

Lamb Glass Co.

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When Rex M. Lamb sold his Essex Glass Co. – a milk bottle manufacturing firm – to the Thatcher Mfg. Co. in 1920, he did not remain idle for long. In 1921, he was instrumental in forming the Lamb Glass Co., a corporation to produce milk bottles. Lamb Glass was a success for more than 40 years until it was absorbed by the Dorsey Corp., although it continued to make bottles under its own moniker until it finally lost its individual identity in the 1970s.

History

Lamb Glass Co., Mt. Vernon, Ohio (1921-1963)

Member of the Dorsey Corp. (after 1963)

Rex M. Lamb and his associates formed the Lamb Glass Co., a corporation, in July 1921 at Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Rex Lamb was president with Owen P. Lamb as vice president and Watson Pickard as secretary. By November 1, the plant began production. The operation started with “one furnace and four eight-mold Miller machines.” From the beginning, Lamb produced machine-made containers and specialized in milk bottles. In 1922, the plant built a second furnace, although only one furnace was usually operated at a time. Eventually, Lynch MT machines replaced the Millers and were later superceded by Hartford-Empire five- and six-mold machines (*Milk Dealer* 1921:11; Toulouse 1971:317).

The Lamb family and their associates incorporated as the Essex Glass Co. in 1906 at Mt. Vernon. Essex was a highly successful milk bottle manufacturer, but it was one of several glass houses purchased by the Thatcher Mfg. Co. in 1920. We would have expected to see Thatcher impose a non-competition clause on the Lamb family, forbidding them to engage in glass manufacture – or at least milk bottle production – for a period of five to ten years. However, the Federal Trade Commission stepped in, eventually concluding in 1923 that the acquisitions constituted reducing the competition, forcing Thatcher to relinquish some of the firms. The feds *may* have ruled in 1921 that any non-competition clauses were invalid (see the sections on Essex and Thatcher for more details).

Lamb was a continual thorn in the side of the Hartford-Empire Co., part of a combine of large glass manufacturers that wanted to maintain control over production and prices in the industry. Since Hartford-Empire (and the Owens Bottle Co.) leased their machines rather than selling them, the firm used the leases as a manipulation device to regulate output. Lamb did not follow the industry dictates. An April 6, 1926, Hartford-Empire memorandum stated “. . . our milk bottle licensees would welcome a suit against Lamb a tending to put an end to Lamb’s price-cutting policy.” Lamb was one of several companies that received numerous complaints from Hartford-Empire and Owens-Illinois (Vatter 1955:97-98).

In 1927, Lamb made “milk jars” at two continuous tanks with 12 rings. The listing remained the same until 1943. However, in 1944, Lamb added “fruit jars, packer’ and preservers’ ware” (*American Glass Review* 1927:138-139; 1944:102). This was almost certainly because of the adoption of waxed paper and plastic containers and the discontinuance of glass bottles by an increasing proportion of dairies (Toulouse 1971:317-318). In 1934, the company was one of the early users of pyroglazing (or ACL) to make color labels on milk bottles. Lamb was known for the “baby face” milk bottle (Giarde 1980:65), a type of cream separator bottle with an extra “bubble” at the neck to allow the cream to gather separately from the milk. The cream was then spooned out of the “baby face” before the milk was poured.

In 1961, Lamb began a major drive to push “multi-quart” bottles – i.e., half-gallon bottles or larger (Figure 1). To help convince the dairies to switch to larger bottles, Lamb bragged that half-gallon bottles made 37 or more round trips (*Milk Dealer* 1961a; 1961b). Lamb merged with the Dorsey Corp., owners of Chattanooga Glass Co., in 1963¹ but

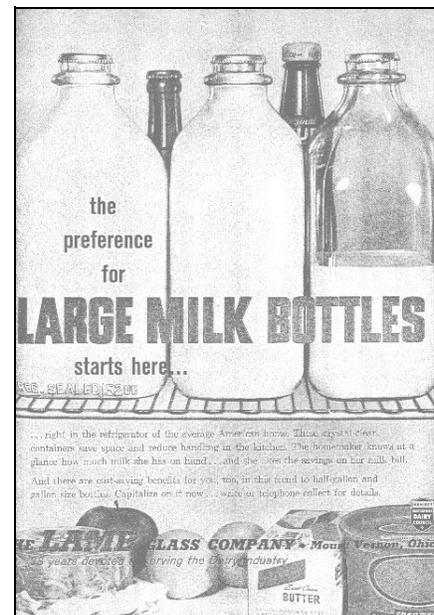


Figure 1 – Large milk bottle ad (*Milk Dealer* 1961:75)

