

Kerr Glass Mfg. Co.

Bill Lockhart, Beau Schriever, Bill Lindsey, and Carol Serr

Alexander H. Kerr apparently became involved with jars to supply the family packing business, Wadhams & Kerr Brothers. Initially, he became a jobber, acting as the go-between for his brothers and the glass industry. Kerr leased a glass factory in 1912 and began his own production, eventually specializing in fruit jars – although the jars remained popular with packers. The firm continued to grow until it was absorbed by the Altrista Corp. in 1996, although the brand remained visible under the new owner.

Histories

Hermetic Fruit Jar Co., Portland, Oregon (1903-1904)

Kerr Glass Mfg. Co., Portland, Oregon (1904-1912)

Alexander H. Kerr & Co., Altoona, Kansas (1909-1912)

Alexander H. Kerr formed the firm of Kerr brothers with Samuel C. and Thomas A. Kerr in 1895, and they were joined by William Wadhams the following year, changing the name to Wadhams & Kerr Brothers. According to the *Oregon Daily Journal* (Portland) for October 27, 1912, J.D. Kenworthy, James Thompson, and F.S. McMahon incorporated the firm in 1907 and erected a new building in 1912. The company remained in business until at least 1922.

Wadhams & Kerr Brothers sold its own brand of “Monopole Goods” (fruits and vegetables) packed in “Easy Vacuum” jars, invented by Ewald Goltstein with patents in 1901 and 1902. The lids were held in place by a clamp patented by Julius A. Landsberger in 1903. Landsberger controlled both patents and formed some sort of relationship with A.H. Kerr, allowing Kerr the rights to sell fruit jars made to the patents (Roller 2011:636, 672). See the section on Giles-Clough for more information on the patents and Easy Vacuum jars.

A.H. Kerr, his wife, Amanda, and his brother, David, formed the Hermetic Fruit Jar Co. on February 18, 1903. The group renamed the firm the Kerr Glass Mfg. Co. by March 25 of the

following year. Despite having “Manufacturing” in the name, Kerr was a jobber, selling Economy jars, made for the firm by the Illinois-Pacific Glass Co. The J.A. Landsberger Co. produced the lids. After the 1906 earthquake, Kerr also contracted with the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. to make the jars in the East (Roller 1983:460; 2011:672-673; Toulouse 1969:363-365).

Kerr bought the Altoona (Kansas) Co-Operative Glass Co. on February 15, 1909. The Altoona company had been using semiautomatic machines to make fruit jars since 1906 but declared bankruptcy in 1908. By March 1909, the plant was producing Kerr’s Economy fruit jars, and Kerr formed the firm of Alexander H. Kerr & Co. – his initial entry into the actual manufacture of containers. The plant had five machines by June 1909 but were only using four of them at that time, making quart and half-gallon jars. Despite the name, the Kerr Glass Mfg. Co. became the sales outlet for the firm (Roller 1996; 2011:673). By this time, Kerr probably had no need of help from the other glass houses.

Kerr Glass Mfg. Co., Chicago, Illinois (1911-1915)

Alexander H. Kerr & Co., Sand Springs, Oklahoma (1912-1965)

Kerr Glass Mfg. Co., Sand Springs, Oklahoma (1915-1925)

Kerr Glass Mfg. Co., Los Angeles, California (1925-1996)

By at least 1911, Kerr operated a sales office in Chicago, and he moved the Portland office there in 1912. Because of a water and gas supply problem in Kansas, Kerr leased the former J.C. Kelley Glass Co. factory at Sand Springs, Oklahoma, in 1912 and soon after closed the Portland operation (Creswick 1987b:48, 165; Roller 1983:460-461; 1996; 2011:673).

By 1913, all production was conducted in one continuous tank with 10 rings by semiautomatic machinery (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:952). Kerr purchased property next door to the former Kelley plant in 1913 and built a new factory there, bringing the plant into operation by the following year. The plants used two continuous tanks with 14 rings to make flint fruit jars and tumblers in 1914 (Roller 1996). Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:101) noted that Kerr added prescription bottles to its product list after the move to Sand Springs, but they did not date the beginning of such production. However, we have found no evidence that Kerr made medicinal bottles until after the acquisition of the former Whitall Tatum factories with the 1969 purchase of the glass plants of the Armstrong Cork Co.

