

# The Diamond Glass Co. of Royersford, Pennsylvania

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Although the Diamond Glass Co. of Royersford, Pennsylvania, was long-lived (1886-1990), its market area seems to have been mostly restricted to eastern Pennsylvania and the surrounding states. Its main manufacturer's mark was a diamond embossed on bottle bases – with some variation. Although the identification is not positive, Diamond may have used a DGCO basemark at some point.

## Company History

### Diamond Glass Co., Royersford, Pennsylvania (1886-1990)

The Diamond Glass Co. grew out of the Penn Glass Works at Royersford, when a partnership consisting of I. Merritt Schellinger, Charles Raiser, William J. Ralston, Addison A. Murray, J. Adam Frederick, John W. Hiller, Daniel D. Holcomb, J. Blackwood Hertzell, Joseph Buzby, and Jacob Stokley. purchased the plant and renamed it the Diamond Glass Co. in 1886. The group purchased land at Royersford on April 19, 1888, possibly with a view of expansion. In 1889, the plant used one furnace (Ruoff 1895:192-193; Toulouse 1971:550; von Mechow 2015). On August 28, 1890, the *American Pottery & Glassware Reporter* noted that Diamond Glass doubled its capacity

last year . . . and again during the summer shutdown they have built so that they are now one of the largest concerns for the manufacture of green glass bottles in Eastern Pennsylvania. This sign of prosperity is largely due to the energy of their secretary, Mr. J.M. Schellinger [probably I.M. Schellinger], coupled with the uniform good quality of the bottles they make (quoted in Roller 1997).

The *Reporter* later stated that on January 25, 1891, fire destroyed “one of the factories” of the Diamond Glass Co., but it would “be rebuilt at once, and the company will try and fill its orders with the remaining furnace.” By February of that year, however, *China, Glass & Lamps* reported that there were three furnaces in operation. By the 1890s, the company letterhead noted

that the plant made soda and beer bottles, druggists' ware, wines and flasks in green, blue, and amber colors (Tyson 1971:14). The firm survived the panic (depression) of 1893, so the business must have been stable.

*China, Glass & Lamps* reported on August 8, 1894, that the Diamond Glass Co. had chartered as a Pennsylvania corporation with a capital of \$100,000. The Board of Directors – Isaac M. Schellinger, A.A. Murray, Charles Raiser, William Ralston, and John Hill – elected I.M. Shellinger as president, with Adam Frederick as vice-president, W.J. Ralston as secretary, A.A. Murray as treasurer, Charles Raiser as general manager, and John Hilbert as his assistant (Roller 1997). In 1897, Diamond Glass operated two furnaces with 10 pots, along with one day tank with four rings (Roller 1997). The *National Glass Budget* (1897:5), however, noted that the plant was “operating one 5-pot furnace on amber, blue and colored bottles” – although this entry only applied to bottles rather than other products.

In 1904, the plant made “prescription, liquor and proprietary ware and milk jars” with the same equipment. Schellinger remained as president, with Ralston and Murry in their respective positions (*American Glass Review* 1934:165). The Thomas Registers (Thomas Publishing Co. 1905:104; 1907:161, 799; 1909:202, 1101) listed the plant as making soda water, wine, bitters, druggists', beer, and medicine bottles from 1905 to 1909 and fruit jars in the 1907-1909 period.

By 1913, the Diamond Glass Co., Royersford, Pennsylvania, made “a general line [of bottles] in special colors” using two furnaces with 10 pots. (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:953). The identification of furnaces and pots with hand manufacture suggests that all Diamond bottles were still mouth blown by 1913. The *National Glass Budget* (1916:1) listed orders for O'Neill machines “within the last ten days” (i.e., from July 1, 1916), and the Diamond Glass Co. of Royersford was on the list. Toulouse (1971:550-551) noted that the company blew bottles by hand until 1917, when it acquired semi-automatic machines, – although he probably referred to the 1916 acquisition. At the end of 1918, the company installed “one large O'Neill machine for the manufacture of quarts and large size bottles” (*Glassworker* 1918:12). The plant had four continuous tanks with 32 rings in 1923. By the following year, it was completely automated (apparently with semi-automatics) and began using the elongated diamond mark.

