

Swindell Brothers, Baltimore, Maryland

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Histories

Swindell Brothers, Baltimore, Maryland (1879-1959)

The beginnings of the company are difficult to pin down. William Swindell was involved in the founding of the Union Glass Works at Philadelphia in 1825, although that firm was not in the direct line of ascent to the Baltimore factory. Swindell moved to Baltimore, where he helped found the Spring Garden Glass Works in 1850. The plant became operational in late 1851, but Swindell sold his share of the firm on May 27, 1854, and became the superintendent for Baker Bros. & Co. for the next 17 years (McKearin & Wilson 1978:89, 130).

By January 1878,¹ William's two sons, Walter and Charles Swindell, had formed the firm of Swindell Brothers and originally operated a window glass plant at Spring Gardens, 112 W. Lombard St. As late as 1878, they were still at that location. Their plant, the Crystal Glass Works (possibly opened as early as 1879), produced window glass. An ad for Swindell Brothers, Inc., in the *American Glass Review* (1934:105) noted that the company was “established 1873” (Figure 1), and that date is supported by William Swindell's obituary. According to the *Boston Journal* (9/29/1891), beginning in 1854, Swindell “superintended the glassworks of Baker Bros. & Co. for seventeen years” or about 1873.

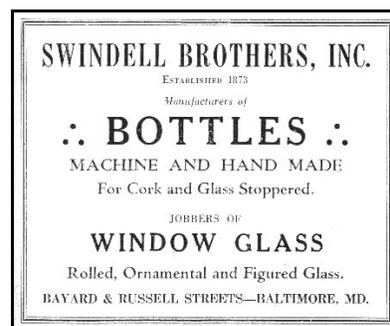


Figure 1 – 1934 ad (*American Glass Review* 1934:105)

By January 4, 1880, the brothers had added “druggists’ flint and green glassware” to their billheads (Figure 2). According to the *Indianapolis Journal* of December 28, 1886, the union workers of both the Baker Brothers and the Swindell Brothers returned to work after a prolonged

¹ Bethman (1991:76) stated that the Swindells were in business by 1869 but did not note his sources. This was probably in reference to the Spring Hill factory.

strike, accepting a pay reduction of 15% and allowing apprentices to take part of the operation.

The workers had to leave the union to comply, but both plants had given notice that they would close their doors permanently if the workers did not return. They

added “beer, wine & mineral bottles, flasks, demijohns, fruit jars, &c” by 1887 (Roller 1998). Bethman (1991:76) noted that the first colorless bottles were made in 1883.

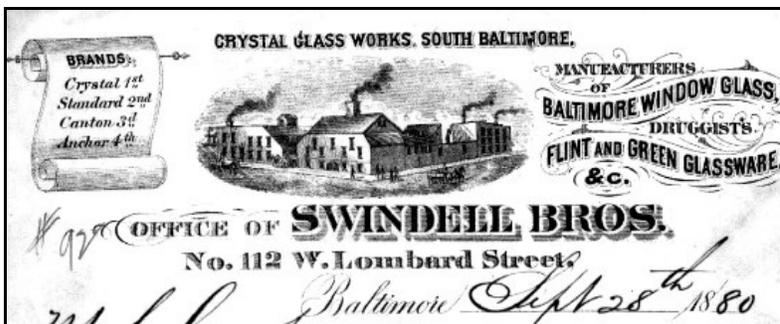


Figure 2 – 1880 billhead (Cigar Box Labels.com)

In September of 1890, the boys of the flint departments at the Swindell Brothers and Baker Brothers factories went on strike, claiming that Carr-Lowery paid higher wages. The strike also threw about 50 men out of work because they needed the boys on the line in order to function. When the Swindells threatened to put other boys to work in their place, “the mothers of some of the boys have taken a hand in the matter, and the strikers find themselves between two fires. They are ‘scabs’ if they work and are liable to get strapped if they don’t.” The strike ended (*Baltimore Sun* 9/4/1890).

