

Falls City Glass Co., Louisville, Kentucky

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Despite its short, eight-year span in business, the Falls City Glass Co., Louisville, Kentucky, was prolific in the variations of its “FCGCO” logo and the number of marked bottles it produced. Especially significant were the variety of molds used in the production of its wax-sealer fruit jars. The firm certainly earned a place in glass mark history.

Histories

Falls City Glass Works, Louisville, Kentucky (1864-1865)

This short-lived plant was operated by John Stanger and Charles Doyle (Stanger & Doyle) from 1864 to 1865. The factory – on Fulton St, above Adams, opposite Island – made lamp chimneys, vials, and window glass (Whitten 2005a:49). It was unrelated to the later Falls City Glass Co.

Falls City Glass Co., Louisville, Kentucky (1884-1892)

The Louisville directories first listed the Falls City Glass Co. in 1884, just about the time the Southern Glass Co. closed (see the section on the Southern Glass Co., Louisville, for more information). Falls City was *not* an extension of Southern Glass; the two factories were at different locations, with separate management. However, many of the Southern Glass workers migrated to Falls City Glass (Whitten 2005b:44).

The *Louisville Courier-Journal* listed the plant at least as early as July 26, 1884. Joseph Husak was president, with Conrad Opperman as secretary, Jacob Scheuer as sole agent, Anton J. Graefenhan as bookkeeper, and Henry Geisel as foreman. The plant was located on Lytle St, between 26th and 27th Streets (Whitten 2005b:44; Roller n.d.). Fifteen gatherers and “laying up boys” struck on May 14, 1887, although the parties reached a settlement by May 18. The plant produced a remarkable variety of glass colors including aqua, green, amber, near yellow, citron, and several blues. The factory closed in 1892 (Whitten 2005b:44).

Containers and Marks

The Falls City Glass Co. made “fruit jars, pickle bottles, coffin flasks, blob beers, peppersauces, olive oils, worcestershire sauce bottles, shoe polish bottles, etc.” (Whitten 2015).

F.C.C.CO.

Whitten (2006) noted that this was a common mis-reading of the F.C.G.CO. mark.

F.C.G.CO. (1884-1892)

Photos from eBay showed that most of the marks had a capital “O” in “CO,” although there were a few with the “o” in lower case. The mark almost always had punctuation in the eBay sample, and it is possible that all marks were intended to contain full punctuation, but some failed to show on the glass. Whitten (2005a:44-45, 51) always showed the marks with full punctuation and noted the logo on grooved-ring wax-sealer fruit jars and a variety of bottles and flasks. The mark was usually in a horizontal line, but one flask was embossed in an arched configuration that is almost a circle.

Wax-Sealer Fruit Jars

Toulouse (1971:197) stated that “these initials have been found on a wax-sealing fruit jar. They do not correspond to any glass company name in my files” (Figure 1). He also noted that the period of use was uncertain. However, in his earlier book (Toulouse 1969:116), he commented that “it may be possible that a “P” was mistaken, dimly cut, for “F,” and that the initials stand for the Pittsburgh City Glass Co., or Works, the plant used by Cunninghams & Ihmsen, 1855-79.” He dated the jar (and mark), “probably circa 1860-70.” Roller (1983:123) noted six colors and identified the Falls City Glass Co. as the manufacturer. He added a variation with the initials “interspersed through W embossed on base” (Figure 2). The Roller update (2011:191) added three variations but no significant information.



Figure 1 – Wax sealer (eBay)



Figure 2 – FCGCO on W (eBay)

Figure 2 – FCGCO on W (eBay) showed six variations of this mark on the bases of grooved-ring wax-sealer fruit jars (Figure 3). The mark appeared with full punctuation, partial punctuation, and no punctuation. It was usually embossed horizontally across the bases of the jars with various embossed lines above, below, and or at angles within the



Figure 4 – Arch (Whitten collection)

In one case, the mark was in an inverted arch at the top of the base, accompanied by numbers 1, 2, or 3, embossed in the center of the base. Searches on eBay have also shown all three numbers but none higher. These are probably mold numbers and have no dating significance. Creswick attributed the mark to the Falls City Glass Co., Louisville, Kentucky, 1884-1892 and included a remarkable number of colors.

