

## Ihmsen Glass Companies

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The Ihmsen family history is very complex because three generations of Ihmsens were involved in U.S. glass production from 1810 to 1900. However, we have been able to divide their operations into six different periods, although a few of those overlap. It is important to understand that three of these periods – Early Ihmsen Firms, Christian Ihmsen Firms, and the Third Generation factories of Christian T. and William Ihmsen – form a continuous chain that lasted almost a century, from 1810 to ca. 1900.

Ancestral and Early Ihmsen Firms (1810-1868)

Christian Ihmsen Firms – Second Generation (1836-1885)

William Ihmsen – Second Generation (ca. 1824-1836)

Christian T. Ihmsen and William Ihmsen – Third Generation (1876-1900)

Dominick Ihmsen Firms – Third Generation (1876-ca. 1890)

Other Ihmsen Companies (1846-1880)

Our main source of information has been Jay Hawkins' book on Pittsburgh glass houses (Hawkins 2009). Since Hawkins cited the various earlier sources, we have rarely mentioned those in our citations. See Table 1 for a chronology of the Ihmsen glass firms.

## Ihmsen Family Genealogy

In order to set the stage for the Ihmsen histories, we offer the following genealogical information on the Ihmsen family provide to us by Bob Bowers. Using bold type, we have highlighted the names of individuals who were specifically mentioned in the histories below.

**Charles Ihmsen** was born about 1769 in Steinbach, Westphalia, Germany. His wife, Phillipine Katrine Ney, also German, was born February 11, 1770. The couple had six sons,

Jacob Charles, Thomas Oswald, **Christian**, Adam, **Henry**, and Martin; two daughters, Catherine and Mary; and **William**, Phillipine's son by an earlier marriage. Charles apparently adopted William and introduced him to the glass business when he grew up. The senior Ihmsen died on September 8, 1828.

According to Bowers, Christian was the real entrepreneur of the family. Born on May 22, 1804, in Frederick, Maryland, Christian married Eleanor O'Connor, and the couple had five sons: **Charles T.**, **William**, Frederick Lorenz,<sup>1</sup> Michael O'Connor, and **Christian T.**; and four daughters, Ann Elena, Phillipina A., Amelia, and Eleanor. Christian died on December 11, 1862. His half-brother, **William**, was also a success in the glass business. William was born about 1794 at Frederick, Maryland. He married Mary Augusta Morrison, but the couple had no children. William died December 11, 1836, only about 42 years of age. The remaining second-generation children seem to have opted out of the glass business.

The third generation of Ihmsens – involved in the glass business – were mostly descendants of Christian. Two of his sons, **Charles T.** and **William**, followed him directly into the glass business. Christian was not very impressed with his two sons (and their records show that they were not inspired businessmen). According to Bowers, Christian's will gave the sons control of the glass making operation for a period of only five years, suggesting that he knew how incapable his sons were. William Ihmsen (likely named after his uncle) was born in 1831 at Birmingham, Pennsylvania. He married Johanna Crouse, and the couple had two children, neither of whom entered into the glass business. William died in September 1875. Also born in Birmingham – in 1828 – Charles T. Ihmsen married Maria G. Mulvaney, and they produced two children whom also chose professions unrelated to the glass trade. Charles died on May 29, 1870. A final, third-generation brother was quite successful in the glass field. **Christian T. Ihmsen, Jr.**, was born in October 1845 at East Birmingham. He married Stella Horner, and the couple only had a single child, Simpson Horner. Christian, Jr., died on December 2, 1901.

**Dominick O'Connor Ihmsen** was the son of Thomas Oswald Ihmsen, brother of Charles T. and William. Born on August 19, 1836, at Birmingham, Dominick was by far the most

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<sup>1</sup> Although we have not discovered any connection between the two families, naming a son Frederick Lorenz Ihmsen would be an unlikely coincidence, when glass maker Frederick Lorenz also lived and operated in Pittsburgh.

successful glass maker of the third generation of Ihmsens. Dominick married Mary Adelaide Mitchell, and the couple had six sons: Herbert Lawrence, Thomas Oswald, Dominick O’Connor, Henry Phillips, William Pollard, and Paulinus Dionysius; and four daughters, Mary Adelaide, Adelaide Virginia, Blanche Josephine, and Anna M. Dominick died on March 25, 1903.

