

Chicago Heights Bottle Co.

Bill Lockhart, Pete Schulz, Beau Schriever, Carol Serr, and Bill Lindsey
with contributions by Al Morin

The Chicago Heights Bottle Co. had an incredibly short but convoluted history, consisting of a single year of independence. The plant began as a location of the Sheldon-Foster Glass Co. Although the Chicago Heights Bottle Co. sent its milk bottle machinery to the Bell Bottle Co. at Fairmount, Indiana, in 1913, the factory continued to produce prescription bottles. The Thomson Bottle Co. may have briefly acquired the Chicago Heights plant just before Thompson, in turn, became part of the Illinois Glass Co. Despite the short history, the plant left its mark on the glass industry.

History

Chicago Heights Bottle Co., Chicago Heights, Illinois (1913)

The Sheldon-Foster Glass Co. opened a new plant in 1901 at Arnold and 12th Streets, Chicago Heights, Illinois. Like the Gas City factory, this one had a single furnace with 14 pots (see Sheldon-Foster section for more information). The plant made prescription and proprietary bottles as well as packers' ware and produced milk bottles from 1907 to 1910 (possibly as early as 1905) on four semiautomatic machines (Owens-Illinois n.d.; Toulouse 1971:266). The company separated from Sheldon-Foster in 1913. The 1911 Sanborn map showed a "continuous furnace" and a pot furnace (Figure 1). See the section on Sheldon-Foster for more information on that firm.

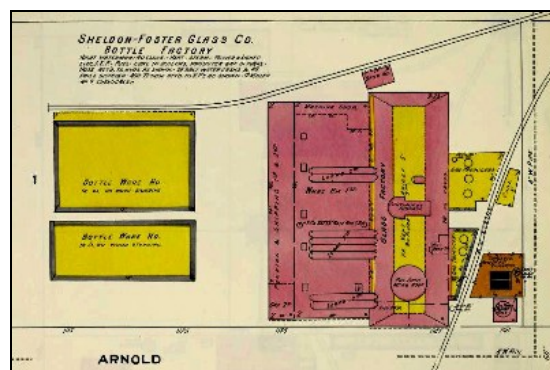


Figure 1 – Sheldon-Foster plant (Sanborn map, 1911)

Toulouse (1971: 74) noted that the name was changed to the Chicago Heights Bottle Co. on December 17, 1912 – although primary sources tell a different story. According to the *Chicago Heights Star* of December 27, 1912 – citing P.W. Schofield, manager of the Sheldon-

Foster Glass Co. branch at Chicago Heights – “A change of ownership of this company took place last September, and after the first of the year, the business will run under the name of The Chicago Heights Bottle company.” The name change was not quite as immanent as Schofield predicted, however. On April 1, 1913, the *Marion Chronicle Tribune* announced that the name change “was received Saturday afternoon” (i.e., March 29, 1913). However, the official list of Illinois Corporations (State of Illinois 1913) placed the date of incorporation under the Chicago Heights Bottle Co. name as April 17, 1913, with P.W. Schofield as president and C.M. Shofield as secretary. To clarify, the Schofield probably made the application on March 29, but the change was not officially recorded until April 17.



The firm also advertised milk bottles from at least April to June 1913 (*Milk Dealer* 1913a; 1913b; 1913c – Figure 3). Toulouse (1971:266) commented that Sheldon-Foster “transferred that business [i.e., milk bottles] to the Bell Bottle Corporation [Fairmount, Indiana] in 1912,” but that date is incorrect.¹ The machines and the mold shop were actually moved to Fairmount in September of 1913 (*Indianapolis Star* 1913; Kranz 1913:41). It is clear both from

advertising and a bottle with the C.H.B.Co. logo (see below) that the Chicago Heights plant continued to make milk bottles into 1913.

