

Quartz Glass & Mfg Co. and Its Predecessors

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Although the B-W Automatic Jar & Bottle Co. was very short lived, it set the stage for the formation of the Southwest Glass Mfg. Co. in late 1903 or early 1904, the maker of Mason jars embossed with an SWG monogram. When the firm morphed into the Quartz Glass & Mfg. Co. in 1907, it continued the Mason jars in altered molds now using a “QG” monogram as well as jars from new molds with the monogram but without the word “MASON.”

Histories

Los Angeles Glass Co., Los Angeles (1902-1903)

The Los Angeles Glass Co. was incorporated on February 18, 1901, with \$250,000 as capital. On March 22, 1902, China, Glass & Lamps reported that the firm was finishing its third day tank and expected to begin production in about a month. It was waiting for three Buttler machines to arrive but was otherwise ready. C.E. Joslin was president with J.C. Dalton as secretary, and the plant made bottles and jars at one continuous tank with six rings. Production apparently ceased prior to October 1903, when the Southwestern Glass Co. purchased the factory (Legislature of the State of California 1903:54; *Riverside Daily Press* 10/12/1903; Roller 1998). We have not discovered any marks used by the company.

B-W Automatic Jar & Bottle Co., Los Angeles (1903)

Illustrated Glass & Pottery World (1903:21) reported that “the B-W Automatic Jar & Bottle Co. has been incorporated with a capital stock of \$200,000. The incorporators are W.H. Brown, H.L. Brown, F.A. Parker and others.” The listing was for Portland, Oregon, although that may have been just the place of incorporation rather than the business location. Between the unusual name and the inclusion of F.L. Parker in both the patent document and the incorporation report, this must be the same as the Los Angeles firm (see below).

The B-W Automatic Jar & Bottle Co. opened in 1903 to manufacture fruit jars. William E. Brown – “of the Brown, Winstanley & Co., jobbers of glass goods” – Los Angeles, applied for a patent for a “Jar Closure” on September 24, 1902, and was issued Patent No. 723,645 on March 24, 1903 (*Riverside Daily Press* 10/12/1903). Brown assigned the patent to the “B-W Automatic Jar & Bottle Co.,” also of Los Angeles (Figure 1). Brown filed for a second patent, for a different type of jar closure, on May 21, 1903 (Figure 2). He

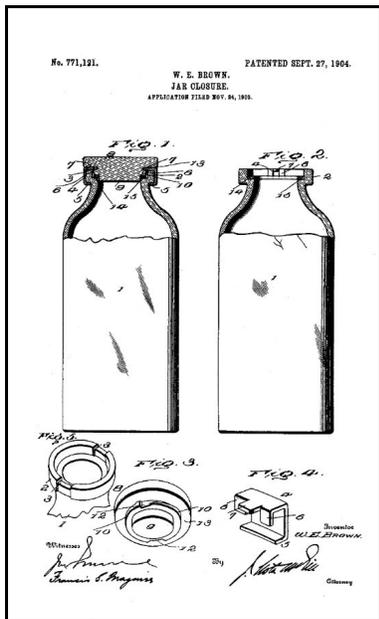


Figure 2 – Brown 1904 patent

received Patent No. 721,975 on February 9, 1904, and assigned the second patent to Frank A. Parker, W.T. Bishop, R.P. Bishop, and J.O. Koepfli (Roller 1998).

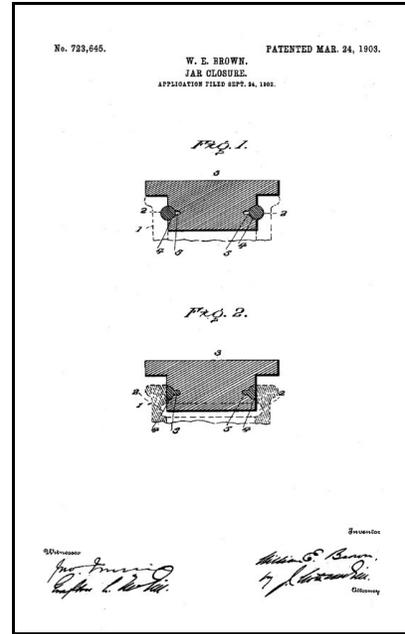


Figure 1 – Brown 1903 patent

With William E. Brown as both president of B-W and the holder of two jar patents, it is virtually certain that the firm existed as a sales outlet and factory for the jars. However, it is equally obvious that the firm never built or purchased a plant, so it never turned out a product. We found no information on Brown, Winstanley & Co., although it may have been connected with B-W.

