

Massillon Bottle & Glass Co.

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History

Massillon Bottle & Glass Co., Massillon, Ohio (1900-1904)

The Massillon Bottle & Glass Co. was incorporated in June, 1900, by a group of Massillon coal executives leery of prospects in the local coal industry and inspired by the success of Reed & Co., the local bottle glass operation. The incorporators were J.F. Pocock, H.F. Pocock and J.C. Haring, all of the Pocock Coal Co., and W.H. Geis and L.J. Kerrigan, experienced glass men formerly employed at the Reed plant. The firm completed the first of its factories within three months and shipped its first bottles in September. It completed two additional factories and had them in operation by the end of the year, employing altogether 175 men and boys. The plant made beer bottles and fruit jars during its initial year. Production by the end of the 1900-1901 blast amounted to more than eight million bottles. All factories had continuous tanks, and all bottles were mold blown (*Massillon Independent* 1900a; 1900b; 1901a; 1901b; Markham, n. d.; *Newark Advocate* 1900; Roller 1996; Secretary of State 1900:453)

In 1901, the plant blew its bottles at a single continuous tank with 18 rings, listing beer and mineral water bottles as its products the following year. Before the 1904 merger, the plant made beer bottles and some Hutchinson-style soda bottles at three tanks with a total of 19 rings (*American Glass Review* 1934:163; Roller 1996).

In August 1904, the Massillon Bottle factories – along with others in Massillon, Newark and Wooster – were purchased by the newly-incorporated Ohio Bottle Co. The factories were thereafter operated as part of that firm and then by its successor, the American Bottle Co. The plant was known locally as the Pocock factory, even after it became part of the Ohio Bottle Co. (*National Glass Budget* 1904:10). See the section on the American Bottle Co. for more information on both American Bottle and the Ohio Bottle Co.

Containers and Marks

Von Mechow (2017) created a distribution map of bottles made by the firm, mostly clustered in the area around the factory – ranging from eastern Wisconsin to the west, southern Ohio and Maryland to the south, New Jersey to the east, and central New York to the north. However, the bottles reported by von Mechow were ones embossed on the sides with the names of local brewers. The Massillon firm primarily produced generic export beer bottles to be used with paper labels for national brands. These generic bottles have been found throughout the U.S.



Figure 1 – MB&GCo envelope (eBay)

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A Massillon Glass & Bottle Co. envelope showed its trademark – a typical export beer bottle with a one-part finish – surrounded by a wreath of what may be hops (Figure 1). The bottle is the type generally found with MG&BCo logos.

M.B.&G.CO. (1900-1904)

According to Toulouse (1971:348), this mark was used from 1900 to 1904. Ayres et al. (1980:unnumbered page), showed M.B.&G.CO in a slight downward arch on a beer bottle base. Paul and Parmalee (1973:33) reported the mark on “applied crown” soda bottles, while Oppelt (2006) noted it as a mark found on Hutchinson finish sodas.

On beer bottles, the mark appears in at least four configurations (Figures 2 & 3):

1. M.B.&G.CO. in a slight arch just above the center of the base
2. M.B.&G.CO. in an arch at the top of the base
3. M.B.&G.CO. horizontally across the center
4. M.B.&G.Co. in an inverted arch at the bottom of the base

Since the glass house was only open for four years, it is doubtful that we shall discover any temporal sequence for these variations. Variation 1 is the most common in our sample, followed closely by Variation 2, but we have only seen a single example of each of the last two configurations. In all cases except Variation 4, the “O” in “CO” was capitalized, and all had punctuation, although the period was occasionally lacking in the final “O” – probably due to lack of space.



Figure 2 – MB&GCo basemarks 1 & 2

Most of our sources (e.g., Mobley 2004; von Mechow 2017) failed to list their examples in ways that allowed us to tell the slight arch variation (1) from the fully arched one (2). Although our photographic sample is small, the No. 1 variation (slight arch) had numbers ranging from 3-24, all below the logo. We only found 1A, 3A, and 5 on bases with the No. 2 variation. Our only example of No. 3 had a 3 in the same position, and No. 4 had an unclear number above the logo in the photo, possibly 2 or 22. All were mouth-blown bottles with Baltimore Loop, one-part beer, or the unusual Phoenix finishes.



Figure 3 – MB&GCo basemarks 3 & 4 (eBay)

Hutchinson Soda Bottles

Hutchbook (Fowler 2017) listed 135 embossed Hutchinson bottles with the MB&GCO logo. All had the logo embossed in a straight line across the heel, and each was followed by a one- or two-digit number, including 5, 7, 12, 19, 23, 33, 37, 079, and 99 (Figure 4). Photos in Hutchbook show pretty clearly that these were model or catalog codes and that No. 5, 12, and 33 were the most



Figure 4 – MB&GCo heelmarks (eBay)

popular choices. No. 5 was embossed “THIS BOTTLE IS NEVER SOLD” just above the reverse heel and “REGISTERED in the same location on the front (just above the logo – Figure 5), while No. 33 was similarly marked “THIS BOTTLE / NOT TO BE SOLD” above the front heel. No. 12 had the logo on the reverse heel but no warning. Some of these codes were followed by a hyphen and either a 1 or a 2 (e.g., 33-1 or 12-2). These were almost certainly mold numbers.

Discussion and Conclusions

It seems that the Massillon Bottle & Glass Co. was an almost instant success, very likely because of its choice of products – although having two experienced glass men at the helm was certainly a factor. As we have noted elsewhere (e.g., the section on the Adolphus Busch Glass Mfg. Co.), the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Co. – and probably the other major breweries – had continual problems finding a sufficient supply of bottles for its constant stream of beer. Meanwhile, some of the major suppliers – e.g., Mississippi Glass Co. and Lindell Glass Co. (see their respective sections) – had either closed or changed their product lines, leaving a growing market open. Massillon Bottle & Glass Co. – along with the other glass houses that became the American Glass Co. – stepped in at the right time to fill that gap.

Although the Massillon Bottle & Glass Co. was only open for a few years, the plant used at least five variations of marks, although we have discovered no good reason why there so many in such a short period of time – although the different logos may have been somehow connected with the firm's success. Unfortunately, we do not know which breweries the plant supplied. Although there may have been a temporal order for the marks, that is probably less important, since each bottle can be dated 1900-1904. However, with all returnable bottles, deposition lag must also be taken into consideration.



Figure 5 – Model 5 (eBay)

Acknowledgments

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