

The Lorenz Family Glass Companies (including Lorenz & Wightman)

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Although several researchers (e.g., McKearin & McKearin 1941; Creswick 1987; Jones 1968:27; Toulouse 1971) have attempted to paint a portrait of the various glass houses that involved the Lorenz family, none have been entirely successful. Part of the problem lies in untangling the connections with the Wightman family and sorting through the reuse of the same name by succeeding generations of Lorenz descendants. The best rendition to date is Hawkins (2009), and we have mostly followed his dates.

Histories

Three generations of the Lorenz family operated glass factories in Pittsburgh. They were involved in six companies. For the continuation of the Wightman family operations after 1873, see the Wightman section.

Frederick Lorenz or Frederick Lorenz & Co., Pittsburgh (1819-ca. 1840)

Frederick Rudolph Jaocim Lorenz (Sr.) purchased the old Trevor & Ensel glass works ca. 1819. Trevor & Ensel may have made window glass and bottles from 1812 to 1816. Its successor, Bolton, Ensel & Co. certainly made the same products. As early as 1819, although probably after 1821, he leased the Pittsburgh Glass Works, established by O'Hara and Craig in the late 18th century. O'Hara manufactured tableware. Lorenz established the Sligo Glass Works at Pittsburgh in 1824. He maintained the factories until he partnered with William McCully ca. 1840 – see below (Hawkins 2009:319-320; 492-493).

Containers and Marks

It is clear that – like almost all of the early 19th century glass houses – Frederick Lorenz used no marks of any kind to identify the vast majority of his wares.

FL and FL&Co. (1819-1840)

Toulouse (1971:263) listed both “FL” and “FL&Co” marks for Frederick Lorenz or Frederick Lorenz & Co., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and dated them ca. 1819-1841. Toulouse cited the marks from Knittle (1927:441), although Knittle did not attempt to date either mark. Each mark could have been used at Sligo or the Temperanceville Glass Works prior to the ownership by W. McCully & Co. (see the McCully section for more information about the factories). Both the “FL” and “FL&Co” marks were also noted on flasks by Freeman (1964:92) and Innes (1976:206, 218).

The “FL” mark was found on a beaded George Washington flask that was probably made in the 1820s (McKearin & McKearin 1941:515; McKearin & Wilson 1978:524) (Figure 1). Flasks with the bust of Washington were very common during the early 19th century, and most flask producers made them. The “FL” mark was almost certainly used by the first Frederick Lorenz (1819-1840). It was apparently only used on this flask.

Whitten (2017) challenged the veracity of the “FL&Co” mark. He noted that “McKearin & Wilson (1978:649-651) showed that the mark was actually “LF&Co” (Figure 2). As far as we can tell, there was never an “FL&Co” flask nor was the mark used on any other glass product. Whitten added, “In any case that flask would certainly date from the 1860s or 1870s” – certainly based on dating by the McKearins. Neither of the “LF&Co” flasks (both the “clasped hands” variety) shown by McKearin & Wilson appeared in the McKearins’ earlier book. See the Other L section for information on the “FL&Co” flask.

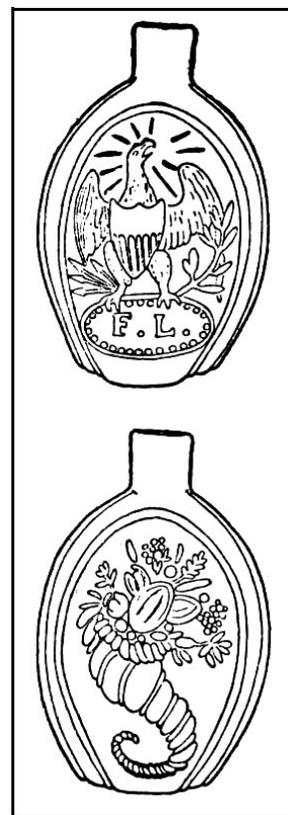


Figure 1 – FL (McKearin & Wilson 1978:524)



Figure 2 – LF&Co (Jay Hawkins)

Wm. McCully & Co., Pittsburgh (ca. 1840-ca. 1850)

William McCully formed a partnership ca. 1840¹ with Moses Lorenz, and A.W. Buchanan – that he modestly titled Wm McCully & Co. (Hawkins 2009:320; Knittle 1927:320; McKearin & Wilson 1978:153). Thomas Wightman bought into the concern about two years later. The Lorenz factories were included in the corporation, along with McCully’s Phoenix Glass Works (a bottle plant) and Williamsport Glass Works (window glass). For more information about this group, see the Wm. McCully & Co. section.

