The Turner Brothers and William F. Modes

Bill Lockhart, Beau Schriever, Carol Serr, Bob Brown, and Bill Lindsey with contributions by David Whitten

The histories of the Modes and Turner glass interests in Cicero and Terre Haute, Indiana, were complex with parts still somewhat shrouded in mystery. Opened in 1894, the Modes Glass Co. emerged into the Modes-Turner Glass Co. (operated by the Turner brothers) and the Southern Indiana Glass Co. (under the direction of William Modes). When the Modes business burned in 1909, he moved on, but the Turners renamed their plant as the Turner Bros. Co., adding branches at Winchester, Indiana, and Fairmont, West Virginia, during the late 1920s. The extensions apparently overextended the Turner resources, and the Hocking Glass Co. acquired the firm, creating the General Glass Co. — eventually merging into the Anchor-Hocking Glass Co. The Turner's Inverted-Triangle-T logo became a well-known brand in the packing industries.

Histories

Modes Glass Co., Cicero, Indiana (1894-1902)

On January 17, 1894, William F. Modes, Edward C. Modes, Charles Modes, A.C. Baker, and George N. Cash incorporated the Modes Glass Co. at Cicero, Indiana, with a capital of \$100,000. Charles Modes was the plant manager, and the new firm acquired the former Washington Glass Co.¹ By at least 1897, the plant made flint, light green, and amber bottles. The factory used two continuous tanks with 28 rings and had its own mold shop. By 1900, the plant used four continuous tanks with 26 rings, producing prescriptions, beers, and packers (Roller 1994:11; 1997). The Modes Glass Co. officially changed its name to the Modes-Turner Glass Co. on February 15, 1902 (Hunt 1902:138). For a chronology of Modes' involvement in the glass industry, see the section on the Streator Bottle & Glass Co.

¹ A 1921 ad in *Glass Container* stated the Turner Brothers Co. was established in 1892, almost certainly a reference to the Washington Glass Co., out of which the Modes Glass Co. and the later Turner operations grew.

Containers & Marks

MGCo

Toulouse (1971:360-361) clearly wanted the Modes Glass Co. to be identified with the MGCo mark on beer bottle bases. He gave the following justification:

Modes made beer bottles and beverage bottles at most of the companies with which he was associated, starting at La Salle with De Steiger ("DSGCo"), but those under his own name were confined to the nine-year period of the Modes Glass Co. Many of his beer bottles are known in bottle collector's groups. There is a strong possibility that his Cicero factory started before 1895, and possibly in the mid-1880s. Beer bottles with "MGCo," made in circa-1880 techniques of crude finishing, have been found in a camp in Arizona known to have been occupied *only* in the 1880s, and along with beer bottles marked for companies that were in business only in that decade. 1895 is the date of reference in the *National Bottlers Gazette*, the earliest date for Modes that I have been able to find.

This is a tautological explanation. Toulouse was expressing an explanation to fit his preconceived belief. In other words, he was trying to force his identification of the mark to fit the known facts. In reality, he missed the mark (pun intended). Since the Modes Glass Co. did not commence operation until 1892, it could not have been the user of the MGCo mark on beer bottles from 1880s contexts. See the Mississippi Glass Co. section for a discussion of the MGCo mark and the correct user.

Modes-Turner Glass Co., Cicero, Indiana (1898-1904) **Modes-Turner Glass Co., Terre Haute, Indiana** (1902-1910)

As often happens in these chronicles, we found a major discrepancy in the records. An Indiana report for the year 1898 (Carter 1899:187) described a one-day strike by the boys working for the Modes-Turner Glass Co. at Cicero on October 5. There would be no reason for a report this early to include the Turner name if the Turners had not been involved by this time. However, the name was not *officially* changed from the Modes Glass Co. to Modes-Turner Glass

Co. until February 15, 1902. It seems unlikely that the plant would have operated under *both* names from 1898 to 1902, but, if not, which name was used? Of course, with only four years at question, the point may be moot – in the long run.

