

## Colorado Glass Works Co.

Beau Schriever, Bill Lockhart, Bill Lindsey, and Carol Serr

As early as 1875, people in the Denver and Golden areas recognized that the region had the raw materials and demand to support a glass industry (*Colorado Transcript* 1875). Eastern industrialists were also aware of the situation, and there were reports that they were scouting locations with the intent to establish a glass works by mid 1876 (*Colorado Transcript* 1876). This scouting apparently involved collection of raw materials that were sent back east for analysis and testing. By 1883, such reports had become a regular item within local news without any physical actions ever being taken. A most interesting piece appeared in the January 31 edition of the *Colorado Transcript* in which a Pittsburg glass man, J.L. Cline, best laid out the need and advantages of establishing a glass works in the region:

First – The quantity of manufactured glass now required to supply the Denver market per annum is nearly or quite equal to the product of an eight-pot furnace.

Second – The raw material of good quality is found in inexhaustible supply, within ten miles of Denver – a larger and better variety than is known to exist in any other district of the United States. It is found in the property known as Burdsall's Soda Lake tract. There is found on this 200 acres of land: A limestone ridge of No.1 lime. A sandstone ridge of a finer and better quality of sand than any now used at any glass works in other states. A soda lake whose waters I have evaporated and find it yields from 15 to 20 per cent. Better test than any imported soda now being used in the manufacture of glass throughout the country.

Sometime in late 1886, plans for a glass works in Golden were finally being realized. The result was the Golden Glass Works, a plant that only remained in business during the year 1887. Like a phoenix, the Colorado Glass Works Co. arose in place of the original firm and made a variety of bottles for Denver and other Colorado bottlers for the rest of 1887 and 1888, when labor disputes caused the closure of the plant.

## Company Histories

### **Golden Glass Works, Golden, Colorado (1887)**

By November 1887, all the details for the creation of the Golden Glass Works factory had been arranged. The factory was to be opened by Joseph Slimm a glassblower with 41 years of experience. Slimm had previously worked for A.& D.H. Chambers at Pittsburgh and had been the superintendent at the A.J. Mansfield glass works in Lockport, New York and the Chase Valley Glass Company No. 2 in Wisconsin (Mass 2014; Miller 2007:2).

According to an interview in the January 5, 1887, *Colorado Transcript*, Slimm selected Golden for his factory because all of the heavy materials needed in glass production were within one-half mile of the factory. The region had coal mines in the hills just behind the factory, fireclay to build and maintain the furnace nearby, as well as deposits with abundant sand and lime. Slimm noted that this situation was unique in the United States.

The factory was to be located on the land formerly occupied by the Golden pottery works. The company would be housed in a building measuring 88 feet square, built with the most current technology available. Initially, the plant would have a five-pot furnace and employ some 10-14 glass blowers with more than 50 additional hands. The initial production would include glass bottles of all types, sizes, and colors, including prescription, bottles, carboys, fruit jars, pickle jars, chow-chow jars, and beer bottles (Clint 1976:39). The glass-blowers were all hand-picked by Slimm from glass concerns in the eastern half of the country and were expected to make from \$5 to \$6 a day. As highly skilled and experienced professionals, glass blowers were paid well in 1887.

The factory was to be completed and ready for operation by February 1887, as thirteen glass blowers arrived from the east the last week in January (*Colorado Transcript* 2/2/1887). However, a news piece from the February 9 *Transcript* noted that the furnace had not yet been completed due to an illness which prevented Mr. Slimm from supervising the work. The works were expected to be in full blast within two weeks. While there may have been some trials beforehand, the official opening of the glass works was on March 8, 1887. Slimm apparently

was a stickler for details and wanted everything to be correct before firing up the furnace and commencing production. A newsman who spent the day witnessing the opening affairs commented on how smoothly the operation began and continued throughout the day as if the factory had been running for years. The reporter also noted that Slimm pronounced the wares being produced as the best he had ever seen and credited the fine materials available locally (*Colorado Transcript* 4/9/1887).

By a week later, the factory had become a popular spot to visit and was steadily producing bottles with large shipments of soda and beer bottles sent to customers (CT Mar 16, 1887). While it is unclear who all the customers were, one of the largest appears to have been the Manitou Mineral Water, Bath & Park Co. – bottling the soda water from springs in Manitou Colorado (*Colorado Transcript* 3/16/1887, 5/19/1887). Such bottles would need to be sturdy due to the pressures created by the natural carbonation in the water – and the Golden Glass Works quickly gained a reputation for strong bottles.

Typical of glass works of the time, the blowers would take a summer vacation that was two months in length (usually July and August), likely because work near the furnace during these months would be unbearable. It seems that the blowers at the Golden Glass Works followed the same schedule because the *Transcript* for August 17, 1887, announced their expected return and beginning of the production season in early September.