Kerr moved the main office from Chicago to Sand Springs in late 1915. In December, the Miller Machine & Mold Works shipped its sixth 8-mold, semiautomatic machine to Kerr. Kerr moved the main office from Sand Springs to Los Angeles ca. 1925 (Roller 1996). For a list of Kerr offices, see Table 1. The senior Kerr served as an assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture from 1917 to 1919, and his son, A. Thomas W. Kerr, operated the glass business. The younger Kerr became president of the firm upon his father’s retirement in 1921 (Roller 2011:674).

Table 1 – Kerr Glass Offices*

City	State	Date Range
Portland	Oregon	1903**-1912
Chicago	Illinois	1911-1915
Sand Springs	Oklahoma	1915-1992

*This chronology was taken from Creswick (1987b:159), Toulouse (1969:363-365), and Roller (1996)

** The Hermetic Fruit Jar Co. incorporated in Portland in 1903; it became the Kerr Glass Mfg. Co. in 1904.

Alexander H. Kerr died in 1927, and the firm incorporated under as Alexander H. Kerr & Co. in Nevada on February 19, with Tom Kerr as president and Ruth Kerr as vice president. At that time, the Sand Springs plant was listed as making “fruit jars, packers and preservers” at two continuous tanks with 14 rings. On May 4, the family also reorganized the Kerr Glass Mfg. Co. as the Kerr Glass Mfg. Corp. and moved the corporate offices to Los Angeles (*American Glass Review* 1927:137; Roller 1996; 2011:674).

Upon Tom’s death on May 14, 1931, Ruth became the youngest female president of a glass firm at the age of 36. The next major event was the erection of a new factory at Huntington, West Virginia, in 1933. The Kerr listing included the Huntington plant with one continuous tank and two rings in 1933, but the products and tanks at the Sand Springs plant remained the same as in 1927. Both listings remained constant until at least 1944. The Huntington plant was followed by the January 1943 purchase of a defunct window glass plant in

Santa Ana, California, and Kerr began making jars at that location. At the same time, Kerr began making packers' ware in addition to its jars and jelly glasses (*American Glass Review* 1927:1933:66; 1944:102; Roller 2016:674-675).

In 1958, Alexander Kerr & Co. became a subsidiary of the Kerr Glass Mfg. Corp. Kerr bought the Plainfield, Illinois, plant of the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. in 1964, and the two Kerr enterprises (manufacturing and sales) merged as the Kerr Glass Mfg. Corp. the following year – with the former factory group now called the AHK Division. Kerr's next acquisition was the glass division of the Armstrong Cork group – with plants at Dunkirk, Indiana; Millville, New Jersey; and Waxahachie, Texas – in June 1969.¹ The firm incorporated again, still under the same name, in Delaware in 1974 and built yet another factory at Wilson, North Carolina, in 1978 (Roller 1983:460; 1996; 2011:675; Toulouse 1971:363-365).

In 1982, Kerr had eight plants that used a total of 56 I.S. machines and six triple-gob machines to make “containers: food, household, chemical, drug & pharmaceutical” bottles. The company maintained decorating departments at Dunkirk and Millville (*Glass Industry* 1982:38). The National Can Corp. bought the Millville plant from the Kerr Glass Co. in 1983. Kerr made its final acquisition – the factory at Maywood, California – in 1983 (*Los Angeles Times* 4/2/1969; Millville Historical Society 2005; Roller 1983:462; 1996). For a list of Kerr factories, see Table 2.

At that point, things began changing. Kerr closed its Huntington plant and shut down one furnace at Millville in 1983, when the Kerr family sold its interests in the firm to National City Lines, Inc., of Dallas, Texas. Later that year, the National Can Corp. purchased four former Kerr plants at Maywood, Millville, Waxahachie, and Wilson.² The new management closed one of the furnaces at Dunkirk (used to make amber beer bottles) in 1984 (Roller 1996).

¹ Roller actually and incorrectly dated the sale at 1968.

² Roller (1996) noted that National Can acquired the rights to the Heye “lightweighting” process along with the Kerr factories. See the section on the Hermann Heye Glasfabrik for more information about the firm and the process.