It is obvious that L.L. Turner and Jay Lee Turner gained an interest in the company by at least October of 1898, probably via an infusion of needed capital. In his report as Secretary of State for Indiana, Hunt (1902:138) noted that the Modes-Turner Glass Co. had issued preferred stock and "Extending and Enlarging Objects" (whatever that may mean) on February 13, 1902. Since the Modes Glass Co. had been organized as a corporation when it was founded in 1894, the Modes-Turner name may have been used casually (unofficially) beginning about 1898. The issuance of stock on February 13, 1902, may have been on or close to the actual date that the Modes-Turner Glass Co. was incorporated. And we may never straighten out this four-year discrepancy.

The *Indianapolis Journal* reported on April 28, 1901, that L.L. and Jay Lee Turner had "secured" the former Hays Glass Co. at Terre Haute, Indiana, opened by the Hays family in 1900 – and planned to move part of its business there the following fall (see the section on the Hays family holdings for more information). This plant, located at 25th and Locust Streets, was also called the Modes-Turner Glass Co., although W.F. Modes returned to Muncie shortly after the factory opened. The operation used four continuous tanks with 26 rings, making prescription and beer bottles as well as packers' ware in the same colors previously offered by Modes. By June, the plant operated 14 shops and had plans for a new 10-pot furnace (Roller 1994:103; 1998). On April 28, 1904, Modes-Turner increased its capital to \$50,000 (Indiana General Assembly 1905:162).

The reprinted 1904 Glass Factory Directory only listed the Terre Haute plant, so the Cicero factory was certainly closed by that time. Toulouse (1971:360) claimed that the Cicero plant burned in 1904 – but also indicated that it was still the Modes Glass Co. at the time. C.M. Turner was president of the corporation with L.L. Turner as secretary and treasurer. Frank Scott was the manager – but there was no mention of Modes. The factory operated two continuous tanks with 20 rings, making prescriptions, liquor bottles, and packers' ware – apparently no more beer production (*American Glass Review* 1934:253). The Thomas Register (Thomas Publishing Co. 1905:103; 1907:158) noted that the company made whiskey bottles in 1905 at Cicero, but this was probably in error. The Terre Haute factory produced "Whiskey; Prescription; Packers';

Preservers" ware by 1907. The following year, the Terre Haute plant operated a single 12-ring continuous tank, making flint bottles (Commoner and Glassworker 1908:1).

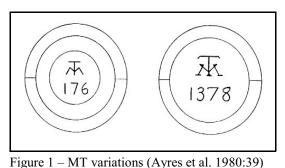
The plant made bottles of amber as well as colorless glass (Commoner and Glassworker 1910a:1). Roller was unclear about the end date of the company, although it was listed in the Thomas Register as late as 1912 but was not in the 1914 edition – but the Thomas publications were notorious for continuing to list glass houses after they had closed (Thomas Publishing Co. 1912:479; 1914). Creswick (1987:161) dated the company 1904-1910, probably following Toulouse (1971:360) who stated that the firm became the Turner Brothers Co. in 1910. A letter from Turner Bros. Co. to W.H. Duncan was dated November 25, 1910, showing that the change was made by then (U.S. Government 1914:31).

Containers and Marks

MT monogram (1898-1910)

Toulouse (1971:496) illustrated this mark but noted that it "did not correspond to any known glassmaker [in the assumption that the order of the letters was TM]. It was found on a reddish amber export beer bottle of about a quart, or reputed quart, capacity. It was hand-tooled with a laid-on-ring, for a cork stopper." We would likely classify that as a blob top or an applied finish on the bottle. Toulouse (1971:496) dated the mark "circa 1880 to 1910." Whitten (2019) described the mark as "almost certainly to the Modes-Turner Glass Company, Cicero & Terre Haute, IN ca.1900-1905."

