

## Louisville Glass Works

Bill Lockhart, Beua Schriever, Bill Lindsey, and Carol Serr  
with contributions by David Whitten

Rising out of the Kentucky Glass Works, the Louisville Glass Works operated under a total of seven different firms during its 18 years in business. The factory manufactured a variety of containers as well as lamps and other items, most of which were unmarked with any logo. The few identified containers included a fruit jar and several types of flasks.

### History

#### Louisville Glass Works, Louisville, Kentucky (ca. 1855-1873)

The Louisville Glass Works grew out of the Kentucky Glass Works (1850-ca. 1855), located at the corner of Clay and Franklin Streets. Under the style of Douglas, Rutherford & Co., George Douglas, John Stanger, William Doyle, William Douglas, and Thomas Rutherford operated the plant for the first two years. Stanger and Doyle had formerly been blowers in the Kentucky Glass Works, providing some continuity for the new firm. According to an ad in the 1855 city directory, the plant made “Vials, Bottles, Flasks, Jars, etc.” as well as “Green and Black Glassware . . . for Druggists, Grocers, Confectioners and Families.” Douglas apparently left, and the operating firm became Stanger, Doyle & Co. for a short time in 1856 (McKearin & Wilson 1978:170-171; Whitten 2005a:46-48).

Later in 1856, John A. Krack joined with John Stanger to form Krack, Stanger & Co., operating the factory for a decade (Figure 1). On February 1, 1866, Stanger left the firm, now Krack & Reed (with Leander S. Reed), although the addition of Reed’s brother, William, created Krack, Reed & Co. in 1869 – now producing bottles



Figure 1 – Louisville Glass Works (McKearin & Wilson 1978:171)

as well as coal-oil lamps, trimmings (peripheral fittings for the glass lamps), and tumblers. Krack left the firm in 1871, and the name became L.S. Reed & Brother. During the 1860s, the factory made telegraph insulators, although containers remained the primary product line. The plant closed permanently in 1873 (McKearin & Wilson 1978:170; Whitten 2005a:46-48).

Although McKearin & Wilson (1978:170) noted the factory as continuing at another location after 1873, they were mistaken. Whitten (1985b:70) described the Louisville Plate Glass Works as a separate and unrelated company. Open from ca. 1874 to ca. 1888, the plant concentrated on flat glass and made no containers.

## Containers and Marks

### LOUISVILLE KY GLASS WORKS

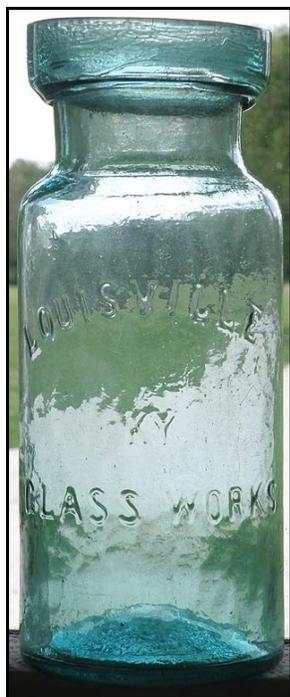


Figure 2 – Louisville jar  
(North American Glass)

Roller (1983:195; 2011:298) listed a jar embossed “LOUISVILLE / KY / GLASS WORKS” on the front that was probably sealed with a waxed cork. He noted that an 1858 ad from Krack, Stanger & Co. included the “KY” abbreviation, attributing the jar to that firm in the 1850s (Figure 2). Creswick (1987:107) also listed and illustrated the jar. Whitten contested Roller’s assertion that the addition that “KY” indicated Krack, Stanger & Co. In his research, conducted in the city of Louisville, Whitten never found any evidence that the name of the factory was ever anything but the Louisville Glass Works. He surmised that the “KY” was included to confirm the state of manufacture, and the jar could have been made at any point during the years the plant was in business.

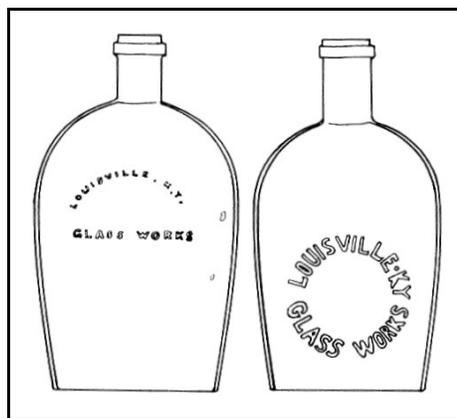


Figure 3 – Louisville Flasks (McKearin and Wilson (1978:675)

McKearin and Wilson (1978:172, 564-565, 674-675) described and illustrated three flasks, embossed “LOUISVILLE KY / GLASS WORKS” in two configurations. One had the first line in an arch with the second line horizontal (the so-called



Figure 5 – Louisville Flask (North American Glass; McKearin and Wilson (1978:565)



Figure 7 – Louisville Flask (Glass Discoveries)

tombstone or horseshoe shape); the other had the first line arched and the second

one in an inverted arch (to form a circle). The final flask was covered with vertical ribs except for a small labeling area on each side (Figures 3-5).