In 1985, the Kerr Glass Mfg. Corp. had only four plants left (Santa Ana, California; Plainfield, Illinois; Dunkirk, Indiana; and Sand Springs, Oklahoma), each with a single furnace feeding a total of 20 I.S. machines. The company made “containers: food, household chemical, liquor, drug & pharmaceutical, and home canning” containers (Perrine 1985:29). The firm renamed itself the Kerr Group, Inc., in May 1992 to reflect the diversity of the company beyond glass manufacture. The Ball Corp. acquired “certain assets of the commercial glass manufacturing operations of Kerr Group, Inc.” on Feb 28, 1992. Ball almost immediately closed the Sand Springs and Santa Ana plants and shut down the Plainfield factory in 1996 (Answers Corp. 2010; Moody Manual Co. 1914:1200; Roller 1996).

Table 2 – Kerr Glass Factories*

City	State	Date Range
Altoona	Kansas	1909-1912
Sand Springs	Oklahoma	1912-1992
Huntington	West Virginia	1933-1983
Sana Ana	Californai	1943-1992
Plainfield	Illinois	1964-1996
Dunkirk	Indiana	1969-at least 1996
Millville	New Jersey	1969-1983
Waxahachie	Texas	1969-1983
Wilson	North Carolina	1978-1983
Maywood	California	1983-1983

*This chronology was taken from Creswick (1987b:159), Toulouse (1969:363-365), and Roller (1996)

Kerr began diversifying by at least the early 1980s. The divestiture of the various glass plants indicated a change in direction rather than a path toward liquidation. Even though the company faltered during the decade between 1982 and 1993, it regained much of its former stature through advancements in the area of plastic containers. Kerr remained a leader in the

home canning field (including glass jars and lids) until 1996, when Alltrista Crop. purchased the concern. Alltrista became the Jarden Corp. in June 2002, and the former Kerr products became Jarden Home Brands in 2005 (Answers Corp. 2010; Roller 2011:675).

Containers and Marks

Even though it was a jobber, the Kerr Glass Mfg. Co. was first listed as making fruit jars in the Thomas Registers at Portland in 1907, and that designation continued until 1912. From 1914 to at least 1918, the name was A.H. Kerr & Co., and the company is listed as making milk bottles as well as fruit jars (Thomas Publishing Co. 1907-1908:700; 1912:2727; 1914:531, 3010; 1918:810, 4430).

Kerr (cursive) (ca. 1914-ca. 1974)

Jones (1965:[22]; 1966:17) noted that the cursive “Kerr” was one of the two marks used by Kerr (along with the full company name). Toulouse (1969:166-171), Roller (1983:174-180), and Creswick (1987b:69-77) all illustrated and/or described a large variety of jars embossed with the cursive “Kerr.” These include the Kerr Economy, Kerr Glass Top, Kerr Self Sealing, and other variations.

According to Toulouse (1971:306), the use of the cursive Kerr began at least as early as 1912; however, the Kerr (cursive) trademark was officially registered on February 14, 1933 (No. 301,111) with the first use claimed as May 12, 1915. Kerr renewed the trademark (No. 503,110) on October 19, 1948 (Creswick 1987b:154, 156). Apparently, after ca. 1920, Kerr stopped embossing the full “KERR GLASS MFG. CO.” on the bases of jars. The Kerr (cursive) mark on the sides remained the only company identification.

Scholes (1941:129) showed the cursive Kerr as still being used in 1941. Berge (1980:83) illustrated the mark in a 1964 chart. Hanlon (1971:6-17) confirmed the cursive Kerr in 1971. The mark was not present, however, on the Emhart 1982 list. The mark continued in use on dated, commemorative jars until at least 1978, although its use on regular jars may have phased out ca. 1974, when the AHK logo began to be used.. See discussion of specific jars below.

KERR GLASS MFG. CO. (1903-1920s)



Figure 1 – Portland

Jones (1965:[22]; 1966:17), Toulouse (1969:105-106), Roller (1983:114; 2011:270-276), and Creswick (1987:49-50; 71-75) all noted the full embossing of the “KERR GLASS MFG CO” on the bases of Economy, Kerr Self Sealing, and other Kerr jars. Dating of the mark is

dependent on the location (also embossed on the base): “PORTLAND, ORE.” (Figure 1); “CHICAGO, ILL. (Figure 2); or “SAND SPRINGS, OKLA (Figure 3). These were all locations of the main sales office, not an actual factory.

