

The Scranton Glass Firms

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Four different glass operations – two at Scranton, one at Moosic, and one at Dunmore (all in Pennsylvania) – shared the Scranton name. The earliest firm, the Scranton Glass Co. – at Scranton – manufactured bottles and jars, sold through the Scranton Jar & Stopper Co. from 1881 to 1895, possibly as late as 1900. This company was noted for the Bloeser, Howe, and Scranton jars as well as the Howe milk bottle (using the same closure as the jar).

The third firm – the Scranton Glass Mfg. Co. – also a glass making operation, was possibly a reorganization of the older company but made various bottles at Moosic. We have not discovered any marks for this firm, possibly because of its short life – 1901-1902. The final company – the Scranton Glass Co., this time at Dunmore – was a jobber of soda and beer bottles, possibly a one-man operation, from 1907 to the mid-1920s or later. The closure and finish of this company's bottles were made to the owner's patent, although it is unclear which glass house actually made the bottles. We have only discovered a single example of the early patent, although a later one was certainly produced. We will address each firm and its products separately below.

History – Scranton Glass Co. and Scranton Jar & Stopper Co.

Scranton Glass Co., Ltd., Scranton, Pennsylvania (1881-1887)

Scranton Glass Co., Scranton, Pennsylvania (1887-1895, poss. 1900)

The Scranton Glass Co., Ltd., was incorporated in 1881 with a capital of \$15,000. The company made green and amber glass at its factory in Green Ridge, a subdivision of Scranton. The factory was at 301 Green Ridge St. (corner of 3rd & Green Ridge) from at least 1883 to 1885, then expanded to 301-329 Green Ridge in 1885 – with C.P. Matthews as the president (Caniff 2014:18; von Mechow 2019). The company reorganized with another incorporation on November 11, 1887, with a capital of \$100,000, removing “Ltd.” from its name. Matthews remained as president with E.P. Kingsbury as vice president, Charles Henwood as secretary and treasurer, and M.A. Goodwin as general manager and superintendent (Roller 1998a; von

Mechow 2019). That year, Scranton Glass advertised itself as “Manufactures of all kinds of Hollow Ware, Soda and Beer, Flasks and Wine Bottles also, Druggists’ Ware” in the city directory and increased its capital to \$150,000 (von Mechow 2019). Creswick (1987:86) illustrated a letterhead from the 1880s (Figure 1).

A major strike ensued during late 1889 or early 1890 that affected ten or more factories, including Scranton Glass. By January 27, 1890, the men were back at work in the



Figure 1 – Scranton Glass Co. letterhead (Creswick 1987:86)

Scranton factory. In 1890, J.H. Steel replaced Matthews as president. The plant had two tanks by November 6, 1894, one for green glass, the other for flint (*Bridgeton Evening News* 1/27/1890; Caniff 2014:18; von Mechow 2019).

The 1893 depression crippled the company. Newspaper reports like the one from the *Freeland Tribune* on January 11, 1894, were frequent. The *Tribune* noted that work at the Scranton plant was temporarily suspended, and pay for non-union workers was reduced for the future. The firm reorganized in August of 1895, with Samuel Hines, E.P. Kingsbury, J.H. Steel, Alfred Harvey, T.C. Von Storch, J.G. Williams, Charles Schlager, A.L. Francois, and Charles Henwood as directors, but the situation was beyond their control (Roller 1998a). The *Scranton Tribune* published a notice on July 17, 1896, that the Scranton Glass Co. property would be sold at a sheriff’s sale on August 8. Toulouse (1971) noted that the Acme Glass Co. began that year, built by men from Scranton, so some of them at least had bailed out prior to the sale.

Apparently, the sale failed to find a buyer, although it is almost certain that production ceased completely at some point prior to August of 1896. The Scranton Glass Co. still owned the idle factory, with J.H. Steele as president, E.P. Kingsbury as vice president, and Charles Henwood as secretary and treasurer, when “a number of buildings formerly occupied by the Scranton Glass company” were entirely destroyed by fire on June 2, 1900. The *Scranton Tribune* reported on the fire on June 4, noting that the flames “caused very little financial loss” because

“the buildings had been unoccupied for over six years” and were “practically worthless.” While “six years” would indicate that production ceased in 1894, the plant certainly made some glass in 1895 and possibly in early 1896. The fire may actually have been welcomed by the firm’s officers.

