

Climax and Empire: The Trademarks of Charles T. Nightingale

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Charles T. Nightingale gained patents for a Lightning-style “tin-top” milk bottle seal and two milk bottle designs during the 1889-1901 period and originally formed the Climax Bottle & Stopper Co. to produce the closures and sell milk bottles made by glass houses. When Nightingale declared bankruptcy in 1899, the J.T.&A. Hamilton glass factory purchased Nightingale’s share of corporate stock and began production of the bottles at the glass house owned by his brother and him – renaming the firm the Climax Bottle & Mfg. Co. When Albert Hamilton was murdered in 1902, the business dissolved.

Meanwhile, Nightingale reentered the glass jobbing business in 1901, incorporating the Empire Bottle & Supply Co., based on his two bottle design patents. Empire sold three major bottle styles – EMPIRE, ESSX, and KEYSTONE. The Essx style was made by the Essex Glass Co., and the other two probably were produced by the Poughkeepsie Glass Works. When the Poughkeepsie plant fell into financial turmoil, Nightingale formed the Empire Milk Bottle Co. to operate the Poughkeepsie factory and replace the Empire Bottle & Supply Co. as the selling agent. It was a mistake; both Empire and Poughkeepsie closed permanently before the plant could reopen.

Climax Bottle & Stopper Co., New York City (1889-1899)

The *Brooklyn Citizen* for May 24, 1889, reported that “Alexander Bogey, of Brooklyn, is one of the trustees of the Climax Bottle & Stopper Company of New York, incorporated at Albany yesterday with a capital of \$5,000.” Although this clearly predated the claim by Dairy Antique (2014) that Climax incorporated in May of 1890, it brings up an important question: Why would Climax have a trustee? The report of Nightingale’s bankruptcy (see below) noted that Nightingale had “a life income of a trust fund of \$10,000 in Poughkeepsie under the will of John A. Nightingale” (*New York Times* 3/29/1899). So, it seems likely that Nightingale’s trust fund financed the firm.

Nightingale was president of the corporation, with L.H. Wilson as secretary and treasurer. The company retained sole rights to manufacture bottles using the Nightingale patents. Although the firm probably made tin stoppers, it did not produce its own bottles, although the Binghamton Glass Works may have made some of them (Dairy Antique 2014; Hitt 2011:65-66). Because of Nightingale's connection with Poughkeepsie and later events, the Poughkeepsie Glass Works also may have been a supplier. A postcard from 1897 showed the firm's products (Figure 1).

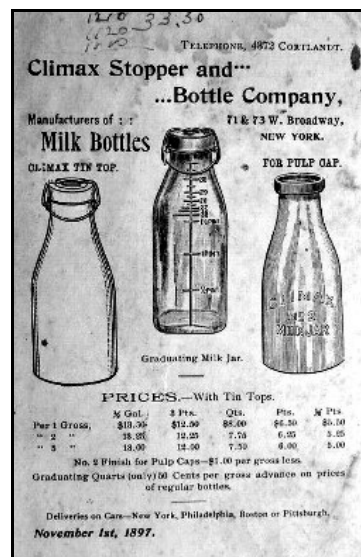


Figure 1 – 1897 postcard (eBay)

The *New York Times* reported on March 29, 1899, that Nightingale had “filed a petition in bankruptcy, with liabilities of \$6,517 and nominal assets of \$140 in stock of the Climax Sopper & Bottle Company. He has a life income of a trust fund of \$10,000 Poughkeepsie under the will of John A. Nightingale.” Von Mechow (2024) cited Jordan (1914) that Albert Hamilton of the J.T & A. Hamilton Co. acquired Nightingale's interest and created a new firm with himself as secretary. Although Jordan did not name the new firm or give a date, the Climax Bottle & Stopper Co. almost certainly closed before the end of 1899.

Climax Stopper Co., Plainfield, New Jersey (1893-1898)

Nightingale needed a place to make closures for his jobber company to sell along with milk bottles. By January 19, 1893, the Climax Bottle & Stopper Co. advertised for a location for “light manufacturing, either with or without power, thirty-six hundred square feet of floor space” – almost certainly for the stopper factory. The plant was definitely in production prior to November 10 of that year, when the *Courier-Times* crowed that the “Climax Bottle Stopper factory *resumed* work again yesterday” (our emphasis). Since Bridgewater is only about ten miles west of Plainfield, the newspaper likely was reporting about the plant's location in the smaller town (see next paragraph).

