

# The Dating Game

by Bill Lockhart

## Liberty Glass Co., Lamb Glass Co., and Updates

### Background

Liberty Glass Co. was formed from the Bartlett-Collins Glass Co. in 1918, at Liberty, Oklahoma, with George F. Collins as its manager and secretary of the corporation. Toulouse (1971:321) placed the L.G. mark as used from 1924 to 1946, but did not note any earlier mark. He noted a change to the L-G mark and dated that from 1946 to 1954 when the company made a final change to LG (no punctuation). The company made milk bottles exclusively until 1935, when George F. Collin & Co. of Poteau, Oklahoma, ceased operation, and Liberty began the manufacture of soft drink bottles as well. About 1955, Liberty expanded its output to a general line of containers.

Although Peterson (1968:49) did not cite his sources, he placed the L-G mark as beginning in 1936, a full decade earlier than the date claimed by Toulouse. He also suggested 1953 as the beginning date for the LG mark. Peterson did not assign end dates to marks.

Giarde (1980:65-68) dated the L.G. mark from 1924 to 1934, the L-G mark from 1934 to 1954, and LG starting at 1954. Giarde also suggested that the L.G.Co. mark found on early milk bottles is the missing mark from Liberty Glass and was used from 1918 until the beginning of the L.G. mark in 1924. Although the L. G. Co. mark was also used by the Louisville Kentucky Glass Works from 1880 until the late 1880s (Toulouse 1971:323), the company was never known to have made milk bottles.

Although the three major researchers (Toulouse, Giarde, and Peterson) agree on most dates, there are two conflicts, one minor – the other of major importance. The minor conflict is only expressed by Peterson with the beginning date of 1953 for the final LG mark, where both others cite 1954. This discrepancy is relatively inconsequential. The disagreement over the beginning date of the L-G mark, however, is important as it differs by a full decade or more. Giarde placed the date at 1934, Peterson at 1936, and

Toulouse at 1946. An intuitive time for the change would have been about 1935, when Collins' Poteau plant closed, and Liberty began making soft drink bottles. It is probable that the date given by Toulouse was a typo (he certainly had several!) – he likely intended it to be 1936.

As somewhat of an aside, the actual date for the beginning of soft drink bottle production was probably 1934. Toulouse cited city directories as his sources, and they are notorious for recording changes a year late. For example, if the 1934 directory came out in April, and Liberty began making soft drink bottles in May or June, then date codes for 1934 would show up on bottles, even though the directory did not record the change until the 1935 edition. The year, 1934, fits better with the marks found on the bottles.

### Milk Bottles

Empirical testing of milk bottles produced interesting results. I looked for date codes I had recorded for El Paso soft drink and milk bottles along with the Lynn Loomis collection and input from Warren A. Hackbarth. On milk bottles, the L.G. mark always appeared on the heel of the bottle, and I found date codes of 28 (1928) and 31 (1931) on bases. Milk bottles from companies that were only in business prior to 1928 were not marked with date codes. That probably means that Liberty Glass did not include date codes on its earliest containers, although the sample is small. This supports Giarde's claim for a 1924 to 1934 date range.

Empirical testing also supports Giarde's beginning date for the L-G mark. Many Liberty Glass Co. milk bottles with the L-G mark were used in El Paso – almost always embossed on the heel and always accompanied by a two-digit date code on the base (although two bottles had both the L-G mark and the date code on the bases – 1942 and 1947). Dates range from 1934 to 1958. A single exception was embossed with a strange date code – a 31 with a "1" that looks more like a capital "I" with tiny serifs.

The use of the LG mark began at least

as early as 1955 on milk bottles and continued in use until at least 1971. Note that an overlap exists between 1955 and 1958 when both L-G and LG marks were used. By 1971, most companies had phased out glass bottles in favor of plastic containers or waxed-paper cartons (or both). Presumably, the mark continued to be used by those few companies preferring glass over the alternative containers. LG logos always appeared on the heels with date codes on the bases.