¹ There is some dispute about the exact date. Toulouse (1971:318) cited “directories; letters with company” as the source for a 1964 date. Roller (1997) cited the *Ohio Swirl*, the Ohio Bottle Club newsletter and Moody’s Industrial Manual for 1983 as his sources for a 1963 date. Because Toulouse is well documented in our research for typographical errors in dates, we have accepted the Roller date of 1963.

continued to mark its bottles with the distinctive L52 logo. By 1971, the company began using the © (Circle C), the symbol of Chattanooga Glass (Roller 1997; Toulouse 1971:318). That was almost certainly the date that the company lost its individual identity; the firm was not listed in a 1982 list (*Glass Industry* 1982).

Containers and Marks

Unfortunately, the Lamb Glass Co. never embossed date codes on its bottles. Thus, all dates below were derived from historical sources or estimates rather than empirical evidence.

L.G.CO.52 (1921-ca. 1928)

Giarde (1980:65-68) suggested that the L.G.Co. mark found on early milk bottles was the mark used by the Liberty Glass Co. from 1918 until the company began using the L.G. mark in 1924. Warren A. Hackbarth (personal communication August 7, 2004) disagreed with Giarde's interpretation that the L.G.Co. mark was used by Liberty. Hackbarth noted that the L.G.Co heelmark was followed by the number 52 on all of his bottles – the identification number used by the Lamb Glass Co. The Hackbarth hypothesis was confirmed by a bottle in the Albert Morin collection that had the Massachusetts “O” seal (see below) on the shoulder with the L.G.Co.52 mark on the heel. The “O” seal was registered to the Lamb Glass Co. (Schadlich 1984). Further confirmation comes from a bottle offered on eBay with the “52 minn” triangle embossed on the heel along with the L.G.Co.52 mark and one in our possession with “L52 (in the crook of the “L”) / MINN / SEAL” in a round-shouldered triangle in a round plate on the shoulder and “L.G.CO.52” embossed on the heel (Figure 2). See below for a discussion of these seals.

The LGCo mark (with and without punctuation) was used by a variety of companies beginning in the 19th century. When attempting to assess the user of the LGCo mark, it is always important to note the type of container upon which the logo is found. For example, LGCo on the base of a mouth-



Figure 2 – LGCo52 heelmark (eBay)

blown, export beer bottle was the mark of the Lindell Glass Co., St. Louis, Missouri (see Lindell section for a full discussion). The Lyndeborough Glass Co. used the LGCO mark on the bases of unembossed flasks during the 1870-1880 period (see Lyndeborough section). To complicate milk bottle identification, the Lockport Glass Co., Lockport, New York (1900-1919), embossed the L.G.Co. mark on milk bottle heels with no accompanying numbers or with a “1” just below the mark (Oats 1995). The identifying numbers (Lamb = 52; Lockport = 1) help in identifying the correct company.

At this point, it is impossible to tell which logo (L.G.Co. 52 or LG-52) was initiated first. Either mark could have been used during the 1921-1928 period. It is also possible that Lamb used both of these marks interchangeably.

L-52 (1921-ca. 1928)

Giarde (1980:64) listed two marks – L52 and L-52 – and dated both “from 1921,” a date almost certainly derived from Toulouse. At this point, we have been unable to find an example of the “L52” mark. However, we have in our possession a half-pint milk (or cream) bottle embossed “L-52” on the heel and “BLANKE” on the base and have seen a similar bottle on eBay (Figure 3). The Blanke Mfg. &



Figure 3 – L-82 and BLANE

Supply Co. grew out of the Blanke & Hauk Supply Co. (1903-1911) and became the Meyer-Blanke Co. ca. 1923. Since Lamb began operations in 1921, the L-52” mark may have been Lamb’s first, used from ca. 1921 until an unknown point, probably no later than 1928. The scarcity of these bottles likely means that the mark was not used long. As noted above, current methods do not allow us to determine which of the two early marks was used first, although the logical progression would be L.G.Co., L-52, L52 (with “52” in the crook of the “L.”