The Climax Stopper Co. was shown on the 1897 Sanborn map at the intersection of Washington St. and E. 4th St., Plainfield, New Jersey, backing up to the Central Railroad of New Jersey (Figure 2).

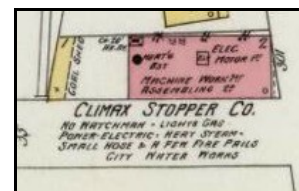


Figure 2 – Climax Stopper Co. (Sanborn map 1897)

According to the *Bridgewater Courier-News* for June 8, 1898, the Climax plant caught fire that morning at 9:30, destroying the upper story and causing water damage to the ground floor. Three women were melting paraffin on gas stoves “for use on paper pulp stoppers for milk bottles” when “a breeze through the window blew the flame into the hot paraffine [*sic*], which blazed up catching the wooden partition. Although firemen quickly responded, the fire spread to the adjoining house before it was extinguished. Charles T. Nightingale arrived about noon to survey the damage. This fire may have contributed to Nightingale’s bankruptcy the following year (see above).

Containers and Marks

Climax only used a single mark that we have been able to find – although it was embossed on both round and square milk bottles.

CLIMAX (1889-1899)

Giarde (1980:23) mentioned that “CLIMAX” was found on some “earlier” milk bottles (Figure 3). He admitted, however, that “the mystery of who might have made the ‘CLIMAX’ milk bottle remains a question for final resolution” – although we now know the Climax Bottle &

Stopper Co. used the mark. The logo was embossed on milk bottle bases in at least two formats – horizontally across the center of the base (Figure 4) or in an arch at the top of the base (Figure 5). In both cases, the word was generally above a two- or three-digit number.



Figure 5 – Climax base – arch (eBay)



Figure 3 – Climax milk bottle (eBay)



Figure 4 – Climax base – horizontal (eBay)

“CLIMAX” is found on both round and square milk bottles. The Dairy Antique Site (2014) described the square ones as being:

advertised as Climax Square Jars around the turn of the century. In fact most of the ones we have seen are embossed CLIMAX on the base. . . . They were advertised in half pint, pint and quart sizes. The prices were \$5.50, \$6.25 and \$8.00 per gross for the three sizes with the tin tops adding an additional dollar per

gross. All the ones we have seen do not have a cap seat and would have taken a tin, bail top [Figure 6]. They used a tombstone shaped slug plate if there was embossing on the front of the bottle. These were hand blown bottles and generally the glass had many imperfections. These milk bottles were not popular with dairies at that time.



Figure 6 – Climax finish (eBay)

Charles T. Nightingale was responsible for two patents that culminated in the use of the “CLIMAX” logo. On March 9, 1889, Nightingale filed for a patent for a “Stopper and Fastener for Bottles and Jars.” He received Patent No. 403,954 on May 28 of the same year. His invention used a wire device to hold down a “tin” cap (Figure 7). The Climax 1890 catalog illustrated the closure, calling it the “Snap Stopper” (Figure 8)

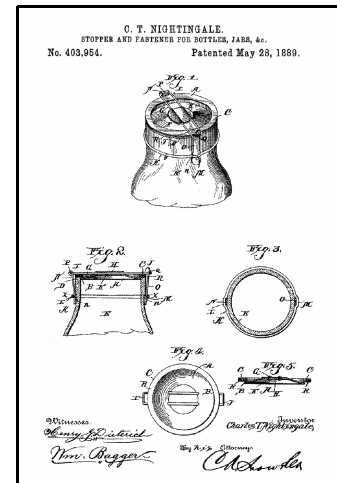


Figure 7 – Nightingale's 1889 patent

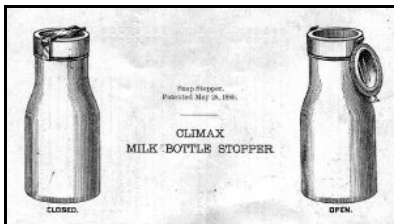


Figure 8 – Snap Stopper (eBay)

