

A Tale of Two Glass Factories: Lockport Glass Co. and Loogootee Glass Co.

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A number of glass houses used an “L.G.Co.” or “L.G.CO.” logo on various bottle types. Most of those have been easily separable by accompanying numbers, bottle types, of font styles and were used by the Lamb Glass Co., Lamont Glass Co., Lindell Glass Co., Lockport Glass Co., Lousiville Glass Co., and Lyndeborough Glass Co. One set of machine-made, wide-mouth bottles and jars, however, had not been identified prior to this study. Because the manufacturing characteristics and bottle/jar types limited the possibilities, we were able to restrict possibilities to just two glass houses: Lockport Glass Co. or Loogootee Glass Co. The evidence clearly favored one of those . . .

Histories

Our inquiry into the glass house that produced machine-made packers’ containers embossed with the “L.G.CO.” logo could only have been one of two factories: the Lockport Glass Co. or the Loogootee Glass Co.

Lockport Glass Co., Lockport, New York (1900-1919)

The Lockport Glass Co. incorporated on July 21, 1900, with W.W. Storrs as president, C.G. Suttcliffe as vice president, and J. Milton Woodward as secretary and treasurer. By October 3, the plant was operating, making “fruit jars, pickle bottles, etc.” using Butler semiautomatic machines (Luff 1955:6; Roller 1997). In 1904, Suttlife was president with Storrs as secretary and treasurer; the plant produced “machine made bottles only” at one continuous tank with seven rings (*American Glass Review* 1934:159). The plant had added milk bottles by at least 1907 (Thomas Publishing 1907:798).

As late as 1910, the plant still made “jars, olives, etc.,” but milk bottles were the dominant product manufactured by 14 “shops” compared to six “shops” for other products (*Commoner and Glassworker* 1910:1). By 1913, Lockport Glass Co. was making its entire

output (all milk bottles) by semiautomatic machine in one continuous tank with 10 rings (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:953). The Thatcher Glass Mfg. Co. bought the Lockport operation on October 17, 1919 and installed three Owens machines (see the section on the Thatcher Mfg. Co. for more on the plant from 1919 to 1942.). Because of the increasing popularity of paper milk cartons during the 1930s and 1940s, Thatcher began experimenting at Lockport with jelly, pickle, and coffee jars in 1942. The experiments were not successful, and the plant shut down on June 6, 1942 (Dunn 1971:7; Luff 1955:7-8).

Ayres et al. (1980:22-23) noted that a second “facility” was operated in New York City from 1906 to 1918 or 1919 (although we believe that may have been a sales outlet). Roller (1983:194), along with Luff (1955:7) and Dunn (1971:7) claimed that plant converted to the manufacture of milk bottles when Thatcher bought the firm in 1919; however, the 1913 article cited above clearly stated that milk bottles were exclusively produced in the plant at that time – probably the reason Thatcher acquired the plant (along with several other competitors at the same time).

In March 1917, Lockport commissioned the H.L. Dixon Co. to build a 60-ton continuous tank and arranged for the installation of Hartford-Fairmont machines to produce milk bottles completely automatically from the blowing machines to the end of the Lehr (*National Glass Budget* 1917:1). A 1918 article describing the installation noted: “Starting with the original intention of making fruit jars, [Lockport] soon realized the big field ahead of them for glass milk bottles and immediately set out to reorganize their factory for the manufacturing of this commodity immediately” (*Milk Dealer* 1918:63). Oates (2004:6) showed the authors an undated booklet which clearly indicates that Lockport Glass Co. made milk bottles. According to *Thatcher v. Federal Trade Commission* (U.S. Supreme Court), Lockport Glass Co. was dissolved on October 20, 1920.