We were able to trace the history of two dairies that used bottles with the L-52 logo. One, the Millbrook Dairy (Middletown, Connecticut) was in business from ca. 1903 to ca 1925. The other, the Terry Dairy (Little Rock, Arkansas), operated from 1921 to 1927 (*Log Cabin Democrat* 2016; Muncy 1976). Both periods confirm the use of the L-52 mark within the 1921-1928 period.

L52 [with “52” in the crook of the “L”] (ca. 1929-ca. 1971)

The mark consisted of a sans serif “L” with an extended lower “foot” and the number “52” nestled in the corner of the “L” (Figure 4). Giarde (1980:64) noted that the mark was used by Lamb “from 1921.” According to Toulouse (1971:317), Lamb probably maintained the logo until ca. 1971, although it was not listed in a 1971 source (Hanlon 1971:6-17).



Figure 4 – L52 heelmark

Al Morin (personal communication 9/24/2008) acquired a milk bottle embossed “MISSOURI PACIFIC DINING CAR SERVICE” on the front along with the Lamb L52 heelmark. Online evidence (e.g., a Missouri Pacific Lines railway pass sold on eBay) and Missouri Pacific collector information (Morin, personal communication 9/24/2008) suggest that Missouri Pacific added the word “Lines” to its name in 1927. Assuming a two-year lag for bottles to wear out, the lack of the word “LINES” on the bottle suggests that the bottle was made by at least 1929; therefore, the L52 mark was in use by that time as well.

Toulouse (1971:317) noted that Lamb used an L_{52} (subscript 52) mark “since 1921.” This was almost certainly a misunderstanding of the mark. Toulouse belonged to a large network of bottle collectors and frequently accepted their identifications in letters he received. This may have been a mis-recording of one of those descriptions.

Bottles from the H.P. Hood Dairy help us date containers made by firms like Lamb – that did not use date codes on their products. At this point, we have never seen a recognizable date code on any Lamb bottle – except those made for Hood. Hood required the glass houses it used to place four-digit date codes on the base of each milk bottle during a period beginning at least as early as the teens² and extending into the 1940s. One bottle, offered on eBay, had a Hood date of 1931 on the base and the L52 (crook) mark on the heel.

² One eBay seller noted that a bottle was “an old Hood pre-dating 1902.” The bottle had no date code. This suggests that Hood began demanding date codes by 1903.

Date Codes

Empirical evidence suggests that Lamb adopted a fairly unique date code system at some point after the instigation of the L52 (crook) logo. In every case we could connect (e.g., with Hood Dairy date codes), the single-digit number in the basal ejection scar indicated the year. Like other single-digit date codes, this creates some confusion between decades. Unfortunately, a “7” could equal 1937, 1947, or 1957 (Figure 5). There is no indication of ejection scar date codes on bottles marked “L.G.Co.52” or “L-52.”



Figure 5 – Ejection scar date code (eBay)

Used in conjunction with other dating tools, it is sometimes possible to ascertain the decade or at least to narrow it down. For example, milk bottle manufacturers began using square bottles in 1941, so a square bottle with any date code cannot have been made prior to 1941. Another application involves the Massachusetts L seal (see that section below) in conjunction with the L52 (crook) logo. The Mass L seal was not used by Lamb prior to 1939, so a “2” date code could only be 1942 – because Massachusetts discontinued the seal system in 1947. If the bottle has the L52 (crook) logo and *no* Mass seal, the same “2” would equal 1952 – after the end of the seal system.

There were occasional exceptions to the system. For example, a milk bottle from the Hood Dairy had the L52 (crook) logo, a “9,” and “REGISTERED” on the heel with an “L” in the ejection scar on the base. The “9” *could* be a date code. In another example, a bottle from the Pinehurst Dairy, Pinehurst, North Carolina, was embossed “PD (large) / 43” on the base and had a “3” in the ejection scar. It is probable that Pinehurst Dairy requested the two-digit basal date code (Figure 6).

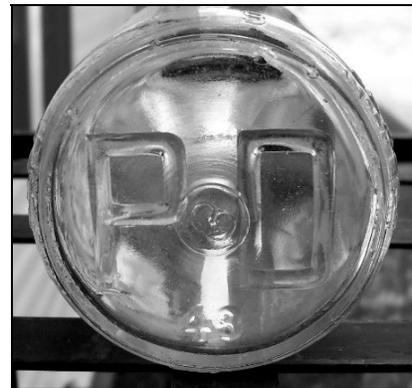


Figure 6 – 3 / 43 date codes (eBay)

By at least 1963 (possibly as early as 1960)³, Lamb instituted a two-digit date code on the bases of square milk bottles. The only examples we have seen had diamond-shaped “stippling” around the resting point of the base. By 1969, the basemarks include probable model codes and large letters that may have indicated a bottle type. An example had a base embossed “69 / X / H2247” (Figure 7).