Ayres et al. (1980:39) illustrated two variations of the mark, one, like those noted by Whitten, with serifs on both letters – the other mark sans serifs (Figure 1). Each had what may be catalog numbers below the logo. The second mark was shown in a large circle, possibly a plate. Both bases were made by post-bottom molds. The group called this an "unidentified monogram . . . on bottles



that are probably of American manufacture." They dated the bottles ca. 1880 to ca. 1900. When the Bottle Research Group examined the Tucson Urban Renewal collection in March 2006, we

found two examples of the sans serif mark and one of the serif mark, all on export beer bottles with tooled finishes (two-part with the serif mark and both one- and two-part for the sans serif mark). The few marks we have recorded were on mouth-blown bottles (Figure 2).

Currently, we have only recorded the number "176" for the sans serif mark. We have seen a "341" with the serif mark on a light green pickle bottle and "651," "1339," and "1378"



Figure 2 – MT monogram (TUR)

on amber beer bottles with the serif mark. The light green color is similar to that of one beer bottle with the IB&GCo logo (see below).

The sans serif mark was probably used earlier than the logo with serifs, but we have been unable to determine any solid dates. It is possible that the Cicero plant used the sans serif mark, and the Terre Haute factory used the logo with serifs. Until we obtain more evidence, however, both variations should be dated to the entire length of the company, 1898-1910.

Indiana Bottle & Glass Co., Cicero, Indiana (1904-1909)

In 1904, William F. Modes was the president and manager of the Indiana Bottle & Glass Co., Cicero, Indiana. The company produced "amber and green beers & liquors" in 1904 at two continuous tanks but graduated to "flint, light green and amber bottles" from 1906 until the plant was destroyed by fire in 1909 (*American Glass Review* 1934:151; Roller 1994:11; 1997). Modes continued as president, with J.L. Hinshaw as secretary and E.M. Hinshaw as treasurer. In 1907, the company made beer, soda, wine, and brandy bottles (Thomas Register 1907:156; 1909:198; Roller 1997).

Although the full story may never be discovered, Modes and the Turners apparently had a falling out in 1901. Certainly, *something* happened at that time to cause Modes to leave the Modes-Turner Glass Co. right after its official name change. Although we have not discovered the locations of either factory, the Southern Indiana Bottle & Glass Co. may have been situated at the old Modes Glass Co. location, while the Turners moved their portion to Terre Haute.

Containers and Marks

IB&GCO (1904-1909)

We have recorded the "IB&GCO" mark on a light green soda bottle, a color similar to Coca-Cola's Georgia Green but with a more yellow tint to it (Figure 3). The mark was on the heel of the bottle, and the container had an applied crown finish. An oval plate on the front of the bottle was embossed "WHALEN BROS / LOUISVILLE / KY." The "O" in "CO" was capitalized, and the mark had no



Figure 3 – IB&GCO (David Whitten)

punctuation. An eBay seller described a similar bottle as "solarized (turning purple), blob-top beer embossed BOHRER (in script on shoulder), G.A. BOHRER BRG CO, LAFAYETTE, IND. (on base) with I.B.&G.Co. glassmaker mark on heel." Indiana Bottle & Glass Co. is the only company we have found with initials that match the marks. Unless we find additional data, the "IBG&CO" mark should be dated to the entire span of the firm's tenure, 1904-1909.

Turner Brothers Co., Terre Haute, Indiana (1910-1927)
Turner Glass Co., Terre Haute, Indiana (1927-ca. 1929)
Turner Glass Corp., Terre Haute, Indiana (ca. 1929-1930)

In 1910, the Turners renamed their operation as the Turner Brothers Co., still located at Terre Haute. Unfortunately, there is a break in the Thomas Registers, our best source of information for the era. The 4th edition was prepared in 1909, but the 5th edition was not printed until 1912. The plant was still listed as Modes-Turner in 1909, and there was no listing for Turner Brothers (Thomas Publishing Co. 1909:200). Toulouse (1971:491) claimed 1910 as the year the Turner Bros. Co. began business, and the firm was certainly in business by September, when *Commoner and Glassworker* (1910b:13) noted that "the Turner Bros. Co. started their flint tank on the 21st and the amber tank will start about the 26th."