Figure 4 – Louisville Flask (Glassworks Auction)

McKearin and Wilson (1978:172,

580-581) also described and illustrated two other American Eagle flasks made by the

Louisville company.

Each of these was

embossed “LOUISVILLE (arch) / KY (horizontal) in an outlined oval below an eagle on the front and with another eagle on the reverse above a similarly outlined “GLASS / WORKS” (Figure 6).

McKearin & Wilson dated all of the flasks to the entire tenure of the firm – 1855-1873. Both Glassworks Auctions and American Glass Auctions have also featured scroll flasks

embossed “LOUISVILLE KY” on one side and “GLASS WORKS” on the other (Figure 7).

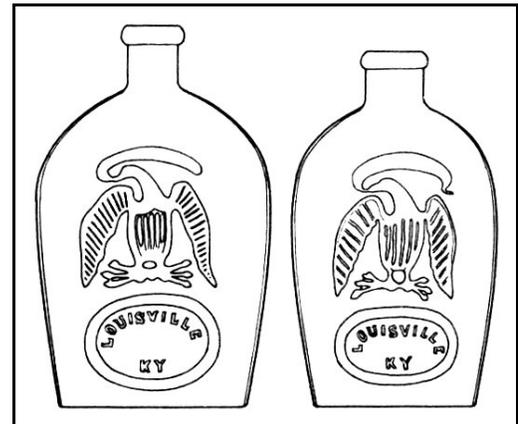


Figure 6 – Louisville Flasks (McKearin and Wilson (1978:581)

## LOU KY G.W.

Roller (1983:195) listed a grooved-ring wax sealer with “LOU KY G.W.” embossed on the base. The jar was not listed by Creswick (1987) or Toulouse (1969). Whitten (personal communication, 3/30/2008) believed this was a case of misidentification. Like Creswick, Whitten had never seen one of these jars and believed that the base was actually embossed “S.G.W. LOU. KY.” (Figure 8). See the section on the Southern Glass Works for more information about this mark and the factory. The markings were probably indistinct or obliterated by lines embossed on the base, and Roller began at the wrong place. The Roller editors (2011:298), however, continued to list the jar as “LOU KY G.W. interspersed through four crossed lines, made in the 1860s. Jerry McCann added that the jar was made in blue and olive green in addition to the aqua reported in 1983. This strongly suggests that McCann had seen examples. Oddly, the jar did *not* appear in McCann (2017:232).



Figure 8 – S.G.W. LOU. KY. (David Whitten)

## Whitten on Toulouse

As we have noted several times in this Encyclopedia, Julian Harrison Toulouse often made outright guesses when he did not know the identities of logo users. In this light, Whitten (2005a:48) discussed the marks that Toulouse (1971) attributed to the Louisville Glass Works:

Although Toulouse (1971:323) states that the Louisville Glass Works used the marks “L.G.CO.” and “L.G.W.”, I believe this is incorrect. Nineteenth century-era bottles marked with an “L.G.CO.” on the base are somewhat later products and most, if not all, of those bottles were produced by either the Lindell Glass Company . . . or Lyndeboro Glass Company . . . . Contrary to Toulouse’s assertion, the Louisville Glass Works never used the term “Company” in their name as far as I have been able to determine. . . . Toulouse also lists another mark “LKYGW”, which I believe to be a fantasy mark.

Our continued research supports both Whitten hypotheses for the LGCo marks, and we have also failed to locate the “LKYGW” mark. Because “KYGW” was a common mark used by the Kentucky Glass Works (see that section), one of the collectors reporting to Toulouse probably misread a mark or miscopied the initials. See the Lindell and Lyndeborough sections for more information on the “L.G.Co” and “L.G.CO” logos.

In addition, Toulouse (1971:323) claimed that the LGCo monogram that looks like a face with a round nose was used on fruit jars by the Louisville Glass Works from ca. 1875 to ca. 1885. For a discussion of the jar, see the Other L section.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

We endorse the Whitten conclusions concerning the Toulouse identifications. The only marks that can be supported as belonging to the Louisville Glass Works are the ones embossed with the entire name of the factory – but even these are not indisputable. The inclusion of “KY” *could* mean any glass house in Louisville. Fortunately, the use of “KY” in the Krack, Stanger & Co. 1858 ad points strongly to the Louisville Glass Works.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Sources**

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