Nightingale next invented the first milk bottle that was square in cross-section. He applied for a patent on August 3, 1896, and received Design Patent No. 29,673 on November 15, 1898, for a

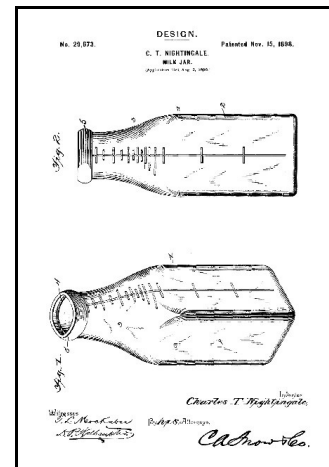


Figure 9 – Nightingale's 1898 patent

“Design for a Milk-Jar” (Figure 9). Note that Nightingale’s patent remained in limbo for over two years and three months, although he began selling the square bottles prior to receiving the patent. The only example we have found was embossed on the back with the graduations shown on the patent document, but the base was embossed “CLIMAX GRADUATING / JAR PAT APL'D FOR” horizontally in two lines (Figures 10 & 11). Note that milk bottles were referred to as jars during the first decades of use. After the long wait, the bottle was never popular.



Figure 10 – Square milk jar (eBay)

Even though the “CLIMAX” mark appeared on square milk bottles, the term probably referred to the fastener. All of the Climax bottles we have seen were mouth blown, and all used Nightingale’s tin-top closure. Nightingale used the “CLIMAX” logo on milk bottles from the inception of the Climax Bottle & Supply Co. in 1890 until its demise in 1899, and the logo transferred to the Climax Bottle & Mfg. Co. when J.T. and Albert Hamilton acquired Nightingale’s share of the operation. Oddly, Nightingale never seems to have received a trademark of “CLIMAX.” Although he may have applied for one, we have not discovered any evidence of it.

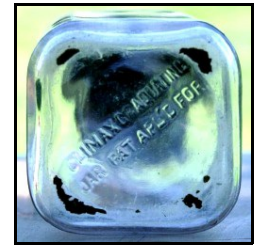


Figure 11 – Square base (eBay)

Climax Bottle & Mfg. Co., New York City (ca. 1899-1902)

J.T.&A. Hamilton (a Pennsylvania glass house) purchased C.T. Nightingale’s share of the Climax Bottle & Stopper Co. ca. 1899, Albert Hamilton becoming the secretary and treasurer (Dairy Antiques 2016; von Mechow 2016). City directories listed no Climax in 1899 and the Climax Bottle & Mfg. Co. from 1900 (at 57 Park Pl.) to 1902 (37 Murray Ave. by 1901). An ad in the Trow Directory (1900) listed the officers as William H. Moon, president and George H. Baker, secretary, along with Moon, C.M. Mutchler and George W. Rinker as directors. The firm capitalized with \$15,000. The 1901 and 1902 directories listed “Hamilton, J.T.&A. . . . (represented by Climax Bottle & Mfg. Co.).”

Albert Hamilton (by that time president of J.T.&A. Hamilton Co. and the Climax Bottle & Mfg. Co.) accused William C. Turner, former president of Climax, of embezzling \$5,100. Obviously taking offense, Turner murdered Hamilton and William J. Mallard, Jr. (secretary of Climax) on October 17, 1902, with a pair of Colt semiautomatic pistols. Turner then ended his own life with a bullet through his head. Turner also fired at three other men whom were in the room, missing them but sending them running frantically for help. Although Turner had agreed to pay \$2,700 of the embezzled money, he had suffered serious financial reverses, and the check found in his pocket was worthless (*American Druggist and Pharmaceutical Record* 902:285; Dairy Antique 2016; Hawkins 2009:244; *Pinegrove Herald* 10/17/1902).

