

Dillon Glass Co.

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With only a three-year history, the Dillon Glass Co. was a minor player in the glass industry, only making glass from 1891 to 1894. The plant made Mason and grooved-ring, wax-sealer fruit jars. Because of the firm's basemarks, it earned a small place in container history.

History

Dillon Glass Co., Converse and Fairmount, Indiana (1891-1894)

Allen and Kesiah Dillon transferred ca. two acres of land at Fairmount, Indiana, to the Dillon Glass Co. on August 22, 1890. Joseph H. Parker, Levi Scott, Allen Dillon, Richard Dillon, Charles M. Tigner, and L.E. Tigner incorporated under the Dillon Glass Co. name on February 11, 1891. The plant began production in mid-April of that year, with J.H. Parker as president, Levi Scott as secretary and treasurer, A.B. Scott as assistant treasurer, C.M. Tigner as superintendent, and R Dillon as foreman (Roller 1983:103; 1994:25; n.d.).

The plant specialized in fruit jars, notably “standard” (grooved-ring, wax-sealers) and Mason jars. The plant apparently soon ran into trouble and may have ceased production for a few months. By April 4, 1894, the firm had reorganized and resumed working, with James Luther as secretary – but the shift occurred too late. On December 7, the Marion Fruit Jar & Bottle Co. announced that it had purchased the Dillon plant and expected to begin production by January 1, 1895 (Roller 1983:103; 1994:25; n.d.).

Containers and Marks

We have only examined photos of the jars made by Dillon. They appear to have been mouth-blown, but they all have one unusual characteristic. Each jar has a seam at the heel, indicating a cup-bottom mold. However, each jar also has a circular seam in the center of the

base – typically a sign of a post-bottom mold. In this case, it appears that these are plates that would allow different embossed labeling to be easily placed on the jar bases.

DILLON G CO. (1891-1894)

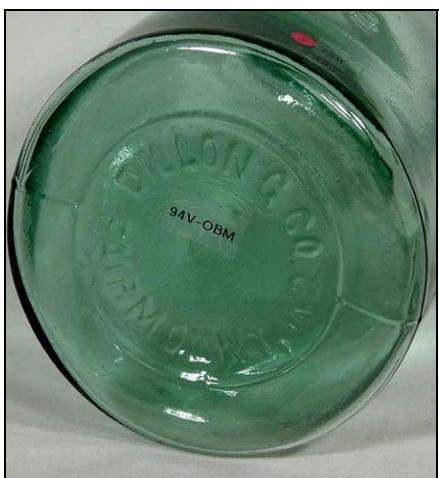


Figure 2 – Dillon jar base (eBay)

Toulouse (1969:93) listed a jar marked on the base “in a circle” DILLON & CO., FAIRMOUNT, IND., but he noted that “it may also read ‘DILLON G CO.’ as the ‘&’ or ‘G’ is uncertain.” Roller (1983:103) also discussed this mark and dated it ca. 1891-1894. Creswick (1987:45)

illustrated a grooved-ring wax-sealer embossed “DILLON G GO. (arch) / FAIRMONT, IND. (inverted arch)” on the base (Figure 1). Examples we have seen sometimes lack a period

after the “G,” although it may be present (Figures 2-4). No other source confirmed the Toulouse observation, and all 10 eBay examples had clearly defined “G” marks.



Figure 4 – Wax-sealer finish (eBay)

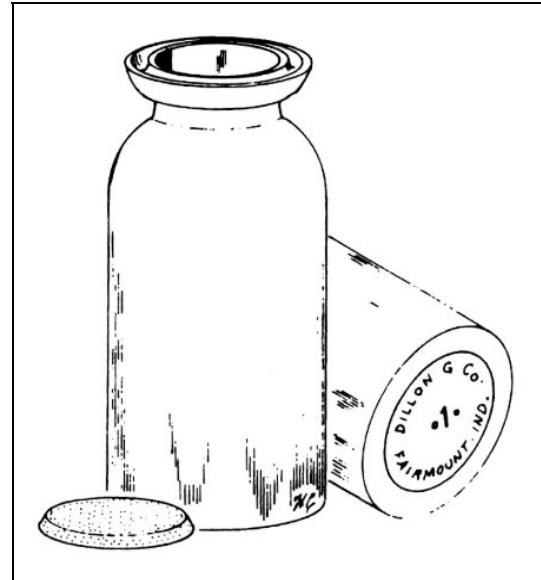


Figure 1 – Dillon jar (Creswick 1987:45)



Figure 3 – Wax-sealer jar (eBay)

DILLON GLASS CO. (1891-1894)

Roller (1983:103) described a variation embossed “DILLION GLASS CO., FAIRMONT, IND.” on the base and dated it also ca. 1891-1894. Creswick (1987:45) included the same variation. We have not found an example, and neither source illustrated the jar. It is impossible to tell which variation was made first.

THE FRANK DILLON CO. (1891-1894)

A final jar listed by Creswick (1987:45) was embossed “THE FRANK DILLON CO. FAIRMONT, IND. PATENT NOVEMBER 30 1866” on the front. This is the only style with the embossing on the front rather than the base, but we have not been able to locate an example. This was almost certainly a product jar, not associated with the Dillon Glass Co.

Discussion and Conclusions

Most of our discussions revolve around assessing what company used a mark or the dates of use. In this case, the company is not in doubt, and the marks were probably used during the entire tenure of the firm. Our job, instead, is to unravel the differing versions of the company history. Creswick (1987:265) claimed that Dillon had a plant at Converse, Indiana, but no other source that we can find confirms her assertion. It is apparent, therefore, that both basemarks were used at the Fairmount factory.

Acknowledgments

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Sources

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