

# Do Numbers Matter?

## A Study of Beer Bottle Bases



Bill Lockhart, Carol Serr, and Bill Lindsey

Dedicated to our fallen comrade, Pete Schulz  
We miss your knowledge, and we miss your information.  
But most of all, we miss your dry wit and ready smile.

[Pete Schulz suffered a serious stroke in 2010 and is recovering.]

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
Figures.....	iii
Tables.....	iv
Foreword.....	v
Do Numbers Matter? A Study of Beer Bottle Bases.....	1
Background.....	1
Ayres et al. (1980).....	3
Clint (1976).....	3
Herskovitz (1978).....	4
Lockhart and Olszewski (1994).....	4
Wilson (1981).....	4
Technology.....	4
Manufacturer’s Marks.....	5
BGCo and BGC <sup>o</sup> .....	5
C / MILW.....	6
CVCo No. 2.....	7
C&Co.....	7
C&CoLIM.....	8
DOC.....	9
FHGW.....	10
IGCo and IGCoL.....	11
KGWCo.....	14
LGCo.....	14
M {letter} – M / {number} – MGW.....	16
MGCo.....	18
OGCo Monogram.....	20
R&Co.....	20
Variation 1 (horizontal across center).....	22
Variation 4 (arch at top of base).....	23
Variation 5 (arched logo with large “C” below).....	23
SB&GCo.....	24

SB&GCo (arch). . . . .	24
SB&GCo (inverted arch at bottom). . . . .	25
SB& (arch) / GCo (inverted arch). . . . .	25
SB&GCo (horizontal). . . . .	26
Wisconsin Glass Co. Marks. . . . .	27
Factory No. 1. . . . .	28
WIS.G.C <sup>o</sup> (arch) / {letter} / MILW. . . . .	28
WIS.G.CO. (arch) / {letter} / MIL. . . . .	29
W.G.Co. (arch) / {letter} / MILW. . . . .	29
Factory No. 2. . . . .	30
WIS.GLASSC <sup>o</sup> / (arch) / {number}. . . . .	30
WIS.GLASSCo. (arch) / MIL. . . . .	30
WIS.GLASSCo. (arch) / {number} / MILW. . . . .	31
WIS.G.CO. (arch) / {number} / MILW. . . . .	31
Answering the Questions. . . . .	31
Question #1 – Mold Numbers. . . . .	31
Mold Numbers. . . . .	32
Shop Numbers. . . . .	33
Bottle Styles. . . . .	33
Customer Identification. . . . .	33
Conclusions for Question #1. . . . .	33
Question #2 – Patterns. . . . .	34
Letters Versus Numbers. . . . .	35
Time Versus Size. . . . .	35
Type of Bottle. . . . .	36
Use Life. . . . .	36
Question #3 – Sequence. . . . .	37
Further Speculation on Mold Numbers. . . . .	38
Sequencing and Dating. . . . .	39
Question #4 – Variations. . . . .	40
The Letter G. . . . .	40
Conclusions. . . . .	42
Photo Notes. . . . .	43
Sources. . . . .	43

