

The Blanke Companies – Jobbers in Milk Bottles

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[Much of this was published in Lockhart et al. 2012.]

Louis and William Blanke joined with B. Riley Hauk in a nationally advertised dairy supply business in 1903. Although Hauk parted company with the Blankes in 1911, each continued in the supply trade. One or both of the Blankes were involved in three subsequent companies, while Hauk was connected with three others. Although Hauk seems to have used no markings on his bottles, three of the four firms connected with the Blanke name used no less than five different logos on milk bottle bases.

Histories

Blanke & Hauk Supply Co., St. Louis, Missouri (1903-1911)

Louis William Blanke joined with his brother, William F. Blanke and Bernard Riley Hauk to purchase the firm of H. McWilson & Co. in 1903, renaming the business as the Blanke & Hauk Supply Co. William was primarily concerned with his own business, the W.F. Blanke Can & Mfg. Co., although he served as secretary and treasurer for the Blanke & Hauk Supply Co. The firm incorporated on December 31, 1902, with a capital of \$25,000, the two Blankes and Hauk listed as the incorporators. Louis was the president of the corporation until at least 1906, with Hauk as the vice president. The firm of Blanke & Hauk was “jobbers of modern machinery, appliances and supplies for the creamery, dairy, ice cream maker and poultryman” (Leonard 1906:60, 262; *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* 1/1/1903).

A 1904 letterhead for the Blanke & Hauk Supply Co. noted that the company sold “Modern Machinery & Appliances, Creamery, Dairy, Ice Cream Maker & Poultryman SHARPLES CREAM SEPARATORS” (eBay). Hauk became the president of the corporation at some point and served in that capacity until 1911, when he left the firm to become president and manager of the B. Riley Hauk Supply Co. (Marquis 1912:270).

The St. Louis Building Arts Foundation listed a 350-page “Catalogue No 2, Modern Machinery And Supplies For The Creamery, Dairy And Cheese” from Blanke & Hauk Supply Co., 202-206 Market St. Unfortunately, the catalog was undated. The firm advertised bees in 1910 (Figure 1). Although Marquis (1912:61) claimed that Hauk left the business in March 1911, and W.F. Blanke became president of the Blanke Mfg. & Supply Co. at that time, we discovered an ad for the B. Riley Hauk Supply Co. in the *St. Louis Star & Times* on October 16, 1910. This almost certainly placed the end of Blank & Hauk at 1910.



Figure 1 – Blanke & Hauk bee ad (*Des Moines Iowa Homestead* 3/10/1910)

Containers and Marks

BLANKE & HAUK (1903-ca. 1906)

An El Paso Dairy Co. bottle was embossed with “BLANKE AND HAUK (arch) / SPECIAL (inverted arch) on the base and was also embossed in a round plate on the body with the phone numbers BELL 340 AUTO 1156 (Figures 2 & 3). According to the city

directories, the Auto phone system was used in El Paso from ca. 1906 to 1913, thus providing a date range for the use of the bottles. The few Blanke & Hauk bottles we have seen were mouth blown, although at least one was machine made.



Figure 3 – Blanke & Hauk bottle



Figure 2 – Blanke & Hauk base

The mark was likely used by the company from its inception in 1903 until the second mark (addressed immediately below) was put into use. This mark is at least scarce, maybe rare. It was probably only used during the early days of the company, although the El Paso bottle suggests that it remained in use until at least 1905-1907.

Frank Bishop reported a milk bottle embossed “SNOW & PALMER” in a plate mold, with “BLANKE & HAUK” on the base. The heel was embossed “PE-32 KEYSTONE.” Milk bottles embossed with “KEYSTONE” are associated with “EMPIRE” marks and the August 13, 1901, Nightingale patent bottles distributed by the Empire Bottle & Supply Co. in the east and O.J. Weber in the west. While there is still a great deal of confusion about the initials “PE,” the bottles were certainly used during the 1901-1918 period.

