

Baker & Cutting and the Firms of Francis Cutting

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Although A.D. Baker, his partner, Francis P. Cutting, and the succeeding firms were primarily food packers, Baker & Cutting also formed the first California firm to attempt bottle making. Even though their efforts failed, their example spurred others on to eventual success. In addition, many of Cutting's later firms commissioned glass containers embossed with their names, initials, or logos.

Histories

A.D. Baker, San Francisco (1854-1857)

A.D. Baker & Co., San Francisco (1857-1858)

According to Bancroft (1890:85), Augustus D. Baker opened California's first plant to produce vinegar in 1854 – at 152 and 154 Battery St. Baker's initial advertisement, however, was on November 25, 1855, in the *Daily Alta California* (San Francisco), where he crowed: "Pickles! California Pickles!" Baker had 3,000 kegs of pickles, along with "100 bbls [barrels] champagne cider" and "500 bbls white wine and cider vinegar." By September 10, 1857, Baker offered champagne cider, wine vinegar, tomato catsup, and other condiments. The goods were packed in kegs, barrels, and cases (Friedrich 2011:11).

Baker had formed A.D. Baker & Co. by December 4, 1857, advertising the same foods, although some were now packed in pint, quart, and half-gallon glass jars. The business – now at "Sacramento street and Long Wharf, below Davis" – was very short lived because Baker found a partner (Friedrich 2011:11-12) – probably for an infusion of new money.

Baker & Cutting, San Francisco (1858-1859)

In 1858, Francis Page Cutting arrived in San Francisco and joined Baker. The firm was now known as Baker & Cutting. Along with the older product list, the new ads in late 1858

included onions, “sauerkraut,” New England cider, and English malt vinegar. The pair claimed they had the “largest manufactory on the Pacific Coast.” However, they were unsatisfied with bottles imported from the East and set about building a glass factory (Friedrich 2011:12-13).

San Francisco Glass Works (1859-1860)

Baker & Cutting had the glass plant built on Beale St. between Howard and Folsom. A reporter from the *Sacramento Bee* visited the works on July 9, 1859, and claimed the factory expected to be in operation “in a few weeks.” The firm advertised for glass blowers throughout the region, believing that enough glass blowers already lived in California – so they would not have to import workers from the East. Baker told the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* (July 13, 1859) that importing bottles from the East was costing nearly \$10,000 per year, so he had visited the eastern states to learn about glass making. The firm planned to use ingredients found in California. In addition to glass containers for their own business, Baker & Cutting planned to make other types of bottles and jars, beginning with an eight-pot furnace (Friedrich 2011:13-15).

Although the exact date when the factory commenced production has not been found, the *Daily Alta California* noted on July 16, 1859, that the plant expected to blow its first glass within a fortnight (two weeks). The blowers were certainly working in time for a major display at the Sixth Annual State Agricultural Society Fair in September of 1859 (Friedrich 2011:16). Baker & Cutting exhibited both glass products that the company made and some of the wares bottled by the firm, including pickles, catsup, and champagne cider. Baker & Cutting took first place for catsup, second for pickles, and a special category was created for the firm’s “glass bottles, first made in California” (State of California 1860:193). The *Transactions* of the exhibition further noted:

A special feature of this display are some gherkin bottles, blown in San Francisco, the first native glass manufacture that has yet appeared; they are very credible specimens, but susceptible to improvement in color and texture; a stand, filled from top to bottom with almost every conceivable variety of pickles and catsups also a very worthy show of native manufacture; several kinds of vinegar are exhibited, together with champagne cider, stencil ink, etc. etc. (State of California 1860:426).

Despite the manufacture of some pickle bottles, the plant shut down for repairs in October but resumed production in November.

Zumwalt (1980:105) quoted Hittell (1882) as stating that “a firm who were engaged in bottling and preserving” built a glass factory in San Francisco in 1858, but “the glass was so inferior a quality that it proved useless.” Hittell merely echoed the *Daily Alta California*. A reporter noted on November 2, 1859, that “although very passably shaped, the glass is rather hazy, and in places specked and blistered.” Baker explained that they were having trouble locating acceptable ingredients, notably sand – even though the firm had found experienced workers (Friedrich 2011:17).