Lorenz & Wightman, Pittsburgh (ca. 1850-1854)

The partnership that formed Wm. McCully & Co. dissolved ca. 1850. McCully retained control of the Phoenix Glass Works and Sligo Glass Works but closed Williamsport. Lorenz and Wightman formed a partnership (under that name) to operate the Pittsburgh Glass Works (also known as the O’Hara works). Although the sources are unclear as to who retained the Temperance Glass Works, by 1871, Thomas Wightman owned the plant. Lorenz & Wightman ran the Pittsburgh Glass Works until 1854 (Hawkins 2009:320, 322; *History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania*, [1876], cited in Creswick 1987:284; *History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania* [1889], quoted in Creswick 1987:284; Knittle 1927:318; McKearin & McKearin 1941:596; Van Rensselaer 1969:178-179). We can find no evidence that this early Lorenz & Wightman firm used any marks on any of its bottles. For more information about these former McCully factories, see the section on McCully.

Frederick Lorenz or Frederick Lorenz & Co., Pittsburgh (1854-1860)

This period has been misunderstood by many researchers. McKearin and McKearin (1941:587) likely created the 1851-1860 Lorenz & Wightman myth when they stated that the

¹ The sources are in disagreement about the date of this partnership in connection with the Sligo works, ranging from 1834 to 1841. Dates for the partnership in general are stated as 1840 and 1841 by different sources. We have arbitrarily accepted the 1840 date. To add to the confusion, Van Rensselaer (1969:178) named the partners McCully, Benjamin Blakewell, and Thomas Wightman.” Hawkins (2009:320) further muddied the waters by noting that McCully, Lorenz, and Buchanan partnered sometime between 1836 and 1840.

“firm became Lorenz & Wightman—Frederick Lorenz Sr. and Thomas Wightman. Lorenz died in 1854 and his son, Frederick R. took his place in the firm.” Their next entry noted that Fahnstock, Albree & Co. leased the plant. Although Frederick R. Lorenz operated the plant independently, this makes it sound as if Wightman continued to be active. McKearin and Wilson (1978:63) repeated the same entry.

In reality, the partnership of Lorenz & Wightman broke up at the death of the senior Lorenz. Lorenz’ son, variously recorded as Frederick R. Lorenz or Frederick Lorenz, Jr., operated the firm, which may have been called Frederick Lorenz & Co. or just Frederick Lorenz. Lorenz called the former Pittsburgh Glass Works the Penn Glass Works operating three furnaces with 25 pots. Ads in 1856 and 1857 offered vials, bottles and window glass. When the junior Lorenz died in 1860, the family leased the Penn to Fahnstock, Albree & Co. (Hawkins 2009:320; *History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania*, [1876], cited in Creswick 1987:284; *History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania* [1889], quoted in Creswick 1987:284; Knittle 1927:318;1 Toulouse 1971:338; Van Rensselaer 1969:178-179; von Mechow 2017).

Containers and Marks

Like the earlier Lorenz firm, we find no evidence for marks on the vast majority of the factory’s products. It is unclear why the plant included initials or the company name on a few soda bottles and fruit jars.

FRL (1854-1860)

Von Mechow (2017) discovered ten bottles embossed “FRL” well above the heel on either the front of “pony” (blob-top) soda bottles below the bottler’s embossing or in a similar position on the reverse (Figures 3 & 4). Fletcher (1994:275) discussed two examples, one from L. Block & Co., Leavenworth City, K.T. (Kansas Territory), the other Block & Brandon from the same place. The companies were in business 1854-1858 and 1858-1861 respectively. Another blob-top soda bottle with a pontiled base was used by J. Fisher & Rogger of Belleville, Illinois. This was also marked above the back heel with FRL (Miller 1980:6). Miller explained the mark:

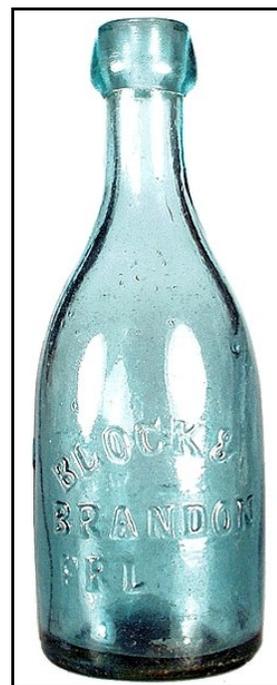


Figure 3 – FRL
(Glassworks Auctions)