BLANKE & HAUK / SUPPLY Co. (ca. 1906-1910)

Bottles sold on eBay (and one in our possession) were embossed “BLANKE & HAUK (arch) / SUPPLY Co. / SPECIAL (both horizontal) / ST LOUIS (inverted arch)” on the bases (Figure 4). These spanned the transition from mouth blown to machine made based on eBay photos. This was almost certainly the second mark used by the company and was likely used until the firm dissolved in 1910.



Figure 4 – Blanke & Hauk Supply Co. base (eBay)

Blanke Mfg. & Supply Co., St. Louis, Missouri (1910-1925)

Giarde (1980:18) correctly identified the Blanke Manufacturing and Supply Co. as a “jobber” or supplier of milk bottles and other dairy related items. Although he gave no date ranges, he noted that the mark was found on “early milk bottles.” The company actually grew out of Blanke & Hauk sometime around October of 1910. Louis Blanke served as president, with his brother, William, as vice president. The firm was listed in 1912 as selling “wholesale creamery supplies” (Marquis 1912:61, 270). The company was one of the advertisers in the Michigan Agricultural College 1916 Yearbook. Blanke apparently sold tokens to its customers, including one used by the Clover Leaf Dairy (Figure 5).



Figure 5 – Token – Blanke & Hauk (Greever 2011)

A 1922 ad in *Creamery and Milk Plant Monthly* (1922:69) named the Blanke Mfg. & Supply Co., St. Louis, Missouri, as “Factors – Engineers – Contractors to the Creamery, Milk

Plant, Ice Cream, Dairy Trade” and listed 44 products, including “Lamb Milk Bottles” (Figure 6). A footnote in *Stanford Law Review* (1950-51:325) noted that Blanke Mfg. & Supply Co. vs. Craig concerned the attempt to withdraw a bid during a bankruptcy sale. Although the firm may have been facing bankruptcy in 1923, it survived to merge with the Meyer Dairy Equipment Co. to form the Meyer-Blanke Co. on February 3, 1925, at which point Louis Blanke retired after serving as president for the entire span of the company. Louis W. Blanke died on February 4, 1941. His brother, William F. Blanke, had preceded him death at age 67 on April 17, 1937 (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 2/3/1925; 4/18/1937; *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* 4/2/1957).



Figure 6 – Blanke Mfg. & Sup. Co. ad (*Creamery & Milk Plant Monthly* 1922a:69)

Containers and Marks

BLANKE MFG. / & / SUP. CO. (1910-ca. 1921)

The Blanke Mfg. & Supply Co. embossed its name in the “BLANKE MFG. (arch) / & / SUP. CO. (inverted arch)” format on the bases of milk bottles it sold (Figure 7). This was probably the first mark used by the company, and it was listed by Giarde (1980:18). These were mostly or entirely machine made.



Figure 7 – BLANKE MFG. & SUP. CO. base (eBay)

BLANKE (ca. 1921-1925)

This mark was embossed in an inverted arch on the bases of some milk bottles. As noted above, the Blanke Mfg. & Supply Co. advertised as using bottles made by the Lamb Glass Co. Since Lamb Glass incorporated in July 1921, Lamb bottles cannot have been sold by the firm prior to that date. Because of the late date (post-1921), BLANKE was probably the last mark used by the Blanke Mfg. & Supply Co. and may only have been used on bottles made by Lamb.



Figure 8 – BLANKE base

A bottle in our possession had 24 panels and was embossed with “SNOW & PALMER / COMPANY” on one side and “SEALED / HALF PINT” on the other. The front heel was embossed “L-52,” with “321” on the back heel and “BLANKE” (inverted arch) on the base (Figures 8 & 9). C.H. Snow, of the Snow & Palmer Branch, Beatrice Creamery Co., Bloomington, Illinois., was listed as a subscriber to the *Journal of Dairy Science* from 1938 to 1946, but we have discovered nothing more about the company. It is highly probably that Snow & Palmer was independent at some point prior to 1938 and used the BLANKE bottles then.



Figure 9 – L-52 heelmark and BLANKE base

A very interesting item was offered on eBay. It was a solid blob of light amber glass that had been poured into a mold for an O.W.

