

Ellenville Glass Works

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After its initial incorporation, the Ellenville factory survived five reorganizations between 1836 and ca. 1922. Unfortunately, despite its almost century-long history, the plant was only known for the use a single mark (possibly two) on its glassware. Even more restrictive, the full factory name was only embossed on a single type of container – cylinder whiskey bottles. Despite the restriction, there were interesting variations in the marks.

Histories

There are two major schools of thought about the history of the glass factory at Ellenville, New York. One, supported by most sources, lumps the various names of the business together. McKearin and McKearin (1941:602) noted that the operating company was called the Ellenville Glass Co., and the factory was the Ellenville Glass Works. The other school of thought followed a more complex system of names that does not make intuitive sense. However, Roller (1997), Jones (1968:16) and the local (Ellenville) sources support this second format. Roller, in particular, cited primary sources for the major changes, and Jones quoted Katherine T. Terwilliger, former historian for the Town of Wawarsing Historical Society, Ellenville, New York. We have therefore followed the Jones/Roller model in the histories below. In addition, Creswick (1987:265) claimed that the opening date for the factory in Wawarsing was 1816, but this is not supported by any other sources and may have derived from a typographic error. The Town of Wawarsing is about three miles north of Ellenvill.

Ellenville Glass Co., Ellenville, New York (1836-1866)

All sources (Jones 1968:16; Knittle 1927:406; Roller 1997; Teal 2005:94; Toulouse 1971:179; Van Rensselaer 1969:101), except Creswick, support 1836 as the date when the plant opened. The original name of the firm was the Ellenville Glass Co. The company completed the plant in 1837 and lit the first fire at that time. Jasper Gilbert, Elisha Brigham, Alvan B. Preston, Rufus B. Chamberlin, and Elisha Johnson incorporated the firm on May 5, 1838. The latter three were associated with the Willington Glass Works at West Willington, Connecticut –

although none of the sources noted the nature of that link (Barber 1900:59; Jones 1968:16; Roller 1997). See the Other W section for more information on Willington.

On August 22, 1845, the firm reorganized. Of the original incorporators, Preston, Gilbert, Chamberlin, and Johnson – who by then had moved to Wethersfield, Connecticut – remained, with the addition of John H. Turner. The reason for the restructuring is unclear, but the plant remained associated with the Willington Glass Works until the next incorporation in 1866 (Roller 1997).

According to the Skye (2006), the workers were mostly Irish, German, and English, and the reason the site was chosen was because of its proximity to firewood and the D&H (Delaware & Hudson) Canal for ready shipping and importation of raw materials. The factory began making bottles in 1837 and switched to using Pennsylvania coal to fire the furnace in 1859, when the supply of firewood was mostly consumed. The plant made “bottles, fruit jars, insulators for telegraph poles, glass canes, paperweights and ornamental objects called ‘whimsies’ or Collectors Glass as well as carboys and demijohns.”

Ellenville Glass Works, Ellenville, New York (1866-1877)

On July 14, 1866, the firm again reorganized, this time as the Ellenville Glass Works, with a capital stock of \$125,000. This time, the group consisted of 25 incorporators, but only Alvan B. Preston had been part of the original founders. An 1871 billhead noted that J.H. Tuthill was the president, with G.H. Smith as vice president and H.H. Gale as treasurer. The plant made “Black, Green & Amber Glassware, Bottles Made to Order. Wilcox Patent Fruit Jars, The “Hero” Jars, Carboys, Flasks, Druggists’ Ware, &c.” (Roller 1997)

By 1875, A.S. Schoonmaker had assumed the presidency, with M.T. Morse as his vice president, M.E. Deyo as treasurer, and Jacob Hermance as general manager. The list of products was essentially the same, but the ad mentioned only Hero and Mason fruit jars. Ellenville was one of the plants that adopted the Keystone Grinding Machine for Grinding Fruit Jars, Flasks, and other glass items, patented by Kelly & Samuel on December 28, 1869. See the section on A.R. Samuel for more information. Despite the seeming prosperity, the firm apparently had problems; the courts ordered the business sold on September 10, 1877 (Roller 1997).