Scranton Jar Co., Scranton, Pennsylvania (1887)

Scranton Stopper Co., Scranton, Pennsylvania (1888)

Scranton Jar & Stopper Co., Scranton, Pennsylvania (1889 to 1898)

The Scranton Jar Co. was formed in 1887, probably to market the Howe jar. Meanwhile, by at least September 22, 1888, R. Bloeser had opened the Scranton Stopper Co. in the same city at 123 Penn Ave. – probably as a sales outlet for the Bloeser jar (see Tyson 1971:30-31). The two firms apparently merged, when the Scranton Jar & Stopper Co. incorporated on January 16, 1889. Thomas B. Howe, Rudolph Bloeser, George H. Clearwater, M.A. Goodwin, and others were the original incorporators (Caniff 2014:18). Goodwin was the superintendent of the Scranton Glass Co. at the time. In 1889, the firm advertised the “HOWE & BLOESER FRUIT JAR, ALSO, THE HOWE MILK JAR, THE BEST EVER MANUFACTURED” (von Mechow 2019). Although the Scranton Glass Co. had failed three years earlier, the remaining firm was almost certainly still selling off the remaining stock of jars.

Scranton Jar & Stopper built a two-story building at the corner of Green Ridge St. and Mylert Ave. for “the manufacture of bottle stoppers, fruit jar and milk can fasteners, etc., of which Mr. Howe and Mr. Bloeser are the patentees” (Caniff 2014:18). Creswick (1987:19) noted that “in later years, the Scranton Jar & Stopper company was known as “Howe & Son” and still later as “Howe & Company.” The firm apparently remained in business until 1897, probably still marketing the Bloeser fruit jar and Howe milk jar. Creswick stated that the company was directly across the street from the Scranton Glass Co. Caniff (2014:18), however, noted that the address of the Scranton Jar & Stopper Co. in 1889 was 301-329 Green Ridge St. – the exact location of the Scranton Glass Co.

Patents

Rudolph Bloeser

Rudolph Bloeser obtained five patents between 1886 and 1892, all for jar and bottle closures of various sorts. His first, awarded in 1886, used an awkward-looking wire bale arrangement, but it was subsequently used for the lid of the Bloeser Jar (see below).

January 12, 1886 – Bottle Stopper (No. 334,334)

Bloeser applied for this patent on October 10, 1885, and received Patent No. 334,334 on January 12 of the following year (Figure 2). This patent was apparently used on “an unembossed aqua or clear jar with Bloeser’s clamp assembly and a glass lid embossed PAT JAN 12 1886.” A second jar was made with “BLOESER” embossed in an arch on the front (Caniff 2014:17).

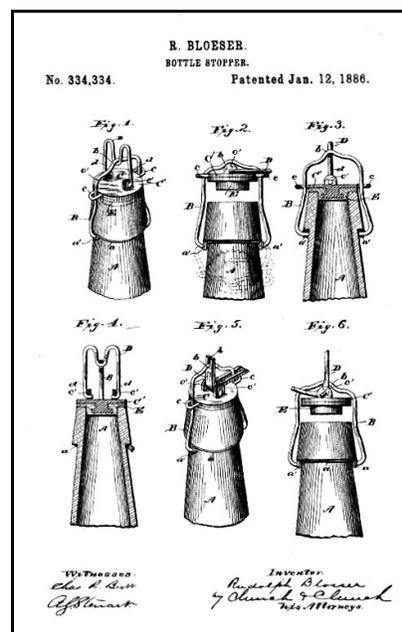


Figure 2 – Bloeser 1886 patent

September 27, 1887 – Jar Fastener (No. 370,373)

On August 12, 1877, Bloeser applied for another patent, receiving Patent No. 370,676 on September 27, 1887 (Figure 3). This patent was used to create a mouth-blown aqua quart jar embossed “BLOESER (arch) / JAR (horizontal)” on the front. This was sealed with a glass lid, held in place by a “patented sheet-metal, one-piece cam-lever and wire-bail clamp.” The lid was embossed “PAT. SEPT. 27 1887” (Caniff 2014:17). An ad from June 21, 1889, illustrated the Bloeser Jar with the 1887 patent lid (Caniff 2014:17-18).