By 1927, the plant made “prescriptions, vials, flint, green, and amber beers and minerals, patent, proprietary, liquors, flasks, packers and preservers” by both machine and hand methods at three continuous tanks with 16 rings. The liquor listing – probably outdated, since this was during Prohibition – was dropped in 1928, and all production was by machine. Despite the early stage of the Great Depression, the company refurbished the plant, installing three continuous tanks that were larger than the former ones in 1931.<sup>1</sup> In 1934, Frank B. Foster – apparently *not* one of the Fosters who were connected with such plants as the Granite Glass Co. or Dean, Foster & Co. – purchased all the common stock in the firm, but production was limited to seven rings. Beginning to feel the Depression, production dropped to the use of only two of the tanks in 1935 (*American Glass Review* 1927:132; 1928:133; 133; 1929:96; 1935:83; Toulouse 1971:550-551).

In 1936, the plant apparently went to all flint production, listing “flint beers and minerals, patent, proprietary, packers and preservers,” using the same equipment. In 1937, the plant produced “flint private mold work only” at one continuous tank with eight rings. Although the number of rings varied after that point, the listing was essentially unchanged through 1944 (*American Glass Review* 1936:89; 1942:99; Toulouse 1971:551). Even though Giarde (1980:35-36) included the company as a milk bottle manufacturer based on an identification by Gordon Taylor, there is no historical evidence to link the company to dairy container production.

The firm seems to have been remarkably stable during the period from 1940 to the 1980s. We have found very little information from this period, even in Pennsylvania newspapers. On May 28, 1946, the *Chester Times* reported that the Civilian Production Administration approved the application of the Diamond Glass Co., Royersford, for \$698,000 to construct three buildings, and this certainly heralded an expansion of the plant. Diamond Glass also sponsored a basketball team – not very originally called the Basketeers – during 1947 and 1948, although there were no newspaper reports on the team before or after those years.

The *Pottstown Mercury* named Local 18 of the Glass Bottle Blowers Assn. in connection with Diamond Glass on September 9, 1952. Although this is the first actual notice we have found for union activity, the very silence likely indicates that the firm had a union shop from the beginning. Typically, union discussions in existing records centered around non-union plants.

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<sup>1</sup> Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:99) added that the factory was destroyed by fire in 1931, but we have not confirmed that in any other sources, including newspaper searches.

From at least 1947 to 1971 (probably both earlier and later than that period), Diamond Glass advertised to purchase broken glass to be used as culet (glass pieces that were melted to be used in conjunction with raw materials to form a new load of molten glass for the tanks). By 1971, John H Foster (son of Frank B. Foster, who had gained control of the firm in 1934) was president, with other family members – Frank B. Foster, Jr, J.C. Foster, and F.B. Foster III serving as vice presidents (Toulouse 1971:551). Toulouse (1971:551) noted that “for quality Diamond has long been the “glassmaker’s glassmaker.”

In 1985, Diamond operated 12 IS machines, making “cosmetic containers, liquor containers, miniatures, private mold containers” at two plants, both in Royersford (Perrine 1985:18). At some point in 1985, Diamond acquired the Dorsey Corp., which had engulfed the Glass Container Corp. in 1983 – and the new firm became Diamond-Bathurst. Diamond, in turn, became a subsidiary of Anchor Hocking in 1987, and the firm became the Anchor Glass Container Corp. Anchor closed the plant in 1990 (*New York Times* 1988; Owens-Illinois 2001; Whitten 2015).

## **Bottles and Marks**

### **Diamond** (horizontally elongated)

Toulouse (1971:550) illustrated an elongated diamond that he claimed was used by the Diamond Glass Co. of Royersford, Pennsylvania, “since 1924.” Toulouse (1971:552) noted that his sources were “directories; Diamond Glass Co. correspondence.” It is thus likely that he received the 1924 date from someone in the glass company. However, such information, supplied by glass company officials for various other firms, has often proved faulty.

According to Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:123), the Diamond Glass Co. used a diamond mark on medicinal bottles between 1924 and 1940, although the pair almost certainly followed Toulouse on the beginning date. Various sources (Berge 1980:83; Emhart 1982:74) show the diamond mark in use by the Royersford plant up to 1982, but it does not appear in sources from 1990 on (e.g., Powell 1990; Emhart 1996:48).

Creswick (1987a:227) showed a single grooved-ring wax-sealer fruit jar embossed on its base with a horizontally elongated diamond, but she gave no details about the jar, dates, or manufacturer (Figure 1). These jars could certainly have been made by the Diamond Glass Co. (U.S. – not Canada) during the 1886-1900 period. Creswick (1987b:42) illustrated a single “insert and screw band” jar with a horizontally elongated diamond embossed on the front (Figure 2). She identified the Diamond Glass Co., “Montreal, Quebec & elsewhere” as the manufacturer. She made no attempt to assign a date to the jar, although this second volume was about 20<sup>th</sup> century jars.

