

Findlay Bottle Co.

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Herskovitz (1978:8) noted variations on the FBCo mark on beer bottles found at Fort Bowie, Arizona. Ayres et al (1980:12) identified the Findlay Bottle Co. as the producer of the containers. Subsequent research supports the claim by Ayres and associates, but the picture grew larger to include wax-sealer fruit jars and The Dandy.

History

Findlay Bottle Co., Findlay, Ohio (1888-1893)

Commoner & Glassworker announced on March 17, 1888, that E.J. Beebe had selected Findlay, Ohio, as a location for a new bottle factory and had returned to Massillon (Ohio) to create a new stock company.¹ On April 14, members of the Coontz Syndicate formed the Findlay Bottle Co., and the group incorporated on May 4 with a capital of \$30,000. Located on E. Blanchard St., the factory was completed in late May, and blew the first glass on September 24 of that year. A July letterhead named U.G. Baker as president, with A.W. Marshall as secretary, and E.J. Beebe as plant manager. The plant manufactured “fruit jars, glass ‘oil cans,’ battery jars, whiskey flasks, and amber and green beer bottles.” The business was a complete success and could hardly stay up with the demand for its bottles (Caniff 2006:38; Roller 1998; Von Mechow 2015).

On June 26, 1889, *Commoner & Glassworker* announced that the “whole factory has been working on jars, principally blowovers [i.e., jars that were blown into a mold with excess glass extending above the mold that was broken off and ground down], some beers and minerals.” About this time, the plant also made “the Burns Microphone Cell Jar [a battery jar] and its carbon for the Findlay Glass & Carbon Co.” (Roller 1998). Wilson and Caperton (1994:70) recorded all beer bottle advertising in the *Western Brewer* between 1883 and 1890 as

¹ This is reminiscent of the founding of the Golden Glass Works at Golden, Colorado, possibly a late 19th century trend? See the Colorado Glass Works Co. file for more information.

well as samples from issues between 1878 and 1882. The Findlay Bottle Co. first advertised beer bottles in the journal in October 1889 and continued the ads until the end of 1890 (the last year noted by Wilson and Caperton). It is likely that the company continued to produce beer bottles until it closed.

By 1890, the plant used eight pots to make its products. Beebe, George L. Cusack, and other members of the corporation attempted to purchase the site of the former Lippincott Glass Works in May 1891 with a view toward expanding the Findlay Bottle Co. Although we have found no record of the final Lippincott sale, the plant replaced the pot furnaces with two continuous tanks in 1892. By September of that year, the factory was making fruit jars at one tank and called the other the “amber or bottle tank.” The plant was shipping fruit jars to Indianapolis by June 1893. The state inspected the factory that year and required that the company install a bathroom for its six female employees – probably grinders of the jar rims (Roller 1998; Von Mechow 2015).

Findlay experienced problems with its natural gas supply by at least 1890 and began to restrict the use of gas in local factories. Inspectors surprised the Findlay Bottle Co. on January 1, 1893, with a midnight inspection and discovered that the plant was using more than its allotted share of gas (Von Mechow 2015). The firm was soon beset with financial problems – including lawsuits by James Gilberds and the Ball Brothers Glass Mfg. Co., forcing the plant to declare bankruptcy and shut down operations on July 1, 1893.² The company went into receivership but remained in existence until October 1896, three years after production had ceased. The factory was torn down in the spring of 1900, and the stones were sold for building material (Caniff 2006:38; Paquette 2002:70-74; Roller 1998).

Containers and Marks

F.B.

Lehner (1978:56) attributed the F.B. mark on a grooved-ring wax-sealer fruit jar to the Findlay Bottle Co. We have not seen this mark; Lehner may have found a jar with a weak “Co.”

² Many businesses closed all over the U.S. during the Panic (Depression) of 1893.

F.B.C. (1888-1893)

Herskovitz (1978:8) found five beer bottles at Fort Bowie (1863-1894) with F.B.C. embossed on their bases. The mark was accompanied by either a 5 or 6 below the logo. He made no attempt to identify the maker. When the Bottle Research Group visited Fort Bowie in early 2007, we at first could not find any bottle bases with the mark. On our second day, however, in a single area at the bottom of the slope that comprised the main trash dump, we discovered about a dozen beer bottle bases within a ca. 30 x 30 meter area – all with the F.B.C. mark. The bases were all amber in color and appeared to be from typical export beer bottles. Also present in the same area were bases marked with F.B.Co. (see below). These marks could be extensions of the F.B.Co. logo. F.B.Co. marks were accompanied by numbers 1-4, and the only examples we could find for F.B.C. had 5 or 6 (Figure 1).