The letters FRL on the bottle might refer to a glassmaker named Frederick Rudolph Lorenz, Jr. who, after his father died, became part owner of the Lorenz & Wightman Glassworks. Several historic flasks have the letters FL on them. These letters on the flasks are attributed to Frederick's father. Possibly Lorenz, Jr. used his middle initial to separate his name from his father's. Also Lorenz, Jr. was involved in the glassworks from 1854 to 1860. This bottle indicated a similar time span.

Farnsworth & Walthall (2011) also found examples used by bottlers in Illinois. Whitten (2017) and von Mechow (2017) confirmed the junior Lorenz as the manufacturer – and we accept that as the best choice using available evidence.



Figure 4 – FRL (Farnsworth & Walthall 2011)

F.R. LORENZ MANUFACTURERS IMP. PITTS. (1854-1860)

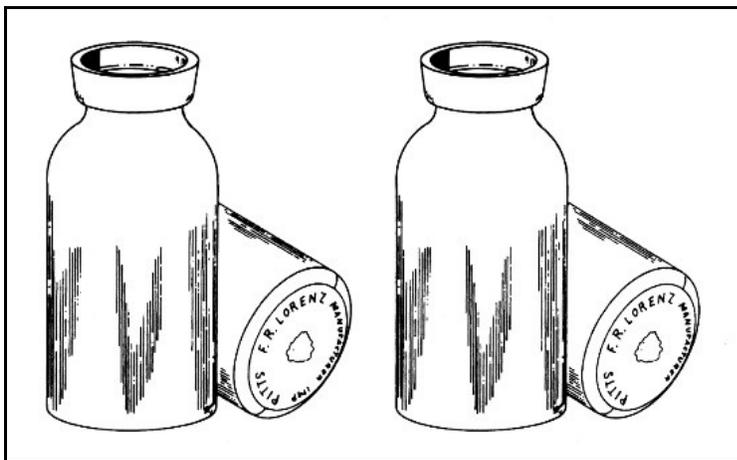


Figure 5 – F.R. Lorenz (Creswick 1987:104)

Creswick (1987:104) showed “F.R. LORENZ MANUFACTURERS IMP. PITTS.” embossed around the center of a pontiled, cork-stoppered fruit jar. She dated the jar ca. 1819-1851 (Figure 5). Roller (1983:195; 2011:297) noted the same jar but dated it ca. 1856-1859 by Frederick R. Lorenz, at the Penn Glass Works, West Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Roller suggested that these jars were “examples of the earliest style of embossed fruit jars.” Our revised chronology would suggest a date range of 1854-1860. Hawkins (2009:321) and Roller (2011:297) noted that the mark was also used without the “IMP” (Figure 6). Although “IMP” may indicate “importers,” we have found no evidence to indicate the meaning.

Leased to Fahnestock, Albree & Co., Pittsburgh (1860-1863)

Fahnestock, Albree & Co. leased the Penn Glass Works, formerly the Pittsburgh Glass Works from 1860 to 1863 (Hawkins 2008; *History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania*, [1876], cited in Creswick 1987:284; Innes 1976:28; Jones 1968:16; Knittle 1927:321; Toulouse 1971:195-196; Van Rensselaer 1969:179). For more information about this firm, see the section on the Fahnestock Companies.



Figure 6 – F.R. Lorenz (Jay Hawkins)

Lorenz & Wightman, Pittsburgh (1863-1873)

Thomas Wightman, Moses A. Lorenz, and Alexander W.K. Nimick formed Lorenz & Wightman in 1863 (*History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania*, [1876], cited in Creswick 1987:284). Caniff (2001:8) provided a slightly different end date than the one cited in Creswick. He noted that even though Moses Lorenz died in 1871, the company continued to operate under the same name until 1873 (also see Roller 1996).² Whitten argued that the Caniff date better fits an observed bottle from the Louisville, Kentucky, area (embossed with L&W marks). In 1873, the partnership of the third generation (for Lorenz, second generation for Wightman) dissolved, and the firm of Thomas Wightman & Co. was born.