**Table 1 – Chronology of Primary of Primary Ihmsen Factories**

Dates	Operating Firm	Ihmsen Involvement*	Marks
Ancestral Firms			
1810	Ensell, Wendt & Co.	None	None
1810-1812	Ihmsen, Wendt & Co.	Charles Ihmsen (1)	None
1812-1822	Beltzhoover, Wendt & Co.	Charles Ihmsen (1)	None
1822	Sutton, Wendt & Co.	Charles Ihmsen (1)	None
1823-1836	Wendt & Ensell	Charles Ihmsen (1) Christian Ihmsen (2)	None
Second Generation			
1836-1838	Whitehead, Ihmsen & Phillips	Christian Ihmsen (2)	W.I.P.
1836-1855	C. Ihmsen & Co.	Christian Ihmsen (2)	C. Ihmsen & Co. C.I.&Co.
1855-1861	C. Ihmsen & Son	Christian Ihmsen (2) Charles T. Ihmsen (3) William Ihmsen (3)	C. Ihmsen & Son
1855-1875	C. Ihmsen & Sons	Christian Ihmsen (2) Charles T. Ihmsen (3) William Ihmsen (3)	C. Ihmsen & Sons C.I.&Sons
Third Generation			
1876-1883	Ihmsen Glass Co., Ltd.	Christian Ihmsen, Jr. (3)	I.G.Co.L
1883-1900	Ihmsen Glass Co.	Christian Ihmsen, Jr. (3)	None

Dates	Operating Firm	Ihmsen Involvement*	Marks
<b>Other First Generation Firms</b>			
1846-1852	Young, Plunkett & Ihmsen	Christian Ihmsen (1)	None
1852-1855	Ihmsen, Plunkett & McKnight	Christian Ihmsen (1)	None
1859-1860	Ihmsen & Ulam	Christian Ihmsen (1)	None
<b>Other Second Generation Firms</b>			
1824-1836	Williamsport Glass Works	William Ihmsen (2)	W. Ihmsen's WI
<b>Other Third Generation Firms</b>			
1865-1878	Cunninghams & Ihmsen	Dominick O. Ihmsen (3)	Cunninghams & Ihmsen C&I
1882-1883	Dominick Ihmsen	Dominick O. Ihmsen (3)	None
1883	Ihmsen Glass Mfg. Co.	Dominick O. Ihmsen (3)	None
1883-1888	Butler Flint Glass Co., Ltd.	Dominick O. Ihmsen (3)	None
1889-1890	Butler Glass Co., Ltd.	None	None

\* Number in parentheses indicates the Ihmsen generation.

### **The Ancestral and Early Firms**

The early glass houses and operating firms were in business during the 1810-1840 period. These eight operating firms centered around two glass factories in the Birmingham region of the south side of Pittsburgh. Charles Ihmsen, the father and grandfather of the glass dynasty, had worked in the glass industry prior to becoming a partner in many of these firms (and may have learned his trade prior to emigrating from Germany), and his son, Christian, inherited his interest when Charles died in 1828.

**Ensell, Wendt & Co.** (1810)

**Ihmsen, Wendt & Co.** (1810-1812)

**Sydney Glass Co.** (1810-1812)

After making a start in the glass business at the New Bremen Glass Works at Baltimore, Maryland, Charles Ihmsen moved to Pittsburgh in 1808, blowing glass for the O'Hara glass factory, a tableware plant. In 1810, the firm of Ensell, Wendt & Co. (Edward Ensell and Frederick Wendt) constructed the Birmingham Glass Works at Muriel St., near the Monongahela River to manufacture windows, but the firm reorganized as Ihmsen, Wendt & Co., with the addition of Charles Ihmsen later that year. Likely, Ihmsen infused new money into the partnership, probably purchasing Ensell's interest. The August 25, 1900, *National Glass Budget* suggested that the Sydney Glass Co. built the factory, and, indeed, the area became known as Sydneyville (Hawkins 2009:75, 284, 478).

In 1812, Ihmsen, Wendt & Co. constructed a second factory nearby to make green (aqua) glass bottles and vials, also under the name of the Birmingham Glass Works. Possibly, one of these factories was the original Ensell, Wendt & Co. plant and the other was the one built by the Sydney group. They may have merged in 1812 (Hawkins 2009:284). Unfortunately, we have no documentary evidence for the Sydney Glass Co. except the 1900 *National Glass Budget* reference.