In 1913, the plant used two continuous tanks with 20 rings to make a "general line" of bottles by both semiautomatic machine and hand methods (*Journal of Industrial and*

Engineering Chemistry 1913:952). The plant was listed continuously in the Thomas Registers with no indication of the type of glass produced through at least 1920 (Thomas Publishing Co. 1914:530; 1920:826).

A company representative noted that "one furnace is being enlarged to take care of automatic bottle blowing machines" in 1918 (*Glassworker* 1918:13). In July 1919, however, Turner discontinued the use of "flow machines" (i.e., fully automatic machines, almost surely the ones installed earlier that year) to return to semiautomatic production. Although no reason was given for the change, it is obvious that there were some problems with the fully automatic machines ("Idlewild" 1919:16). A 1921 ad in *Glass Container* (1921:22) only listed the Terre Haute plant and noted:

Bottles and Jars Automatically made • Clear Flint Glass Corrugated Paper and Wood Reshipping Cases Wood Cases for Bottlers (Figure 4)

A 1923 woodcut (*Glass Container* 1923:21) showed the Terre Haute factory and noted that the plant made flint jars and bottles – also including the former Woodbury Glass Works plant at Winchester, Indiana (Figure 5). The 1925 report listed three continuous tanks at Winchester and one at Terre Haute. In February, the firm increased capacity by 25%, but a fire on July 16 destroyed the bottle packing department (Toulouse 1971:491).



Figure 4 – 1921 ad (*Glass Container* 1921:22)

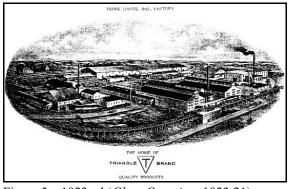


Figure 5 – 1923 ad (*Glass Container* 1923:21)

In 1927, Turner Bros. Co. was listed in both Terre Haute and Winchester, Indiana, as well as Fairmont, West Virginia. H.D. Hartley was president with W.M. Turner (a second generation?) as vice president. The combined plants operated seven continuous tanks with 42 rings, one furnace with 16 pots, and two day tanks with 16 rings to make "flint, prescriptions, beers,

minerals, patent, proprietary, flasks, liquors, packers and preservers" by machine. Although the source only noted the operation of machines, the use of pots in a furnace suggests that some hand manufacture continued (*American Glass Review* 1927:145).

Toulouse (1971:491) suggested that the Turners may have overextended their resources just before the end of Prohibition, but we wonder if the entrance of the Great Depression may have brought about the firm's demise. Toulouse noted that the glass directories he used listed "No Report" for the Turners in 1929, but the Glass Factory Directory from the *American Glass Review* (1927:165; 1928:150-151; 1929:105) listed Hartley still as president but with I.J. Collins as vice president for all three years. Toulouse noted that Collins was chairman of the board for the Hocking Glass Co. – and that Hocking now owned Turner.

The Toulouse notation that W.M. Turner was vice president in 1927 suggests that later in 1927, Collins became vice president – and things began changing. The company was consistently listed as the Turner Bros. Co. up to January of 1927 (*Glass Container* 1927a:53). The next known ad (*Glass Container* 1927b:31) called the firm the Turner Glass Co. A final name change to Turner Glass Corp. appeared sometime between October 1928 and February 1930 (*Glass Container* 1928:35; 1930:23). These last two names probably heralded the change in ownership, possibly a gradual one where Hocking Glass took over partial control in 1927, gaining more power over the next few years.