There were numerous variations of these marks, but all had the company name in an arch and the location in an inverted arch on the bases of the jars. Many variations had patent dates, especially June 9, and 23, 1903. Some only had “PAT” or “PATENT” in the center (Figure 4). Some also included numbers. We have not discovered a way to date these variations more precisely. However, the basemark dates combined with the dates for side embossing variations will often produce a



Figure 2 – Chicago (eBay)



Figure 3 – Sand Springs



Figure 4 – Base variations (eBay)

tighter range (see Economy, Self Sealing, etc. below). See Table 3 for dating these basemarks. Note that the dates for the

marks extend slightly beyond the duration of the offices in the first two cases. Because molds, including baseplates, were used until they wore out, there is some overlap in dating.

Table 3 – Kerr Glass Basemarks*

Basemark	Date Range
KERR GLASS MFG. CO. (arch) PORTLAND, ORE (inv. arch)	1904-ca. 1914
KERR GLASS MFG. CO. (arch) CHICAGO, ILL (inverted arch)	1912-ca. 1917
KERR GLASS MFG. CO. (arch) SAND SPRINGS, OKLA (inverted arch)	1915-1920s?

* These are found in a several variations, including patent dates. We have found no way to create finer dating, although these should be compared to the various side embossings.

In the early days, Kerr did not manufacture its own jars. The initial jars were made by the Illinois-Pacific Glass Co. from 1903 to ca. 1910. Around 1906, the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. made some of the jars. Because one jar had a ghosted “SAFE” on its reverse, the Safe Glass Co., Upland, Indiana, may have also made some of the jars.

Variations include:

KERR GLASS MFG CO

KERR GLASS MF’G CO

KERR GLASS MFG’ CO

Economy or Kerr Economy (cursive) (1903-1943; 1946-1955)

Toulouse (1969:105-106), Roller (1983:174), and Creswick (1987:49-50; 71-75) all noted variations of the Economy jar (Figure 5). All of the early jars included the various basemarks described in the section above. Economy jars, however, went through four datable phases, based on side embossing: 1) Economy (cursive) – 1903-ca. 1910; 2) Economy (cursive) / TRADE MARK – ca. 1910-ca. 1914; and 3) Kerr / Economy (cursive) – ca. 1915-1943; 1946-1955 (Figure 6). See Table 4.

Table 4 – Economy Jars, Kerr

Side Embossing	Location(s)	Date Range
Economy (cursive)	Portland	1903-ca. 1910
Economy (cursive) / TRADE MARK	Portland, Chicago	ca. 1910-ca. 1914
Kerr / Economy (cursive)	Portland, Chicago, Sand Springs	ca. 1915-1943; 1946-1955

The basis for the Economy jar was the patented closure. On October 15, 1902, Ewald Goltstein applied for a patent for a “Jar-Closure” and received Patent No. 730,760 on June 9, 1903. He assigned the patent to Julius A. Landsberger, who made an agreement with

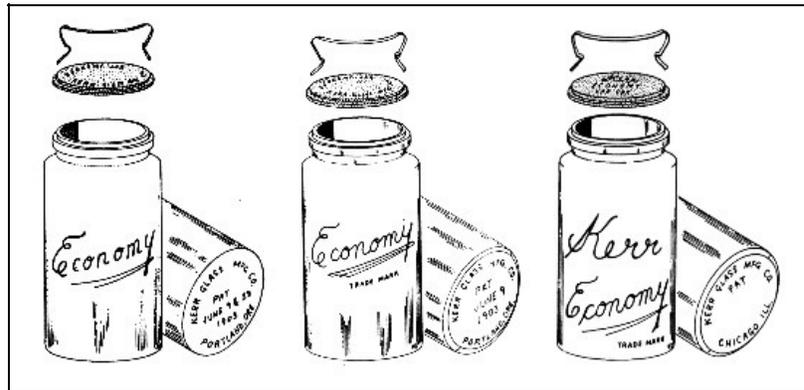


Figure 5 – Variations of Economy jars (Creswick 1987:49-50; 72)

Alexander H. Kerr to develop the Economy jar. This patent date appeared on the bases of many of these jars. Landsberger adapted a flat metal spring clip to the closure and applied for a new patent on October 16, 1902

(the day after Goltstien’s application). He received Patent No. 731,793 for a “Closure for Receptacles” on June 23, 1903. The Landsberger patent was the actual closure used on the Economy jars, and this date was also embossed on some bases. See the section on Giles-Clough for more on the patents and development.