Figure 1 – F.B.C. / 6 (Fort Bowie, AZ)

F.B.Co. (1888-1893)

The F.B.Co. logo appears to have only been used on beer bottles and grooved-ring, wax-sealer fruit jars.

Beer Bottles

Herskovitz (1978:8) noted this mark on nine beer bottle bases at Fort Bowie (1863-1894). The mark was accompanied by either a 1, 2, or 3. He made no attempt to identify the maker. When the Bottle Research Group visited Fort Bowie in early 2007, we found amber beer bottle bases with this mark scattered around the main trash dump, although they were few in number. We also recorded examples at the National Park Service Western Archaeological Curation Center (NPSWACC) (Figure 2). A single base was embossed PAT 85 (arch) / F.B.Co. / 4 (both horizontal) (Figure 3).



Figure 2 – F.B.Co. / 3 (NPSWACC)

As part of the Tucson Urban Renewal Project, Ayres and his associates (1980:12) illustrated a beer bottle base with F.B.Co. embossed horizontally across the center with a 2 below it (Figure 4). They identified the maker as the Findlay Bottle Co., Findlay, Ohio, and noted that the company was in business in 1888 and 1889. The researchers were unable to determine either a beginning or end date for the firm. Brose & Rupp (1967:90) recorded numbers “1” and “2” for the mark.



Figure 3– Pat 85 variation (Fort Bowie, AZ)

When we examined the Tucson Urban Renewal collection in 2006, we found the bottle marked F.B.Co. / 2 and noted that two examples both had one-part applied finishes. These finishes placed the manufacture of the bottles during the ca. 1875-1896 period. One-part finishes were made for use with lightning-style stoppers, although they were also used with corks. However, applied, two-part finishes continued to be used until the end of the applied finish era, ca. 1895.

According to Six (1994:49) the F.B.Co. mark appeared on both the heels and bases of bottles (presumably beer and soft drink). It would be interesting to learn whether heelmarks are used primarily on soda bottles and basemarks on beer as seems to be fairly prevalent in the industry during the late 19th century. Von Mechow (2015) listed two examples of beer bottles embossed “FBCo” across the center of bases. He attributed these to the Findlay Bottle Co.

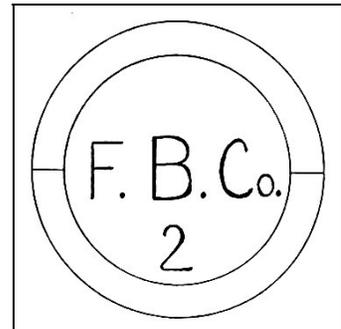


Figure 4 – F.B.Co. / 2 (Ayers et al. 1980)

An eBay auction offered a single base from an amber beer bottle that was marked on the base “THE F.B.CO. (arch) / FAIRMONT, W.VA. (inverted arch).” See the Fairmont Bottle Co. section for more information. Apparently, these always included the city/state designation, so there should be no confusion between the two firms and logos.

Fruit Jars

Lehner (1978:56) attributed the F.B.Co. mark to Findlay, and the F.B. mark she noted on a wax-sealer jar may have been a misreading of F.B.Co. Roller (1983:123) listed and described a grooved-ring, wax-sealer fruit jar and attributed it to the Findlay Bottle Co., 1888-1893. He noted that “shards of these jars have been found at the Findlay Bottle Co. site – making a solid identification for the logo. Creswick (1987:58) illustrated an example embossed F.B.Co / 1 on the base (Figure 5). The jars were made in aqua, cobalt blue, smoky blue, grey-blue, citron, yellow-amber, and brown-amber. She also attributed the mark to Findlay Bottle and dated it the same as Roller. The Roller update (2011:190) added that the editors could find no evidence for the cobalt blue variation.

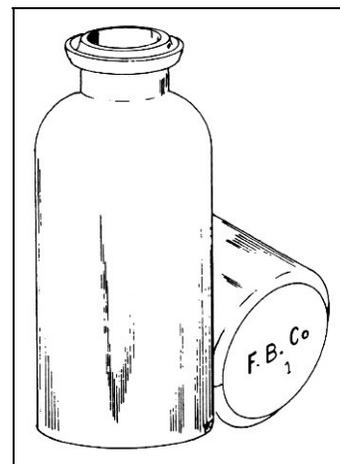


Figure 5 – Wax sealer
(Creswick 57)

F B & Co

Toulouse (1971:197) noted this mark as being found on a grooved-ring wax-sealer fruit jar. He surmised that the letter “B” might have been an engraver’s error and should have been an “F.” In that case, the mark would fit Fahnstock, Fortune & Co., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1866-1873. It is also possible that the ampersand was an engraver’s misunderstanding. In the days of handwritten, cursive messages, such errors were common. Even more likely, this was probably a misreading or misreporting of the F.B.Co. logo.

