

Carr-Lowrey Glass Co.

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The Carr-Lowrey Glass Co. opened in 1889 and remained in business for more than a century – closing in 2003. During that time, the factory specialized in prescription and medicinal bottles, although it also made a variety of other container types. Although the firm began using machines ca. 1913, it continued producing mouth-blown specialty bottles.

History

Carr-Lowrey Glass Co., Baltimore, Maryland (1889-2003)

Founded by Samuel J. Carr and William W. Lowrey, the Carr-Lowrey Glass Co. opened at Baltimore, Maryland, in 1889.¹ The plant was located on the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River at the community of Westport. Sam J. Carr was the secretary and treasurer. On November 24, 1898, *China, Glass & Lamps* reported that the Carr-Lowrey plant had recently been destroyed by fire. The firm had “engaged all their employees” to clean up the debris and begin rebuilding.” The plant planned to begin production on January 15 (Roller 1998; Toulouse 1971:134).

In 1897, Carr-Lowrey made bottles in “two furnaces, 22-pot capacity” but had reduced the number of pots to 20 by the following year (*National Glass Budget* 1897a:7; 1897:4; 1898:7). C.G. Hilgenberg was the president and secretary in 1904, with S.J. Carr as treasurer, and N. Branin as manager. The plant made druggists and proprietary ware at two furnaces with 16 pots (*American Glass Review* 1934:155).

Although generally known for prescription and similar bottles, in 1907, Carr-Lowrey also made prescription, beer, soda, wine, brandy, preservers’, and packers’ bottles. In 1909, the plant made “druggists’ shelf” and perfumery bottles, and that continued until at least 1920 (Thomas Publishing Co. 1907:158; 1909:200; 1920:826).

¹ A company letterhead confirms the 1889 founding.

As with all 19th century glass houses, Carr-Lowrey originally made all containers by hand. By 1913, the plant used a combination of mouth-blown and semiautomatic processes. Along with a general line of glassware, the firm produced stoppers and “paste-mold ware” on one continuous tank along with three furnaces and 33 pots (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:952). The number of pots indicates that mouth-blown production was still a major part of the operation. In October 1918, Carr-Lowrey was in the process of installing a new 25-ton tank for a “Hartford-Fairmont feeder” (*Glassworker* 1918:1, 12).

In 1927, the factory produced “prescriptions, proprietary ware, perfumes, toilets, cream jars, talcums, carbonated beverages, colored glassware” by both machine and hand production. The plant used three furnaces with 41 pots; one day tank with four rings; and three continuous tanks with 12 rings. Carl G. Hilgenberg was still the president, and Samuel J. Carr was now vice president and remained as treasurer. George F. Lang was another vice president, A.F. Krammer was yet another vice president, and Walter R. Leach as secretary, general manager, and sales manager (*American Glass Review* 1927:129).

The products remained the same in 1928, but the three furnaces only used 33 pots, and the factory ran four continuous tanks with nine rings and seven Hartford-Empire feeders. The only change in management was that Leach dropped the sales manager title. In 1929, the plant reported 17 rings, Krammer was listed as manager of the New York office as well as vice president, and Arthur Koppleman was listed as Chairman. Hand production had been reduced to two furnaces in 1930, and the production list had changed to “proprietary and pharmaceutical ware, perfumes, toilets and cream jars, cork and ground glass stoppered, cut glass and art design bottles” (*American Glass Review* 1928:129; 1929:95; 1930:86-87).

Carl R. Hilgenberg (possibly the son of the president, Carl G.) became the treasurer in 1932, although other officers remained the same. The following year, two titles shifted a bit, with Carl G. Hilgenberg now the executive chairman and George F. Lang as president. The 1933 list added “opal ware, beverage bottles and packers’ ware.” The following year, beverage and packer’s items were dropped, but the plant added talcum powder and cream jars. By 1938, “the older pot furnaces had disappeared, except for one that was kept until 1960.” Hand blowing continued for “short runs, peculiar demands, and sampling” – i.e. bottles ordered in quantities too small to be made economically by machine (Toulouse 1971:136).

