

Acme Glass Co. and the Acme Logos

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Although the Acme Glass Co. was not known to have used any manufacturer's marks, earlier researchers have attributed glass logos to the company. As we demonstrate below, the uses of the "ACME" logo can all be traced to other glass houses.

The term "Acme" was also used by numerous other business – either in their names or as brand monikers – and several of these had the name embossed or in ACL on bottles. An unusual case involves "Acme" embossed in cursive on the bases of prescription bottles. This almost certainly indicated a brand or type of bottle. Although we researched three possible manufacturers – Acme Glass Co., H.C. Fox & Sons, and the Dominion Glass Co. – Fox was by far the most likely.

Histories

Acme Glass Co., Olean, New York (1895-1929)

The Acme Glass Co. incorporated in August 1895 with a capital of \$7,000. The initial investors were John E. Farrell, Martin A. Brunner, Joseph Sharp, Philip A. Von Starch, Henry U. Hanover, Joseph N. Thomas, and Abram Cullaher (Roller 1998). In 1897, the plant made "green bottle[s] and holloware" in 12 pots, increasing to 18 pots the following year. By 1901, the listing decreased slightly to 16 pots and remained at that level until at least 1902 (*National Glass Budget* 1897:7; 1898:7; 1900:11; 1901:11; 1902:11). Another source claimed that the factory used one continuous tank with six rings in 1897 and 1899 but had increased to three tanks with 22 rings by 1904, making prescription, liquor, and proprietary ware (Roller 1998).

Although the number and type was not recorded, Olean was using machines by at least 1907 (*Commoner & Glassworker* 1907). In 1908, Acme had an "enlarged 12-ring tank" handling 21 shops. The plant had a total of five tanks, two on flint glass, three on amber, producing beer, soda, and wine bottles as well as flasks (Mayer 1908:13).

By 1909, the Olean plant used 13 semiautomatic machines to make “vaselines, inks, etc.” (*National Glass Budget* 1909:1). Three years later (1912), however, seven machines were used at Olean, New York, to make “vaselines, inks, shoe polish and pint and half pint milks” (*National Glass Budget* 1912:1). It is important to note that the article did not mention which *company* used the machines, although the similarity to the 1909 report suggests that at least some of them were in the Acme plant. Presumably, as the quality of the machines improved, less were needed.

Acme competed locally with the older Olean Glass Co. that originally began business in 1883. After a checkered history that included shut downs and a major fire, Olean Glass sold to the Acme Glass Co. on July 10, 1913 (*Olean Times-Herald* 7/11/1913). In that year, Acme used two continuous tanks with 15 rings to produce “prescription, beer, liquor and water [i.e., soda]” bottles, vials, and flasks (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:953).

The Acme Glass Co. made “prescription, beer, soda, wine, and brandy” bottles at least as early as 1907. In 1912, the list was abbreviated to “prescription, beer, etc.” and remained that way until at least 1920. In 1920, the firm was first listed as making fruit jars (Thomas Publishing Co. 1905:159; 1907:159; 1912:480; 1920:827, 4616).

In July 1916, Acme ordered at least one O’Neill semiautomatic machine. The anonymous correspondent noted that the new machine “does away with one boy” (*National Glass Budget* 1916:1). The plant was now “operating one tank with six hand-blow shops, three Olean¹ and three one-man O’Neill machines on two shifts and a miscellaneous line of bottles being turned out” (Bristow 1917:16).

The Eastern Glass Co., Rochester, New York, purchased the Acme Glass Co. in June 1926 and vastly increased the capacity of the plant by December. Acme built a new plant in 1927 and added fully automatic machines, but the company was sold at auction two years later (1929) to local interests who renamed the plant the Olean Glass Co. The factory made prescription bottles, beers, minerals, patent-medicine and proprietary-medicine bottles, liquors,

¹ Although we have not discovered the date, Olean developed its own semiautomatic machine, known as the Olean machine. This was probably the machine designed and patented by John A. Burleigh of Olean, New York, in 1911 (No. 998,673) and 1912 (No. 1,030,252).

flasks, fruit jars, packers, preservers, and milk jars as well as soda, wine, and brandy bottles (Olean Glass Co. 1929:430; Toulouse 1971:35-37).

