

Coshocton Glass Co.

Bill Lockhart, Pete Schulz, Tod von Mechow, Beau Schriever, Carol Serr, and Bill Lincsey
with contributions by and David Whitten

Although the Coshocton Glass Co. only survived for a bit less than two decades, the plant became an important producer of soda and beer bottles, especially in the Midwest, East Coast, and the South. The plant opened in 1902, using hand methods, but adopted British Ashley machines by 1909. In 1917, the factory operated a variety of machines, apparently eliminating hand production. The firm closed its doors in 1924 at least in part due to Prohibition.

History

Coshocton Glass Co., Coshocton, Ohio (1902-1921)

According to von Mechow (2014), the Coshocton Board of Trade organized in 1899 to attract new industries to the town. As part of that campaign, the Board enticed the Saltzburg Glass Co. to build a new facility in the community. The deal was sealed by the end of 1901, and Saltzburg began construction. However, the firm withdrew prior to completion, and the Monongahela Valley Bank sued Saltzburg on January 29, eventually winning back the title to the land. The newspapers gave no details, but the withdrawal was obviously not a popular decision (*Coshocton Daily Age* 12/31/1901; van Mechow 2014).

The Coshocton Glass Co. organized with E.G. Van Horn and E.K. Sober as the primary stockholders. The *Coshocton Daily Age* described Sober as a man of “sturdy character and splendid business qualifications” on April 23, 1902, but gave no indication as to the glass production history of either man. The firm completed the plant in mid-February 1902, lighting its initial fire on April 23. The first glass was blown about May 1, and full production began on May 5. Construction continued during the typical summer lay-off (Roller 1998; von Mechow 2014).¹ The outlook was optimistic. The *Coshocton Democrat and Standard* in 1902 noted that “many orders have been booked, and a prosperous season’s run is anticipated” (Helser 2007).

¹ For specific newspaper articles, see von Mechow (2014).

The plant was described as “a snug little factory . . . built with a view to the economical manufacture of bottles.” Workers made amber bottles at a 75-ton tank with six rings. A total of 18 glass blowers could work at the tank at one time, “12 on the platform and six below.” They blew all bottles into molds and then sent them to the lehr for annealing (*Coshocton Daily Age* 5/5/1902).

As of June 12, 1902, the plant employed 15 blowers, 12 laborers and about 30 boys, making amber beer bottles at a single continuous tank with six rings. Initially, all bottles were mouth blown into molds. In order to expand, the firm reorganized as an Ohio corporation on February 29, 1904, with a capital of \$60,000. The incorporators were E.G. Van Horn, H.R. McCurdy, Lewis Brendel, E.J. Sober, and Thomas J. Gainor. Sober was president, with Gainor – previously the manager for Edward H. Everett at Newark, Ohio – as vice president and general manager, and Van Horn as secretary and treasurer. By that date, the factory used a single continuous tank and was only producing beer bottles, although plans were afoot to increase the size of the first continuous tank and install a second one during the summer (*American Glass Review* 1934:161; von Mechow 2014).

By March 17, Thomas Gainor was president, with Hippolyte Liewer as vice president, Sober as secretary and Van Horn as treasurer. The corporation increased its capital stock to \$100,000 in the summer in order to further expand and made a further increase to \$250,00 on October 2 (von Mechow 2014). The Liewer Brothers (Hippolyt and Charles) from New York – already stockholders in the firm – purchased the assets from E.K. Dober (apparently an early stock holder), Van Horn, and Gainor in January 1906 and took complete control of the company. By June, the plant employed 450 people, although Gainer returned to Everett in September (von Mechow 2014).

Coshocton was not included in the 1905 Thomas Register, but the 1907 issue (Thomas Publishing Co. 1907:159) listed the factory as making beer, wine, soda, and brandy bottles as did the 1909 Register (1909:201). By December 1907, the factory had two continuous tanks with 40 rings – one tank for green glass, the other for amber. The plant added prescription bottles by 1908 as a hedge against the threat of local prohibition (*Commoner and Glassworker* 1908:1; von Mechow).