Code milk bottle but not blown. The heel of the blob was embossed L-52” with “BLANKE” in an arch on the base (Figure 10).



Figure 10 – BLANKE & L-52 Whimsey (eBay)



Figure 11 – BLANKE base & L.G.CO.52 heelmark (eBay)

An eBay auction featured a bottle with the BLANKE basemark and a heelmark of “L.G.CO.52” (Figure 11). The L.G.CO.52 logo was probably the earliest mark used by Lamb, followed by the “L-52” logo. Unfortunately, we have not yet determined when Lamb changed from either of these early marks to the L52 mark (with the “52” nestled into the crook of the “L”), although the final change was probably after the “BLANKE” mark was terminated. The logo was likely used until the end of the company in 1925.

Meyer-Blanke Co., St. Louis, Missouri (and other locations) (1925-2022+)

On February 3, 1925, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported that “Today . . . consolidation of the Meyer Dairy Equipment Co., 422 North Third street, and the Blanke Manufacturing and

Supply Co., 214 Washington avenue. . . into the Meyer Blanke company” with a capital of \$300,000. Robert L. Blanke was the president with Carl G. Meyer as vice president, Edward R. Owen as secretary, and Harry E. Blanke as treasurer. Although the Blanke Co. Headquarters had been under lease and so was closed, the “branch offices of the former Meyer company at Dallas, Tex., and Birmingham, Ala., [were] retained under the new firm name.”

Giarde (1980:72) recognized that the MEYER-BLANKE CO. mark was that of a supplier rather than a manufacturer but otherwise had no knowledge of the firm. The firm continued in the dairy supply business. The Meyer-Blanke Co. remained in operation as of this writing in 2022.

Containers & Marks

MEYER-BLANKE CO. (1925-1930s)

Schadlich ([ca. 1990]) noted that MEYER BLANKE Co. was embossed on the bases of milk bottles ca. 1900. Although that date is incorrect, we have in our possession a milk bottle embossed “MEYER-BLANKE CO.” in an inverted arch that wrapped (counterclockwise) almost entirely around the base. The bottle, unfortunately, had no manufacturer’s mark. Similarly marked bottles have appeared on eBay, and one had the L52 mark (with the “52” nestled in the crook of the “L”) embossed on the heel (Figure 12). The bottle styles were popular during the 1930s and 1940s, and the logo was used by the Lamb Glass Co. from ca. 1929 to ca. 1971 or later. We have arbitrarily chosen “1930s” as an ending date for the MEYER-BLANKE logo because other jobbers we have researched ceased using their own marks on milk bottles by that period. The mark could have been used later or could have been discontinued earlier.



Figure 12 – MEYER-BLANKE basemark (eBay)

A variation was embossed on the base with the same words, but this one was configured in an arch that extended (clockwise) almost entirely around the circumference of the base (Figure 13). We have been unable to determine whether the difference was an engraver’s



Figure 13 – MEYER-BLANKE basemark (eBay)

whim or whether there is some temporal significance to the arched vs. inverted arch variations. Unfortunately, the Lamb Glass Co. rarely if ever used date codes on its bottles. The firm also carried ceramic jugs (Figure 14).

B. Riley Hawk Supply Co., St. Louis, Missouri (1911-1921)

This company grew from the Blanke & Hawk Supply Co. Although Marquis (1912:270) placed the date at March of 1911, we discovered an ad for the B. Riley Hawk Supply Co. in the October 16, 1910 edition of the *St. Louis Star & Times* and an article that the “B. Riley Hawk Supply Co. has recently organized” at 206 S. Fourth St. in *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for October 21 of the same year. It is therefore almost certain that the changes in the businesses happend around October of 1910.



Figure 14 – Ceramic jug (eBay)

Hawk had been the president of the earlier company and became the president and manager of this new firm. Hawk advertised in 1911 as a poultry supply jobber (Figure 15). The firm was still in business under the Riley Hawk name in February of 1920 (*Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette* 1920; *Chillicothe Daily Constitution* 1911). A token website noted that the firm was in business from 1911-1921 (Greever 2011), although it probably closed not too long after that.