**Beltzhoover, Wendt & Co.** (1812-1822)

Composed of Daniel Beltzhoover, George Sutton, John K. McNickel, Frederick Wendt, Charles Ihmsen, and Peter Hane, Ihmsen, Wendt & Co. was renamed Beltzhoover, Wendt & Co. around 1812. The first three infused new capital into the firm and may have provided new management ideas, probably buying Ihmsen's share, while the remaining men continued to operate the works. About 1819, Edward Ensell, Sr., and Edward Ensell, Jr., joined the firm (apparently *rejoined* in the case of the senior Ensell, who had been one of the original partners) (Hawkins 2009:76).

## **Containers and Marks**

Knittle (1927:441) listed “B.W.&Co.” as being used by “Belzhover (*sic*) Wendt & Co.” (probably on historical flasks. Toulouse (1971:98) noted that Knittle “was the only author to list the initials of [BW&Co]” and to identify Beltzhoover, Wendt & Co. as the user of the logo. However, he was skeptical that the initials actually existed.

**Sutton, Wendt & Co.** (1822)

**Wendt & Ensell** (1823-1836)

The firm again reorganized as Sutton, Wendt & Co. in 1822, then Wendt & Ensell the following year. Charles Ihmsen died in 1828, and his son, Christian, inherited his share in the two glass factories at Birmingham.<sup>2</sup> In 1836, Christian Ihmsen purchased the interests of the other partners, operating the factories as Christian Ihmsen & Co. (Hawkins 2009:76)

**Whitehead, Ihmsen & Phillips** (1836-1838)

**Whitehead, Sproul & Co.** (1839-1840?)

In 1836, Thomas I. Whitehead, Christian Ihmsen, Charles Ihmsen, and William Phillips formed the partnership of Whitehead, Ihmsen & Phillips. This firm operated concurrently with C. Ihmsen & Co., possibly because Ihmsen and his backers needed additional funding to expand. The new firm built the Pennsylvania Flint Glass Works to make cut, plain, engraved, and pressed tableware and the Pennsylvania Black Glass Works for bottles, both in Birmingham. Each of the plants employed 32 “hands” to make the glass in 1837 (Hawkins 2009:516-518; *National Glass Budget* 1909:1). On January 1, 1839, Christian Ihmsen sold his interest in the concern to Thomas T. Whitehead and Henry Sproul, who then formed Whitehead, Sproul & Co. We have not discovered how this change affected the distribution of the factories, but the latter firm was short-lived and may have been absorbed by C. Ihmsen & Co. (Hawkins 2009:518; Kay & Kay 1853:174)

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Ihmsen may have established an independent window glass factory in Birmingham about 1814, although McKearin and McKearin (1941), the only reference for this factory, may have been referring to the already-established Birmingham Glass Works.

## Containers and Marks

### W.I.&P. (1836-1838)



Figure 1 – W.I.&P. basemark  
(eBay)

Hawkins (2009:517-518) described and illustrated a blackglass porter bottle embossed “W.I.&P. (arch) / PITTSBURGH, PA. (inverted arch)” on the base (Figures 1 & 2). He identified Whitehead, Ihmsen & Phillips as the manufacturer. This may have been the only container marked by the firm.



Figure 2 – Porter bottle  
(eBay)

## The Christian Ihmsen Firms

In 1836, Christian Ihmsen, son of Charles Ihmsen, acquired the factories discussed in the section above and built them into a growing concern that was successful for the rest of his life.

### Christian Ihmsen & Co. (ca. 1836-1855)

As early as 1836, the two factories described above were listed as controlled by Whitehead, Ihmsen & Phillips, but the other two were under the management of “C. Ihmsen” – one factory making vials with 36 “hands,” the other employing 45 workers to make window glass (*National Glass Budget* 1909:1). By 1841, C. Ihmsen & Co. completely controlled the two Birmingham Glass Works factories, the Pennsylvania Flint Works, and the Pennsylvania Black Works. Even though the McKearins stated that C. Ihmsen & Co. stopped making window glass in 1840, the firm continued to advertise window glass until at least 1870.

Christian’s brother, William, and Francis McGowan joined the firm in 1836, although William died later that year in December. Christian and William may have built a glass house in Birmingham in 1831 to make bottles and vials, along with window glass, but this may be a confusion with William’s involvement with Christian’s Birmingham factories. The firm added a

plant at Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, by 1841, operated for the firm by McGowan, although Lorenz & Hamilton eventually gained control of that plant. Christian was also involved with Young, Ihmsen & Plunkett during this period – a firm discussed below (Hawkins 2009:272-274).