The next step was the sale of the Chicago Heights Bottle Co. One report (*Chicago Heights Star* 1951) claimed that the Thompson Bottle Co. acquired the operation. If so, this must have taken place after Chicago Heights stopped advertising in June 1913 and after the milk bottle transfer in the fall of 1913. Possibly, the milk bottle transfer was a result of the sale. Toulouse (1971:267) noted that the Illinois Glass Co. “absorbed the J.L. Thompson Glass Co.” (*sic*) in 1913.² This was probably just after the Thompson acquisition of Chicago Heights.



Figure 3 – Ad from Chicago Heights (*Milk Dealer* 1913:5)

A decade after the sale, the Illinois Glass Co. told a different story. On April 9, 1923, the Federal Trade Commission charged that the firm “had violated the laws against restraint of trade by buying capital stock of other companies” – including the Chicago Heights Glass Co. and the Thompson Bottle Co. In its July answer in the *Glass Industry* (1923:139), Illinois Glass said that it “acquired all outstanding shares of the capital stock of the Chicago Heights Bottle Company.” In addition, “for many years prior to 1913, and during the year 1913 and continuously thereafter, [Illinois Glass] purchased practically the entire out-put” of Chicago Heights “and sold and marketed the same in the name of [the Illinois Glass Co.]. In the same document, Illinois Glass admitted to the similar acquisition of the Thompson Glass Co., also in 1913, dissolved Thompson Glass “pursuant to the laws of Indiana” in 1914.

Regardless of the actual details, Illinois Glass certainly ended up with the Chicago Heights Bottle Co. during the year of 1913. Even though Chicago Heights retained its identity, it is clear that Illinois Glass marketed all bottles made at the factory after the brief period of Chicago Heights autonomy in 1913. The scarcity (actually rarity) of bottles marked in such a

² At this point, we have not found a historical source for the date of the sale. Moody (1924:916) listed Chicago Heights among the subsidiaries of Illinois Glass in 1924 but not the date of purchase. The Thompson company was historically listed at the J.L. Thompson Bottle & Glass Co. or Thompson Bottle Co. An Owens-Illinois report (n.d.) claimed that the first sale was to Thompson in 1912, then to the Illinois Glass Co.

way as to specifically identify a production at Chicago Heights makes it virtually certain that bottles after the autonomous period wore the Diamond-I logo of the Illinois Glass Co.

The final report (that we have found) of milk bottles in connection with the plant is from early 1914, when two local milkmen were arrested for buying milk bottles from boys who had stolen them from the factory (*Chicago Heights Star* 1/12/1914). This does not necessarily demonstrate that such bottles were still being made in 1914 – they could represent unsold stock – and the article did not mention *when* the boys actually stole the bottles.

Although it was clearly an Illinois Glass Co. subsidiary (e.g., see the Illinois Glass Co. 1920 catalog), Chicago Heights retained its individual identity after the Illinois Glass takeover. P.W. Schofield represented the Chicago Heights Bottle Co. at the annual meeting of the Glass Container Assoc. on July 29, 1921. The 1927 Year Book also listed Schofield as the president of the Chicago Heights Bottle Co., with J. M. Levis (the head of Illinois Glass Co.) as vice-president (*American Glass Review* 1928:129; *National Glass Budget* 1921:17).

The plant burned to the ground in 1925 and was rebuilt with a continuous tank. After that, the factory was devoted exclusively to prescription ware. In 1929, the company was “now a branch of the Owens-Illinois Glass Co.” as Plant No. 13. Soon after, the firm installed a second tank and added fully automatic bottle machines in 1934 (Gauding 1929; Owens-Illinois n.d.).

In 1939, Owens-Illinois sold the Chicago Heights plant to the Kimble Glass Co. Kimble installed an electric furnace in 1945, but Owens-Illinois purchased Kimble in 1949, re-acquiring the Chicago Heights factory as Plant No. 33.³ The factory began “producing ivory opal glass” in 1953, becoming a second supplier of Shulton’s Old Spice containers, but that was phased out in 1967 (Owens-Illinois n.d.). Owens-Illinois finally closed the plant in 1999.