In 1931, Turner was listed as "in hands of receiver March 2 for liquidation" (*American Glass Review* 1931:90) – transferring to the newly organized General Glass Corp. General, in turn, became part of the Hocking Glass Co. in 1937, and the plant once again changed ownership (Roller 1994:103; *Winchester Journal-Herald* 10/12/1965). Also see the General Glass entry in the Other G section.

Containers and Marks

T in an inverted triangle (1920-1930)

Toulouse (1971:490) illustrated a mark of T in an inverted triangle with slightly bowed sides that was used by the Turner Bros. Co., Terre Haute, Indiana, from "circa 1915 to 1920." As usual, he did not explain his reasons for those dates (or for choosing Turner as the user of the

mark). Although Toulouse showed bowed sides for the mark, we have never seen an example with that configuration. All marks in inverted triangles that we have examined (including the Travis milk bottles) have had straight sides on the triangles (Figure 6).



Figure 6 – Inverted Triangle T

Giarde (1980:122) identified this mark on milk bottles and called the identity of the maker "a mystery yet to be solved" but suggested the Turner Brothers as one possibility. We now know that the mark was used on milk bottles by the Travis Glass Co. – completely unrelated to the Turner bottles or marks. See the section on the Travis Glass Co. for more information.

The Turner Brothers Co., Terre Haute, Indiana, registered trademark No. 205,166 on November 3, 1925, stating that the mark was "continuously used in the business of said corporation since January 1st, 1920." In the illustration, the Inverted-Triangle-T mark was flanked by the works "TRIANGLE" (to the left) and "BRAND" (to the right). The registration included the disclaimer that "no claim is made to the exclusive use of the words 'Triangle Brand'

apart from the mark shown." The mark was registered for use "on printed labels and molding in the glass" on glass bottles, flasks, jars, jugs, and decanters. Obviously, Toulouse credited Turner with the mark about five years too early.

All of the Turner ads after 1920 included a drawing of the logo (see Figures 4 & 5). A December 1927 ad (*Glass Container* 1927c:45) showed the configuration of the Turner mark. The bottle base was embossed "934 /{Inverted-Triangle-T} / 1" (Figure 7). Ayres et al. (1980:39) illustrated the mark on the center of what they identified as a beer bottle base (actually a grape juice bottle) with 310 above the logo and 13 below it. Other examples we have recorded include:



Figure 7 – 1927 ad ($Glass\ Container$ 1927c:45)

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419 / {mark} / 2
876 / {mark} / 2
445 / {mark} / 3
55 / {mark} / 26
581W / {mark} / 7
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The two- or three-digit number on top is almost certainly a model or catalog code. This is similar to the three- or four-digit numbers associated with the MT logos discussed in the Modes-Turner section above. The one- or two-digit number below the logo may be a date code, although the "13" in the Ayers group illustration does not fit this hypothesis. With that exception, the very small sample we have seen could certainly fit into the time period when the mark was used (1920-1930). Thus, single-digit codes could indicate 1921, 1922, or 1923, and our lone double-digit example (26) would equal 1926. A larger sample of numbers would be helpful.

We have only seen the marks on generic, machine-made bottles (with distinct parison scars). Turner Brothers certainly used machines by 1913 and made most if not all products by machine after 1920. A November 1922 ad stated, "Our modern plants, automatically equipped, enable us to manufacture high grade Flint Bottles and Jars of every description. Especially are we equipped to take care of the requirements of the Packer and Preserver."

We have discovered ads for Turner Brothers Co., Turner Glass Co., and Turner Glass Corp. from 1921 to 1930. In all cases, the mark was a straight-sided, inverted triangle with a T in the center. The ads offered bottles and jars for catsup, chili sauce, preserves, "james" (sic), jellies, vinegar, condiments, syrup, and showed a large variety of packer bottles and jars, all made of flint (i.e., colorless) glass. All were generic. There was no hint of embossing to suit the customer or of any milk bottles.

The Travis Glass Co. was using this mark on milk bottles until at least Oct 1919 (see section on Travis). Thus, Travis had ceased operation when Turner registered the mark.