The list from 1933 remained essentially the same until 1942, when the company still used machine and hand production at two furnaces and four continuous tanks. Another change in 1942 was the replacement of Walter R. Leach as general manager by N.R. Beck. C.R. Hilgenberg moved to vice president and secretary. By 1943, the plant produced “machine-made flint glass containers and opal jars for drugs, cosmetics, foods and household and office products. Hand Made perfume and toilet water bottles, C.T. finish, cork finish and glass stoppered.” Albert C. Burgund became a vice president (*American Glass Review* 1933:62; 1942:98 1943:98-99).

The Anchor Hocking Glass Corp. acquired the company in 1944 but continued to use the Carr-Lowry name and retained the same officers. The firm acquired the Swindell Brothers in 1959. Carr-Lowry officially became a subsidiary of Anchor Hocking on January 1, 1963 (Toulouse 1971:134-137). The firm was known as one of the early users of the Individual Section machines (although we have not discovered a date for the adoption). In both 1982 and 1985, the plant was a division of the Anchor Hocking Corp. and used “IS blow & blow; IS-62 press & blow; straight press” machines. The company made “aerosol, cosmetic, food, drug & pharmaceutical, liquor and private mold containers. Container colors in amber, blue, green & opal” (*Glass Industry* 1982:11-12; Perrine 1985:14).

The Anchor Hocking Glass Museum (2014) declared that Carr-Lowry Glass was sold on October 12, 1989, although it failed to give any details. The plant was still listed at Baltimore in 2000, using four continuous tanks to make “flint and frit fed containers, bottles and jars for cosmetics, perfumes, full decorating service” (*National Glass Budget* 2000:43). The company declared bankruptcy and closed its doors in 2003. The firm had been in business for 114 years (Terry 2003).

Patents

According to Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:98), William W. Lowrey patented the Symmetrical Oval in 1887. Lowrey applied for his patent on November 9, 1887, and received Design Patent No. 17,945 on December 13 of that year. Unfortunately, the patent drawing has been lost, but a bottle embossed with the patent date shows the design (Figure 1). On May 9, 1889, Lowrey applied for another patent for a “Design for a bottle.” He received Design Patent

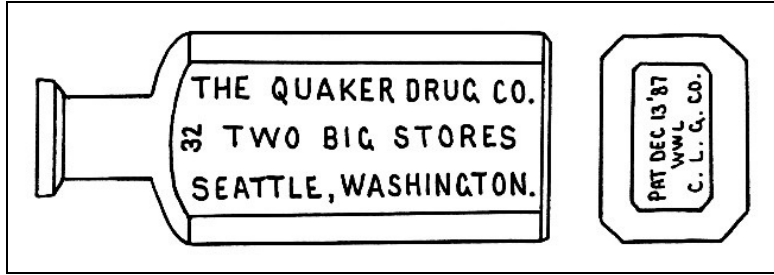


Figure 1 – Lowrey’s 1887 bottle (Bethman 1999:655)



Figure 3 – Gavin’s poison bottle (eBay)

No. 19,182 on June 25 of the same year (Figure 2). Lowrey designed at least seven other bottles and three glass stoppers during the 1890s and 1900 – mostly perfume bottles. We have not discovered evidence for the use of a maker’s mark on perfume containers.

An interesting poison bottle, frequently offered at eBay auctions was hexagonal and embossed “{number} / C.L.G.CO. / PATENT APPLIED FOR” (Figures 3 & 4).

Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:95) noted that the bottle was invented by John J. Gavin of Baltimore. Gavin applied for a

patent for a “Design for a Bottle” on May 8, 1914. He received Design Patent No. 46,166 on July 28 of that year (Figure 5). Oddly, we have not seen the patent date on one of these bottles. The examples on eBay have all had “PATENT APPLIED FOR” on the base.