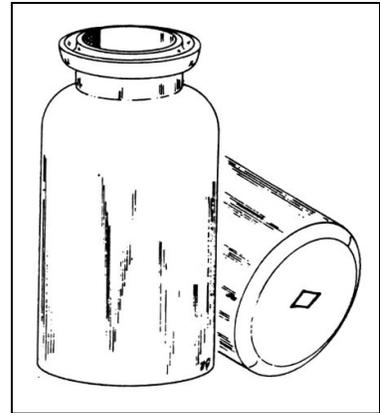


Figure 1 – Diamond wax-sealer (Creswick 1987a:227)

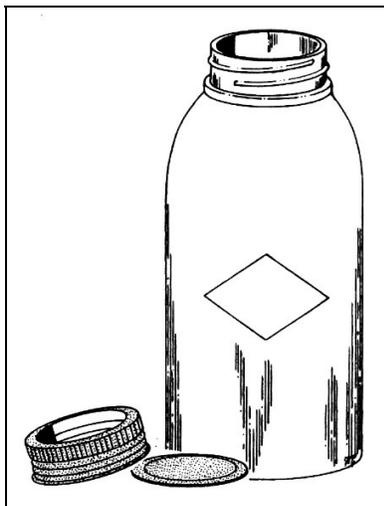


Figure 2 – Diamond jar (Creswick 1987b:42)

Von Mechow (2014) reported the elongated-diamond logo on 63 beer and soda bottles. He noted cryptically that “most marked bottles date 1886 to 1890 and have smooth bases.” The Diamond Glass catalog on his webpage – from ca. 1900-1905 – showed a variety of beer and soda bottles (including both crown and Hutchinson finishes) and some liquor bottles, but no other types. The actual bottles illustrated by von Mechow had Hutchinson, blob, and Baltimore Loop

finishes, indicating that the Diamond logo was used on soda and beer bottles during the early period of the firm’s existence. The distribution of the bottles was limited to the area around eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey, although it extended into southern New York and northern Maryland. The back page of the catalog also showed a Diamond enclosing a drawing of the plant (Figure 3).

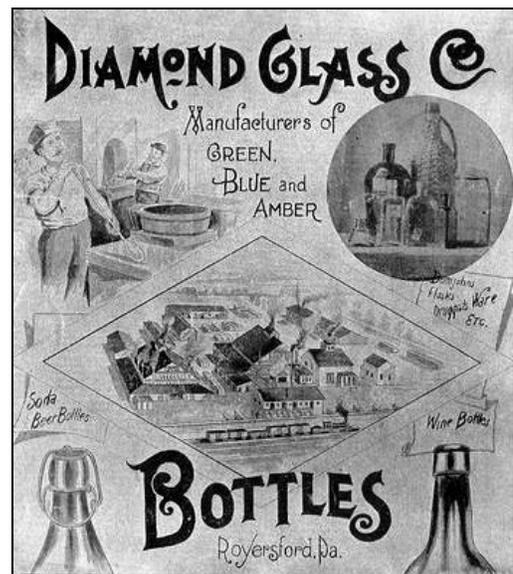


Figure 3 – Diamond Glass catalog – back page (von Mechow 2015)

Von Mechow (2015) included some interesting variations, including DGCO in a diamond, 14 in a diamond, B in a diamond, 12 in a diamond, 8 in a diamond, and a dot in a diamond (Table 1). The DGCO in the diamond forms a connection with the DGCO logo discussed below. Von Mechow noted close matches between several of the bottles with these basal variations from the ca. 1900-1905 Diamond catalog. This provides solid evidence that Diamond Glass used most of these variations.

**Table 1 – Diamond Basal Variations – after von Mechow (2015)**

In Diamond	Bottle Type	Location	Number
DGCo (325 below)	champagne beer	NJ	6
DGCo	champagne beer	NJ	1
B	Hutchinson	NJ	1
14	Hutchinson	PA	2
12	Hutchinson	PA	1
12	Hutchinson	NJ	3
8	Hutchinson	PA	1
dot	champagne beer	PA	5

Whitten (2015), however, added that “some bottles may well be products of the Illinois Glass Company, Alton, IL., a firm that used a diamond mark enclosing numbers and/or letters on many types of bottles.” In some cases, the “I” inside the Illinois Glass Diamond-I logo may be very faint and can be mistaken for an empty diamond mark. Although not mentioned by Whitten, some of the Illinois Glass Co. variations used a dot in the center of the diamond. While most of those occurred on smaller bottles, we have seen the dot on larger containers.