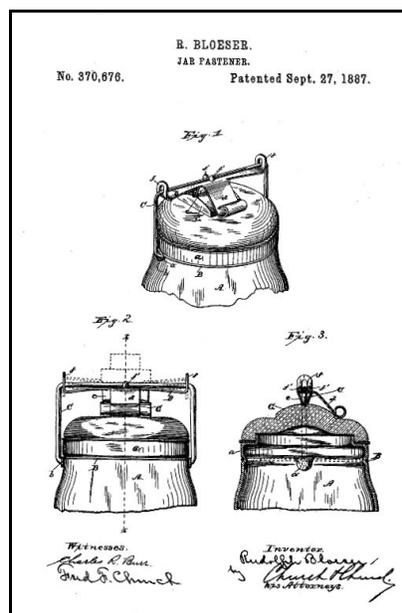


Figure 3 – Bloeser 1887 patent

March 6, 1888 – Bottle Stopper (No. 379,149)
December 10, 1889 – Bottle Stopper (No. 417,139)
August 2, 1892 – Bottle Closure (No. 480,168)

Thomas B. Howe

Thomas B. Howe was briefly a very prolific inventor. Between 1887 and 1890, he patented no less than seven jar- or bottle-related patents. One of these, patented on September 27, 1887, was used on the Scranton Jar, and another, patented on February 28, 1888, was incorporated into the Howe Jar (see both below).

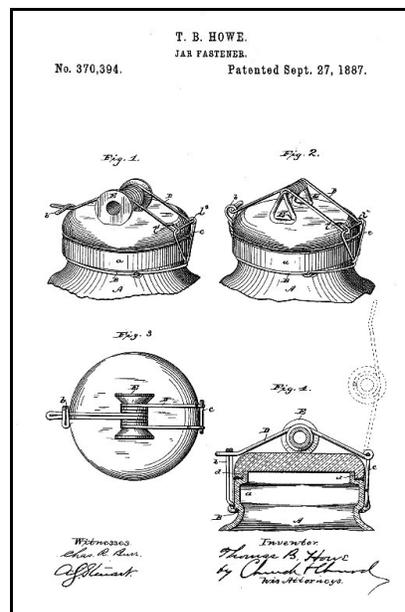


Figure 4 – Howe 1887 patent

September 27, 1887 – Jar Fastener (No. 370,394)

On June 29, 1887, Howe applied for a patent for a “Jar Fastener” and received Patent No. 370,394 on September of the same year (Figure 4). Roller (2011:468) described the closure as “top seal, straddle lip glass lid held down by three-piece metal and coiled wire clamp, coil wrapped around wooden spool to equalize pressure on lid, depressions blown in jar’s neck to hold metal clamp.” As noted above, this patent was used to make the Scranton jar.

February 28, 1888 – Jar Fastener (No. 378,685)

Howe filed for another patent on December 28, 1887, also for a “Jar Fastener.” He received Patent No. 378,685 on February 28, 1888 (Figure 5). Roller (2011:245) described the closure as a “top seal, straddle lip glass lid held down by wire bail with coiled ends that fit into depressions in jar’s neck.” This patent became the foundation for the Howe Jar (as noted above).

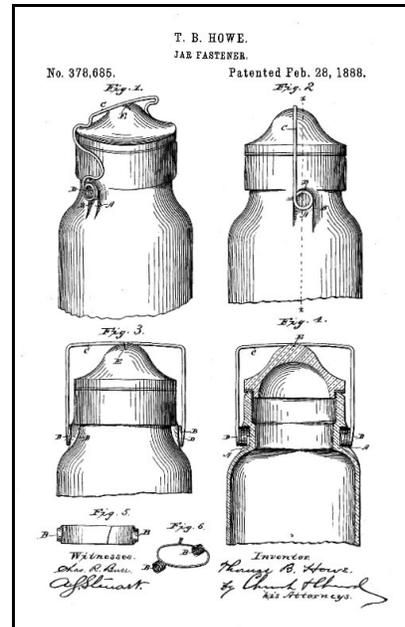


Figure 5 – Howe 1888 patent

August 7, 1888 – Jar Fastener (No. 387,304)

December 11, 1888 – Automatic Jar Fastener (No. 394,490)

June 11, 1889 – Bottle Stopper (No. 405,035)

March 4, 1890 – Bottle Fastening (No. 422,415)

March 25, 1890 – Butter Jar (No. 423,928)

Containers and Marks

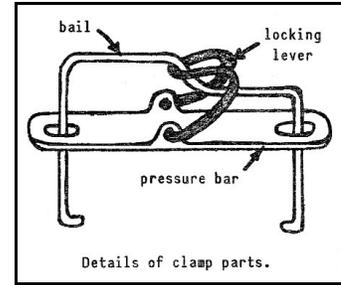


Figure 6 – Bloeser clamp
(Roller 1883:68)

Tyson (1971:30) discussed a letter from the Scranton Jar Co. sent to mold maker Charles Yockel on May 21, 1888. Scranton Glass was concerned because it had not received molds it had returned to Yockel “to have ‘Bloeser’ cut into them.” The molds were for a quart jar, and the glass house intended to have Yockel also make molds for pint and half-gallon sizes. This may have indicated the transition from the unembossed 1886 patent jar to the embossed one – although this seems a bit late.