By 1927, the plant used two continuous tanks with seven rings to produce its glass, entirely by machine² (*American Glass Review* 1927:125; 1929:93). An Olean announcement “assured a continuance of the same prompt service and the high quality packers’ ware [that customers] have been receiving in the past” (Olean Glass Co. 1929:430). Acme remained in business until the Thatcher Mfg. Co. acquired the firm in 1944 (Lockhart et al 2006; 2007). For more information about both Olean firms, see the section on the Olean Glass Co.

Dominion Glass Co., Montreal, Canada (1886-1995)

The history of this firm is recorded in the D section and in detail in King (1987:127-135; 145-152; 159-164, 217-220). The plant was established in 1886 and incorporated in 1894. In 1895, the company merged with the Diamond Glass Co. and Sydenham Glass Co., with numerous locations. Dominion acquired the exclusive rights to the Owens Automatic Bottle Machines in Canada. The firm made various types of bottle and jars (including prescription bottles) during its tenure both by hand and machine processes. The plants typically identified all bottles with the Diamond-D logo embossed on the bases.

The Henry C. Fox Factories

Henry C. Fox, flint glass manufacturer, Philadelphia (1853-1874)

We have found very little about this early glass house. According to the H.C. Fox & Sons ca. 1904 catalog (and earlier ads), the company was established in 1853. This, of course, referred to the firm of Henry C. Fox that manufactured flint glass druggists’ and perfumers’ ware. The plant was called Fox’s Flint Glass Works (Figure 1). Fox brought his sons into the business in 1874 and renamed the firm to reflect their involvement. The Hexamer General Survey (1884) noted that the extensive buildings were erected from 1856 to 1883.

² The plant was still listed as Acme until 1929, although the glass factory listings were notorious for continuing to include plants that had closed.

H.C. Fox & Sons, Philadelphia (1874-1922)

Fox brought his sons into the business and renamed the firm H.C. Fox & Sons in 1874. The family styled themselves as manufacturers of “Druggists’ and Perfumers’ Glassware” and displayed many of their bottles at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition (Ingram [1876]). As with the earlier firm, we have discovered very little information about the actual glass house or its workings. However, the plant made “druggists’ and perfumers’ bottles” at three furnaces with 25 pots during the 1881-1882 period. The firm sold \$236,000 worth of products each year (Humphries 1882).

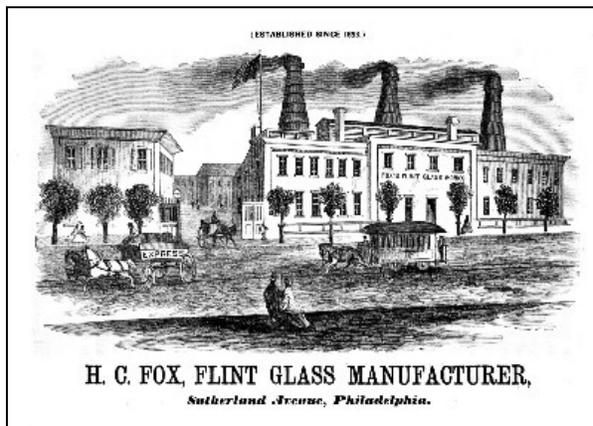


Figure 1 – Fox & Sons plant (*Southern Steamship Manufacturers & Mercantile Register* 1866)

The Hexamer General Survey (1884) illustrated a huge complex that extended between Sutherland Ave. on the west side to Verner St. on the east, with a northern boundary along the U.S. Naval Asylum Grounds and Kansas St. to the south. The complex – named the H.C. Fox & Sons Flint Glass Works – had three large smokestacks.

H.C. Fox & Sons was one of the founding firms in the organization of the National Glass Co. in 1899 – although the firm maintained its own identity. National Glass was a loose merger of independent glass houses that came apart in 1907. Fox probably left the conglomeration in 1904, when it incorporated (H.C. Fox & Sons ca. 1904; von Mechow 2012).

