

## **Companies Owned by the Coffin Family**

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William Coffin and his sons – especially William, Jr. – either founded or were involved in eight New Jersey glass houses. William Coffin, Sr., and Jonathan Haines erected the family's first enterprise – a window-glass factory – at Hammonton, New Jersey, in 1817. From this beginning, the family spread its interests, frequently selling all or portions of various glass houses to relatives. Although no longer in the family, the final plant – the Winslow Glass Works – did not close until 1892, after a continuous operation for 53 years. We present the plants below in chronological order according to opening dates.

### **Histories**

The Coffin family operated at least seven glass houses at six locations between 1817 and 1857. We have presented these in chronological order according to the years of Coffin family involvement. The dates in parentheses in the factory titles are those for the Coffin family. See Table 1 at the end of the history section.

#### **Hammonton Glass Works (Coffin & Hay), Hammonton, Jew Jersey (1817-1857)**

At some point between 1817 (possibly slightly earlier) and 1820, William Coffin, Sr., and Jonathan Haines built a cylinder-glass factory (i.e., window glass) and created a town around it that came to be known as Hammonton (named after one of Coffin's sons – John Hammonton Coffin). Haines withdrew ca. 1822, and Coffin brought his son, William, Jr., into the business in 1823. The two operated the factory until 1836, when another son, Bodine, and Andrew K. Hay (a son-in-law) joined him, took over active management, and refurbished the plant for the production of whiskey flasks. The younger generation changed the name of the business to Coffin & Hay. The plant burned to the ground in 1838<sup>1</sup> (Barber 1900:60; Knittle 1927:223; McKearin & McKearin 1941:594; McKearin & Wilson 1978:93; Pepper 1971:85, 94-95; Prowell 1886:703; Toulouse 1971:130; Van Rensselaer 1969:142).

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<sup>1</sup> Pepper (1971:96) gave the year of the fire as 1840.

William Coffin resumed control of the works and rebuilt it, again making cylinder window glass. Upon the death of the senior coffin in 1844, two other sons, John Hammonton Coffin and Edwin Winslow Coffin acquired the plant. Edwin sold his share to John in 1851, and John ran the operation until a drastic dip in the market demanded the closing in 1857 (Barber 1900:60; Knittle 1927:223; McKearin & McKearin 1941:594; McKearin & Wilson 1978:93; Pepper 1971:96, 98; Prowell 1886:703; Van Rensselaer 1969:142).<sup>2</sup>

### **Bottles and Marks**

Knittle (1927:356) claimed that “Coffin & Hay made excellent flasks between 1839 and 1847 to 1850.” Knittle (1927:357) also commented that “many of the flasks stamped [embossed] ‘Hammonton’ are thought to have been really made at Winslow [a later plant used by Coffin & Hay]. It is not known why none of the flasks were marked ‘Winslow.’” The Coffin & Hay period at Hammonton only lasted for two years – from 1836 to 1838. It is possible that the molds marked Hammonton were saved from the fire and continued to be used at the Winslow plant until they wore out. There are unmarked flasks attributed to the company that also could be from the Winslow plant (see below).

### **C&H**

According to Knittle (1927:441), the C.&H. mark was used by Coffin & Hay. Toulouse (1971:130) repeated the identification (but showed the mark with no punctuation) and dated the mark ca. 1838 to 1842. Whitten (2014) only mentioned that the mark was used by Coffin & Hay. We have not found an example of this logo online or in any other source, and it did not appear in McKearin & Wilson (1978). This is likely a bogus mark.

### **COFFIN & HAY / HAMMONTON (1836-1847)**

Knittle (1927:223) stated that Coffin & Hay “made some of the best-designed flasks in the American catalogue.” She noted that some of those were embossed “COFFIN & HAY,” and others included “HAMMONTON” as well – although McKearin & Wilson (1978:94, 567-569)

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<sup>2</sup>Prowell (1886) appears to have been the original source for this information.

illustrated the flasks and showed that all variations marked with “COFFIN & HAY” also included “HAMMONTON” (Figures 1 & 2). Pepper (1971:92) also included a photo of one of the flasks. Surprisingly, the logo was not mentioned by Whitten (2014).



Figure 2 – Coffin & Hay flask (Norman A. Heckler)

Both Knittle (1927:225) and McKearin & Wilson (1978:93) agreed that Andrew Hay probably took the molds that survived the Hammonton fire and

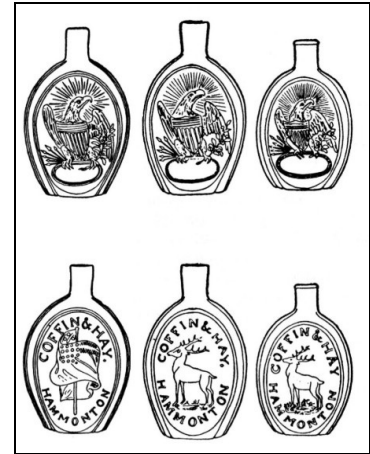


Figure 1 – Coffin & Hay flasks (McKearin & Wilson 1978:567,569)

used them again at the Winslow plant. These were probably used until the molds wore out. The length of time would have depended on how often the molds were used and how many flasks were produced. Thus, the date range for the COFFIN & HAY mark could have extended from 1836 to 1847 or even later.