Southwestern Glass Mfg. Co., Los Angeles (1904-1907)

The Southwestern Glass Mfg. Co. of Los Angeles was incorporated in October 1903 to manufacture fruit jars, packers’ ware and demijohns. G.E. Bittinger was the president with William E. Brown as vice president and J.W. Roberts secretary and general manager. W.G. Fraser and G.H. Low rounded out the remaining directors. The firm had a capital of \$100,000 (*Riverside Daily Press* 2/25/1904). The only one of these men formerly connected with B-W Automatic Jar was William E. Brown.

Southwestern promptly purchased the inactive hand plant of the Los Angeles Glass Co. – N. 19th Ave. and Humboldt St. – and remodeled it, installing a continuous tank and three Buttler jar machines. On October 12, 1903, in the *Riverside Daily Press*, Bittinger told the readers that his firm had “bought the plant of the old Los Angeles Glass Company, which went out of business some time ago. . . . We have filed articles of incorporation and expect to be doing business in a very short time.” Charles E. Joslin, self proclaimed “president of the Los Angeles Glass Company,” however, disputed the announcement, stating that the firm was “not out of business and the plant of the Los Angeles Glass Company has not been sold or conveyed to any company or corporation.” Joslin was incorrect, although we may never discover why he was unaware of the sale.

Production began in February 1904, using local lime and sand. The plant used Buttler machines for fruit jars and wide-mouth packers’ ware, while it made bottles and small jars using hand methods. The ware was noted as “free from iron color, but has a smoky tint that slightly mars its beauty” (*Los Angeles Times* 10/11/1903; 2/25/1904; Aubury 1906; Hayes 1912; Merrill 1917:54).

By 1904, the Southwestern Glass Mfg. Co. produced the “Nevurspoil” jar and bottle closure, citing Brown’s 1904 patent (Roller 1998) – although the closure was probably used on product containers rather than fruit jars. By 1905, the plant operated one continuous tank with five rings. The same group operated the Nevurspoil Jar Closure Co. as a marketing outlet for the jars (Roller 1998).

In the summer of 1907 the factory, still “in full operation,” was offered for sale. It was noted as containing one 6-ring tank, three 90-foot lehrs, and large storerooms, all located on a 3-acre parcel with a rail spur to the plant. The reason for the sale was given as: “Do not understand the business and have to rely too much on help” (*National Glass Budget* 1907). The plant was purchased by the Quartz Glass & Manufacturing Co. later the same year.

Quartz Glass & Manufacturing Co., Los Angeles (1907-1910)

The Quartz Glass & Mfg. Co. of Los Angeles was incorporated in September 1907 and took over the plant of the Southwestern Glass Mfg. Co. The firm filed Articles of Incorporation

on September 24, 1907. Authorized capitalization was \$100,000, and the three original incorporators were C. George, F. Eisenmayer, and W.G. Eisenmayer. The group filed a certificate to authorize an increase to \$200,000 the following March (*Los Angeles Times* 11/14/1908; 7/31/1910; city directories).

The factory evidently produced both flint and green glass, manufacturing soda, beer, prescription, wine, grape juice, olive oil, club sauce, catsup and toothwash bottles, as well as packers' bottles and jars, ball-neck panels, fruit jars (both Mason and Lightning), liquor flasks, candy jars and demijohns. They made containers for Coca Cola, New York Bottling Co., Crystal Bottling Co. and Bishop's Catsup. The company also sold crushed silica from its own quarries (*Los Angeles Times* 11/14/1908; 7/31/1910; city directories).

Quartz expanded its glassworks in the fall of 1908 to accommodate a force of 100 men. The following year, the plant was using three wide-mouth, semiautomatic machines to produce fruit jars – undoubtedly the same three Buttler machines that had been installed by Southwestern in 1904 – and two press machines for jar lids and jelly jars. The plant contracted with C.H. Greenshaw – a stockholder in Southwestern Glass – to install three additional Buttler machines to be delivered by March 20, 1908, but Greenshaw failed to follow up – leading to a lawsuit by Quartz (*Los Angeles Daily Herald* 5/8/1908; *Los Angeles Times* 2/25/1904; 8/6/1908; *Commoner and Glassworker* 1908; Hayes 1909:13).