H.C. Fox & Sons was listed as making green glass (i.e., containers) – prescription and druggists’ ware – in the first Thomas Register in 1905. The listing added packers’ and preservers’ ware in 1907. In 1913, the plant used both hand and machine methods to make a general line of bottles at a single continuous tank with 14 rings and three furnaces using 28 pots (Thomas Publishing Co. 1905:104; 1907:161; *Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:953).

The next change in the Thomas Registers occurred in 1914, finally noting the incorporation and the location at Schuyhill Ave. & Catherine St. The plant was now listed as making flint (colorless) prescription, preservers, etc. The enumeration remained the same until 1916, the last listing (Thomas Publishing Co. 1914:532; 1916:661). The plant finally closed in 1922.

Fox, Fultz & Webster, Boston (1885-possibly 1915)

Fox, Fultz & Webster, New York (1885-1904)

Fox, Fultz & Webster was first listed in the 1885 Boston city directory and continued to be enumerated until 1894. The following year, H.C. Fox & Co. replaced Fox, Fultz & Webster and remained in the directories until at least 1911 (von Mechow 2012).³ By ca. 1894, the New York location was 52 Park Place, with an 18 Blackstone St. address at Boston.

Fox, Fultz & Webster was a jobber (wholesaler) supplying druggists, chemists, and perfumers. Along with being the outlet for H.C. Fox & Sons glassware, the Boston and New York locations offered metal tools, ceramic containers, syringes, pill molds, and virtually any other tools or items related to the three retail groups they served (Fox, Fultz & Webster ca. 1894). The factory probably vended its own goods prior to 1885, then developed Fox, Fultz & Webster as a sales arm.

In March 1904, E.L. Lillibridge, former manager of Fox, Fultz & Webster's New York office, announced a new corporation – the Lillibridge Weeks Thurlow Co. – that had purchased the New York business of Fox, Fultz & Webster at 31 Warren St.. Lillibridge was the president and treasurer of new firm, with M.R. Thurlow as the secretary. Clarence W. Fox (one of Henry's sons) retained an interest as a director of the company (*American Druggist* 1904:148). A second source – *Druggists Circular & Chemical Gazette* (1904:xxvi) – reported the same occurrence in greater detail, but called the older firm Fox, Fultz & Co. Based on these two descriptions and the New York address of both Fox, Fultz & Webster and Fox, Fultz & Co. being 31 Warren St., it is highly likely that both names actually applied to the same firm.

³ The directories were only listed by von Mechow to 1911, so this is not a defining date.

Fox, Fultz & Co., New York (at least 1898-1904)

Fox, Fultz & Co., Boston (1895-ca. 1915)

As noted above, Fox, Fultz & Co. replaced Fox, Fultz & Webster in the Boston city directory. In February 1898, Fox, Fultz & Co. announced “the marriage of the business of Messrs Fox Fultz & Co to Every Retail Druggist” at 31 Warren St. New York. They described the business as an “extensively equipped house in New York handling druggists specialties such as flint and green prescription ware corks brushes hard and soft rubber goods etc.” (*American Druggist* 1898:62). The Boston office was open until at least 1915., when it advertised itself as “Manufacturers and Jobbers [of] Bottle Glassware Druggists’ Sundries [and] Toilet Specialties” in the program of the Boston Negro Business League convention (1915).

The Charles D. Fox 1874 Patent

On February 5, 1874, Charles D. Fox (one of Henry’s sons) applied for a patent for an “Improvement in Glass-Molds.” He received Patent No. 149,461 on April 7 of the same year. Fox noted that the object of his invention was “to provide a mold which will produce letters and figures on glassware more clearly and distinctly than any heretofore provided” (Figure 2).

Using the old method, he claimed, “the air therein is compressed, having no means to escape, and prevents the glass from completely filling up the depressions. He improved on this by drilling tiny “perforations or orifices” that led from the letters to an air chamber built into the mold. These allowed the air to escape so that the letters would be “full, clear, and raised to the desired extent.” The essential method was so effective that it remains in use in the 21st century.