The *Mount Vernon Argus* (White Plains, New York) told a different story (mostly relayed to the *Argus* by Turner’s sister), also on October 17. In this version, Hamilton had purchased

Turner's share of the business but still owed Turner money. Meanwhile, Mallard had been blackmailing Turner for more money, and Turner had complained that the firm owed him \$10,000. There was even a claim that Hamilton had approached Turner, asking him to repurchase his interest. On the night before the shooting, Turner had told his family that he was going to New York to "settle the matter one way or another." Regardless of which side was correct (if either), the Climax Bottle & Mfg. Co. was finished.

Containers and Marks

J.T.&A. Hamilton almost certainly made Climax bottles during the period when Albert Hamilton controlled the firm. One eBay seller offered an amber milk bottle embossed on the base with the Triangle-H mark as well as CLIMAX 225 – but he included no base photo, only the description. We have been unable to find another example. The Hamilton firm used the triangle logo from 1900 to 1943 (well after Nightingale ceased operations) and the "J.T.&A.H." mark from ca. 1884 to ca. 1920. Although our original publication stated that the "J.T.&A.H." initials were often accompanied by the word "CLIMAX," we have been unable to find a single example in 2024. Considering that the Hamilton period lasted less than three years, it is surprising that any representative bottle has survived at all.

Empire Bottle & Supply Co., New York City (1901-1914)

The *New York Times* for January 26, 1901, listed the Empire Bottle & Supply Co. as one of the New Corporations for that date. The firm was capitalized at \$10,000, with John H. Delaney, John W. Kirchner, and Joanna J. Delaney as directors. The New York directory for that year added that Kirchner was president, and Joanna Delaney was secretary. The company location was 70 Warren St. in New York City. In 1902, Delaney was called Josephine, but the other information was the same. Meanwhile, Nightingale was in business at Chicago listed in the directory as "bottles." Although we have not found a 1903 directory, Nightingale advertised "This is 'It' – The Empire," calling his invention the "only sanitary bottle" in the June 1, 1903, issue of the *Elgin Dairy Report*. He gave two addresses to "write for information": 17 La Salle St., Chicago – where he was living at the time – and 39 Murray St., New York. The ad did not mention the Empire Bottle & Supply Co.

By 1904, Charles T. Nightingale was the president the Empire Bottle & Supply Co., with Joanna J. Delaney as secretary and treasurer and Robert L. Kane as the final director – still with a capital of \$10,000 – and the firm had moved to 39 Murray St. Two years later, the officers remained the same, but the firm had raised the capital to \$15,000, and Henry Allen had replaced Kane. Obviously, the business was formed to sell milk bottles made to Nightingale’s 1901 patent design. But, the ad and the 1904 directory bring up as many questions as they answer. If the Delaneys and Kirchner incorporated in 1901 to sell Nightingale’s 1901 patented milk bottle, why was Nightingale still in Chicago? The ad makes it seem that he was *not* yet involved with the Empire Bottle & Supply Co. in June of 1903, but why was he advertising “The Empire” if he was not connected with the firm? If he were connected, why not use the firm name? If he then bought the other shares, why was Joanna Delaney still the secretary? In any event, Nightingale took control of the company in late 1903 or early 1904.

A 1909 ad showed a nice Empire logo (Figure 12) and listed the officers of the corporation as C.T. Nightingale, president and treasurer, G.A. Gutzler, vice president, C.T. Nightingale, Jr., secretary, W.W. Wallace, assistant treasurer, and I.F. Hobby, assistant secretary. By this time, the firm had moved to 43 W. Broadway. The ad claimed that Nightingale had “made the study of a sanitary milk bottle his sole aim for the last twenty-four years [i.e., 1885], being the inventor of all the leading styles now on the market” and that the firm “began to experiment on making the milk bottles by machinery, which was not fully developed until 1901” when “the Climax Bottle & Stopper Co. became “the first company to make a machine-made bottle.” The machinery claims are difficult to believe, since Climax was a jobber rather than a manufacturer – especially since the Climax bottles we have examined were mouth blown.



Figure 12 – Logo from 1909 ad (New York Commercial 1909)

George A. Gutzler, listed as vice president in the 1909 ad, began his glass career as an office boy for Empire about 1903, rising to traveling salesman according to his obituary in the *Brooklyn Daily Times* for July 1, 1918. The obituary claimed that “about five years ago [i.e., 1913], when the company was reorganized he was made the head of the concern which makes milk bottles.” Another obituary, in the July 1918 *Creamery & Milk Plant Monthly*, added that the glass firm was the Essex Glass Co. Essex had been an Empire supplier since 1908.