1. arch [quarts with numbers 1, 2, & 3; half-gallons with 1 & 2] (Figure 4)
2. horizontal [quart; half-gallon] (Figure 5)

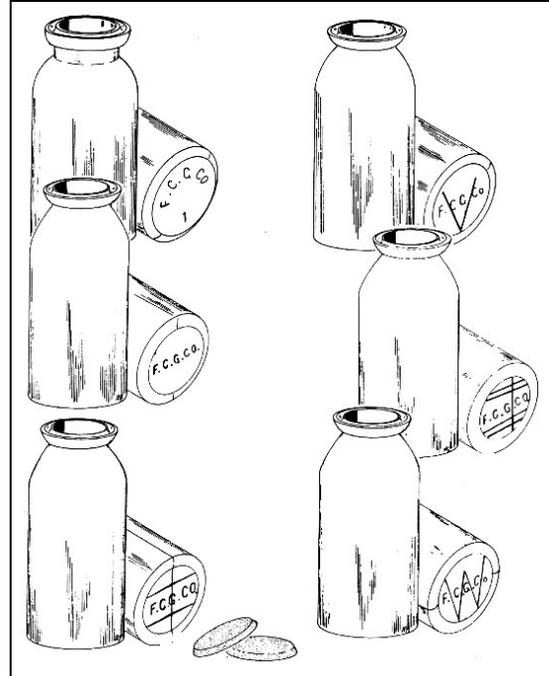


Figure 3 – FCGCO wax sealers (Creswick 1987:59)



Figure 5 – Horizontal (Whitten collection)



Figure 6 – Two lines (eBay)

3. horizontal with one horizontal line above the logo and one line below [quart] (Figure 6)

4. horizontal with one vertical line through “G” and two horizontal lines, one above the logo, and one

below the logo [quart] (Figure 7)

5. horizontal with two lines above the logo, two below, and a

single vertical line [quart] (Figure 8)



Figure 8 – Five lines (Whitten collection)

6. horizontal with an “X” below the logo [quart] (Figure 9)

7. horizontal logo backgrounded by a large embossed “V” [quart] (Figure 10)

8. horizontal logo backgrounded by a large embossed “W” [quart] (see Figure 3)



Figure 7 – Three lines (Antique Bottles.net)



Figure 9 – X (eBay)



Figure 10 – V background (eBay)

No one seems to have addressed the lines on the bases of these bottles. The lines were horizontal, vertical, and diagonal.

Some bracketed the F.C.G.Co. logo, while others crossed the mark. In two cases, the lines formed apparent letters of “V” and “W” although the “letters” may have had no intended alphabetical connotation. These lines may have been a form of mold identification. Although this needs to be tested with a large sample of Falls City fruit jars, each of these line configurations apparently represents a single mold.

Beer and Soda Bottles

Von Mechow (2015) reported the “F.C.G.CO.” mark on five beer and soda bottles. His only example of a Hutchinson soda bottle had the logo embossed on the reverse heel, although



Figure 11 – Beer base (eBay)



Figure 13 – Pat '85



Figure 14 – Hutchinson bottle (Fowler 2015)

the common location on beer bottles was horizontally across the center of the base (Figures 11 & 12). One beer variation was embossed “PAT. / F.C.G.Co. / ‘85.” also on the base – the patent for the Baltimore Loop Seal (Figures 13). All the beer bottles appeared to have applied, one-part finishes. Interestingly, all photos we have seen of beer bottle bases had a lower-case “o” in “Co.”

Mobley (2015) included five of the Pat 85 beer bottles and four with the mark horizontally across the bases. All had one-part finishes. Hutchbook (Fowler 2015) listed nine Hutchinson bottles, two with basemarks, the other seven with logos on the reverse heels (Figures 14 & 15).



Figure 15 – Basemark (Fowler 2015)

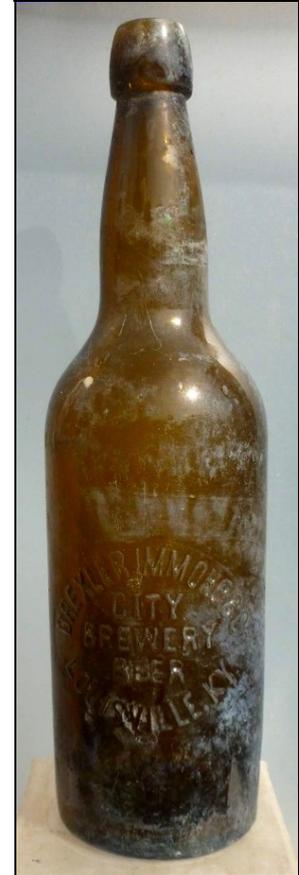


Figure 12 – Beer bottle (eBay)



Figure 16 – Pickle base (eBay)