McKearin & Wilson (1978:94, 568-569, 628-629) also discussed and illustrated ten flasks that they attributed to Coffin & Hay – although none of these were embossed with the

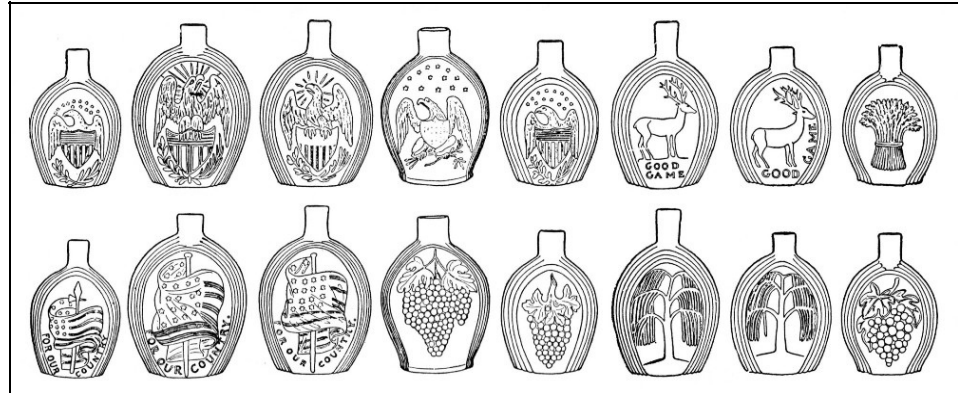


Figure 3 – Winslow flasks (McKearin & Wilson 1978:5697,629)

name, initials, or a place name (Figure 3). The identification almost certainly rested on the strong similarity between the illustrations on the marked and unmarked flasks (Figure 4). All of these flasks have what McKearin & Wilson called a “plain lip” – an essentially unfinished finish, where the gaffer had cracked off or wetted off the blowpipe, then smoothed the lip or rim with a tool or fire polishing. The Coffin & Hay flasks in photos generally appear to have fire-polished finishes, although at least one was probably tooled (Figure 5).

All the bases had pontil scars. A photo from a Norman A. Heckler auction showed that a glass-tipped blowpipe was used as a pontil on at least one flask (Figure 6). See Lindsey (2024) for a discussion of this type of finish and pontil scar. If these flasks were made by Coffin and Hay, it suggests that the Winslow plant made unmarked containers which could be differentiated from those made at Hammonton by the lack of the place name.



Figure 4 – Winslow flask (Glass Works Auction)

### **Coffin, Pearsall & Co., Millville, New Jersey (1828-ca. 1830)**

James Lee erected a glass house at Millville in 1806. The plant made window glass and probably bottles. At some point, Gideon Smith and Nathaniel Solomon acquired the plant, followed by Burgin, Wood & Pearsall by at least 1828. William Coffin, Jr., joined the group in 1828, creating Coffin, Pearsall & Co. Coffin apparently left in 1830,



Figure 6 – Pontil scar (Norman A. Heckler)

and the firm became Burgin & Pearsall in 1833. At some point, the plant sold to Scattergood, Haverstick & Co., who, in turn, sold it to the Whitall brothers in 1844 (Knittle 1927:221-222; McKearin & McKearin 1941:588; Pepper 1971:225; Van Rensselaer 1969:146).<sup>3</sup> See the section on Whitall Tatum & Co. for more on the Whitall brothers and the later plants. None of our sources recorded any marks from this factory.



Figure 5 – Tooled finish (Norman A. Heckler)

### **Winslow Glass Works, Winslow, New Jersey (1829-1851)**

William Coffin, Jr., along with his father (William Sr.) and Thomas Jefferson Perce built the Winslow Glass Works ca. 1829, adopting William Coffin, Jr. & Co. as the operating company name. When William Sr. retired in 1833, the operating firm became Coffin & Perce,

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<sup>3</sup> Prowell (1886) appears to have been the original source for this information.

but the younger Coffin became the sole proprietor upon the death of Perce in 1835. Coffin's brother-in-law, Andrew K. Hay, bought into the company, immediately following the burning of the Hammonton plant in 1838 – making the firm Coffin & Hay. Tristran Bowdle joined within the next few years, and the firm then became known as Coffin, Hay & Bowdle. William Coffin sold his interest to his brother, Edwin, in 1847, and the firm became Hay, Bowdle & Co.<sup>4</sup> In 1850, Bowdle withdrew from the firm, and Coffin sold his interest to Hay a year later. Hay's nephew, John, joined him, and the firm became A.K. Hay & Co. (Knittle 1927:356; McKearin & Wilson 1978:93; Pepper 1971:98-99; Roller 1996; Van Rensselaer 1969:153).<sup>5</sup>

### **Winslow Glass Mfg. Co., Winslow, New Jersey (1866-1884)**

On April 4, 1866, Andrew K. Hay John B Hay, William C. Hay, Augustus C. Downing, and Francis H. Holmes incorporated the Winslow Glass Mfg. Co. The purpose of the firm was “manufacturing, procuring, selling and otherwise disposing of glass and for the transaction of any other business properly connected therewith.” The corporation was capitalized with \$200,000. The incorporation papers did not list the original officers (State of New Jersey 1866:948-950). The incorporation may not have lasted long. All three associated patents (see below) were assigned to Hay & Co. – *not* A.H. Hay & Co. – in 1870, 1873, and 1877. It is thus likely that the firm had become Hay & Co. by at least 1870. By the time of Hay's death on February 17, 1881, the plant had two window-glass furnaces and one that made bottles and jars. The firm leased the plant to the Tillyer Brothers in 1884 (Knittle 1927:356; McKearin & Wilson 1978:93-94; Pepper 1971:99; Roller 1996; Van Rensselaer 1969:153-154).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The plant may have been known as the New Jersey Glass Works by this time (McKearin & Wilson 1978:73). As noted elsewhere in the Encyclopedia, it was common for glass houses to have two names – one of the factory, itself, and one for the operating company. As with the entries above, Prowell (1886) seems to have been the basis for most of this information.