Loogootee Glass Co., Loogootee, Indiana (1901-1904)

John G. Clark, David F. Allen, Joseph P. Gray, and William R. Hines incorporated the Loogootee Glass Co., Loogootee, Indiana, on December 7, 1901, with a capital of \$18,000. On April 7, 1902, Loogootee signed an agreement for \$4,600 with William Butler to purchase three

of the Butler semiautomatic bottle machines.¹ The plant was in production by late June as a non-union shop making fruit jars. The firm manufactured fruit jars until it sold to the Ball Brothers in 1904. Clark was the president of the operation, with Gray as vice president, Allen as treasurer, and Hines as secretary (Roller 1994:56-57; 1998).

By 1904, the plant made fruit jars at a single continuous tank with six rings. A letterhead, dated April 25, 1904, illustrated a Mason jar embossed “MASON'S PATENT”; another from September 21 of that year claimed the factory as manufacturers of “Exclusively Machine Made Mason Fruit Jars.” The Ball Brothers purchased the operation on November 10, 1904, for \$42,500 (*American Glass Review* 1934:153; Roller 1994:56-57; 1998). Like the Thatcher Mfg. Co., noted above, the Ball Brothers acquired quite a few of their smaller competitors.

Creswick (1987a:160) called the company the Loogootee Fruit Jar Co. and dated it “to 1904.” Midwest Antique Fruit Jar & Bottle Club (2005) added that the Ball Brothers closed the plant in 1906. Ball had a history of buying, then closing, plants. Walter Feagon purchased the plant and land for \$650 in July of 1907 (Roller 1998).

Containers and Marks

There is no question that the milk bottles embossed “L.G.CO.” – especially those with the logo above the numeral “1” – were made by the Lockport Glass Co. (as explained below). Nor is there any question that the Mason jars with the Lockport name were made at that location. However, the manufacturer of the machine-made packers’ jars and wide-mouth bottles – also embossed “L.G.CO.” – is not so firmly established.

L.G.CO. / 1

Oats (2004:6) positively identified the Lockport Glass Co. as the user of the “L.G.CO. / 1” mark on milk bottles. He was also kind enough to send us a photocopy of a Lockport booklet that illustrated a milk bottle embossed “L.G.CO. / 1” at the front heel on both the front and back covers (Figure 1). The mark was occasionally found without the “1,” although these bottles are

¹ Our searches have failed to discover a patent for Butler machines.

more unusual. Elsewhere, we have discussed the milk company numbering system (e.g., Lockhart et al. 2017). The bottles without the “1” were likely made prior to the implementation of the numbering system, originated by the State of New York in 1910 and soon adopted as an unofficial national arrangement.



Figure 1 – L.G.CO. / 1

The Lamb Glass Co. also used the L.G.Co. mark, although it was always followed by “52” (L.G.Co.52), the number assigned to Lamb. See the section on the Lamb Glass Co. for more information.

L in the Massachusetts seal

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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]).

According to Schadlich (ca. 1990), the Lockport Glass Co. embossed the Massachusetts “L” seal on the shoulders of milk bottles from 1909 to 1919. The company’s typical heel mark (LGCO / 1) accompanied most (if not all) seals. Lockport used at least three configurations for the seal (each accompanied by the typical manufacturer’s mark on the heel):

1. The earliest was in an arched shape on the shoulder, with the “L” centered below the arch. These were almost certainly used during the ca. 1909-1914 period, and the only examples we have seen are on tin-top bottles (Figure 2).



Figure 2 – Mass Seal L (eBay)

2. The second type may have only been used on the apple-shaped Deerfoot cream jars. This one was “MASS SEAL L” in an arch on the reverse of

the jar. The “L” was in the same line as the “MASS SEAL” in this configuration (Blodget, personal communication 1/24/2008). This style was likely used during the 1912-1916 period.



Figure 3 – Mass L Seal (eBay)

3. The final type was in the typical circular configuration describe above, with the “L” in the center of the circle (Figure 3). This seal was used during the ca. 1914-1919 period. Morin (personal communication 4/20/2007) noted that all three formats are equally common, and some have the LGCO mark embossed on the base.

