

The Thomas Wightman Glass Companies

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Upon the death of Moses Lorenz in 1871, Thomas Wightman became the sole owner of a series of Pittsburgh glass houses. After starting a new plant at Parker, Pennsylvania, Wightman had closed all the Pittsburgh factories and moved his headquarters to the new location by 1883. He began expanding the business during that period but retired in 1907. At that point, four of his sons divided the two factories between them, and one left in 1913 to make his own territory. By 1915, all but one of the remaining Wightman sons had retired, the final one following in 1917. In this study, we have presented a new chronology for the Wightman businesses.

History

When the partnership of Lorenz and Wightman dissolved upon the death of Moses A. Lorenz in 1871, Wightman continued the business. The Wightman family's subsequent involvement may be divided into four distinct periods:

1. The Pittsburgh Years (1873-1893), when Thomas Wightman ran several glass houses in Pittsburgh as well as opening a new plant at Parker.
2. The Expansion Period (1893-1907), when the senior Wightman – still in charge – opened additional factories at Monongahela and Morgantown, West Virginia.
3. Post Thomas Wightman Period (1907-1915), after the senior Wightman's death, when the four sons divided the Parker and Morgantown plants – and William Wightman moved to Punxsutawney.
4. The Breakup Period (1915-1921), when the Wightmans began dying off and/or divesting themselves of their glass interests.

1. The Pittsburgh Years (1873-1893)

In the aftermath of Moses A. Lorenz's death, Thomas Wightman emerged as the owner of several Pittsburgh glass houses, making bottles, jars, liquor ware, and window glass. In 1883,

he opened an additional plant at Parker and began withdrawing from the Pittsburgh operations, leaving only the Parker business in 1893.

Thomas Wightman & Co., Pittsburgh (1873-1883)

The period of time between the death of Moses A. Lorenz in 1871 and 1874 is a bit unclear (see the section of Lorenz and the Lorenz & Wightman companies). Possibly as early as 1872, certainly by 1873, Thomas Wightman had changed the name of the company to Thomas Wightman & Co. The name change may have even occurred as early as 1871. In discussing Thomas Wightman & Co., an 1879 article noted, "In 1871, the Eclipse glass factory was bought" (*Brick, Pottery, and Glass Journal* (1879:116). Although it is easy to assume that Wightman did the buying, that was *not* clearly expressed.

From the beginning, Wightman made green and blackglass bottles, fruit jars and druggists' ware. W.K. Nimick, from the Lorenz & Wightman days, remained as one of the owners, and Thomas Wightman was joined by two of his sons, James S. Wightman and Alexander R. Wightman. The firm operated three plants: The Penn Glass Works (the original O'Hara and Craig Pittsburgh Glass Works), the old Fahnestock & Gladdens glass works on Smallman Street in Pittsburgh, and the old Fahnestock, Albree & Co. factory (Eclipse Glass Works) in Temperanceville (Hawkins 2009:519-521). See the section on Lorenz & Wightman for more information.

In 1878, the company owned two window-glass factories, one of which also made "phials," fruit jars, and tableware. Each plant was equipped with two ten-pot furnaces (*Crockery and Glass Journal* 1878:26). A fire on April 10, 1880, caused the rebuilding of the Temperanceville window-glass factory, and the plant was back in operation in September. The container plants made Mason jars, Mason's Improved, "The Queen," and wax-sealer fruit jars along with the bottle line. In 1881, the firm made "green and amber bottles and vials" at two furnaces with 20 pots. The plant employed 167 people that year and sold \$60,000 worth of products. The firm became a limited partnership in 1883 (Hawkins 2009:522; Humphries 1882:59).

Thomas Wightman & Co., Ltd. (1883-1893)

Pittsburgh (1883-1893)

The operating group became a limited partnership in 1883. The old Fahnestock & Gladdens factory was abandoned sometime during the 1880s, but Wightman still operated three plants, including the Parker facility (see below). The Penn Glass Works in Pittsburgh continued to produce window glass, but the other plants were devoted to containers, including druggists' ware. One of the green bottle factories burned on April 30, 1887, but was rebuilt and back in operation in an astounding three weeks. The *American Pottery & Glassware Reporter*, noted on May 5, 1887, that the firm had "one other green bottle factory, one prescription and two window glass works in operation." At that time, the combined Wightman factories operated 50 pots. Wightman closed the Penn Glass Works in 1891. The plant had been in operation for 94 years and was finally dismantled in 1894 (Hawkins 2009:523; n.d.a).

