

# **The Bottles of Phillips Milk of Magnesia**

Bill Lockhart, Beau Shriever, and Carol Serr

As often happens, sources of the early history of Charles H. Phillips, his most prominent invention, and his business are confused and confusing. The following history has ignored the often-copied incorrect information from the internet and concentrated on best cited and/or most rational information we could find.

Soon after its invention by Charles H. Phillips in 1873, Milk of Magnesia became Phillips' most popular product. After Phillips died in 1882, his four sons gained control of the business, incorporating as the Chas. H. Phillips Chemical Co. in 1885. Although the product sold nationally, it probably did not become a household word until the Sterling Products Corp. purchased the firm in 1923 and stepped up national advertising. Sterling introduced Milk of Magnesia Tablets in 1931. The bottles for both the liquid and the tablets followed a logical progression of embossing and paper labels, enabling me to present a reasonable chronology of the product.

## **History**

Charles H. Phillips, an English chemist (pharmacist), moved from England to Elizabeth, New Jersey, where he operated as a retail druggist before relocating to what became known as the Phillips Mansion, 666 Hope St., in the Glenbrook subdivision of Stamford, Connecticut, in 1848. He established the Phillips Camphor and Wax Co. along the Noroton River on the same property, a bit east of the house, in 1849. Along with camphor and wax, the factory produced essential oils as well as Phillips' Palatable Cod Liver Oil (emulsion) and Phillips' Phosphor-Nutritine (Mills 2018; Old Main Artifacts 2014; Sullivan 2013).

In 1873, Phillips patented an 8% suspension of hydrate of magnesium and water, naming the formula Milk of Magnesia because of its milky whiteness. Even though he produced his products at Glenbrook, he advertised as Charles H. Phillips, Manufacturing Chemist, through a sales office at "Nos. 2 & 4 Platt Street," New York City by at least 1879. He used his own name and the New York address until at least 1883 and almost certainly until the incorporation. After

Phillips' death in 1882, his four sons gained control of the business, incorporating as the Charles H. Phillips Chemical Co. in 1885. By 1886, the product line included Phillips' Phospho-Muriate of Quinine, Milk of Magnesia, Phillips' Palatable Cod Liver Oil Emulsion, Phillips' Digestible Cocoa, and Phillips' Wheat Phosphates (*American Journal of Electrology and Neurology* 1879:81; *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 1886:1; Mills 2018; Old Main Artifacts 2014; *Popular Science News* 1883:9).

The Sterling Products Corp. acquired the business in 1923, soon increasing the Milk of Magnesia product line and expanding the factory. Sterling added Phillips' Milk of Magnesia Toothpaste in 1924, Phillips' Dental Magnesia & Tooth Powder in 1925, and Phillips' Milk of Magnesia Tablets in 1931, stepping up the advertising by the 1930s. Sterling renamed the Phillips section as the National Brands Division, Glenbrook Laboratories, in 1958. About 1980, Sterling closed the factory and it became an office complex occupied by 45 small businesses as of 1985. Bayer HealthCare acquired Sterling in 1995, continuing Phillips' Milk of Magnesia to the present (Connie C. 2012; Mills 2015; Sullivan 2013).

## Bottles and Marks

Some generalities became apparent early in this study and are worth a short preface. The earliest Milk of Magnesia bottles were generic with paper labels. These were followed by a series of embossed bottles then a return to generic bottles with paper labels in the 1960s (possibly slightly earlier). See Table 1 for a list of pertinent dates for bottle identification.

Although several internet sources have noted that the Phillips logo was first used in 1906, that date is very misleading. Justia (2018) noted that the Phillips Chemical Co. registered the famous trademark on August 21, 1906, the date embossed on many bottles and paper labels. However, the firm claimed a first use in 1885! The logo consisted of "PHILLIPS' / MILK OF / {monogram} / MAGNESIA." The monogram consisted of a highly stylized "CHP" (Charles H. Phillips) within a shield "surrounded by buckled strap" (Figure 1).

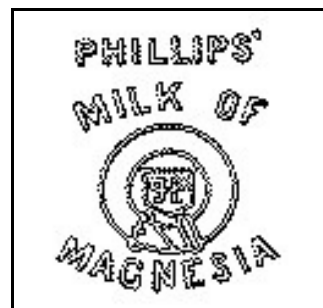


Figure 1 – Phillips logo

Glass bottle use may be divided into two sections: liquid Milk of Magnesia (marked Antacid-Laxative on the paper labels) and Milk of Magnesia Tablets. Since the tablets were introduced much later than the liquid (by Sterling in 1931), the chronology is much different. Both the embossing and the paper labels for the tablets were distinctively different from those used on the liquid. We will begin with the much older liquid chronology.

Glass Bottles for liquid Milk of Magnesia may also be divided into two groups: mouth-blown and machine-made bottles. Although these two are distinct by manufacturing characteristics, the embossing was identical on the final mouth-blown bottles and the initial machine-made one. Logically, we begin with the mouth-blown containers.

**Table 1 – Significant Years for Milk of Magnesia**

Dates	Significant Events
1849	founding of Phillips Camphor and Wax Co at Glenbrook
1873	Milk of Magnesia patent
1885	incorporation of Charles H. Phillips Chemical Co.; first use of Milk of Magnesia trademark in April
1906	trademark registered August 21
1918	Hazel-Atlas began making cobalt blue glass
1920	Hazel-Atlas absorbed Kearns-Gorsuch (K - number)
1923	Sterling Drug acquisition
ca. 1925	Kearns-Gorsuch converted a tank to cobalt blue glass; Lynch machines
1925-1930	adoption of CT finishes
1931	Tablets (all CT finishes)
ca. 1937	K-G lost its identity as part of HA (K-number + HA logo)
1962	first use of 5-digit postal codes – on ALL paper labels on cobalt blue bottles

## Mouth-Blown Bottles for Liquid Milk of Magnesia

The mouth-blown era (for these bottles) lasted from 1873 to ca. 1915. This period may be divided into six segments based on bottles or paper labels – although the first two may have been very close in description. We discuss the bottles below in chronological order.

### 1. 1873-1885 – unknown

Phillips patented the Milk of Magnesia formula in 1873 and almost certainly began selling the liquid soon thereafter. It was surely packaged in glass, but we have discovered no identifiable bottles for this period. It is virtually certain that he used generic bottles with paper labels – although we have no clue as to the layout or the wording of those labels, the size of the packaging, or the color of the glass. Since the earliest embossed bottles were colorless or light blue, he may have used aqua bottles – the common color for the time – during this period. He also may have used a variety of bottles depending on what was convenient, or he may have ordered a specific shape.

### 2. 1885-poss. 1890s – Generic bottles; paper labels

**Finish:** Squared Ring

**Color:** Light Blue

**Side Embossing:** None; tombstone-shaped paper label – MILK OF MAGNESIA (arch) / {circular belt and shield trademark} / long, involved list of cures; photo too indistinct for more information (Figure 2).

**Base Embossing:** None

**Manufacturing Technique:** Mouth Blown

**Dating:** after 1885

**Comments:** Round in cross-section

Unfortunately, we only have a single example from a photograph posted by “Molly” – a junior member of Antique Bottles.net – and one of the few collectors of Milk of Magnesia

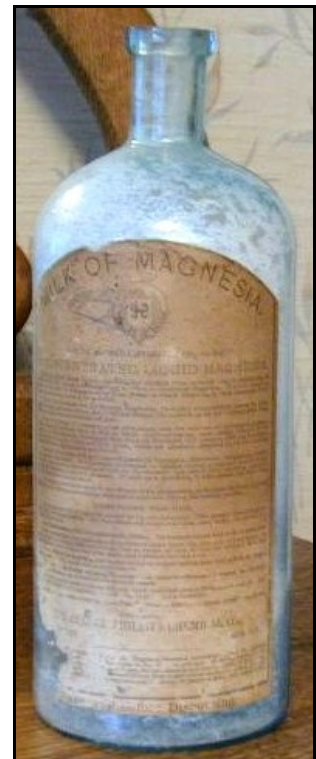


Figure 2 – Paper label  
(Molly – Antique  
Bottles.net)

bottles. Her bottle was one of the typical tall, round, squared-finished packer or packing bottles of the 1870s and 1880s, often used for medicine as well as other products – and the label included the logo trademarked in 1906 with a first use claimed in 1885.

3. poss. 1890s – Embossed; 1873 patent; C.H. PHILLIPS around logo; squared finish

**Finish:** Squared Ring

**Color:** Colorless or Light Blue

**Side Embossing:** C.H. PHILLIPS (arch) / {circular belt and shield trademark} / NEW YORK (inverted arch) / PATENTED / APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup> AND JULY 22<sup>ND</sup> / 1873 (all horizontal) (Figure 3)

**Base Embossing:** None

**Manufacturing Technique:** Mouth Blown

**Dating:** poss. 1890s

**Comments:** Probably first embossed bottle

This bottle was embossed with the New York designation – possibly the main office or a sales outlet. Even by 1880s standards, Stamford, Connecticut, was just across the state border from New York City. All Milk of Magnesia bottles after this one (at least as far as we currently know) bore the name of Glenbrook (a subdivision of Stamford). The ca. 1890s date should be considered “best guess.” The collector (Molly) reported the size at “about 7 inches tall.”

