

Illinois-Pacific – a West Coast Phenomenon

Part II – Illinois-Pacific Glass Corp. (1926-1930)

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The Illinois-Pacific phenomenon consisted of three companies: The Illinois-Pacific Glass Co. (1902-1926); Illinois-Pacific Glass Corp. (1926-1930); and the Illinois-Pacific Coast Co. (1930-1932). All were affiliated with the Illinois Glass Co. of Alton, Illinois. Because the history is so complex, and the company used such a rich variety of manufacturer's marks and date codes, we have divided the history and marks chronology into three sections, reflecting the three main divisions of the company's history.

History

Illinois-Pacific Glass Corp., Los Angeles and San Francisco (1926-1930)

According to Toulouse (1971:268), the Illinois-Pacific Glass Corp. incorporated in 1925. Ayres et al. (1980:20-21), however, dated the formation of the corporation at 1926, citing city directories. The latter date is correct. On January 7, 1926, the *New York Times* reported that the "Illinois Glass Corp., Wilmington, reorganize the Illinois Pacific Glass, a California Corp., \$31,000,000–310,000 shares."¹ In other words, the original Illinois Pacific Glass Co. was also a corporation, chartered in California, and the Illinois Pacific Glass Corp. was a reorganization of the corporation, based this time in Delaware to take advantage of that state's more lenient corporation laws. The company also maintained sales offices in Oakland, Seattle, and Portland (*Los Angeles Times* 2/12/1926).

Only a few changes took place during this period. Illinois-Pacific built a new, larger combination warehouse and office building at San Francisco in 1927 (*Pacific Bottler* 1927:26). Also, in 1927, the San Francisco plant made a "general line of bottles and hollowware, fruit jars,

¹The official date of incorporation was January 6, 1926 (Moody's 1926:2111).

milk bottles and jelly glasses [along with] ‘Electroneal’ ware” at three continuous tanks with 12 feeders (*American Glass Review* 1927:137).

In June 1928, the company broke ground for the new \$750,000 plant at Los Angeles. The plant began operation on February 15, 1929 (Moody 1929:149; *Wall Street Journal* 6/6/1928). The factory, Plant No. 2 in Los Angeles, was intended to supply Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah, as well as “the Orient, Antipodes and South and Central American countries which have previously been served from San Francisco (*Los Angeles Times* 6/10/1928). The new plant had a single continuous tank and five feeders (*American Glass Review* 1929:99). By at least 1930 (probably earlier), hand operations had completely ceased, and all plants only produced bottles by machine (Shippey 1930:A4). Illinois-Pacific merged with the Pacific Coast Glass Co. to form the Illinois-Pacific Coast Co. in 1930.

Containers and Marks

For background information on the bottles and marks of the entire Illinois-Pacific Glass Co., see the preceding section.

IPG in a Triangle (1925-1931)

As far as we can discover (except for the PRESTO jars), the only mark ever used by the corporation was IPG in a triangle (despite the claim by Toulouse that three variations were used). This mark was mostly embossed on heels of the bottles (as noted on soft drink, food, and milk bottles), although it was occasionally placed on bases of medicine, some beer, occasional soda, some food bottles, and possibly other



Figure 2 – Triangle-IPG heelmark

types (Figures 1 & 2). The logo uniformly maintained the same shape and was often accompanied by numbers that fit into identifiable patterns. The “I” leaned in toward the center as did the “P” with the “G” slanted backwards. The apex of the triangle had a tiny,



Figure 1 – Triangle-IPG basemark

solid, embossed triangle above the “P.” Each IPG mark we have examined followed this pattern, although Robert Leavitt (personal communication, 5/11/2005) reported a single example that lacked the smaller, solid triangle at the apex. This was probably an engraver’s error, quite common during the 1920s and for two decades to follow.

Jones (1965:[16]) was the first researcher to report this mark. According to her, T.L. Kousseff claimed that “this was the mark of Illinois Pacific in the 1920’s, prior to the merger with Pacific Coast . . . Trade mark after 1924 ‘Electroneal.’” Three years later (1966:20), Jones again mentioned the triangle mark but with a completely incorrect date of 1903. Toulouse (1971:268-269) also included this mark, again with no specific information. Giarde (1980:55) discussed the mark as used on milk bottles. He claimed that single-digit date codes were found to the left of the triangle “particularly in the late 1920’s” and noted that “the triangle mark is the one found on milk bottles.”