The Wightmans shut down the Eclipse Glass Works, the firm's final Pittsburgh holding in 1893 – with the reorganization that settled with a new name – the Wightman Glass Co. Although we have not found the specific closing announcement, the May 20, 1896, issue of *China, Glass & Lamps* told the story:

The citizens of the West End, better known as Saw Mill Run, have endeavored to induce Thomas Wightman to start his old green glass factory there, which has been idle for the past four years [i.e. 1892]. Mr. Wightman proposes to concentrate his business at Monongahela City, and will not start the old pot factory.

Parker (formerly Parker's Landing), Pennsylvania (1883-1893)

In 1879, a group of local businessmen organized the Parker Glass Co. with John B. Leonard as president. Directors for the corporation were William Morgan, James P. Parker, A. Sheidemantle, and C.P. Hatch. The firm built its factory in 1880, producing high-quality flint druggists' ware. Although sources provided conflicting dates, Thomas Wightman & Co. purchased the plant in 1882 (Armstrong County Genealogy Project [1913]; Roller n.d.a).

Algernon S Wightman operated the factory from the Whightman purchase until his death in 1915 (*National Glass Budget* 1915:4).

A note in *Crockery & Glass Journal* (1883:18) stated that “Thomas Wightman & Co. have leased the works of the Parker Glass Co., Parker City . . . to Armstrong & Co., and will make prescription ware there.” While we cannot explain this apparent breach in the Wightman production, see the section below on the Thomas Wightman Glass Co. at Parker for another sharing of the factory. In 1893, the firm again reorganized as the Thomas Wightman Glass Co.

2. The Expansion Period (1893-1907)

During this period, emerging into the 20th century, Wightman began expanding his holdings, first opening a factory in Monongahela in 1894 and selling it in 1899, the purchasing an existing plant at Morgantown, West Virginia, in 1905. The family continued to sell glass in Pittsburgh, even though it had closed all of the Pittsburgh plants

Thomas Wightman Glass Co. (1893-1907)

Another reorganization created the Thomas Wightman Glass Co. in 1893. The firm closed the Eclipse Glass Works in Temperanceville – the family’s last Pittsburgh factory – and joined a combine called the Pittsburgh Glass & Bottle Co., with intentions to build a new plant at McKeesport. The cartel disbanded before the factory could be built (Hawkins 2009:523-524; Roller n.d.a).

By 1894, all six of Wightman’s sons worked with the senior Wightman at the company, and Wightman remained active at the age of 76 (Hawkins 2009:254-525). The Thomas Wightman Glass Co. incorporated in West Virginia in 1906 with a capital of \$100,000. Thomas Wightman was president, with James S. Wightman as vice president, Thomas Wightman, Jr., as secretary, G.H. Patterson as treasurer, and A.S. Wightman as general manager. The firm sold the window glass segment of the business to Pittsburgh Plate Glass in May of 1907 (*Paint, Oil & Drug Review* 1907:24). When Thomas Wightman retired in 1907, his sons divided the factories into separate businesses.

Parker, Pennsylvania (1893-1907)

The Wightmans announced on May 20, 1896, that they would move the workings from the Parker plant to Monongahela City (Pennsylvania). Although they never explained the details, there appeared to be problems with the Monongahela plant that caused the family to rescind the decision the following year. The issues were apparently resolved (Roller 1997a). In 1897 and 1898, the Parker factory operated one furnace with ten pots, making flint prescription ware, although the number of pots had increased to 12 by 1901. Thomas Wightman was the proprietor with J.S. Wightman as the plant manager. In 1907, J. Smyley Wightman renamed the Parker factory as the Wightman Glass Co. (*National Glass Budget* 1897:4; 1898:3; Roller n.d.b).

Monongahela, Pennsylvania (1894-1899)

The firm built the Wightman Window Glass Works (still operated by and as the Thomas Wightman Glass Co.) at Monongahela, Pennsylvania, in 1894, and production commenced at their continuous tank on November 10. Although the Wightmans announced their intention to move their base of operations to Monongahela City in 1896, there were apparently some problems that caused them to change their plans. In late 1899, the Wightmans sold the Monongahela plant to the American Glass Co. Although the firm became a window-glass jobber, it never again produced any flat glass (Hawkins 2009:254-525; Roller 1997a).

Morgantown, West Virginia (1905-1907)

In 1905, the Wightmans bought the West Virginia Bottle & Glass Co., Morgantown, West Virginia, from the West Virginia Bottle and Glass Co. and operated the plant until it became the S.R. Wightman Glass Co. (i.e., Samuel R. Wightman) during the 1907 reorganization (*Commoner and Glassworker* 1910:1; Six 1993:20, 22; Toulouse 1971:534; Hennon et al. 1913:22).