Figure 4 – Poison bottle base (eBay)

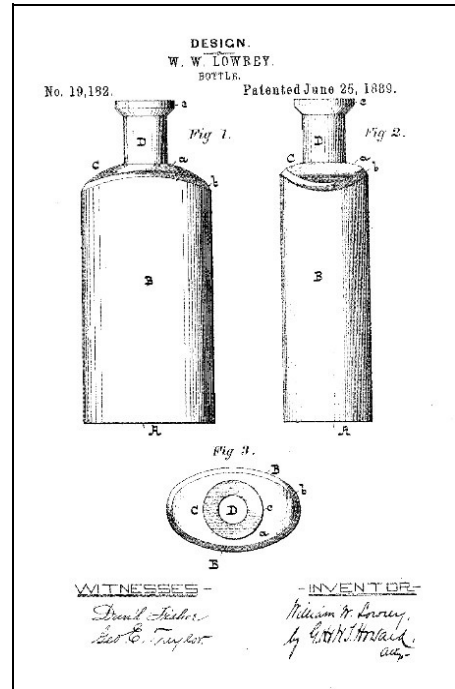


Figure 2 – Lowrey’s 1889 patent

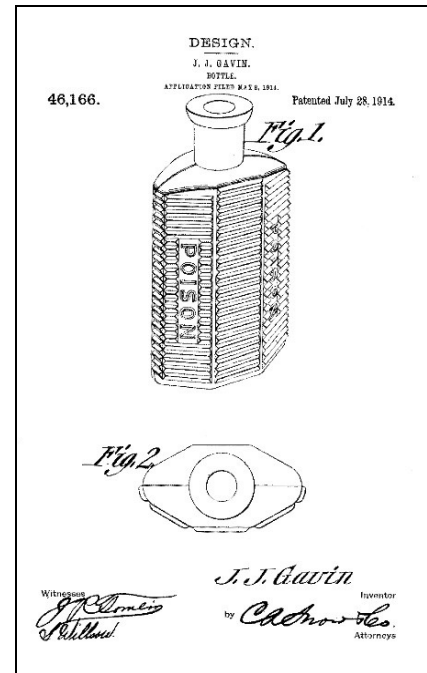


Figure 5 – Gavin’s 1914 patent

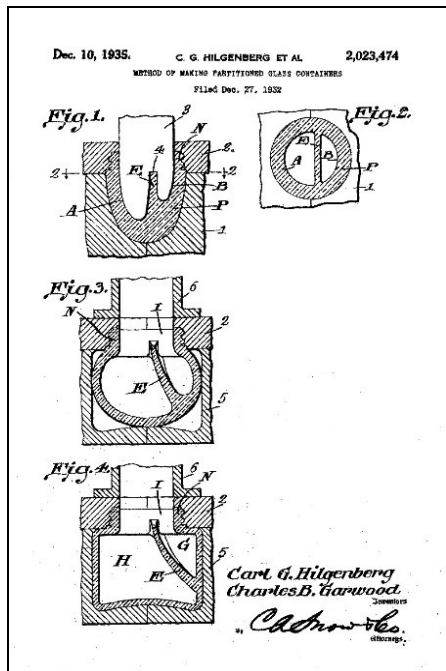


Figure 6 – Hilgenberg’s 1935 patent

During the 1930s, Carl G. Hilgenberg and Waler R. Leach designed dozens of bottles and some machinery for Carr-Lowrey. Hilgenberg was the president during at least the 1904-1932 period, then executive chairman until at least 1944. An example of his skill was a manufacturing method for a partitioned ink bottle.

Hilgenberg applied for the patent on December 27, 1932, and received Patent No. 2,023,474 on December 10,

1935 (Figure 6). The actual ink bottle was designed by George W. Aiken and patented on December 12, 1933 – Design Patent No. 91,183 (Figure 7). Aiken was also an employee of the firm. Leach was the secretary of the corporation and general manager from at least 1927 to 1942. An example, Design Patent No. 94,498, he received on February 5, 1935 (Figure 8).

Containers and Marks

Carr-Lowrey was a major producer of embossed drug store bottles, “perhaps the most attractive being the emerald green bottles.” The plant also produced colorless bottles and attractive shades of blue (Bethman 1991:74). Although the firm continued to make mouth-blown bottles until 1960, the main type after ca. 1924 was perfume bottles. The industry moved away from mouth-blown prescription bottles in the early to mid-1920s and adopted generic, machine-made bottles instead.

