

Southern Glass Works

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Four different firms (Stanger & Co., Sherley & McCulloch, a currently unnamed corporation, and T.M. Sherley & Co.) operated the same factory under the name of the Southern Glass Co., Southern Glass Works, Southern Glass Works Co. and Southern Glass Works again during the brief period between 1877 and 1886. The study below attempts to unravel the confusion caused by the plethora of similar names. The glass marks were apparently only used by the first two firms.

Histories

Southern Glass Co., Louisville, Kentucky (1877-1879)

In 1877, John Stanger, Sr., and his son-in-law, Charles Doyle, formed John Stanger & Co. (also called Stanger & Co.) to open the Southern Glass Co., also called the Southern Glass Works. Bottle production began in August at the plant on 11th and Monroe Streets, near “the canal.” The 1878 city directory listed John, Joseph M. and Thomas Stanger, Charles Doyle, Conrad Upperman, Joseph Husack, Philip Zell and Frederick Rau as the proprietors of the Southern Glass Co. The listing with the same owners continued in the 1879 directory. The plant made wine, ale, mineral water, and beer bottles, as well as druggists’ flasks and fruit jars (Whitten 2005:70-72; von Mechow 2019).

Beginning on March 26, 1879 and continuing into April, newspapers all over the country carried the story of how John Sanger, Jr., business manager for the glass house, disappeared with thousands of dollars in company money that he had been collecting, presumably absconding with the cash to Leadville, Colorado, to join the mining boom. The firm soon fell into receivership (von Mechow 2019).

Containers and Marks

According to Whitten (2005:71), the firm used both names (Southern Glass Co. and Southern Glass Works, but the term Southern Glass Co. seemed to be preferred (with “S.G.Co.” applied to bottle bases).

S.G.Co. (1877-ca. 1879 or later)

Roller (1983:326; 2011:472) listed a grooved-ring wax sealer embossed S.G.Co. on the base but made no glass house attribution. Creswick (1987:191) illustrated the mark as “S.G. (arch) / Co. (inverted arch)” on the same jar base, claiming the maker as the Southern Glass Works of Louisville, Kentucky (Figure 1). Edelen (1974:825-829) also attributed the S.G.Co. marking to the Louisville Southern Glass Co.

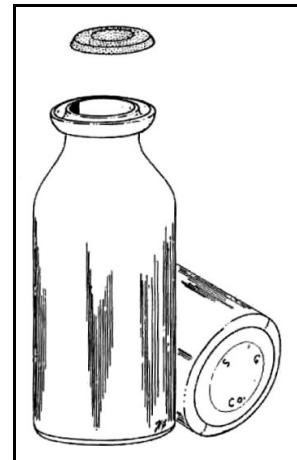


Figure 1 – S.G.Co.
(Creswick 1987:191)



Figure 2 – S.G.Co. bottles (David Whitten)

Both Creswick and Whitten always showed the S.G.Co. mark with full punctuation and with a lower-case “o” in “Co.” Although not listed in the sources, photos from David Whitten show that “S.G.Co.” was embossed horizontally on several bottle and flask bases (Figures 2-4).

According to Whitten (2005:71), the S.G.Co. mark was used by the Southern Glass Co. at Louisville during its brief life on chemical bottles, wax-sealer fruit jars, ginger ovals, and John J. Smith tonic bottles. He suggested that the mark was mostly used during the first two years of the firm’s existence, “although it is likely that some of the bottle molds with that marking were used into later years until they wore out.” Since other glass houses used the same mark (including at least one other



Figure 3 – S.G.Co. (David Whitten)

Southern Glass Co.!), Whitten (2005:71-72) suggested “that if a bottle or jar seen with the mark is handblown with a true applied lip, is crudely made, aqua, is basemarked, and found primarily in Louisville and surrounding area of Kentucky and southern Indiana, it is likely a product of Southern Glass Works.”

Southern Glass Works, Louisville, Kentucky (1879-ca. 1884)

Thomas H. Sherley – owner of the T.H. Sherley Co., a local liquor distributor – and Joseph G. McCulloch acquired the firm, with John L. McCulloch as bookkeeper, operating as Sherley & McCulloch. The factory flourished during the next few years, producing bottles for Sherley’s whiskey as well as supplying many other local glass needs. The plant was apparently idle after late 1883 or early 1884, with the firm dissolving at some point in 1885 (Whitten 2005:70-72; von Mechow 2019).

Toulouse (1971:474) added an interesting footnote, stating that J.L. McCulloch and J. Wood Wilson bought the Southern Glass Co. plant in 1887 “and moved it to Marion, Ind., because of the finding of natural gas there. They renamed the company the ‘Marion Fruit Jar & Bottle Co.’” He added that McCulloch had worked as a bookkeeper for Southern from about the founding of the company until 1883. See the section on the Marion Fruit Jar & Bottle Co. for more information about that firm.



Figure 4 – S.G.Co. (David Whitten)

Containers and Marks

S.G.W. (ca. 1879-ca. 1884)

Toulouse (1971:474) noted that the “S.G.W.LOU.KY” mark was embossed on “a fruit jar” that he dated “pre-1879 to 1887” – reflecting his understanding of the Southern Glass Co./Works operating dates. Roller (1983:326; 2011:472) added a variation “SGWLOUKY” with the letters interspersed through a tic-tac-toe design on the base of a grooved-ring wax-sealer.