Figure 7 – 69 X H2247 base (eBay)

An earlier heelcode consisted of one to three letters embossed in conjunction with the “L52” (crook) logo. These included the letters “B,” “S,” “NL,” “NU,” and “ANU” (see Figure 5) The Owens-Illinois Glass Co. used a similar system to designate specific bottle features. For example, “S” could indicate a specific kind of finish. Future research may discover more about the meanings of these codes.

L (ca. 1940s?-ca 1960s?)

Berge (1980:83) showed an “L” with no accompanying numbers as the mark used by Lamb in 1964. Lehner (1978:71) stated that Lamb used the simple “L” after 1969. Photos from eBay auctions show an “L” embossed on some bases of Lamb Mason jars (see next entry), although other bases lacked the letter (Figure 8). Lettered bases in our very small sample were always accompanied by stippling, a sign that the bases were made after 1940, although they could be on either round or round-cornered square jars.



Figure 8 – L base (eBay)

However, the letter “L” on the base does not always indicate the Lamb Glass Co. We have discovered the letter in the ejection scars of a few milk bottles, but we have found no reason to believe that those were the logos of any glass house. For example, one of these marks was on a bottle embossed “L.G.Co. / 1” on the heel – a logo of the Lockport Glass Co. (see that

³ An eBay seller noted that a bottle base was embossed with “60” – but he or she included no photo.

section for more information). However, the bottle was made for the Liberty Milk Co. In addition, of course, a solo “L” on beer bottle (and other) bases indicates a use by someone other than Lamb. See the Other L section for more on these lone “L” logos.

LAMB (ca. 1944-at least 1964, poss. until ca. 1970.)



Figure 9 – Lamb Mason (eBay)

Toulouse (1969:180-181) noted that jars embossed on the side with “LAMB / MASON” were made by the Lamb Glass Co. ca. 1940-1950 (Figure 9). In his later book (Toulouse 1971:317) he noted that the LAMB mark was used from “1855 [certainly a typo for 1955] to 1964,” explaining that Lamb used its full name on “nondairy and nonbeverage ware.” The jars were made in both round and rounded-square configurations.



Figure 10 – Lamb lid (eBay)

Roller (1983:189) added that the lid had “LAMB” embossed on the bottom (Figure 10). He dated the jars ca. 1930-1940s. Creswick (1987:80) illustrated the jar, showing the “LAMB” embossed on the *top* of the lid (Figure 11). She dated the jar ca. 1940-1964 and noted that a variation had the © (Circle C) mark on the base, an indicator that the jar was also made by the Dorsey Corp. at some point after 1964. It is possible that Lamb did not enter the fruit jar field until 1944 (see history section above).

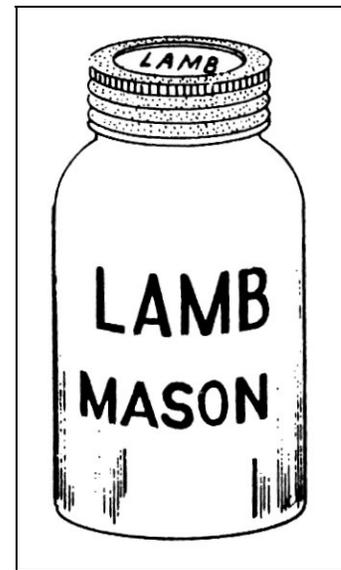


Figure 11 – Lamb Mason (Creswick 1987:80)

L in the Massachusetts seal and O in the Massachusetts seal

From 1910 to 1947, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts required that all glass factories selling bottles to dairies within the state mark their containers with a Massachusetts seal. By at

least 1914, most factories embossed the seal on the shoulder of each milk bottle, usually in a circular form embossed “MASS (arch) / {factory designator} / “SEAL (inverted arch).” These often appeared in a small plate mold (Blodget 2006:8; Schadlich [ca. 1990]).

