

## **Richards Glass Co.**

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

James P. Richards went into business as a glass jobber in 1912, specializing in glass bottles for drug stores. Between 1977 and 1982, the firm went through name changes, reorganizations, and/or changes of ownership, settling into the Richard Products, Inc. The company used at least four different logos over the years and remains in business in 2018.

### **History**

#### **Richards Glass Co., Toronto, Ontario, Canada (1912-1977)**

A former salesman for the Beaver Flint Glass Co., James P. Richards incorporated the Richards Glass Co. on May 13, 1912, to manufacture pharmaceutical ware. Despite the claim, Richards Glass was almost certainly a jobber in pharmaceutical supplies, especially bottles made by the Dominion Glass Co. One of the firm's most popular models was the Rigo Oval, created in early 1914 in response to a new regulation issued by the Ontario College of Pharmacy to the effect that all bottles for poisonous compounds had to be packaged in specially marked containers (Phillips 2013; King 1987:113). See the entry for RIGO in the Containers and Marks section below for more details on the bottle and the section on the B.F.G.Co. Logos for more on Beaver Flint Glass.

The Dominion Glass Co. acquired the controlling interest in Richards in 1913, and Richards became the Dominion outlet for pharmaceutical goods in Toronto. The 1920 Canadian Trade Index listed the Richards Glass Co. factory at 66 Temperence St., Toronto, suggesting that the firm was actually making at least some of its products by that time. J.P. Richards purchased the company back from Dominion Glass for \$111,600 in November 1928 and established a division called RIGO Agencies in 1930. The division handled imported lines, such as Rolls Razors, MacLean's Toothpaste, and other items. The RIGO lines became very popular (King 1987:113, 146, 277). The firm reorganized in 1977.

## **Richards Packaging, Inc.** (ca. 1980-present)

In 1968, J. Stanley Richards, son of the originator, and the president at that time, moved the facilities to the O.H. Johns Glass Co., Ltd., also in Toronto. The name was changed to Stanrich Sales, Inc., in 1977 (King 1987:227).<sup>1</sup> At some point after 1977, the firm reorganized as Richards Packaging at 3115 Lenworth Dr., Mississauga, Ontario, where it remains in 2018. Whitten (2018) hinted that the date for the reorganization may have been 1982.

### **Containers and Marks**

A 1915 ad for the Richards Glass Co. included over 60 glass products and bragged that it carried “everything the druggist needs in glass.” Since the ad include such widely diverse items as prescription bottles, nursers, perfume bottles, glass mortars, glass urinals, spirit lamps, and much more (Phillips 2013).

#### **RGCoT** (1912-1928)

We have only seen this mark on Canadian drug store bottles. The mark was used by the Richards Glass Co. and may have only appeared during the 1912-1928 period, when the firm was a jobber of pharmaceutical bottles for the Dominion Glass Co. (Miller & Pacey 1986:42).<sup>2</sup> The firm’s most popular model was the Rigo Oval, although the mark appeared on the Imperial and Princess lines as well – and may have been used on other ware. Richards almost certainly copied his initial logo design from his former employer, the Beaver Fling Glass Co. In both cases, the base contained a large diamond containing the name of the bottle with “B,” “F,” “G,” and “Co.” outside each line of the diamond for Beaver Flint or “R,” “G,” “Co.,” “T” for Richards Glass (Figure 1).



Figure 1 – RGCoT diamond (eBay)

---

<sup>1</sup> Internet searches revealed very little about the O.H. Johns Glass Co. and nothing at all about Stanrich Sales, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> Miller and Pacey (1986:49) cited two illustrated price lists from the Richards Glass Co. (ca. 1926 and ca. 1928) that note the firm as selling pharmaceutical and laboratory glass.

The mark may be distinguished from the RGC<sub>o</sub> logo found on U.S. containers because of the use on different bottle types (the U.S. mark was used on beer and soda bottles – as well as at least one packer bottle) and the inclusion of the letter “T” (for Toronto) on the Canadian pharmaceutical bottles. Although our sample is small, the mark only appeared on mouth-blown bottles (Figure 2).