Strikes periodically interrupted business for the rest of the century and into the 1900s. On October 27, 1890, a fire created \$10,000 in damages to the plant. The next year, William Swindell died at the age of 71 on September 27, 1891 (*Alexandria Gazette* 10/28/1890; *Boston Journal* 9/29/1891). Although mostly known for druggists’ glass, Swindell made two carloads of “green” ½ pint and pint flasks for the South Carolina Dispensary in 1894 (Teal 2005:96). The *Illinois State Register* reported on January 14, 1896, that the Swindell plant had burned, causing an estimated \$100,000 in damages.

In 1897, Swindell used 14 pots to make flint bottles but had decreased to 10 the following year and remained at that level until at least 1901. For green glass, however, the sequence was reversed with five pots used in 1897 and 10 pots in 1898. By 1900, the number was up to 14 (*National Glass Budget* 1897:7; 1898:7; 1900:11; 1901:11). The window glass plant was “totally destroyed” by fire on May 9, 1901, and was not rebuilt (*Evening Star* 5/10/1901; Toulouse 1971:453).

In 1904, the plant made “flint, green and amber druggists, proprietary and packers’ ware and blown specialties” at two furnaces with 19 pots and two day tanks with 16 rings (*American Glass Review* 1934:157). The first Thomas Register (1905:103) noted that Swindell Bros. made “green, flint, prescription & druggists’ bottles.” The same listing remained until 1909 (Thomas Publishing Co. 1907:158; 1909:200). In 1909, a Baltimore company (possibly Swindell) used eight “semi-wide mouth” semiautomatic bottle machines to make “1-oz. to 1-quart” bottles (Hayes 1909:1).

By 1913, the plant used a mixture of mouth-blown and semiautomatic machine production to make a “general line” of bottles on one continuous tank along with two furnaces with 38 pots (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:952). The Thomas Registers dropped the “green” glass in 1920 (Thomas Publishing Co. 1912:479; 1920:826). It is interesting that each of the three drawings of the factory (see Figure 2 and the section on Containers and Marks) and two photos show different components (Figures 3-5). Of course, this is probably due to improvements made over time.

By 1927, Swindell made “prescription bottles and vials, hand and machine, lettered and plain; patent, proprietary, perfume ware, cork and glass stoppered, toilet ware, cut glass bottles, cut glass stoppers, tincture and salt mouth



Figure 3 – Swindell factory (Maryland Historical Society)



Figure 4 – Swindell factory (Maryland Historical Society)

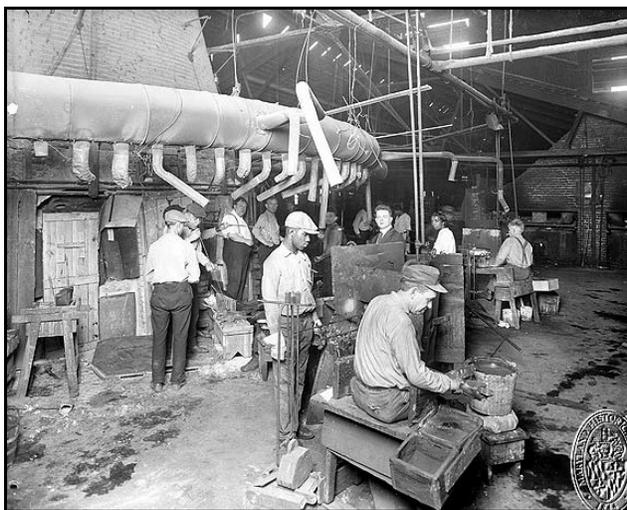


Figure 5 – Swindell factory (Maryland Historical Society)

bottles, flint, emerald, green, blue and special colors” as well as “Perfect and Brawner glass sprinkler tops” by both hand and machine methods at two furnaces with 26 pots and one continuous tank. In 1932, the company added “flint proprietary ware, sodas, private mold work” at a single furnace with 13 pots and two continuous tanks “with machines” and inserted “beer and liquor bottles” in 1934 and dropped the “flint proprietary ware” in 1935. In 1937, the plant used the same furnace and pots but had two continuous tanks with nine machines. The listing remained the same until at least 1944, although the company noted the use of ten machines in 1941 (*American Glass Review* 1927:145; 1932:79; 1934:99; 1935:92; 1937:91-92; 1941:101).