Ulster Glass Works, Ellenville, New York (ca. 1878)

Roller (1997) presented a single advertisement for the “Ulster Glass Works (Late Ellenville Glass Works).” Ulster obviously replaced Ellenville at some point after the sale. The principals were listed as Frisbie, Brown, and Tisdale. Brown was probably Charles S. Brown, one of the 1866 incorporators, but the other two were apparently newcomers to the plant. Marvin E. Deyo – treasurer in 1875 – was the general agent, and H. Reed was superintendent. The plant made demijohns, bottles, and fruit jars as well as other glassware (Roller 1997). The firm was short lived.

Ellenville Glass Factory, Ellenville, New York (1879-ca. 1889)

When Charles A. Edwards purchased the plant on October 15, 1879, he changed the name to the Ellenville Glass Factory but continued to make the same or similar products. Edwards joined with Isaac Corbin, William H. Deyo, Matthew Johnson, and Marvin E. Deyo to incorporate the Ellenville Glass Factory on October 15, 1879, with a capital of \$25,000. Edwards was president. At some point between 1886 and 1890, the plant ceased operations (Roller 1997).

Ellenville Glass Co., Ellenville, New York (1890-ca. 1894)

On April 24, 1890, Frederick S. Howard, John T. Stickney, and William V. Hilliard formed yet another corporation to operate the plant, this time as the Ellenville Glass Co. The ill-fated business again closed ca. 1894. E.J. Baily of Baily & Deyo (unclear whether this is William, Marvin, or some other Deyo) bought the factory at a foreclosure sale in August 1896 and sold it to State Treasurer Addison B. Colvin on May 25, 1898 (Roller 1997). The factory was probably not in operation during this two-year period.

Bahr Demijohn Co./Ellenville Glass Co., Ellenville, New York (ca. 1912-ca. 1922)

By 1912, Henry Bahr had opened the Bahr Demijohn Co. in a different part of town – *not* part of the earlier factory. The plant used one continuous tank with three rings, and Bahr had incorporated the firm by the following year, although he remained as president and treasurer,

with William H. Cokelet as manager for the life of the company. Bahr changed the name to the Ellenville Glass Co. in 1915, and the last listing was in 1922 (Roller 1997; Toulouse 1971:179-180). Although the plant certainly made demijohns, we have not discovered a list of other products.

Containers and Marks

Although Ellenville produced bottles for the South Carolina Dispensary in June 1893, none contained manufacturer's marks (Teal 2005:95).

E.G.W.

Von Mechow (2015) described three Hutchinson bottles embossed "E.G.W." on the reverse heels. All three bottles were made for Pennsylvania bottlers. Fowler (2015) attributed the mark to the Ellenville Glass Works, although von Mechow only claimed it was "E Glass Works." Although we have been unable to find a photo of the mark or documentary evidence to tie the E.G.W. logo to the Ellenville Glass Works, the initials certainly fit.

ELLENVILLE GLASS WORKS (ca. 1865-at least 1880)

Toulouse (1971:170) noted that the mark was "in a circle on bottom of bottles" and dated its use from ca. 1880 to 1890. Jones (1968:16) showed two slight variations of this mark, one embossed with ELLENVILLE GLASS in a downward arch at the top of the base and WORKS in an upward arch at the bottom. The second variation had the words in a continuous circle with a large dot flanked by two "rays" in the center (Figure 1).



Figure 1 – Ellenville Bases 1 & 2
(Jones 1968:16)

Switzer (1974:29, 32) noted that one of the cases of whiskey bottles found on the steamship Bertrand had bottles (probably dark green in color) made with three-piece molds (i.e., dip molds with hinged shoulder sections) with Rickett's-type molds at their bases. Each

Rickett’s mold was embossed “ELLENVILLE GLASS WORKS.” in a circle around the edge of the base. The 1865 wreck of the Bertrand solidified the date for this mark, although it may have used slightly earlier and was certainly used later.