³ Kimble Glass Co. was listed as a subsidiary of the Illinois Glass Co. in 1926; therefore, the plant should have *already* belonged to Owens-Illinois by the 1929 merger. We have been unable to resolve this conflict.

Containers and Marks

C.H.B.CO.

We have discovered a bowling-pin-shaped milk bottle, solarized to an amethyst hue, and machine made – with the reverse heel embossed “C.H.B.CO” (Figures 4 & 5). The initials only fit one company: the Chicago Heights



Figure 5 – Bowling pin milk bottle



Figure 4 – C.H.B.CO heelmark

Bottle Co. The ejection mark on the base was unusual. It was an “outie,” centered and extending slightly out from the base (Figure 6). It is probable that this particular base configuration was made by a specific type of machine. Unfortunately, we know little about the early milk bottle machines.

This mark was not recorded by either Toulouse (1971) or Giarde (1980), and it is no wonder. Bottles with the mark had to have been made for a very short period between March and September of 1913. The company was small, so these bottles must be rare, indeed. We have never found the mark on any other bottle type.



Figure 6 – Base configuration

Massachusetts “C” Seal

The Massachusetts “C” seal was only found on apple-shaped heavy cream jars, embossed on the front body with “½ PINT (horizontal) / DEER FOOT (slight arch) / HEAVY / CREAM / THIS JAR IS NOT SOLD / PLEASE RETURN (all horizontal).” The last line was at the heel. The reverse was embossed “MASS (arch) / C (horizontal) / SEAL (inverted arch)” with “REGISTERED” at the heel. The jars solarized to a light amethyst color (Figures 7 & 8).

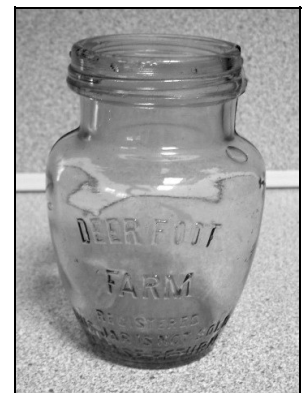


Figure 7 – Apple-shaped jar (eBay)

Schadlich (ca. 1990) stated, “there were manufacturers applying the MASS SEAL to their milk bottles or jars for which no record of approval has been found.” One example he gave was a “MASS C SEAL” on a half-pint cream jar used by a dairy in Southborough, Massachusetts. He assigned the mark to the Cohansey Glass Co. Morin (personal communication, 2/4/2008) added that

Deer Foot Farm purchased “SPECIAL COHANSEY Fruit Jars lettered/embossed Deer Foot Farm” that were used for milk & cream VERY EARLY like the 1880’s.....either Lou Schadlich attributed the later Mass C Seal jars because of this.....or he had other information that Deer Foot continued their relationship with COHANSEY in later years.

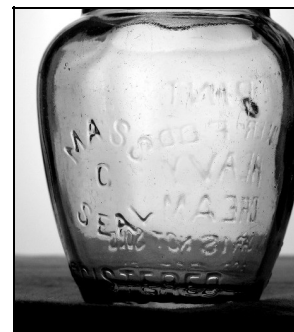


Figure 8 – Mass. C Seal

Giarde (1980:25) noted that the “COHANSEY GLASS MF’G Co” mark was used on milk bottles “to about 1900,” and there are several Cohansey jars marked with dairy names. The Giarde entry suggests that Cohansey may have ceased milk bottle production after the move to East Downington in 1900 (see the Cohansey section for more information). However, since Cohansey closed in 1911, it remains an unlikely, although still possible, choice.

The Mass C Seal jar was made by a press-and-blow machine and exhibited an unusual ejection (valve) scar on the base. Typically, these scars are either flush with the base or slightly sunken. The ejection scar on the Deer Foot jar with the Massachusetts “C” seal, however, protrudes slightly from the base. In our examination of literally hundreds (maybe even thousands) of milk bottles, the “outie” scar is very rare.

We have only found one bottle with a similar scar – the milk bottle discussed above – and it bears a manufacturer’s mark of “C.H.B.Co.” (Figures 9 & 10).



