

Lynchburg Glass Factories

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Histories

Lynchburg Glass Works, Lynchburg, Virginia (1919-1921)

According to Gish (2010):

The Lynchburg Glass Works, Inc. was incorporated in February 14, 1918 with a capital of \$300,000. An amended corporation charter for Lynchburg Glass Works, Inc. was filed on December 16, 1918 increasing the capital to \$450,000 to manufacture glass food containers. The plant was completed around February 1919.

Nathan D. Eller was president with Walter Pettyjohn as vice president and D.B. Ryland as secretary. Although all three were local successful businessmen, none had previous glass making experience. Located at the intersection of Ann and Hudson Streets, the new facility with its nine buildings and sheds showed every indication of a successful glass operation. The plant made bottles at five Cox semiautomatic bottle machines and had at least one other machine for the production of tumblers (Bratcher 2017a).

Almost immediately, the plant began manufacturing Coca-Cola bottles (Porter 1996:5). The first directory listing for the firm was in 1919, when the factory contained two continuous tanks with 16 rings – although only one was ever placed in operation. The plant made beer and soft drink bottles as well as jelly glasses and tumblers by both machine and hand methods (Bratcher 2017a; Creswick 1987:160, 167; Roller 1998; Toulouse 1971:337; Virginia Secretary 2009:348; Woodward 1988:21).

The plant suffered a serious fire in 1921, probably resulting in the cessation of bottle manufacture, although the factory was reported as back in operation by November. The plant continued to be listed with the same products in 1922 but was reported as “In hands of creditors.”

It is thus likely that the plant remained idle after the fire. The creditors sold the factory at public auction in June 1923 (Bratcher 2017a; Roller 1998; Toulouse 1971:337). For a *much* more detailed history, see Bratcher (2017a). There is little doubt that Bratcher has produced by far the best histories of the two Lynchburg glass firms.

Lynchburg Glass Corp., Lynchburg, Virginia (1923-1925)

The Lynchburg Glass Corp. Began in June 1923 with a capital of \$300,000. Interestingly, N.D. Eller, the president of the failed Lynchburg Glass Works, was elected president of the Lynchburg Glass Corp. J. William Gayner formerly of the Gayner Glass Co., Salem, New Jersey, became a vice president and the general manager of the new firm (see the section on the Gayner Glass Works for more information on that firm). William Lloyd served as both secretary and treasurer. The plant now made soft drink bottles and insulators, apparently at the same single tank as in the older plant – although two continuous tanks with a total of 16 rings still remained. Gayner supplied insulator presses and molds – brought from his family’s factory. No hand manufacturing was listed for the new business (Bratcher 2017; Roller 1998; Toulouse 1971:337).

The plant suffered from poor quality production, and the corporation halted production in April 1924. The firm reorganized in November of that year and attempted to resume manufacturing. However, glass quality continued to decline, sometimes causing an entire production run to be discarded. The factory ceased operations in May 1925. Although the firm attempted another reorganization, the plant never reopened (Stoudt & Whitmore 2005-2006). The *American Glass Review* (1927:100, 139), however, still listed Lynchburg Glass Corp. – incorrectly – as making “prescriptions, vials, beers, minerals, patent and proprietary, full line of glass insulators” at two continuous tanks with 16 rings in 1927. Ironically, when the plant was being demolished, it was discovered that a faulty valve that was improperly installed at a unreachable location restricted the gas flow – almost certainly contributing to (if not actually causing) the poor quality of glass (Bratcher 2017b). As above, see Bratcher (2017b) for a more detailed history.

Containers and Marks

According to Bratcher (2017a; 2017b), the initial firm – Lynchburg Glass Works – made primarily druggists’ bottles and soda bottles along with tumblers. The second incarnation – Lynchburg Glass Corp. – concentrated on insulators, although it also produced fruit jars and some soda bottles.

Lbg (1919-1920)

Porter (1996:5) noted that the Lynchburg Glass Co. made hobble-skirt Coca-Cola bottles of grey glass from 1919 to 1920. The plant marked the bottles “Lbg” along with two-digit date codes (Figures 1 & 2). Porter (personal communication,



Figure 2 – Lbg Coke bottle (eBay)

3/26/2008) confirmed that the “b” and “g” in the mark were lower case and that the logo was embossed on the heels of Coke bottles with either a “19” or “20” to the right of it. The

1919 date codes are rare, and Porter had never seen one from 1921. In addition to the heelmark, bottles without city/state embossing also have the “Lbg” embossed on the base.