Most of the bottles we studied were soft drink bottles used in Arizona along with some from New Mexico and El Paso, Texas. However, all bottles (including milks and households) we have found with the Triangle IPG mark could be dated from 1925 to 1931. We attribute the mark to the “Corporation” period, although the mark was used by at least January 1925 – during the “Company” period.

Electoneal

Advertisements for Illinois Pacific from at least May 1926 to March 20, 1930, showed the Triangle-IPG mark with the tiny triangle at the apex (Figure 3). The mark accompanied ads for milk, soft drink, and food bottles. In addition, the ads touted electrically annealed bottles and claimed that the process could almost double the use life of bottles. The earliest milk bottle ad (*Western Milk Dealer* May 1926) we have found noted that “the ordinary milk bottle lives 17 round trips – some more and some less – but seventeen trips on average.” However, it claimed that “electronically annealed milk bottles live practically twice as long.” By September, the company had

Reducing Bottle Costs

Your bottle expense cannot be determined by the price you pay for bottles. It depends upon the number of trips your bottles make.

Watch your junk barrel and learn the age of the glass that is breaking up. We place the date of manufacture on every bottle.

In addition to giving you bottles that will be durable, we give you a clear, sparkling glass, of good attractive color, to give a proper dress and finish that is worthy of your product and helps in its appeal to the consumer.

Ask the man who is using
Electroneal Bottles
SOLE MANUFACTURERS

Identify Them  by the Triangle

Illinois Pacific Glass Corporation
Folsom and 15th Streets
SAN FRANCISCO

1317-18 ALASKA BUILDING SEATTLE, WASH. 816-817 BROADWAY BUILDING PORTLAND, OREGON 3101 FRUITLAND ROAD LOS ANGELES, CALIF. 1744 BROADWAY OAKLAND, CALIF.

Figure 3 – Ad with triangle logo (*Pacific Bottler* Feb. 1928)

named the process Electroneal (Figure 4). An ad that month in the *Western Milk Dealer* claimed that “Electroneal Milk Bottles never spall—they are perfectly tempered, tough, and durable. They resist the action of pasteurizing indefinitely. They tell their own age by the date on the top of the finish” (see the discussion of this rim-code dating process in Part I of this series and below). The company also created a paperweight to celebrate the process (Figure 5).

Charles C. Cole (1926:40), President of Illinois-Pacific Glass Corp., followed the ads with an article that described the process as thermostatically controlling the annealing so that the



Figure 5 – Illinois-Pacific paperweight

ideal temperatures were maintained and changed to create the strongest bottle. He claimed that no fuel source could match the efficiency offered by electrically heating the annealing oven. He finished by noting: “The impossibility of expressing all of this thought in brief form has given rise to the need for coining a new word and hence the addition to the dictionary of the word ‘Electroneal.’”

Fruit Jars

Creswick (1987:31) reported the triangle mark on the base of a Boyd Mason jar. Boyd Masons were made by the earlier Illinois Pacific Glass Co. but were probably discontinued with the reorganization. The triangle mark was also positioned at the back of the heel as in the case of the Getsbest jar (Creswick 1987:57; Roller 1983:137). The Improved Everlasting Jar (also made by the earlier “company”) was also embossed with the triangle logo on the heel (Roller 1987:165). See the first part of this series for more information on Boyd Masons and Improved Everlasting jars.

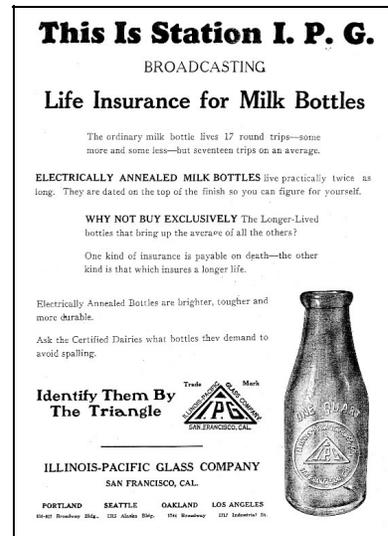


Figure 4 – Electroneal ad (*Western Milk Dealer* May 1926)

Milk Bottles

Illinois Pacific adopted a somewhat unique system for embossing date codes on bottles. Although the system was apparently developed by the Southern Glass Co. (Vernon, California), it was soon practiced by several glass houses in the state – but is unknown in any other area we have found. Illinois Pacific’s May 1926 ad (*Western Milk Dealer*) noted that milk bottles “are dated on the top of the finish so you can figure for yourself” (Figure 6). The one-or two-digit number on the left side (1-12) of the rim is a code for the month the bottle was made, and the single-digit numeral on the right side is a year code. The year codes for Illinois-Pacific extend from 5 to 0, indicating 1925 to 1930 (although some bottles with Triangle-IPG logos extend to “3” (1933)).