Oddly, the L.G. mark returned to use on some milk bottles. Bottles in the Hackbarth collection have L.G. marks on heels with two-digit date codes of 51, 56, 61, and 67 on the bases. All of these bottles have pyroglazed labels on them, a technique not used on bottles until 1934. Therefore, these codes must be for 1951 through 1967. These were obviously used concurrently with both L-G and LG marks.

### Soft Drink Bottles

Empirical testing of El Paso and New Mexico soft drink bottles (especially the Lynn Loomis collection) tells a more interesting story than any found in the usual sources. The earliest date code for the L-G mark I have seen on a soda bottle is "37" (1937), which probably indicates that Liberty began using the mark on soda bottles in 1935, about the time it began the manufacture of soft drink bottles. The mark continued to be used until at least 1967.

The company, however, was very inconsistent about the placement of the mark. Mostly, the earliest bottles were marked with both the L-G and the date code on the base (1937 to mid-1940s). Beginning in 1946, however, the logo (L-G) was mostly placed on the heel with the date code on the base. The logos returned to the base (along with the date codes) in 1953 and remained in that position until 1967. During both transition years (1946 and 1952), the logo appeared on both the heel and base, although the date code remained on the base. There were occasional exceptions, however. In both 1956 and 1963, both the logo and the date code appeared on the heel. I have not found bottles with the usual pattern in either 1956 or 1963, although they may exist.

The final mark, LG, first appeared on soda bottles by at least 1961 (possibly earlier) with both the logo and date code

on the base as had been common with the L-G mark. Note that this means an overlap period between 1961 and 1967 when both L-G and LG were used. Sometime between 1972 and 1977, the date code migrated to the heel of the bottle, while the logo remained on the base. The marks remained in that position throughout the 1970s, although I cannot confirm the placement after the late 1970s.

#### Coca-Cola Bottles

Because the Coca-Cola company demanded that their bottles be marked in a specific way, Coke bottles are a special case. The well-known, hobble-skirt bottles are distinguished by different patent markings in the central labeling area of the bottles. According to Kendall (1978:7) and Pollard (1993:45), these may be broken down into roughly four types prior to the addition of Applied Color Labels (ACL) in 1963: 1) BOTTLE PAT'D NOV 16, 1915 (1917-1930); 2) BOTTLE PAT'D DEC. 25, 1923 (1926-1938); 3) BOTTLE PAT. D105529 (1938-1951; and 4) IN U. S. PATENT OFFICE (1951-1963).

At this point, I have only seen L-G marks on two different types of Coke bottles: the D 105529 and IN U. S. PATENT OFFICE variations. The D bottles have L-G embossed on the skirts (i.e. about halfway between the heels and the labeling areas), although I have only seen this on 1951 bottles. It is possible, however, that Liberty made Coke bottles earlier. According to Porter (1999:7), as well as my personal observations, manufacturer's marks on Coke bottles were placed on the skirt until 1951 when they were moved to the base. Marks may be found in both locations in 1951. The L-G mark was on the base of IN U. S. PATENT OFFICE bottles by 1952 and continued until at least 1962. Hopefully, readers will write in and extend the dates for the D 105529 bottles.

#### Conclusion

The L. G. mark was probably used by Liberty Glass from about 1924 until about 1935 when soft drink bottles were added to the factory's inventory. Based on existing literature, the company probably did not mark its earliest bottles (1918-1924). The L.G.Co. mark was probably used by Lamb Glass Co. instead of Liberty (see Lamb Glass Co. below). Date codes

began to appear on bottles with the L.G. mark in 1928 and continued until about 1934. The L-G mark began use in 1934 and continued to be used until at least 1958, four years longer than any of the established references claim. LG on milk bottles was used at least as early as 1955 and as late as 1971.