BLOESER JAR (ca. 1886-ca. 1900)

Roller (1883:68) discussed a jar only embossed “BLOESER” on the side, with a lid embossed “PAT JAN 12 1886.” He assigned the jar to the Scranton Glass Co., made for the Scranton Jar & Stopper Co. ca.



Figure 8 – Bloeser lid (North American Glass)

1887-1888 and illustrated the clamp (Figure 6). A second example was embossed “BLOESER (slight arch) / JAR (horizontal)” on the front with “PAT. SEPT. 27 1887” on the lid (Figures 7 & 8). He dated this one ca. 1888-1890. Roller (1983:277) also included an unmarked jar with a lid embossed “PAT JAN 12 1888” – the second Bloeser patent. The jar was also made by Scranton Glass.

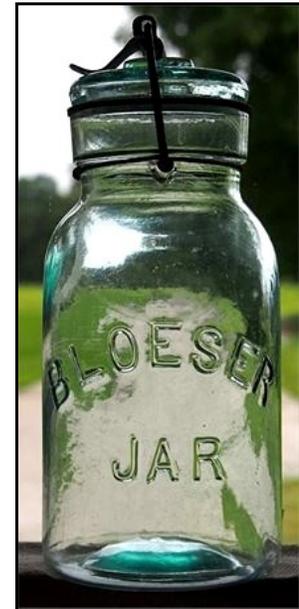


Figure 7 – Bloeser jar
(North American Glass)

Creswick (1987:18-19) illustrated and discussed two variations of the jar – “BLOESER” and “BLOESER JAR” – although the major difference appears to be in the lids (Figure 9). Along with the jar/lid described by Roller (Patent No. 370,676), she noted an earlier lid

embossed “PAT. JAN. 12, 1886” – No. 334,334. She further noted an identical jar (lacking any body embossing) that also used the 1886 lid. Roller (2011:106) suggested that the unembossed form was made first, followed by the variation with the “BLOESER” embossing – although we note that the

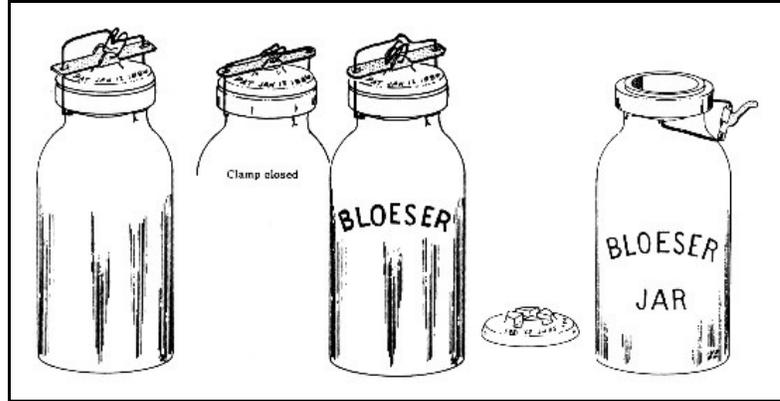


Figure 9 – Bloeser jar (Creswick 1987a:18-19)

unembossed variation could also be a product jar. Caniff (2014:17-19) also discussed all three variations. Table 1 shows a probable chronology of Bloeser Jars.

Table 1 – Bloeser Jar Chronology

| Front Embossing | Lid Embossing | Patent | Date Range |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| none | PAT JAN 12 1886 | 1/12/1886 (No. 334,334) | 1886-1888 |
| BLOESER | PAT JAN 12 1886 | 1/12/1886 (No. 334,334) | 1886-1888 |
| BLOESER JAR | PAT. SEPT. 27 1887 | 9/27/1887 (No. 370,373) | 1888-1896 |

HOWE JAR (ca. 1888-ca. 1900)