The Lamb Glass Co. was placed in a unique position as the only glass maker to be issued two separate codes to use in the Massachusetts seal. Because the Lockport Glass Co. had already been issued the “L” code, probably as soon as the seal system was instigated in 1909, Lamb could not obtain that letter. As a latecomer to the game, Lamb was issued an “O” code, probably taken from the plant’s location in Ohio⁴ (Figure 12). Lamb continued to use the “O” seal, embossed on the shoulders of its Massachusetts milk bottles from 1921 to 1939 (Schadlich [ca. 1990]), and this date is confirmed by datable bottles used by the Hood Dairy.



Figure 12 – Mass O Seal

Although the story has not been told, it is almost certain that Lamb petitioned the State of Massachusetts for the use of the “L” code, since the Lockport Glass Co. had been defunct since 1919 (Figure 13). So, from 1939 until the seal system ended in 1947, Lamb used the “L” code. Bottles with the “O” seal were accompanied by heelmarks of either “L.G.Co.52” or the L52 (with “52” in the crook of the “L”) marks. Only the later L52 mark has been found with the “L” seal, and all of the “L seal” bottles in our sample were in shoulder plates. For a more complete look at Massachusetts Seals, see Lockhart et al. 2017.



Figure 13 – Mass L Seal (eBay)

L52 in the Maine and Rhode Island Seals

The State of Maine followed the Massachusetts trend in 1913, enacting its first seal law. Maine seals were similar to those from its earlier sister state – round in shape and placed on bottle shoulders in the same “MAINE (arch) / {factory designator} / SEAL (inverted arch)” format. Again, following suit, the project was quietly disbanded in 1947.

⁴ The “M” for Mt. Vernon, the city location of Lamb was already issued to the Mannington Glass Works, Mannington, Virginia.

The Maine seals followed at least four – possibly five – formats:

1. MAINE / L-52 / SEAL in circular format; embossed bottle (Figure 14) with L.G.CO. 52 embossed on the heel.



Figure 14 – Maine L-52 Seal

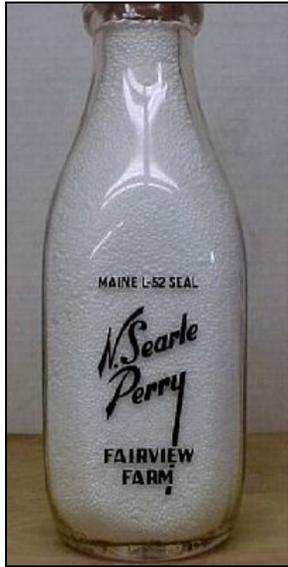


Figure 15 – Maine L-52 Seal ACL (eBay)

2. “MAINE L-52 SEAL” (all horizontal); brown or green pyroglaze at shoulder (Figure 15)

3. “MAINE / L52 / SEAL” in circular format; red pyroglaze at shoulder (Figure 16)

4. “MAINE / L52 / SEAL” in circular format – these have the “52” nestled in the crook of the “L” with the same mark at the heel (Figure 17). One example of the seal appeared on a HOOD dairy bottle with a 1936 date code on the base.

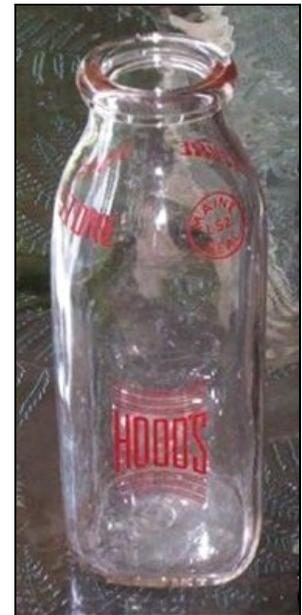


Figure 16 – Maine L52 Seal ACL (eBay)

4a. Same as #4 but with no “L”⁵



Figure 17 – Maine L52 Seal

The Rhode Island seal system apparently began in 1915 and also continued until 1947. The Lamb Glass Co. embossed “R.I. (arch) / L52 (52 in the crook of the “L”) / SEAL (inverted arch)” on the shoulders of its milk bottles for use in the state of Rhode

Island (Figure 18). For a more complete look at Maine and Rhode Island Seals, see Lockhart et al. 2017.



Figure 18 – RI L52 Seal (eBay)

⁵ The 52 seal with no “L” has been reported to us; we have not seen an example.