There is obviously some overlap between the Diamond Glass Co. Diamond logo and the Illinois Glass Co. Diamond-I and similar marks. As noted by Whitten (also see Lockhart et al. 2005), the Illinois Glass Co. made a significant number of bottles embossed with basemarks consisting of a diamond with a two- or three-digit number, sometimes with letters. These numbers often corresponded to bottles listed in various Illinois Glass Co. catalogs, although

some were for private molds (i.e., molds only used for individual customers). At this point, we have never found the Illinois Glass Co. numbered-diamond logo on soda or beer bottles, nor have we seen the Diamond Glass Co. marks on any other bottle type. Admittedly, our sample of these bottles is limited, but it may be that the glass houses can be distinguished by bottle type. Since Diamond Glass was apparently limited in area to eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey, that should also help researchers to identify marks. In addition, machine-made bottles from the Illinois Glass Co. would also have the distinctive feathered Owens basal scar.



Figure 4 – Diamond on Parker’s Hair Balsam bottle

We can add diamond marks on two bottles. One was a Parker’s Hair Balsam bottle with a “3” to the left of the logo but with no body embossing



Figure 5 – Diamond on flask (Tucson Urban Renewal collection)

(Figure 4). The other was a liquor flask embossed on the base “D-126 / 1 (sideways) 18 {diamond logo} 47 (illegible embossing) / MADE IN U.S.A.” (Figure 5). The “47” is a date code for 1947, required on liquor bottles during the 1934-1964 era, and “18” was apparently the Diamond Glass Co. factory code. During this post-Prohibition period, the federal government assigned specific numbers to glass houses making liquor bottles. Both were machine made and had not even a faint trace of any letter or number inside the diamond.

### DGCO in a Diamond

As noted above, DGCO-in-a-diamond was used by the Diamond Glass Co. at Royersford as demonstrated by von Mechow (2015). Von

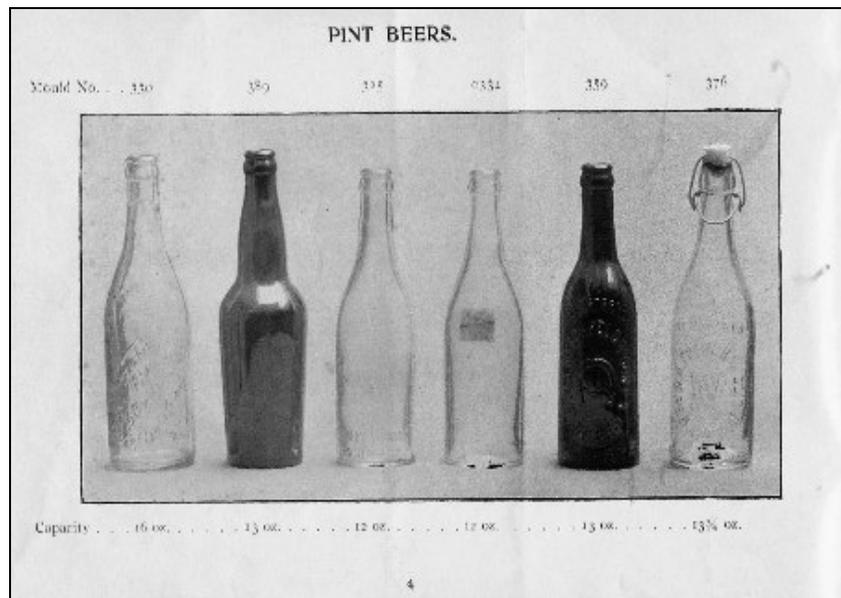


Figure 6 – Diamond Glass catalog (von Mechow 2015)



Figure 7 – Bottle matching catalog (von Mechow 2015)

Mechow connected examples of bottles with the logo and identical bottles in the 1900-1905 Diamond Glass Co. catalog that he reprinted on his website (e.g., Figures 6 & 7). A discussant on the New Jersey Bottle Forum (2011) posted a 1915

Diamond Glass Co. ad that illustrated a W.A. French bottle (Figure 8). French was one of the bottlers listed by von Mechow as using the Diamond-DGCO / 325 mark. The bottle third from the left in Figure 6 bears the catalog number 325. This is the same bottle shown in Figure 7 and on the right in Figure 8. This positively connects the logo with the Diamond Glass Co. Diamond Glass probably only used the logo between the mid-1890s and ca. 1910 but only on bottles used by a small group of bottlers within a 25-mile radius of each other along the Atlantic coast of New Jersey.



Figure 8 – 1915 Diamond Glass ad (New Jersey Bottle Forum)

## DGCO

Von Mechow (2015), Fowler (2015), and Whitten (2015) all listed, discussed, and/or illustrated bottles that used the DGCO logo. Von Mechow suggested three different glass houses as users of the mark – none of which included the Diamond Glass Co. Fowler followed von Mechow, but Whitten included Diamond as a possibility. The variations and hypotheses associated with the DGCO logo are discussed in the DGCO section, and our conclusion was that the Diamond Glass Co. was one of two users of the mark. Diamond Glass probably only used the logo between the mid-1890s and ca. 1910.