## Figures

Figure 1 – Variations in the “G” on BGCo logos. . . . .	5
Figure 2 – BGCo (upside down G). . . . .	5
Figure 3 – C / 2 / MILW (Fort Laramie). . . . .	6
Figure 4 – C&Co / 11 (San Elizario). . . . .	8
Figure 5 – 2 / C&CoLIM. . . . .	8
Figure 6 – C&CoLIM / 12. . . . .	9
Figure 7 – 4 / DOC (Fort Laramie). . . . .	9
Figure 8 – DOC / 17. . . . .	10
Figure 9 – Comparison of C&CoLIM / 12 and DOC / 12. . . . .	11
Figure 10 – Bar / FHGW / 15. . . . .	11
Figure 11 – FHGW / 40 (Lockhart). . . . .	12
Figure 12 – IGC <sub>o</sub> / J (San Elizario). . . . .	12
Figure 13 – {Maltese cross} / IGC <sub>o</sub> / 3 (San Elizario). . . . .	12
Figure 14 – IGC <sub>o</sub> L / 12 (Fort Laramie). . . . .	13
Figure 15 – KGWCo. . . . .	14
Figure 16 – LGCo / 26. . . . .	15
Figure 17 – LGC <sup>o</sup> / 15 (Fort Laramie). . . . .	15
Figure 18 – MA. . . . .	16
Figure 19 – M / 3 (National Park Service Western Area Curation Center [NPSWACC]). . . . .	16
Figure 20 – PAT 85 – M / 7 (Fort Bowie). . . . .	17
Figure 21 – MGW2. . . . .	17
Figure 22 – MGW / 7. . . . .	18
Figure 23 – MGW / 6 / PAT 85 (Ayres et al. 1980). . . . .	18
Figure 24 – MGCo / 7 (San Elizario). . . . .	18
Figure 25 – A / MGCo / 9 [backwards] (Tucson Urban Renewal Project). . . . .	19
Figure 26 – + / MGC <sup>o</sup> / 2 (San Elizario). . . . .	19
Figure 27 – OGCo monogram (Hillsboro, NM). . . . .	20
Figure 28 – R&Co (horizontal) / 38 (Fort Laramie). . . . .	21
Figure 29 – PAT / R&Co / 85 (eBay). . . . .	21
Figure 30 – PAT 85 / R&Co / 15 (eBay). . . . .	21
Figure 31 – R&Co (spread arch) / D (eBay). . . . .	21
Figure 32 – R&Co (arch) / 5 (eBay). . . . .	21

Figure 33 – R&Co (arch) / 88 / 087 (TUR).....	21
Figure 34 – R&Co with C (TUR). ....	22
Figure 35 – SB&GCo (arch) / 19 (NPSWACC). ....	25
Figure 36 – 11 / SBGCo (inverted arch) (Wilson 1981:124)..	25
Figure 37 – SB& (arch) / F / GCo (inverted arch).....	25
Figure 38 – SB&GCo / 9 (horizontal) (eBay). ....	26
Figure 39 – WIS.G.C <sup>o</sup> (arch) / {letter} / MILW. ....	28
Figure 40 – WIS.G.CO. (arch) / {letter} / MIL (Fort Bowie). ....	29
Figure 41 – W.G.Co. (arch) / {letter} / MILW (Fort Bowie). ....	29
Figure 42 – WIS.GLASSC <sup>o</sup> / (arch) / {number} (Hillsboro, NM). ....	30
Figure 43 – WIS.GLASSC <sup>o</sup> / (arch) / {number}. ....	30
Figure 44 – WIS.GLASSCo. (arch) / MIL.....	30
Figure 45 – WIS.GLASSCo. (arch) / {number} / MILW. ....	31
Figure 46 – WIS.G.CO. (arch) / {number} / MILW. ....	31
Figure 47 – WIS.G.Co. (arch) / {number} / MILW.....	31
Figure 48 – Bases with right-extended “G” in the logo.....	41

#### Tables

Table 1 – Chronology of Basemarks for the Reed & Co. Factory.....	17
Table 2 – Variations of Basemarks used by the Mississippi Glass Co.....	18
Table 3 – Manufacturer’s Mark Data for the SB&GCo Logos. ....	24
Table 4 – Wisconsin Glass Co. Basemarks – Factory No. 1. ....	28
Table 5 – Wisconsin Glass Co. Basemarks – Factory No. 2. ....	29

## Foreword

From some of the earliest studies, researchers recognized the value of manufacturer's marks. The same researchers rarely addressed the embossed numbers – ubiquitous on 20<sup>th</sup> century bottles and common on some bottle types as early as the 1870s. Later researchers, by at least the late 1970s, began recording letter and numerical codes, and some recognized date codes and began exploring the meanings of other embossed numbers and letters.

The Bottle Research Group began exploring these embossed numbers early in its existence. We spent endless hours in e-mail and occasional telephone discussions about the meanings of these codes. We discovered that the codes contain a rich language used by the glass manufacturers – codes that disclosed the order in which molds were used, factory designations, model numbers, date codes, and some mysterious codes we have not yet cracked.

The beer dumps at Fort Stanton provided a perfect vehicle for addressing the embossed numbers and letters on export beer bottles made between ca. 1880 and ca. 1896. This study is not meant to be definitive; it is an exploratory venture into the fascinating world of mold codes. The beginning.