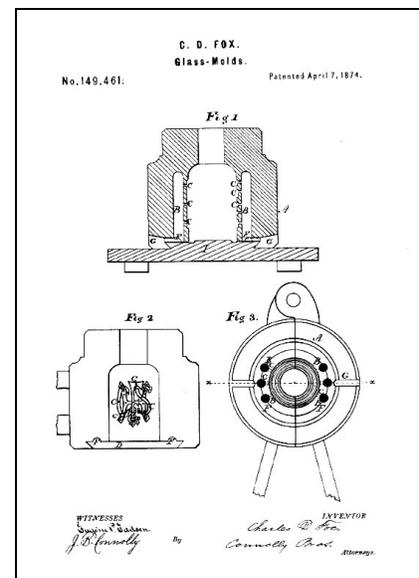


Figure 2 – Charles D. Fox 1874 patent

Containers and Marks

Although an ad for the Acme Glass Co. (*Glass Container*1922)



Figure 3 – Ad for Acme Glass Co., 1922 (*Glass Container*1922)

shows the word “ACME” embossed on the heels and shoulders of bottles, there is no evidence that such a mark was actually used by that firm (Figure 3). The Online Dictionary defined Acme as “the point at which someone or something is best, perfect, or most successful.” It is therefore almost certain that the term on glass bottles and jars referred to high quality rather

than a specific manufacturer. They were used in the context of company names (Figure 4) or brand names (Figure 5)

ACME

Milk Bottles

Giarde (1980:5) dated the ACME mark as being used between 1920 and 1930. Although he noted that Acme “made milk bottles prior to the 1920’s,” Giarde drew his dates from Toulouse (see fruit jar discussion below). The Acme Glass Co. was *not* listed as a milk bottle producer in

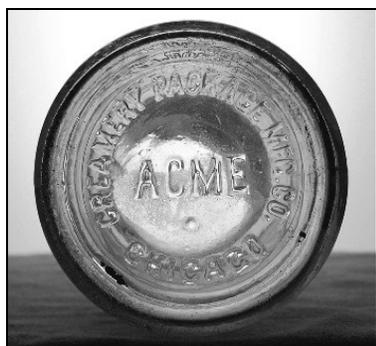


Figure 6 – ACME – base of Creamery Package Mfg. Co. milk bottle

the Thomas Registers from 1905 to 1920 (Thomas Publishing Co. 1905:159; 1907:159; 1912:480; 1920:827, 4616). Thus, the ACME mark on milk bottles was almost certainly unrelated to the Acme Glass Co., although the plant may have made milk bottles by machine in 1909. Like IDEAL, however, the ACME mark (Figure 6) was a brand name used by



Figure 4 – Acme Beverages (eBay)



Figure 5 – Hannis Acme Whiskey (eBay)

Creamery Package Mfg. Co. (see Creamery Package Mfg. Co. section or Lockhart et al. 2008a; 2008b; 2008c for evidence).

Fruit Jars

According to Toulouse (1969:14), an upwardly slanted ACME in an American Flag shield was embossed on a machine-made, quart fruit jar with a “Lightning beaded neck closure, glass lid” (Figure 7). The shield had five stars and seven bars, but the fifth star was smaller, almost as if it were an afterthought. Toulouse attributed the mark to the Acme Glass Co. with a use ca. 1920-1930. He noted that the pint size had three stars in the shield; however, it had all seven bars (Figure 8).



Figure 7 – ACME quart shield jar (eBay)

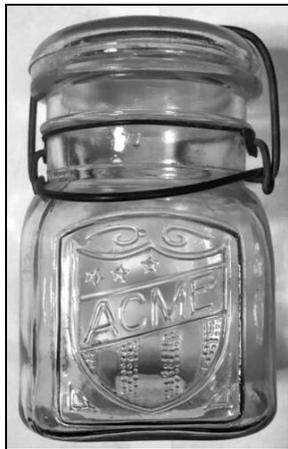


Figure 8 – ACME pint shield jar (eBay)

Roller (1983:3) told a completely different story about the ACME “shield” jars. He noted that the jars were made by the Schram Glass Mfg. Co. ca. 1922-1925. He also illustrated an ad for the jar from a ca. 1920s Schram canning booklet. He explained:

This jar has been incorrectly listed in the past as having been made by the Acme Glass Co., Olean, N.Y. Early in 1922, the Schram Glass Mfg. Co. sent a salesman, Thomas F. O’Hara, to the Acme plant to determine whether they had ever made any jars marked “ACME.” He reported that they had not, and on this basis, Schram’s patent attorney approved the use of the name for their new jar.