The Lamb Glass Co. acquired the “L” seal in 1939. By that time, of course, the seal only appeared in the circular format (see section on Lamb Glass Co. for details). Thus, any arched seal may safely be attributed to Lockport. Since neither Lockport nor Lamb used date codes, the only way to determine the user of the circular Massachusetts seal is to find another way to relatively date the bottle.

MAINE LGCo 01 SEAL

In 1913, Maine enacted a seal law similar to the one in Massachusetts. According to the Dairy Antique Site (2016), Maine awarded the Lockport Glass Co. Seal No. LGCo 01, almost certainly to match the firm’s No. 1 that it used in most states (Figure 4). The Thatcher Mfg. Co. apparently applied for a number earlier than Lockport, receiving No. 1.



Figure 4 – Maine LGCo 01 Seal

LOCKPORT MASON and MASON IMPROVED (ca. 1900-ca. 1913)

Toulouse (1969:186-187), Roller (1983:194) and Creswick (1987a:83) all described two machine-made, shoulder-seal jars, embossed respectively “LOCKPORT MASON” and “LOCKPORT MASON IMPROVED” as made by the Lockport Glass Co. (Figure 5). Toulouse dated the Lockport Mason ca. 1900-1920 and the Lockport Mason Improved at ca. 1915-1930. Roller placed both jars ca. 1900-1910s, but Creswick extended the period to 1920. It is pretty certain, however, that Lockport ceased jar production by no later than 1913.



Figure 5 – Lockport Masons (North American Glass)

The Roller update (2011:296) added that one type of Lockport Mason Improved had “an odd feature on the upper finish area. It is a helix on each side of the mold seams in the finish above the screw thread.” Leybourne (2014:243) added an interesting variation with a reversed “LOCKPORT MASON” ghosted under the

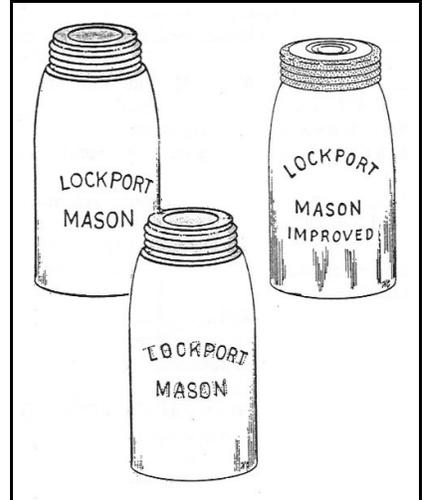


Figure 6 – Lockport Masons (Leybourne 2014:243)

name in the correct aspect (Figure 6).

L.G.CO. on Machine-Made Jars

Several types of jars have been found with L.G.Co logos embossed on bases or bodies. These can be divided by jar types and manufacturing techniques into grooved-ring wax sealers, Mason jars (with L.G.Co monograms), and machine-made packer or product jars. All of these show characteristics of press-and-blow machines.

Press-and-Blow Machine Jars and Wide-Mouth Bottles

We have discovered six examples of packers’ jars and wide-mouth bottles – each embossed on the base with “L.G.CO.” – that were made by press-and-blow machines: three from eBay, one sent to us by Jean Nargiz, one from David Whitten, and another illustrated by Creswick (1987a:101; 1987b:81). Since Creswick included the same jar in both volumes, she must have felt that they were made during the ca. 1900-1920 period (Figure 7). Creswick suggested the Loogotee Glass Co. as the maker of the jars.