Some of the confusion may be created because Lorenz & Wightman were involved in more than one factory. A glassworker reminisced (*National Glass Budget* 1909:11) that:

In 1865 a company of bloweres (*sic*) started a factory between Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh streets, old Twelfth ward, on a site known as “Grissell’s Hill,” north of Penn avenue, known as Campbell, Peak & Co. which lasted but a few years, Lorenz and Wightman taking possession and operating the plant until 1875 as a fruit jar works, familiarly known as “Wightman’s Dinky.”

² According to Hawkins (2009), Thomas Wightman & Co. advertised under the name of Lorenz & Wightman as late as 1873.

In 1865 to 68, inclusive, a company of blowers (*sic*) operated a factory at the foot of Forty-second street, in Lawrenceville, on the site of the present Phoenix Roll Works, known as Modes, Ryrie & Co. Lorenz and Wightman took possession of this plant in 1868 and operated it for several years. . .

See Table 1 for a complete list of Lorenz and Whightman glass firms.

Table 1 – Lorenz and Wightman Glass Factories

Dates	Glass Firm
1819-1840	Frederick Lorenz or Frederick Lorenz & Co. (Frederick Lorenz, Sr.)
ca. 1840-ca. 1851	Wm. McCully & Co. (with Lorenz & Wightman as partners)
ca. 1851-1854	Lorenz & Wightman
1854-1860	Frederick Lorenz or Frederick Lorenz & Co. (Frederick Lorenz, Jr.)
1860-1863	Leased to Fahnstock, Albree & Co.
1863-1873	Lorenz & Wightman (Moses Lorenz, Thomas Wightman, Jr., and Alexander Nimick)
1873-1883	Thomas Wightman & Co.
1883-1893	Thomas Wightman & Co., Ltd.
1893-1917	Thomas Wightman Glass Co. (also called the Wightman Glass Co.)
1916-1921	Wightman Bottle & Glass Co. ³
1921-1952	Wightman Bottle & Glass Mfg. Co., an affiliate of the Knox Glass Bottle Co.
1952-1968	Knox Glass Bottle Co. of Parker

³ The 1916 listing in the Thomas Register (1916:661) is the first we have found for the Wightman Bottle & Glass Co. at Parkers Landing. The Punxutawney plant, however, was named the Wightman Glass Corp.

Containers and Marks

Unlike the earlier firms in this section, Lorenz & Wightman embossed the company initials on many, possibly all, of its containers.

L&W [block] (1863-1873)

Wilson and Wilson (1969:38-39) showed five examples of the L&W mark in block letters on bases of “DR. J. HOSTETTER’S / STOMACH BITTERS” bottles. They attributed the marks to the Lorenz & Wightman Glass Works, Pittsburgh. The Wilsons dated the mark from ca. 1866 to 1873 (when the company became Thomas Wightman & Co.). Switzer (1974:72) noted that several Hostetter’s bottles embossed “L&W” on the bases were found in the wreckage of the steamer *Bertrand* after it had sunk on April 1, 1865, thus setting a solid date for the use of the mark.

Siri (2005:58) noted two variations of the mark – large and small letters (Figure 7). Although the large-letter variation sometimes appeared by itself, it usually had a number (from 1-19) embossed below it. The small-letter variation was always unaccompanied. It is possible that Lorenz & Wightman switched mold-making firms at some point, adopting mold numbers at the switch.



Figure 7 – L&W (block) (Farnsworth & Walthall 2011)

Jones (1968:27) showed the L&W (block) mark embossed in an inverted arch on the base of a round bottle. Unusually, the bottle was made by a two-piece mold, the style often referred to by collectors as a keyhole mold. Farnsworth & Walthall (2011:636) illustrated a rectangular patent medicine bottle for Dr. H. Kruse’s Malaria Antidote that was also embossed “L&W” on the base in a keyhole mold. Kruse was listed in Peoria, Illinois, city directories from 1867 to 1873. These were probably used during the early part of the 1863-1873 period (see Lindsey 2017 for a discussion of this mold type).

Creswick (1987:133, 138, 145-150, 233) and Roller (2011:356, 359) illustrated and/or discussed a number of Mason jars embossed with the “L&W” (block) mark. These logos were placed on the base (unlike the cursive mark discussed below).

Although Peters (1996:60) did not specify whether the L&W marks on Wisconsin soft drink bottles were block or cursive, it is clear that the company made soda bottles (probably with the block letters). Apparently, two otherwise identical blob-top bottles were made for Grey & Co. (soda bottlers in business from 1854 to 1905), one with the mark on the base, the other on the heel (Figure 8).

Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:125) noted that the L&W mark (again not specifying whether it was cursive or block) was used on bottles by O.P. Bissell, Peoria, Illinois, and by Fox & Co. on Hygeia Bitters. Ring (1980:259) confirmed the mark on Hygeia Bitters but added no other information. Ring (1980:142, 150, 255, 269, 366, 471, 479) also recorded seven other bitters bottles bearing the L&W mark (incidentally tying Lorenz & Wightman as the third-highest producer of different styles of bitters bottles). Ring’s list included Cocktail Bitters, Cribbs Davidson & Co., Mobile, Alabama; Cornplanter Bitters; Hostetter’s Bitters (discussed above); Jenkins’ Stomach Bitters, advertised in 1872 (also with bottles made by McCully); Pendleton’s Pineapple Bitters, Nashville, Tennessee; Victoria Tonic Bitters, Williams & Ross, Memphis, Tennessee (dating from ca. 1871); and Wallace’s Tonic Stomach Bitters.

Hawkins (2009:325) noted that “all marked pieces are believed to be from the second Lorenz & Wightman,” and Farnsworth & Walthall (2011:67) also placed all of the “L&W” logos during the second Lorenz & Wightman firm (1862-1873). The researchers documented

20 different bottles with L&W maker’s marks from bottlers in nine towns across the northern 2/3 of Illinois—including seven sodas, six patent medicines, three bitters (two from Chicago and one from Peoria), a Chicago gin, two Peoria beers, a Peoria ale, and a Peoria hair treatment bottle.

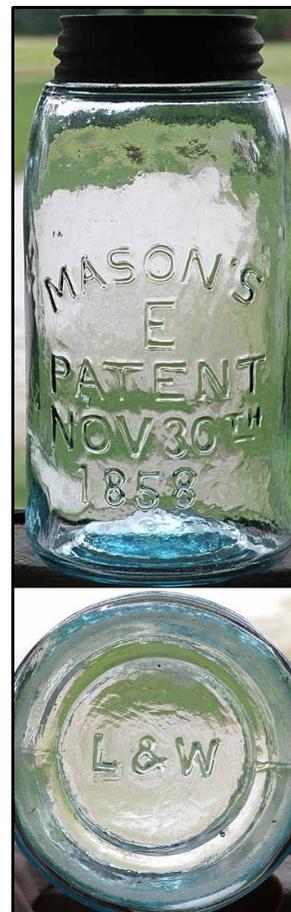


Figure 8 – L&W Mason jar (North American Glass)

All of the bottles we have found had the block-letter logos either on heels or far more commonly on bases (Figure 9). We have only seen the cursive marks on fruit jars.

L&W [cursive] (1863-1873)

According to Toulouse (1971:338), the L&W mark was used by Lorenz & Wightman, possibly after the dissolution of William McCully & Co. in 1851, when the pair operated the Pittsburgh Glass Works. He stated that the mark was “definitely used” during the second Lorenz & Wightman period. He thus dated the mark “possibly 1851 to 1860[;] Definitely 1862-1871.” Our amended chronology (see above) suggests that the latter dates should be extended from 1863 to 1873 and – as noted above – that these latter dates are the only time period during which the mark was used.

Toulouse (1971:338-339) included a rare justification for his 1862-1871 dates:

We have definite proof that the “L&W” mark was in use in the period just before 1871. There were wax-sealing fruit jars being made with the initials “L&W” in large letters on the side. Wightman merely peened out the letter “L” and the ampersand, leaving only the “W.” However, many jars were made from molds so incompletely peened that the letter “L” and the “&” can be easily read. Later Wightman made new molds with the same script “W,” and still later used another mark.

Roller (1983:197-19, 236-8) discussed eight fruit jar styles embossed with the L&W mark. Unfortunately, he did not distinguish between the block and cursive variations. His dates varied from the 1860s to 1873. He attributed all of the jars to Lorenz and Wightman. On the earliest three jars – all Mason jars – the mark was embossed on the base. The later jars, however, had the initials embossed in larger letters on the sides in the form of “L&W’s XL” (Figure 10).



Figure 9 – L&W
(Farnsworth & Walthall
2011)



Figure 10 – L&W cursive (North American Glass)

In one case, the “XL” was “ghosted” or peened out (Figure 11). He showed an ad from the 1872-1873 Pittsburgh directory that featured the “L&W



Figure 11 – Ghosted L& (Jay Hawkins)

XL” with cursive L&W and mused that “XL” could indicate the word “excel.” The PET jars had the initials on the reverse and were finished for the T.G. Otterson patent of August 31, 1869 (Roller 1983:238, 285 – Figure 12). We have not found a reason for the “PET” name – possibly it was an arbitrary choice.