An undated article from the *Newark Advocate* (Helser 2007) described a change in the plant. At that undisclosed time, the factory had two tanks, one working amber glass, the other working flint. Each operated ten shops. The plant was in the process of rebuilding the flint tank to accommodate an additional six shops and 24 more blowers to increase the work force by 75-100 workers, including all the boys and men that would support the blowers. The flint tank was producing medicine and whiskey bottles at the time. The change must have occurred about 1908, when the plant added medicine bottles (von Mechow 2014).

When the factory closed for the typical mid-summer shutdown in 1909, reopening was delayed by a labor/management dispute. Because of competition from machines and non-union labor, the plant owners asked the blowers to take a 50% wage cut – with other employees to take a comparable decrease. The workers refused. On October 18, the workers accepted a wage reduction, and the plant reopened. During the September directors' meeting, Hippolyt Liewer was reelected president, with K.L. Almack as vice president, and Charles A. Liewer as secretary and treasurer. A factory at Coshocton, Ohio – almost certainly the Coshocton Glass Co. – operated two Johnny Bull semiautomatic glass machines (made in England) in 1909. The machines made soda bottles (Hayes 1909:1).

Hippolyt Liewer was president and general manager of the corporation by 1910, with Charles Liewer as vice president and treasurer. The plant made prescription, beer, soda, whiskey, and water (soda) bottles in flint, light green, and amber colors (Roller 1998). By 1913, the factory used two continuous tanks with 25 rings to make “beer, water, liquor and packers” bottles and flasks (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:953).

By 1915, the plant made beer, beverage, and packer bottles. The company sold beer bottles to Rupperts, Anheuser Busch, Pabst, and Schlitz. According to Toulouse (1971:102-103), the plant converted to the use of semi-automatic machines in 1915. Other information (see below and in the Containers and Marks section) suggests that one or two years later – probably 1917 – is a more likely date. Machine installation likely coincided with the construction of the new plant.

The gatherers went on strike for higher wages in late August of 1915 and forced the factory to shut down in September. Work resumed, however, in just two weeks. In January

1917, the firm began construction of a new, modern plant in front of the old one to meet the demand for beer and soda bottles, notably for Coca-Cola (von Mechow 2014).

Walbridge (1920:107-108) noted that the Owens Bottle Machine Co. installed five Graham machines (controlled by Owens since the acquisition of Graham in 1916) at Coshocton in 1917, licensed for the manufacture of beer and soda water bottles. Since the American Bottle Co. had already captured the exclusive license for the Owens Automatic Bottle Machine, that option was not available for Coshocton. The *National Glass Budget* announced on August 18, 1917, that the O'Neill Transfer Machine had been developed at the Coshocton Glass Co., and 18 of the new machines were planned to be in operation by September 1 (Roller 1998). This was O'Neill's first successful small-mouth bottle machine. For more on the O'Neill machines, see Lockhart (2013).

Bristow (1918:1) noted that the Coshocton Glass Co. had three plants (i.e., tanks) in 1918. Two were worked with "21 O'Neill machines on two shifts, producing green and amber beers, sodas and minerals. The third tank in "the new plant" used "six Graham automatic machines which are equipped with the flowing device and pint green beers are being turned out."

The plant continued to make beer, wine, soda, brandy, and prescription bottles until 1921, when the combination of equipment failures, loss of key employees, and the disappearing beer bottle market caused by Prohibition forced the closure of the factory (Thomas Publishing Co. 1921:781; von Mechow 2014). A new group bought the plant in 1923, and renamed the firm the Coshocton Glass Corp. (Toulouse 1971:102). Coshocton also made "tableware, jellies, tumblers, goblets and specialties," all by machine at three continuous tanks with "14 ringholes" in 1927 (*American Glass Review* 1927:87). The factory closed in 1928 (Toulouse 1971:103). On August 29, 1930, the Geo. McCrea Co. advertised a sale of the remaining equipment at the Coshocton Glass Co. (still called "Co." in the ad) on September 1 (*Coshocton Tribune* 11/2/1930).