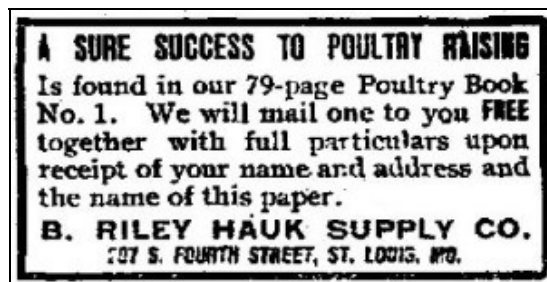


Figure 15 – B. Riley Hawk ad (*Chillicothe Daily Constitution* (2/20/1911)

According to Stevens (1921:232), Hawk’s “latest enterprise is the Dairyman’s Manufacturing and Supply Company.” Since Stevens’ book was written in 1921, the B. Riley Hawk Supply Co. could not have remained in business later than that year. Also, 1921 was the earliest reference we could find for the Dairyman’s Manufacturing and Supply Company. However, sometime between November of 1924 and September of 1926, the firm reorganized as

B. Riley Hawk & Son, retaining that name until at least 1950 when Hawk retired. Bernard Riley Hawk died on April 1, 1957 (*Charleston Entrprise-Courier* 9/16/1926; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 11/9/1924; *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* 4/2/1957).

Riley Hawk-Vogelsang Supply Co., St. Louis, Missouri (at least 1915-at least 1918)

O'Mally (2006:53) cited a letter from Hawk-Vogelsang, written in 1915, so the firm was in business by that time. The company still advertised in 1917 as producers of "Hawk's Emulser, Creamery, Dairy and Ice-Cream Machinery and Supplies" (*Chemical Catalog Co.* 1917:316) and advertised again in 1918 (*Creamery and Milk Plant Monthly* 1918b:55). This firm was in business concurrently with the B. Riley Hawk Supply Co., and this may reflect two names for the same company.

Riley Hawk & Son, St. Louis, Missouri (1926-ca. 1929)

Riley Hawk & Son incorporated in 1926 at 201 S. First St., St. Louis (*Iron Trade* 1926). Although we have found very little information about this firm, it was still in existence in 1929, but the firm became the Hawk Mfg. Co. by the following year.

Hawk Mfg. Co., St. Louis, Missouri (ca. 1930-at least 1947)

As noted above, Riley Hawk & Son still advertised in 1929, and we found an ad for the Hawk Mfg. Co. from in 1930. Hawk was sued over a debt issue concerning water heaters in 1947, so the company survived until at least that point. There were several different firms in business later in the 20th century with the name, Hawk Mfg. Co., so the later extent of the company is difficult to trace.

Discussion and Conclusions

The marks on these bottles have rarely been recorded in the bottle literature (Table 1). The above research establishes reasonably good dates for some of the Blanke marks and good approximates for all others. Hopefully, future research will enable us to "tighten" the date ranges.

Table 1 – Marks used by Blanke Companies

Mark	Firm	Dates	Mfg.
BLANKE & HAUK	Blanke & Hauk Supply Co.	1903-ca.1906	
BLANKE & HAUK / SUPPLY Co.	Blanke & Hauk Supply Co.	ca. 1906-1911	
BLANKE MFG. / SUP. CO.	Blanke Mfg. & Supply Co.,	1911-ca. 1921	Lamb
BLANKE	Blanke Mfg. & Supply Co.,	ca. 1921-late 1920s	L-52
MEYER-BLANKE CO. (inverted arch)	Meyer-Blanke Co.	1920-1930s	
MEYER-BLANKE CO. (arch)	Meyer-Blanke Co.	1920-1930s	

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Chemical Catalog Co.

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1911 Advertisement: “A Sure Success to Poultry Raising.” *Chillicothe Daily Constitution* February 20. [Chillicothe, Missouri]

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Originally published 12/2/2013; last updated 1/5/2023