The Swindells sold the Baltimore plant to the Carr-Lowrey Glass Co. on August 31, 1948, although the factory operated under the Swindell name until 1959. At that point, Carr-Lowrey moved the equipment to the main plant and sold the land (Toulouse 1971:454). Carr-Lowrey became part of the Anchor Hocking Glass Corp. in 1944, although it continued to operate under its own name until 1963. See the section on Carr-Lowrey for more on that firm.

Wightman Glass Corp., Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania (1918-ca. 1920)

Tibby-Brawner Glass Co., Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania (ca. 1920-at least 1944)

The Swindell Brothers briefly expanded in 1918, joining with W.O. Tibby and H.O. Brawner to purchase the Wightman Glass Co. plant at Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, renaming it the Wightman Glass Corp. Charles J.B. Swindell became president of the corporation. The plant continued to operate the single continuous tank with ten rings that was previously run by Wightman, making “Flint prescriptions, vials, beers, minerals, liquors, [and] flasks” by hand. Although the directors remained the same, the plant was listed as the Tibby-Brawner Glass Co. in 1920. In 1927, Tibby and Brawner purchased the Swindell portion of the business (Roller 1997; Toulouse 1971:454). See the section on the Tibby Brothers for more information.

Containers and Marks

S BROS. (ca. 1909)

Pollard (1993:260) illustrated a drug store bottle embossed “PAT. APPLD. FOR / 1909 / S. BROS” (Figure 6). The drug store offering the bottle was open from 1904 to 1923. None of

our other sources indicate a similar mark. It is possible that the Swindells only used the mark on this bottle in connection with the applied-for patent. Although we could trace numerous other patents awarded to the Swindell Brothers and their employees, the only patent for 1909 through 1911 to the brothers or the company was for a “gas producing machine.” The bottle patent may have been rejected; the bottle is very similar to the Colonial Oblong sold by Whitall Tatum & Co. (Whitall Tatum Co. 1909:12) and the Paris sold by Dean, Foster & Co. (Freeman 1964:10X). Although we have not seen an example of this mark, Pollard is a reliable source, so this mark almost certainly exists.

S.B. (ca. 1888-?)

Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:127-128) noted the S.B. mark and claimed it, too, was used by Swindell Bros. Instead of a date range, they

left the cryptic note that it was

“patented 1888.” William M. Garton patented a prescription style bottle on June 19, 1888, and assigned it to the Swindell Brothers. The bottle closely resembles the Brooklyn Oval listed in the Swindell 1902 catalog (Swindell Brothers 1902:7). The 1902 catalog illustrated at least three variations of an SB monogram in bottle plate molds, although it is unlikely that the company actually used any of these on bottles. We have never seen an actual example of this mark or of the monograms, although Nate Briggs discovered a similar monogram embossed on the base of a colorless prescription bottles (Figure 7). Also see



Figure 7 – SB monogram (Nate Briggs)

the SB Monogram discussion in the Other S section for another possible explanation.

S in a circle (ca. 1920-1959)

According to Toulouse (1971:452-454), Swindell Brothers, Baltimore, Maryland, used the Circle-S mark from ca. 1920 to 1959. Toulouse found no record of any other mark.

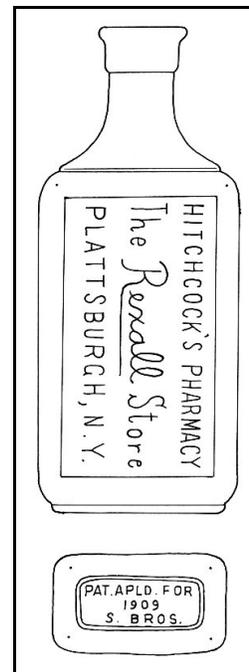


Figure 6 – S. Bros. (Pollard 1993:260)

Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:127-128) followed Toulouse in both identity and dates for the mark.