Toulouse (1969:155) noted a jar embossed “THE HOWE / SCRANTON / PA” on the front and “PAT FEB’Y 28/88” ON THE LID (Figures 10 & 11). A variation included the word “JAR” just below “HOWE.” He did not know the maker but suggested that the jar was made ca. 1888, presumably because of the patent date. Roller (1983:159; 2011:245) only listed the variation with “JAR” and dated the jar ca. 1888-1890s by the Scranton Glass Co. for the Scranton Jar Co. Creswick (1987:86) also noted and/or

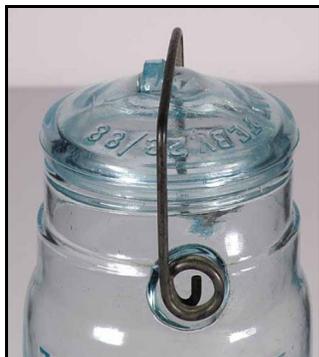


Figure 11 – Howe lid (North American Glass)



Figure 10 – Howe jar (North American Glass)

illustrated the jar and ascribed it to the Scranton companies – almost certainly based on Thomas Howe’s 1888 patent – No. 378,635 (Figure 12).

SCRANTON JAR (ca. 1887-ca. 1900)

Toulouse (1969:278-279) discussed a mouth-blown jar embossed “THE (horizontal) / SCRANTON (slight arch) / JAR (horizontal)” on the front (Figures 13 & 14). The lid was embossed “GRIFFIN’S PAT. OCT. 7, 1869” but he had not found a copy of the actual patent. Although he did not know the maker, he mentioned a Scranton Glass Co. at Scranton, Pennsylvania, that advertised beverage bottles in 1889. Toulouse described the closure as “glass stopper sealing on a slanting surface, with rubber ring seal. A spring wire held the stopper in place, bent over a wood roller and hooking under a strap. The yoke assembly was held by a wire passing vertically around the jar as in the VAN VLIET and the GILBERDS, and antedated both.” This was not the correct stopper for the Scranton jar.

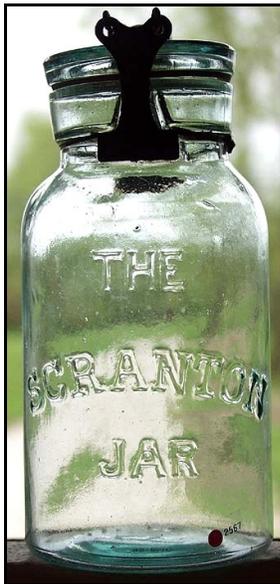


Figure 13 – Scranton jar (North American Glass)



Figure 15 – G.H.C. base (North American Glass)

Roller (1983:323; 2011:468) noted the initials “G.H.C.” on the base (Figure 15). He failed to mention any marking on the lid but claimed that the patent for the closure had been issued to Thomas B. Howe of Scranton on September 27, 1887. Howe assigned two-thirds of the patent to G.A. Clearwater and M.A. Goodwin. Howe, Clearwater, and Goodwin were all officers of the Scranton Glass Co.

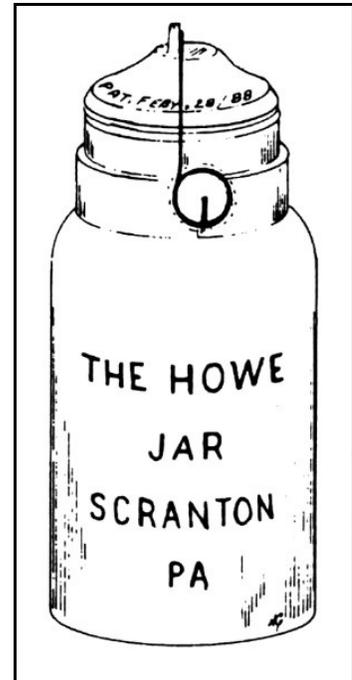


Figure 12 – Howe jar (Creswick 1987:86)



Figure 14 – Scranton lid (North American Glass)

Roller (1983:323; 2011:468) also described a second jar – that he called rare – with the same embossing on the front but no initials on the base. The finish had a stopper well, and he suggested that it was probably closed with “an adaptation of one of the various Howe or Bloeser bottle stopper patents.” Creswick (1987:190) illustrated and described the same two variations (Figure 16) and suggested that the “G.H.C.” initials on the bases of some of these jars matched those of the three last names (Goodwin, Howe, and Clearwater).