By mid-December, the furnace was working four pots,¹ and the *Evening Bulletin* reported that the bottles were “thick green glass, perfectly clear, and, to all appearances, as good as any in the world.” In addition, the plant made glass tubes for the San Francisco Water Co. and insulators for the Pacific and Atlantic Telegraph Co. The firm made plans to increase production (Friedrich 2011:18-19).

On December 31, 1859, Augustus Baker left the partnership in the California Pickle Warehouse, selling his interest to Francis Cutting. However, on the same day, the pair formed a new partnership, again called Baker & Cutting, to operate the San Francisco Glass Works. In early January 1860, the firm claimed that it could produce 20,000 bottles in a year. Once again the pair dissolved the partnership, this time on February 29, 1860, with Baker retaining the interest in the San Francisco Glass Works (Friedrich 2011:20-21).

Baker advertised wine, soda, pickle, and most kinds of bottles, telegraph insulators, etc. When the fourth annual Mechanics’ Institute Fair opened in September 1860, the firm exhibited “soda, sarsaparilla, pickle, porter, wine, and sauce bottles.” These apparently still had some defects (Friedrich 2011:22-23).

Reports of the Fair, however, appear to have been the last mention of either Baker or this first plant. We have been unable to find any reference to Augustus D. Baker who probably

¹ For a discussion about furnaces, pots, and early glass making techniques, see McKearin and McKearin (1941:7-34). Also see Lindsey (2013b) for a glossary of glass terminology.

returned to the eastern states. An Augustus D. Baker died in either Illinois or New York in 1914, although records are unclear.

Containers and Marks

Only the initial glass house (San Francisco Glass Works, operated by Baker & Cutting) was specifically built to supply the Baker (later Cutting) pickle and packing operation. Although Cutting was one of the directors of the Pacific Glass Works, there appears to have been no other direct connection between packing and glass making. In all probability, the Cutting firms – like almost every bottler, regardless of product – purchased its glass from whomever offered the best deal at the time.

BAKER & CUTTING / GLASS & PICKLE MFRS. / SAN FRANCISCO

These were obviously the “gherkin bottles, blown in San Francisco, the first native glass manufacture that has yet appeared” noted in the 1859 exhibition report discussed above. The report also stated that the bottles were “susceptible to improvement in color and texture,” but it did not discuss the quality.



Figure 2 – Fragment embossed “SAN FRANCISCO” (Oldwestbottles.com 2011)

Both Zumwalt (1980:105) and Oldwestbottles.com (2011) noted that broken remnants of these bottles have been found (Figure 1).

Zumwalt added that

(at least in 1980) only a single unbroken bottle was

known. Oldwestbottles.com found fragments of the bottles in “amber, teal, aqua, and various shades of green” glass “with millions of seed bubbles.”



Figure 1 – Remnants of Baker & Cutting bottle (Oldwestbottles.com 2011)



Figure 3 – Fragment embossed “GLASS & P . . . / MFRS” (Oldwestbottles.com 2011)

The bottles were rectangular in cross section in a “cathedral” pickle bottle shape. Each side had a countersunk panel with a design at the upper (pointed) end. Three panels were embossed (respectively): “BAKER & CUTTING // GLASS &



Figure 4 – Base of Baker & Cutting bottle (Oldwestbottles.com 2011)

PICKLE / MFRS. // SAN FRANCISCO” (Figures 2 & 3) The base had a circular pontil scar and the neck was encircled by an embossed ring (Figure 4).

These bottles were embossed to identify the packing firm *and* the glass house. They may have been part of the initial manufacture in 1859, or they may represent the bottles made to display at the Mechanic’s Fair in 1860. No one has ever reported any other bottles that can be directly attributed to Baker & Cutting.

San Francisco Glass Works (1862)

On August 19, 1862, the *Daily Alta California* reported that “a glass factory has lately been established near the corner of Powell and Greenwich streets, chiefly for the purpose of making bottles for wines and pickles.” The plant was a “partnership, composed of Turner brothers, Kohler & Frohling: Mr. Cutting, Mr. Harcum, Foreman; Dr. Post, Superintendent.” Cutting, of course, was Francis P. Cutting, still trying to make pickle bottles (Friedrich 2011:23).