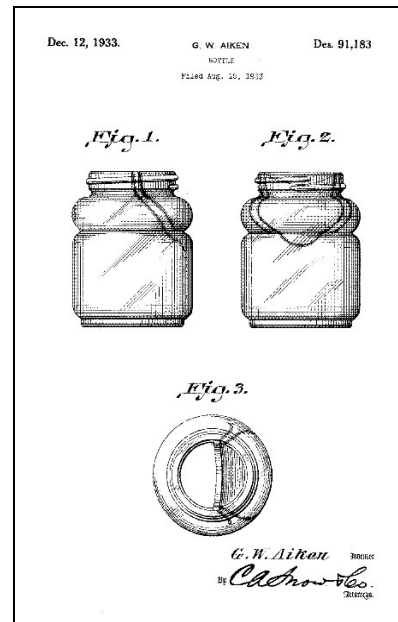


Figure 7 – Aiken’s 1933 patent

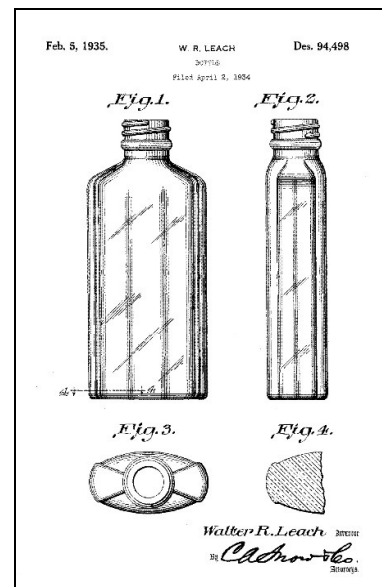


Figure 8 – Leach’s 1935 patent

The firm was one of the makers of the Avon collectible line of cologne bottles. These came in a large variety of shapes and styles, often molded to look like automobiles, human figures, and common objects, such as shoes. According to *Western World* (1987:342), Avon launched its decanter series for men's cologne in the late 1960s. Its initial introduction was a bottle shaped like a classic car in 1968. The series then ran through a remarkable variety of bottles.

C.L.G.CO. (ca. 1889-ca. early 1920s)



Figure 9 – C.L.G.CO. / A

Bethman (1991) identified the C.L.G.CO. mark as belonging to the Carr-Lowrey Glass Co., and illustrated 20 examples of bottles with C.L.G.CO.



Figure 10 – C.L.G.CO. prescription bottle

embossed on the bases. The marks appeared in five configurations, the most common of which (11 examples) consisted of C.L.G.CO. above a single letter or number. Letters shown were A, C, and D; numbers were 1, 2, and 4. The letter B also showed up at an eBay auction, and numbers exist at least as high as 16 – although most were single-digit (Figures 9 & 10). These were not catalog or model numbers. Four examples with the letter “A” were all different styles of bottles. Dates ranged from 1905 to 1920.



Figure 11 – C.L.G.CO.

The second most common bases (five examples) were simply embossed C.L.G.CO., often on bases of round bottles (Figure 11). These were dated between 1908 and 1920. Another example had the patent numbers embossed above the logo: PAT'D 6/25/89 / C.L.G.CO (Figure 12). The fourth configuration was identical with the third except for a single-digit

number above both the patent date and the logo (Figure 13). The final configuration was embossed PAT DEC 13 '87 / WWL / C.L.G.CO (see Figure 1). WWL are the initials of William W. Lowrey. Both of the final two examples were dated ca. 1910 by Bethman.