Scholes (1941:129) showed this mark as being used by Swindell in the early 1940s. He also showed the same mark (although larger) as being used by the Sterling Glass Co. but assumed everyone would know *which* Sterling Glass he referred to (see the section on the Sterling glass companies). The S-in-a-Circle logo was shown as belonging to Swindell on a table of glass trademarks compiled by Owens-Illinois in 1964, but the mark was no longer listed in 1971 or 1982 (Berge 1980:83; Emhart 1982:74-75; Hanlon 1971:6-17).



Figure 8 – Circle-S (TreasureNet.com)

A Dr. A.C. Daniels disinfectant bottle with a Circle-S logo on the base also had a design patent number of “D 114,208.” John L. Dunnock applied for a patent for a “Design for a Bottle” on February 2, 1939, and received Design Patent No. 114,208 on April 11 of that year. He assigned the patent to the Swindell Bros., Inc., Baltimore. This removes all doubt as to the connection between Swindell and Circle-S mark. Dunnock also designed and patented at least seven other liquor, wine, toiletry, and household bottles between 1935 and 1947, assigning all of them to the Swindells. Various members of the Swindell family also designed toiletry, perfume, and prescription bottles for the firm between 1888 and 1928.

A discussion on Antique Bottles.net featured a colorless, oval liquor flask with the FEDERAL LAW FORBIDS THE RE-USE OF THIS BOTTLE warning on the shoulder and embossed pictures of Harry Wilken, Jr., Harry Wilken, Sr., and William T. Wilken on the reverse. The base was embossed “D9 / 31 {S in a circle} 7 / M 1645 B.” In this case, D9 was the distiller’s code, 31 the glass house number, and 7 the date code for 1937.

TreasureNet.com posted photos of a light green (British green?) flask with mystical symbols on an embossed cup on the front and “135L {Circle-S} R” across the base. The bottle was machine made and had a one-part “brandy” finish (Figure 8).

Of the glass houses using the Circle-S logo, only the Swindell Brothers made liquor containers, so these flasks were almost certainly Swindell products. A machine-made, colorless, oval toiletry bottle found at Fort Bliss (El Paso, Texas) was embossed on the base with a Circle-S

and “15” turned sideways to the logo in one narrow end (Figure 9). Unfortunately, the bottle does not fit a Dunnock patent; however, since the Swindells made toiletry bottles, this was likely made by the company.



Figure 9 – Circle-S (Fort Bliss)

An eBay auction offered a straight-sided Coca-Cola bottle embossed with a double-strike Circle-S



Figure 10 – Coca-Cola base (eBay)

logo on the base. The double-strike technique was generally used between ca. 1895 and 1914. One side was embossed with the Coca-Cola cursive logo above “TRADE MARK REGISTERED” on the heel. The other side was marked “BIRMINGHAM, ALA” above the heel (Figures 10 & 11). Bill Porter (personal communication 4/4/2019) suggested a date of ca. 1906-1907 for the bottle based on the dating of a bottle with a very similar style. The

only known user of a Circle-S mark that was in business during that period (or any other southern glass house with a name beginning with “S”) was the Swindell Brothers plant.

The Southern Glass Co., Sterling Glass Co. (Lapel, Indiana), and Sneath Glass Co. also used the Circle-S mark. See those sections for more information as well as the section the S Logos. The latter section deals with the various L marks (as opposed to words or glass house names that begin with S or initials comprising multiple letters), including comparisons and discussions about *why* we selected certain logos and/or bottle/jar types for specific glass houses.