THE DANDY

Toulouse (1969:87-88) described a jar that was sealed with a glass lid held on by a wire-bale arrangement. The jar was embossed “TRADE MARK (slight arch) / THE DANDY (horizontal)” on the front (Figure 6). The jar, itself, was mouth-blown, round in cross-section,

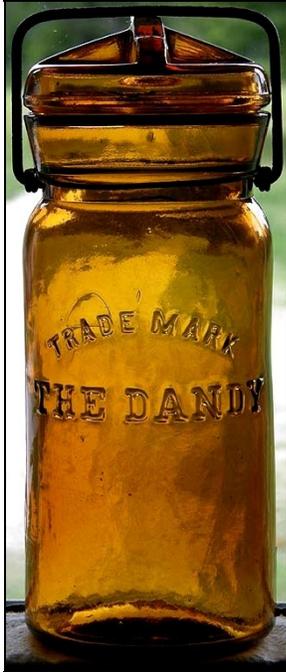


Figure 6 – The Dandy (North American Glass)

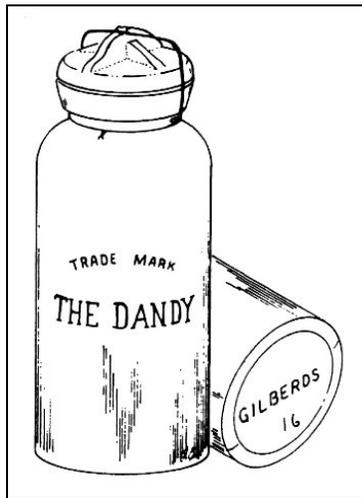


Figure 9 – The Dandy (Creswick 1987:41)

and light blue or amber in color (Figure 7).³ Toulouse noted that the jar was made for the Gilberts Butter Tub Co. of Jamestown, New York. The basis for the jar was Patent No. 328,115, issued to James Gilberts on October 13, 1885. Toulouse also stated that a Dandy lid was found on an unembossed jar, although he admitted that this was probably “a substitute lid.”

Roller (1983:138) noted that James Gilberts patented jar lids in Jamestown, New York, but he was not a manufacturer. Creswick (1987:41) illustrated the Dandy and added that the base was embossed

“GILBERDS / 16” – although numbers ranged from 1 to at least 24 in photos from North American Glass (Figures 8 & 9). She claimed the maker was the Findlay Bottle Co. and dated the jar ca. 1885, although she noted that the Sneath Glass Co., Tiffin, Ohio, later made the jars. Caniff (2006:38) confirmed the identification, noting that Findlay advertized itself as the “sole manufacturers” of The Dandy. The

Roller update (2011:513-514) listed the lid as being embossed “PAT OCT 13TH 1885” in an arch (Figure 10). The editors noted

that the jar was made ca. 1892-1897 by the Sneath Glass Co. In addition, they cited a May 26, 1891, ad in a Findlay newspaper reporting that the jar was made by the Findlay Bottle Co. as



Figure 7 – Dandy finish (North American Glass)



Figure 8 – Dandy base (North American Glass)



Figure 10 – Dandy lid (North American Glass)

³ This was almost certainly one of the “blowovers” mentioned by *Commoner & Glassworker* in 1889 (see the history section).

well as a variation of the jar embossed “GILBRED” on the front. We do not know whether the misspelling was a typo or an engraver’s error.

Gilberds Patents

Although James Gilberds received patents for butter tubs in the 1870s (e.g., Patent No. 189,212 on April 3, 1877 – Figure 11), we are concerned with his two patents for fruit jars, especially the second one.