However, before the factory was restarted, the works were incorporated, although Slimm was apparently no longer associated with it. It is unclear if Slimm lost the works due to debt or sold it possibly due to health issues. Regardless, the factory was incorporated on August 9, 1887, as the Colorado Glass Works Company.

### **Containers and Marks**

Although only producing bottles for four months, the firm apparently produced a variety of bottle types in various colors. With the exception of one bottle, the Golden Glass Works does not appear to have placed a maker's mark on its products. Clint (1978:40) suggested that possible bottles produced by this company may be identified using certain criteria, but there is no certain method for irrefutable identification. It does seem likely that unmarked bottles for

customers of the Colorado Glass Works Co. that could date from 1887 based on bottle characteristics and that share similar characteristics to those produced by the later company could have been made by the Golden Glass Works.

**G° / G G C° (1887-1889)**

Clint (1976:120) is the only source that recorded this very strange mark (Figure 1). The slash (/) is an actual part of the mark rather than an indicator for the beginning of a new line. He noted that it was “perhaps a backward attempt at Golden Glass Works. The bottle was a quart liquor bottle with an applied, two-part finish made for a Denver liquor house. There were apparently two variations of the bottle that had the same shape, color, and customer embossing on the sides. One variation was embossed “G°/G G C°” across the base, while the other had nothing on the base, and the base seams are different from each other. The bottle with the unembossed base had “COLO. G.W.” embossed on the back heel, but Clint was unclear about whether that was also true of the bottle with basal embossing. If both variations had the heel mark, it would be clear that the “G°/G G C°” mark was that of the Golden Glass Works.

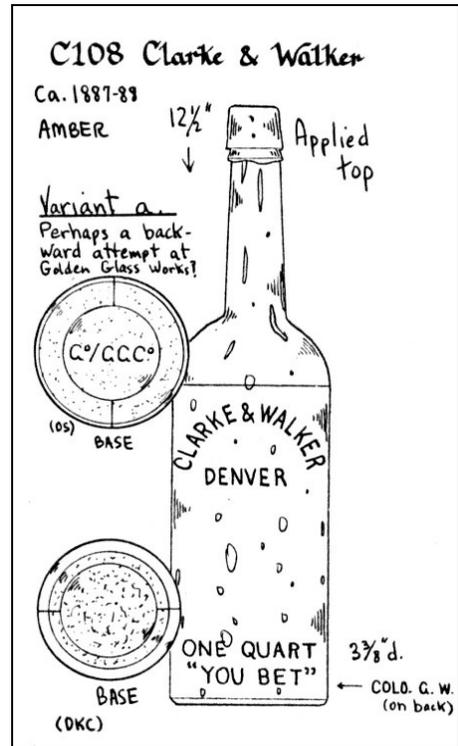


Figure 1 – Odd basemark (Clint 1976:120)

Both bottles were made for the same liquor dealer – Clarke & Walker – which creates a strong association with the Golden glass Works. However, this raises the question of why the company appears to have only placed a mark on a single mold. Perhaps this was the last mold ordered by the company before incorporation, and the company decided to start marking its products. If so, the odd “G°/G” part of the mark may have been an engraver’s mistake. The instructions to the mold maker may have been to mark the base “G°G C°” or “G G C°” to stand for the Golden Glass Company, but the instructions were misunderstood and reproduced as listed on the instructions

A more likely explanation was that this was probably a garbled C.C.G.Co. logo from the Colorado City Glass Co. The letters make sense as “C°/C G C°” – the exact initials of the Colorado City Glass Co., rather than “G°/G G C°” – initials that mean nothing. Even an experienced bottle researcher may mistake a “C” for a “G” – or vice versa. In addition, the slash (/) makes in virtually certain that there is one engraver’s error on the mark; Garbled letters may be another. Both glass houses made bottles for Denver firms. When the Golden firm ceased operations in 1888, Clarke & Walker logically would have purchased bottles from the only other local producer – Colorado City Glass Co.

### **Colorado Glass Works Co., Golden, Colorado (1887-1888)**

The articles of incorporation of the Colorado Glass Works Co. listed twelve prominent local Colorado businessmen as directors, but it seems likely that Adolph Coors was the primary investor behind the corporation; the board elected him as the president and treasurer of the company. One might expect that one of the main reasons that Coors was involved was to secure a source of bottles for his brewery. If this was the case, then these bottles must have not born the maker’s mark of the company as there are no known bottles attributed to Coors with either the Golden Glass Works or Colorado Glass Works Co. marks (Clint 1976, Prebble 1987).

It is unclear if the company continued as before or if the new management recruited new blowers and instituted new policies. However, the factory underwent improvements during the summer break that may have been the result of the change in ownership. These improvements took longer than expected and delayed restarting the furnace until September 14, and work commenced the following Monday (*Colorado Transcript* 8/31/1887; 9/14/1887; 9/21/1887).