<sup>5</sup> Pepper (1971:99) stated: In 1838 [William, Jr.] sold a half interest to his brother-in-law Andrew K. Hay. *Before long* a third partner, Tristram Bowdle, was admitted.” The emphasis is ours. The timing for Bowdle's entry is *very* unclear. McKearin and Wilson (1978:93) were even more unclear, noting that “sometime between then [i.e., 1838-1840] and 1847, Tristram Bowdle acquired an interest in the Winslow Glassworks.”

<sup>6</sup> The sources all stated that the firm reorganized as Hay & Co. in 1883, although that probably reflects the first date that the researchers found for the name. Most sources had an empty period between 1866 and Hay's death in 1881.

### **Tillyer Bros., Winslow, New Jersey (1884-1892)**

According to the *Crockery & Glass Journal* for July 3, 1884, the firm was composed of William Tillyer, Thomas B. Dewees, and Isaac H. Tillyer under the name of Tillyer, Dewees & Co., although all other sources called the firm Tillyer Bros. Hay & Co. still owned the factory in 1888, although the Tillyer Bros. retained control. The plant apparently made both window glass and containers at a single furnace. The Tillyer Bros. must have purchased the factory at some point; foreclosure proceedings were instituted against the Tillyers in 1892, and the factory was sold at a sheriff's auction on July 8 of that year (Roller 1996).

Pepper (1971:99) added that there was a “raging fire [that] swept the three glass plants and many houses, beyond hope of repair” on “Decoration Day [now called Memorial Day – the last Monday of May] of 1892.” However, an article in *China, Glass & Lamps* stated that the plant was up for a sheriff's sale on July 8 and that “the factory is to be ready for operation at the season start” (Roller 1999). In any event, the plant never reopened.

### **Containers and Marks**

As with the other Coffin firms, the Winslow Glass Works rarely marked any of its containers. The only apparent exceptions were the Winslow Jar and the Almy jar.

### **Flasks**

As discussed above, it is highly likely that some of the Coffin & Hay flasks marked “HAMMONTON” were actually made at Winslow. Hay almost certainly took the surviving molds with him, and these were used until they wore out. It is also probable that Coffin & Hay; Coffin, Hay & Bowdle; and possibly even Hay, Bowdle & Co. made the flasks attributed to Coffin & Hay but without the embossed firm name (see Figures 3 & 4).

### **Winslow Jars**

Theodore F. Woodward of Winslow, New Jersey, received Patent No. 101,958 for a “Fruit-Jar Cover” on April 12, 1870. Woodward assigned the patent to Hay & Co. of



Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Figure 7). Hay & Co. must have opened an office in Philadelphia. The 1870 and 1873 patents used that address instead of Winslow – although a later, 1877 patent claimed Winslow. According to Roller (1996), the Woodward Patent became the basis for the Winslow Improved Valve Jar. He noted that the patent was filed on February 23, 1870. This patent spawned at least three major variations in the jars.

### THE WINSLOW IMPROVED VALVE JAR (1870-ca. 1874)

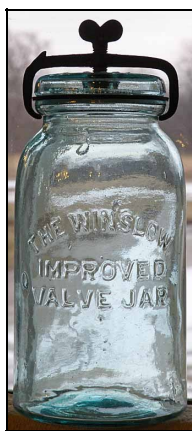


Figure 8 – Winslow Improved Valve jar (North American Glass)

Although Toulouse missed this variation, Roller (1983:387; 2011:556) described the closure as a “straddle-lip top seal, glass lid with blind hole in center held down by cast-iron thumbscrew yoke clamp pushing down on coil spring held in blind hole on lid.”

He noted that the lid was embossed “PAT APRIL 12<sup>TH</sup> 1870”; we add from photos that the patent information was applied in a circle around the central hole in the lid (Figures 8 & 9). Roller dated the jars ca. 1870-1884 and identified

Hay & Co. at Winslow as the manufacturer. Creswick

(1987:224) illustrated the jar and dated it ca. 1870 but added no new information (Figure 10). Because the Winslow Jar (see below) was such a major improvement, the Winslow Improved Valve Jar was probably only made for a few years – 1870-ca. 1874.

### WINSLOW JAR (1873-1884)

The Winslow Jar was based on an invention by Henry C. Gaskill of Mount Holly, New Jersey, who filed for a patent for an “Improvement in Fruit-Jars” on August 31, 1870. He received Patent No. 136,148 on February 25, 1873 and assigned the patent to Hay & Co. of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Figure 11). Gaskill noted in his description that his

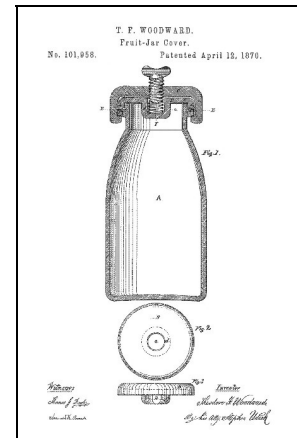


Figure 7 – Woodward 1870 patent

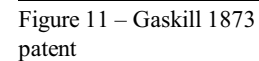


Figure 9 – Lid & finish (North American Glass)



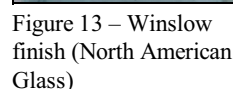
Figure 10 – Winslow Improved Valve jar (Creswick 1987:224)

Heretofore difficulty has arisen from the cover springing in casting, so as to require a great pressure of the same upon the gum ring to make a tight fit all around, and thus to produce a great Strain upon the fastening, tending to weaken it, and thereby inducing a breakage.