### **Containers and Marks**

It is very clear from the sparse selection below that Christian Ihmsen rarely used any marks to identify the bottles made at his factories.

#### **C. IHMSEN GLASS MANUFACTURER (ca. late 1830s-early 1870s)**

Jones (1966:7; 1968:15) and Wilson (1981:118) illustrated an early mark from the Christian Ihmsen period. The aqua bottle base was embossed C. IHMSEN GLASS MANUFACTURER in a circle around the edge almost certainly a cylinder whiskey bottle (Figure 3). The words were embossed in an early type of baseplate mold. Patented in England in 1821, the Ricketts mold was the first known to have used a separate plate around the outer edges of the base (Jones & Sullivan 1989:48-49).

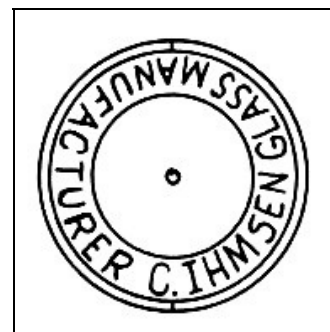


Figure 3 – C Ihmsen base  
(Wilson 1981:118)

The Ihmsen bottle used the Ricketts style of baseplate mold. Although Jones and Sullivan cited an 1867 patent as the “official” starting date for plate mold use in the United States, the style used by Ihmsen (and others) could certainly predate that year. The mark was probably used by Ihmsen sometime between ca. 1836-1840 and may only have been used on a single mold. We have not discovered another citation for this mark and have not seen one.

#### **C. IHMSEN & Co (ca. 1836-1860)**

At least one type of Pike’s Peak flask was marked “C. IHMSEN & Co / PITTSBURGH PA,” with the ends of “C. IHMSEN” turned down and those of “PITTSBURGH PA” turned up to conform to the oval frame below the embossed drawing of an eagle with a banner in its mouth (Eatwell & Clint 2001:167; McKearin & Wilson 1978:499, 640). Hawkins (2009:277) also noted that the logo was embossed on some liquor bottles and at least one flask. (Figure 4).



## CI&Co (ca. 1858-1860)

According to von Mechow (2016), Christian



Figure 5 – CI&Co bottle (Glass Discoveries)

Ihmsen & Co. used the CI&Co logo on the reverse heels of three “blob” top soda bottles (Figure 5).

The mark was apparently used very infrequently, apparently only on soda bottles with pontil scars on their bases (Figure 6).

The firm of Beck & Zeisler, one of the firms

listed by von Mechow, was enumerated in the 1860 St. Louis directory, but we have been unable to find datable information on the other two bottles.

## C. Ihmsen & Son (ca. 1855-1861)

## C. Ihmsen & Sons (1855-ca. 1876)

About 1855, Christian brought his sons, Charles T. and William, into the company, probably changing the name to C. Ihmsen & Sons at that time. Boxes aboard the *Arabia*, sunk September 5, 1856, were labeled C. Ihmsen & Sons. The first directory listing for C. Ihmsen & Sons was in 1861, but the boxes aboard the *Arabia* makes the 1855 date for the change virtually certain. However, the 1861 city directory also listed C. Ihmsen & Son (singular) operating a window-glass factory. Hawkins (2009:275) made the argument that this was a correct listing (rather than a misprint) because there are both bottles and fruit jars embossed with the singular name. If this is correct, then Christian brought one son into the business first, followed by the



Figure 4 – C Ihmsen & Co. (Cite Bill's book)



Figure 6 – Pontiled base (eBay)

second one. Despite the 1861 listing, the “Son” period probably only lasted a year or so, possibly as early as 1854. The family also acquired the Jefferson glass factory (formerly controlled by Young, Ihmsen & Plunkett) in 1855, bringing their total to five plants.

On December 11, 1863, Christian Ihmsen died, leaving control of the factories in the hands of his two sons. Charles T. and William Ihmsen continued to operate under the C. Ihmsen & Sons name and had gained a factory at New Castle, Pennsylvania, by at least 1867. Charles T. Ihmsen died on May 29, 1870, and the factory was last listed in the 1874 city directory. William died in 1875, leaving the third generation to operate the firm. The operations during the next two years are very unclear – see below (Hawkins 2009:275).