Figure 9 – Trade Mark Diamond (Creswick 1987b:42)

## Other Diamond Marks

### Diamond Fruit Jar Marks

Toulouse (1969:91-92; 1971:161), Roller (1983:102), and Creswick (1987b:42) all listed and/or illustrated two diamond marks embossed on machine-made, round fruit jars (Figure 9). Each consisted of variations of “TRADE MARK,” “DIAMOND,” “FRUIT JAR.” and, in one case, “IMPROVED” associated with a horizontally elongated diamond. The logo was actually used by the Federal Glass Co. and is discussed in more detail in that section.



Figure 10  
– Heisey  
Diamond  
marks  
(Peterson  
1968:16)

### Diamond (vertically elongated)

Peterson (1968:16) illustrated a vertically elongated diamond mark used by A.H. Heisey & Co., Newark, Ohio, beginning in 1900 on “pressed or blown glassware” (Figure 10). This was a match for Heisey’s H-in-a-diamond mark that was also used from 1900 on pressed glassware. As far as we know, the Heisey mark without the “H” was not used on bottles. See Illinois Glass Co. section for more on the Heisey Diamond-H mark.



Figure 11 – Diamond  
insulator (eBay)

### Diamond on Insulators

A horizontal diamond – virtually identical with the one used on bottles by the Diamond Glass Co. – was embossed on glass insulators (Figure 11). Both the McDougalds (1990:154-155) and Whitten (2015) attributed these insulators to the Diamond Glass Co. of Manitoba, Canada.

## Discussion and Conclusions

There seems to be little question that the horizontally elongated diamond mark (unfilled) was used by the Diamond Glass Co., Royersford, Pennsylvania. Since the logo has been reported on blob-top soda bottles and Hutchinson bottles, it was probably used from the

beginning of the firm in 1886. Since the mark was listed as late as 1982, and Whitten (2014) illustrated a photo of a diamond heelmark with a 1985 date code, the logo was almost certainly used until the closing of the plant in 1990. All the early marks seem to have been on bases, and that apparently continued into at least the late 1940s. Heelmarks – including date codes – were probably a later format, although our sample is insufficient to provide a closer date (Figure 12).

The vertically elongated diamond mark was also certainly used by the Heisey Glass Co., apparently only on tableware. Since it would be difficult or even impossible to tell whether the diamond was embossed vertically or horizontally on a base, the difference in products is important. Also see the discussion on the possible use of Heisey logos on prescription bottles in the Illinois Glass Co. section. Creswick identified the Diamond Trade Mark fruit jar logos as being made by the Federal Glass Co., Columbus, Ohio.

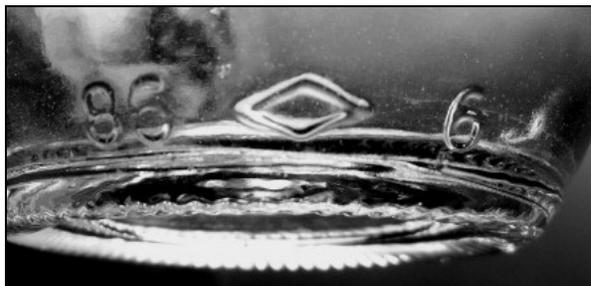


Figure 12 – Diamond heelmark (Whitten 2015)

Horizontally elongated diamonds were used by Diamond Glass, of course, as well as the Illinois Glass Co. and the Dominion Glass Co. of Manitoba, Canada. The Diamond-I logo of Illinois Glass is notable for the “I” in the center, and the Dominion mark has a central “D.” The only real issue centers around the diamonds with numbers inside. Unfortunately, we have not found examples of the Diamond Glass Co. number logos. I may be that there is a way to readily distinguish those from the numbered marks used by the Illinois Glass Co. As noted above, Diamond Glass seems to have used the numbered diamonds on soda and beer bottles, while Illinois Glass embossed the mark on medicine and packer bottles. In addition, most (probably all) of the Illinois Glass logos were accompanied by Owens basal scars.

The user of the DGCO logo, however, has been in dispute, despite the obvious connection between Diamond Glass Co. as shown by the Diamond-DGCO logo. However, a great deal of other evidence supports the identification of other glass houses – as well as Diamond Glass – with DGCO marks. This controversy is discussed in the DGCO section.

## Acknowledgments

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