

Kimble Glass Co.

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

Evan Kimble opened the Kimble Glass Co. in Chicago in 1901, using lamp working tools, gifts from Thomas K. Sheldon, Kimble's former employer. The firm specialized in glass tubing and laboratory glass. Kimble purchased a one-third share for the Vineland Flint Glass Mfg. Co. in 1912 but sold it back in 1918. In 1931, however, Kimble acquired the entire Vineland factory, moving to Chicago Heights in 1939. The Owens-Illinois Glass Co. purchased the controlling stock of Kimble in 1946 and gradually achieved full ownership. In 1949, Kimble *became the first manufacturer of picture tubes for television sets and produced glass blocks.

Histories

Vineland Flint Glass Mfg. Co., Vineland, New Jersey (1892-1920)

According to Pepper (1971:278) and the Antiquarian ([2013]), Victor Durand, Jr., with help from his father, leased the Vineland Flint Glass Mfg. Co. at Vineland, New Jersey, in 1897 – originally founded in 1892. Durand had worked with his father at Whitall Tatum & Co. in Millville, New Jersey, before moving to T.C. Wheaton, then to several West Virginia glass houses. He was proficient in all forms of glass blowing by the time he and his father began the Vineland business.

The factory made bottles, jars, and lamp chimneys at seven pots, but Durand built an additional furnace to produce glass tubing. He purchased his father's share in 1899, becoming the sole owner. Although the factory burned to the ground in 1904, Durand rebuilt it. In 1912, he merged the firm with the Kimble Glass Co., becoming the Kimble-Durand Glass Co. Although we have not discovered an explanation, Kimble withdrew from the merger in 1918. The plant added vacuum bottles at some point but apparently continued to produce containers until at least 1920 – although tubing and thermos bottles remained the primary products (Davies [2016]; *National Glass Budget* 1898:7; Pepper 1971:278; Thomas Publishing Co. 1912:489; 1920:827). We have found no sources that suggested manufacturer's marks from this firm.

Vineland Flint Glass Works, Vineland, New Jersey (1920-1931)

Durand incorporated the business as the Vineland Flint Glass Works in 1920 and was the president and majority stockholder of the firm. In 1924, he convinced Martin Bach, Jr., to join him and produce art glass. By 1927, the factory made glass tubing, rods, chemical and laboratory ware, vacuum bottle blanks, hydrometer jars, funnels, X-ray bulbs and apparatus, signal glass, opal ware, plain and iridescent glassware, novelties and specialties, and art glassware. The plant operated six furnaces with 45 pots as well as one continuous tank and one day tank, and the listing remained the same until 1931, when the company merged with the Kimble Glass Co. Durand died during the transaction, and his wife completed the merger (*American Glass Review* 1927:133; 131:114). As with the earlier company, this one apparently failed to mark its products.

Kimble Glass Co., Chicago, Illinois (1901-1939)

Kimble Glass Co., Vineland, New Jersey (1931-1939)

Kimble Glass Co., Chicago Heights, Illinois (1939-1946)

A former employee of the Sheldon-Foster Glass Co., Evan Ewan Kimble began his company in 1901 in Chicago with lamp-working tools given to him by his former employer, Thomas K. Sheldon. Kimble originally obtained tubing from the Vineland Flint Glass Tube Co. and the Sheldon-Foster plant at Chicago Heights. He concentrated on laboratory apparatus and tubing, eventually making his own glass as well as some bottles – notably non-corrosive bottles for storing acids. In 1912, he purchased a one-third interest in the Vineland plant but sold it back to Victor Durand in 1918

(Pullin 1986:190; Toulouse 1971:292-293). Pepper (1971:257) interviewed a tube inspector from the early period who called the job “exhausting.” He stated that he had to be sure that not even a tiny “seed” (air bubble) remained – or the tubing could explode.