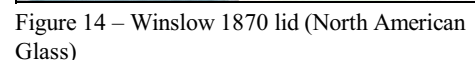


In other words, the patent is for the method of creating the finish rather than a specific type of closure. Gaskill specified that his invention “may be used in connection with any fastening for the cover of jars in which an elastic ring is used.” Despite this disclaimer, the earlier variation was clearly made to Gaskill’s patent drawing. According to Roller (1996), this patent was used for the Winslow jar and Tillyer jar.

Figure 12 – Winslow jar (North American Glass)



Toulouse (1969:331) noted two variations of this jar, each based on the lid. He described the first one as “glass lid, wire clip and twin helical neck lugs” (Figures 12 & 13).] The lid was embossed “PATENTED NOV 29<sup>TH</sup> 1870” in a circle around the outside





(1983:387; 2011:556) discussed the same two variations and added that the lid on the first one was smaller than the second one (3" v. 3.5"). He dated the jars together as ca. 1870s-1884. Creswick (1987:224) illustrated the jars and dated the early one ca. 1870 – almost certainly based on the patent date (Figure 15).

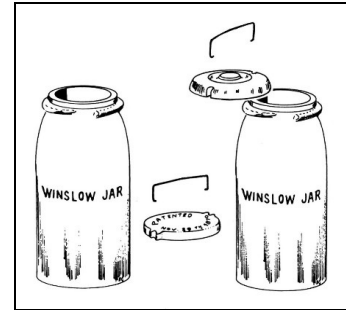


Figure 15 – Winslow jars & lids (Creswick 1987:224)

Despite the 1870 Woodward patent date, this jar was obviously made to the 1873 Gaskill patent described above. A *very* important question was apparently never asked by previous researchers: Why does a jar made to the 1873 patent have the 1870 patent date? The probable answer is simple and consistent with glass manufacturing practices. As noted above, Gaskill applied for his patent in mid-1870 but did not receive it until February 1873 – two and one-half years later. The design was obviously superior to Woodward’s jar, so Hay & Co. probably put it on the market soon after filing the application in 1870 – or possibly after a short wait showed that the patent would not be soon forthcoming, possibly as late as early 1871. To achieve a modicum of protection, Hay & Co. embossed the date of the patent the firm *did* control – Woodward’s patent of 1870. These jars were probably made until the molds wore out. As noted elsewhere, molds constituted some of the most expensive inventory items and were generally used as long as possible – as witnessed by the large number of jars with “ghosted” (peened out) embossing.

### *Variation 2*

Toulouse (1969:332) noted this second style, again, according to the lid. This one added the patent date of “Feb. 25, 1873” to the early date. The jars look much the same (Figure 16), but the second lid was embossed



Figure 17 – Winslow 1873 lid (North American Glass)

“PATENTED (arch) / FEB. 25. 1873 (inverted arch)” around the central raised portion of the lid, with “PATENTED (arch) / NOV. 28<sup>TH</sup> 1870 (inverted arch)” in a larger circle around the later patent date (Figures 17). As noted above,



Figure 16 – Winslow jar (North American Glass)

Roller (1983:387; 2011:556) measured this second lid style at 3.5" in diameter – a half inch larger than the earlier one. Creswick (1987:224) illustrated the jar and lid and dated them ca. 1873 (see Figure 14).

### WINSLOW (ca. 1873-1884)

Roller (1983:388) noted a straight-side jar with “top seal (on ground lip), glass lid with attached wire clamp engaging two helical ramps on jar neck.” He noted that “the exact purpose of these straight-sided wide-mouth squat jars is not known, but they may have been sold to food packers.” The unembossed lids were 4” in diameter. Creswick (1987:224) gave the size as a pint and that the jar was “shaped much like the Cohansey jelly jar, except that it has a glass lid, while the Cohansey has a tin lid.” She illustrated the jar (Figure 18) and added that

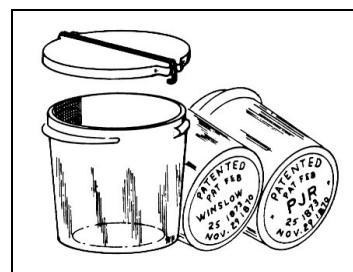


Figure 18 – Straight-sided Winslow jar (Creswick 1987:224)

Robert Puszczyk of Great Valley, New York, reports that his jar has an original paper label reading: Winslow Collar Jar 14½. The author’s Cohansey jelly jar has a similar paper label which reads: Jelly Collar. Although the word Collar is not used in the patent text, we believe it refers to the shape of the jar around the top . . . a straight-sided jar, wider at the top than the base, and without a shoulder. A shape that would be very suitable for a jelly jar.