Nightingale remained president in 1911, with his son, Charles, Jr., as the secretary, but Gutzler was only listed as a director of the firm (Audit Company 1911:245, 441). The *Era Druggists Directory* for 1913 still listed Empire (D.O. Haynes & Co. 1913:295).

Although Musso (2018) stated that the Poughkeepsie Glass Co. obtained a contract with the Empire Bottle & Supply Co. to produce milk bottles in 1913, Nightingale testified that Empire sold bottles made at Poughkeepsie for about three years – i.e., since 1911 (Supreme Court 1914:26). That year (1913), the factory used three continuous tanks with 28 rings to make a “general line” of bottles by both semiautomatic machine and hand production (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:953). The court records claimed that the Empire Milk Bottle Co., Inc., were “successors to Empire Bottle & Supply Co.” in June of 1913. However, Nightingale’s testimony makes it clear that the Empire Bottle & Supply Co. continued into 1914 but was almost certainly disbanded early in the year. Despite the court record, the June 15, 1915, *New York Times* listed judgements filed the previous day, and the Essex Glass Co. received \$6,129.05 from the Empire Bottle & Supply Co.

Containers and Marks

Probably, Nightingale formed the Empire Bottle & Supply Co. as a venue to sell the “bowling pin” style milk bottle he designed and patented in 1901. A postcard dated September 14, 1906, showed an illustration of four milk bottles (Figure 13). The bottle to the left had an illegible name on the front (Sanitary?) with “S” on the neck. The second had “X” on the shoulder but no name, the third had “EMPIRE” in an arch at the neck with the August 30, 1901, patent below it. The final neck featured “KEYSTONE” (also arched) above the patent date. The “S” bottle heel was squared, rounded on the “X” one, slightly bulging “bowling pin” for Empire, and full bowling pin for Keystone. The X and Empire bottles had ligneous disc stoppers shown above them. Below, it said “Glass is running fine. Bottles are the best ever made. Send along your orders early.”

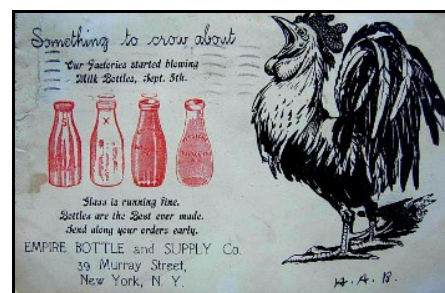


Figure 13 – 1906 postcard (eBay)

Interestingly, a 1907 ad showed the same three bottles but only discussed the EMPIRE and KEYSTONE. Like on the post card, the middle bottle was still marked with an “X” (Figure 14). Unlike later ads, this one did not list factories.

All three bottles appeared in a 1911 ad (*Tammany Times* 1911), illustrating the KEYSTONE, ESSX, and EMPIRE styles (Figure 15). The firm also listed three factories on the left side of the ad (New York, Ohio, Indiana) and two more on the right (Michigan, Virginia). The three on the left probably indicated glass houses – Essex Glass Co., Mount Vernon, Ohio; Poughkeepsie Glass Works, Poughkeepsie, New York; and the Indiana plant could be any of several that made milk bottles. The left list may have been factories that made lids, possibly boxes, or other related supplies.

By August of 1910, Poughkeepsie Glass had three machines in operation making milk bottles (*Bridgeton Evening News* 8/8/1910; *Newark Advocate* 3/25/1911), and all hand operations had ceased by the following year (*Bridgeton Evening News* 10/10/1911). According to the 1914 court transcript, Nighingale identified the Poughkeepsie Glass Works machines as “six shops on Teeple machines, one semi-automatic machine and one on hand blowing for quarts and half gallons.” Essex had machines by 1913, the year it bought the Standard Milk Bottle Mfg. Co., possibly earlier (Toulouse 1971:172-174; *Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:951-954).