### Containers and Marks

#### C. IHMSEN & SON or C. IHMSEN & SONS (1855-1885)

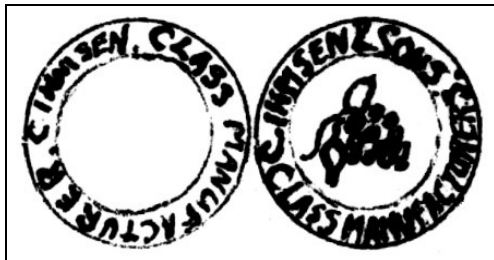


Figure 7 – Ihmsen bases (Jones 1968:15)

stylized “I” and a cluster of grapes embossed in the center of the

An interesting variation of the circular mark was “C. IHMSEN & SONS (arch) / GLASS MANUFACTURERS (inverted arch)” with what appears to be a



Figure 8 – Whiskey base (Jay Hawkins)

base. Jones

(1968:15) showed the base but provided no other information about this mark (Figure 7). This logo also appeared on amber, three-piece-mold whiskey bottles (Figure 8).

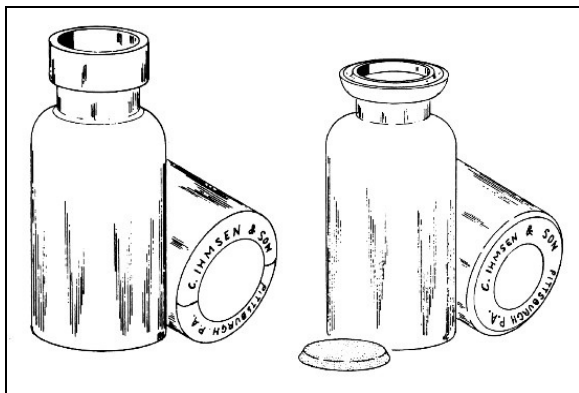


Figure 9 – Wax sealers (Creswick 1987:87)

Roller (1983:162) listed two fruit jars with C. Ihmsen & Sons (plural) basemarks. One was a grooved-ring wax-sealer, while the other had a one-part, collared finish for a cork. He

dated the jars ca. 1860s-1870s. These were marked “C. IHMSEN & SONS (arch) / PITTSBURGH, PA. (inverted arch).” Creswick (1987:87) illustrated both jar types but with the singular form: “SON” (Figure 9). She dated the jars 1860-1862 but did not explain her reasons. The Roller editors (2011:250) listed both types of jars with either the singular or plural forms of son. The only examples we have found were embossed with the singular form (Figures 10).

Hawkins (2009:277) noted that “C. IHMSEN & SON” was embossed on the bases of a single type of blackglass squat liquor bottle and wax-sealer fruit jars. The mark was used prior to 1861. He also stated that “C. IHMSEN & SONS” (plural) was embossed on bottle bases but did not specify what types. He added that this logo was used after 1861, but we would place the beginning date as early as 1855 based on the *Arabia* bottles discussed above.



Figure 11 – CI&Sons (McKearin & Wilson 1978:651)



Figure 10 – Wax sealer base (North American Glass)

### C I & Sons

C. Ihmsen & Sons also made a figural flask with clasped hands in a shield on the front and “CI&Sons” embossed in an oval below an eagle with a pennant in its mouth on the reverse (McKearin & Wilson 1978:153, 490, 650-651 – Figure 11). The mark was also recorded by Freeman (1964:89) on the same flask. Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:123) listed the mark as used by C. Ihmsen & Sons from 1867 to 1885 on medicinal bottles. It is likely that they were referring to the Argyle Bitters bottle listed by Ring (1980:58) with “CI&SONS” embossed on the base. The brand was carried by E.B Wheelock, New Orleans, Louisiana. It was advertised from at least 1860 to 1901. The mark could have been used any time between 1855 and ca. 1876, the period when the business was known as C. Ihmsen & Sons.

## The Third Generation Ihmsen Firms

The first set of these operating companies was a continuation of the older C. Ihmsen & Sons factories, although the Dominick Ihmsen firms were unrelated.

### **C.I. Ihmsen & Co.** (ca. 1876)

Hawkins (2009:275-276, 281) cited Thurston's 1876 history for the existence of this firm as a window-glass concern. He speculated that the initials may have indicated Christian Ihmsen, Jr. Regardless, the firm is only of transitory importance at best and seems to have left no logos.