Figure 6 – Variations of Economy jars (eBay)

William C. Bulhes filed for a further refinement of this style of lid on April 4, 1904, and received Patent No. 783,608 for a “Closure for Receptacles” on February 28, 1905. Although Buhles assigned the patent to Landsberger, there is no evidence that the design was used by Kerr. The patent date never appeared on any Kerr jars reported in the literature.

On December 29, 1903, Julius A. Landsberger received Trade Mark No. 41,790 for the word Economy on glass jars. He claimed that the word had been used since October 20, 1903. The Kerr Glass Mfg. Co. renewed the Trade Mark (No. 505,740) on January 18, 1949. For jar lids, Kerr registered the Economy trade mark on April 12, 1949 (No. 508,444), and confirmed its first use on October 20, 1903 (Creswick 1987:150, 156; Roller 2011:674).

The company registered a separate trade mark for a symbol that consisted of a hand reaching into an Economy jar on April 28, 1931 (No. 282,676), with first use claimed on October 20, 1903 (Creswick 1987b:154). It is unlikely that this trademark was ever embossed on jars, although it was used frequently in ads from 1910 and 1911 as shown by Creswick (1987b:187, 198, 201).

SELF SEALING (1904-1943; 1946-1980s or later)

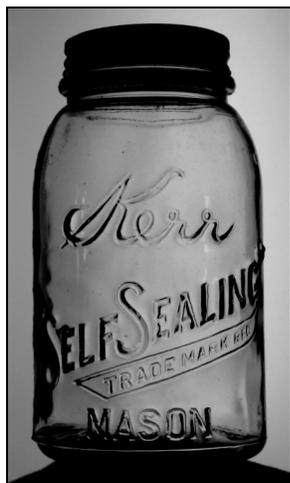


Figure 7 – Kerr Self-Sealing

Kerr registered a Trade Mark for “SELF SEALING” (No. 314,468) on June 26, 1934, with first use on October 1, 1904, and renewed the mark (No. 518,904) on December 20, 1949 (Creswick 1987:155-156). Toulouse (1969:169-171), Roller (1983:176-180; 2011:272-277), and Creswick (1987:72-77) all illustrated and described several variations of Self Sealing jars. Creswick, alone, included 27 illustrations (Figure 7). These jars were made from 1904 until World War II, when they were discontinued in favor of the Kerr Glass Top.



Figure 8 – Self-Sealing Wide Mouth (eBay)

The line was reinstated about 1946, and production continued until at least the 1980s.

All of these jars had the Mason beaded neck style, although the actual seal was at the lip or rim of the jar. With one commemorative exception (discussed below), the jars were either embossed “Kerr (cursive) / SELF SEALING / MASON” (Figure 8) or “Kerr (cursive) / SELF SEALING / WIDE MOUTH / MASON” (Figure 9) with “SELF SEALING” usually upwardly slanted and underlined by a “tail” extending back from the final “G.” The tail expanded into a box with notations, such as “TRADE MARK REG.” or “REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.” Occasionally, the word “PATENTED” or patent dates were also marked on the front. A 1910 ad showed that both square and round versions of the “Kerr Self Sealing” and “Wide Mouth Mason” jars were available by that date (Creswick 1987:187 – Figure 10).



Figure 9 – Self-Sealing ad (Creswick 1987:177)



Figure 10 – Self-Sealing variations (Creswick 1987:72-77)

Creswick (1987:75-76) also illustrated and discussed several datable “Self Sealing” jars. The earliest were the 65th anniversary jars, made in 1968 – with that date on the reverse (see a discussion of these in the Kerr logo section below). Kerr also made a straight-sided jar with no neck or shoulder (still embossed with “Kerr” and “SELF SEALING”) for Sanka Brand

Decaffeinated Coffee. These were made at the Millville plant in 1975. They were intended for reuse as a home canning jar. In addition, the firm made several commemorative jars for employee retirements between 1974 and 1978. The Millville factory also made a jar embossed

“1776 / {13-star American flag} / FIRST STARS / AND STRIPES” in 1976 and a jar commemorating Kerr’s 75th anniversary in 1978.

