

Mid-West Glass Companies

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At least three glass houses used the term “Mid-West” in their names, although they were unrelated in locations or time periods. Two of these, the Mid-West Casket Co., located in Kansas, and the Mid-West Glass Co. of Winnipeg, Canada, used the term “Mid-West” (or “MID-WEST”) on at least some of their containers.

Histories

Midwest Glass Casket Co., Okmulgee, Oklahoma (1917- at least 1918)

The January 16, 1916, issue of the *National Glass Budget* (p. 15) heralded the beginnings of the firm:

The Midwest Glass Casket CO with headquarters at Wichita, Kans., has been organized for the purpose of manufacturing glass caskets. Names mentioned in connection with the enterprise are I.P. Miller and H.A. Eldridge, and it is stated that they are figuring on building a factory in the vicinity of Wichita. We have heard talk of this kind before.

The headquarters may have been in Wichita, but the firm built its plant at Okmulgee. Bristow (1918:16) described the Mid-West Casket Co., Okmulgee, Oklahoma, as “one of the finest machine bottle factories in the country.” The plant opened in August 1917 and made “a nice line of milk bottles.” Although Bristow failed to note the number or types of machines used, the plant was planning another “one-man machine” (i.e., semiautomatic) in the near future.

Midwest Glass Casket Co., Muskogee, Oklahoma (1917- at least 1918)

Apparently, Mid-West also operated at nearby Muskogee. In 1918, the plant ran “four semi-automatics on milk containers.” The factory was “modern in every respect,” and the company owned “its own sand pit and sells sand to other glass factories in this section”

(*Glassworker* 1918:16). According to a 1918 ad, the “plant was built for the manufacture of Mid-West Milk Bottles exclusively” (*Milk Dealer* 1918 – Figure 1). Both Toulouse (1971) and Giarde (1980) missed this company, and it was never listed in the Thomas Registers. We have found no information on the firm’s demise, but it must have been sudden. There were no references to it after 1918.

Containers and Marks

MID-WEST (1917-1918)

We have observed a milk bottle from the La Paloma Lecheria (Creamery) embossed with MID-WEST in an arch around the edge of the base (Figure 2). The machine-made bottle was cylindrical but divided into 24 panels and had solarized to an amethyst color. The front heel was embossed with the letter “M.” Giarde (1980) did not list Midwest in his description of manufacturer’s marks. It is important to note that the milk bottle mark does not fit the same pattern as the mark noted by Toulouse on fruit jars.

Mid-West Glass Co., Winnipeg, Canada (1929-ca. 1935)

The Canadian government granted the Mid-West Glass Co., Ltd. of Winnepeg a charter on July 19, 1929. The new plant had two furnaces, one to produce flint (colorless) glass, the other to alternate between green and amber colors. Projected to manufacture 18,000,000 containers per year, the plant made “milks, sodas, beverages, and medicines, fruit and honey jars; also packer’s ware, including jelly glasses and tumblers.” Although a reference to a bad debt was dated October 6, 1936, King stated the “there is no extant proof that the company operated successfully after 1930” (King 1987:155-156).

The
Mid-West Glass Casket Company
Manufacturers of
Mid-West Milk Bottles

Quality *Accuracy* *Service*

MADE of strong, clear, flint glass and tempered in specially constructed lehrs the **MID-WEST BOTTLES** are the strongest and most durable on the market.

Capacity guaranteed accurate. Will conform to the regulations of any state or city.

Located outside the congested freight district and with excellent shipping facilities we are in position to give prompt service with assurance of quick delivery.

The Mid-West Glass Casket Company
Muskogee Oklahoma

Figure 1 – Midwest ad (*Milk Dealer* 1918)