The L-G mark on soft drink bottles was likely used between 1935 and 1967, although the positioning of the mark changed from the base to the heel and back again during that time (including its appearance on both heel and base during the two transition years of 1946 and 1952). The final mark, LG, appeared at least by 1961 and was used until at least the late 1970s. Both marks were used during the 1961-1967 period.



**Lamb Glass Co.**

Rex M. Lamb and associates formed the Lamb Glass Co., a corporation, in July 1921 at Mt. Vernon, Ohio. From the beginning, Lamb produced machine-made containers and specialized in milk bottles. Lamb merged with the Dorsey Corp., owners of Chattanooga Glass Co. in 1964 but continued to mark its bottles with the distinctive L52 logo. In 1955, the company began the manufacture of wide-mouth food bottles and packers due to the adoption of waxed paper and plastic containers (and discontinuance of glass bottles) by an increasing proportion of dairies. By 1971, the company began using the © (Circle C), the symbol of

**Table 1: Liberty Glass Co. - Marks, Location and Dates**

| Mark  | Mark Location | Date Location | Bottle Type | Date Range   |
|-------|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| LGCo  | Heel          | None          | Milk        | 1918-1924*   |
| L.G.  | Heel          | None          | Milk        | 1924-1927    |
| L.G.  | Heel          | Base          | Milk        | 1928-1934    |
| L-G   | Heel**        | Base          | Milk        | 1934-1958    |
| L.G.† | Heel          | Base          | Milk        | 1951-1967    |
| LG    | Heel          | Base          | Milk        | 1955-1971    |
| L-G   | Base          | Base          | Soda        | 1935-1945    |
| L-G   | Base and Heel | Base          | Soda        | 1946         |
| L-G   | Heel          | Base          | Soda        | 1947-1951    |
| L-G   | Base and Heel | Base          | Soda        | 1952         |
| L-G   | Base          | Base          | Soda        | 1953-1967    |
| LG    | Base          | Base          | Soda        | 1961-1972 †† |
| LG    | Base          | Heel          | Soda        | 1977 ††-1978 |

\* Giarde (1980:67) suggested "probably 1920s" and attributed the mark to Liberty. Hackbarth noted that this mark fits better with the patterns used by Lamb Glass Co. As such, it was probably used beginning in 1921, possibly throughout the 1920s.

\*\* Some exceptions are known with L-G and the date code embossed on the base (at least 1942-1947).

† After being discontinued in 1934, this mark was used again concurrently with the L-G and LG marks.

†† There is a gap in our data from 1973 to 1976. The actual year when the date code migrated to the heel is currently unknown.

Chattanooga Glass (Toulouse 1971:317-318). Unfortunately, the company never embossed date codes on its bottles.

In a personal communication, Warren A. Hackbarth disagreed with Giarde's interpretation that the L.G.Co. mark was used by Liberty Glass Co. Hackbarth noted that on all of his bottles that bore the L.G.Co logo, the mark was followed by the number 52. Toulouse (1971:317) noted two marks for the Lamb Glass Co., L<sub>52</sub> (with a subscript 52) used "Since 1921" and LAMB from "1855 [certainly a typo for 1955] to 1964." Giarde (1980) added two other marks – L52 and L -52 – and dated both "FROM 1921." L.G.Co.52 fits better with the other Lamb Glass Co. configurations than with the Liberty Glass Co. formats. It should be noted, however, that collectors in the Lockport, New York, area attribute the L.G.Co. mark to the Lockport Glass Co. of that city.

It seems likely that L.G.Co.52 was the earliest mark used by Lamb. I have not personally seen either the L<sub>52</sub> or L-52 marks. Maybe our readers can supply more information on these. On bottles I have seen, the L52 marks have a large "L" (no serifs) with 52 "tucked" inside the "corner" (see drawing). All of these marks that I have seen fit into a datable context from 1941 to the early 1950s (based on bottle use by El Paso and Southern New Mexico dairies). It is possible that the L.G.Co.52 mark was used in the 1920s, the L<sub>52</sub> and/or L-52 marks used in the 1930s, and the L52 (with 52 "tucked" into the "L") used from 1940 on. Once again, maybe our readers can help with assigning dates to some of these other Lamb marks.