3. The Post Thomas Wightman Period (1907-1915)

In 1907, Thomas Wightman retired at the age of 90, replaced by his sons, William K., Algernon S., Samuel R., and James Smyley Wightman, who operated the surviving plants

(Armstrong County Genealogy Project [1913]). James, Algernon, and William shared the management of the Parker factory – apparently with James (also called Smyley, his middle name) in the top position, while Samuel acquired the Morgantown business. Two other sons, John R. and Thomas W. Wightman, were involved in some way as well, but their positions were unclear in the sources. The senior Wightman died on September 1 of the following year (*Glass Worker* 1922:16; Hawkins 2009). The *National Glass Budget* (1915:4) noted that the recently deceased Algernon S. Wightman was the “president and general manager of the recently organized Wightman Bottle & Glass Co.” – indicating that the next reorganization of the firm occurred in 1915.

Wightman Glass Co., Parker, Pennsylvania (1907-1915)

Glass Industry reported in October of 1936 that the firm had changed its name to the Wightman Glass Co. in 1907. In May of 1909, “contractors broke ground . . . for the erection of a new seven-ring tank” for the Parker plant (*Commoner and Glassworker* 1909:1). The plant now had one furnace with 12 pots and a continuous tank with seven rings. James S. Wightman (also known as J. Smyley) was listed as proprietor in 1910, although he died on June 7 of that year, leaving his brother, Algernon, as the owner. As of 1912, the Parker factory was the only one operated by the family, and it used a single continuous tank with eight rings (*National Glass Budget* 1915:4; Roller n.d.b).

Although the plant continued to make most of its bottles by hand, it installed a single machine in 1913 to produce half-gallon and gallon ware. Also, in 1913, the Wightman family informed the town of Parker that it intended to move its operation to a factory the family had purchased in Punxsutawney. In order to preserve the income base, a group of local businessmen purchased the plant for \$15,000, with plans to continue the operation – although the Wightman family continued to operate the large-bottle machine and some private molds (Armstrong County Genealogy Project [1913]). Although the details are unclear, Algernon apparently incorporated the Wightman Bottle & Glass Co. in 1915, at some point prior to his death in September. His obituary in the *National Glass Budget* (1915:4) noted that the firm had “recently” been incorporated with Algernon as the president. With his death, the Wightman presence within the firm vanished (see the next reorganization below).

S.R. Wightman Glass Co., Morgantown, West Virginia (1907-ca. 1910)

With the reorganization of 1907, Samuel R. Wightman became the proprietor of the Morgantown plant and operated thereafter as the S.R. Wightman Glass Co. (*Commoner and Glassworker* 1910:1; Six 1993:20, 22; Toulouse 1971:534). Hennon et al. (1913:21-22) reported that the factory was “located along the Morgantown & Kingwood RR on Deckers creek one half mile southeastward from the corporation line of Morgantown” and that “owing to financial difficulties, it was compelled to shut down in May 1910.

Hennon et al. (1913:22) then quoted an article from a May 1906 edition of the *New Dominion*, a Morgantown newspaper. At that time, the plant had “three bottle machines running two shifts per day” occupying six shops, each employing three men and three boys. The blurb added that “the Sabraton plant” operated two tanks, one of which was being overhauled at that time. This almost certainly referred to the Pressed Prism Plate Glass Co. – at Sabraton, near Morgantown – rather than a second Wightman plant.

Wightman Glass Co., Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania (1913-1915)

The firm purchased an existing plant at Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, in 1913 and continued to produce bottles there at two continuous tanks with 16 rings. This earlier plant was not listed by any source we could find, although the Corning Museum of Glass (2002) listed a Punxsutawney Glass Bottle Works (a.k.a., Punxsutawney Glass Works) in operation between 1892 and 1896. Conceivably, this plant could have continued to exist – either still producing or idle – until Wightman’s 1913 purchase. W.K. Wightman was the president and secretary with D.S. Harris as secretary. Wightman moved to Port Allegany in 1915, and the Punxsutawney company reorganized as the Wightman Glass Corp. (Hawkins 2009:252-526; Roller 1997b).

4. The Breakup Period (1915-1921)

The Wightman separation continued in 1915 as the Wightman Bottle & Glass Co. at Parker and the Wightman Glass Corp. at Punxutawney. In addition, W.K. Wightman left the firm in 1915 to form the Wightman Co-operative Glass Co. at Port Allegany. But this was the final gasp of Wightman family glass businesses.