Figure 17 – Pickle bottle (eBay)

Other Bottle Types

The mark is also found on pickle bottles (Figures 16 & 17), packers (Figures 18 & 19), flasks, Worcestershire sauce bottles (Figure 20 & 21), and at least one form of six-sided peppersauce bottle, all shown on eBay auctions (as well as others mentioned by Whitten – see Histories section). All finishes appear to have been applied (Figure 22). The F.C.G.CO. mark also appeared on a single bitters bottle. Ring & Ray (1984:74) listed the mark on the base of a Normandy Herb & Root Stomach Bitters bottle, packaged by the Normandy Mfg. Co., Louisville, Kentucky. They offered no further information about either the company or the mark.



Figure 20 – Sauce bottle (eBay)

The base of a picnic flask had a unique variation of the logo. The flask was made in a bottom-hinged mold that left a seam that extended from one side of the neck, down the side, across the base, and back up the other side. The base was marked “F.C.” above the seam and “G.CO.” below it (Figures 23 & 24). This unusual configuration may indicate one of the plant’s early molds.

F.C.G.C. (ca. 1884)

Although F.C.G.CO. is the more common mark, Whitten (2005b:44) noted that



Figure 18 – Packer base (eBay)



Figure 19 –Packer bottle (eBay)



Figure 21 – Sauce base (eBay)



Figure 22 – Applied Finish (eBay)

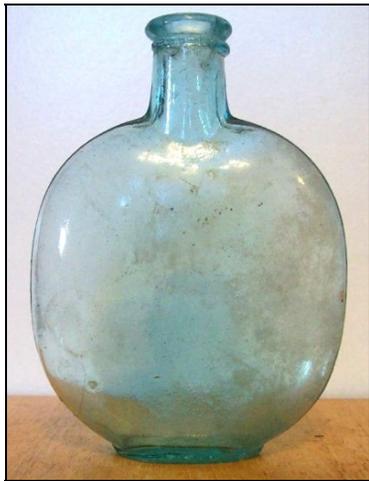


Figure 24 – Picnic flask (eBay)

JACKET / IS CRACK PROOF” that had the more typical “F.C.G.CO.” basemark.

F.G.G.Co.

Herskovitz (1978:8) noted a single beer bottle base embossed with F.G.G.Co. The mark was not accompanied by any letters or numbers, and he made no attempt to identify the maker. This was a misreading of the F.C.G.Co. mark. When the Bottle Research Group examined the Fort Bowie bottles in January 2007, we found the base Herskovitz recorded. Although the letters were blurred by time and nature, it was, indeed, the F.C.G.Co. mark (Figure 25).



Figure 27 – Porpoise Oil bottle (Whitten collection)

some bottles were marked on the base with F.C.G.C. We have only discovered a single bottle embossed “F.C.G.C.” horizontally across the base (Figure 26). The side of the bottle was embossed “JOSEPH.GOLDBACH. (slight arch) / PORPOISE OIL DRESSING (inside the outline of a fish) / LOUISVILLE. KY. (slight inverted arch)” read with the bottle on its side, finish facing left (Figure 27). The bottle was very crudely made, and every “S” was reversed. The bottle was likely made during the earliest days of the factory – probably ca. 1884. Figure 28 shows the porpoise oil bottle beside a similar bottle embossed “RED



Figure 23 – Flask base (eBay)



Figure 25 – Beer base (National Park Service Wester Archeological Curation Center)

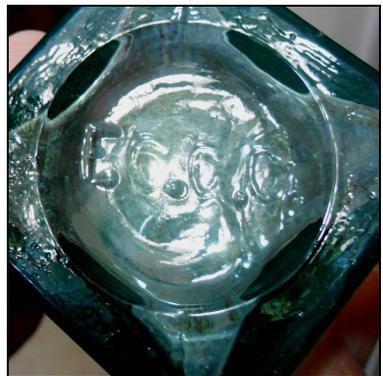


Figure 26 – F.C.G.C. basemark (Whitten collection)

Discussion and Conclusions

It is clear that the user of both the F.C.G.CO. and F.C.G.C. marks was the Fall City Glass Co. of Louisville, Kentucky. We found no companies that even came close to fitting the F.G.G.Co. initials recorded by Herskovitz, so the mark is probably either a misreading of an indistinct mark or an engraver's error. Future research needs to focus on assessing a possible chronology of logo variations and fully classifying base mark variations on wax-sealer fruit jars.

Acknowledgments

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Figure 28 – Similar bottles
(Whitten collection)

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