EMPIRE (1901-1914)



Figure 18 Empire basemark

The Empire Bottle & Supply Co. applied for a trademark for EMPIRE on June 20, 1911, and received Trademark No. 84,383 on December 12, 1911 – claiming a first use in August of 1901 (Figure 16). Milk bottles with rounded heels, often called “bowling pin” bottles, were frequently marked with “EMPIRE” and “PAT AUG 13, 01” in various configurations – including combinations of arches, inverted arches, and horizontal formats (Figures 17 & 18). Charles T.

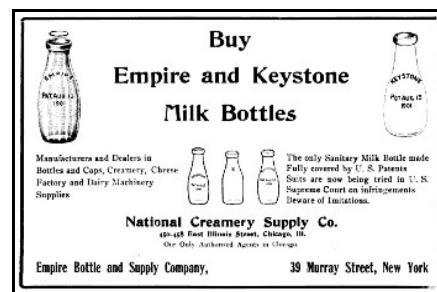


Figure 14 – 1907 ad (*New York Produce Review* 1907)

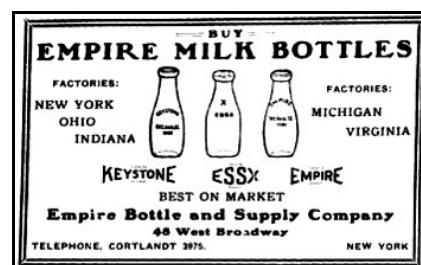


Figure 15 – 1911 ad (*Tammany Times* 1911)



Figure 16 – Empire trademark



Figure 17 “Bowling pin” milk bottle

FIG. 1.

FIG. 2.

FIG. 3.

FIG. 4.

FIG. 5.

Charles T. Nightingale, Inventor.

By *E. H. [Signature]*

Attorney

Figure 19 – Nightingale’s 1901 Patent

Schadlich ([ca. 1990]) noted that bottles with the Massachusetts shoulder seals bearing the “E” or “P” factory codes (for Essex Glass Co. and Standard Milk Bottle Mfg. Co.) were often embossed EMPIRE on the heel. These were sometimes accompanied by the 1901 patent date (noted above) embossed on the base. In Wisconsin, however, Empire was given its own code (No. 17) in 1913 (*Stevens Point Journal* 1913:1). It is currently unknown exactly where the number was embossed on the bottles.



Figure 20 – Empire + E4 (eBay)

For further complication, Schadlich and Schadlich (1984:5) noted that the Standard Milk Bottle Mfg. Co. used a “Pe.” seal on Massachusetts milk bottles (probably a typo – a lower-case “e” makes no sense at all). Although we have not found a Massachusetts Pe Seal, we have a milk bottle embossed “EMPIRE (arch) / PAT AUG 13 10 (inverted arch)” on the base and “EMPIRE 32 PE” on the heel – with “EMPIRE” in smaller font than “32 PE” (Figure 21). This connects PE and 32 (see the heelcode above) with either Empire or Standard Milk Bottle (maybe both). The “PE” heelmark also could mean Poughkeepsie under Empire – 1914-1916. See the section on Standard Milk Bottle Mfg. Co. for more discussion of that firm.



Figure 21 – Empire + PE

Hawkins (2009) further complicated the issue. He noted that another Empire – the Empire Glass Co. – was formed in 1900 at Jeannette, Pennsylvania, although it initially manufactured glass bowls. However, the plant also produced some bottles, including milk bottles. A group of business men purchased the company in 1910 and renamed it the Jeannette

Shade & Novelty Co. Hawkins noted that this company was thought to be the producer of the bowling-pin bottles embossed with ““EMPIRE PAT AUG 13, 01.” – although we find that *very* unlikely, probably collectors attempting to make a local connection.

ESSX (1908-1914)

Collectors sent Giarde additional information on the ESSX mark after his 1980 book, *Glass Milk Bottles: Their Makers and Marks*, was already published (personal communication, 2/21/2007). One collector described a bottle embossed with “P-3 EMPIRE, ESSX” on the heel roll and “123-P 124-P” on the opposite heel. Another sent information on a bottle embossed “E-4 ESSX X” on the heel. An eBay auction also included an “E-4 EMPIRE ESSX” heelmark with the typical Empire 1901 patent date on the base.