Wightman Bottle & Glass Co., Parker, Pennsylvania (1915-1921)

The firm reorganized again in 1915 as the Wightman Bottle & Glass Co. at Parker. By then, the tank was “worked with 10 hand blow shops on two shifts and made a miscellaneous line of bottles.” T.A. Kerr was vice president with C.W. Wick as secretary, W.A. Wick as treasurer, and W.G. Hixon as plant manager (Bristow 1917:1). In 1921, the company became loosely connected with the new Knox Glass Bottle Co., Knox, Pennsylvania (established 1914), resulting in yet another slight name change to the Wightman Bottle & Glass Mfg. Co. For information about the company, see the section of Knox or Lockhart et al. (2008:526).

Wightman Glass Corp., Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania (1915-1918)

When Wightman left in 1915, the company reorganized as the Wightman Glass Corp. James B. Phelan became president with Irwin Simpson as vice president, F.C. Lang as treasurer, Arthur T. Bennis as secretary, and W.C. Tibby as general manager. In 1918, the Swindell Brothers, along with W.C. Tibby and H.O. Brawner gained control of the business. The group renamed the firm as the Tibby-Brawner Glass Co. in 1920 (Hawkins 2009:252-526; Roller 1997b). For more information, see the section on the Tibby Brothers.

Wightman Co-Operative Glass Co., Port Allegany, Pennsylvania (1915-1917)

W.K. Wightman left his position as president of the Wightman Glass Co. in 1915 to manage the newly organized Wightman Co-Operative Glass Co. at Port Allegany. We have not discovered the reason for his defection. The company took over the idle plant of the former Olean Glass Co., closed since 1912. The factory operated two continuous tanks with 14 rings in 1916, but its creditors forced the firm into bankruptcy on June 13 of that year with Wightman as receiver. The plant sold to the Pierce Glass Co. the following year (*National Glass Budget* 1915:2; Roller 1997c; Toulouse 1971:535).

Table 1 – Factories Operated by the Wightman Family

Name or Location	Former Name	Dates*
Penn Glass Works (Pittsburgh)	O'Hara and Craig	1873-1891
Smallman St. (Pittsburgh)	Fahnestock & Gladdens	1873-late 1880s
Eclipse Glass Works, Temeranceville, PA	Fahnestock, Albree, & Co.	1873-1893
Parker, Pennsylvania	Parker Glass Co.	1883-1921
Monongahela, Pennsylvania	Built new	1894-1899
Morgantown, West Virginia	West Virginia Bottle & Glass Co.	1905-1910
Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania	unknown	1913-1918

* Dates of operation by the Wightmans

Table 2 – Wightman Companies and Corporations

Name	Location	Owner	Dates
Pittsburgh Years (1873-1893)			
Thomas Wightman & Co.	Pittsburgh	Thomas Wightman	1873-1883
Thomas Wightman & Co., Ltd.	Pittsburgh	Thomas Wightman	1883-1893
Thomas Wightman & Co., Ltd.	Parker	Thomas Wightman	1883-1893
Expansion Period (1893-1907)			
Thomas Wightman Glass Co.	Parker	Thomas Wightman	1893-1907
Thomas Wightman Glass Co.	Monongahela	Thomas Wightman	1894-1899
Thomas Wightman Glass Co.	Morgantown, WV	Thomas Wightman	1905-1907
Post Thomas Wightman Period (1907-1915)			
S.R. Wightman Glass Co.	Morgantown, WV	S.R. Wightman	1907-1910
Wightman Glass Co.	Parker	James S. Wightman Algenon S. Wightman	1907-1915
Wightman Glass Co.	Punxsutawney	W.K. Wightman	1913-1915

Breakup Period (1915-1921)			
Wightman Glass Corp	Punxsutawney	James B. Phelan	1915-1918
Wightman Bottle & Glass Co.	Parker	T.A. Kerr	1915-1921
Wightman Co-Operative Glass Co.	Port Allegany	W.K. Wightman	1915-1917

Containers and Marks

According to ads in 1875, Wightman sold fruit jars sealed with the Cohansey lids. We have not discovered whether the firm made the jars or acted as a jobber for the Cohansey Glass Mfg. Co. Wightman made beer bottles at least as early as 1879. The firm also advertised MASON'S PATENT NOV 30th 1858, THE QUEEN, MASON'S IMPROVED, and "Groove Ring, Or Wax Fruit Jars" in 1879 (Roller n.d.a). Giarde (1980:139-140) noted that Wightman made milk bottles during the early 1900s.