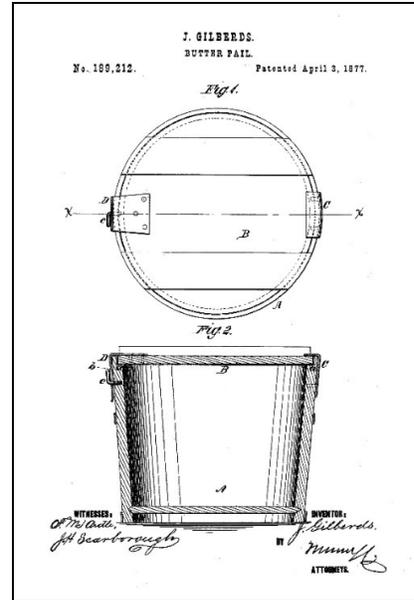


Figure 11 – Gilberds 1877 patent

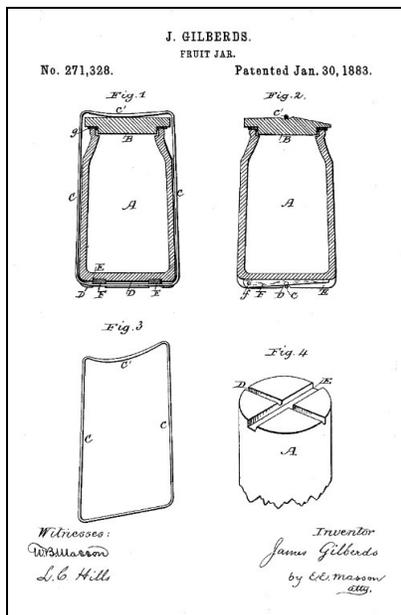


Figure 12 – Gilberds 1883 patent

July 31, 1883

Although the application dates are missing from both of his jar patents, James Gilberd received Patent No. 282,188 for a “Fruit Jar” on July 31, 1883. The glass lid on this jar was held in place by a rectangular wire that extended entirely around the jar – vertically. This was held in place at the heel by a groove on each side (e.g., see Roller 2011:213) (Figure 12).

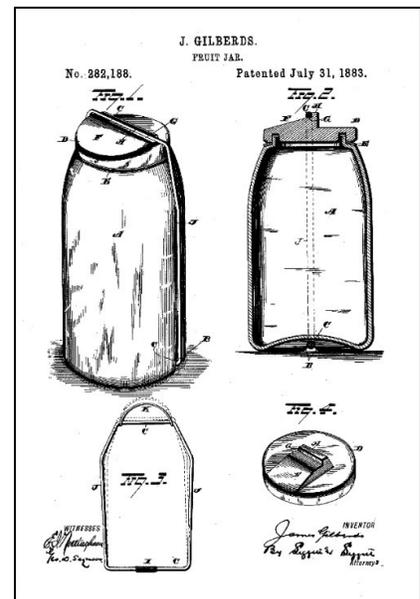


Figure 13 – Gilberds 1885 patent

November 3, 1885

Gilberd also received Patent No. 328,115, again for a “Fruit Jar” on November 3, 1885. The main difference between this patent and his earlier one from 1883 was a stepped ramp on the lid (Figure 13).

A More Complete Story

Joe Terry filled in most of the missing details, although no one has explained why Gilberts apparently waited almost six years after his patent was granted to have the jars made – perhaps it took that long for him to be financially able, or he may have offered his other jars earlier (see below). Terry noted that the Gilberts 1885 patent was apparently modified to create “The Dandy,” a fruit jar with a ramped lid that was held in place by a much shorter wire arrangement that was attached to the jar around the neck. Lids on the jars were embossed with Gilberts’ October 31, 1885, patent date.

According to Terry (2010:43-44), Gilberts contracted with the Findlay Bottle Company, to make the new jars. He had molds made and sent to the factory, which then began production. Gilberts signed the contract with Findlay on March 3, 1890, granting the glass house exclusive rights to manufacture the jar, although Gilberts was to receive a 50¢ patent royalty per jar and 50¢ commission for each jar that Gilberts actually sold.⁴ Gilberts retained all rights to market the jars for the first four years, although a caveat allowed the glass house to also sell the containers.

All did not go well. On August 31, 1891, Gilberts sued the Findlay Glass Co. for failure to pay him a total of \$1,448.89, along with \$20,000 in damages (Terry 2010:44). The Sneath Glass Co., Tiffin, Ohio, began making the Dandy jars, apparently in colorless glass, by at least March 10, 1892. The glass house apparently had acquired the patent from Gilberts; when Sneath moved away from Tiffin in 1897, two local attorneys placed for sale Patent No. 328,115 – issued on October 31, 1885 – for the Dandy fruit jars (Terry 2010:45).⁵ No one seems to have recorded an actual sale.

⁴ That is over a dollar per jar – an incredibly exorbitant price for the time. No wonder that glass house balked. It is a wonder that they ever agreed.