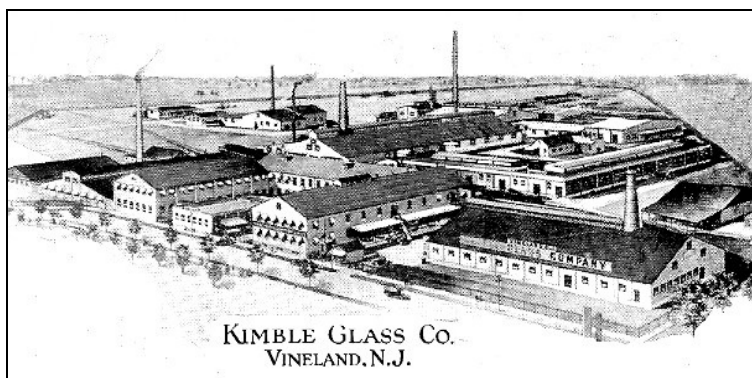


Figure 1 – Kimble factory (Illinois Glass Co., 1926)

When Kimble purchased Vineland Flint (including the Durand operation), he also acquired a large stock of art glass, which he sold off locally. Although art glass was not part of Kimble's plan, he was convinced to try it and commissioned a single vase, marked on the base with the letter "K," a serial number, and the year of manufacture. Because of the Great Depression, sales of the vases were poor, and Kimble discontinued art glass after two years (Pepper 1971:285).

Although the relationship between the two firms is unclear, the 1926 Illinois Glass Co. catalog illustrated the company's factories and included the Kimble Glass Co. plant at Vineland (Figure 1). Since the photo included the Kimble name, Kimble likely made some of the drug store apparatuses sold by Illinois Glass. Kimble bought the entire Vineland operation in 1931 and ran both plants until he purchased the Chicago Heights factory from Owens-Illinois Glass Co. in 1939 (Toulouse 1971:293). Although we have no historical data for confirmation, Kimble may have relocated his operations to Chicago Heights at this point and closed the Vineland plant and Chicago office. See the Chicago Heights section for more information on that firm.

Although the company made "tubing, laboratory and optical" glass, it also manufactured "vials and prescription ware" in 1927 and used two furnaces with 20 pots; one continuous tank with three rings; and one day tank to make its products. The vials and prescription ware were made by machine. In 1929, the product list for bottles became "toilet and perfumery ware" – probably specialized fancy containers – and that listing remained until at least 1936 (*American Glass Review* 1927:99, 137; 1929:99; 1936:93).

Owens-Illinois purchased the controlling stock of the Kimble Glass Co. in 1946 and organized the American Structural Products Co., an Ohio corporation, in 1947, the firm that controlled the Kimble assets. There is no indication in Owens-Illinois records of a factory at Vineland or at Chicago, so Kimble must have closed his New Jersey and Chicago operations prior to the sale. Owens-Illinois used the plant primarily for making Kaylo (a type of insulation) and picture tubes (Casetext 2016; Owens-Illinois n.d.; Toulouse 1971:292-293).

The Kimble unit announced the production the first practical rectangular cathode ray envelopes – also called television picture tubes – on July 10, 1949. The display was roughly 12 by 16 inches in size and cost \$12. On May 26, 1952, Owens-Illinois reorganized the American

Structural Products Co. as the Kimble Glass Co. and began the production of structural glass blocks. Owens-Illinois expanded the Vineland plant in 1961, installing two furnaces for the production of borosilicate glass. As of April 2, 2007, Owens-Illinois transferred the Kimble assets to Gerresheimer Glass, Inc., the current owner in 2017 (Casetext 2016; Simpson 1962:64; TODAYINSCI 2016).

Containers and Marks

Toulouse (1971:292) described Kimble as using

many trademarks, but most refer to glass compositions, apparatus, tubing, glass block, and television envelopes (picture tubes). A few refer to vials and bottles, especially of noncorrosive glass (“NC” is a 1926 trademark) of “Neutraglas” (trademark from 1941) Many of the trademarks are words which start in “Kim”

K (1931-1933)



Figure 2 – K engraving (eBay)

According to Pepper (1971:285), the single letter “K” was hand engraved on the Kimble vase along with a serial number and date. Although the example she illustrated was engraved “Durand (cursive between the serifs of a large “V”) / 1978 8,” she maintained that Kimble vases had date codes and were only

made during the first two years after Evan Kimble took over the business. However, the example we have used (Figures 2 & 3) was etched “20165-12 (arch) / K / Dec-49 (inverted arch) – although “Dec” could be “Dic” or “Dee.” Other numbers included “31,” “32,” “109,” and “110” – all preceded by “Dec.” The last two were



Figure 3 – Kimble Vase (eBay)

certainly not date codes, so it is improbable that the other numbers indicated dates. It is unclear whether or not Pepper suggested the two-year period based on “31” and “32” “date” codes. We have not discovered the mark in any other context, and it was probably never embossed or used on laboratory or container glass.