W (cursive) (ca. 1873-1883)

Toulouse (1971:533) showed the cursive "W" mark in two forms: 1) a cursive "W" which he noted as "new jars with cursive 'W' only"; and 2) the older L&W (cursive) mark with a "peened out "L &." He dated the latter mark 1871 (Figure 1). The "peened out" mark was obviously from existing molds on hand after the death of Moses Lorenz (see Lorenz/Lorenz & Wightman section).



Figure 1 – W – ghosted L& (Jay Hawkins)

Roller (1983:375) discussed "W over ghosted L&W's" embossed on the side of a grooved-ring wax sealer fruit jar. He dated the mark slightly later than Toulouse – ca. 1874. Roller noted that "the firm of Thomas Wightman & Co. was started soon after the dissolution of the firm of Lorenz & Wightman in 1873." The Roller update (2011:541) added variations with unembossed base, six-pointed star, and cross. Hawkins (2009:524, 527) confirmed the identification.

Creswick (1987:105) showed four variations in both the "ghosted" "L&" and the unaltered "W" marks (Figure 2). These may be instructive. In what is probably the oldest

variation of the ghosted style (on a stoppered jar), the “W” stood erect. In the second ghosted style (on a grooved-ring wax sealer), the “W” leaned to the right. The two with the unaltered “W” variations were both grooved-ring wax sealers. In one, the W was identical to the right-leaning “W” on the second ghosted variation. In the other, the “W” leaned to the left. These are probably in chronological order – with the right-leaning “W” earlier than the one leaning to the left.

Our adjusted chronology, places Thomas Wightman & Co. in business from 1873 to 1883. It is possible, of course, that the “W” marks were used much later, although none of the known jars were probably made after the 1880s.

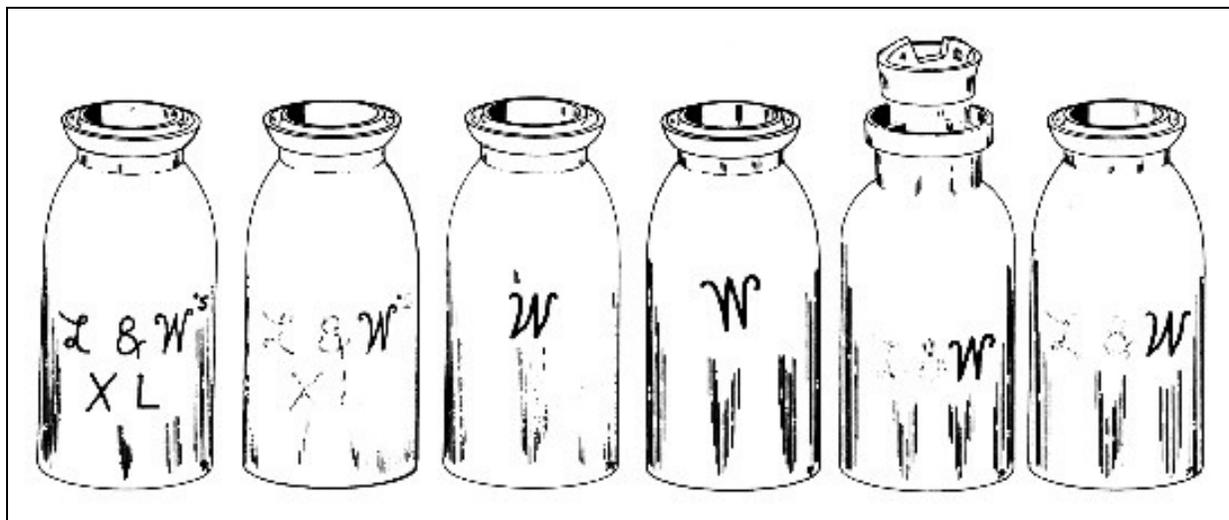


Figure 2 – Cursive W jars (Creswick 1987:105)

W (block) (poss. 1883-1893)

Hawkins (2009:525) stated that the “‘W’ mark is attributed to Thomas Wightman & Co. or the Thomas Wightman Glass Co.” He included a photo from the base of a rectangular druggist’s bottle. The mark could have also been used by the Wormser Glass Co., Whitney Glass Works, or any other glass house with a name beginning in “W.”