Figure 11 – Coca-Cola bottle (eBay)

S in a diamond

When compiling the Chicago Glass Mfg. Co. section, we conducted a study of the various diamond shapes reported, illustrated, or photographed by our various sources (Figure 12). The

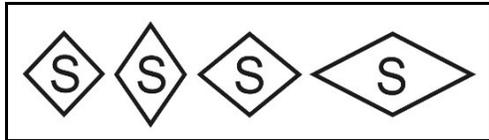


Figure 12 – Diamond variations

study showed that the Southern Glass Co. mostly used the elongated diamond, and there was some correspondence between shape

and bottle style. However, *any* of the four variations were used on bottles that we attributed to the Swindell Bros., and most could have been used by the Chicago firm. All could have been the result of sampling bias. The only example of a vertical diamond was on an amber Union Oval flask offered on eBay (Figure 13).

Bethman (1991:76) attributed the Diamond-S mark to the Swindell Brothers, noting that “the ‘diamond S’ marking would appear

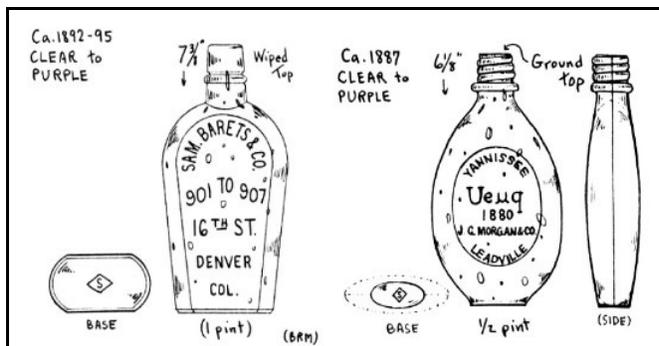


Figure 14 – Diamond-S on liquor flasks (Clint 1976:115; 170)

to date from 1885 to 1889.” Although he did not specify, Bethman’s area of study was medicinal bottles, mostly prescriptions. Other evidence, however, suggests that the mark was used on prescription bottles by the Chicago Glass Mfg. Co. See that section for details. Soda and milk bottles are similarly easy to explain. The Southern Glass Co. used the Diamond-S logo on those products in 1919 and 1920, possibly a year or two later.

Our study of the Diamond-S mark (see the S Logo section) strongly suggests that the Swindell Glass Co. made both the continuous-thread flasks and the flasks and cylindrical liquor bottles from the late-1880-1890s period (Figure 14 & 15). The Swindells made flasks at least as early as 1887. To cap the



Figure 13 – Vertical diamond (eBay)

to date from 1885 to 1889.” Although he did not specify, Bethman’s area of study was medicinal bottles, mostly prescriptions. Other evidence, however, suggests that the

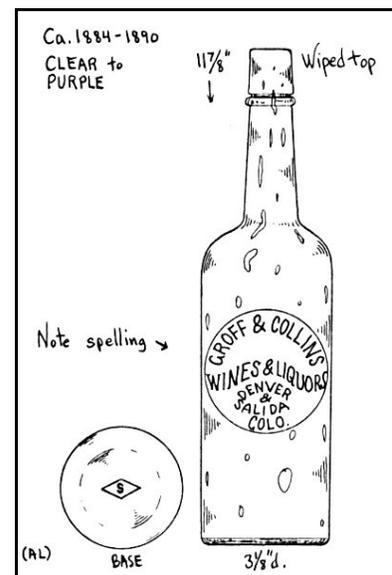


Figure 15 – Diamond-S on liquor flasks (Clint 1976:122)

identification, the 1902 Swindell catalog illustrated a “Screw Top Union Oval” on their flask page (p.63). The page also shows various one- and two-part finishes available for the flasks (Figure 16). This leaves virtually no doubt that the Swindell Glass Co. was the user of the Diamond-S logo on liquor ware from the 1880s through the early 1900s – and it was virtually certainly the maker of flasks with the mark at the end of Prohibition in the 1930s.