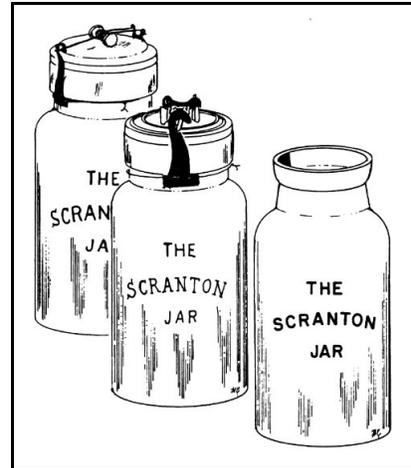


Figure 16 – Scranton jars (Creswick 1987:190)

History – Scranton Glass Mfg. Co.

Scranton Glass Mfg. Co., Moosic, Pennsylvania (1901-1902)

The Scranton Glass Mfg. Co. incorporated on May 25, 1899, with a capital of \$50,000 for the purpose of “manufacturing and selling of glass of all kinds.” With M.E. McDonald as president, John R. Edwards as secretary, W.F. Elkin as treasurer, and Thomas W. Flower as general manager, the firm acquired the former J.W. Bonta plate glass factory at Moosic, Pennsylvania. After refurbishing the plant, the firm began production on February 18, 1901. The firm intended to use the “\$76,000 machine” invented by J.W. Banta “for making decorative plate glass in panels as large as 14x28 feet” (Roller 1998b; *Scranton Tribune* 2/19/1901).

Despite the huge plate glass machine, the new plant use two furnaces with eight pots, for the manufacture of beer bottles and flasks, intending to extend into the production of plate glass in 1902. Although we have not discovered what went wrong with Scranton Glass, the Republic Glass Mfg. Co. gained control of the operation in late 1902 to make William Fenn’s jars (Roller 1998b; *Stanton Tribune* 1/3/1902). See the section on the Perfection Glass Co. for more information about Republic.

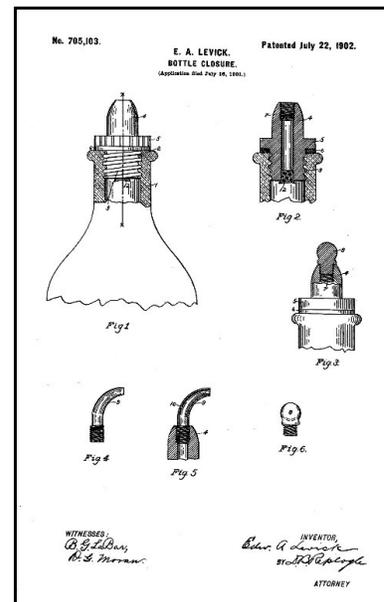


Figure 17 – Levick 1902 patent

Edward A. Levick applied for a patent for a “Bottle-Closure” on July 16, 1901, and received Patent No. 705,103 on July 22, 1902 (Figure 17). He assigned two-thirds of the rights to the Scranton Glass Mfg. Co. (von Mechow 2019). The closure was actually an internally threaded stopper, fitting inside the throat of the bottle, with a pour spout that was also internally threaded, fitting into the top of the closure. The spout could be unscrewed and replaced with a plug. The invention was apparently too late to save the failing glass concern.

Containers and Marks

We have not discovered any marks for this short-lived firm.

History: Scranton Glass Co.

Scranton Glass Co., Scranton, Pennsylvania (ca. 1907-1925, poss. 1930 or later)

According to von Mechow (2019):

About 1907, Anthony Francis McDonnell operated a second Scranton Glass Company at 1341 Jefferson St, Dunmore PA. This was his parents’ home, therefore it is likely that his business was that of a glass jobber rather than a manufacturer. McDonnell also patented and trade marked the Sanitop Bottle closure and operated into the 1920s if not later.

The earliest ad we have found for this Scranton Glass Co. was for “the Nuevo hat pin receptacle. Made of flint glass; six inches long” in the November 3, 1908, issue of the *Duluth News-Tribune*. “Artistically trimmed with silk, lace and ribbons,” the price was a quarter. McDonnell advertised milk, soda, and beer bottles and reported to the Ball Brothers on December 3, 1909, that he had been granted Canadian patent No. 122,282 (Caniff 2014:19; Roller 1998a). McDonnell apparently never received an American patent for his closure. Roller (1998a) explained that

One of their letterheads [i.e., Scranton Glass Co.] figured a milk bottle with an arrow lettered (SEE THAT SOCKET) pointing to the annular flange on the bottle

neck. The letterhead mentioned that they were the “Sole Manufacturers of the Celebrated SANITOP BOTTLES AND CLOSURES.”