Figure 9 – Basal scars – C.H.B.CO (left); Mass C (right)

A comparison between the jar and the milk bottle reveals several similar characteristics. Both are a solarized amethyst in color, and both are made by press-and-blow machines. Each

has the “outie” ejection scar and a base that exhibits tiny, pinpoint holes as well as an “orange peel” texture from a rough, cast-iron baseplate. Each also has an unusual vertical side seam that either disappears or almost disappears as it reaches the heel of the container. The cup bottom base seam is virtually invisible on both jars and can only be seen upon very close inspection.



Figure 10 – “Outies” – C.H.B.CO (top); Mass C (bottom)

The finish of the jar is interesting in its own right. The vertical side seams terminated at the base of the finish at the parting line (a horizontal seam encircling the jar just below the finish). A second horizontal seam encircled a sealing ring just below the beginning of the continuous thread. There were no seams on the threaded segment of the finish or the rim. The seamless, continuous-thread finish was the invention of George W. Henning and Arthur W. Beeson, an adaptation to fit a press-and-blow machine that would make seamless, continuous-thread finishes. They applied for a patent on June 16, 1906, and received Patent No. 857,803 on June 25, 1907 (Figure 11). The patent document stated:

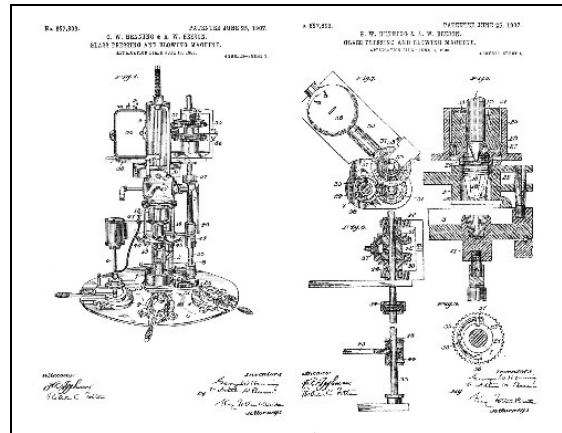


Figure 11 – Henning & Beeson 1907 patent

The object of the invention is to provide mechanism which may be readily adapted and attached to any form of molding and blowing machine, and which operates automatically and whereby a thread or threads without fin or seam may be formed on the article.

Their adaptation could work on any press-and-blow machine.

Although the finish description is not directly relevant to the discussion about the manufacturer of the jar, it places the production of the jar after 1906 (probably after 1907). Similar finishes have been discussed in detail (e.g., Bernas 2003:xix-xxviii; 2006:5-7). The similarities between the Deer Foot jar and the pint milk bottle with the C.H.B.Co.

manufacturer's mark are too close to have a spurious connection. Those similarities suggest that the Massachusetts "C" seal was used by the Chicago Heights Bottle Co.

As noted above, the C.H.B.Co. initials were those of the Chicago Heights Bottle Co., in business only during 1913. The similarities described above, coupled with the "C" in the Massachusetts seal, make it highly probable that the "C" seal was also used by the Chicago Heights Bottle Co. The short span of life for the company also explains why the only known use of the seal was on the Deer Foot heavy cream jars. The Lockport Glass Co. also made apple-shaped, Deer Foot jars, probably after Chicago Heights had become part of the Illinois Glass Co. and had transferred the milk bottle business to the Bell Bottle Corp.

The Cohansey identification also fails on another level. Photos of Cohansey jar bases (at least ones marked with the company name) all exhibited mouth-blown characteristics. Many of the jars had a "whittled" appearance, a characteristic generally found only on mouth-blown bottles, and many had uneven or rough finishes, especially at the rim. There was no sign of an ejection mark or any kind of machine scar on any bases observed by the Bottle Research Group. Most (possibly all) bases were cup bottom with a circular, sunken plate embossed with the Cohansey name. We have not found any Cohansey jars with normal valve scars – much less an "outie."