Creswick (1987b:1) illustrated the jars and agreed with Roller that Schram was the maker. She added that Trademark #163,166 for the shield design was “issued on Jan. 2, 1923” to the

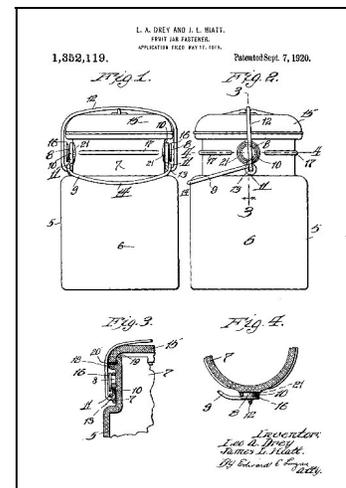


Figure 9 – Drey & Hiatt’s 1920 Patent

Schram Glass Mfg. Co., Hillsboro, Illinois, and St. Louis, Missouri. The jar, itself, received Patent No. 1,352,119 on September 7, 1920 (Figure 9), and Design Patent No. 57,772 on May 3, 1921, both assigned to Schram. She further noted that the Ball Brothers continued to make the jars when they took over Schram in 1925. Indeed, various newspapers carried ads for the jars (usually from wholesalers or retailers) from 1922 to 1941.

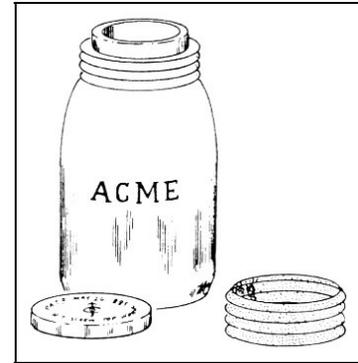


Figure 10 – ACME jar, late 19th century (Creswick 1987a:2)

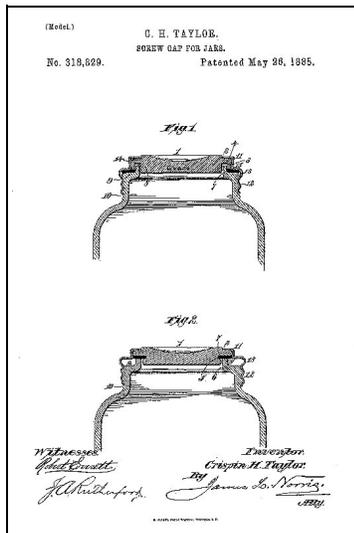


Figure 11 – Taylor’s 1885 Patent (No. 318,829)

Roller (1983:2-3) also noted

two other jars marked with the ACME logo. One was an aqua or yellowish green jar with a “straddle-lip top seal, glass lid and metal screw band” (Figure 10). Although the maker was not known to Roller, Crispin H. Taylor received Patent No. 318,829 (Figure 11) for the lid on May 26, 1885 (also illustrated by Creswick 1987a:2). The second jar, although colorless, had the same type of seal but was embossed on the side with “Acme Seal” in upwardly slanted cursive (Figure 12). Roller dated it ca. 1907-1914 and claimed the Manitoba Glass Mfg. Co., Beasejour, Manitoba, Canada, was the maker. Creswick (1987b:1) illustrated the jar but added no additional information.

The word “Acme” was also part of a complex logo that consisted of “ACME” / “LG” around the top point of a five-pointed star with “Co.” between the bottom two points / “TRADE MARK” / “1893.” According to Roller (1983:241), the jar was made by the Lamont Glass Co., Trenton and New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, Canada, ca. 1890-1898. A variation without the 1893 trademark date was probably used earlier. Creswick (1987b:2) illustrated the jar but did not add any additional information.



