Owens-Illinois Glass Co.	
1931	Plant idled until it was used to make land mines during World War II	

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