McDonnell registered “Sanitop” as a trademark on glass bottles (No. 77,405) on April 5, 1910 (von Mechow 2019). He was listed in the 1910 census as a “Wholesale Merchant (?) glass” – almost certainly confirming that he (along with the Scranton Glass Co.) was a jobber, not a manufacturer (von Mechow 2019).

Still the manager (and almost certainly owner) of Scranton Glass, McDonnell again wrote the Balls on July 16, 1912, that his attorney believed that there was no infringement with Alston’s patents – an apparent reference to a complaint by the Balls that they controlled a patent for a similar closure. According to the letterhead, Scranton Glass was the sole licenser for SANITOP closures. The firm was still listed at 1341 Jefferson Ave., Dunmore, in 1916 and advertised “bottles, shipping cases and casks” on May 17, 1920, in the *Wilkes-Barre Time-Leader*. The firm also offered “Owl Self-Shining Sove Polish” in the October 1, 1924, issue of the *Daily Illinois Stat Journal* and was noted as late as February 1925 (Caniff 2014:19; von Mechow 2019). Despite the use of Scranton in the advertisements, the business was located at Dunmore. Although a separate municipality, for all practical purposes, Dunmore was and is a suburb of Scranton.

To add confusion, the Sanitop Co. of 2131 Eighth Ave., New York City, offered a Sanitop milk bottle cover as early as 1911 (Figure 18). The firm incorporated in 1912 and remained in business for at least one more year. Despite the similar time frame, the firm and the product were totally unrelated to McDonnell and his invention (*American Druggist and Pharmaceutical Record* 1911:25; *Practical Druggist* 1912:53).



Figure 18 – Sanitop ad (*American Druggist and Pharmaceutical Record* 1911:25)

Containers & Marks

SCRANTON GLASS CO. (1908-ca. 1925)



Figure 19 –
Scranton Glass
(Von Mechow
2019)

Von Mechow (2019) listed a single bottle embossed “SCRANTON GLASS CO. (arch) / SCRANTON, PA / PAT 7/14/8 (both horizontal) / SANITOP BOTTLE (inverted arch)” on the base (Figure 19). This was the product of the second Scranton Glass Co., a jobber unrelated to the original firm.

Currently, we have no way to determine the actual manufacturer of the bottle.

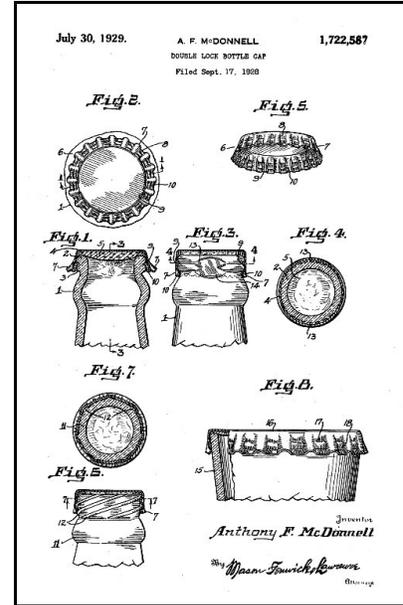


Figure 20 – McDonnell 1929 patent

PATENTED TWIST-OFF (ca. 1930)

On September 17, 1928, McDonnell applied for a patent for a “Double-Lock Bottle Cap” and received Patent No. 1,722,587 on July 30 of the following year (Figure 20). The closure was an obvious

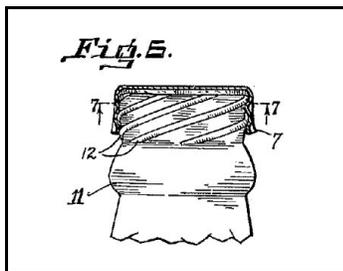


Figure 21 – McDonnell finish

takeoff on the crown cap with an extra indentation to allow the cap to fit on a double-ring finish, crimping on *both* rings. A subset of his patent was ahead of its time. An adaptation allowed his crown to fit on a non-continuous-thread finish – a closure style that did not become popular until the mid-1960s (Figure 21).