Figure 12 – Acme Seal jar, Canada (Creswick 1987b:2)

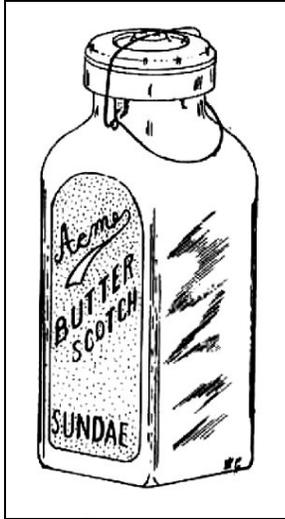


Figure 13 – Butterscotch Sundae jar (Creswick 1987b:1)

Creswick (1987b:1) added one more style of Acme mark, this time on a product jar embossed “Acme (upwardly slanted cursive with underlining tail) / BUTTER / SCOTCH (both upwardly slanted) / SUNDAE (horizontal)” (Figure 13). She made no guess as to the manufacturer, but the jar was listed in her second volume, devoted to jars made from ca. 1900 on. The still unknown maker of the jars made them for the Cedar Rapids Candy Co. of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, as advertised in at least the April-August 1913



Figure 14 – Butterscotch ad (N.A.R.D. 1913:617)

issues of the N.A.R.D. (e.g. N.A.R.D. 1913:617). Each jar held enough Original Butterscotch Dressing for 12 sundays, and the ads illustrated a square Acme-style jar with a paper label (Figure 14).

Acme (cursive)

The Bottle Research Group photographed the base of an oval prescription bottle embossed “Acme” in cursive (Figure 15). The bottle was mouth blown into a two-piece mold with a cup bottom, but we did not record any further information. Griffenhagen & Bogard (1999:100, 117) noted that a 1900 ad from Fox, Fultz & Webster listed an Acme Oval – which the authors ascribed to H.C. Fox & Co. A Fox, Fultz & Webster catalog (estimated by the Corning Glass Museum between 1883 and 1895) did *not* include the Acme Oval, but the H.C. Fox & Sons catalog (ca. 1904 or later) illustrated and listed the Acme Oval in nine sizes (Figure 16). The illustration is very similar to our photo of the base. This suggests that the Acme Oval was first offered between ca. 1896 and 1900.



Figure 15 – Acme script prescription bottle base

Miller & Pacey (1985:43) listed an Acme oval in seven sizes of “hand” molds in the 1926 mold inventory of the Hamilton plant of the Dominion Glass Co. Unfortunately, neither set of researchers illustrated a bottle or base, but it is possible that Dominion adopted the name and style after Fox disbanded. To further complicate matters, a bottle illustrated in the 1922 Acme Glass Co. ad (see Figure 3) appears to be approximately the same shape as the base shown in Figure 15.

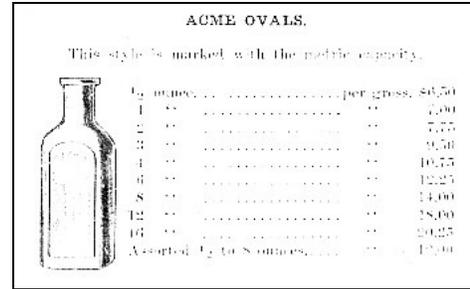


Figure 16 – Acme Oval in H.C. Fox & Co. catalog (ca. 1904)

Other Fox Company Marks

FF&W

Whitten (2012) recorded an FF&W mark on the “the base of a colorless druggist bottle from Greenville, NH, probably made circa 1885.” He attributed the logo to Fox, Fultz & Webster, Boston. The Fox Fultz & Webster catalog (ca. 1894 according to the Corning Museum of Glass) illustrated a Hub Prescription bottle embossed “FF&W” on the base (Figure 17). However, it should be noted that the same catalog also illustrated the “FF&W” initials on the shoulders and bodies of bottles where manufacturer’s or jobbers logos are virtually never known to appear.