David Whitten send us photos of an aqua, mouth-blown, square pickle bottle, only embossed “W” on the base (Figure 3). Whitten (2020) suggested that the “W” could have been

used by “either Wormser Glass Company (1875-c.1927) Pittsburgh, PA; or Thos. Wightman & Company (1872-1893) Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. . . . A square handmade aqua-colored pickle bottle that bears a “W” on the base looks to date from the 1880s or 1890s.” We add that the only confirmed Wightman “W” was on the sides or bases of wax-sealer fruit jars.



Figure 3 – W (David Whitten)



Figure 4 – W (Jay Hawkins)

Jay Hawkins contributed a photo of a “W” base (Figure 4) that he attributed to Thomas Wightman & Co. or Thomas Wightman Glass Co. (Hawkins 2019:525). Zumwalt (1980:414) noted (under the heading of “W”): “embossed on the face of a ‘honeywell’ type spice aqua, scarce – no information”

Another “W” was embossed on the base of a grooved-ring, wax-sealer fruit jar (Creswick 1987:216; Roller 1983:375; 2011:541). Neither Roller nor Creswick gave any suggestion for the manufacturer (Figure 5). This was *not* the same style of “W” found on the sides of other wax sealers made by Thomas Wightman & Co. If Wightman used any of these “W” marks, it was probably during the 1883-1893 period. Also see lone W marks in the Weeks & Gilson and Other W sections.

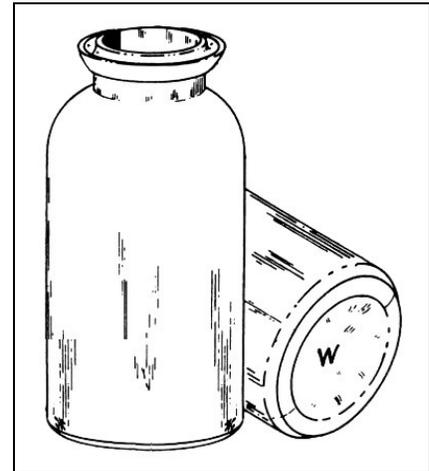


Figure 5 – W (Creswick 1987:216)

W&Co (1873-1893)

The “W&Co” mark, according to Toulouse (1971:533), was used by Wightman & Co. “later. Probably in 1880s.” When the company reorganized in 1893, it became the Wightman Glass Co. At that point, the W&Co mark became inappropriate.

Roller (1983:375; 2011:541) noted two slight variations of this mark on grooved-ring wax-sealer fruit jars – “W&CO. / 1” and



Figure 6 – W&CO base (North American Glass)

“W&CO. (arch) / PITTSBURGH (inverted arch)” (Figures 6 & 7). He attributed both as possibly belonging to Wightman & Co. “who advertised groove-ring jars in their 1879 catalog.”

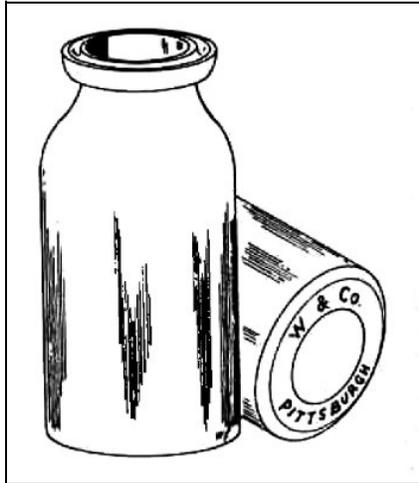


Figure 8 – W&CO (Creswick 1987:106)

Creswick (1987:106) showed the same variations as Roller, but illustrated the “1” atop the mark and a lower-case “o” in “Co” (i.e., 1 / W&Co). She also added a 2 / W&Co variation. The W&Co. PITTSBURGH mark was embossed around the edge on the base in a circular pattern (Figure 8). She dated both marks “circa after 1871.”

Hawkins (2009:524, 527) confirmed the association of the mark with Wightman but declined to speculate on dates.



Figure 7 – W&CO jar (North American Glass)

The identification of this mark (especially the connection with Pittsburgh) as used by Wightman is almost assuredly correct. Our adjusted chronology suggests that W&Co could have been used any time between 1873 and 1893.