#### Acknowledgements

I especially want to thank Lynn Loomis for letting me spend three days photographing and recording information from his remarkable collection. Special gratitude also goes to Warren A. Hackbarth for looking through his collection and sending me much-needed milk bottle information. As always, thanks to my fellow researchers, Mike Miller, Bill Lindsey, Carol Serr, and David Whitten for looking over my work and offering suggestions.

#### **Update - Keystone Marks**

Everything ever printed about manufacturer's marks is only our latest knowledge about the subject. Because of

this, my research is ongoing. Therefore, I would like to present additions to my earlier discussion about the Knox Glass Bottle Co. and their keystone marks (see my article in the winter 2004 issue of *Bottles and Extras*). Upon reading the article, Robert Wagner called me from Mississippi to report a bottle he had found with unusual markings. The base was embossed with the K-in-a-keystone mark typical of Knox but it also had a J-in-a-circle mark beside the keystone. The bottle was from the Hazelhurst Bottling Works, and Robert figured it had been used around 1936 to 1938 or earlier.

I contacted Jack Underwood who suggested that the initial molds used by the Jackson, Mississippi, plant were probably sent down from the main Knox plant with the K-in-a-keystone mark already on them. Engravers at the Jackson branch probably added the J-in-a-Circle mark to distinguish their new plant. It is also likely that new baseplates with J-in-a-keystone were substituted for those from the main plant as soon as possible, so the J-in-a-Circle mark combined with the K-in-a-keystone mark was probably only used during the first year, 1932.

A bit later, I visited Lynn Loomis to photograph his extensive collection of New Mexico bottles. In his collection, I discovered a total of four soda bottles with D-in-a-keystone marks on their bases. Both the "D" and the keystone were a bit more crude than those on most Knox bottles, and the "D" bottles lacked the typical three-part code used by Knox. Again I asked Jack Underwood, and he said that the bottles were probably made by the Denver plant and sent me a photocopy of a page from an undated issue of the Knox News, a paper circulated within the Knox group. The plant was apparently opened on April 1, 1946. According to Toulouse (1971:298), Knox closed the plant in 1951. Bottles in the Loomis collection were estimated to date in the mid-1940s to mid-1950s range, so the period the plant was open coincides with the approximate use date.

Another inference on Knox also comes from the Loomis collection. Some bottles with the J-in-a-keystone mark appear to have a date code to the right of the manufacturer's mark during the 1950s (such as A53 and A57). In at least two cases, these bear the A57 code, and the bottles (Mission Dry blue label) probably date from the mid-1950s to at least the

late 1960s (see Bates 1992:M-9). This indicates that the Jackson plant, and possibly the Palestine plant (both controlled by the Southern Underwoods), continued to use the individual plant mark until at least the late 1950s. It was previously thought that all the plants converted to the use of the generic K-in-a-keystone mark about 1952.

I recently ran across a great article in the "Granny Kath's Kitchen" column (*Antique Glass & Bottle Collector*) from October 1998 about Knox marks on fruit jars. Vivian Kath showed photos and gave descriptions of three quart variations, one pint, one half-pint, and two half-gallon variations of fruit jars with the K-in-a-keystone mark used by Knox. In all of these cases, the Knox manufacturer's mark was embossed on the center body of the jar. Kath also showed two other variations, one with an upwardly-slanted Knox in a circle and one with an upwardly-slanted script Knox. She also included photos and descriptions of lids marked with Knox or the logo.