Morin (personal communication, 2/3/2008) cautioned that shipping costs could have played a part in ordering, and Chicago was quite distant from Massachusetts. This critique is quite valid. Chicago Heights was considerably more distant from Massachusetts than any other company known to use a Massachusetts Seal. The most distant *regular* supplier was the Travis Glass Co.. With its main factory at Clarksburg, West Virginia, the plant was ca. 530 miles from Boston. The Butler Glass Co., Bulter, Ohio (not Pennsylvania, as Schadlich 1984 contended) was ca. 600 miles from the city, and both the Standard Milk Bottle Mfg. Co. and Universal Glass Products were located at Parkersburg, West Virginia, ca. 630 miles away. The distance from Boston to Chicago, however, was ca. 850 miles, a good 220 miles farther than the most distant West Virginia factories.

Typical Massachusetts suppliers were located in Pennsylvania or New York, much closer venues for shipping. It is worth noting that, of the distant plants, only the Travis Glass Co. (the

closest of the “distant” factories) was a regular supplier of Massachusetts milk bottles. Bottles from Butler (B seal) and Standard (P seal) are classified by most collectors as scarce, while those from a firm with a longer life – Universal Glass Products (UGP seal), open from 1921 to 1979 – are fairly common. We can thus hypothesize that Massachusetts dairies generally only bought from distant sources when there was a bottle shortage, sale, or some other special reason for an occasional or one-time purchase. Massachusetts C-Seal jars only appear to have been used by a single dairy, and they may have been a one-time purchase.

LYRIC

As noted above, Charles M. Schofield applied for a patent for a “bottle” on June 22, 1912, and received Design Patent No. 43,782 on April 1, 1913 (Figure 12). Schofield assigned the patent to the



Figure 13 – Lyric bottle (eBay)

Sheldon-Foster Glass Co. The bottle was very distinctive in design, with a unique reinforced finish that was retained by the Illinois Glass Co. and into the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. period (Figure 13). It remained popular until continuous-thread finishes replaced the corks entirely.

The shoulder design was likewise unique. The number of ounces of liquid held by the bottle was embossed in a circle on the shoulder, with embellishments extending to both right and left (Figure 14). The face of the bottle had graduations one both sides – ounces to the left and cubic centimeters to the right. The base of the bottle was embossed “SANITIZED” (with the “S” and “D” enclosed in shield motifs, while the T was enlarged and ornate) / LYRIC (Figure 15).⁴

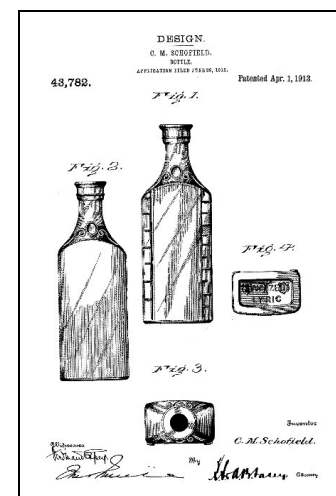


Figure 12 – Shofield's 1913 Lyric patent



Figure 14 – Lyric shoulder

⁴ Griffenhagen & Bogard (1999:46) only noted the Illinois Glass Co. as making the Lyric bottle by 1928. They missed Chicago Heights and the earlier Lyric manufacture by the Illinois Glass Co.

It may seem odd that a bottle design that was assigned to Sheldon-Foster was advertised by Chicago Heights. The explanation can be found by a close look into the patent document and the company history. Schofield applied for the patent on June 22, 1912, and assigned it to the Sheldon-Foster Glass Co., Chicago Heights, Illinois (*not* Sheldon-Foster's main factory at Gas City, Indiana). By the time the patent was actually issued on April 1, 1913, the factory belonged to the Chicago Heights Bottle Co. Whether the patent was part of the sales agreement (which is the logical answer) or if the Schofields purchased it separately, there is no question that the patent was reassigned to the Chicago Heights Glass Co.