Examples on North American Glass were made in both amber and aqua (Figure 19). The finish of each was ground, and the lids appeared more like the 1870 lids on the



Figure 20 – Finish & lid (North American Glass)

Winslow jars described above (Figure 20). The base of the amber example may have been missing the “1” in “1873” – although it may appear that way because of camera angle. Both amber



Figure 19 – Straight-sided Winslow jar (North American Glass)

jars had double-stamped bases (Figure 21). As noted in the section on the Clyde Glass Works, the technique that created the double stamp on the base may have been used in the early 1880s – or even the late 1870s – *on jars in the New York/New Jersey area*, even though it was not used on bottles until the very late 1880s and was uncommon on bottles until the 1895-1914 period. At this point, we have only found double-stamped jar bases in this limited area. Future research will determine whether this technique was used more extensively on jars in an earlier period than on bottles.



Figure 21 – Winslow bases (North American Glass)

The amber example had a paper label with “ST PRE / Schimm . . . s . . . rve” (black letters) / CHER . . . IES (red) / The J.O. Schimm . . . Preserving Co. / PHILADELPHIA (black)” with two round color pictures flanking “CHERRIES” that are unclear in the photo (Figure 22). Although we have not discovered an opening date, the J.O. Schimmel Preserving Co. dissolved as a corporation on July 31, 1883 – showing that it was in business prior to that date. The company carried on as a private ownership until the plant burned in early March of 1891 (Corporations of New Jersey 2014:816; *Goshen Daily News* [Goshen, Indiana] 3/6/1891).



Figure 22 – Winslow jar with paper label (North American Glass)

The Roller update (2011:556) further explored the possible uses for the jar. Roller found an illustration in a Hero Glass Works catalog from ca. 1879 that showed a straight-sided jar with a wide mouth that was listed as “THE OYSTER, COFFEE, TEA, and COLLAR JAR.” He discovered a jar with a paper label that said “WINSLOW JAR COLLAR” and surmised that at least some of these jars were used to hold the celluloid collars worn by men of the era. Clearly, the jars were used for a variety of purposes.

None of the sources provided any speculation about dates for these jars. The patent dates, of course, demonstrate a concrete beginning date of February 25, 1873. The embossing could not possibly have been present prior to the receipt of the patent. The end date, however, requires a bit of speculation. Historically, Hay & Co. ended with the 1884 lease of the factory to

the Tillyer Bros. There is reason to believe, however, that the Tillyers also received at least some patents as part of the deal (see the discussion of the Tillyer jar below). However, patents at that time only extended for 14 years. Thus, there would be no reason to emboss the patent date after 1887.

In actual practice, most patent dates were not continued after the initial molds wore out. Few jars – with notable exceptions like Mason jars – remained popular throughout the patent period. This way of thinking is complicated by the length of popularity. If a jar sold well initially, then dropped in popularity but continued in sporadic production, the initial molds could last decades. Generally, however, production ceased within the patent period. It is therefore likely that these jars were discontinued by the end of Hay & Co. in 1884.

### **PJR** (ca. 1873-1884)

Roller (1983:287) illustrated and discussed a straight-sided, wide-mouth jar, identical to the Winslow jar described above. Like the other jar, the lid was unembossed, and the base of the jar showed both patent dates. This base had “PJR” as a central figure in place of “WINSLOW.” Roller added that “the significance of the **PJR** is not fully understood, but it has been suggested that the initials may have stood for Phillip J. Ritter, a New Jersey food packer.” Creswick (1987:224) illustrated the jar, showing the base embossing as “PATENTED / PAT FEB (arches) / • PJR • (horizontal) / 25, 1873 / NOV 29 1870 (both inverted arches)” and noted that Ritter was still in business at the time of her publication (see Figure 18). Although we tried to find alternative name possibilities, Roller’s solution may be the best. Like the Winslow jars, these jars were probably made between 1873 and 1884.

### **Tillyer** (1884-1892)

Roller (1983:353) identified this jar as being made by the Tillyer Bros. from 1884 to 1892 – the full tenure of the firm. He also listed the patents discussed above. These jars were identical to the Winslow Jars with the second style lid. Creswick (1987:208) illustrated the jar and also identified the patents (Figure 23). She agreed with Roller’s dates. The Roller update (2011:508) added two

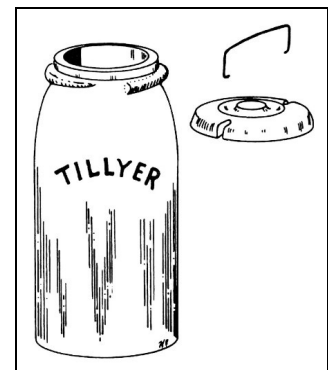


Figure 23 – Tillyer jar (Creswick 1987:208)



Figure 24 – Tillyer jar (North American Glass)

variations, one with “WINSLOW” ghosted on the reverse, the other with a rectangular plate. Although the Roller editors did not explain where the plate was located on the jar, a North American Glass auction included photos of both the normal variation and the one with a rectangular plate on the reverse (Figures 24 & 25).



Figure 25 – Tillyer jar - rectangular plate reverse (North American Glass)

**ALMY (1877-1882)<sup>7</sup>**

“ALMY” was embossed in an arch on the side of a handmade, light blue-green fruit jar with “PATENTED DEC. 25, 1877” on the base (Figures



Figure 27 – Almy jar finish & lid (North American Glass)

26 & 27). Toulouse (1969:18) noted that Theodore F. Woodward of Winslow, New Jersey, received Patent No. 198,528 on December 25, 1877 and assigned the rights to Hay & Co. of the same community (Figure 28). Woodward had applied for the patent on November 16 or the same year.