Kerr also commissioned the Pilgrim Glass Corp. and the Scandia Glass Co., both or Ceredo, West Virginia, to manufacture red, blue, and white (milkglass) jars in the shape of the liberty bell. The jars were embossed “Kerr (cursive) / “SELF SEALING”” on the front and “UNITED STATES / BICENTENNIAL / 1776-1976” on the reverse. They were mouth blown in 1976 (Figure 11). Unlike the other “Self Sealing” jars, these had pontil scars, ground lips, and sealed on the bead at the neck (Creswick 1987:77). Leybourne (2001:184) added that 750 each were made of the red, white, and blue jars as well as 75 in green and a few salesman’s samples of colorless and amber glass.



Figure 11 – Liberty Bell jars (North American Glass)

In addition, Kerr also made a variety of drinking mugs. These were embossed with the cursive Kerr and “SELF SEALING” – similar to the marking on actual jars. The finishes, however, were not threaded (although they apparently had vestigial threads), and each mug had a handle on the side. These appear to have been made in regular jar molds, with a modified finish segment and the handled added.

GLASS TOP MASON (ca. 1942-ca. 1945)

The factory made a jar embossed “Kerr (cursive) / GLASS TOP / MASON” from ca. 1942-1945. Kerr advertised that these jars were “made by government order to further conserve metal.” Unlike earlier and later jars, these used a metal screw band to hold down a glass insert in place of the metal one. In at least one case, “SELF SEALING” was ghosted under “GLASS TOP” (Roller 1983:176; 2011:271). Creswick (1987:72) also illustrated one of these jars (Figure 12).



Figure 12 – Glass Top (eBay)

JAMBLER (1948-?) and Other Tumblers

Kerr registered Trade Mark No. 530,889 for the word “JAMBLER” on September 19, 1950 with first use on July 12, 1948. The trade mark was for “jars and tumblers made of glass and designed for commercial use, principally for packing food items and also for re-use in the household” (quoted in Creswick 1987b:156). This was the time period when numerous packers offered jellies, jams, cottage cheese, and other items in sealed “jars” that doubled as tumblers to be used in the home after the product was consumed. Many of these had ACL designs, often in the form of “themes” – so that a family could collect an entire set of farm scenes, flower designs, etc. If “JAMBLER” was ever actually embossed on a glass item, it was probably on one of these tumblers.

A 1935 ad (in Creswick 1987:177) illustrated tall jelly glasses and squat jelly glasses (see Figure 9). These appeared to have no markings and were only identified as Kerr products by “gold lacquered” metal lids embossed “Kerr / JELLY / GLASS.” The tall glasses could be used as tumblers after the product was consumed, and the squat, fluted glasses made “an exceptionally attractive jelly mold.” It is likely that the lids were also embossed to suit the wholesale or retail seller.

Although we have not discovered any historical sources, numerous auction sites have offered four-ounce jelly glasses with Kerr lids that were embossed on the bases with a somewhat bizarre figure – at least in some formats – that the sellers call the Bee Angel. The figure was apparently only embossed on the smaller glasses (Figure 13).

AHK (1969-ca. 1996 – on glass)

Toulouse (1971:544) claimed the “AHK” mark has been used “since 1968” and almost certainly refers to the Armstrong Glass Co. takeover by Kerr in 1969 (Figure 14). Jones (1966:17) also showed the mark. Creswick (1987b:156) noted that the AHK trademark was



Figure 13 – Bee Angel jelly jar (eBay)

registered on April 26, 1949, but was first used on September 9, 1944. Roller (1983:124) listed the mark on round jars with the early flag, the date “1776,” and “FIRST STARS AND STRIPES” embossed on the front. He stated that “the Millville Kerr plant produced 13,982 gross of these round jars for the J.H. Filbert Co., of Baltimore, Maryland, who packed mayonnaise in them.”



Figure 14 – AHK logo

Despite the trade mark registration in 1949, the mark may not have been used on jars until much later (as noted by Toulouse). Hanlon (1971:6-17) listed only the cursive Kerr for the firm in 1971. By 1982, however, AHK was the only mark listed for Kerr (Emhart 1982:75). Regardless of other sources, Creswick (1987:74) made a good argument for the mark’s first use in 1969. Creswick stated that an amber-colored “Kerr Self Sealing Mason” and one with “65TH / ANNIVERSARY / 1903-1968” on the reverse were “made in limited quantity . . . especially for collectors . . . in 1968. Released 1969.” The amber jars were made at the Plainfield, Illinois, plant, and the 65th anniversary jars were manufactured at Santa Ana, California. These carried the AHK mark on the bases.