The new season started with twenty blowers (*Colorado Transcript* 9/21/1887). Clint (1978:39) indicated that by October the workforce and production at the factory had doubled and flourished until July 11 when the furnace collapsed. The furnace was apparently repaired and work continued until December, when a labor dispute led to the closure of the company. It is interesting that no mention of the furnace collapse or repair was present in an article reporting on the visit of Issac Kline, the president of the National and International Glass Maker’s Union, to the golden factory during the week following July 11(*Colorado Transcript* 7/18/1888). Was the paper being polite not to mention the problem or was as the furnace that quickly repaired?

By December, the plant was extremely busy filling orders from companies in Colorado and out of state (*Colorado Transcript* 12/19/1888). However, all was not well within the ranks of the blowers, and the company ceased operation during the final week of December. The problem seems to have been a dispute between the glass blowers involving some union policy. As presented in the December 26, 1888, issue of the *Colorado Transcript*, the dispute was regrettable but seemed to be solvable:

The suspension of work in the Golden Glass works announced on Wednesday was a surprise to everybody. The Glass Works company unable to have their employees agree among themselves as to some matters between the members of their assembly and their chief magistrate in Ohio, were most reluctantly compelled to suspend work at present, with the full and declared intention of resuming work in a few weeks, when the labor question can be set to rest. Orders on their books will be delayed for a while.

The minor labor issue apparently was not so minor; the closure continued into March precipitating reports in papers that the works would be moved to another city. The local paper sought to reassure the citizens of Golden that this would not occur and reported receiving assurances that the works would not move and only remained closed due to the labor issue (*Colorado Transcript* 3/6/1888).

The company did not move but neither did it reopen. While it is unclear at this time, the labor issue that led to the end of the firm must have involved the company management, the blowers, and the union. The company owners were apparently quite willing to close the factory, if the labor terms were not acceptable to them. As Coors was not dependent on the Golden factory for bottles, the closing did not affect his main enterprise, the brewery.

It is unclear what happened to the company assets. It is certain that the Colorado City Glass Co. began operation in 1889 and made bottles for some former customers of the Golden Glass Works customers that are similar to those made by Golden Glass Works. This might suggest that some of the molds and equipment from the Golden factory ended up in Colorado City.

Wikipedia (2014) added that the firm incorporated in 1888 (probably a reorganization) as Coors, Binder & Co. prior to the strike. John Herold leased the idle factory in 1910 as the Herold China & Pottery Co. and made tableware and ovenware until the Coors company acquired the firm in 1914.

## Containers and Marks

### COLO. G.W. (1887-1888)

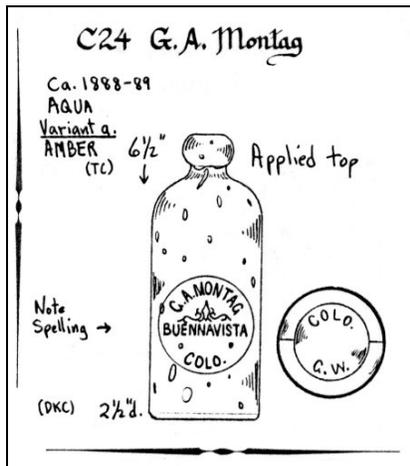


Figure 2 – COLO. G.W. Hutchinson bottle (Clint 1976:105)

This mark was embossed on the bases of beer and soda bottles made by the Colorado Glass Works Co. It appeared on only one Colorado Hutchinson soda bottle shown by Oppelt (2005:8, 53,

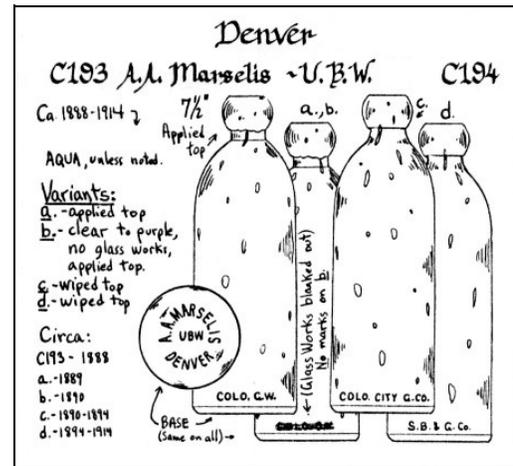


Figure 3 – COLO. G.W. Hutchinson bottle (Clint 1976:137)

66). Clint (1976) showed two variations: 1) “COLO. G.W.” embossed at the back heel (Figure 2); and 2) “COLO. (arch) / G.W. (inverted arch)” on the base (Figure 3). He showed five examples of the former, four of which were embossed on Hutchinson bottles; the remaining mark was on a quart whiskey bottle. All had applied finishes. The basal markings were all on Hutchinson bottles, two with applied finishes, and two with tooled tops.