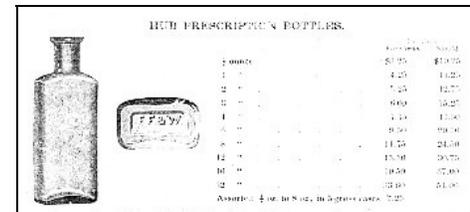


Figure 17 – FF&W logo on prescription bottle base (Fox, Fultz & Webster ca. 1894 catalog)

FOX, FULTZ & WEBSTER

A Worthpoint auction illustrated and described a vented nursing bottle embossed “CLEAN FONT VENTED NURSING BOTTLE FOX, FULTZ & WEBSTER NEW YORK & BOSTON PATENTED OCT. 25 1892” on the front face.

Otis K. Newell of Boston applied for a patent for a “Nursing-Bottle” on March 7, 1892, and received Patent No. 484,811 on October 25 of that year (Figure 18). His invention was

intended “to provide a nursing-bottle with an automatic vent which possesses all the advantages of the vented stopper without its attendant disadvantages” – which included leaking and having the stopper popping out at awkward moments.

The bottles may have been made at the H.C. Fox & Sons factory or may have been produced elsewhere. Although Fox, Fultz & Webster was apparently formed to sell H.C. Fox products, it grew to encompass many other levels of goods and probably glassware made by other firms – especially for items *not* produced by Fox. Newell did not assign the patent to H.C. Fox & Sons or any other firm, so we have no way to track the actual maker.

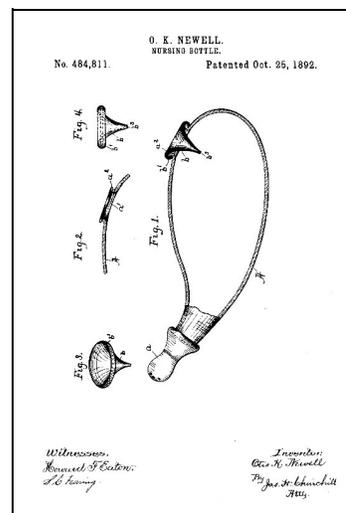


Figure 18 – Otis K. Newell 1892 patent

FOX, FULTZ & CO.

An eBay auction featured an apothecary vessel (apparently pewter) stamped with “FOX, FULTZ & CO.” in a circle on the bottom. The name was also painted on some equipment, such as suppository presses. We have not found the name on glass containers.

Discussion and Conclusions

As noted above, the word “acme” derived from ancient Greek and meant “pinnacle” or “highest level of achievement” – indicating high quality. Because of the quality connotation, the term was used by a number of glass manufacturers on various products, usually at the behest of glass house customer – often a firm with “Acme” in its name or as one of its major brands. Thus, the term did not – on its own – indicate the Acme Glass Co. However, it is likely that Acme Glass chose the name to connote quality products, although part of that choice may have been to achieve an enumeration near the top of glass factory lists in directories.

It appears that the Acme Glass Co. did not use any identifying mark on its containers. Although fruit jars, product jars, prescription bottles, and milk bottles were embossed with “Acme” in various formats, almost all of those have been traced to other companies. In addition, the Acme Glass Co. admitted in 1922 that it had not used the mark on fruit jars.

It is certain, however, that “ACME” was used by the Creamery Package Mfg. Co. on milk bottles during the early 20th century, and the mark was used on the sides of fruit jars by the Schram Glass Mfg. Co., the Lamont Glass Co., and possibly by the Manitoba Glass Mfg. Co.

The attribution of the cursive “Acme” on the bases of colorless prescription pharmacy bottles – while not absolute – is now fairly certain. Although the Acme Glass Co. illustrated a bottle that was similar in shape to the base with the cursive “Acme,” we have no evidence that the firm offered an “Acme” oval. Although the Dominion Glass Co. *did* manufacture an Acme Oval, the Dominion plants were very consistent in the use of the Diamond-D logo on the bases of its products. Since H.C. Fox & Sons made and advertised the Acme Oval through its own catalogs and its sales outlet – Fox, Fultz & Co. – the Fox factory is the most likely choice for the mark on prescription bottles.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Doug Leybourne for granting us permission to use drawings from the Alice Creswick books. These drawings are better representations in many cases than photos of the actual jars.

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