TW&Co (1873-1883)

Toulouse (1971:502) claimed that this mark was used by Thomas Wightman & Co. from ca. 1880 to 1895. Wilson and Wilson (1969:38) noted that the TW&Co mark appeared as an inverted arch on the bases of some Hostetter’s Stomach Bitters bottles. They stated that the mark belonged to Thomas Wightman & Co., begun in 1874. Fike (1987:36), too, noted that Wightman made Hostetter’s bottles, but he failed to directly address the marks involved. Siri (2005:60) illustrated the mark in an inverted arch with a superscript “o” in “Co” and an “M” in the center of the post-bottom (Figure 9). The style of the “M” requires a bit of discussion. The central lines the make the “M” usually form a



Figure 9 – TW&CO (eBay)

letter “V.” Variations include lines that form a lower-case “v” as well as a capital “V.” An unusual variation, the one found with the “T.W&C” mark, has a “Y” formed by the central letters. This unusual variation was also noted by Bernas (2007:53-56) on Simplex jars.



Figure 10 – TW&CO
(Farhnam & Walthall
2011)



Figure 11 – TW&CO
(Farhnam & Walthall
2011)



Figure 12 – TW&CO
(North American Glass)

Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:128) also noted the mark on bottles used by the Ritmeir (*sic*) Drugstore in Milwaukee, and by the California Wine Bitters Co. They used the Toulouse date range (1880-1895). Ring (1980:401) listed the product as Ritmeier’s California Wine Bitters and noted the mark on the base. The product was advertised from 1878 to at least 1901. Ring (1980:151) also listed the mark on Covert’s Modoc Stomach Bitters but included no dates or other information.

Von Mechow (2020) listed 29 blob-top soda bottles embossed on the reverse heels with “TW&Co” – dating the marks 1873-1883. The bottlers involved were widely dispersed throughout the Midwest, with outliers in Colorado and Louisiana. Other researchers (Clint 1976:143; Farnsworth & Walthall 2011; Fletcher 1994:276; Oppelt 2005:4, 66; and Paul & Parmalee 1973:79) all discovered examples, falling within the same general date range (Figure 10). Hawkins (2009:527) confirmed the use of the mark by Wightman. Farnsworth & Walthall (2011) also illustrated the logo on the base of an embossed vial (Figure 11). Creswick (1987:138) and Roller (1983:240) both found the mark embossed on the base of one style of Mason jar, but neither suggested a date (Figure 12).

Our revised chronology suggests that 1873 to 1893 would be a better date range for the use of the TW&Co mark. The name during that period was Thomas Wightman & Co. or Thomas Wightman & Co, Ltd. We have not seen the “Ltd.” or any other reference to the limited partnership on glass marks.

TWGCo monogram

Peterson (1968:24) noted a TWGCo monogram used by Thomas Wightman as early as 1894 (Figure 13). He claimed the mark was “stenciled” on the glass. The mark was probably used only on tableware and, possibly, in advertising.

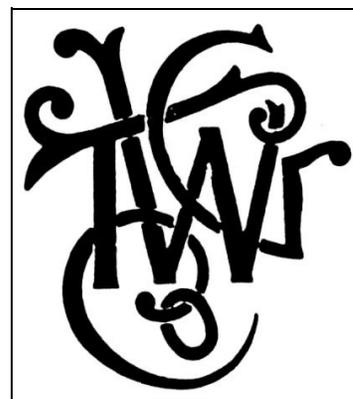


Figure 13 – TW&Co monogram
(Peterson 1968:24)

WGCo

As discussed below, we have discovered the “W.G.CO.” logo on beer bottles, prescription bottles, machine-made straight-sided Coca-Cola bottles, fruit jars, and possibly milk bottles. In all cases, the “O” in “CO” was capitalized, and the mark had full punctuation.

Beer Bottles

Von Mechow (2020) listed six beer bottles, each embossed on the base with “W.G.CO.” The bottles were used by bottlers in Pennsylvania, New York, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Kansas, so a Pittsburgh manufacturer would certainly fit the territory. We found an additional bottle from

Iowa on eBay. Von Mechow attributed the bottles to the Wormser Glass Co. (see that section for more information. Some of these bottles appeared (in photos) to have applied finishes; others certainly had tooled finishes. Five were champagne beer bottles, one was a pony, and the final one was an export beer. The logo was either horizontal across the center of the base or in a slight arch near the top (Figure 14).



Figure 14 – WGCO (eBay)

As we have discussed elsewhere (also see Lockhart 2007:56), tooled finishes were not used on export beer bottles until ca. 1890 and generally not on slick-sided beer bottles until ca. 1900. Thus, these bottles were probably made during the ca. 1890-ca. 1915 period. The Thomas Wightman Glass Co. catalog also illustrated champagne beer bottles on unnumbered pages. Any descriptive account of the beer bottles was not included in the catalog or was lost from the only extant copy. The catalog did not include an export beer bottle.