Figure 6 – Rim Code
(California State Parks)

Milk bottles with the triangle mark generally had a single-digit number, usually to the left of the mark, although it was occasionally to the right or even below. Double-digit numbers were almost always to the left (one case below). Numbers in our sample ranged from 1 to 29 and included virtually every number in between. Occasionally, a mark had a two-digit number to the left and a single-digit number to the right. These numbers did not match either month or year rim codes, nor did they correspond with bottle sizes (e.g., number “1” is found in half-pint, pint, and quart sizes). Since two-digit codes contained numbers “10,” “11,” “12.” etc., they were far too early to have been date codes. All evidence we have found shows that the Triangle-IPG mark showed up ca. 1925 (see Figure 2 & Figure 35 in Part I).

The Triangle-IPG mark was *much* more likely to occur on the heel than the base. Of 109 examples of the mark that we observed in the California Parks collection, only two were placed on the base (1.8% of the sample – 98.2% occur on the heel).

Soda Bottles

Beginning in 1927, soft drink bottles with the triangle mark displayed two notable patterns: 1) {number} – {number} located somewhere away from the mark (e.g., 7 - 1); or 2)

{number} Triangle-IPG {number} (e.g., 8 Triangle-IPG 5). The manufacturer's marks were almost always embossed on the heels; we have found only one number pattern that appeared on a base. We found the first pattern inconsistently placed on the front or on the back heel, regardless of the location of the manufacturer's mark.

On bottles that should be from 1926, there were no identifiable date codes accompanying the Triangle-IPG marks. However, the number "7" appeared in one of the formats described above (usually the number to the left) on all bottles that we have been able to date to ca. 1927 (Figure 7).² This is the first year for the use of a date code on soda bottles by Illinois Pacific. Interestingly, we came to this conclusion based on empirical evidence, then discovered that a June 1927 ad was the earliest we can find that discussed date codes on soft drink bottles (*Pacific Bottler*). The ad stated: "Our ELECTRONEAL bottle will carry more beverage from your plant to the consumer than any other bottle because it is durable and long-lived. To enable you to prove this to your own satisfaction, the date of manufacture is placed on every bottle."

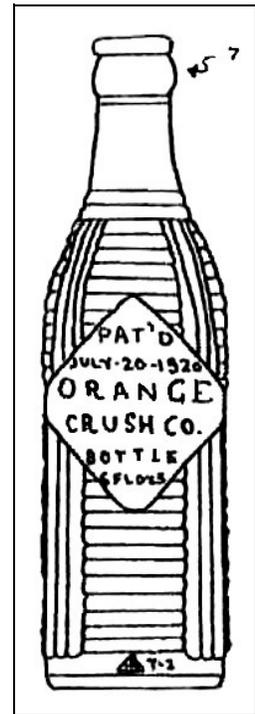


Figure 7 – Heel & finish codes (Miller 2008:52)

Porter (2009) reported a slightly different pattern in hobble-skirt Coca-Cola bottles. Illinois-Pacific apparently first made Coke bottles in the "PAT'D NOV 16, 1915" variation in 1926, and these had the Illinois-Pacific triangle on the heel. Single- or double-digit numbers, usually on the opposite side of the bottle from the logo, appear to have been mold number. In 1927, however, the heelmarks began to follow the first pattern described above. Unlike most of the other (non-hobble-skirt) bottles, these also had a small "7" embossed on the reinforcing ring of the crown finish.

² Both Miller, in Arizona (e.g., Miller 1999; 2008), and Lockhart, in El Paso, Texas, and Southern New Mexico (e.g., Lockhart 2000) have extensively dated local bottles using a combination of company information, manufacturer's marks, possible code combinations, manufacturing techniques, and the observation of hundreds, possibly thousands, of bottles. This resulted in many cases in the development of a chronology for bottles initially used by a company within a one- or two-year period. These techniques have enabled us to develop, test, and often confirm possible date codes on many bottles.