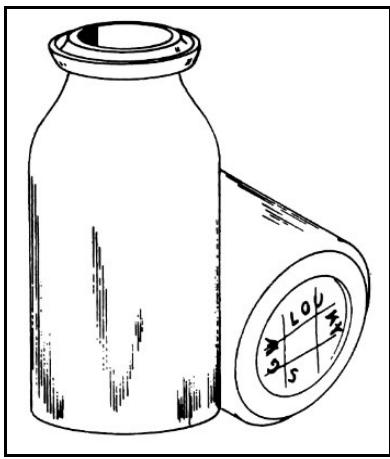


Figure 5 – S.G.W. (Creswick 1987:196)

Creswick (1987:196) illustrated the same logo (Figure 5). She dated the mark 1879-1887, almost certainly following Toulouse. Whitten (2005:71) listed wax-sealer fruit jars, medicine, pickle, cathedral peppersauce, cylinder whiskey, Hutchinson soda, and many other bottle types embossed with the mark. Whitten also noted that all marks used by Southern (in Louisville) were applied to bottle and jar bases.

Whitten (2005:71) also illustrated and discussed a pumpkinseed flask embossed with the S.G.W. initials on the base. The flasks are found in the Louisville area. This was the only example included by Whitten that used the initials without “LOU.KY.”



Figure 6 – S.G.W. (eBay)



Figure 7 – S.G.W. (Cole Lewellen; eBay)

The “S.G.W.LOU.KY” logo, however, was used in at least three formats, all on bases. On cylindrical whiskey bottles (round in cross section), the mark was embossed in a circular format with two variations (Figure 6). One variation was embossed on the inside of a post mold with the bottom of the letters pointing inward (i.e., read clockwise). The other variation was embossed *outside* the post mold with the bottom of the letters pointing outward (i.e., read counterclockwise). A configuration from a grooved-ring wax-sealer included a large “X” in the center of the base (Figure 7).

On other bottle shapes (and on some cylindrical bottles), the mark was embossed “S.G.W. / LOU.KY” with both lines horizontal

(Figure 8). With one exception, all examples of the



Figure 8 – S.G.W. (Antique Bottles.net)

mark we have seen (in any configuration) have included full punctuation. The exception was the wax-sealer fruit jar with the mark embossed through a tic-tac-toe symbol. Creswick's drawing (1987:196) did not show punctuation.

SOU.G.W. or SOU.G.W.S. (ca. 1879-ca. 1884)



Figure 9 – SOU.G.W. (Creswick 1987:196)

A final wax sealer (Creswick 1987:196; Roller 1983:333) was embossed SOU.G.W. on the base (Figure 9). The mark was apparently only embossed in a horizontal pattern with full punctuation. An interesting variation was shown by occasional eBay sellers. In this version, the initial "S" was embossed backwards (Figure 10). Roller (2011:482) included this mark but added no new

information. Whitten (2005:71) noted the wax sealers but also added that a variation of the mark "SOU.G.W.S." was embossed on the base of square pickle bottles (Figure 11).



Figure 10 – SOU.G.W. (eBay)

Southern Glass Works Co., Louisville, Kentucky (ca. April 1885-January 1886)

Ca. April of 1885, the Southern Glass Works Co. reopened the factory. The 1886 city directory listed the firm as a corporation, with Robert W. Lewis as president, Joseph Richardson, as secretary and treasurer, and Joseph M. Stanger as superintendent. This company may have ceased production early in 1886. The firm was no longer listed in the 1887 directory (Whitten 2005:72; von Mechow 2019). Whitten discovered no manufacturer's marks that he could attribute to this firm.



Figure 11 – SOU.G.W.S. (Whitten 2019)

Southern Glass Works, Louisville, Kentucky (1888-1889)

By 1888, the directory listed T.M. Sherley & Co. (distiller's agent and wholesale commission merchant) as leasing the Southern Glass Works (now minus the "Co.") as well as the Kentucky Glass Works, although Southern was last listed in 1889. Since Sherley was also president of E.L. Miles Distillery and vice president of the New Hope Distillery, the plant almost certainly produced whiskey bottles (Whitten 2005:72; von Mechow 2019).

Discussion and Conclusions

Both the Southern Glass Co. and Southern Glass Works, located in Louisville, produced a large variety of bottles and jars, embossed with three different company marks. The "S.G.Co." logo was almost certainly used by the initial company (1877-1879), but Whitten noted that some molds from the earlier company were almost certainly used in the 1879-1884 period. The second firm (1879-1884) was almost certainly responsible for the "S.G.W." and "SOU G W" marks. With current methods, however, we are unable to place the two logos in any chronological order. It is likely that they were used concurrently with the whim of the mold maker as the only real difference.

Whitten (2005:72) stated that there were no marked bottles made by the last company (Southern Glass Works Co., 1885-1886), although Edelen (1974) claimed that there was an "LGWC" mark. Whitten had been unable to confirm the mark and suggested that it probably did not exist. It is likely that both the Southern Glass Works Co. (1885-1886) and the final Southern Glass Works (1888-1889) exclusively made whiskey bottles for the two local distilleries.

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