52 MINN Triangle

The Minnesota seal system became effective on December 1, 1913. Although the specific embossing format changed about 1940, the use of seals remained in place until 1947, the apparent date when all seal use ceased. The Minnesota system was unique in requiring the seals in a triangular format – initially embossed on the shoulder (often in a circular plate) – moving to the heel of the bottle ca. 1940. Like Maine and Rhode Island, the system used numbers instead of letters with two exceptions – both operated by Rex Lamb. Lamb’s first glass house was the Essex Glass Co., a firm that used the “E4” logo both as its heelmark and as its Minnesota triangle seal. The Lamb Glass Co. also originally used the “L52” seal, although that changed to just “52” at some point. Lamb’s Minnesota triangles went through at least three variations:



Figure 19 – L52 Minn Seal (eBay)

1. L52 (52 in the “crook” of the “L”) / MINN / SEAL” – shoulder logo on a bottle with “L.G.CO.52” embossed on the heel (Figure 19); 1921-ca. 1929

2. 52 / MINN / SEAL – shoulder logo (Figure 20); ca. 1929-ca. 1941



Figure 20 – 52 Minn Seal (eBay)

3. 52 / MINN – heelmark ca. 1941-1947

We recorded a bottle with the “L52 (52 in the “crook” of the “L”) / MINN / SEAL” shoulder logo on a bottle with “L.G.CO.52” embossed on the heel. This is almost certainly a case where the glass house used an old bottle mold (with the “L.G.CO.52” heelmark) and a newer plate with the seal (L52 crook logo).

For a more complete look at Minnesota Seals, see Lockhart et al. 2017.

Other Lamb Bottles

The Lamb Glass Co. Several specific styles of milk bottles.

Cream Separator (1930s?)

The Fort Collins History Connection provided another possible bottle design. One bottle was embossed “Modern Spas - Savr Top / One Quart, 2 Liquid 1-52, sealed / Registered / Pat. 2112233” – presumably all but the patent number on the heel (City of Fort Collins 2012). The designation “1-52” on the heel *may* indicate the L52 (crook) logo. These were also called “Modern Top” bottles. William D. Teunisz applied for a patent for a “Cream Separator and Milk Container” on November 21, 1936, and received Patent No. 2,112,233 on March 29, 1938 (Figure 21). Although some of these were made by Lamb, the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. made the majority of this type of bottle.

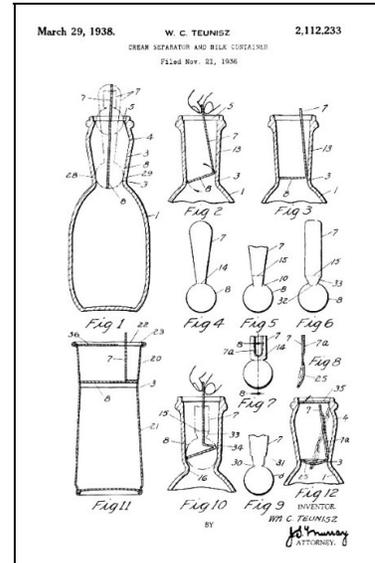


Figure 21 – Teunisz 1938 patent

DRIPLESS (1936-ca. 1940s)

Lamb acquired the rights to the “Dripleless” milk bottle design and advertised the factory as the exclusive producers of these bottles in 1936 (Figure 22). The neck design resembles a “brickwork pattern,” composed of several concentric circles around the neck of the bottle (13 on the quart, 11 on the pint, 8 on the half-pint) (e.g., Findley Antique Bottle Club 2006). The rows were offset in each ring to create the illusion of staggered brickwork. The word “DRIPLESS” was embossed below the “brickwork” with “DRIP” at a down ward slant and “LESS” upward to form a “V” shape.

Carl O. Swanson applied for a patent for an “Antidrip Bottle” on May 31, 1933, and received Patent No. 1,929,221 on October 3, 1933 (Figure 23). Dairy Antiques (2016) noted that Swanson’s initial design



Figure 22 – Dripleless bottle (eBay)

had a series of indents around the neck, similar to a honeycomb. The idea was that this would stop the drip from moving downwards and increase the surface area so it would dry. Unfortunately this design was hard to clean, weakened the glass in the neck area of the milk bottle and was difficult to remove from the mold during manufacture.

Swanson applied for another antidrip milk bottle patent on April 18, 1934, and received Patent No. 2,012,487 on August 27 of the following year (Figure 24). Dairy Antiques (2016) noted that the new design worked much better. This was the style advertised by Lamb and apparently offered through the rest of the 1930s and at least into the 1940s.