Figure 1 – Lbg (Bill Porter)

Stoudt and Whitmore (2005-2006) added that the “Lbg” mark has been recorded on “Chero Cola, Coca Cola and Coca Cola Soda Water which was used for flavored drinks such as Orange, Grape. Medicine bottles with ‘LBG’ on the heel have also been found.” Despite the use of capitals in the quote, Lynchburg only used a mark with a capital “L” and lower-case “bg.” There seems to be no evidence, however, for the use of the “Lbg” mark after 1920. It is possible that the 1921 fire occurred very early in the year. It is apparent from Bill Porter’s unpublished database that Coke bottle production was limited to the Lynchburg Glass Works – not the later corporation. All of this was confirmed by Bratcher (2017c).

L in a Horizontal Oval (1923-1925)

According to McDougald and McDougald (1990:116-117), the Lynchburg Glass Works marked its products with an L in a horizontal oval. This was almost certainly referring to insulators and was after the plant stopped making bottles. Stoudt and Whitmore (2005-2006), however, noted that the

Lynchburg Glass Corporation is known to have had six bottle blowing machines on their premises. . . . Also, several Sparkletts Spring Water decanter bottles are known to exist, each having an “L-in-an-Oval” logo, but there has been much discussion as to where these bottles were actually produced.

The use of the mark on insulators and the historical reference to the continued manufacture of soda bottles provide a strong connection between Lynchburg and the Oval-L logo. However, the mark was also certainly used by the Latchford Glass Co. in California. Currently, the only way we know to identify which company used the mark on any specific bottle is from context. It is highly unlikely that a bottle made by a small glass house in Virginia would be used in California. Conversely, California-made bottles are unlikely to have been used in Virginia. Since Sparkletts was founded at Los Angeles, California, in 1925, the mark on the Sparkletts bottle almost certainly indicates the Latchford Glass Co. See the Latchford section for the use of the mark on bottles – by that company.

Again, Bratcher (2017c) basically agreed with the above information but also discussed a real anomaly. Some Coca-Cola bottles were made with the “ROOT” logo on the heel but the Oval-L mark on the base. Although Bratcher discussed several possibilities, the reason for the two logos on one bottle remains a mystery.

There is no question at all that the Lynchburg Glass Corp. made insulators marked with the Oval-L logo, “LYNCHBURG,” or both (Figure 3).



Figure 3 – Lynchburg Insulators (eBay)

LYNCHBURG STANDARD MASON (1923-1925)

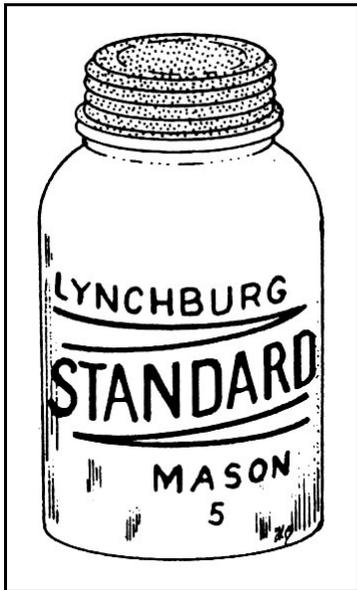


Figure 4 – Lynchburg jar
(Creswick 1987:84)

The Lynchburg Glass Corp. made the LYNCHBURG STANDARD MASON jar as a sideline during the 1923 to 1925 period (Figures 4 & 5). The company's main product by that time was insulators. The jars were machine made, and – as may be expected from the short production period – uncommon (Creswick 1987:84; Roller 1983:200; 2011:304; Toulouse 1969:292; 1971:337). Woodward (1988:21-22) noted that insulators were marked LYNCHBURG and that nothing else was made “except for a few fruit jars, produced for a couple weeks” during the



Figure 5 – Lynchburg jar
(North American Glass)

period when insulators were manufactured. According to McDougald and McDougald (1990:116-117), the plant made insulators from November 1923 until it closed in 1925.

Discussion and Conclusions

There is no question about the marks attributed to the Lynchburg Glass Works and Lynchburg Glass Corp. For a very thorough history of both firms and a thoughtful discussion of the marks, see Bratcher (2017a; 2017b; 2017c).

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