The mark continued in use to at least 1996 but was not listed in 2000 (Emhart 1982:75; 1996:48; 2000; Powell 1990). Since the Kerr Group, Inc., drastically reduced glass production in 1996, this was likely the last use of the mark. The firm continued to produce glass jars to at least 2010, however, so some use of some mark is still possible.

Date Codes

Kath (1998:40) noted a bead-seal Mason jar embossed “Kerr (cursive) / GLASS TOP / MASON” that was “dated 1943 on the neck.” This is the first we have heard of date codes on the neck of a jar made by Kerr. Kath claimed that these jars were only made during the 1942-1944 period. Roller (1996) also described a Kerr jar embossed “88 97” in the “finish area” and claimed that “88” was the plant number for the Dunkirk factory.

Lids

The metal lids also went through phases of change. Roller (1983:175, 178) illustrated and dated six lid variations found on Kerr Economy jars and an additional six lids found on screw-top jars. The glass insert used on the Kerr Glass Top Mason jars was simply embossed with the cursive “Kerr” logo.

Some later jars also had glass lids. An eBay seller offered a jar embossed “KERR / SELF SEALING / TRADE MARK REG. / WIDE MOUTH / MASON” on the side with “AHK” on the base (along with “14” and “518”). The glass lid was embossed “PAT. RE, 17562” across the center and “TO OPEN INSERT KNIFE BELOW RUBBER AT ARROW” around the edge. The aluminum ring included the Good Housekeeping seal. These lids were probably used after 1968, but we are unable to date them more closely.

The only patent with that number that we can find connected to jars was reissued to Raymond H. Parker on January 14, 1930, and, by mesne assignment, transferred to the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. The original patent (No. 1,702,795) was issued on February 19, 1929. Both patents are for the same Lightning-style closure, and neither seems to have anything to do with either a screw band or glass insert.

KPP in an oval (1969-ca. 1972)

We have seen a single base embossed “12 5 / LIQUOR BOTTLE / KPP (in oval) 2.” Whitten (2016) noted that the mark indicated Kerr Packaging Products, a small division of the company. He was familiar with the mark on Kerr-made insulators from the ca. 1969-1974 period. We were only able to find a single online confirmation that such a division existed. However, stippling, such as that found around the resting point of the base was not used until 1940 and, in that position (i.e., only at the resting point), not until a later but currently unknown date. The term “LIQUOR BOTTLE” began to be embossed on bases in 1964, with the end of the FEDERAL LAW FORBIDS RE-USE OF THIS BOTTLE warning.

Brent Berger offered an insulator for sale with a skirt embossed “KPP (in an oval) ARMSTRONG.” Burger commented, “For a very brief period, Kerr made insulators after

buying out Armstrong, and simply added the embossing of ‘KPP’ (Kerr Packaging Products) in an oval. By 1972, the molds were retooled to read ‘Kerr.’” The mark on the insulator was identical to the one on the liquor bottle. According to Rubin (1997), Kerr Package Products only used the mark on a set of insulator molds that was made in 1972.



Figure 15 – KPP logo

A single jar was reported with the Oval-KPP mark and an apparent date code (71) for 1971. A prototype Pepsi “swirl” bottle had the same logo and a “70” date code. We have also seen the “KPP” logo on prescriptions bottles (Figure 15).

Discussion and Conclusions

Kerr used four manufacturer’s marks – “Kerr (cursive),” “KERR GLASS MFG. CO.,” “AHK,” and “KPP” – each reasonably well dated. In addition, some variations of its Economy and Self Sealing series may be dated to fairly tight ranges, and the Kerr Glass Top Mason jars were only made during World War II. Many of the variations, especially of the Self Sealing series, unfortunately, cannot be given a specific date range using currently available methods. Prior to the 1940s, Kerr occasionally added a one- or two-digit mold code, but these were unusual. The firm used numerical codes of uncertain meaning after 1940 and added date codes by the 1970s.

Acknowledgments

Our gratitude to Doug Leybourne for allowing us to reproduce the drawings from the Alice Creswick books and to Greg Spurgeon for letting use the photos from North American Glass. As always, thanks to Wanda Wakkinen for proofreading these sections.

Sources

American Glass Review

1927 "Glass Factory Yearbook and Directory." *American Glass Review*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

1944 "Glass Factory Yearbook and Directory." *American Glass Review*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Answers Corp.