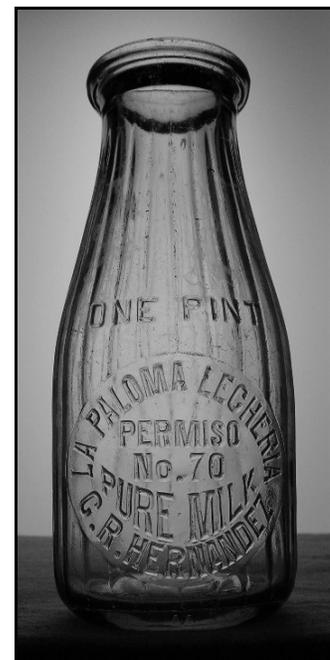


Figure 2 – La Paloma bottle

In 1929, Mid-West was first listed in the *American Glass Review* as making “bottles and containers” by machine at one continuous tank. By 1930, the listing was more precise: “flint, green and amber beverage bottles, prescription and proprietary ware, fruit jars, packers’ ware, milk jars” at two continuous tanks, all by machine. The plant expanded to three continuous tanks and eight rings in 1933 and used both machine and hand production. The company added a ninth ring the following year. The plant was idle in 1936 (*American Glass Review* 1929:101; 1931:86; 1933:68; 1934:96; 1936:95). It seems likely that the addition of a tank in 1933 indicates that the plant remained in production at least that late, probably to 1935 – although King may have been correct about reduced production after that date.

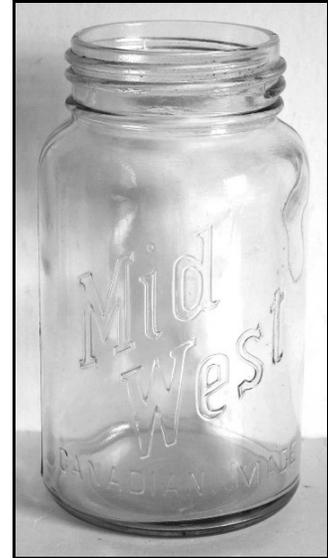


Figure 3 – MID / WEST (eBay)

Containers & Marks

Mid / West (1929-ca. 1935)

According to Toulouse (1969:217), Mid / West (upwardly slanted) / CANADIAN MADE was embossed on the sides of fruit jars. He called the company “Midwest Glass Co., Winnipeg, Man.” and dated the mark at “1929-37,” the same as the years of operation for the company. By his second book (Toulouse 1971:363-364), he listed the containers made by Midwest as “bottles and jars, sodas, prescriptions, and packers.” Photos on eBay show “MID / WEST” in capitals (Figure 3).

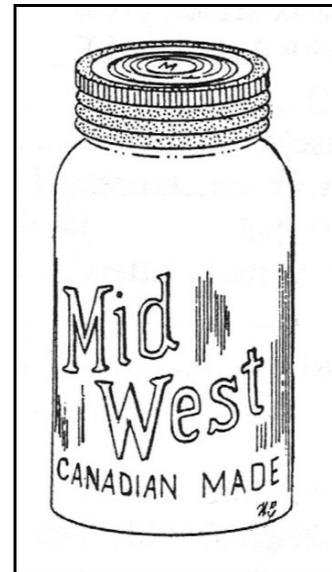


Figure 4 – MID / WEST (Creswick 1987)

Roller (1983:251) noted that the jars had two variations of lids: 1) “M in the center of concentric circles”; and 2) a Maple leaf embossed on the top. He, too, assigned the Mid-West Glass Co. as the maker, ca. 1929-1931. Creswick (1987) illustrated the jar and agreed with Roller’s dates and manufacturer (Figure 4). We have found no reports of any other manufacturer’s marks connected with Midwest Glass, so the factory probably never marked the vast majority of its products.

Mid-West Glass Bottle Co., Gas City, Indiana (1951-1968)

The Knox News (1951:6) noted a Mid-West Glass Bottle Co. as part of the Knox conglomerate. Located at Gas City, Indiana, the plant became part of Knox in 1951. Toulouse (1971:296, 298) called the factory the Knox Glass Bottle Co. of Indiana. He noted that “it had been built by the United States Glass Co. in 1892, and sold to [the Slick Glass Co.] in 1937.” The Glass Container Corp. purchased Knox in 1968. See the section on the Knox Glass Bottle Co. for more information.

Discussion and Conclusions

Although two factories used the term “MID WEST” on glass containers, the differences are easy to recognize. The Midwest factories in Kansas were only open from 1917 to 1918, and their only product was milk bottles. The “MID-WEST” logo was embossed on bases. The Canadian Midwest firm apparently only embossed “MID / WEST” (in two slanted lines) on the sides of fruit jars from 1929 to ca. 1935. This limited use provides tight dating for both logos.

Acknowledgments

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