Containers and Marks

CGCo (ca. 1907-ca. 1917)

Toulouse (1971:102) noted that the CGCo mark was used by Coshocton from 1907 to 1915. Giarde (1980:28-29) expressed a doubt that Coshocton made milk bottles, but followed the Toulouse dates for the CGCo mark. Even though evidence (see above) indicates that Coshocton made milk bottles, it probably did so for a very short period of time. Peters (1996:9) claimed a C.G.CO. mark was used by Coshocton Glass Co. from 1907 to 1923 (probably following the incorrect Toulouse closing date) but gave no reason or sources for his assertion.



Figure 1 – Cohansey CGCo logo

Our study of the C.G.CO. logo (see the Cohansey Glass Co. section) concluded that both the Cohansey Glass Co. and the Coshocton Glass Co. made beer and soda bottles embossed with the C.G.CO. mark. Typically, however, most of the bottles with the Cohansey logos were used by breweries and bottlers in or near Philadelphia. The vast majority of bottles marked “C.G.CO.” used in the Southern states and elsewhere were made by the Cohansey Glass Co. The “C.G.CO.” logos fell into four patterns:



Figure 2 – Coshocton heelmark (eBay)

1. C.G.CO. on the heel with no accompanying numbers
2. C.G.CO. on the heel, followed by a two- or three-digit number
3. C.G.CO. on the heel (usually reverse heel) with a three-digit number on the base
4. C.G.CO., followed by a two- or three-digit number (or no number), all on the base

Bottles with heel logos followed by numbers (#2 in the above list) were apparently only made by the Cohansey Glass Co. (Figure 1). The remaining bottles – with CGCO heelmarks and no numbers; heelmarks and base codes; or basemarks of all kinds (with or without numbers) – were made by the Coshocton Glass Co. (Figures 2 & 3). Apparently, only Coshocton manufactured Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola bottles. As noted above, our full study was reported in the Cohansey Glass Co. section.

The timing of the bottles/logos is interesting. All of the bottles that we have observed or that were reported were mouth blown. Individual bottles reported by Ayers (1997) fell into the 1906-1915 period. Although Toulouse (1971:102) claimed a 1907 inception date for the C.G.CO. logo, we can find no basis for this assertion. This may reflect the general time period when factories began using logos on soda bottles; it may have derived from insider information (Toulouse was an employee of the Owens-Illinois Glass Co.); or it may have been one of the Toulouse typographic errors. Although Coshocton may have used the mark from the inception of the factory in 1902 until ca. 1917, we have elected to support the Toulouse beginning date. The later date is supported by the Ayers dates for Southern Pepsi-Cola bottles. Although Coshocton adopted the British Ashley machines in 1909, it was not until 1917 the factory apparently moved to full machine operation. It is possible that Gainer brought the idea of manufacturer's marks to Coshocton from the Everett plants.



Figure 3 – Coshocton basemark (eBay)

The C.G.Co. logo was also used by the California Glass Co. and the Carolina Glass Co. but only on liquor bottles and flasks. Both firms made bottles and flasks for the South Carolina Dispensary system, so these should not be confused with the soda and beer bottles embossed with the C.G.CO. mark by Coshocton and Cohansey. See the sections on both of those firms for more details.