Figure 2 – Mouth blown (eBay)

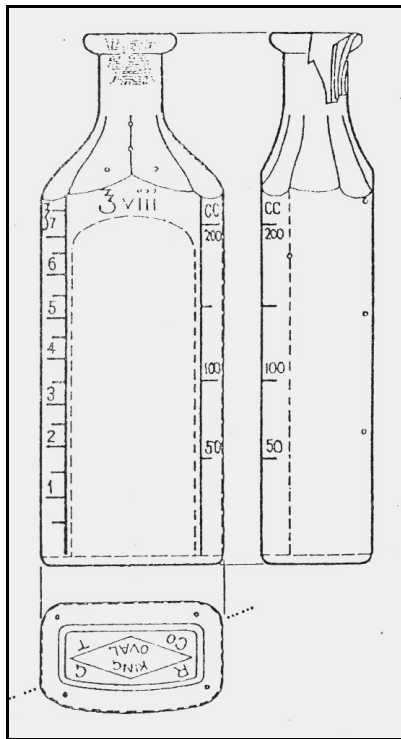


Figure 3 – King Oval (Rosewarne 1971:43)

Miller and Pacey (1986:41, 43), the King Oval was introduced by the Dominion Glass Co. in 1912. Whitten (2018) also discussed the mark.

A second format was the bottle name on the base with “RGC<sub>o</sub>T” (no punctuation) below it. This was similar to a format used by the Beaver Flint Glass Co., as both used a “T” to indicate Toronto (Figure 4).

This follows a pattern similar to U.S. drug store bottles, where hand production continued for bottles embossed with individual pharmacy names until ca. 1926 (see Lockhart et al. 2006). For a discussion about the U.S. “RGC<sub>o</sub>” logo, see the section on the Root Glass Co.

Rosewarne (1971:43) illustrated and described a King Oval, with a base embossed “KING / OVAL” in the center of a large, elongated diamond. Above the left upper line of the diamond was “R”; with “G” above the right upper line; “Co” below the left lower line; and “T” below the right lower line (Figure 3). The Rosewarne bottle was colorless with graduations on both sides of the front face and an ounce symbol with lower-case Roman Numerals to represent the number of ounces. According to



Figure 4 – RGC<sub>o</sub>T (eBay)

## RIGO or Rigo (cursive) (1914-1977)



Figure 6 – RIGO base (eBay)

As discussed in the history section above, the RIGO poison bottle was developed in response to the 1914



Figure 7 – Rigo base (eBay)

Although “RIGO” (an acronym for Richards Glass Co.) was used by the firm for a large variety of items, it was apparently only embossed in capital letters on the bases of cobalt-blue poison bottles – as noted by Whitten (2018).

As discussed in the history section above, the RIGO poison bottle was developed in response to the 1914 poison container regulation (Figures 5 & 6). RIGO poison bottles may or may not be embossed with the Dominion Glass Co. Diamond-D logo above “RIGO.” A slightly different logo was embossed on colorless nursers as “Rigo” in cursive (Figure 7).



Figure 5 – RIGO bottle (eBay)

## RP (1982-2005)

Whitten (2018) noted that “RP (often with 3-digit number) on the base” was used by Richards Packaging, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. He added that the logo was created “after 1982, and indicates production in Taiwan (by unidentified glass factory) for Richards.” We have not seen an example of this mark.

## R with Bottle

Whitten (2018) described this logo as “R (odd-looking trademark, sometimes may look like either an R or a K, with a bottle-shaped ‘notch’ extending downward from the upper right side” and identified Richards Packaging as the user (Figure 8). He added that



Figure 8 – R with Bottle

Richards is a distributor of glass and plastic containers, and has a number of distributing locations scattered throughout Canada and the United States. Most of their glass containers with this mark were made in China, and to some extent, some other Asian countries. This particular mark is often (but not always) accompanied by a four-digit number, and dates after 2005.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

The history of the Richards Glass Co./Richards Products, Inc., is mired in fog. We have found very little information on a company that has been continuously in business for 88 years. The greatest hole in our information is whether the firm actually produced any glass or not. Hopefully, future research will fill in many of the gaps.

## **Acknowledgments**

We wish to thank Wanda Wakkinen for proofreading our studies.

## **Sources**

King, Thomas B.

1987 *Glass in Canada*. Boston Mills Press, Ontario.

Miller, George L. and Antony Pacey

1985 "Impact of Mechanization in the Glass Container Industry: The Dominion Glass Company of Montreal, a Case Study." *Historical Archaeology* 19(1):38-50.

Phillips, Glen C.

2013 "RIGO Poison Bottles - The Historical Truth and the Owl Drug Collectors Blog." <https://www.antique-bottles.net/showthread.php?583433-RIGO-Poison-Bottles-The-Historical-Truth-and-the-Owl-Drug-Collectors-Blog>

Rosewarne, Robert V.

1971 "Canadian Base Numbers." *Glasfax Seminar Newsletter* 5(6):25-56.

Whitten, David

2018 “Glass Manufacturers’ Marks on Bottles & Other Glassware.”

<http://www.glassbottlemarks.com/bottlemarks/>

Last updated 9/3/2019