Baby Face (ca. 1960s)



Figure 25 – Baby-face bottle (eBay)

The Lamb Glass Co. produced “baby face” milk bottles, probably during the 1960s, possibly earlier. Our only dated Lamb example was made in 1963 (Figure 25). Other than that clue, we have found no specific dating information on the baby top bottle style made by Lamb. On December 2, 1935, Michael A. Pecora applied for a patent for a “Design for a Milk Bottle and received Design Patent No. 98,609 on February 18, 1936 (Figure 26). Pecora assigned the patent to Pecora’s Farm Dairy, a partnership between Michael A. Pecora, Pasqua Pecora, and Salvador Pecora. The vast majority of these bottles seem to have been made by the Brookfield Glass Co., and Lamb may have waited to produce the design until after the patent expired in the mid-1950s.

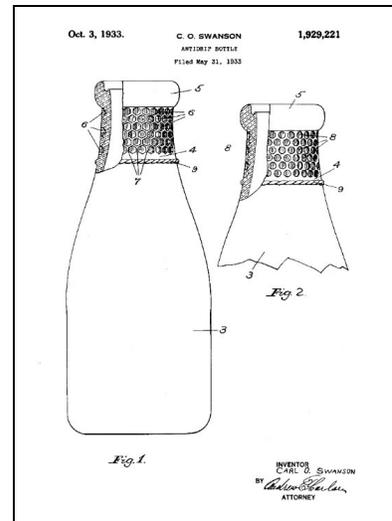


Figure 23 – Swanson 1933 Patent

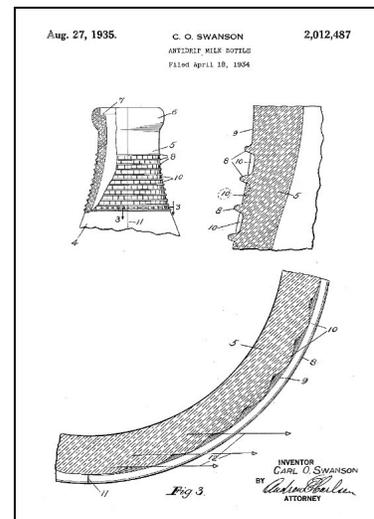


Figure 24 – Swanson 1935 patent

Discussion and Conclusions

Confirmed evidence suggests that Lamb used a total of five logos:

L.G.Co.52 – 1921-ca 1928

L-52 – 1921-ca. 1928

L52 (“52” in the corner of the “L”) – ca. 1929-ca.1972

LAMB – ca. 1944-ca. 1960s [LAMB MASON fruit jars] – ca. 1944-at least 1964, poss. until ca. 1970.

L – [LAMB MASON fruit jar bases] ca. 1940s?-ca 1960s?

As mentioned in the text, precise dating of each mark is hampered by the lack of date codes on Lamb bottles. Current dating is based on historical information along with date codes from Hood Dairy bottles. Hood required four-digit date codes on bottle bases by ca. 1910. Unfortunately, Hood seems to have purchased all or most of its bottles from the Atlantic Bottle Co. during the early 1920s – a crucial period for the transition from “L.G.Co. 52” to “L-52” (or vice versa) – so Hood may not have ordered Lamb bottles during that time. Future research should center on Lamb ads or Hood bottles to refine the dates.

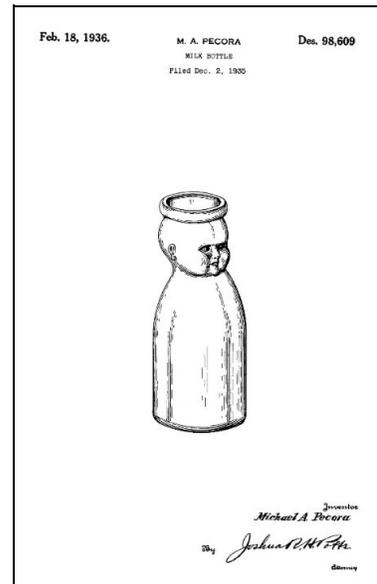


Figure 26 – Pecora 1936 patent

The wide range of seals from the northeastern states and Minnesota is interesting and may improve dating when used in conjunction with manufacturer’s marks in some cases. Once again, future research should center on the two earliest Minnesota triangle seals for finer dating.

Acknowledgments

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