Other W.G.CO. Bottles and Jars

Hawkins (2009:525) noted that the “WGCo” mark was also embossed on the bases of druggists bottles and illustrated the base of one of them. He noted that the mark “is attributed to the Thomas Wightman Glass Co.” and also noted the mark on milk bottles. Bill Porter has noted the “WGCo” logo on the bases of several straight-sided Coca-Cola bottles and has dated those from 1912 to 1917 (Figure 15). Although Porter suggested the Wormser Glass Co., the date range could fit either glass house. Roller (1983:379; 2011:549) listed a grooved-ring wax sealer with “W.G.Co.” embossed on the base. This, too, was undated and no maker listed. Creswick (1987:220) also noted the jar but did not illustrate it or add any further information.



Figure 15 – WGCO (eBay)



Figure 16 – WCo Mason (eBay)

There is some question about this mark on milk bottles. Giarde (1980:39) illustrated “WCo” on milk bottles as being used by the Wightman Glass Co. (1900-1917) and the Wightman Bottle & Glass Co. (1917-1930). However, his discussion was only about his limited knowledge about the glass firms – nothing about the bottles. We have not discovered an example, and it is unclear whether Giarde had actually

seen one. Toulouse (1971:538) noted that both WG and WCo were “found on separate bottles, which may or may not have any relationship with each other. These are unknown as to meaning.” Hi did not mention the type (or types) of bottles. For a discourse about the manufacturer, see the Discussion and Conclusions section below.

WCo Monogram

Roller (1983:218) showed a WCo monogram found a Mason jar with a “shoulder seal, zinc screw cap.” The front was only embossed “MASON (slight arch) / WCo monogram” (Figure 16). He did not know the manufacturer and did not include a date range. Creswick (1987:116) also illustrated the jar, dating it ca. “1900 & later” but not guessing at the producer (Figure 17).

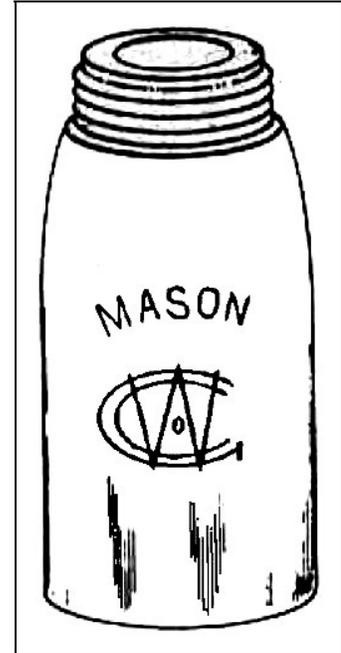


Figure 17 – WCo Mason (Creswick 1987:116)

Discussion and Conclusions

It is relatively certain that *none* of the Wightman glass houses regularly or consistently used any kind of a logo to mark any of the containers they sold. It is equally certain that the earliest firm embossed marks on *some* of its bottles and jars. The cursive “W” mark on fruit jars was undoubtedly used by Wightman – as indicated by the peened out “L&” on some examples. The mark was certainly used during the 1873-1883 period, probably during the early part of that span. The use of the W&Co mark by Wightman is also almost certain, based on the inclusion of “PITTSBURGH” on some jars. This mark was probably used after the “W” mark, during the

1873-1893 period. The final style of mark used by Thomas Wightman & Co. was TW&Co, and this was probably the most recent of the three, assuming that the marks became more complex over time. However, it is possible that the “TW&Co” was just used on different containers than the other marks – notably soda bottles – and was present during the entire 1873-1883 period. The TWG&Co monogram has never been reported on any actual bottles that we can find.

The “W.G.CO.” mark is a bit more ambiguous. Three companies made all or most of the styles of bottles bearing the “W.G.CO.” mark: Williamstown Glass Co., Williamstown, New Jersey (ca. 1881- 1917); Wightman Glass Co., Pittsburgh (1907-1915); and Wormser Glass Co., Pittsburgh (1885-1925). Williamstown was not noted as using any marks, either before or after the probable period when the “W.G.CO.” mark was used (ca. mid-1890s-1920s), and Wightman and Wormser used marks very sparingly. None of these three consistently used manufacturer’s marks. Although the Thomas Wightman Glass Co. was in business much earlier (1873-1907), it was not likely to have used the “W.G.CO.” without a “T” at the beginning. Wormser is more logical choice. Also see the Wormser section.

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