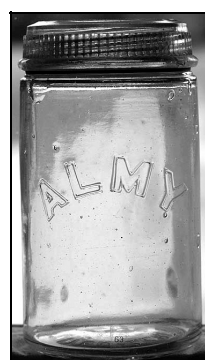


Figure 26 – Almy jar (North American Glass)

Creswick (1987:6) noted three variations: “ALMY / JAR,” “ALMY” with “JAR” ghosted, and “ALMY” alone (Figure 29). The base of Creswick’s example was embossed “PATENTED (arch) / B / DEC. 25 1877 (inverted arch)” on the base. She, too, noted the patent and Hay & Co. as the manufacturer. Basemarks also included “A” in place of “B” (Figures 30).

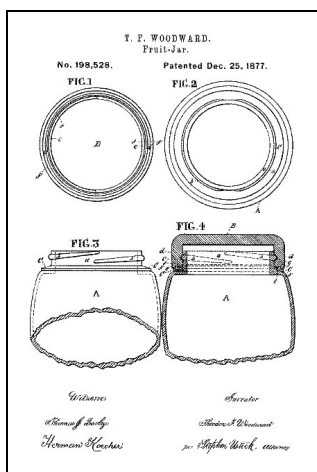


Figure 28 – Woodward 1877 patent

Roller (1983:9; 2011:23) added that the June 9, 1881, issue of *Crockery*

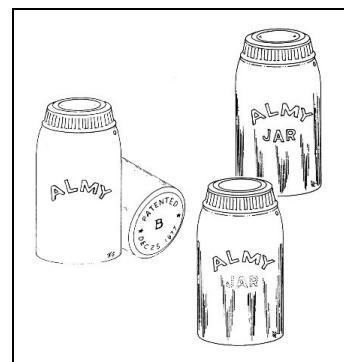


Figure 29 – Almy jars (Creswick 1987a:6)

<sup>7</sup> Parts of this discussion was originally included in the Other A section, but we have added a great deal of information here.



& *Glass Journal* illustrated the jar, noting a manufacture by H.S. Almy & Co., with a sales office address of 42 Park Place, New York (Figure 31). H.S. Almy & Co. was in business at New York City by at least 1880, when it was listed in the *Star Almanac* (1880:110) as a glassware dealer that suffered a fire loss of \$6,400. H.S. Almy and his brother, George W. Almy, started the business probably during 1880, possibly a year or so earlier. The firm was again plagued by fires on September 22 and November 28, 1890. H.S. Almy died in December 1895, and his brother, George, took over the business. The business failed, and George closed the doors on August 22, 1901 (New York Board of Fire Underwriters 1891:84, 102; *New York Times* 8-23-1901). Creswick (1987:6) added that Harvey S. Almy was a jobber and was associated with George W. Almy and William D. Chase in 1880 clock-case patents.

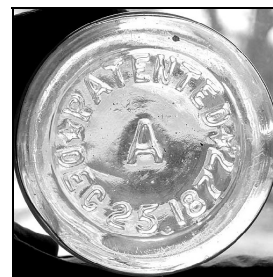


Figure 30 – Almy jar base  
(North American Glass)

The relationship between Hay & Co. and the Almy brothers has never been uncovered, but there seems to be little question that Theodore F. Woodward worked for Hay & Co. Typically, when a patent is assigned to a firm upon issue, it is because the inventor worked for the company. With patents in 1870 and 1877, Woodward was apparently a long-term employee. The unanswered question is: How did a New York jobber in glassware and ceramics acquire a patented jar from a New Jersey glass house? We may never know the answer, but we can speculate that the process went one of two ways. Almy may have purchased the patent shortly after Woodward received it. In that case, Almy had the rights – and thus used his name on the jar – retaining Hay & Co. as the manufacturer. Alternatively, Hay & Co. may have retained the rights to the patent, while using H.S. Almy & Co. as the sole agent. The use of the Almy name on the jar suggests that the first scenario is the most likely.

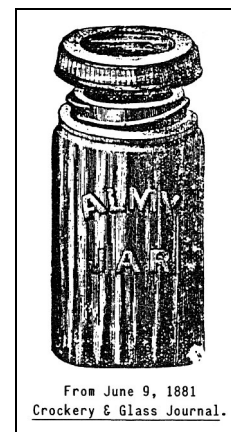


Figure 31 – Almy 1881  
ad (Roller 1983:9)

Since the patent was assigned to Hay & Co. in late 1877, it is virtually certain that the Winslow Glass Co. made the jar between the patent date and the leasing of the plant to the Tillyer Bros. in 1884. It is possible that the Tillyers also made the jar from 1884 to as late as 1892. As noted above, the jars went through three stages, although any dating finer than 1877-ca. 1892 is speculative. The examples embossed “ALMY / JAR” were certainly made first, probably within a few months of the patent. These *may* have been made by Hay & Co. from ca.



1879 to 1884. It is possible that the Tillyer Bros. dropped the “JAR” designation and peened that out of the molds, continuing to make the containers without “JAR” from 1884 to 1892. Under this scenario, the molds with the ghosted “JAR” probably would have been used during the first few years of the Tillyer tenure, followed by the jars only embossed “ALMY.”