By 1909, the plant used one continuous tank with five rings to make flint prescription, druggists' or perfumers' ware, beers, sodas, minerals, wines, flasks, medicine goods, fruit jars, packers & preservers' ware. The operation also had its own mold-making department. It is possible that the successful jar sales of Quartz Glass attracted the Ball Brothers. In any event, the Balls wrote to Henderson & Osborn of Los Angeles (apparently local jobbers) offering to meet the Quartz price for the sale of their own "Sure Seal" jars (Roller 1998).

Competition from the Ball Brothers may have led to the end of Quartz jar production. In July 1910, determining to concentrate on manufacturing rock products and building materials, Quartz abandoned glass container production and sold off its existing stock (*Los Angeles Times* 7/31/1910). We have found no indication that Ball ever attempted to buy Quartz Glass – as it had with so many others. Ball may have simply priced the firm out of existence.

Containers and Marks

Neither of the Brown patents (1903 or 1904) were listed in either Creswick (1987a) or Roller (1983). This almost certainly indicates that the B-W Automatic Jar & Bottle Co. never actually produced any containers. In addition, there is no record that the firm built or purchased a factory.

SWG monogram (1903-1907)

Toulouse (1969:284) illustrated this mark but called it the “SGW MASON.” The jars were made in light green color as well as colorless glass that solarized to a “pink” hue (probably indicating the use of manganese dioxide as a decolorant, possibly interacting with something else. Toulouse noted two variations. He described the first as “handmade round, ground lip,” ascribed it to the Salem Glass Works (making the incorrect assumption that the initials were arranged in “SGW” order), and dated the jar ca. 1895 to 1910. The second variation was machine made, and he dated that ca. 1915 to 1938. In his later book, Toulouse (1971:459) continued to ascribe the monogram to the Salem Glass Works, although he did not discuss it further.

Roller (1983:217; 2011:330) illustrated the mark with no attribution but noted its relationship to the “QG” monogram discussed below. Creswick (1987a:116) likewise illustrated the mark without attribution (Figure 3). She only noted the “smooth lip” (i.e., machine-made) variation. Creswick’s second volume (1987b:89) included exactly the same information about the mark and jars as her initial work.



Figure 3 – SWG monogram (Creswick 1987a:116)

The base of the only specimen that we have observed (collected from Southern California) had a light valve scar from a press-and-blow machine, and we assume that this is a standard scar for a Buttler machine. The similarity to the ornate QG monogram of the Quartz Glass & Manufacturing Co. is discussed below. The evidence that the SWG mold was re-used by Quartz provides a compelling rationale for assigning this mark to Southwestern (see the Discussion & Conclusions section).

QG monogram (1907-1910)

Toulouse (1969:251) illustrated a QG monogram (“Q” inside an elongated “G”) on a machine-made, shoulder-seal Mason jar and claimed a use date of ca. 1900-1930, although he stated that “no glass company could be found with these initials, even considering ‘Q --- Glass’” (in other words, he could find no glass firm beginning with the letter “Q”). He listed the jars in two variations, one with “MASON” in “heavy arched lettering,” the other with no lettering above the logo. At least the non-MASON jar could be found solarized to a “deep amethyst.” This could indicate just a shorter solarization period than the “pink” Southwestern jar or could mean a different chemical composition.

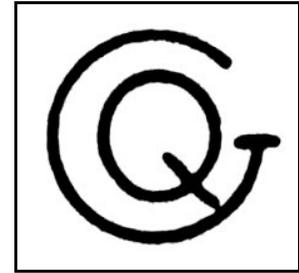


Figure 4 – QG monogram (Toulouse 1971:431)

In his latter book, Toulouse (1971:431) illustrated two variations of the mark. One was the monogram he originally illustrated, but the other was found “on a bottle” (Figure 4). He added that the letters could be either QG or GQ, although the latter seemed more likely. Toulouse further noted that June Eastin “found one of these with a faint indication that the letter ‘S’ had been peened out of the mold. It intertwined the ‘Q’ of the upper drawing.” Although he did not specify, the peened out mold was probably on the jar.¹ Toulouse dated both marks ca. 1900-1930, even though the mark “defied allocation to any known glass company.”



Figure 5 – QG monogram (North American Glass)

Roller (1983:299; 2011:437) showed a photo of the jar with the QG monogram without the word “MASON” (Figure 5). Roller (1983:217; 2011:330) also illustrated the mark with “MASON” (Figure 6) in an arch above the logo and added:

¹ Toulouse and Eastin both belonged to the collector’s network established by May Jones. Eastin’s only book (Eastin 1965) did not contain the reference to the QG mark, so Toulouse probably received the information via a letter.