Another interesting ramification has surfaced. Because of the information on milk bottle rim codes, we reappraised our ideas about soda bottle marks. With a single exception, in every example of the mark we have examined, there are two codes (from 1927 on). Initially, we thought that one of these was a date (year) code, and the other was a mold number. However, in a total of almost 50 marks, every number (usually on the left of the code sequence) was between 1 and 12. Since milk bottles during this period were embossed with *both* the month and the year of manufacture, it is almost certain that the second codes on soda bottles are codes for the month of manufacture. Note that month codes do *not* appear on Coca-Cola bottles. Porter showed codes of 7-13, 7-60, 9-13, 9-14, and 9-15 on Coke bottle bases, demonstrating that the second set of digits were not month codes.

In 1928, the numeral “8” was usually a part of the code and generally appeared also on the crown finish. The numeral was embossed on the reinforcing ring (the second or lower, more bulbous area of the crown). We have found a single amber soda/near-beer bottle with a “7” embossed on the reinforcing ring and a 7 {triangle mark} 3 on the heel (see Figure 7). This indicates that the crown date codes were used at least as early as 1927, although the crown location was much more common in 1928. See Miller (2008) for numerous examples of all these date codes.

Occasionally, the numeral “7” was in the codes associated with the mark, but “8” was on the crown. In all likelihood, this represented a transition to date codes embossed on the crown. Bottles with “7” near the manufacturer’s mark were probably made from molds cut in 1927. When the engraver added the “8” at the crown, he likely forgot to change the heel number. Examples of this kind of error during a transformation period are common on Owens-Illinois Glass Co. bottles as well, and careful examination often reveals where an old code was obliterated and a new digit added to update the year. The date code on the crown probably began sometime during the year, so bottles exist in both configurations.

Coca-Cola bottles again formed an interesting pattern. During 1928, Illinois-Pacific changed from the “PAT’D NOV 16, 1915” Coke bottle to the “PAT’D DEC 25, 1923” style. All of the 1915 hobble-skirt bottles recorded by Porter (2009) only had the “8” date code at the heel. The 1923 variation bottles, however, uniformly had the second pattern of the logo/codes (i.e., {number} Triangle-IPG {number}) on the heel and the “8” code on the reinforcing ring. A

single 1915 bottle was made in 1929 for the San Francisco Coca-Cola Bottling Co., but this is almost certainly a reuse of an old set of side molds and a new baseplate. The format of the heelmarks followed the second pattern.

The move to the crown seems to have been completed by 1929, although occasional examples still retained an “8” near the manufacturer’s mark (Figure 8). As above, this was a common error during transitions. Most Coke bottles followed the move to the reinforcing ring only, but a few retained the heel codes in the second pattern (Porter 2009).

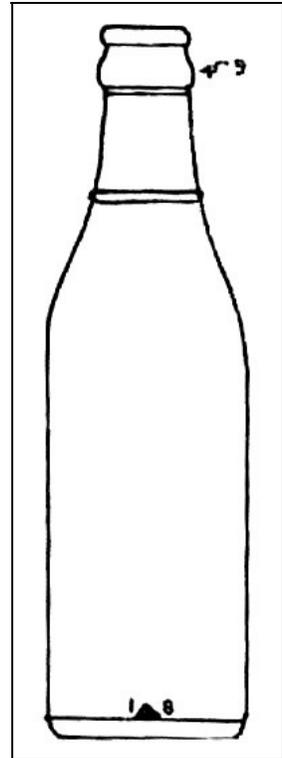


Figure 8 – Heel & finish codes (Miller 2008:45)

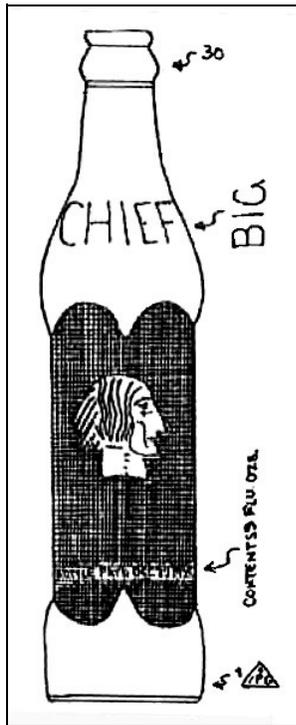


Figure 9 – Heel & finish codes (Miller 2008:26)

In 1930, the only consistently-identifiable date code was embossed on the crown, although two examples attributed to that year did not have marks on the crown (Figure 9). One of these exceptions, however, had a “0” next to the manufacturer’s mark (probably indicating 1930). All of the hobble-skirt Coca-Cola bottles recorded by Porter (2009) had the “30” on the reinforcing ring, but, in most cases, the “30” was embossed over a “9.” Almost all also had “9 Triangle-IPG {number} embossed at the heel. Several of these had a “0” embossed on top of the “9.” This provides solid evidence that virtually all of the Coke bottles made in 1930 were made from the older 1929 molds.