Friedrich (2011:23-25) only recorded six newspaper articles describing this short-lived firm. As with the Baker & Cutting glass house, the newspapers concentrated on the use of local/regional ingredients and a description of the plant, itself. It is highly likely that the equipment used in the factory was salvaged or purchased from the Baker operation that had apparently failed a year or more earlier.

Dr. G.W. Post was apparently the driving force behind this second factory. The location, however, was a poor choice. After just a week of production, local residents complained that flames from the furnace threatened their homes, and women bemoaned that their “rooms were filled with soda ash” as soon as they opened their doors. Undaunted, the group added other principals, incorporated, moved the factory to the Potrero, and changed the name to the Pacific Glass Works in October 1862 (Friedrich 2011:24-25). The new plant was eminently successful (see the section on Pacific Glass Works).

Cutting & Co., San Francisco (1860-1875)

Only a year after the partnership had formed – on December 31, 1859 – the partners dissolved the firm of Baker & Cutting. A.D. Baker sold his entire interest in the pickle and packing business to Francis Cutting. Cutting continued to use the partnership name until April 24, 1860, when he renamed the business Cutting & Co.² (Friedrich 2011:12). In 1865, the firm established salmon canneries on the Columbia River, and, in 1872, initiated Alaskan canneries at Sitka and Cook Inlet (DePuytd et al. 1997:153).

At least two containers exist to demonstrate that Cutting operated under this name. One was a wax-sealer fruit jar embossed “CUTTING AND CO.”; the other was a Worcestershire Sauce bottle embossed “CUTTING & CO.” vertically up the side. Jacobs (1914:31-32) repeatedly referred to the firm as “Cutting & Co.” in contexts between 1868 and 1872, and the 1872 San Francisco city directory listed Cutting & Co., “manufacturers pickles, preservers, etc.” The firm became the Cutting Packing Co. in 1875 (Ungar 2011:5).

Containers and Marks

Below, we discuss three marks used on containers, with an emphasis on three grooved-ring, wax-sealer fruit jars. Collectors have noted that all three of these jars – embossed “CUTTING & CO.,” “SAN FRANCISCO GLASS WORKS,” and “M. SELLER & CO.” – were made from the same molds. Although all three of these jars are rare, the one from Cutting & Co.

² The timing here is a bit confusing. Although the partnership dissolved in 1859, and the plant became known as the San Francisco Glass Works, Cutting appears to have continued to use “Baker & Cutting” for the food business until 1860.

is the earliest and rarest of all. Next in the production sequence was the San Francisco Glass Works jar – leaving no question as to the manufacturer – and this was the least rare of the three. The M. Seller jar was the last one made and is medium rare (yes, pun intended). See Lindsey (2013c) for more discussion – as well as below.

CUTTING & CO.

At least two different containers were embossed “CUTTING & CO.” One was an aqua peppersauce bottle embossed “WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE” around the shoulder and “CUTTING & CO.” vertically up the side. Zumwalt (1980:108) illustrated the bottle and noted that it was rare but added no other information. We have not found the bottle in other sources.

Creswick (1987:10) illustrated a grooved-ring wax-sealer fruit jar embossed “CUTTING.&.CO. (slight arch) / SAN FRANCISCO (horizontal)” on the side (Figure 5). She noted the Pacific Glass Works as the probable maker (1862-1876). McCann (2010:67) showed these jars as very rare and noted a connection with the San Francisco Glass Works.