Of greatest interest to me was the TEXAS MASON embossed with an outline of the State of Texas and MADE IN TEXAS BY TEXANS embossed on the base. This jar was made by the Knox plant at Palestine, Texas, from mid-1948 to mid-1949. The pint and quart jars were created as part of a promotion by the State of Texas during those years. A few two-piece metal closures "lettered TEXAS MASON in red above a red outline" were specially made to accompany the jars, although most of the jars were packed without tops. Although the Palestine plant made other fruit jars, it apparently always used the K-in-a-keystone mark on them rather than the T in a keystone used on soft drink bottles (Kath 1998).

In another column of Granny Kath's Kitchen (October 1996), she noted the keystone mark with no letters inside that was used by the Mason Fruit Jar Co. of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Like other jar embossings, the mark appeared on the side of the jar instead of the base. She also stated that a keystone-in-a-circle mark was embossed on other fruit jars. She speculated that the circle marks also may have been used by the Mason Fruit Jar Co. but admitted that the identification was not certain.

Knox also had a brief international connection. The Canadian Knox Glass Co., Ltd., received its federal charter on

February 1, 1939, and established a plant at Oshawa, Ontario. As in the U. S., Roy R. Underwood was president. On May 14, 1940, however, the short-lived branch was sold for \$618,270 to the Dominion Glass Co. The plant continued to operate under Dominion for at least two more years (King 1987:156-157). Unfortunately, the mark used by the plant is currently unknown.

A final note on the company came from Volume 5 of *The Bottle Trail* by May Jones. In the earliest table of manufacturer's marks, she claimed the K-in-a-keystone mark as being used by the Marienville plant. Unfortunately, she did not name her source, but I have found no other reference to a mark used by Marienville.

### Update - AB Marks

In response to the AB-Connected article in The Dating Game column, Bruce Mobley sent in information about his collection. In addition to the heelmarks noted in The Dating Game for A B Co bottles, Bruce has S-12, S-13, and S-14, also embossed on A B Co heels. This indicates that the American Bottle Co. switched the order of date codes in 1912 (from the 11-S) and continued to use them until at least 1914 (at least in the Streator plant). In addition, he noted three- and four-digit basemarks that look very much like catalog codes. Now, all we need is to find surviving American Bottle Co. catalogs.

In looking over the old May Jones newsletters (*The Bottle Trail*, Vol. 3), I discovered where Toulouse got his ideas about the AB-connected mark. She quoted a letter from a Mr. Carroll of Anheuser Busch (Jones 1963):

It is my assumption, and this is not based on actual fact that the brand [AB-connected] refers to the Adolphus Busch Glass Co. rather than the American Bottle Co., whereas, the brand ABCO refers to the American Bottle Co. Of the two brands I think the brand [AB-connected] is older but I could be mistaken. I also assume, without any actual basis of fact, that you are correct in thinking that the brand [AB-connected] without identification insofar as letters of the alphabet or numbers were concerned, was the earlier type of bottle and was then followed in

succession by the addition of a letter of the alphabet and then the addition of a number.

It is important to note that Carroll admitted he was guessing about the identification of the AB-connected mark as belonging to Adolphus Busch. This is a rare look at one of the sources used by Toulouse in his book.

### Questions for Our Readers

A future article will discuss marks found mostly on heels (lowest part of the sides – *not* the base or bottom) of bottles. Some of these marks are currently identified, but their locations on the bottles are unknown. If any of your bottles with these marks also include numbers, please let us know.

1. OG, EG, LSQ, G, and GRAHAM are all marks identified as being found on Coca-Cola bottles by Porter (1996:4). Are these marks found on heels or bases?

2. Are any other (non-Coca-Cola) bottles marked with OG, EG, LSQ, G, or GRAHAM?

3. Are any Coca-Cola bottles marked on the heel with LP?

4. Are any bottles marked on the heel with LS or LG? If so, what kind of bottles are they?

5. Have any of you seen the L<sub>52</sub> and/or L-52 marks, that Toulouse and Giarde report finding on milk bottles? Any ideas about what years they were used?

6. Does anyone have any idea what the "52" on Lamb Glass Co. marks could mean?

Comments are always appreciated.

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