4. poss. 1900-ca. 1906 – Embossed; 1873 patent; PHILLIPS at shoulder; squared finish

**Finish:** Squared Ring

**Color:** Ice Blue and colorless

**Side Embossing:** PHILLIPS / MILK OF (slight arch) / {circular belt and shield trademark} / MAGNESIA (inverted arch) / PATENTED / APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup> AND JULY 22<sup>ND</sup> / 1873 (all horizontal) (Figure 4)



Figure 3 – C.H. Phillips (Antique Bottles.net)

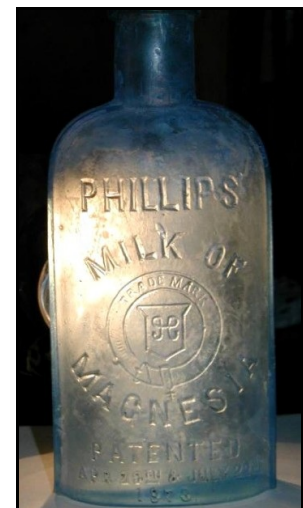


Figure 4 – Milk of Magnesia 1873 (Antique Bottles.net)

**Base Embossing:** None

**Manufacturing Technique:** Mouth Blown

**Dating:** poss. 1900-ca. 1906

**Comments:** One of these – a colorless example – had all of the patent data below the word MAGNESIA peened out (ghosted) (Figure 5)

These bottles set the design standard for the next 60 years. Although the earlier bottles (including the paper labels) incorporated the logo with the CHP monogram, this design included “PHILLIPS” at the shoulder, “MILK OF MAGNESIA” around the arch, and dates from the lower body to the heel. Although the collector (Molly) reported one of these as “clear” (colorless), the photo showed a blue tint at the base. She reported the size at “about 7 inches tall.” These were probably made during the ca. 1900-1906 period – although the one with peened-out lettering below the logo was probably made just about 1906. Even though the firm had registered the trademark (in 1906), the family probably wanted to take advantage of one last run of bottles with the old, paid-for molds.

5. 1906-ca. 1915 – Embossed; REG'D 1906; PHILLIPS shoulder; square or round finish; T base

**Finish:** Squared Ring

**Color:** Light Blue

**Side Embossing:** PHILLIPS / MILK OF (slight arch) / {circular belt with arched TRADE MARK at top around shield with reversed Ps} / MAGNESIA (inverted arch) / REG'D IN U.S. PAT. OFFICE / AUG 21, 1906 (Figure 6)

**Base Embossing:** T / 50 or T / 31 or T / 34 (or other numbers) (Figure 7)

**Manufacturing Technique:** Mouth Blown

**Dating:** 1906-ca. 1915 Tibby Brothers Glass Co., Sharpsburg (1904-1915)

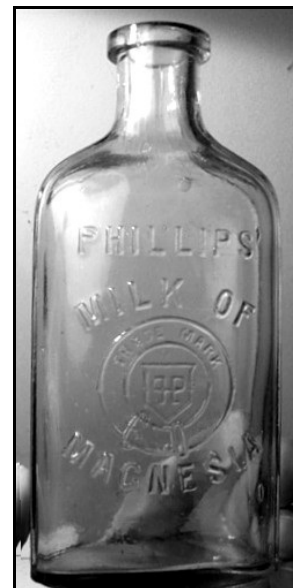


Figure 5 – Ghosted patent data (Antique Bottles.net)

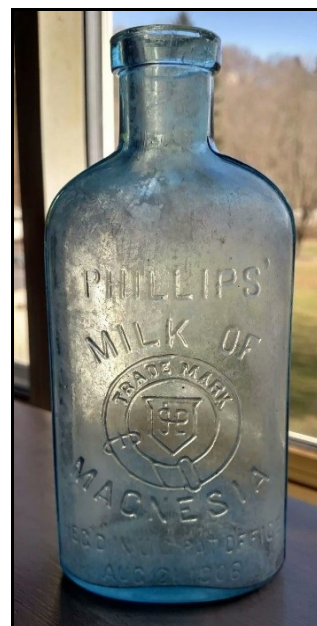


Figure 6 – 1906 squared ring (eBay)



**Comments:** PHILLIPS; 2 lines below; identical with machine made except for color and manufacturing technique. A variation was identical except that the ring finish was rounded, and the base of the only examples we have seen was embossed with only a “T” – no number (Figure 8). One rounded-ring example was only embossed on the base with two dots (Figure 9). It is impossible to determine whether the squared or rounded finish was made earlier.



Figure 7 – T # basemark (eBay)



Figure 8 – Rounded ring (eBay)

Because of the 1906 trademark date, these bottles could not have been used prior to that time. Although the date changed, this group continued the information below the logo. These were almost certainly the first bottles with the 1906 date, so they probably began production in 1906 and continued as long as Phillips purchased bottles from this supplier.

The “T” manufacturer’s mark has not been addressed in any of the traditional sources. The investigations of the Bottle Research Group have concluded that only one major company beginning with a “T” fits the various criteria for bottles we have found with the “T” basemark: Tibby Brothers (1866-1903), followed by the Tibby Brothers Glass Co., Sharpsburg,

Pennsylvania (1904-1915). Tibby made a wide variety of bottles in at least colorless and “green” glass. While we have no absolute evidence, the “green” (i.e., glass with no coloring agents or decolorant added) came out in different shades of aqua and light blue, depending on the chemical composition of the sand and the amount of iron it contained. The sand used by the Tibby family apparently colored the glass a light blue.



Figure 9 – Rounded ring bases (eBay)

In our dating, we have made the assumption that Phillips continued to buy bottles from the Tibby Brothers until the glass house shut down its Sharpsburg operations in 1915. It appears that all of this final style of Milk of Magnesia bottles were marked with the “T” logo on the bases and were light blue in color. Phillips may have shifted to another supplier earlier, so the 1915 end date for this style should not be regarded as absolute. We suggest, however, that Phillips remained with its supplier until forced to switch.

## **Machine-Made Bottles for Liquid Milk of Magnesia**

The machine-made era lasted from ca. 1915 until some point during the late-1960s-mid-1970s, when the firm shifted to plastic containers. This era must be subdivided into two parts because of the inception of Milk of Magnesia Tablets by Sterling in 1931. Sterling used a single style of embossed bottle for the tablets as well as at least five variations of paper labels on generic bottles. However, we will discuss the bottles intended for liquid Milk of Magnesia first. These consisted of five embossed variations, followed by three paper-labels on generic bottles. For archaeologists, the number of labels is moot, since the identifying basemarks are identical on all of the generic bottles except for manufacturer’s initials and mold numbers.

There appears to be an important distinction between the bottles made for Phillips and those produced for Sterling Products Corp. None of the pre-Sterling bottles have been found in the quantities of the ones used by Sterling. In part, of course, we can expect smaller quantities of older bottles just because of attrition with age. But Sterling stepped up advertising dramatically. Where Phillips mostly advertised in druggists’ journals – expecting the stores to do the interacting with the customers – Sterling boasted in national magazines with full-page ads. This *has* to have increased sales dramatically.

1. ca. 1915-1923 – REG’D 1906; PHILLIPS at shoulder; 2 lines below logo; squared finish; numbers on base

**Finish:** Squared Ring

**Color:** Cobalt Blue

**Side Embossing:** PHILLIPS (horizontal) / MILK OF (slight arch) / {belted shield} /  
MAGNESIA (slight inverted arch) / REG’D IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE / AUG. 21, 1906 (Figure 10)



**Base Embossing:** 10 or 5 or 7 (probably other numbers) in machine scar (Figure 11)

**Manufacturing Technique:** Machine

**Dating:** ca. 1915-1923 – followed the “T” mouth-blown bottle. Continuous-thread finishes were not available until the mid- to late 1920s. These were probably used by Phillips from the end of the Tibby Brothers to the sale to Sterling in 1923.

**Comments:** Strap side; PHILLIPS above logo; 2 lines below; identical with mouth blown except for color and manufacturing technique



Figure 10 – Square ring (eBay)

As noted above, these were almost certainly used from the end of the Tibby Brothers to the sale to Sterling Products in 1923. These were the last bottles to carry the Phillips name embossed above the circular belt-and-shield logo. These bottles were identical to the Tibby containers except for two characteristics. First, of course, they were machine made with a distinct scar on the base and a parting line just below the finish. Second, they were cobalt blue in color. Despite the lack of a manufacturer's mark, these may have been made by the Maryland Glass Corp., the largest producer of cobalt blue bottles in the world at that time. The machine scars were typical of glass machines but were not specifically diagnostic.



Figure 11 – Numbers (eBay)

2. 1923-ca. 1928 – REG'D 1906; no PHILLIPS; Glenbrook; 5 lines below; squared finish; M or K basemarks

**Finish:** Squared Ring

**Color:** Cobalt Blue

**Side Embossing:** MILK OF (slight arch) / {circular belt with arched TRADE MARK at top around shield with reversed Ps} / MAGNESIA (inverted arch) / REG'D IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE / AUG. 21, 1906 / THE CHAS W PHILLIPS / CHEMICAL COMPANY / GLENBROOK, CONN. (Figure 12)

**Base Embossing:** 12 K 929 with machine scar or  
K 928 / U.S.A. / 26 (with base vertical) or  
18 K 929 or  
5•M•9

**Manufacturing Technique:** Machine

**Dating:** Sterling – 1923-ca. 1928

**Comments:** Strap side; no PHILLIPS; 5 lines below

This begins the Sterling Products Corp. years. The basic layout of the bottle remains the same as the Phillips style, but the name “PHILLIPS” at the top is notably absent. Sterling also added company name and location below the trademark date. The bases were embossed with either the “M” used by the Maryland Glass Corp. or the “K 928” (or 929) of the Kearns-Gorsuch Glass Co. The earliest of these were the “M” bottles, made for Sterling from 1923 to ca. 1925.