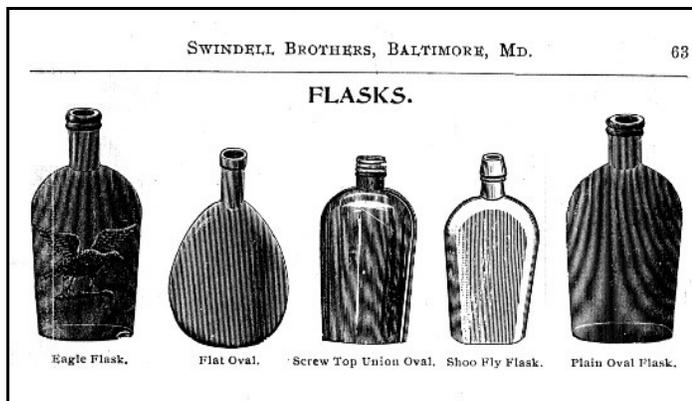


Figure 16 – Flasks (Swindell 1902:63)

A final interesting bottle style was the one used for Snider’s Catsup bottles. Although we initially followed Toulouse (1971:449-450) in assuming that the Diamond-S with either a rotated-square or slightly elongated diamond was used by Snider, that did not hold up under study (Figure 17). We could find no examples of a Diamond-S on Snider paper labels, and most Snider bottles lacked the logo. Since Swindell made a general variety of bottles, and Chicago Glass specialized in medicinal containers, Swindell is the more likely choice.



Figure 17 – Snider’s Catsup (eBay)

While it is almost certain that the Chicago Glass Mfg. Co. used the Diamond-S logo on medicinal and prescription bottles from 1883-ca. 1891, it is possible that the Swindell Bros. adopted the mark after the demise of the Chicago firm. The Swindells used a Circle-S logo on similar bottles during the 20th century, but current methods did not allow us to tell for sure when that use began. See the S Logo section for a more in-depth discussion about our studies and reasoning.

Brand Names

A billhead with a date of September 28, 1880 – ordering molds from Charles Yockel of Philadelphia – showed a drawing of the “Crystal Glass Works South Baltimore” and noted that the firm was “Manufacturers of Baltimore Window Glass, Druggists Flint & Green Glassware,

&c.” It located the office at No. 112 Lombard St. The billhead also noted four brands (in order): “Crystal 1st[,] Standard 2nd[,] Canton 3rd[, and] Anchor 4th” (Tyson 1971:32). Tyson suggested that these “sound like the names of fruit jars,” but the brands need to be examined individually. (see Figure 2).

A billhead dated September 28, 1888, showed a different factory drawing (possibly including later improvements) and the same list of brands. However, this one indicated factories at “Bayard & Warner Sts[,] Haines & Russell Sts[, and] Spring Gardens” (Figure 18) A similar billhead, dated February 8, 1900, showed the same Crystal Glass Works drawing and the identical brands but lacked the list of factories, only including the No. 10 & 12 Lombard St. address (Figure 19). A postcard, postmarked May 19, 1888, advertised “The Gem, Mason’s Improved and Mason’s Porcelain Lined Fruit Jars” for sale, but we have found no indication that any actual jars were ever marked with any logo or name that would identify Swindell (Figure 20).

Crystal

Toulouse (1969:82-84) described four jars that bore the word “CRYSTAL.” One of these was embossed with patent dates associated with the Hero

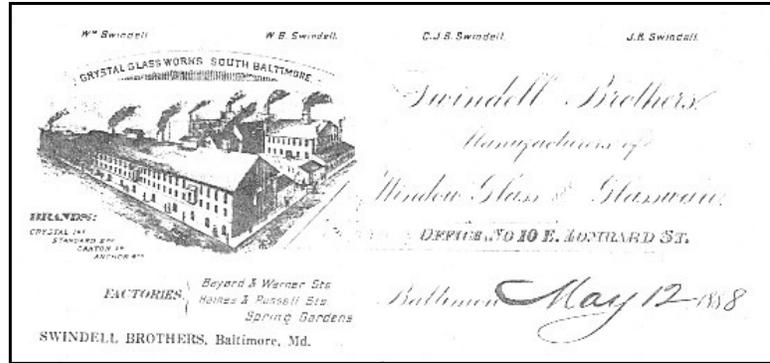


Figure 18 – 1888 letterhead (Tyson 1971:32)