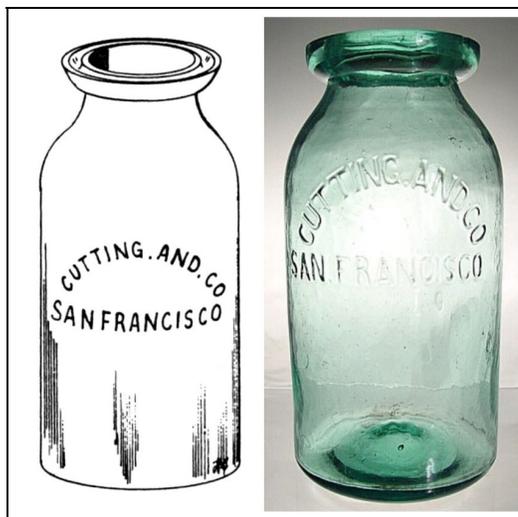


Figure 5 – CUTTING & CO. jar (American Bottle Auctions; Creswick 1987:10)

The same mold was apparently used for “CUTTING.&.CO.” jars, then was reworked into “SAN FRANCISCO GLASS WORKS” jars, and finally became jars embossed “M. SELLER & CO.” This implies that the jars were all made by the San Francisco Glass Works and its successor, the San Francisco and Pacific Glass Works (Roller 2010:155).

SAN FRANCISCO GLASS WORKS

Toulouse (1969:274; 2010:463) described this wax-sealer jar as embossed with “SAN FRANCISCO / GLASS WORKS” (both horizontal) on the side. He noted that these green and

dark green jars were made by the San Francisco Glass Works between ca. 1869 and 1876.³ Once the “CUTTING.&CO.” name had been removed from the front, of course, these jars could have been used by anyone.

Roller (1983:318) noted that the San Francisco Glass Works made these jars from ca. 1869-1876, and they were made “possibly by its successor, San Francisco & Pacific Glass Works.” To illustrate, Roller presented an ad for the jar embossed “SAN FRANCISCO (slight arch) / GLASS WORKS (slight inverted arch)” from the San Francisco & Pacific Glass Works in the 1879 San Francisco city directory. Roller further noted that “some of these jar (*sic*) have been reported with ghosted letters arched above SAN FRANCISCO.”

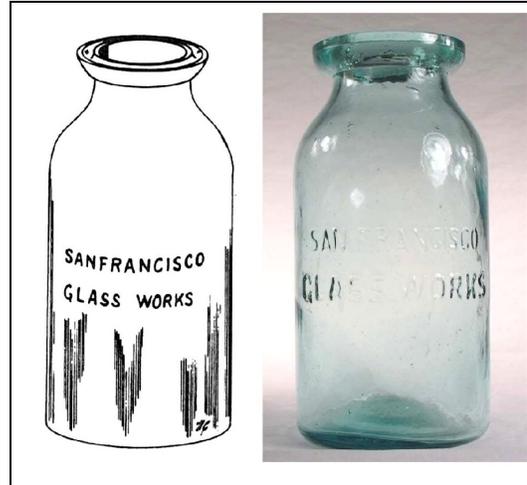


Figure 6 – SAN FRANCISCO GLASS WORKS jar (Bill Lindsey collection; Creswick 1987:189)

Creswick (1987:189) also noted two variations of this jar (Figure 6). She followed Roller in reporting the unknown ghosted letters in an arch above “SAN FRANCISCO” and attributed the jar to the San Francisco Glass Works from 1869 to 1876. She noted that the San Francisco & Pacific Glass Works was the likely maker of jar with no ghosting. Finally, she suggested a connection with the M. Seller & Co. jar. McCann (2010:170) rated the jars as rare and noted that they were “made in altered Cutting & Co. molds.”

M. SELLER & CO.

Toulouse (1969:283) listed this jar as a green wax sealer whose “pressed laid-on-ring is very smoothly made, indicating late manufacture.” The jar was embossed “M. SELLER & CO / PORTLAND, O.” horizontally on the side. He suggested ca. 1870-1900 as the manufacturing date range but included no speculation about a maker.

³ It is important to note that the San Francisco Glass Works referred to here is *not* the one that started and failed in 1862. This later plant grew out of the San Francisco Flint Glass Works. See the Section on the San Francisco Glass Works for histories of these later firms.

Roller (1983:326) described this jar as aqua in color and noted that “SAN FRANCISCO GLASS WORKS” was ghosted on the reverse, although some jars lacked the ghosting (see the glossary in Lindsey 2013b). According to Roller, M. Seller & Co. was a dealer in crockery and glassware at Portland from 1860 to 1930.