We only have five examples of bases or four-leaf cylinder whiskey bottles embossed ELLENVILLE GLASS WORKS. Each example was embossed in a circle as per Switzer rather than the arch/inverted arch format noted by



Figure 3 – Ellenville Base 4 (Tucson Urban Renewal collection)

Jones. The words appeared in a Rickett’s-type mold around the outside edge of each base. Despite the small sample, the bases varied according to word placement, punctuation, types of indent, and mamelon/dot in the center. Two examples – one from Switzer (1974:32), one from the California State Parks collection – had the circle of words complete, with a period after “WORKS.” – a medium-sized central mamelon/dot, and a concave base (Figure 2). One example from the Tucson Urban Renewal collection also had a period after “WORKS.” – a significant space on both sides of “WORKS,” a medium mamelon/dot with four “rays,” and a concave center (Figure 3). An example offered at Glass Works Auction lacked punctuation, had spaces between “ELLENVILLE” and the other two words, and had a concave center with a mamelon/dot (Figure 4). The final example – also from Glass Works



Figure 2 – Ellenville Base 3 (Switzer 1974:32)

from the Tucson Urban Renewal collection also had a period after “WORKS.” – a significant space on both sides of “WORKS,” a medium mamelon/dot with four “rays,” and a concave center (Figure 3). An example offered at Glass Works Auction lacked punctuation, had spaces between “ELLENVILLE” and the other two words, and had a concave center with a mamelon/dot (Figure 4). The final example – also from Glass Works



Figure 4 – Ellenville Bases 5 & 6 (Glass Works Auction)

Auction – also had the spaces around “ELLENVILLE,” no punctuation, a tiny central dot, and an indented center (Table 1). It is important to note that the variations in engraving were probably due to the whims of the individual mold makers.

Table 1 – Ellenville Glass Works Logo Variation

Word Spacing*	Punctuation	Dot/Mamelon	Base Shape
ELLENVILLE GLASS (arch) / WORKS (inverted arch)**	No punctuation	Absent	Unknown
Even/continuous**	No punctuation	Medium with wings	Unknown
Even/continuous	Period after “Works”	Medium	Convex
Spaces around “Works”	Period after “Works”	Medium with 4 rays	Convex
Spaces around “ELLENVILLE”	No punctuation	Medium	Convex
Spaces around “ELLENVILLE”	No punctuation	Very small	Indented

* All bases were embossed “ELLENVILLE GLASS WORKS” in a circle in a Rickett’s plate around the edge of the base.

** These two variations are based on drawings by Eve Jones (1968:16). There is no way to be certain of the accuracy of the drawings.

Our study of cylinder whiskey bottles – presented in the A&DH Chambers section of the “A” Volume – dated concave bases with no pontil scars on cylinder whiskey bottles ca. 1870-1905. Indented bases with smaller central dots were made between ca. 1880 and ca. 1890. These Ellenville cylinder whiskey bottles were therefore most likely made during the ca. 1870-1890s based solely on manufacturing characteristics. That period fits the Ellenville Glass Works (1836-1866), Ellenville Glass Factory (1866-1877), and Ellenville Glass Co. (1879-ca. 1889) periods. Adding the earlier 1865 date based on the wreck of the Bertrand brings the probable date range to ca. 1865-at least 1880s.

Creswick (1987:66) noted that the Ellenville Glass Works was one of the companies that made the GEM fruit jar. Roller (206-210) mentioned several different manufacturers for the GEM jars, but Ellenville was not one of them.

Discussion and Conclusions

All surviving marks suggest that the last name was “Works.” This could mean one of two things. Either, 1) the bottles were made during the 1866-1877 period when the firm was incorporated as the Ellenville Glass Works, or 2) that the factory was always called the Ellenville Glass Works – regardless of the operating firm name – and the bottles could have been made anytime during the life of the plant. As the only known Ellenville marks are on cylinder whiskey bottles, the best date range is provided by the bottle style rather than the company dates. Manufacturing characteristics support the second explanation, stretching through periods with three different factory names. The mark was certainly in use in 1865, when the Bertrand sunk with a case of bottles. While it is unclear how long the mark was used, the indented base on one variation suggests that the use continued to at least 1880.

The E.G.W. logo remains controversial, but the initials certainly fit the Ellenville Glass Works, probably the best choice based on current information. Future researchers should find a larger sample of cylinder whiskey bottles and attempt to actually view Hutchinson bottles with E.G.W. initials. It is also possible that additional primary sources will appear.

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