K in an elongated hexagon (ca. 1917-ca. 1920)

Toulouse (1971:292) noted two variations of Kimble’s K in a hexagon (Figure 4). The first, that he dated “circa 1917,” had a smaller “K” that showed space between the letter, itself, and the hexagonal border. Although we have questioned some of the Toulouse dates, he claimed that his information in this case came from “directories; Kimble history papers; personal contact.” As an industry insider, he may have had some reason for selecting these dates – although we can find no trademark evidence for the use of the logo this early (see below). However, if Toulouse was correct, Kimble likely stopped using this logo when he adopted the next one ca. 1920.

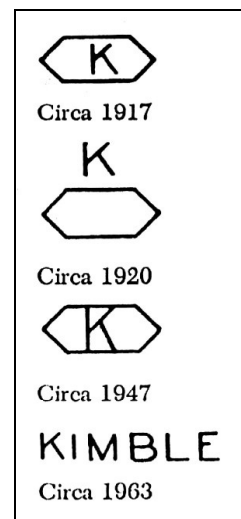


Figure 4 – Kimble logo variations (Toulouse 1971:292)

K above an elongated hexagon (1920-1947, poss. as late as the 1970s)

Toulouse (1971:292) dated this mark ca. 1920. Pullin (1986:190) noted the mark and used the Toulouse date. Hanlon (191:6-17) illustrated a K above a horizontally elongated hexagon in 1971, all enclosed in a circle, but the mark was not included in a 1982 list (Emhart 1982:74-75). Kimble received Trademark No. 381,836 on October 8, 1940, claiming a first use of the mark in April of 1920.

Kimble made at least some test bottles including Babcock Test Bottles with very elongated necks for use by dairies. A 1922 ad noted that “the Sand Blast that is now being put on Kimble Milk and



Figure 5 – K over hexagon logo (*Pacific Dairy Review* 1922)

Cream Test Bottles offers a permanent durable writing surface” (*Pacific Dairy Review* 1922). This suggests that the mark was only used on these specific bottles – although it is likely that Kimble also etched the same setup for any other bottles that generally needed to be labeled by hand (Figure 5). The logo probably continued in use until 1947, although Owens-Illinois could have extended its life into the 1970s.

A variation of the mark was surrounded by a circle, although this was probably only used in advertisements and possibly on boxes. Kimble received Trademark No. 164,311 on February 20, 1923, claiming first use in April of 1920 (Figure 6).

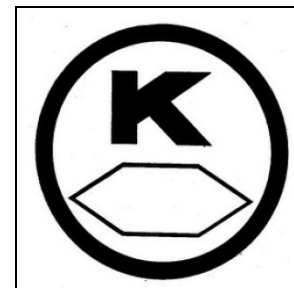


Figure 6 – Hexagon-K in a circle trademark

K in an elongated hexagon (1947-ca. 1963)

In the second Hexagon-K logo listed by Toulouse (1971:292), the “K” was larger with both top and bottom touching the hexagon (Figure 7). This was used “circa 1947,” making it a mark of the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. Pullin (1986:190) only included a K-in-a-hexagon mark – with space around the letter – “after 1936.” Many examples we have found were also embossed with “NEUTRAGLAS” – dating those bottles and mark after 1941 (see Neutraglas below).

According to the trademark document, Kimble applied for the Elongated-Hexagon-K logo on September 24, 1948, and was not granted Trademark No. 523,902 until April 11, 1950. Kimble claimed first use on December 2, 1947, so the Toulouse beginning date is correct by 29 days. The hexagonal logo was probably replaced by “KIMBLE” (see next entry) sometime between 1963 and 1969.



Figure 7 – Hexagon-K

KIMBLE (1963 and 1970s)

Toulouse (1971:292) placed the “KIMBLE” mark ca. 1963 (see Figure 4). Pullin (1986:194), however, set the date ca. 1970s and noted that it was a logo of the Owens-Illinois division. Kimble received Trademark No. 883,223 on February 19, 1968, and claimed first use of the mark in February 1963.

NEUTRAGLAS (1941-ca. 1955)

Toulouse (1971:292) noted that Kimble used the Neutraglas trade mark on non-corrosive ware beginning in 1941 (Figure 8). Owens-Illinois filed for the NEUTRAGLAS trademark on January 21, 1942, and received the filing status for Trademark No. 396,024 on June 23 of that year. The firm claimed December 4, 1941, as the date of first use.