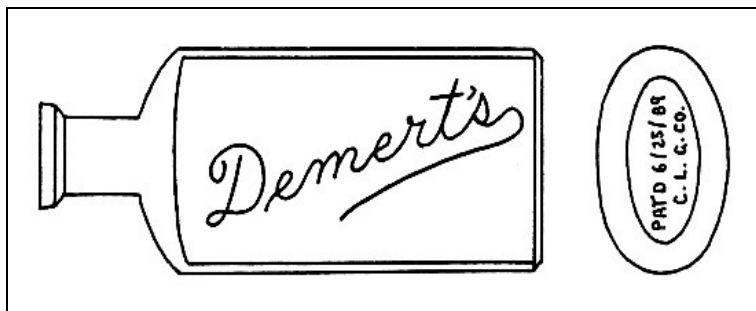


Figure 12 – C.L.G.CO. below patent data (Bethman 1999-772)

We have also seen a single glass-stoppered bottle with the base embossed “C.L.G.CO.” in an inverted arch (Figure 14).

A single bottle marked with C.L.G.Co. was shown by Burggraaf and Southard (1998:377). Although the bottle was from Iowa City, Iowa, they were unable to find a date



Figure 13 – Number above the patent and C.L.G.CO. (eBay)

range. Because their book was about bottles between 1846 and 1915, that is currently as close as we can get. Three poison bottles were shown by Colcleaser (1966:27). One was cobalt blue; two were green. All were elongated hexagons in cross section with ribbed surfaces. Each was marked “{letter or number} / C.L.G.CO. / PATENT APPLIED FOR” – although Colcleaser recorded them as C.L.C.CO. Preble

(2002:466) illustrated a single example of the mark on a drug store bottle used between 1889 and 1890.

Although sometimes faint, punctuation is present on all marks we have personally observed. Toulouse (1971:134), however, noted the mark without punctuation and dated it “before 1900 to 1920.” Toulouse (1971:137) also explained that “there are several prescription bottles and one chemical bottle in which the “G” looks more like a “C” (see Figure 9). Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:123) dated the mark 1889-1920. Bottles we have observed with the logo have been mouth blown, and photos of the marks show no evidence of



Figure 14 – C.L.G.CO. in inverted arch (eBay)

machine manufacture. Although the sample is still fairly small, we can hypothesize that C.L.G.CO was only used on mouth-blown bottles. In every case we have observed, the “O” in “CO” was capitalized. It is possible (although unlikely) that the mark was still used on occasional hand-made bottles until the last pot shut down in 1960.

CL monogram (ca. 1920-present)

Jones (1965:[22]) showed a CL monogram in which the “L” was slightly lower than the “C” but extended up into it. She noted that it was an “Anchor Hocking Sub.” but did not offer any dates. Toulouse (1971:135) also showed the same mark and dated it 1920 to 1963. Berge (1980:83) showed a 1964 chart that included the mark, but the information may have been a few years out of date. Berge and all subsequent illustrators of the mark show it with the



Figure 15 – CL monogram

“L” extending entirely through the “C” to form a logo that looks almost like a “cents” sign (¢) with an extension at the base to make the “L.” It is likely that the Berge style was used during the entire period, rather than a change in design. The only example we have personally observed was in the style illustrated by Berge (Figure 15).

The 1920 date is somewhat counterintuitive. Usually (although certainly not always), a company changed its mark in commemoration of some event of notable change in the company or factory. In this case the new logo probably indicates the move to machine-made prescription bottles. We have not seen a logo on any other bottle types. The mark was used consistently from at least 1941 to the closing of the plant in 2003 (Scholes 1941:129; Powell 1990; Emhart 1982; 1996; 2000:26; 2005).

CL monogram (1963-present?)

Toulouse (1971:134) showed a second monogram in which a smaller “L” is nestled inside the curve of the “C.” This he dated “since 1963.” This date almost certainly marked the change of Carr-Lowrey to an official subsidiary of Anchor Hocking. If this change is indeed

correct, it challenges the older CL monogram as continuing in use after 1963. However, no other source showed this mark, and it is likely a Toulouse misunderstanding. In the days prior to computers and e-mail, the handwritten information Toulouse received from collectors was occasionally misleading.

Discussion and Conclusions

The dating above requires no further discussion. In general, the history of the firm and dating of the logos is well grounded by documents and known industry changes. However, future research should center around finding documentary evidence to date the adoption of semiautomatic bottle machines (currently recorded as ca. 1913) at the plant.

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