2010 "Answers.com: Kerr, Inc." Answers Corp.

<http://www.answers.com/topic/kerr-group-inc>

Berge, Dale L.

1980 *Simpson Springs Station: Historical Archaeology in Western Utah*. Cultural Resource Series No. 6. Bureau of Land Management, Utah.

Creswick, Alice

1987 *The Fruit Jar Works, Volume II, Listing Jars Made Circa 1900 to Modern*. Privately printed, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Emhart Glass

1982 *Emhart Punt Marks*. Emhart, Zurich, Switzerland.

1996 *The Emhart Book of Punt Marks*. Emhart, Zurich, Switzerland.

2000 "Punt Marks Guide" Emhart Glass Online. <http://www.emhartglass.com>

Glass Industry

1982 "Glass Manufacturers, Primary." *Glass Industry* 62(10):9-64.

Griffinhagen, George and Mary Bogard

1999 *History of Drug Containers and Their Labels*. American Institute of the History of Pharmacy, Madison, Wisconsin.

Hanlon, Joseph F.

1971 *Handbook of Package Engineering*. McGraw-Hill, New York.

Jones, May

1965 *The Bottle Trail, Volume 5*. Nara Vista, New Mexico.

1966 *The Bottle Trail, Volume 6*. Nara Vista, New Mexico.

Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry

1913 "The Present Status of the Glass Bottle and Hollow Ware Industries in the United States." *Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 5(11):951954.

Kath, Vivian S.

1998 "Granny Kath's Kitchen." *Antique Glass & Bottle Collector* 15(3):40-45. [before and after variations]

Leybourne, Douglas M.

2001 *The Collector's Guide to Old Fruit Jars: Red Book 9*. Privately published, North Muskegon, Michigan.

Millville Historical Society

2005 "Tour Stop #6."

http://www.millville.org/memorial/history/bicentennial/text/06_shetterville.html

Moody Manual Co.

1914 *Moody's Manual of Railroad and Corporation Securities*. Vol. 2. Moody Manual Co., New York.

Perrine, Lowell E.

1985 "Directory Issue 1985." *Glass Industry* 66(3):1-170.

Powell, Jerry

1990 "Who Made the Bottle?" <http://www.p2pays.org/ref/04/03222.pdf>

Roller, Dick

1983 *Standard Fruit Jar Reference*. Acorn Press, Paris, Illinois.

1996 "Kerr Glass Manufacturing Co. Historical Notes." Dick Roller files.

2011 *Standard Fruit Jar Reference: 2011 Update*. Edited by Jerome McCann and Barry Bernas. Fruit Jar Annual/Phoenix Press, Chicago.

Rubin, Paul T.

1997 "CD #155 Armstrong DP 1 with the letters KPP in an oval to the left of the Armstrong name." <http://www.insulators.info/articles/woodward/cd155kpp.htm>

Scholes, Samuel R.

1941 *Handbook of the Glass Industry*. Ogden-Watney, New York.

Thomas Register of American Manufacturers

1907-1908 *The Buyers' Guide: Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers and First Hands in all Lines*. Thomas Publishing Co., New York.

1909 *Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers and First Hands in All Lines: A Classified Reference Book for Buyer and Sellers*. Thomas Publishing, New York.

1912 *The Buyers' Guide: Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers and First Hands in all Lines*. Thomas Publishing Co., New York.

1914 *Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers and First Hands in All Lines: A Classified Reference Book for Buyer and Sellers*. Thomas Publishing, New York.

1915 *Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers and First Hands in All Lines: A Classified Reference Book for Buyer and Sellers*. Thomas Publishing, New York.

1916 *Thomas Register of American Manufacturers and First Hands in All Lines*. 9th ed. Thomas Publishing Co., New York.

1917 *Thomas Register of American Manufacturers and First Hands in All Lines*. 9th ed. Thomas Publishing Co., New York.

1918 *Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers and First Hands in All Lines: A Classified Reference Book for Buyer and Sellers*. Thomas Publishing, New York.

Toulouse, Julian Harrison

1969 *Fruit Jars*. Thomas Nelson & Sons, Camden, New Jersey.

1971 *Bottle Makers and Their Marks*. Thomas Nelson, New York.

Whitten, David

2016 "Glass Factory Marks on Bottles." <http://www.glassbottlemarks.com/bottlemarks/>

Last updated 1/6/2016