Hutchbook (Fowler 2014) listed six examples of Hutchinson bottles embossed with the two-part basemark and Colorado bottlers, as well as four examples with the logo on the back heel. Von Mechow (2014) only noted a single bottle from Buena Vista, Colorado, embossed “COLO. (arch) / G.W. (inverted arch)” on the base. The firm also made at least one amber,



Figure 4 – COLO. G.W. whiskey base (eBay)

cylinder whiskey bottle with a packer finish and “COLO GW” embossed horizontally on the back heel (Figures 4-6) and two round, wide-mouth jars, each with a tooled packer finish and “COLO. (arch) / G.W. (inverted arch)” on the base (Figures 7 & 8).



Figure 5 – COLO. G.W. whiskey bottle (eBay)



Figure 6 – COLO. G.W. whiskey finish (eBay)



Figure 7 – COLO. G.W. packer bottle (eBay)



Figure 8 – COLO. G.W. packer base (eBay)

### **COLO. G.W. Co. (1887-1888)**

According to Oppelt (2005:8), this mark was embossed on the bases of beer and soda bottles made by the Colorado Glass Works Co. We have not found an example.

### **CGW (1887-1888)**

This mark is found on the base of a New Mexico Hutchinson soda bottle in the Lynn Loomis collection. Although this mark was not recognized by Clint or Oppelt, it may have been

used by the Colorado Glass Works Co. Other bottles are marked C G W that are embossed with the names of East Coast cities. See section on CGW for more discussion.

Toulouse (1971:129) attributed this mark to the Campbell Glass Works, West Berkeley, California, from 1884 to 1885. This was almost certainly a guess based on the initials. To date, we have only discovered a single California Hutchinson bottle used by the Enterprise Bottling Works of Sebastopol that was embossed on the base with the CGW logo (Fowler 2014). Harry B. Morris and F.R. Matthews established the Enterprise Bottling Works at Sebastopol, California, in 1908 and remained in business until at least 1917. This bottle could not possibly have been made by the Campbell firm (nor by the Colorado Glass Works Co. – see discussion below). It was apparently made by the Clyde Glass Works – on the other side of the continent!

Hutchbook (Fowler 2014) listed two Colorado Hutchinson bottles with “CGW” embossed on their bases. One bore the name of Ed. S. Hughes of Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Other Hughes Hutchinson bottles were embossed with full, four-digit date codes for 1889, 1892, 1900, 1903, 1909, and 1910. The bottle from 1892 had the “C.C.G.CO.” basemark from the Colorado City Glass Co. The CGW bottle was the only one with no date and one of only two with a manufacturer’s mark. The second was used by “Chas. Lang” of Aspen. The Chas. Lang saloon was listed in 1887 in *Bonfort’s Wine and Spirits Circular*. Lang remained in the saloon business until at least 1910.



Figure 9 – CGW Hutchinson base (Lynn Loomis collection)

Wood (1998) noted that another Hutchinson bottle with the “CGW” basemark was used by the Albuquerque Bottling Works in Albuquerque, New Mexico (Figures 9 & 10). Although the Albuquerque Bottling

Works has not been thoroughly researched, an ad in the February 12, 1888, *Albuquerque Daily Citizen* noted that the plant had opened in 1880; therefore, the firm was in business from 1880 until at least 1888. All three of these businesses fit within the time frame of the Colorado Glass Works Co.



Figure 10 – CGW Albuquerque Hutchinson (Lynn Loomis collection)

Although this mark was not recognized by Clint or Oppelt, it was likely used by the Golden factory. Bottles from the Colorado Glass Works Co. (1887-1888) may be recognized by the location at or near Colorado, basal position of the logo, and a “normal” “tailed-G” in the mark (see the section on the Clyde Glass Works for a discussion of eastern bottles with the CGW logo used by the Clyde Glass Works).

### **CGW Co (1887-1888)**



Figure 11 – CGW Co base

One of the authors has a colorless, cylinder whiskey bottle with an applied finish that was embossed “CGW (arch) / Co (inverted arch)” on the base (Figures 11 & 12). Although not mentioned by any of our sources, this logo was certainly used by the Colorado Glass Works Co.



Figure 12 – CGW Co bottle

### **THE DENVER JAR**

Although Roller (1982:101) suggested the Colorado Glass Works as a possible maker of the Denver Jar, we believe that the Colorado City Glass Co. is a much better choice. See the discussion in the Colorado City Glass Co. section.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

Most of the marks associated with these Colorado glass manufacturers are pretty straight forward. As noted above, the more unusual mark was probably used by the Colorado City Glass Co. instead of Golden Glass Works as attributed by Clint. The short time in business, coupled with the locality of the bottlers makes the identification of these marks pretty certain.

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Last updated 8/3/2014