Figure 15 – Chicago Heights Lyric base

There are two characteristics about the Chicago Heights Lyric bottles that differ from those made by the Illinois Glass Co. First, Chicago Heights included the word “SANITIZED” exactly as it appeared on the patent document. The word was missing from the Illinois Glass Co. containers (Figure 16). Second, all the Lyric bottles we have examined from Illinois Glass were made on Owens Automatic Bottle Machines and had the distinctive Owens basal scars. Those from Chicago Heights were mouth blown – no Owens scars. The Illinois Glass Co. made the Lyric bottles from ca. 1914 until the merger that created the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. in late 1929. Owens-Illinois offered the same bottle – now labeled the “Illinois” brand – for several years.

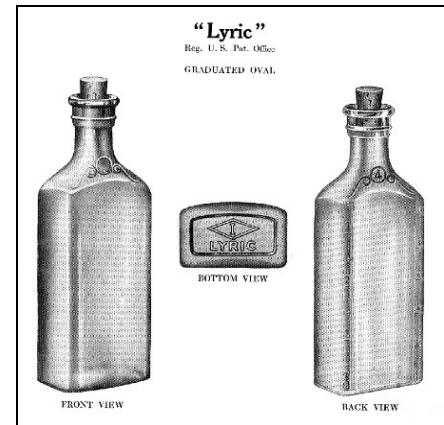


Figure 16 – Lyric – Illinois Glass Co. 1920 catalog

SIGNET

Peterson (1968:40) noted that “SIGNET” was a trade mark “blown in the bottom” of glassware by the Chicago Heights Bottle Co., registered in 1913. However, the actual trademark document showed that Charles N. Schofield, secretary of the Chicago Heights Bottle Co. applied for the SIGNET mark on February 7, 1914 (a year later than noted by Peterson) and received Trademark No. 97,822 on August 23 of 1914. The company claimed the Signet mark had been

“used continuously in the business of said corporation since December 11, 1913.” The mark was “applied to the bottles by being blown in the bottoms of the same.”

By this time, Illinois Glass owned Chicago Heights, although it still operated under its own name and obviously made the earliest examples. These were certainly mouth blown (Figure 17) with the word “SIGNET” on

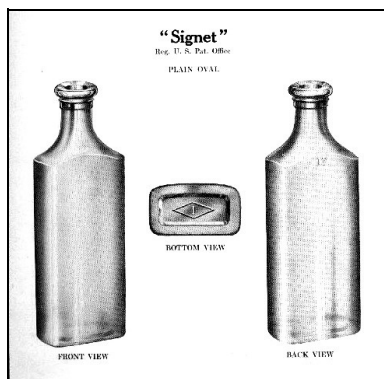


Figure 19 – Signet – Illinois Glass Co. 1920 catalog

the base (Figure 18). As with the Lyric bottles, the Illinois Glass Co. picked up the brand under its own name by 1920 (Figure 19), but the Chicago Heights plant may have made all of these. Although we have not spent as much time examining these bottles, all we have currently found were mouth blown. The Chicago Heights plant was still making mouth-blown perfume bottles in the 1920s (Canaday Library 2012).

However, the Illinois Glass Co. was marking Signet bottles with the Diamond-I logo by at least 1920 as shown in the catalog for that year.

Schofield’s 1908 Patent

As noted in the history section, Perlee W. Schofield applied for a patent for a “Bottle” on June 17, 1908, and received Design Patent No. 39,479 on September 1 of the same year (Figure 20). He assigned the bottle to the Standard Glass Co., presumably the firm that he worked for at that time. This became the model for the Blue Ribbon prescription bottle – Standard’s top seller. See the section on the Standard Glass Co. for more information.