### **Green Bank Glass Works, Green Bank, New Jersey (1840-1850; 1857-1858)**

William Coffin, Sr., built yet another window glass plant in Green Bank, New Jersey, in 1840. Upon Coffin’s death in 1844, his son, Bodine, took control of the plant but closed the works in 1850. A cooperative reopened the factory in 1857 but the business failed the following year and closed permanently. At some point, the plant also made bottles (Knittle 1927:362; McKearin & McKearin 1941:603; Pepper 1971:97; Pepper 1971:97, 108; Van Rensselaer 1969:142; von Mechow 2024).

#### **Containers and Marks**

According to von Mechow (2024), the plant made beer bottles. At least some of these were embossed “GREENBANK GLASS WORKS” in an arch on the reverse body. One of von Mechow’s examples was embossed “GREENBANK (arch) / N.J. (horizontal) / GLASS WORKS (inverted arch)” (Figure 32). The second had “GREENBANK GLASS WORKS (arch) / N.J. (horizontal)” on the reverse. He dated the bottles 1840-1850 and 1857-1858. These are apparently scarce or rare; we have been unable to find any examples except those cited by von Mechow.



Figure 32 – Greenbank bottle (von Mechow 2024)

### **Free Will Glass Manufactory, Williamstown, New Jersey (1841-1843)**

In 1835, a cooperative – consisting of William Nicholson, Matthias Simmerman, Richard H. Tice, Samuel P. Tice, John T. Brown, Jacob DeHart, Joseph L. Thomas, Richard Fordham, Israel Ewan, Isaiah Dill, Joshua Eldridge, Thomas Park, and John E. Ayers – started the Free Will Glass Manufactory in Williamstown to make bottles, vials, flasks, and other containers. The plant was completed in mid-June and began making bottles in the fall of 1835. Along with

flasks and bottles of all sizes, the factory made London Mustard, Turlington's Balsam, Godfrey's Cordial, and Opodeldoc Bitters bottles. The firm dissolved on May 2, 1836, after just a single season of production (Knittle 1927:358; McKearin & McKearin 1941:602; Pepper 1971:149; Van Rensselaer 1969:151)

Nicholson purchased the works at a sale on June 4, 1836, for \$1,425, in cash and bonds to total \$5,700. He soon took on John Swope, Benjamin Smith, and Woodward Warrick as partners, making glass under the name of Nicholson, Warrick & Co. The factory was now known as the Washington Glass Works. The plant made pint and half-pint flasks as well as other bottles (Knittle 1921:358; McKearin & McKearin 1941:602; Pepper 1971:149-150; Van Rensselaer 1969:151). Although there are no known marks for the business, Pepper (1971:150) speculated that – due to the name “Washington Glass Works” – the plant must have made some of the “11 different Washington flasks [i.e., those with embossings of the bust of George Washington] with no definite provenance.”

The Panic of 1837 caused the demise of the business, and Nicholson died in May of 1838. After Nicholson's death, John F. Bodine, John Swope, Joseph Iszard, and Gabriel Iszard purchased the plant. At some point, Thomas Black acquired all but the Bodine share, and the firm became Bodine & Black. John F. Bodine and William Coffin, Jr., operated the factory as William Coffin, Jr. & Co. from 1841 to 1843, when Coffin left (Knittle 1921:358; McKearin & McKearin 1941:602; Pepper 1971:150; Van Rensselaer 1969:152).

Knittle (1927:359) and Van Rensselaer (1969:152) maintained that Bodine then operated the plant alone, until he combined the business with his Washington Glass Works, a plant he had established across the street in 1839. This suggests that Knittle believed that the former Nicholson plant did *not* operate under the Washington Glass Works name. McKearin & McKearin (1941:602) specifically noted that the Free Will Glass Manufactory combined with the Washington Glass Works.

As noted above, Pepper (1971:149-150) provided some pretty compelling evidence for the Washington Glass Works name being applied to the former Nicholson factory. She noted that the *Constitution* (apparently the name of the local newspaper) of July 11, 1837,

concluded with the alternate name of Washington Glass Works. Surely this record refutes the prevailing opinion that the Washington Glass Works was not built at Squankum [Williamstown] until 1839, by Joel Bodine.

It seems certain, in fact, that the Freewill glasshouse was known as the Washington Glass Works even by 1836. For in the *Constitution* of July 4, 1837, James L. Plummer announced that he had bought the Washington Glass Works Stage Line Operating between Squankum and Camden; this would indicate an already well-established glasshouse and a stagecoach service named for it.

We have not discovered any marks from the Free Will Glass Manufactory or Washington Glass Works.

**Table 1 – Coffin Family Tenure at Various Glass Houses**

| Glass House                | Location         | Date Range    |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Hammonton Glass Works      | Hammonton, NJ    | 1817-1857     |
| Coffin, Pearsall & Co.     | Millville, NJ    | 1828-ca. 1830 |
| Winslow Glass Works        | Winslow, NJ      | 1831-1851     |
| Green Bank Glass Works     | Green Bank, NJ   | 1840-1850     |
| Freewill Glass Manufactory | Williamstown, NJ | 1841-1843     |
| Hay & Co.                  | Millville, NJ    | 1844-1854     |
| Sasokson Glass Works       | Camden, NJ       | ca. 1850      |

### **Hay & Co., Millville, New Jersey (1844-1854)**

Frederick Schetter established a glass house at Millville, making window glass and green glass. Schetter's business failed in 1844, and Hay & Co., a firm composed of Lewis Mulford, Andrew K. Hay, and William Coffin, Jr., purchased the plant. They operated the works until 1854, when the Whitall Brothers & Co. acquired the factory and combined it with their Millville Glass Works (McKearin & McKearin 1941:600; Pepper 1971:228). See the Whitall Tatum &

Co. section for more history of the business. As with most of the Coffin enterprises, we have found no evidence that Hay & Co. used any identifying marks at this location.