Each base was embossed “L.G.CO.” with one or more dots above the logo and a three-digit number below it (occasionally above). Dots in the sample include three dots in a line, three

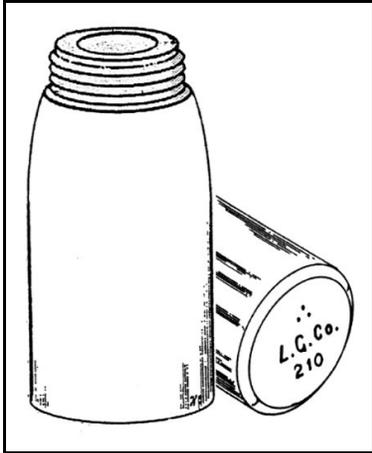


Figure 7 – L.G.CO. Creswick (1987:81)

dots in a triangular pattern, and a single dot. Numbers included 52, 200, 210, and 510 – probably model numbers – and each number corresponded to a jar of a distinct different style. All had slightly off-center valve scars. The color and style of lids indicated the same general dates as the Creswick range. These appear to be common

and must have been made in large quantities. Leybourne (2014:236), for example, priced the fruit-jar shaped ones at \$1-2 each.



Figure 8 – L.G.CO. (David Whitten)

The color and style of lids indicated the same general dates as the Creswick range. These appear to be common



Figure 9 – Short jar (David Whitten)

Probably the oldest jar in the sample was short, sun-colored amethyst in color, with a squared-ring finish. The basal manufacturer’s mark was “L.G.CO.” in a slight inverted arch below a faint “52” (not a date code). The “G” appeared to be a “C” with a serif added by hand. The “L.G.CO.” was much smaller than we have seen on any other container (Figures 8 & 9).



Figure 10 – Product jar (eBay)

Another, also amethyst in color, resembled a pint Mason jar. Both examples were embossed on the bases with “L.G.CO. / 200” – but one had three dots above the logo, the other only one (Figure 10). A wide-mouth bottle was oval in cross-section with a continuous-thread finish. The base was embossed “L.G.CO. / 510” with three dots above the logo (Figure 11).



Figure 11 – Oval bottle (eBay)

The final example in our sample was colorless, decagonal in cross-section with rounded bands at shoulder and heel – with a continuous-thread finish. The base was embossed “L.G.CO. / 135.” The basal embossing was faint, so we could not detect the presence of dots above. The Creswick jars were identical to quart shoulder-seal Masons, embossed “L.G.CO. / 210” on the base with three dots in a triangular shape above the logo.

Discussion and Conclusions

In our attempt to be thorough in our search for the user of the “L.G.CO.” logo on the bases of product (packers’) jars, we have searched through every source we could find for firms with the L.G.Co. initials, looking for a glass house that was in business between 1896 and 1920, the likely production period for jars bearing the logo, and known to have used press-and-blow machines during the time. Most notably, one of the authors spent days searching through the Dick Roller files, one town at a time, seeking a plant with the initials. Our list of probable candidates narrowed down to two: The Lockport Glass Co. and the Loogootee Glass Co.

Both Loogootee and Lockport were open during the early years of the 20th century, and both made jars on press-and-blow machines. While Loogootee made jars – including fruit jars – we have found no evidence for product jars from the company. From 1900 to at least 1910, possibly as late as 1913, however, Lockport produced “pickle bottles” as well as “jars, olives, etc.” before switching to milk bottles by 1913. In addition, Lockport certainly used the “L.G.CO. / 1” mark on its milk bottles.

This trend toward machine-made jars and wide-mouth bottles for at least the first decade of the 20th century, combined with the use of a capital “O” in “CO” on both milk and packers’ jars, strongly suggests that Lockport was the user of the logo in both cases. While certainly not diagnostic by itself, the basal scars from the “L.G.CO” product jars and “LOCKPORT” Mason jars were very similar (Figure 12). While the Loogootee Glass Co. cannot be totally ruled out, we have found no evidence that the firm ever used any type of identifying mark. All available evidence supports the Lockport Glass Co. as the user of the “L.G.CO.” logo on all machine-made, wide-mouth bottles and jars. It



Figure 12 – Lockport Mason (top); product jar

appears that Lockport used Mason jars embossed with the Lockport name as its fruit jars and identical (or similar) jars without the side embossing – but “L.G.CO.” on the base – as its primary packer line.

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