⁵ It is also likely that Gilberts regained the molds from Findlay Glass. The amber jars were almost certainly made by Findlay, with colorless examples produced by Sneath; however, both high and low mold numbers appear on bases of both amber and colorless jars.

Sneath Glass Co., Tiffin, Ohio (1888-1893)

When the Tiffin Glass Co. opened in 1888, Samuel B. Sneath was one of the incorporators and was the president by at least 1890. According to an 1890 ad, Tiffin made “Crystal Glass Tableware, Lamps, Salvers, Globes, Jellies, etc.” of flint glass. Although we have not found details, S.B. Sneath purchased the defaulted Tiffin Glass Co. at a sheriff’s auction for \$15,505.25 in early January 1892. The plant was operational by early February, making jars and lantern globes. *Commoner & Glassworker* (3/10/1892) reported that Sneath would be making “THE DANDY” for Gilberts. The plant burned in March 1893 (Roller 1997).

Sneath Glass Co., Hartford City, Indiana (1894-)



Figure 14 – Circle-S logo (Wikipedia)

In September 1894, *Commoner & Glassworker* announced that the Sneath Glass Co. would be starting production soon at Hartford City, Indiana (Roller 1997). The plant made lantern globes and founts, kitchen and refrigerator products but specialized in ruby, green, and blue globes. Samuel’s

son, Ralph D. Sneath, was president of the reorganized firm. By ca. 1900, the plant began expanding its line to include Mason jars, glass cabinets, spice jars, and other kitchen containers, using a Circle-S logo to identify its products (Figure 14). The factory again shifted to refrigeration items and heat-proof glass in the 1930s and made waterproof searchlight covers and kitchen products during World War II. With the expansions of the plastics industry in the 1950s, Sneath lost ground and finally sold to the Canton Glass Co. in 1957 (Wikipedia 2015).



Figure 15 – Gilberts jar (North American Glass)

Other Gilberts Jars

Gilberds also commissioned two other jars, the earliest of which was embossed “GILBERDS (arch) / {star} / JAR (inverted arch)” on the front (Figure 15). Lids for the former



Figure 16 – Gilberts lid (North American Glass)

jar were embossed “JAS GILBERDS PAT^d JAN 30 1883 JAMESTOWN NY” or “GILBERDS JAR JAMESTOWN NY PAT JULY 31 83” (Figure 16). The wire was held in place by a groove along the heel and the base (Figure 17). Toulouse (1969:130-131) dated the jars by the patent dates but had no idea of the manufacturer. In his later book,



Figure 17 – Gilberts base (North American Glass)

Toulouse (1971:226) dated the mark ca. 1883 to 1890. Roller (1983:138; 2011:213) noted that “James Gilberts and his son, James B. Gilberts, were listed in the 1884 Jamestown city directory as ‘Butter Pail Manufacturers’ – although he declined to date the jars and could not locate a maker.

Creswick (1987:70), however, speculated about the manufacturer of the Gilberts jars. She suggested the Findlay Bottle Co. (1888-1893) as the maker of both jars (see below). Although she did not explain her choice, the selection of Findlay Glass was probably based on the connection between Findlay and the Dandy. She further noted that the Gilberts and the Van Vliet jar of 1881 are the only fruit jars known with wire clamps extending vertically around the entire jar.

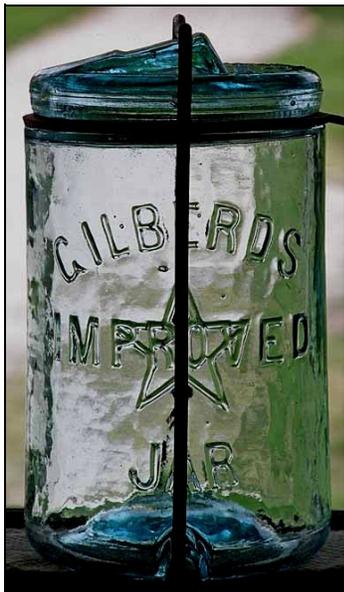


Figure 18 – Gilberts Improved (North American Glass)

The later jar was embossed “GILBERDS (arch) / IMPROVED {through star} (horizontal) / JAR (inverted arch)” on