These jars often have four short lines on the ‘Q’ that match the intersections of the lines forming the ‘S’ and ‘W’ of the SGW monogram of MASON SGW jars Apparently, these jars were made from altered MASON SGW molds, but the maker of both jars is still unknown.

Creswick (1987a:116) discussed three variations of the jar/mark and illustrated two of them. The first variation included the arched “MASON” and showed an almost circular “Q” with the short lines in

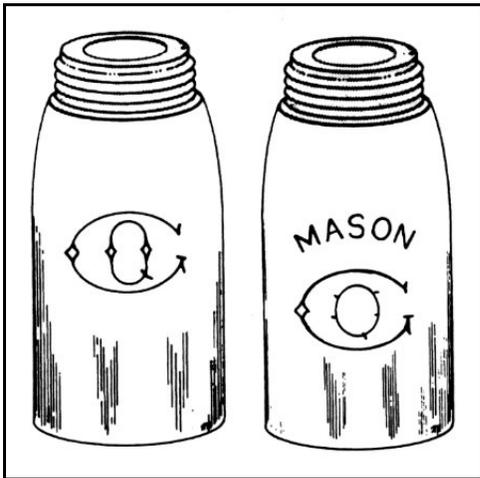


Figure 7 – QG monogram (Creswick 1987a:116)

four places. The second variation (not illustrated) included the ghosted “S” (almost certainly the same jar noted by Eastin).² The third variation had a fancy “Q” with diamond-shaped embellishments, no “MASON,” and no short lines (Figure 7). Creswick continued the Toulouse attribution of the jars to the Salem Glass Works and noted that they were all machine made.

Creswick (1987b:89) included the exact same information about the marks and jars in her second volume, and Leybourne (2001:213) also failed to add any new data. An example of the non-Mason jar in our possession has a typical valve scar on the base (Figure 8).

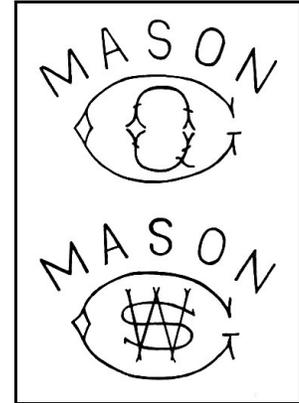


Figure 6 – SWG & QG Mason (Roller 1983:217)

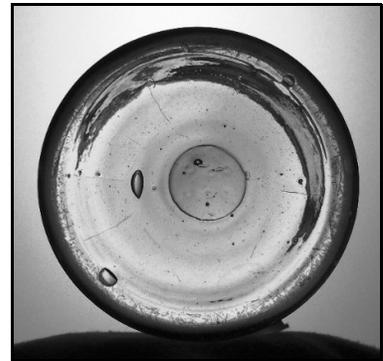


Figure 8 – QG base

² Although Creswick failed to mention whether this variation included “MASON,” it is highly likely that it did. Creswick also failed to discuss the “short lines” – although it is again likely that these were present.

Discussion and Conclusions

Even though the earlier sources called the SWG monogram an SGW logo, the shape of the mark should be enough to identify SWG as the proper order. The “S” and “G” are intertwined in the center, surrounded by a much larger “G.” This, of course, fits historically with the Southwestern Glass Mfg. Co. initials. Because the plant had a longer name than most, the company probably decided to leave off the last two initials (“M” & “Co”).

Only Toulouse suggested that any of the jars were hand made, and he was the only source that included green as one of the colors (although the colorless glass could certainly solarize. Unfortunately, he did not explain where his information came from, but it was almost certainly hand-written letters from one or more members of the collectors’ network operated by May Jones. Historical sources stated that the Southwestern Glass Mfg. Co. plant used machines to make jars from the beginning of the company. It is possible that the factory made some jars with hand methods at the start, but it is strange that none of the later researchers discovered either the jars with ground rims or the green color. It is also possible that the handmade jars were prototypes produced by the earlier B-W Automatic Jar & Bottle Co. It is much more likely that Toulouse either received erroneous information or misunderstood a hand-written letter.

The ghosted “S” on one “QG” jar and the four short lines on other “QG” jars (that correspond to the intersection of “S” and “W” on “SWG” mark) solidly connect the earlier “SGW” monograms with the later “QG” logos. Similarly, the surrounding “G” in both logos is identical – at least in the Roller and Creswick drawings. Historically, the sale of the Southwestern Glass Mfg. Co. to the Quartz Glass & Mfg. Co. in 1907 equally clearly links the two companies. The virtually inescapable conclusion is that the Southwestern used the “SWG” logo, and Quartz used the “QG” monogram.