Figure 8 – NEUTRAGLAS

KIMAX (1956-2017)

KIMAX replaced NEUTRAGLAS by at least August 21, 1956, (probably a year earlier), when Kimble applied for the logo, receiving Trademark No. 646,480 on June 4 of the following year – claiming a first use of the mark on July 30, 1956 (Figure 9). Such bottles continue to be available in early 2017. – still with etched, hexagonal-shaped areas for writing.



Figure 9 – KIMAX bottle (eBay)

Liquor Code (at least 1950s)

At some point after the Repeal of Prohibition, Kimble applied for and received one of the federal numbers to allow the firm to manufacture liquor bottles. We have discussed this several times in the Encyclopedia, so it is sufficient to say that the federal liquor number requirement extended from 1934 to 1964. Each manufacturer had to emboss the number of the distiller, the glass house number (both assigned by the federal government), a two-digit date code, and the factory logo on the base of each bottle. In the



Figure 11 – Decanter



Figure 10 – Liquor base

case of our example, D-10 was the distiller's code, 66 was the number for Kimble, and the bottle was made in 1953. The final number (4) was a mold code (Figure 10). It is likely that all of Kimble's liquor bottles were fancy decanters, such as our example (Figure 11).

Discussion and Conclusions

Although a few small gaps remain in the research, and there is a reasonable doubt about the initial logo and timing proposed by Toulouse, the dating of the marks used by Kimble are sufficient for most archaeological and collector needs. The mark with the "K" above the hexagon was certainly used from 1920 to 1947 and may have continued as a vehicle for writing on glass containers well after that date. The larger "K" in the hexagon began its existence in 1947, when Owens-Illinois purchased the business and was probably replaced by "KIMBLE" between 1963 and 1968 – and remains in use in 2017.

Acknowledgments

We wish to extend our gratitude to Wanda Wakkinen for proofreading our work.

Sources

American Glass Review

1927 *Glass Factory Yearbook and Directory*. *American Glass Review*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

1929 *Glass Factory Yearbook and Directory*. *American Glass Review*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

1936 *Glass Factory Yearbook and Directory*. *American Glass Review*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Antiquarian

[2016] "History of Durand Art Glass Vineland Flint Glass Works 1892-1933, Vineland, N.J."

<http://theantiquarian.us/Hist.%20Durnd%20Art%20Glass%20-%20Vineland%20Flint%20Glass%202.htm>

Casetext

2016 “Kimble Glass Co. v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue (1961).”

<https://casetext.com/case/kimble-glass-co-v-commissioner-of-internal-revenue-1>

Davies, Jim

[2016] “Vineland Flint Glass Works: The Early Years.”

<http://www.vineland-flint.sjerseyglass.com/>

Emhart Glass

1982 *Emhart Punt Marks*. Emhart, Zurich, Switzerland.

Hanlon, Joseph F.

1971 *Handbook of Package Engineering*. McGraw-Hill, New York.

National Glass Budget

1898 “Flint, Green and Cathedral Glass Factories of the United States and Canada in Operation.” *National Glass Budget* 13(38):7.

Owens-Illinois Glass Co.

n.d. “Owens-Illinois Glass Company Pocket History.” Pamphlet. Owens-Illinois Glass Co.

Pacific Dairy Review

1922 Advertisement: “The Kimble Sand Blast Spot Gives Glass a Writing Paper Finish.” *Pacific Dairy Review*.

Pepper, Adeline

1971 *Glass Gaffers of New Jersey*. Scribner's Sons, New York.

Pullin, Anne Geffken

1986 *Glass Signatures Trademarks and Trade Names from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*. Wallace-Homestead, Radnor, Pennsylvania.

Simpson, H.E.

1962 “The Glass Industry – 1961.” *Glass Industry* 43(2):63-67.

Thomas Publishing Co.

1912 *Thomas’ Register of American Manufacturers and First Hands in All Lines: A Classified Reference Book for Buyer and Sellers*. Thomas Publishing, New York.

1920 *Thomas Register of American Manufacturers and First Hands in All Lines*. Thomas Publishing Co., New York.

TODAYINSCI ®

2016 “Today in Science History.” https://todayinsci.com/10/10_01.htm

Toulouse, Julian Harrison

1971 *Bottle Makers and Their Marks*. Thomas Nelson, New York.

Last updated 2/3/2017