Creswick (1987:190) followed Roller in identifying two variations (with and without ghosting). However, she noted that the reverse had “ghosted arch and rectangle Words in arch believed to be Cutting & Co. . . . Words in rectangle were San Francisco Glass Works” (Figure 7). She suggested the San Francisco & Pacific Glass Works as the maker but noted that the Marion Fruit Jar & Bottle Co. made some jars for Seller. McCann (2010:174) showed these jars as being very rare. He added that the jar “was made from an altered mold that was first used to make the Cutting & Co. jar and then the San Francisco Glass Works jar.”

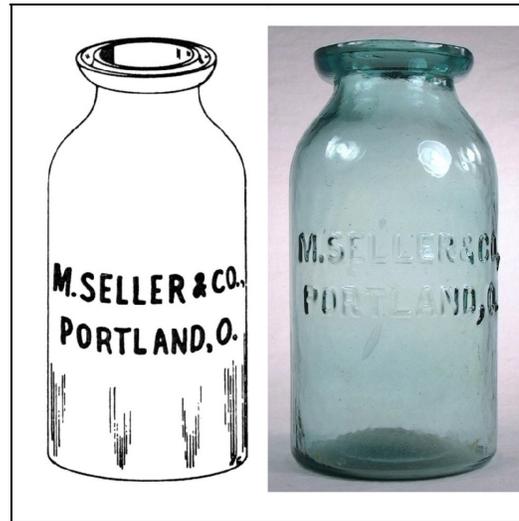


Figure 7 – M. SELLER & CO. jar (Bill Lindsey collection; ; Creswick 1987:189)

Since these jars are rare, they were almost certainly only made for a short period of time. They were likely manufactured between ca. 1875 and 1885, although not for that entire period. Also see Lindsey (2011) for a discussion of the progression of these jars.

The Frisco R

Collectors have for some time noticed a distinctive “R” that was apparently made by a single mold engraver at San Francisco (or nearby). Both the San Francisco and Seller variations of this jar are marked by the “Frisco R” (Figure 8). Lindsey (2011) discussed the embossing:



Figure 8 – Frisco R (Lindsey 2011:38)

The original mold engraver or “mold cutter” for the Cutting jar and the mold cutter for the later two jars appear to be two different people as the style of the

embossed lettering is distinctly different. In particular, the later mold cutter was the one who made a distinctive “R” with an outwardly curving angled leg. This “R” is a distinctive feature found on scores of different Western bottles that were almost certainly made at the San Francisco & Pacific Glass Works between about 1876 and the mid-1880s, and possibly the latter days [early to mid 1870s] of one or both of the precursor glass companies [Pacific Glass Works and/or San Francisco Glass Works].

Lindsey (2009:38) also discussed the “R” in other contexts. In addition, the Bottle Research Group has been informed that a similar “R” is found on some Eastern bottles made during roughly the same period. Could the engraver have begun his career in the East and migrated to the West Coast?

Cutting Packing Co., San Francisco (1875-1899)

As noted above, Cutting & Co. became the Cutting Packing Co. in 1875. Included in the firm’s trademark was “ESTABLISHED 1858” (Zumwalt 1980:106) – almost certainly referring to Baker & Cutting, the firm’s ancestral establishment. Francis Cutting was the president of the corporation from its beginning (Zumwalt 1980:105, 107). By 1880, the firm packed a large variety of foods that included salmon, vegetables, fruit, preserves, pickles, different types of meat, honey, and champagne cider. The company functioned successfully until 1899 (DePuytd et al. 1997:153; Zumwalt 1980:105, 107).



Figure 9 – Lids embossed CUTTING PACKING CO. (eBay & North American Glass)

Containers and Marks

CUTTING PACKING CO. (1875-1899)

Zumwalt (1980:106) illustrated round and square lids embossed with “CUTTING PACKING CO. / SAN FRANCISCO” around a griffin in the center, and several similar lids have

been offered on eBay (Figure 9 & 10). One jar was also embossed “CUTTING” and some other words below a griffin, but the other wording was illegible in the Zumwalt photo.