Quartz almost certainly developed the logo to make use of the molds it inherited from Southwestern. Because the company name was the Quartz Glass & Mfg. Co., a long name for a monogram, the company may have decided to limit the logo to the first two letters. In addition, a logo beginning with “Q” was likely distinctive enough to not warrant further elaboration.

According to Creswick, there were three variations of jars bearing the “QG” logo. The first two of these were obvious alterations of “SWG” molds. One had a ghosted “S” (that apparently matched the “S” in “SWG” – also noted by Eastin), and the other had four short lines that marked the intersection where the “S” met the “W” in the earlier monogram. The logo with the lines was accompanied by the arched “MASON” that was used on the jars with the “SWG” monogram, although “MASON” was missing from the jar with the fancy “Q” (see Figure 6).

It is possible (probable?) that both variations were made by the same molds. Sometimes paste or other manufacturing byproducts would clog some of the embossing, creating “error” jars with one letter (or more) either absent or ghosted. It seems likely that ghosted letters (i.e., those peened out to change embossing) would clog easier than fully embossed letters. Thus, the “short line” variation may just be a jar where the ghosted “S” was clogged. Since the company almost certainly made more than a single mold, these two variations may, instead, reflect the difference in quality of two engravers who peened out the former embossing.

The “Q” with short lines illustrated by Roller did not match the “Q” drawn by Creswick. Creswick’s letter showed a much rounder “Q” with no embellishments on the sides. Roller’s “Q” was identical with the later “Q” (without the short lines) and included both embellishments and short lines. The only example we have seen (from eBay) does not fully support either illustration. The eBay photos, while certainly *not* as valid as observation of the actual object, show the more oval, later-style “Q” with short lines but no embellishment – a logo in between those of Creswick and Roller. The eBay photo *does*, however, show the dash marks where the “S” originally crossed the lines of the “Q” (Figure 9). Future research should include the personal observation of a larger sample of these jars to ascertain if there are really *three* variations of this logo, or if both illustrations are slightly inaccurate. If all embossing is as “fuzzy” as the one shown on eBay, inexact drawings are to be expected.

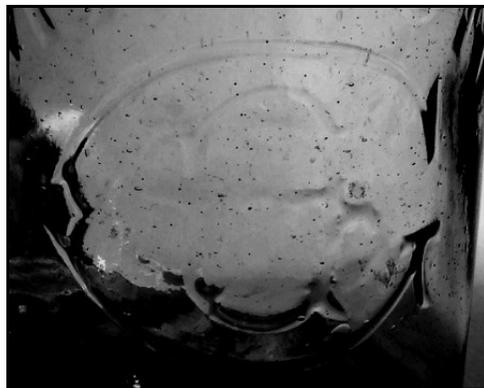


Figure 9 – Closeup Q (eBay)

The final variation likely followed, either when the original molds from Southwestern wore out or when demand increased to require additional molds (or both). These were marked

with a more ornate “Q” (with embellishments on each side) and the elimination of the arched “MASON” above the monogram. At least some of these jars have been found sealed with a modification of the 1904 William Brown patented closure, instead of a Mason shoulder seal lid (see the B-W Automatic Jar & Bottle Co. section above). The eBay example is one of these. A quart example of the final logo and a pint example in our possession each had the embellishments on the “Q” – and neither had any trace of the remains of the “S” from the former logo.

A thus-far unexplained phenomenon is the lack of jars with the “Nevurspoil” closure that was advertised by Southwestern in 1904. Nevurspoil was obviously the closure patented by Brown in 1904. The discovery of modifications of the Brown closure on Mason jars may explain the apparent lack of other jars using the Brown patent. The closures may have only been used on the Mason jars.

In summary, the Southwest Glass Mfg. Co. apparently *only* made the “MASON / SWG-monoram” jar, while the Quartz Glass & Mfg. Co. produced both “MASON / QG-monoram” jar and jars without the word “MASON.”

Both companies made other glass container products, but only one source (Toulouse 1971) claimed the use of the QG logo in any context other than Mason jars. Unfortunately, Toulouse only noted that the slightly modified mark was found on “a bottle.” It is thus likely that neither firm used a manufacturer’s mark with any regularity, except on these Mason jars. Hopefully, future research will disclose an example of the mark on an actual bottle.

Acknowledgments

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