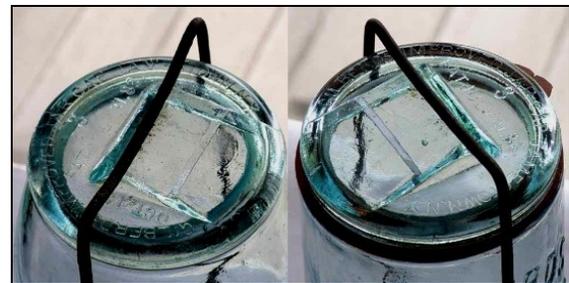


Figure 19 – Gilberts Improved lid (North American Glass)

the front and had lids embossed in two variations (Figure 18). One was embossed “GILBERDS



Figure 20 – Gilberts base (North American Glass)

IMPROVED JAR CAP
 JAMESTOWN NY (in an arch
 around the outside) / {number} /
 PAT JULY 31. 83. (above the
 ramp).” The second added
 “OCT 13” to the left of the ramp
 and “1885” to the right (Figure
 19). All numbers on the lids – in
 our sample – were single digit.

Again, the jar had a wire that encircled the entire body and finish from top to bottom (Figure 20). We have found no evidence to suggest that either of these jars were made by the Findlay Bottle Co. (although see the Discussion and Conclusions section). For more information about the jars, see Roller (1983:138; 2011:213), or Creswick (1987:70) (Figure 21).

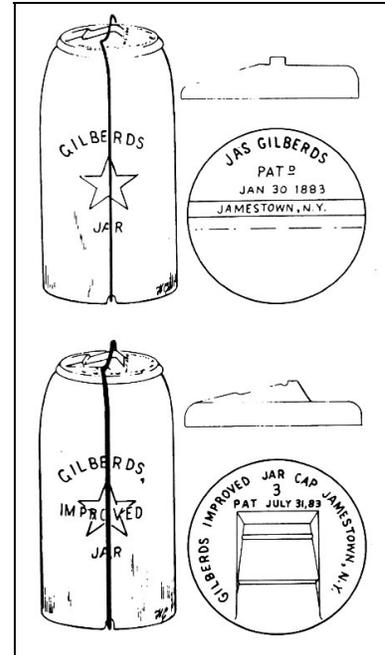


Figure 21 – Gilberts jars (Creswick 1987:70)

Discussion and Conclusion

There can be little doubt that the identification of the Findlay Bottle Co. as the user of the F.B.Co. mark by Ayres and his associates is correct on beer bottles without crown finishes. Not only did the name fit the initials, the firm was in business during the proper time period (1888-1893) to produce the bottles found at Fort Bowie (1863-1894) by Herskovitz. Neither Ayers et al. (1980) nor the Bottle Research Group found any other bottle manufacturers with the necessary initials during the 1880-1900 period. In addition, the plant was known to produce beer bottles. Seldom does all the evidence add up to such conclusive proportions.

This same evidence points to the Findlay Bottle Co. as the user of the F.B.C. mark. Mold marks of 1-4 below “F.B.Co.” logos and 5-6 on bases with “F.B.C.” marks – along with the 1885 patent date on one F.B.Co. base, – suggest that the mark with “Co.” was likely used first.

It is clear, however, that the Fairmont Bottle Co. later used the same mark, although the only example we have found was also marked with the location (Fairmont, W. VA.). If any beer

bottles are found with crown finishes and the FBCo logo, they should be considered as made by Fairmont Bottle. Likewise, any bottle with both the FBCo mark and any machine characteristics could only have been made by Fairmont Bottle (see the section on the Fairmont Bottle Co. for more information on the firm).

The FB&Co mark cited by Toulouse was probably either an engraver's error (as suggested by Toulouse) or a recording error by the person who reported the mark. The F.B. mark recorded by Lehner is likewise almost certainly a misreading of an indistinct FBCo logo.

There is no question that the Findlay Bottle Co. made some of the Dandy jars. There is no evidence to suggest that Findlay Glass produced colorless products, so the colorless examples should be assigned to the Sneath Glass Co. from 1892 to probably 1893, when the Tiffin plant burned (Figure 22). Although there is a possibility that the firm made Dandy jars after the move to Hartford City, the history did not mention jars again until ca. 1900 – and those were Mason jars.



Figure 22 – Aqua and colorless Dandy jars (North American Glass)

There is no evidence to support the contention that the Findlay Bottle Co. made any of the Gilberts jars; however, all of the Gilberts and Gilberts Improved jars we have seen were made of aqua-colored glass – a distinct possibility from Findlay Bottle. Since Gilberts received his patents in 1883 and 1885, and Findlay Bottle certainly made the Dandy, it is distinctly possible that Findlay also produced both Gilbert jars prior to or concurrently with making the Dandy.

Acknowledgments

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