Even though the merger that created the Illinois Pacific Coast Co. was made in 1930, some bottles with date codes for 1931 still retain an identifiable IPG mark (instead of the expected IPC mark). This probably indicates the use of a mold until it wore out or the filling of existing contacts after the change in name (or both). However, the “31” date codes may be found either on the crown or in conjunction with the manufacturer’s mark at the heel. This practice is documented by Smith (1989:25-27) in describing the Ball

Brothers takeover of the Three Rivers Glass Co. Again following the pattern, this inconsistency of mark placement was also documented by Porter (2009) on Coke bottles. Some 1931 marks are only on the heel; others are on both heel and crown. By 1930, codes on both sides of the mark were often unrelated to the date or month (Figure 10).

MANUFACTURED BY ILLINOIS PACIFIC GLASS CORP.
and **PRESTO JARS** (1927-1930)



Figure 10 – Heel & finish codes (Miller 2008:182)

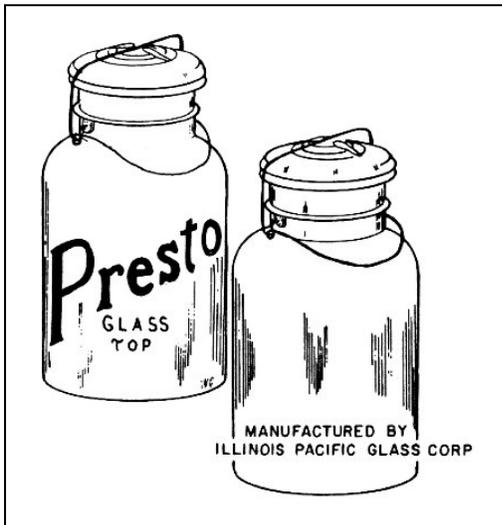


Figure 11 – Presto Supreme (Creswick 1987:106-107)

Toulouse (1969:247-248) discussed the Presto jar series, noting that the jars were made by both the Illinois Glass Co. and Illinois-Pacific – although he did not include the variations in Illinois-Pacific heelmarks. Roller (1987:293) also featured the PRESTO GLASS TOP with the mark but not the Mason jars.

The Illinois Glass Co. and its subsidiaries (including Illinois-Pacific)

made the “PRESTO” series of jars after March 1, 1927 (the date of first use on the trademark document). The Illinois Glass Co. registered the “PRESTO” logo (#243,989) on July 3, 1928 (Creswick 1987:155). Both “PRESTO GLASS TOP” jars and “PRESTO SUPREME MASON” jar were embossed “MANUFACTURED BY ILLINOIS PACIFIC GLASS CORP.” in two lines across the back heels of the jars (Creswick 1987:106-107 – Figures 11-13).



Figure 12 – Presto Supreme (eBay)

Contrary to Creswick’s statement (1987:106), the jars were *not* made by the earlier Illinois Pacific Glass Co. The “Co.” ended in 1926, a year before the PRESTO logo was ever

used. The Roller update (2011:432-433) also questioned her identification of the “Corp.” logo on the Presto Supreme Mason. The Roller editors only noted the “Corp.” embossing on the Presto Glass Top jars. See also the last entry in Part I of this series and “PRESTO” jars in Part III. These jars were probably made for export – hence the embossing of the full name (see discussion in Part I).



Figure 13 – Presto heelmark (eBay)

Discussion and Conclusions

Aside from a few jars embossed with the entire Illinois-Pacific name, the “corporation” only seems to have used a single mark, IPG in a triangle. Even though the mark was originally used during the “company” period, beginning in January 1925, its greatest use was between 1926 and 1931 – extending into the Illinois-Pacific Coast Co. period (see Part III). Of greater importance, from a dating perspective, the corporation embossed codes showing both the month and year of manufacture on milk bottles as early as 1925 and soda bottles by 1927. These are some of the most finely dated glass containers ever made.

It is tempting to seek parallels between Illinois-Pacific and the Illinois Glass Co., but the two firms had separate developments. The logos were dissimilar, and the Illinois Glass Co. never developed a date code system – while Illinois-Pacific used extensive date codes. Rim codes on milk bottles were an exclusive West Coast phenomenon that was never copied or developed in other parts of the country. In addition, Illinois-Pacific did not share its Electorneal system with the eastern firm. Oddly, since other areas remained separate, both firms made Presto jars.

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