Figure 12 – Square ring  
(eBay)

The Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. acquired Kearns-Gorsuch in 1920, but the plant did not convert a continuous tank to cobalt blue glass until ca. 1925. The “K” bottles were made from about that date to ca. 1928, when continuous-thread finishes and screw caps became available. One bottle in our sample included “U.S.A.” on the base, suggesting that the initials appeared during the end of this period – ca. 1928 – and that Sterling was selling the product outside the U.S. by this time.

The timing for this addition is interesting and almost certainly was no accident. According to King (1987:248), all bottles made by the Dominion Glass Co. for export to the United States after June 27, 1928, had to be embossed “MADE IN CANADA” because of a newly instituted American requirement. This same law almost certainly demanded “MADE IN U.S.A.” to be similarly embossed on U.S. bottles produced for export – although we have been unable to find a direct reference to the statute.

Unlike Phillips, Sterling was not loyal to a single glass house, although we do not know the firm’s reasoning. Sales may have been so large that a single plant could not meet the demand, or Sterling may just have preferred diversity – taking advantage of sales or using the prices of one glass house as leverage against another one.

3. ca. 1928-late 1930s – REG (no date); no PHILLIPS; Glenbrook;  
4 lines below; K or M basemarks

**Finish:** Continuous Thread

**Color:** Cobalt Blue

**Side Embossing:** MILK OF (slight arch) / {belted shield} /  
MAGNESIA (slight inverted arch) / REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. / THE  
CHAS W PHILLIPS / CHEMICAL COMPANY / GLENBROOK,  
CONN. (Figure 13)

**Base Embossing:** 25 (upside down) / U.S.A. / K928 (upside down)  
or

U.S.A. (turned left) / 9 / K-928 (turned right) or  
K 928 / U.S.A. / 21 (with long axis vertical) or  
M 8 (8 turned right) (Figure 14)

**Manufacturing Technique:** Machine scar

**Dating:** ca. 1928-late 1930s

**Comments:** No PHILLIPS; 4 lines below



Figure 13 – CT finish, 4 lines  
(eBay)

This was essentially the same bottle as Sterling's first – with two major changes. Most notable was the shift to the continuous-thread finish, sealed with a metal screw cap. These became available during the ca. 1925-1931 period, and we have selected ca. 1928 as a probable adoption date. The vast majority of our sample had the “K” basemarks of the Kearns-Gorsuch Glass Co., although one had the “M” of Maryland Glass. These were probably used until the late 1930s based on



Figure 14 – 4 line bases (eBay)

manufacturer's marks on the bases of the next style of bottles. Kearns-Gorsuch used model numbers 928 and 929 for Phillips' Milk of Magnesia bottles. The lower number (928) indicated the 4 oz. bottle, while “929” was for the larger 12 oz. size.

3a. ca. 1928-late 1930s – same as 3 but Windsor Ontario

**Finish:** Continuous Thread

**Color:** Cobalt Blue

**Side Embossing:** MILK OF (slight arch) / {belted shield} /  
MAGNESIA (slight inverted arch) / REG. CAN. PAT. OFF. / THE  
CHAS W PHILLIPS / CHEMICAL COMPANY / WINDSOR,  
ONTARIO (Figure 15)

**Base Embossing:** Diamond-D / 11 {embossing faint} (Figure 16)  
K 928 / U.S.A. / 21 (with long axis vertical) or  
M 8 (8 turned right)

**Manufacturing Technique:** Machine scar

**Dating:** ca. 1928-later 1930s

**Comments:** No PHILLIPS; 4 lines below



Figure 15 – Windsor (eBay)



Figure 16 – Windsor base (eBay)

This was the same as No. 3 above except that the location was changed to Windsor, Ontario, Canada. These Canadian bottles were made during the same period as No. 3 – ca. 1928-ca. the mid-1940s. The Dominion Glass Co. – with branches in several Canadian cities – used the Diamond-D logo from 1928 to the 1970s. It makes sense that the Canadian branch of Sterling used bottles made in Canada.

4. late 1930s-late 1950s – no REG; no PHILLIPS; Glenbrook; 3 lines below; K or HA basemarks

**Finish:** Continuous Thread

**Color:** Cobalt Blue

**Side Embossing:** MILK OF (slight arch) / {circular belt with arched TRADE MARK at top  
around shield with reversed Ps} / MAGNESIA (inverted arch) / THE CHAS W PHILLIPS /  
CHEMICAL COMPANY / GLENBROOK, CONN. (Figure 17)

**Base Embossing:** HA logo (facing left) U.S.A. K-928 (facing right) / 12 or  
MADE IN / HA logo (facing left) K-928 (facing right) / U.S.A. or  
MADE IN / HA logo (facing left) 22 (facing right) / U.S.A. or



U.S.A. M (M turned right) / 4 or  
MADE IN / 5 (facing left) M (facing right) / U.S.A. or  
27 (turned left) U.S.A. M (M turned right) (Figure 18)

**Manufacturing Technique:** Machine scar

**Dating:** late 1930s-late 1950s

**Comments:** No PHILLIPS; 3 lines

At some point during the late 1930s, Sterling took the next logical step by removing the reference to the patent office, reducing the bottom embossing to three lines.



Figure 18 – 3-lines base (eBay)

At least one run of these bottles was made by the Kearns-Gorsuch plant.

Since Kearns-Gorsuch lost its individual identity ca. 1937, the plant used the typical Hazel-Atlas H-over-A logo after that point. The presence of both the H-over-A logo *and* the K-928 designation probably indicates the transition period, when the older Kearns-Gorsuch molds continued in use – with the Hazel-Atlas logo added. These continued in use until the late 1950s, when one last embossed bottle was adopted.



Figure 17 – 3 lines (eBay)

5. mid- to late 1950s – GENUINE; no REG; no PHILLIPS; no  
Glenbrook; HA basemark; light blue

**Finish:** Continuous Thread

**Color:** Light Blue

**Side Embossing:** GENUINE / PHILLIPS / MILK OF (slight arch) /  
{circular belt with arched TRADE MARK at top around shield with  
reversed Ps} / MAGNESIA (inverted arch) (Figure 19)

**Base Embossing:** MADE IN / Z2 (facing left) U.S.A. (horizontal) HA  
logo (facing right) (Figure 20)

**Manufacturing Technique:** Machine scar

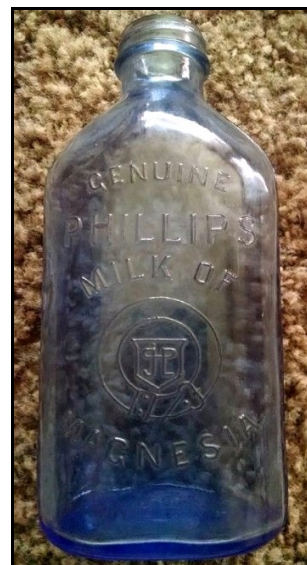


Figure 19 – Genuine (eBay)

**Dating:** 1950s

**Comments:** GENUINE / PHILLIPS; no lines below; left digit on base may be letter, number, or both

These were transitional bottles between the embossing and paper eras – probably limited to a single run. The words “GENUINE” and “PHILLIPS” – added to these bottles – also appeared on the paper labels that followed. Meanwhile, Sterling eliminated the lines below the logo on the body. The only example we have seen was marked with the typical Hazel-Atlas H-over-A basemark. These had their Canadian counterparts. Our



Figure 20 – Genuine base (eBay)

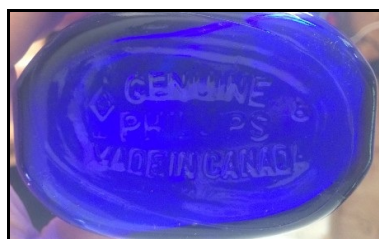


Figure 21 – Genuine Canada (Matt Emery)

only example, compliments of Charles “Matt” Emery, was embossed “GENUINE / PHILLIPS / MADE IN CANADA” with the Diamond-D logo to the left (with an “F” to the left of the logo and a dot to the right) and “8” to the right (Figure 21). Although the “F” does not fit into the typical Dominion Glass Co. code system, the dot to the right indicates the plant at Wallaceburg. The front of the bottle was identical to those from the U.S.

6. ca. 1960-1962 – generic cobalt-blue bottles; paper labels

The first paper label contained the following information – all in black lettering except where noted:

GENUINE (red) / PHILLIPS' / ® / MILK OF / MAGNESIA /  
Contents {logo (red)} 4 Fl. Oz. (cursive) / THE CHAS. H. PHILLIPS  
CO. / A DIVISION OF STERLING DRUGS, INC., NEW YORK  
N.Y. / Chas. H. Phillips (cursive signature) / ® / SHAKE WELL  
BEFORE USING (red in oval outline) / DISTRIBUTED BY  
GLENBROOK LABORATORIES – NEW YORK, N.Y. (red)

The “contents” area varied according to the size of the bottle – at least “4 Fl. Oz.,” “12 Fl. Oz.,” or “1 Pt. 10 Fl. Oz.” (Figures 22 & 23). The sides of the label contained directions for dosage on the left

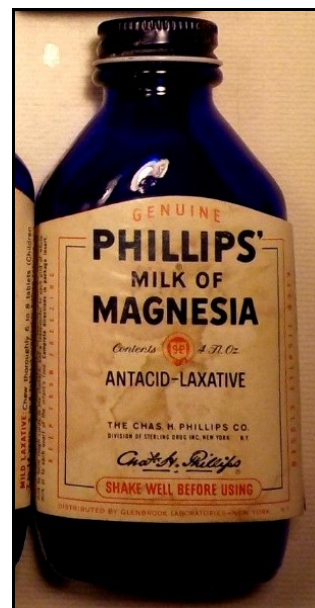


Figure 22 – 1<sup>st</sup> paper label (eBay)

and a warning on the right. Unfortunately, the only photo we have on this label and bottle did not include the base photo of information. However, the base was probably similar to or identical with the ones that followed. Unfortunately, we have yet to discover any Canadian bottles with paper labels.