McDonnell may have actually made some money on this later invention. Rick Lease sent us a series of photos of a soda bottle used by the Hanover Springs Bottling Works of Danville, Pennsylvania (Figure 22). The finish had the reinforcing (lower) ring of a crown top but had continuous threads in place of the sealing (upper) ring. The reinforcing ring was embossed “PATENTED” on one side and “TWIST-OFF” on

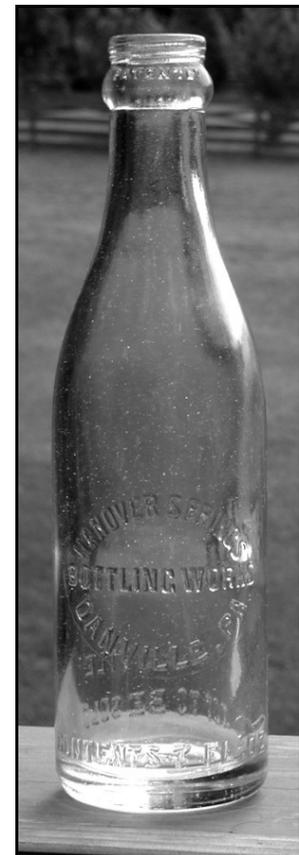


Figure 22 – Twist-off bottle (Rick Lease)

the other (Figure 23). The base was embossed with the Triangle-R logo used by the F.E. Reed Glass Co. from 1923 to 1956 (Figure 24). Since McDonnell received his patent in 1929, the timing is perfect. McDonnell may have sold the patent to Reed Glass or licensed the firm to make the bottle. He still may even have been acting as a jobber by then. For more information on the logo, see the section on F.E. Reed.



Figure 23 – Twist-off finish (Rick Lease)

Discussion and Conclusions

Tyson (1971:29-30) described two letterheads, one for the Scranton Glass Co. and one for the Scranton Jar Co., both written in 1888. The letterheads for both companies included M.A. Goodwin, president of the jar firm and Superintendent for Scranton Glass. In addition, the handwriting on the dates of the letters appears to be identical, probably that of Goodwin. As Tyson noted, this seems to indicate a connection between the two companies, almost certainly Scranton Jar as a subsidiary of Scranton Glass.



Figure 24 – Twist-off base (Rick Lease)

Tyson (1971:29) further noted that the June 9, 1888, letter to mold maker, Charles Yockel (from the Scranton Glass Co.), described the Scranton Jar, although it was never mentioned specifically by name. The letterhead noted that Scranton Glass made ware of “Green and Amber” color. Creswick (1987:190) described the colors of the Scranton jars as being “Aqua and Citron,” hues that fit into the “Green and Amber” category. The letterhead for the Scranton Jar Co. (Tyson 1971:30), written on May 21, 1888, shows two illustrations of the Scranton jar, leaving no question about its use by that company. Since Roller (1998) did not find any listing for the Scranton Jar Co. (see the history section above), it was probably a distribution firm for the Scranton Glass Co. Scranton Glass was very likely the actual manufacturer of the jars.

A third letter (Tyson 1971:30-31) was from the Scranton Stopper Co., 123 Penn Ave., Scranton – dated September 22, 1888. The Stopper Co. letter was signed by P. Bloeser. The

Scranton Jar Co. letter described molds that the company wanted to have inscribed “Bloeser.” Thus, all three firms are tied together, both the Jar Co. and the Stopper Co. probably being subsidiaries of the Glass Co.

The patents, names of company officials, histories, and letters to Yockel conclusively tie the Howe, Bloeser, and Scranton jars to the Scranton Jar Co. and its subsidiaries. We have not found any specific data indicating the early products produced by the plant, but we have also discovered no evidence to link the factory to fruit jar production prior to ca. 1886. None of the labeled jars show grounds to link them to the earlier production era.

We have less information about the short-lived Scranton Glass Mfg. Co. (1901-1902). The timing of the operation as well as the name suggest that it was an outgrowth of the original firm at Scranton. A move to Moosic may have been intended as a new beginning after the closure due to the 1893 depression. Unfortunately, we have been unable to discover any names of the officers of the Moosic company. There is no evidence that the Moosic plant made fruit jars, although the Republic Glass Co., successors to Scranton Glass at Moosic, manufactured fruit jars. It is doubtful that production dates for the Bloeser, Howe, and Scranton jars extended beyond the original firm.

The final firm, a jobber in soda and beer bottles, was almost certainly unrelated to either of the other two – despite its following fairly closely to the demise of the Moosic operation. This final business was certainly small, possibly a one-man operation was fairly long lived – ca. 1907- ca. 1925 – although the Sanitop closure never gained any popularity. McDonnall’s later invention – the screw-off crown, patented in 1929 – was certainly made by the F.E. Reed Glass Co., although examples are rare.

Acknowledgments

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