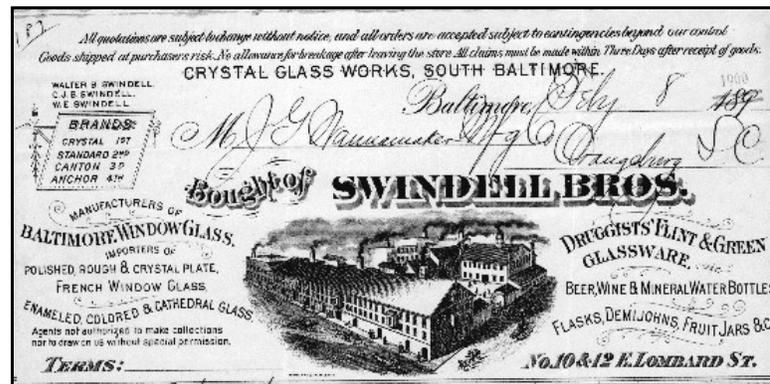


Figure 19 – 1900 Billhead (eBay)

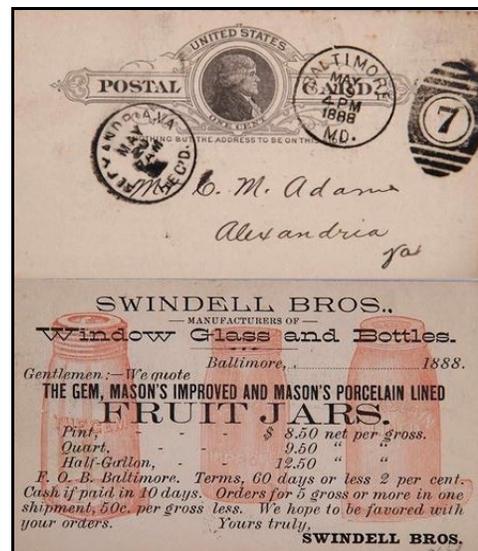


Figure 20 – 1888 postcard (North American Glass)

Glass Works and was almost certainly made by that company. Two others had “CRYSTAL (arch) / JAR (horizontal)” embossed on the front. One had the initials “CG” embossed below the word “JAR.” A final jar was embossed “MASON’S (arch) / CRYSTAL / JAR (both horizontal).” He dated all three jars at ca. 1878 or 1879 and suggested Consolidated Glass Co. as the possible marker.

Roller (1983:97-98) also addressed the various jars with “Crystal” embossing. He confirmed the identification of the Hero Glass Works with one of the jars, and illustrated an ad and discussion linking the “CRYSTAL JAR” to the Crystal Glass Co. and the Independent Glass Co. (see the section on Crystal for details). He noted that the Crystal Mason was “very scarce,” making that an unlikely candidate for a jar listed on the Swindell letterhead. He speculated that the “CG” variation could have been made by the Crystal Glass Co. Creswick (1987:38) illustrated the jar in two sizes but did not discuss it. She suggested that the makers were Crystal Glass and Independent Glass, almost certainly following Roller.

It is possible that “CG” indicated the Crystal Glass Works, operated by the Swindells. The plant made fruit jars by at least 1887. The 1902 catalog (Swindell Bros. 1902:65), however, only illustrated and described a single jar, embossed “MASON’S (arch) / PATENT / NOV 30TH / 1858 (all horizontal).” This, of course, was more than a decade later than the probable manufacture date for the Crystal “CG” jar. The jar, however, looks virtually identical to the arched Crystal jars (except for the “CG”).