Figure 23 – 1<sup>st</sup> paper label (eBay)

## 7. 1962-late 1960s – generic cobalt-blue bottles; paper labels

The second generation of labels were identical except that they included the five-digit postal code – 10016 – after both the address in the center of the label and the one at the bottom – although a slight variation only added the code at the bottom address (Figure 24). The Post Office initiated the postal codes system in 1962, almost certainly the year of the switch – although old labels were certainly used until they ran out. These were made in two formats – one with red letters as described in No. 6 (above), the other – for mint flavor – with green instead of red. An exception – probably a misprint on a single run of mint flavor labels – only had the postal code after the bottom address.



Figure 24 – Postal Code (eBay)

All of the basal embossing followed the identical format – “GENUINE (slight arch) / PHILLIPS (horizontal) / MADE IN U.S.A. (slight inverted arch)” – with the last line upside down in relation to the first two. Either a “G” or an “M” appeared to the left of “GENUINE” with a single-digit number to the right. Often, the “M” had dots on both sides. Dotted stippling encircled the base on the resting point (Figure 25). The “M” – of course – identified the Maryland Glass Corp. The “G” almost certainly indicated the Gulfport Glass Co. (1955-1970). Gulfport was a subsidiary of Maryland Glass from its inception to its sale to the Dorsey Corp. in 1968 – although it retained its identity until 1970. The plant only made amber and cobalt blue bottles. Although Toulouse



Figure 25 – Postal code bases (eBay)



(1971:210) only noted a Circle-G logo, the “G” within that circle is identical with the “G” on the Phillips bottles. Therefore, we can confidently date these bottles between 1962 (postal code) and the closing of Gulfport in 1970.

#### 8. late 1960s-poss. mid-1970s

The final generation of paper labels on glass bottles changed the information below “ANTACID – LAXATIVE” to: “Chas. H. Phillips (signature) followed by the red logo / THE CHAS. H. PHILLIPS CO. / A DIVISION OF STERLING DRUGS, INC., NEW YORK N.Y. / CONTENTS 4 FL.

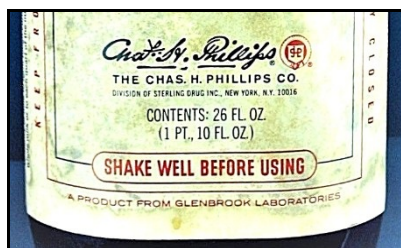


Figure 27 – Later label (eBay)

OZ.” (Figures 26 & 27). Note that the contents information migrated to the bottom, changing from cursive to block capitals, and the Phillips logo moved from the center of the contents data to a position following the signature. Only the locations changed; the information remained the same.

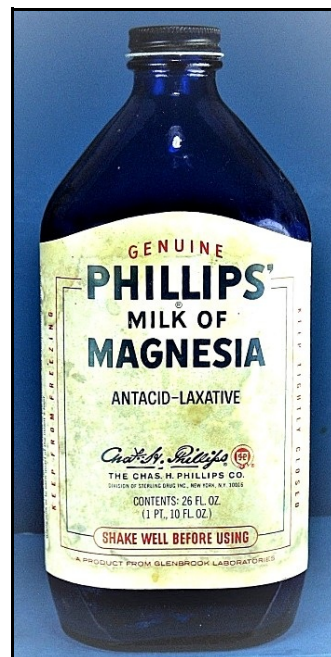


Figure 26 – Later label (eBay)



Figure 28 – Later base (eBay)

The bases with the “M” manufacturer’s mark remained the same as with the previous bottle, but we have found none with “G” logos (Figure 28). Some of this generation, however, had a Circle-B mark to the right of “GENUINE” and a one- or two-

digit number to the left – as well as curved stippling (resembling a line of parentheses) at the resting point. The Circle-B logo was the mark of the Brockway Glass Co. used from 1933 to ca. 2000. At some point, probably the mid-1970s, Sterling adopted plastic bottles and a change of paper label – but plastics are beyond the scope of this research (Figure 29).



Figure 29 – Plastic bottle (eBay)

Several of these later bottles had their Canadian Counterparts. As of this writing, we do not have sufficient information to address these in any detail, although Matt Emery has provided two examples. One of these was only embossed “MADE IN / CANADA” with a “6” to the left. The second, with a heavily stippled base, was embossed “5 / A {Diamond-D} dot (lower right) 3 / 8205-B” (Figure 30). The “5” above was a mold code, but the other codes on this base make no sense. The letter codes to the left were discontinued in 1949, yet this rayed stippling was likely used much later. The dot position indicated the Burnaby plant, opened in 1965, and that fits with the probable age of a paper-labeled Milk of Magnesia bottle. However, the “3” in the date position *should* indicate 1963, but that is two years before the opening of the factory at Burnaby. Of course, this may just indicate a hung-over mold maker. The dot should probably have been immediately to the right of the point of the diamond – indicating the Wallaceburg plant – the factory code on our other Canadian examples.



Figure 30 – Canadian bases (Matt Emery)

## Bottles for Milk of Magnesia Tablets

Because Sterling did not offer Milk of Magnesia Tablets until 1931, this chronology is much shorter – although different in several ways. Along with the addition of the word TABLET, another divergence was in the neck shape of bottles – at least the later ones with paper labels. The bottles for the liquid had a more gentle slope from shoulder to neck (Figure 31). The paper labels also followed a different sequence.

### 1. 1931-late 1950s

**Finish:** Continuous Thread

**Color:** Cobalt Blue

**Side Embossing:** GENUINE / PHILLIPS (slight arch) / {circular belt with arched TRADE



Figure 31 – Shoulders - Tablet on bottom

MARK at top around shield with reversed Ps} / MILK OF /  
MAGNESIA (inverted arch) / TABLETS (horizontal) (Figure 32)

**Base Embossing:** MADE IN / 6 (facing left) M (facing right) /  
U.S.A. OR

9 Diamond-D dot 8 OR

MADE IN / 16 (facing left) / U.S.A. (Figure 33)

**Manufacturing Technique:** Machine

**Dating:** First created by Sterling Drug in 1931

**Comments:** PHILLIPS; TABLETS; The Diamond-D basemark indicated the Dominion Glass Co., and the dot to the right noted the Wallaceburg factory.



Figure 32 – Tablet bottle  
(eBay)



Figure 33 – Tablet base (eBay)

The beginning date for the tablet bottles is one of the few absolutes in the entire Milk of Magnesia series, since the tablets were first placed on the market in 1931. Sterling never changed the tablet bottles until it applied paper labels during the late 1950s.

2. ca. late 1950s – first paper label – Belt & Shield logo between MILK OF MAGNESIA and TABLETS; NO postal code; Successors to (but no Sterling)

The first paper labels were printed with “GENUINE (red) / PHILLIPS / REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. / MILK OF MAGNESIA / {belt & shield logo} (red) / TABLETS / EACH TABLET CONTAINS ONE TEASPOONFUL / OF GENUINE PHILLIPS’ MILK OF MAGNESIA / IN CONCENTRATED FORM. / 75 Tablets Price 50¢ / THE CHAS. H. PHILLIPS CHEMICAL CO. / *Successors to Chas. H. Phillips* (cursive signature) NEW YORK, N.Y. / The name Phillips’, the design and signature are / registered as Trade Marks in the U.S. Patent Office. (red)” (Figure 34). All letters are black unless otherwise designated. The label appeared on the side of an embossed Tablet bottle – the only one we have found on an embossed container. This label was probably used for a very short time.



Figure 34 – 1<sup>st</sup> paper label  
(eBay)



3. ca. 1960-1962 – Belt & Shield logo (red) on bottom left corner; NO postal code; Successors to – PHILLIPS MILK OF MAGNESIA TABLETS

Since these labels, too, had no postal codes, they were made prior to 1962 (possibly ca. 1960) and probably used until the printing was exhausted, around 1964 or later. These labels were quite different from the first one: “*MINT FLAVORED* (red) / GENUINE / PHILLIPS’ ® / MILK OF MAGNESIA / TABLETS / *FAST RELIEF FROM* (red) / UPSET STOMACH (red) / INDIGESTION (red) / HEART BURN (red) / DUE TO GASTRIC HYPERACTIVITY (red) / 75 (or 200) TABLETS / THE CHAS. H. PHILLIPS CO. / DIV. OF STERLING DRUG INC., NEW YORK, N.Y. / SUCCESSORS TO / Chas. H. Phillips (cursive signature) / {belt & shield logo} DISTRIBUTED BY GLENBROOK LABORATORIES – NEW YORK, N.Y. (red)” – all in black letters except as noted (Figure 35).