C.P.CO. (1875-1899)



Figure 11 – C.P.CO. and griffin on pickle jar (Utah Antique Bottle Cliche)

Zumwalt (1980:108) illustrated a square pickle bottle embossed “C.P.CO.” horizontally on one side directly below an embossed drawing of a griffin with “TRADE” to the left and “MARK” to the right. A similar bottle was offered at an online auction (Figures 11 & 12). Bottles with this logo could have been made anytime during the Cutting Packing Co. period.

Monogram

Zumwalt (1980:108) illustrated a square pickle jar with “monogrammed (*sic*) initials” on the side. Unfortunately, she did not identify whether the initials are C&Co or CPCo., and the photo was

unclear.

Griffin (1875-ca. 1916)

The two examples of containers embossed “CUTTING & CO.” do *not* include the griffin logo. The griffin logo, however, was a prominent addition to the containers embossed either “CUTTING PACKING CO.” or “C.P.CO.” (eBay; Zumwalt 1980:106, 107). The use of the griffin continued with the California Fruit Cannery Assoc., although it probably disappeared with the inception of the California Packing Corp. (see Figure 12). DePuydt et al. (1997:154) noted a jar lid that “apparently fits a half-pint sized, clear jar embossed: {Griffin} / CUTTING’S / JAMS & JELLIES.”



Figure 10 – Cutting & Packing Co. jar (North American Glass)



Figure 12 – Closeup of C.P.CO. and griffin (Utah Antique Bottle Cliche)

History San Jose (2010) illustrated a series of labels from the Cutting Packing Co., California Fruit Canners Assoc., and the California Packing Corp. In all cases, the first two labels included the griffin logo, while the later labels did not (Figure 13 & 14).



Figure 13 – Cutting Packing Co. label with griffin (History San Jose 2010)

California Fruit Canners Assoc., San Francisco (1899-1916)
California Packing Corp. (1916-?)

Headed by Cutting, eighteen California firms joined together in June 1899 to form the California Fruit Canners Assoc. (CFCA). Sydney Smith, president of the Cutting Packing Co., was one of the principal promoters. At some point, the new consolidation adopted the name Del Monte as its brand (Figures 15). The name was initially used in 1886 for a blend of coffee made for Monterrey’s Hotel Del Monte. By the time the association incorporated as the California Packing Corp. on November 9, 1916, the CFCA featured 50 Del Monte brands (Ungar 2011:14; Zumwalt 1980:107).



Figure 14 – Label from California Packing Corp. (History San Jose 2010)



Figure 15 – Del Monte label (History San Jose 2010)

Discussion and Conclusions

Thanks to two publications, Friedrich’s excellent book with archival newspaper information about the early San Francisco glass firms (2011) and Ungar’s biography of Francis

Cutting (2011), we have a good sense of the difficulties of the early California glass plants and the historical path that led Cutting to develop his canning enterprise.

Baker & Cutting almost certainly only made the pickle bottles embossed with the company name, but, while the glass house opened in 1859, the bottles were probably only made during 1860. While Baker apparently returned to the east after the partnership breakups in 1859 and 1860, Cutting remained involved in the glass business with subsequent San Francisco firms.

Cutting continued in the canning business and used a variety of embossed containers that identified his various concerns. In addition, Cutting and his successors maintained an interesting and unique series of paper labels. These firms provide a rich material culture connected with San Francisco. See Table 1 for a chronology of the Cutting containers.

Table 1 – Probable Chronology of Cutting Company Containers and Marks

Mark	Container Type	Company	Griffin	Dates
BAKER & CUTTING	Square Pickle Bottle	Baker & Cutting	no	ca. 1860
CUTTING & CO.	Worcestershire Sauce	Cutting & Co.	no	1860-1875
CUTTING & CO.	Wax-sealer fruit jar	Cutting & Co.	no	1860-1875
C.P.CO.	Square Pickle Bottle	Cutting Packing Co.	yes	1875-1899
CUTTING PACKING CO.	Square Pickle Bottle	Cutting Packing Co.	yes	1875-1899
Cutting Packing Co.	paper labels	Cutting Packing Co.	yes	1875-1899
California Fruit Canners Association	paper labels	California Fruit Canners Assoc.	yes	1899-1916
Cal. Packing Corp.	paper labels	Cal. Packing Corp.	no	1916-?

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