### **Sasockson Glass Works, Camden, New Jersey (ca. 1850)**

Van Rensselaer (1969:130-131) noted: “About 1850 Coffin and Hay operated a window glass factory on Cooper’s Creek, Camden, under the name of Sasockson Glass Works, of which little is known.” No other source mentioned this glass house.

## **Synthesis of Coffin & Hay Factories**

Although we are presenting each of the Coffin family holdings in chronological order, it is important to understand Coffin & Hay as an operating system across the various factories. The firm began when Bodine Coffin (a brother of William Coffin, Jr.) and Andrew K Hay (a brother-in-law of the two) gained control of the Hammonton Glass Works in 1836. When the factory burned in 1838, the two abandoned the plant or returned it to William, Jr., who rebuilt the works.

Meanwhile, William Coffin, Jr., had acquired the plant at Winslow in 1835. Immediately after the 1838 Hammonton fire, Andrew Hay bought into the Winslow factory with William, Jr. – creating another Coffin & Hay operating firm. Both Knittle (1927:225) and McKearin & Wilson (1978:93) agreed that Andrew Hay probably took the molds that survived the Hammonton fire and used them again at the Winslow plant.

Although none of the sources were clear on the date, Tristran Bowdle joined William, Jr., and Andrew Hay soon after the two merged, possibly within two years or so. Our guestimate would be ca. 1840. The firm became Coffin, Hay & Bowdle until William Coffin sold his share to another brother, Edwin, in 1847, and the group became Hay, Bowdle & Co.

Bowdle withdrew from the firm in 1850. Although sources were unclear, the firm may have reverted to the Coffin & Hay name for another year. At that point (1851), Edwin Coffin sold his share to Hay, and Hay’s nephew, John, joined – now making the firm A.K. Hay & Co. The firm then stabilized until the death of Andrew Hay in 1881. The company reorganized as

Hay & Co. in 1883, and leased the factory to the Tillyer Brothers the following year. The Tillyers controlled the plant until 1892.

As a footnote, Coffin & Hay may have opened a window glass factory called the Sasokson Glass Works ca. 1850. We have discovered only one reference for the plant, but it is irrelevant for this discussion of container factories.

## The Continuation of Products

The apparent redundancy in the above discussion is necessary to create the continuity required to understand the progression of flasks and fruit jars between the operating firms. Of all the various Coffin-related enterprises, the Coffin & Hay succession appears to be the only one that made identifiable products. Although the explanation requires a bit of speculation, the results seem relatively evident. See Table 2 for a chronology of Coffin & Hay.

All sources suggest the Hammonton plant as the originator of the flasks embossed “COFFIN & HAY / HAMMONTON” – for obvious reasons. As mentioned above, both Knittle (1927:225) and McKearin & Wilson (1978:93) suggested that Andrew Hay probably took the molds that survived the Hammonton fire and used them again at the Winslow plant. It seems likely that the remaining flasks – with similar embossed designs but no names – were also made by Coffin & Hay at Winslow. It is equally probable that production continued into the Coffin, Hay & Bowdle period and that the flasks were made until the molds wore out.

**Table 2 – Coffin & Hay Chronology**

| Operating Firm       | Dates     | Location              |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Coffin & Hay         | 1836-1838 | Hammonton Glass Works |
| Coffin & Hay         | 1898-1839 | Winslow Glass Works   |
| Coffin, Hay & Bowdle | 1839-1850 | Winslow Glass Works   |
| Hay, Bowdle & Co.    | 1847-1850 | Winslow Glass Works   |
| poss. Coffin & Hay   | 1851      | Winslow Glass Works   |
| Coffin & Hay         | ca. 1850  | Sasokson Glass Works  |

The same general principles apply to the jars originally made by Hay & Co., including the Winslow and Almy jars – although the Winslow Improved Valve Jar was likely only made by Hay & Co. The Tillyer Bros. certainly took over the patent for the Winslow jar (or made the jar after the patent expired), and they probably continued the Almy jar as well. By 1892, however, the string was broken with the closure of the plant.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

Although the Coffin family was involved in a number of glass operations, all within New Jersey, all sources agree that the only bottles marked with the Coffin name were those made by Coffin & Hay at the Hammonton and Winslow factories from 1836 to as late as 1846. Even though Knittle and Toulouse (almost certainly parroting Knittle) claim that a C&H mark was also used by Coffin & Hay, we can find no other confirmation for the logo.

The second string of identifiable containers consisted of jars made by Hay & Co. – still at Winslow – and their successors, the Tillyer Bros. Theodore F. Woodward assigned his 1870 and 1877 patents to Hay & Co., and Henry C. Gaskill assigned his 1873 patent to the firm. These produced the Winslow Improved Valve Jar, the Winslow jar, and the Almy jar. The Winslow jar was certainly continued by the Tillyer Bros. – as the Tillyer jar – and the brothers may have also made the Almy jar.

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