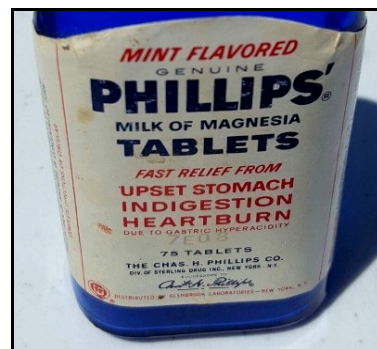


Figure 35 – 2<sup>nd</sup> paper label (eBay)



Figure 36 – 2<sup>nd</sup> paper base (eBay)

The bases were embossed “PHILLIPS (horizontal) / MILK OF MAGNESIA (arch) / TABLETS” (horizontal) with a one- or two-digit number just below and to the left of “PHILLIPS” and a “G” or “M” (flanked by dots) to the right (Figure 36).

A single subvariation exists with a badly deteriorated paper label where all red has disappeared. The label *appears* to be the same as the No. 3 label *except* that the location line added the older numerical designation – “NEW YORK 18, N.Y.” We have no explanation as to why the “18” appears on this label and no others (Figure 37).

4. 1962-1970s – Belt & Shield logo (red) on bottom left corner; postal code; Successors to

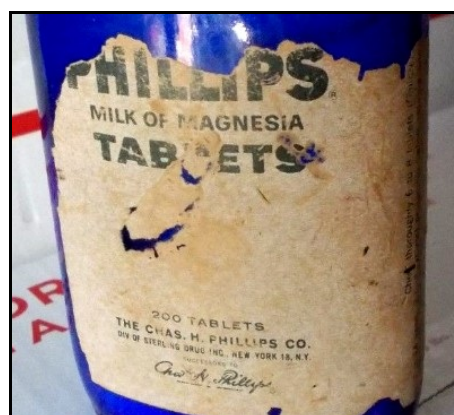


Figure 37 – Variation (eBay)

The only difference between this and the No. 3 label is the addition of the postal code after the location – placing the use of these labels at 1962 or later (Figure 38). We have been unable to determine the approximate date of the next change. The bases of these were embossed the same as No. 3 except the word “PHILLIPS” was notably larger. The bases have both “•M•” and “G” manufacturer’s marks. These bottles were very likely used until the early 1970s, possible until the middle of the decade.

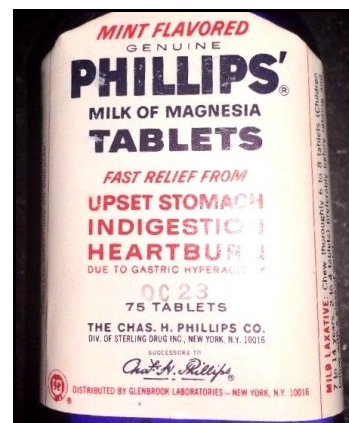


Figure 38 – Postal code (eBay)

##### 5. early-mid-1970s – Original Formula (in red oval at top); no belt & shield logo

The final paper label on glass bottles had “ORIGINAL / FORMULA in white letters in a red oval atop a thick blue bar above NDC 12843-373-09 / GENUINE / PHILLIPS’ ® / MAGNESIA / TABLETS (blue-green) / FAST ANTACID RELIEF (red) / FROM ACID INDIGESTION (blue-green) / SOUR STOMACH AND HEARTBURN (blue-green) / MINT FLAVORED / the Chas. H. Phillips Co. / Division of Sterling Drug, Inc. / New York, N.Y. 10016 / A Product from Glenbrook Laboratories / 200 TABLETS 4.8 grs. each” (Figure 39). Letters were black unless otherwise designated. This was certainly the final paper label used on glass bottles, and it may have transferred over to plastics.



Figure 39 – Last label (eBay)

The bottle base was embossed “PHILLIPS (large letters) / MAGNESIA / TABLETS” with a number to the left of “MAGNESIA” but no manufacturer’s mark. Note that “MILK OF” had been retired. These bottles were probably used only during the early to mid-1970s, likely only at the end of that period. As noted above, the study of plastic bottles and their labels is beyond the scope of this work.

## Lids

All paper-label regular lids (i.e. for bottles for liquid Milk of Magnesia) were dark blue rolled steel with white letters: “*Genuine* / PHILLIPS’ (upwardly slanted) / MILK of / MAGNESIA / TO OPEN, TURN ➤➤➤ (arch).”

The only examples of the final embossed bottle we have discovered *with a lid* had the same type – although the lettering was yellow (Figure 40). It is probable that there was at least one earlier lid style. Our entire lid sample came from eBay auction photos, so the lid on the embossed bottle *may* have been a later lid added by a collector or seller.



Figure 40 – Liquid lids (eBay)

We have only discovered a single embossed Tablet bottle with a lid. Like those on the regular Phillips jars, the lid was rolled steel, but the color scheme was dark blue with yellow letters: “PHILLIPS (arch) / MILK OF / MAGNESIA (both horizontal) / TABLETS (inverted arch).” All paper-label Phillip’s Tablet lids had the same color scheme as the regular lids with “PHILLIPS / MILK OF MAGNESIA / TABLETS (all horizontal)” (Figure 41).



Figure 41 – Tablet lids (eBay)

## Tablet Tins

When the Sterling Products Corp. initiated Milk of Magnesia Tablets, they packaged them in both glass bottles and small tin boxes. Although these were not glass items, they were sufficiently related to warrant an inclusion in this study. Unfortunately, the ads did not show all of the variations in the boxes. A perusal of eBay auctions, however, revealed eleven variations that fell into a very clear progression as well as a crude chronology.

1. 2 red & 1 blue outline – logo in center – 25¢ (1931-ca. 1936)

The first tin was immortalized in the earliest ad for the tablets in 1932 (Old Main Artifacts 2014). The ad offered “slender light boxes of 30” and “bottles of 60” (Figure 42).

Although the ad did not show color, the box it illustrated was an exact match for the earliest tin offered on eBay. The top of the lid contained black lettering (unless otherwise noted): “GENUINE (slight arch - red) / REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. AND CANADA.” Below that was a box made of three lines, the outer on blue, the other two red. “PHILLIPS” created a break in the top of the box. Inside was “MILK OF MAGNESIA (arch) / {shield & buckle logo} / TABLETS / EACH TABLET CONTAINS ONE TEASPOONFUL OF / PHILLIPS’ MILK OF MAGNESIA / IN CONCENTRATED FORM. / 30 TABLETS PRICE 25¢” (Figure 43).

The back had directions in a double-outlined red box with “Prepared only by / THE CHAS. H. PHILLIPS CHEMICAL CO. / successors to Chas. H. Phillips (signature in cursive) NEW YORK CITY” below the directions. The tin was originally sealed shut with a strip of tape containing the Phillips signature. This variation showed in ads as late as 1935 but was replaced by the next style in the 1938 ad, so we



Figure 43 – 1<sup>st</sup> tin (eBay)

2. 1 red & 1 blue outline – logo in center – 25¢ (ca. 1936-ca. 1940)

In this second variation, the outlines were reduced to one red (outside) and one blue (inside) with “REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.” moved below “PHILLIPS” followed by the same information as in the first one. Between the lines at the bottom was “THE NAME PHILLIPS’,

**Quick facts for the busy Doctor about**

- 1 Phillips' Milk of Magnesia Tablets are actually made from genuine, concentrated Phillips' Milk of Magnesia.
- 2 They are not to be confused with dry-form combinations of magnesium oxide, magnesium carbonate and calcium carbonate now on the market.
- 3 Each tablet contains 4.8 grains of precipitated magnesium hydroxide, or an amount equal to one teaspoonful of Phillips' Milk of Magnesia. This concentration is 13 times as great as in U.S.P. liquid Milk of Magnesia.
- 4 They therefore have the marked effectiveness in neutralizing acids that Phillips' Milk of Magnesia has.
- 5 They offer a new convenience for the small, frequent doses which thorough alkalization calls for. Can be carried easily in pocket, hand-bag or traveling-bag and taken whenever and wherever necessary.
- 6 They are as pleasant to take as candy - mints which, indeed, they taste like. They melt quickly on the tongue and leave no after-taste.
- 7 Here, at last, is a form of this remarkable antacid which you can prescribe and be sure your patients will readily accept.

IN SLENDER, LIGHT BOXES OF 30 . . . . . Handy to carry in vest pocket or hand-bag.

IN BOTTLES OF 60 . . . . . Supply for the family medicine cabinet and traveling-bag.

Figure 42 – 1932 ad (Old Main Artifacts)

have selected ca. 1936 as an end date. A few of these also had the NRA symbol (an black eagle with the letters NRA above). The initials indicated the National Recovery Administration, and attempt to pull the country out of the Great Depression – *not* the National Rifle Assn.



Figure 44 – 2<sup>nd</sup> tin (eBay)



THE DESIGN AND SIGNATURE ARE / REGISTERED AS TRADE MARKS IN THE U.S. PATENT OFFICE” (Figure 44). On the back, the directions were more complex, and “NEW YORK CITY” was replaced with “NEW YORK, N.Y.” The sealing tape remained the same. These probably replace the initial tin ca. 1938 and continued in ads until 1940 (although we have a gap in the ad sequence from 1940 to 1946).

### 3. Double outline plus company info – Press Here at top (ca. 1940-1942)

This was apparently a transitional tin between the one discussed above and the following example. The red and blue outline surrounded the entire labeling area with “PRESS HERE TO OPEN” at the break in the lines at the top and an arrow pointing to the upper right corner. The section beginning “THE NAME PHILLIPS’ . . .” had disappeared to be replaced with “THE CHAS. H. PHILLIPS CHEMICAL CO. / NEW YORK, N.Y.” Some of these were “COMPLIMENTARY” packages, only different from the regular tins in the diagonal red lettering showing that the box was not to be sold (Figure 45). Since the factory address had moved to the front in this variation, it was no longer on the back. This interim box was likely used for a short time, probably ca. 1940-ca. 1942.