Figure 17 – Signet bottle (eBay)



Figure 18 – Signet base (eBay)

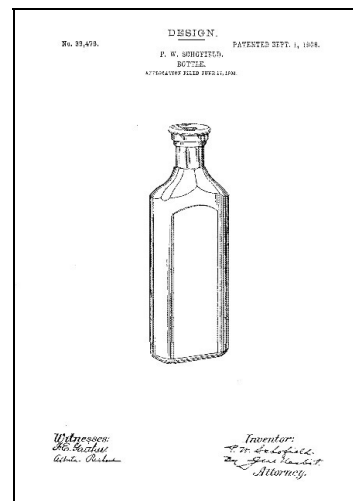


Figure 20 – Schofield 1908 patent

Discussion and Conclusions

Even though the Chicago Heights Bottle Co. had a very brief existence, it is clear that its marks hold a value for researchers. Although the C.H.B.Co. mark is rare, the Massachusetts “C” seal is well known and has been mis-attributed to the Cohansey Glass Co. This research pinpoints the dates of the seal and increases our knowledge about a little-known company and its marks. In addition, the information on the Lyric and Signet bottles should also prove useful. In the case of the Lyric brand, mouth-blown bottles may be attributed to Chicago Heights, where machine-made examples were certainly made by the Illinois Glass Co., and the earliest bottles retained the more elaborate “SANITIZED” above “LYRIC.”

Sources

American Glass Review

1927 Glass Factory Year Book and Directory. *American Glass Review*, Pittsburgh.

Bernas, Barry

2003 *The Anchor Glass Company: A Southwestern Pennsylvania Corporation*. Privately published, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

2006 “Jars of the ANCHOR MASON'S PATENT Series - The Guide to Collecting Fruit Jars.” In *Fruit Jar Annual*, by Jerome J. McCann, pp. 9-16.

Canaday Library

2012 “Owens Joins with Illinois.” Canaday Library.

<http://www.utoledo.edu/library/canaday/exhibits/oi/OIExhibit/OwensIllinois.htm>

Chicago Heights Star

1912 “Factory in New Hands.” *Chicago Heights Star*, October 11, 1912:1.

1914 “Milkmen Bound Over.” *Chicago Heights Star*, January 22, 1914:1.

1951 "C.H. Glass Co. Plant founded 50 Years Ago." *Chicago Heights Star*, July 13, 1951:IV-4.

Gauding, Henry W.

1929 "Glass Trade Pep and Ginger." *American Glass Review* 49(4):17-18.

Giarde, Jeffery L.

1980 *Glass Milk Bottles: Their Makers and Marks*. Time Travelers Press, Bryn Mawr, California.

Glass Industry

1923 "Illinois Glass Company Answers Complaint." *Glass Industry* 4(7):139 [July].

Indianapolis Star

1913 "Union Cards Distributed to Glass Bottle Blowers." *Indianapolis Star*, September 12, 1913:4.

Kranz, Theo

1913 "Chicago Heights, Ill." *American Flint*. September:41.

Milk Dealer

1913a Advertisement: "Milk Bottles of Quality." *Milk Dealer* 2(7):5.

1913b Advertisement: "Bottle Breakage a Burden." *Milk Dealer* 2(8):15.

1913c Advertisement: "Offer a Well Dressed Service." *Milk Dealer* 2(9):24.

Moody, John

1924 *Moody's Analyses of Investments and Security Rating Books: Industrial Securities*. Moody's Investor Service, New York.

National Glass Budget

1921 "Register of Container Meeting" *National Glass Budget* 37(14):17.

Owens-Illinois Glass Co.

n.d. "Owens-Illinois Chicago Heights Plant." Unpublished, anonymous single-page report from Owens-Illinois records.

Peterson, Arthur G.

1968 *400 Trademarks on Glass*. Washington College Press, Takoma, Maryland.

Schadlich, Louis

ca. 1990 "Recap of the Massachusetts Manufacturer's Seal Marks." Unpublished manuscript.

State of Illinois

1913 *Certified List of Illinois Corporations and Supplemental List of Foreign Corporations*. Illinois Printing Co., Danville, Illinois.

Toulouse, Julian Harrison

1971 *Bottle Makers and Their Marks*. Thomas Nelson, New York.

Waterloo Courier

1914 Advertisement: "Lyric Ovals." *Waterloo Evening Courier*, December 21, 1914.

First published 6/11/2014; last updated 10/28/2024