The Dairy Antique Site (2015) noted that the Empire Bottle and Supply Co. catalog called a specific type of milk bottle the “Essx style,” suggesting that the bottles were made by Essex. Empire was a jobber, selling milk bottles and supplies, and Essex was certainly one of Empire’s manufacturers. Unfortunately, we have been unable to find an example. Empire applied for “ESSX” on June 20, 1911, and received Trademark No. 94,722 on December 30, 1913 – claiming a first use on July of 1908 (Figure 22).



Figure 22 – Essx trademark

KEYSTONE (1904-1914)

Bottles with the Massachusetts E-seal included “E-4 EMPIRE” embossed on the front heel and “KEYSTONE PAT. AUG 13 01” embossed on the base. An eBay auction offered a milk bottle embossed “SMBMCO” on the heel and “KEYSTONE (arch) / PAT. AUG. 13, 01 (inverted arch)” on the base (Figure 23). The dairy was in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The same seller offered four bottles with the Keystone and 01 patent base (although only one with SMBMCO), all from Michigan dairies. Nightingale, acting for Empire, applied for “KEYSTONE” on June 20, 1911, and received Trademark No. 84,824 on January 9, 1912 – claiming a first use on September of 1904 (Figure 24).



Figure 23 – Keystone (eBay)

We have discovered a milk bottle that connects Empire with the West Coast. It was embossed “ONE PINT / S.C.S.D.”



Figure 25 – Weber-Keystone base

on the front, “KEYSTONE PAT. AUG.

13, 01 (arch) / WEBER (inverted arch)”

around the outside of the base, and “E-4

EMPIRE / B5” on the heel (Figures 25 & 26). An eBay seller posted another milk bottle with EMPIRE on the heel and WEBER on the base – from Casitas Ranch Dairy Co., Ventura, California (but no heel photo). Although Empire was an East

Coast distributor, the O.J. Weber Co. of Los Angeles, California, seems to have

circulated the Empire bottles on the West Coast. Weber was in business from at least 1911 to 1937 – an overlap with Empire of at least three years. See the section on Weber for more information.



Figure 24 – Keystone (eBay)



Figure 26 – E-4 Empire heelmark, Weber bottle

Empire Milk Bottle Co., Poughkeepsie, New York (1914)

Thanks to the testimony of Nightingale (and others) in 1914, we have a pretty good look at the processes that culminated in the creation of the Empire Milk Bottle Co. and Nightingale’s lease of the Poughkeepsie Glass Works (Supreme Court 1914). As noted above, the Empire Bottle & Supply Co. had been buying and using bottles made by the Poughkeepsie Glass Works since 1911.

Excerpts from the Court Testimony

Clearly, there had been serious problems with both quality control and financing at the Poughkeepsie Glass Works, one of Nightingale’s important suppliers. Nightingale had been complaining about the quality of the Poughkeepsie products for some time, and had been out of production from some time in September of 1913 until February of 1914 “and [were] unable to go on with operation for lack of money.” The Sanborn map for 1913 showed the factory at that point (Figure 27).

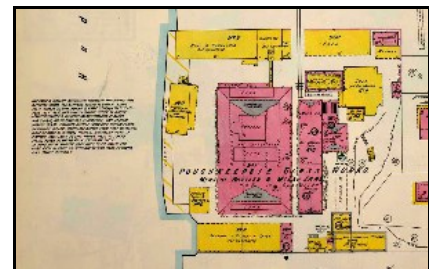


Figure 27 – Poughkeepsie Glass Works (Sanborn map, 1913)

In September of 1913, Nightingale went to Poughkeepsie to take charge of the factory at the request of Hoyt, the general manager, but he returned to New York shortly thereafter because the workers “couldn’t follow my instructions,” so he returned to New York. Soon, however, the glass works invited him back because “they couldn’t get along without me” since they were “losing about \$4000 a month.” Nightingale took control of the factory on January 19, 1914.