Figure 45 – 3<sup>rd</sup> tin (eBay)

### 4. Blue & red outline – logo in center – Press Corner at top - 25¢ (ca. 1942-1948)

In this variation, the box was painted blue, with a red outline on the front with “TO OPEN PRESS CORNER” in white letters at the top. Inside was “GENUINE (red – NOT arched) / PHILLIPS’ / REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. / MILK OF MAGNESIA (arch) / {shield & belt logo} / 30 TABLETS

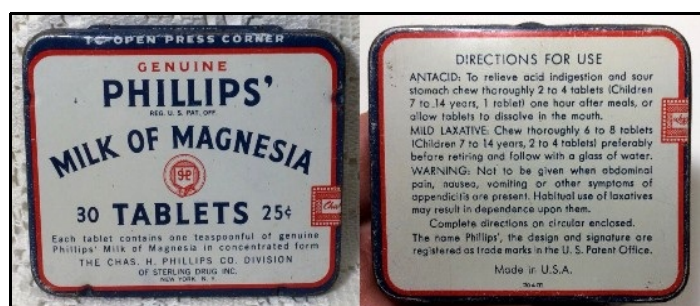


Figure 46 – 4<sup>th</sup> tin (eBay)

25¢ / Each tablet contains one teaspoonful of genuine / Phillips Milk of Magnesia in concentrated form / THE CHAS. H. PHILLIPS CO. DIVISION / OF STERLING DRUG INC. /

NEW YORK, N.Y.” (Figure 46). Directions appeared on the back, and the sealing tape remained the same. Ads suggest that these were used from ca. 1942-ca. 1948 (Figure 47).

5. Same as 3 but notched red MINT FLAVORED at top – Press Corner bottom (ca. 1949-1951)



Figure 48 – 5<sup>th</sup> tin (eBay)

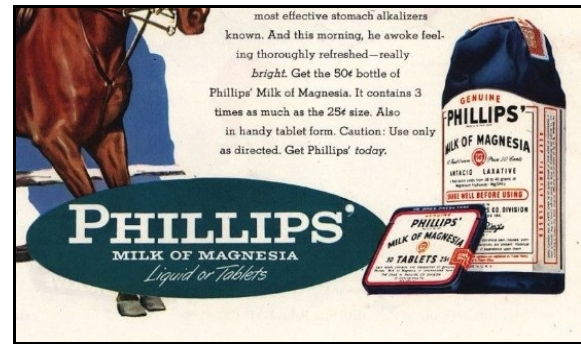


Figure 47 – 1948 ad (Old Main Artifacts)

This variation was the same as No. 3, except that “MINT FLAVORED” in white letters in a notched red label was now at the top, and “TO OPEN PRESS CORNER” had migrated to the bottom. The bottom line of the address now read “OF STERLING DRUG INC. — NEW YORK, N.Y.” (Figure 48).

This design was probably used from 1949 to ca. 1951. Unfortunately, we have not discovered any ads from the 1950s with drawings or photographs of the tablet tins, so all dates after this point remain “best guesses” until the addition of the postal codes in 1962.

6. Same as 4 but no logo or price (ca. 1951-ca. 1953)

This appears to be an interim box that was similar to No. 4 described above, except REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. and the logo had disappeared, and the price was replaced by a second 30. The information at the bottom was replaced with “*FAST RELIEF FROM / UPSET STOMACH INDIGESTION HEART BURN / DUE TO GASTRIC HYPERACTIVITY*” (Figure 49).

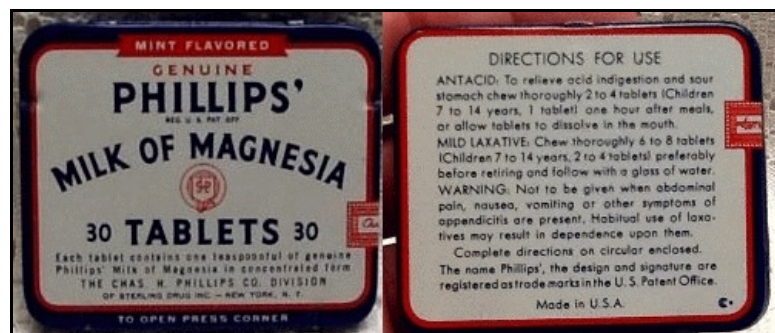


Figure 49 – 6<sup>th</sup> tin (eBay)

Unfortunately, the eBay seller did not include a photo of the back of the box. This was probably

an interim design, only used temporarily, possibly 1951-1953. The back of these boxes now included “NEW YORK 18, N.Y.” in the address.

7. Blue outline around outer edge – no logo - 30¢ (ca. 1953-ca. 1957)

This tin had the same basic information as the interim one discussed above – although the format had changed. The red outline had disappeared, and “30 TABLETS” was now at the top, above “MINT FLAVORED” in red. “GENUINE” was now blue, and “MILK OF MAGNESIA” was no longer arched. The “FAST RELIEF” message now took four lines instead of three, and “TO OPEN PRESS CORNER” was now within the white area in blue letters. Most noticeable was 30¢ in a circle in the upper right corner (Figure 50). The “18” in the New York address remained on the back of these boxes. These tins were probably used during the ca. 1953-ca. 1957 period.



Figure 50 – 7<sup>th</sup> tin (eBay)

8. Same as 6 but 35¢ (ca. 1957-1962)

The front of this tin was identical to No. 5 (above) except that the price had increased to 35¢. On the back, the 18 had disappeared from the address (Figure 51). These were likely used between ca. 1957 and 1962.



Figure 51 – 8<sup>th</sup> tin (eBay)

9. Same as 7 but 39¢ – 10016 postal code (1962-ca. 1965)

The only two changes in this variation were a price increase to 39¢ on the front, and “TO OPEN – PRESS CORNER” had moved to the lower right corner. The addition of the five-digit postal codes to the address was the only change to the back (Figure 52). These were probably used from 1962 to ca. 1965.



10. Same as 8 but no price (ca. 1965-ca. 1970)

This was identical to the one before, although Sterling had finally given up on placing the price as an integral part of the package (Figure 53). These may have been used between ca. 1965 and ca 1970).



Figure 53 – 10<sup>th</sup> tin (eBay)



Figure 52 – 9<sup>th</sup> tin (eBay)

11. Same as 9 but 30 TABLETS moved to bottom (ca. 1970s)

This final tin was identical with the one immediately above, but” 30 TABLETS” had migrated to the bottom with “(4.8 GRS. EACH)” in parentheses following “TABLETS” (Figure 54). These were likely used during the 1970s and were probably the last of the tin boxes offered.



Figure 54 – 11<sup>th</sup> tin (eBay)

## Other Bottle Types

Several of Phillips' other products came in embossed glass containers. The list below is almost certainly incomplete, coming only from an online scan of eBay auctions and a single bottle from “Molly” – a junior member of Antique Bottles.net. It is virtually certain that the earliest examples for each of these brands were packaged in generic bottles with paper labels, graduating to embossed bottles then returning to paper labels before being discontinued.

Phillips' Phosphor-Nutritine (ca. 1848-at least 1879)

Phosphor-Nutritine was apparently one of Phillips' early products, possibly as early as 1848. It was also featured in a 1879 ad (Figure 55), although we have not discovered an example of a container (*American Journal of Electrology and Neurology* 1879:81 – also see the discussion about Palatable Cod Liver Oil below). By the next ad we have found (1883), the product was no longer listed. According to the Kentucky Historical Society (n.d.), Phosphor-Nutritine later became Wheat Phosphates.

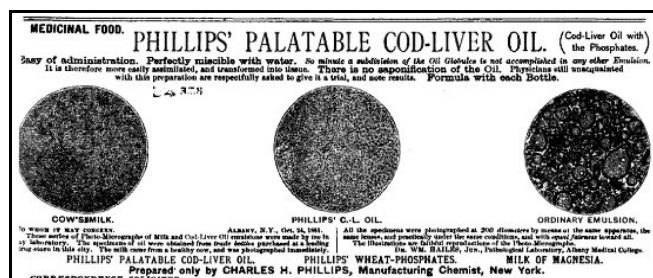


Figure 56 – 1883 ad (*Popular Science News* 1883:9)

Phillips' Wheat Phosphates (1883-at least 1906, probably ca. 1919)

As noted above, Wheat Phosphates grew out of Phillips' earlier product, Phosphor-Nutritine (Kentucky Historical Society n.d.). Wheat Phosphates were featured in an 1883 ad (*Popular Science News* 1883:9) for Phillips' Palatable Cod Liver Oil (Figure 56). The Kentucky Historical Society (n.d.) illustrated an early Wheat Phosphates bottle with a paper label identifying the product as "PHILLIPS / {logo} / SOLUTION OF / WHEAT PHOSPHATES" (Figure 57).

An eBay seller offered a transitional bottle embossed "PHILLIPS' / WHEAT PHOSPHATES / (PHOSPHOR-NUTRITINE)" on one side (Figure 58). The mouth-blown, colorless bottle was square

The following Preparations are especially recommended to the Profession :

## MILK OF MAGNESIA.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE APERIENT AND ANTACID KNOWN.

IT IS SPECIALLY VALUABLE.

FIRST.—In Disorders of the Stomach, Indigestion, Sick Headache, Nausea, Constipation, Flatulency.

