

Standard Milk Bottle Mfg. Co.

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During its very short life (2+ years), the Standard Milk Bottle Mfg. Co. made very few milk bottles with its “SMBMCo” logo. The plant was soon absorbed into its parent – the Essex Glass Co. – and lost its individual identity.

History

Standard Milk Bottle Mfg. Co., Parkersburg, West Virginia (1910-1913)

The Standard Milk Bottle Mfg. Co. incorporated in early May 1910, with a capital of \$35,000. Lewis E. Tigner, S.H. Israel, Allen D.B. Herron, and W.O. Hosack were the incorporators. The factory “put fire in their eight-ring machine tank on Sept. 5 and expect to begin operations during the coming week” (*Bridgeton Evening News* 9/14/1910; *Commoner and Glassworker* 1910:1; *Industrial World* 1910:689; *State* 5/13/1910). The plant manufactured “hollow ware” and milk bottles in 1912 (Six 1993:22). By 1913, Standard was using Warner semiautomatic machines at a single continuous tank with eight rings to make milk bottles (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:954). By at least March of 1913, the plant had shed the Standard name and became known as the second factory of the Essex Glass Co. (*Bridgeton Evening News* 3/11/1913; Giarde 1980:109-110).

Containers and Marks

SMBMCo (1910-1913)

Both Giarde (1980:109) and Shadlich ([ca. 1990]) noted the “SMBMCo” mark as being used by Standard during the 1911-1912 period, although it could also have been used briefly in 1913. Shadlich added that the logo was embossed on milk bottle bases. Giarde (1980:110) stated that “the two digit numbers which appear on the bottom of Standard milk bottles do not represent the year of manufacture.” The mark could also have been used during the latter part of 1910.

An eBay auction offered a milk bottle embossed “SMBMCO” on the heel and “KEYSTONE (arch) / PAT. AUG. 13, 01 (inverted arch)” on the base. The dairy was in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The same seller offered four bottles with the Keystone and patent base (although only one with SMBMCO), all from Michigan dairies. Currently, we have been unable to observe an example of the mark, so we do not know whether the “o” in “Co” is capitalized or lower case or if the initials included punctuation.

Pe in the Massachusetts Seal (1911-1913)

From late 1909 to 1947, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts required that all glass factories selling bottles to dairies within the state mark their containers with a Massachusetts seal. From some point after 1910, factories embossed the seal on the shoulder of each milk bottle, usually in a circular form embossed “MASS (arch) / {factory designator} / “SEAL (inverted arch).” These often appeared in a small plate mold. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts (1910:4; 1911:4) listed “Mass. Seal P” as belonging to the Poughkeepsie Glass Works and ascribed the “Mass Seal Pe” to the Standard Milk Bottle Mfg. Co. at least as early as 1909, and the listing continued until 1918 (Commonwealth of Massachusetts 1921 :635).

Although Blodget (2006:8) and Schadlich ([ca. 1990]) both suggested that Standard used the “P” mark in the seal from ca. 1910 to ca. 1912, the mark clearly belonged to Poughkeepsie (see that section for more information and Lockhart et al. 2017 for more on the Massachusetts seals). The Sheffield Glass Bottle Co. had already pre-empted the “S” designator, with Poughkeepsie preempting the “P” so Standard accepted “Pe” – although the reason for the letters is unclear. The “P” certainly could have represented Parkersburg, but there is nothing intuitively obvious about the “e” – *especially* in lower case. We have never seen a Mass. “Pe” seal nor have we found the “SMBMCo” mark in conjunction with the Massachusetts “P” seal.

Discussion and Conclusions

With only a bit more than two years in operation under the Standard Milk Bottle Mfg. Co. name, it is not surprising that the “SMBMCo” logos are extremely rare in the literature and on eBay. Although the State of Massachusetts carried the “Mass Seal Pe” on the books from 1909 to 1918, we have been unable to locate a single example. It is probable that Standard Milk Bottle

never made a single container for a Massachusetts dairy – at least until it was subsumed under the Essex Glass Co. name – at which point, it would have used the Massachusetts E Seal.

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