Standard

Toulouse (1969:291-292), Roller (1983:337-339), and Creswick (1987:199-200) all listed and/or illustrated several different jars embossed with the name “STANDARD.” However, virtually all of these can be assigned to other glass houses with at least reasonable accuracy. The term “Standard” was also used by the glass industry to indicate grooved-ring, wax-sealer jars. See the Other S, Standard Glass Co., Greenfield Jar & Bottle Co., Other I, Other P, and Illinois-Pacific Glass Co. sections for details. As it pertains to the Swindell Brothers, this brand remains a mystery.

Canton

Toulouse (1969:58-59; 1971:127), Roller (1983:81-82), and Creswick (1987:25-26) described and/or illustrated several jars marked “CANTON,” especially the “THE CANTON / DOMESTIC / FRUIT JAR.” A letterhead from the Canton Glass Co. showed the Canton Domestic Jar, clearly identifying Canton as the manufacturer, and various patents connect the Canton Electric Fruit Jar and Canton Fruit Jar to the Canton Glass Co.

The Canton “brand” remains somewhat of a mystery. Although our copy of the 1902 Swindell Brothers catalog is incomplete, a search of it revealed nothing that could connect to the word “Canton.” Unless Swindell acted as a jobber for Canton Glass, we can find no trace of a “Canton” brand connected to Swindell by any other source than the letterhead.

Anchor

Toulouse (1969:20), Roller (1983:12-14), and Creswick (1987:4-5) all described and/or illustrated a jar with an embossed anchor on the front but were unable to identify the maker. Bernas (2003), however, identified the jar as being manufactured by the Anchor Glass Co. (see the Anchor Glass Co. section for details).

The 1902 catalog (Swindell Bros. 1902:38, 63) illustrated an “Anchor Flask” embossed on the side with an anchor tilted 90 degrees, so that it lay on its side (Figure 21). The flasks were offered in ½ pint, pint, and quart sizes. These were obviously mouth-blown. The catalog noted that the ½ pint size held “about 7 ounces,” with “about 14 ounces” for the pint and “about 30 ounces” for the quart. This was most likely the “brand” listed on the letterhead.

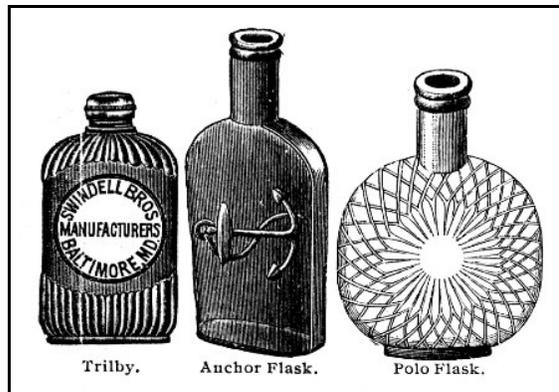


Figure 21 – Anchor flask (Swindell 1902:63)

Discussion and Conclusions

Aside from the brief mention of the S. BROS. and S.B. marks, there is no record that the Swindell Brothers used any mark during the 19th century. According to Toulouse, however, the company began using the Circle-S mark ca. 1920 and continued to mark its bottles with the logo until it closed. Contemporary sources partially support Toulouse, and we have adopted his dates, even though the first use of the marks remains in question.

The use of the Diamond-S logo on liquor ware is less documented, but the best information we can find suggests that the Swindell Bros. used the mark on such containers. Although the Chicago Glass Mfg. Co. has virtually certain evidence for its use of the Diamond-S logo on medicinal ware, the Swindells may have picked up the mark when the company ceased operations ca. 1891 and used it on medicinal bottles until it adopted the Circle-S logo ca. 1920.

The brands listed on the May 1888 letterhead are very likely not fruit jars. The Anchor brand very likely indicated the flask. We have not discovered the identity of Crystal, Canton, or Standard. It may be that these brands had been discontinued during the 16-year interval between the 1888 letterhead and the 1902 catalog.

Acknowledgments

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