SECOND.—In all Complaints of Infancy, whether arising from Indigestion, Imperfect Digestion or Impurity of the Blood.

THIRD.—As a Laxative, removing causes of Constipation.

FOURTH.—As a Preventive of Sourness of Food in the Stomach.

FIFTH.—As the unailing and acceptable remedy for the Nausea incidental to Pregnancy.

## PHOSPHO-NUTRITINE.

A NEW AND IMPORTANT PREPARATION OF THE SOLUBLE WHEAT PROPERTIES.

TONIC, DIGESTIVE, AND HIGHLY NUTRITIVE.

A vitalizing Tonic, superior to all others; entirely devoid of Alcoholic Stimulant; relieving Mental and Physical Prostration. An Agreeable Substitute for Nauseous Drugs and Liquors.

IS IMMEDIATE AND PERMANENT BENEFICIAL EFFECTS ARE RECOGNIZED.

In Dyspepsia, Consumption, Scrofula, or any Deterioration of the Blood.

In Nervous and Nervous Affections. In Languor, Debility, and Loss of Amenity to Members of the Brain, and in complaints that follow Overtaxing the System.

TO MEMBERS OF THE PROFESSION, TO MERCHANTS, TO STUDENTS, and to all whose pursuits demand intellectual activity, and therefore draw heavily upon their vital powers, Phospho-Nutritine has proven itself to be the thing desired.

IN CONTRAST with other preparations pressed upon the public, as of value in Nervous Affections, it is to be understood that

PHOSPHO-NUTRITINE does not STIMULATE, calling the already enfeebled system to further exertion, but only to be followed by complete relaxation, restoring a momentary brilliancy from a dying ember: but that it

PHOSPHO-NUTRITINE ENERGIZES, repairs the waste, quiets the nerves, and nourishes the vital powers; PRODUCES AND AGGRAVATES NEW STRENGTH FOR FUTURE EFFORT.

## PHILLIPS' PALATABLE COD LIVER OIL

IN COMBINATION WITH PHOSPHO-NUTRITINE.

A Pure, Perfect, Pleasant, Powerful Preparation. MIXES WITH WATER IN ALL PROPORTIONS, FORMING A MOST PALATABLE AND INVIGORATING DIET.

For use in Consumption, Scrofula, and Wasting Diseases.

This combination is a perfect preparation of pure Norwegian Cod Liver Oil, and Phospho-Nutritine, as found in White Wheat, retaining all the remedial and nutritive principles of each, compounded in accordance with scientific principles, under our direct supervision. The Medical Profession, so far as we have been able to reach, have unanimously preferred "Palatable" for these reasons:

FIRST.—The absence of the bad Cod Liver Oil in its natural condition, the universally accepted agent in the treatment of Consumption and Emaciation.

SECOND.—The vitalizing power of Phospho-Nutritine, added to the pure Cod Liver Oil, and with equal advantage to the Phosphates of the Wheat Phosphates.

THIRD.—The absence of any irritating taste, destroying the properties of the oil, making of the stomach a receptacle for soft soap, the more common error in emulsions, particularly those in which Hypophosphates are present.

FOURTH.—The minute subdivision of the oil globules, permitting and demanding its administration with water, assuring thorough assimilation.

FIFTH.—Its acceptability and retention in all the stomachs of some, especially female, having rejected all other preparations.

Prepared only by CHARLES H. PHILLIPS, Manufacturing Chemist, Nos. 2 & 4 PLATT STREET, NEW YORK.

Figure 55 – 1879 ad (*American Journal of Electrology and Neurology* 1879:81)

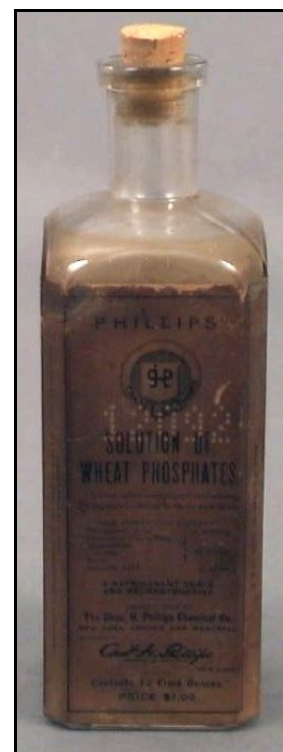


Figure 57 – Wheat Phosphates (eBay)

in cross-section with a tooled one-part squared “patent” finish. Unfortunately, we have no effective date for the transition – only that it occurred at some point between 1879 and 1883.

A bottle offered on eBay was embossed “PHILLIPS’ / WHEAT PHOSPHATES / REPRESENTING PHOSPHATES SIMILAR



Figure 59 – Wheat Phosphates (eBay)

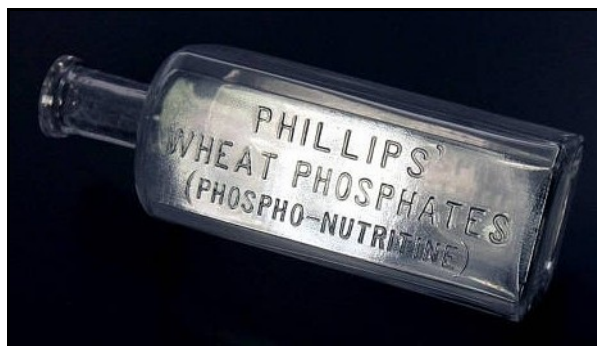


Figure 58 – Wheat Phosphates (Etsy)

TO THOSE IN WHEAT” (Figure 59). Like the transitional bottle discussed above, this bottle was mouth-blown and colorless, square in cross-section with a tooled one-part squared “patent” finish. At least one of these bottles was embossed with a “T” – the probable logo of the Tibby Brothers Glass Co. (1904-1915). See the discussion in the mouth-blown section of the Milk of Magnesia discussion above for more on Tibby Brothers.

A Worthpoint auction offered a similar bottle embossed “PHILLIPS’ / WHEAT PHOSPHATES” – without the final line. The bottle had the identical shape, color, and finish and appears to also be mouth blown. This was probably the last bottle in the series. The final ad (*Texas Medical Journal* 1906:301) we have found was from 1906 (Figure 60). Along with “Wheat Phosphates (Acid),” the ad touted “Phillips’ Syrup of Wheat Phosphates” – although it did not explain the difference. It is probable that the product remained in use until ca. 1919, when Phillips was examined by the federal government (see below).

<b>PHILLIPS' EMULSION</b>	
50% best NORWAY COD-LIVER OIL minutely subdivided, WITH WHEAT PHOSPHATES (Phillips') Palatable, Permanent, Miscible in Water, Milk, Wine, etc.	
<b>PHILLIPS' MILK OF MAGNESIA</b>	Mg H, O, (Fluid) "The Perfect Antacid."
Registered in U. S. Patent Office, Sept. 17th, 1905. for correcting Hyperacid conditions—local or system of Vehicle for Salicylates, Iodides, Balsams, etc.	
<b>PHILLIPS' PHOSPHO-MURIATE OF QUININE,</b>	
Registered in U. S. Patent Office, Oct. 17th, 1905.	
<b>Compound.</b>	
TONIC AND RE-CONSTRUCTIVE WHEAT PHOSPHATES, WITH MURIATE OF QUININE AND STRYCHNINE	
PHILLIPS' WHEAT PHOSPHATES (Acid). PHILLIPS' SYRUP OF WHEAT PHOSPHATES. PHILLIPS' DIGESTIBLE COCOA.	
The Chas. H. Phillips Chemical Co., New York and London.	

Figure 60 – 1906 ad (*Texas Medical Journal* 1906:301)



### Phillips' Palatable Cod Liver Oil (ca. 1848-1883)

An eBay auction featured an amber bottle embossed “PHILLIPS’ PALATABLE (second word in back-slanted letters) / COD LIVER OIL” on a sunken rectangular plate (Figure 61). The bottle was rectangular in cross-section with what appears to be an applied, tapered, one-part finish. A second eBay example was aqua in color but otherwise identical. These were the only example we have seen of the older bottle. Palatable Cod Liver Oil was featured on the 1879 ad that suggested “Phillips’ Palatable Cod Liver Oil in combination with Phospho-Nutritine a pure, perfect, pleasant, powerful preparation. Mixes with water in all proportions, a most palatable and invigorating diet” (see Figure 55). The ad suggested using the treatment for “Consumption, Scrofula, and Wasting Diseases.” The word “Palatable” remained in the 1883 ad (see Figure 56).



Figure 61 – Palatable Cod Liver Oil (eBay)

### Phillips' Cod Liver Oil Emulsion (1894-at least 1906, probably 1919)

We want every Physician to know that

**PHILLIPS' COD LIVER OIL**

EMULSION

Represents, in all essential features, the highest degree of perfection in the Emulsionizing of Cod Liver Oil.

*We believe it to be the only Emulsion not advertised to the Public.*

**PHOSPHO-MURIATE OF QUININE.**

COMPOUND.

**A RELIABLE ALTERATO-CONSTRUCTIVE.**

Particular applicable to conditions of mal-nutrition. A reliable tonic in convalescence from the exanthemata, and of chronic inflammation in those cases where deficiency of the Phosphate results in glandular enlargement, scrofulous, imperfect bone formation, or impairment of the central nervous system. An early appropriate and reliable combination of the Soluble Wheat Phosphate with Muriate of Quinine, Iron and Strychnia. Of greater strength than the various Hypophosphite compounds. The above Preparations are put up in Dispensing and Trade Containers.