C in a star (ca. 1917-1921)

Toulouse (1971:102) noted that the Coshocton Glass Co. used the Star-C mark from 1915 to 1923 (Figure 4). Toulouse rarely discussed why he paired marks with companies, but he may have had insider information on this one. According to Toulouse, the plant converted to the use of semi-automatic machines in 1915, but our research (see above) shows that the plant had two Ashley machines by 1909, but the main machine installation took place in 1917. It is possible that Toulouse is correct, but the initial 1917 machines were Graham devices from the Owens Bottle Machine Co. Since Owens did not acquire the Graham business until 1916, the machines could not have been used at Coshocton earlier than that. It is



Figure 4 – Star-S logo

possible probable that O'Neill began development of his machines at Coshocton in 1915, but they would probably not have been in full-scale production until 1917. Our only examples of the Star-C mark were found on machine-made bottles.

Toulouse (1971:101) also claimed that the Star-C mark was used “since 1949” by the Star City Glass Co., Star City, West Virginia (1949-1966), and Coventry, Rhode Island (1966-at least 1971). The West Virginia plant was destroyed by fire in November 1963. Although the citizens of Morgantown rallied in support of rebuilding the factory in January 1964, it was still not completed in November, when workers were offered jobs at the plant that was under construction in Rhode Island. The West Virginia plant was apparently rebuilt but suffered another fire in January 17, 1970. The plant was not reconstructed again. The Coventry branch was open at least as late as April 30, 1977, when the workers went on strike. The plant may have closed a few years later (*Cumberland News* 11/4/1962; *Morgantown Dominion Post* 1/23/1924; 11/3/1964; 1/18/1970; *Newport Daily News* 5/2/1977).

Star City made liquor bottles and flasks. According to an Owens-Illinois marks table, Star City was still using the Star-C mark in 1964 (Berge 1980:83), but the mark was no longer listed in 1982 (Emhart 1982:75). Note that there is no dating conflict – Star City opened at least 26 years after Coshocton stopped using the mark – and only used the mark on liquor bottles and flasks. These Star City containers almost certainly had continuous-thread finishes – a technique only applied to small-mouth bottles a few years after Coshocton had closed.

C in a star, surrounded by a circle



Figure 5 – Star-S-Circle heelmark

We have discovered several soda and beer bottles (e.g., Red Raven Splits, Coca-Cola, and Chero Cola), each with the Star-C-Circle mark – a logo not mentioned by any of our sources. The Red

Raven marks were embossed at the heel (Figure 5), while the others were embossed on the base (Figure 6). These logos



Figure 6 – Star-S-Circle basemark (Mike Elling)

were slightly different from those described by Toulouse; each star was superimposed on a circle that bisected each of the five points. The heelmarks were followed by one- or a two-digit numbers, while a number or number/letter combination was embossed somewhere on the base with the base logos. The bottles were all amber in color, had crown finishes, and were machine made.

CO-SHOE

According to Toulouse (1971:102), the corporation used a mark of CO-SHOE from 1923 to 1928. This refers to the Coshocton Glass Corp., in business during those years. The mark was almost certainly applied to tableware. We have been unable to verify the use of this logo.

Discussion and Conclusions

Our study of the “C.G.CO.” logo leaves almost no doubt that the mark was used on soda and beer bottles by the Coshocton Glass Co. between 1907 and 1921 – possibly as early as 1902. However, the mark was used on similar goods by the Cohansey Glass Co., mostly in the Philadelphia area. Although two other glass houses used the logo, it was *not* on soda or beer bottles.

There is no reason to doubt the Toulouse identification of the Star-C mark as being used by Coshocton, although the probable dates were 1917 to 1921, and the mark’s later use by Star City Glass Co. from 1949 to some point after 1971. The Star-C-Circle logo was also likely used by Coshocton, probably during the same period. There may be a temporal distinction between the two marks, but we have not had access to a sufficiently large sample to make any determination. We have not found supporting evidence for the “CO-SHOE” logo noted by Toulouse as being used by the later (1923-1928) Coshocton Glass Corp., but it was purportedly found on tableware and is not relevant to this discussion. Unfortunately, there is no indication that the numbers that accompany any Coshocton logos are date codes.

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