Turner Glass Co., Winchester, Indiana (1921-1930) Turner Glass Co., Fairmont, West Virginia (1927-1930)

Turner acquired the former Woodbury Glass Co. plant in Winchester, Indiana, in 1921. Woodbury had sold to the Thatcher Mfg. Co. in 1920, and Thatcher sold the factory to the Turners the following year (*Winchester Journal-Herald* 10/12/1965).² Turner ads support this date. A November 1921 ad only listed the Terre Haute plant, but a July 1922 ad included the Winchester plant (*Glass Container* 1921:22; 1922:14). Thus, the Winchester plant did not become part of the company until sometime after November 1921.

In January 1927 (*Glass Container* 1927a:53), the Turners bought the Monongah Glass Co. at Fairmont, West Virginia. The company's ad showed a map of Turner's nationwide distribution and noted that the firm now made tumblers. The company also maintained branch offices in ten cities. The farthest west was Dallas, Texas, although the firm shipped all the way to the West Coast. This purchase probably overextended the Turner family and created the gradual takeover by the Hocking Glass Co. (discussed above). In 1929, the three plants made "flint, proprietary, beverages, fruit jars, packers and preservers" by machine at seven continuous tanks with 42 rings. The products were the same as 1927 listing, but the furnace and pots had been deleted, probably signaling the final end of hand production.

Discussion and Conclusions

There are solid data indicating that the Inverted-Triangle-T mark was used by both the Travis Glass Co. (on milk bottles) and the Turner Glass Co. (or Turner Brothers – on packers). The marks used by both companies were identical. However, Travis marks were only applied to milk bottles, while Turner marks appeared on generic packer bottles. Travis marks were almost always slightly or very obliterated by the ejection scars created by press-and-blow machines. Turner bottles had parison scars caused by blow-and-blow machines that usually did *not* deface the marks.

² Other sources suggest that Thatcher retained control of the Fairmont plant until at least 1923, possibly as late as 1925 (e.g., *Glassworker* 1925:12).

In addition, the Travis date code system followed the "T-19-xx" pattern (below the mark), with T-19 being the company's identifying mark and xx being the date code. Turner codes follow the "xxx / {Triangle-T mark} / x" pattern, with the upper two- or three-digit number representing the model or catalog code, and the lower number as a probable date code. Finally, Travis ceased using the Triangle-T logo in late 1919, and Turner began use of the mark in January of 1920. Turner used the logo until the company entered receivership in 1930.

Other marks associated with earlier firms – the S.I.G.Co. of the Southern Indiana Glass Co. and the MT monogram used by Modes-Turner – have been equally well defined. However, the transitions between the various companies are less accurately understood. The state of Indiana was using the name Modes-Turner Glass Co. at least as early as 1898, but the Modes Glass Co. did not officially change its name to Modes-Turner until 1902. It seems likely that Modes needed an infusion of capital about 1898, and the Turner brothers bought into the corporation about that time.

The historical waters became murky after that – at least with the resources at our disposal. The Turners moved the Modes-Turner operation to Terre Haute, and Modes was no longer associated with them. It seems apparent that there was some form of falling out between the two families. We can speculate that Modes retained the Cicero segment of the business, turning that into the Southern Indiana Glass Co. – probably at the same location. The firm continued to make similar products in similar colors until the plant burned (according to Toulouse) in 1909. Modes moved on.

The Turners shifted into the production of packers' ware (along with some other glass containers) and became quite successful, growing and expanding into the late 1920s. As often happened in the glass industry, they Turners may have outgrown their resources – or possibly the original brothers passed on (through death or retirement) to be replaced by less astute managers. The last Turner in management was replaced in 1927 by I.J. Collins, a principal in the Hocking Glass Co. By 1932, the Turner holdings had become the General Glass Co., a Hocking associate that merged into Achor Hocking in 1938.

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