DIGESTIBLE COCOA. WHEAT PHOSPHATES. MILK OF MAGNESIA.

**THE CHAS. H. PHILLIPS CHEMICAL CO.,**  
77 PINE STREET, NEW YORK.

Figure 62 – 1894 ad (Period Papers 2018)

By the 1894 ad (Period Papers 2018), the product had become Phillips' Cod Liver Oil Emulsion, and touted the product as “in all essential features, the highest degree of perfection in the Emulsionizing of Cod Liver Oil” (Figure 62). The 1906 ad, however, called it Phillips' Emulsion and described it as the “best Norway cod liver oil, minutely subdivided with Wheat Phosphates (Phillips') palatable, permanent, miscible in water, milk, wine, etc.” (see Figure 60).

Four eBay examples of the Phillips' Emulsion bottles were each amber in color with a one-piece, slightly tapered finish. All were embossed “PHILLIPS' EMULSION / COD-LIVER OIL / NEW YORK” on a sunken panel (Figure 63).

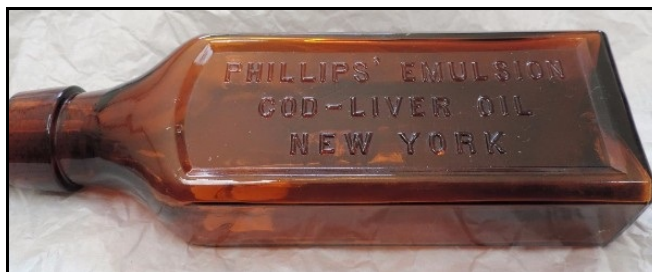


Figure 63 – Emulsion Cod Liver Oil (eBay)



The bottles were rectangular in cross-section, and two appear to have been mouth blown, while the other two show a parting line below the finish – a certain machine characteristic. One machine-made bottle was embossed “T5” – the probable mark from the Tibby Bros. (see above) – on the base but showed no machine scar (Figure 64). One example, probably machine made,



Figure 64 – Emulsion base (eBay)



Figure 65 – Paper label (eBay)

still exhibited a mostly intact paper label, calling the product “PHILLIPS’ / PALATABLE / Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil” (Figure 65). While a machine-made, small-mouth bottle *could* have been made in 1906, these were likely produced at least in the teens. The product was likely discontinued ca. 1919, when other Phillips’ items were examined by the federal government.

### **Phillips’ Phospho-Muriate of Quinine (1885-ca. 1919)**

We have a fairly solid beginning date for Phillips’ Phospho-Muriate of Quinine. The brand was absent from Phillips’ 1883 ad (see Figure 56) but appeared in 1885 (*Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 1885:1), suggesting a debut in the latter year. The only bottle we have discovered was in a Worthpoint auction. The bottle had a paper label with the words “PHILLIPS’ / Phospho- / Muriate of Quinine, / COMPOUND” and was embossed “THE CHAS PHILLIPS / CHEMICAL CO. / NEW YORK” on one side of the bottle. Square in cross-section, this was identical to bottle described immediately below and appeared to be colorless, although the liquid inside was very dark – appearing black in the photo.

Based on data from 1918, a book by the American Medical Assn. (1922:197-198) noted that the Phillips firm claimed that “the quantities of quinin and strychnin [apparently the correct spellings at that time] in this preparation are so well balanced that relieve the depression and fatigue from mental or physical exertion without the necessity of recourse to alcoholic stimulation” but added the claim was “nonsensical if indeed it is not mendacious balderdash.” The study concluded that the compound was

a complex and irrational mixture exploited by means of unwarranted claims. It is a survival of the old days of therapeutic chaos when impossible and fantastic chemical formulas were gravely published and as solemnly accepted without question and also without the slightest understanding on the part of many, when the most eminent of practitioners did not hesitate to give glowing testimonials for lithia waters that contained no more lithium than ordinary river water, when no therapeutic claim was too preposterous to receive acceptance, no theory too nonsensical to justify the use of all manner of claptrap mixtures for all manner of conditions.

It is virtually certain that Phillips withdrew the product from the market by the following year. In fact, it is likely that all of the Phillips products vanished during this two-year period with the exception of Milk of Magnesia.

#### **Chas. H. Phillips Chemical Co. (mid-1880s-ca. 1919)**

Molly posted a photo of a colorless, mouth-blown bottle embossed “THE CHAS. H. PHILLIPS / CHEMICAL CO. / NEW YORK” on one face (Figure 66). The bottle appears square in cross-section in the photo with a squared, one-part “packer” finish. There are three vent marks on the shoulder and at least one (probably more) along one side seam. The bottle almost certainly sported a paper label when it was used. At least one example was used for Phillips’ Phospho-Muriate of Quinine (see above).



Figure 66 – Phillips’ Chemical Co. (Molly – Antique Bottles.net)

#### **Phillips’ Digestible Cocoa (1885-1913)**

Absent from the 1883 ad, Digestible Cocoa appeared in 1885, another pretty solid beginning date. The ad called the Cocoa “a Delicious Beverage. Nourishing to a High Degree. Easily Digested” and described it as “a reliable *article of diet* (their emphasis) for the sick room and a substitute for Tea or Coffee for every day use. As it is often digested when milk or other nutrients cause distress, it becomes a superior food in irritable conditions of the stomach” (*Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 1885:1).

At least two advertising cards have survived, one with a painting of a maid sipping Cocoa on the job, the other with a young girl painting the product name – both with a hundred-year calendar on the reverse (eBay; Digital Commonwealth). Phillips packaged the Cocoa in rectangular tins with a wrap-around paper label and a lid embossed “PHILLIPS / DIGESTIBLE / Cocoa / COMPOUND” (Figure 67).



Figure 67 – Digestible Cocoa (eBay)

On August 15, 1912, U.S. Marshals seized 72 packages of Digestible Cocoa, noting that the product was misbranded – failing to list sugar, phosphates, and vanilla flavoring (United States Dept. of Agriculture 1913:1). It is probable that Phillips discontinued the brand shortly thereafter.

## Discussion and Conclusions

Due to the very fragmentary history of the early businesses, we have very little information on the bottles, labels, and possible other packaging of the early products offered by Charles H. Phillips. Milk of Magnesia, of course, was the dominant brand, surviving when the other remedies faded from public consciousness. As a result, we have compiled a much more complete chronology for the Milk of Magnesia bottles – especially the embossed ones.

At least two of the Phillips products (Phospho-Nutritine and Palatable Cod-Liver Oil) were replaced by “improved” versions (Wheat Phosphates and Cod Liver Oil Emulsion). Between 1913 and 1916, the business fell under the critical eye of the federal government – enforcing the 1906 Food and Drug Act as well as subsequent regulations – and began to be censured for misbranding and mislabeling. This seems to have led to the elimination of most of the remaining products – with the notable exception of Milk of Magnesia – by ca. 1919 and probably led to the eventual sale of the firm to the Sterling Products Corp. in 1923.

This work should be considered a preliminary study. Future researchers should concentrate on finding new sources to show transitions in bottles, labels, and tins. Hopefully, more examples of the older bottles, both those with paper labels and embossed examples will appear in both collectors' and archaeological sources. We especially need better dating for the 1940s-1970s for both bottles and tins.

## Acknowledgments

We wish to thank Wanda Wakkinen for proofreading this study.

## Sources

### *American Journal of Electrology and Neurology*

1879 Advertisement: "The Following Preparations are Recommended to the Profession."

*American Journal of Electrology and Neurology* 1(1):81. [July]

### American Medical Assn.

1922 *Propaganda for Reform in Proprietary Medicines*. Vol. 2. Press of American Medical Assn., Chicago.

### *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*

1885 Advertisement: "Phillips' Palatable Cod Liver Oil." *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 113(18):1. [October 29]

1886 Advertisement: "Phillips' Phospho-Muriate of Quinine." *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 115(13):1. [September 30]

### Connie C.

2012 "Old Glass Bottles and Items of Antiquity: Genuine Phillips' Milk of Magnesia." <http://productmanufacturers.blogspot.com/2012/10/genuine-phillips-milk-of-magnesia.html>

Justia Trademarks

2018 “PHILLIPS' MILK OF MAGNESIA - Trademark Details.”

<https://trademarks.justia.com/710/16/phillips-milk-of-71016576.html>

Kentucky Historical Society

n.d. “Object Record.” Kentucky Historical Society

<http://kyhistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/7AF4A189-31E2-48D2-A5D7-621820673224>

King, Thomas B.

1987 *Glass in Canada*. Boston Mills Press, Ontario.

Mills: Making Places in Connecticut

2018 “Charles H. Phillips Chemical Co.”

<https://connecticutmills.org/find/details/charles-h.-phillips-chemical-co>

Old Main Artifacts

2014 “Phillips’ Milk of Magnesia, Glenbrook, CT.”

<https://oldmainartifacts.wordpress.com/2014/05/21/phillips-milk-of-magnesia-glenbrook-ct/>

*Popular Science News*

1883 Advertisement: “Phillips Palatable Cod-Liver Oil.” *Popular Science News* 17(December 1):9.

Sullivan, Eve

2013 “The Dart: Youthful admiration leads to long relationship - with a house.” *Stamford Advocate* (9/22/2013).

*Texas Medical Journal*

1906 “Phillips’ Emulsion.” *Texas Medical Journal* 21(January):301.

Toulouse, Julian Harrison

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

United States Dept. of Agriculture

1913 “Notice of Judgement No. 2186: Adulteration and Misbranding of Phillips’  
Digestible Coca.”

Last updated 4/23/2018