Creswick (1987:104-105), Hawkins (2009:325), and Roller (2011:301-302) illustrated and/or discussed a large sample of jars embossed with “L&W” in cursive on the sides. The “L” and “W” varied slightly in shape in some cases, and there were distinct variations in the ampersand (&). The jars were variously



Figure 12 – PET (North American Glass)

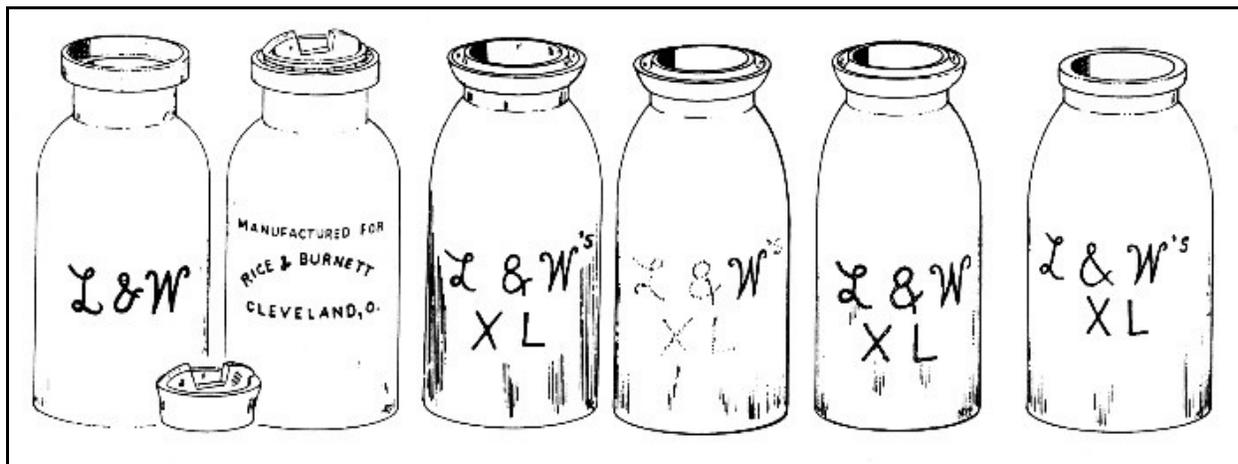


Figure 13 – L&W cursive (Creswick 1987:105)

marked “L&W,” “L&W^s / XL,” and “L&W^s / XL” with the “XL” ghosted or peened out. Along with the “L&W” logos, some jars were embossed “PET,”



Figure 14 – L&W finishes (North American Glass)

“MANUFACTURED FOR

/ RICE & BURNETT / CLEVELAND, O.,” or “D.P. BEDELL / 118 / BANK S^T /

CLEVELAND, / O.” (Figures 13). The jars were made for three different finishes: 1) D.I.

Holcomb’s patent of December 14, 1869; 2) A. Kline’s patent of October 27, 1863; and 3)

grooved-ring wax sealers (Figures 14).

Hostetter’s Stomach Bitters

At least five bottle houses (McKee, McCully, Lorenz & Wightman, Chambers, and Ihmsen) and probably others made Dr. J. Hostetter’s Stomach Bitters bottles. Wilson and Wilson (1969:38-39) described and illustrated two bottles made from a single mold, although they were marked by two different companies. One bottle contained the L&W mark used by Lorenz & Wightman; the other was embossed W. McC. & Co., the mark of Wm. McCully & Co.. The Wilsons (1969:38) suggested that the mold “was evidently loaned to the McCully Glass Works to fill out an order,” although the loan could just as easily have gone the other way. Ring (1980:255) also noted both marks on the Hostetter’s bottles but did not join in the mold controversy.

Discussion and Conclusions

The new classification system and the evidence connected with each mark makes the dating more clear than in past sources. As noted in the text, the firms in this line prior to the second Lorenz & Wightman rarely used any form of manufacturer’s mark, and “FL&Co” is almost certainly a dyslexic corruption of “LF&Co.” Lorenz & Wightman, however, placed its logo on a large number of its products (possibly all of them) during the decade between 1863 and 1873.

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Last updated 2/25/2017