Although the exact timing is unclear, “a new corporation was to be formed” by the citizens of Poughkeepsie with Nightingale as the secretary – the Empire Milk Bottle Co. Both John K. Segue, president of Poughkeepsie Glass Works and C.T. Nightingale, secretary of the Empire Milk Bottle Co. signed the lease on August 1, 1914, for one year although it could be renewed annually. As of that point, the contract with the Empire Bottle and Supply Co. was annulled. As noted above, Blowing was set to begin on February 22, 1914, at “six shops on Teeple machines, one semi-automatic machine and one on hand blowing for quarts and half gallons” with “the entire output . . . supplied to the Empire Bottle & Supply Co.” In addition, Empire had contracts with the Essex Glass Co. at its Mount Vernon, Ohio, and Parkersburg, West Virginia, glass factories.

The Rest of the Story

Even though it was not mentioned in the court transcript, the *Poughkeepsie Eagle-News* reported on March 10, 1914, that creditors of the Poughkeepsie Glass Works appointed Edward M. Taylor as their trustee to deal with the insolvency of Poughkeepsie Glass. Despite the new contract discussed in the court transcript, the Poughkeepsie Glass Works never reopened. The news was also the death knell for the Empire Milk Bottle Co.

On March 3, 1914, the *News of Cumberland County* (Bridgeton, New Jersey) stated it clearly: “The bottle plant of the Empire Bottle Co., Poughkeepsie, N.Y., has been closed down permanently.” This was *before* the Empire Milk Bottle Co. signed the contract mentioned above – so the whole court transcript is a bit crazy – although it may reflect a last-ditch attempt to save the glass house. The *Poughkeepsie Eagle-News* reported on January 26, 1915, that “the A.C. Dutton Lumber Corp. officially took possession of the property formerly occupied by the Poughkeepsie Glass Works.” However, the *Eagle-News* provided a fitting epitaph on May 27, 1914:

A task of digging out 300 tons of glass from the old furnace at the Poughkeepsie Glass Works was started Tuesday by workmen. The digging process is being accomplished by crow bars and hammers. It will take between two and three weeks to complete the job. The material will be shipped out of town to some large glass manufacturing concern. The days of the local plant as a glass factory are apparently over.

Containers and Marks

Since the Poughkeepsie plant never reopened, it is unlikely that the Empire Milk Bottle Co. actually had any marked bottles.

Discussion and Conclusions

Although Charles Nightingale was a gifted inventor, patenting a “tin-top” milk bottle closure and two milk bottle designs, he had mixed success as a businessman. His first business, the Climax Bottle & Stopper Co., survived for ten years as a jobber in milk bottles and closures – 1889-1899 – but it ended in bankruptcy. When Albert Hamilton bought Nightingale’s share of the stock as a sales agency for the J.T.&A. Hamilton glass house, the firm ended in disaster in less than three years, when one of Hamilton’s associates murdered him along with the secretary of the business.

With his final invention, Nightingale again opened a jobber business, the Empire Bottle & Supply Co. This one lasted more than a dozen years (ca. 1901-1914), transitioning while it was still successful into the Empire Milk Bottle Co. in 1914. Nightingale formed the new firm as an operating company for the Poughkeepsie Glass Works, one of his major suppliers. Unfortunately, this operation ended in failure almost immediately.

Despite significant testimony from 1914 law suit against Nightingale and the Poughkeepsie Glass Works, there are still confusing elements in what happened to cause the ending of both the Poughkeepsie Glass Works and the Empire Milk Bottle Co. (as well as the Empire Bottle & Supply Co.) in the first half of 1914. Even though the newspapers reported the final permanent closing of Poughkeepsie Glass in early March and the breaking up of the

solidified glass in the tank in May, the court transcript showed that Nightingale signed a contract to take over control of the glass factory in August. That timing makes no sense. Why would Nightingale sign a contract to operate a closed, bankrupt glass house? We may never know – but we do know that the plant never reopened.

However, the various firms left a rich legacy of logos on milk bottle bases and heels. The first firm was very prolific, leaving its CLIMAX marks on numerous bottles. Empire, too, left its EMPIRE mark on plenty of bottles, often accompanied by either ESSX or KEYSTONE, the names of two of Empire's milk bottle brands. As noted in the text above, one set of accompanying marks provided mysteries that we never fully solved.

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