### **Ihmsen Glass Co., Ltd.** (ca. 1876-1883)

### **Ihmsen Glass Co.** (1883-1900)

Although two of the C. Ihmsen & Co. glass plants apparently remained closed, Christian T. Ihmsen, Jr., seems to have revitalized the original Birmingham factories ca. 1876. The *Crockery and Glass Journal* (1876:15) listed C. Ihmsen & Co. as using a single furnace with eight pots in 1876. The company first appeared in the 1878 city directory as the Ihmsen Glass Co., Limited (also called the Ihmsen Window Glass Co.). The factory was located at the "foot" of 14<sup>th</sup> St. (soon listed as 14<sup>th</sup> & Neville) and manufactured vials and bottles. The factory suffered a serious fire on July 21, 1878, but immediately rebuilt (Hawkins 2009:281).

The firm apparently began making bottles in December 1879, probably only producing window glass prior to that time. By 1880, Ihmsen had another plant at Monongahela, Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup> The firm was listed by various names during the 1880s and produced window glass and a variety of vials and bottles that included prescription ware (Hawkins 2009:281). In 1881, the plant made "18,000 gross green and amber glass-ware" at a single furnace with eight pots (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 1881:59).

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<sup>3</sup> Our view of the factories may be exactly reversed. The *Crockery & Glass Journal* (1883a:14) noted that the Ihmsen Glass Co. purchased the "Ihmsen glass house property, on Fourteenth street, South side" on March 20 for \$55,000. This indicates that the 14<sup>th</sup> St. plant could not have been used by the Ihmsen Glass Co. prior to 1883, so the Monongahela factory may have been the first one.

Even though the firm had been listed in the city directories as a “Limited” company since 1878, the *Crockery and Glass Journal* (1883b:14) reported that “the Ihmsen Glass Co. have applied for a charter to the Governor of Harrisburg from which it appears that hitherto they have not been an incorporated company.” We have no explanation for this discrepancy. Periodically during this period, the bottle plant was listed as the Ihmsen Glass Co., Ltd., while the window-glass unit was referred to as Ihmsen & Co. or the Ihmsen Window Glass Co. (Hawkins 2009:281-282).

In 1886, the firm operated a single ten-pot furnace for making window glass and another of eight-pot capacity for the manufacture of bottles. Another fire damaged the plant in October 1886, but Ihmsen quickly rebuilt and was back in production by December. Christian T. Ihmsen, Jr., died at Denver, Colorado, where he had relocated hoping to regain his health, on January 2, 1889 (Hawkins 2009:282).

The company was last listed as making bottles in 1896, and the plant probably ceased production of green glass at this time, although the factory continued to make prescription ware and window glass. By August, the company had begun bankruptcy proceedings, but it seems to have remained in business, although the word, Limited, was dropped from the directory listings in 1897, possibly as a result of the previous year’s difficulties. The American Window Glass Co. bought the Ihmsen holdings in 1900 (Hawkins 2009:282).

### **Containers and Marks**

Wilson and Caperton (1994:70) recorded all beer bottle advertising in *The Western Brewer* between 1883 and 1890 as well as samples from issues between 1878 and 1882. Ihmsen began advertising beer bottles in the journal by at least December 1879 and continued the ads until at least the end of 1890.

### **IGCo (possibly 1897-1900)**

Toulouse (1971:261) maintained that “IGCo” was used by the Ihmsen Glass Co. ca. 1870-1895. He continued, “The use of the ‘IGCo’ trademark is rare and found on some

unmistakably Pittsburgh bottles” (Toulouse 1971:263). Unfortunately, he did not indicate what made the bottles “unmistakably Pittsburgh.”

Despite the Toulouse claims, the evidence points almost certainly to the Illinois Glass Co. as the user of the “IGCo” logo, although there is a *remote* chance that Ihmsen used the mark occasionally. See Lockhart et al. (2005a; 2005b) or Farnsworth & Walthall (2011) for arguments against “IGCo” as an Ihmsen mark.

### **IGC (1873-1894)**

Herskovitz (1978:8) noted six examples of this mark on beer bottles from Fort Bowie, Arizona Territory. The excavated portion of the fort was officially open from 1862 to 1894, although beer bottles were only transported for long distances from the factories beginning in 1873. Thus, 1873 to 1894 are the only dates currently known for this mark. Herskovitz reported accompanying letters/number of B, H, and 3+. In addition, a bottle for sale on the internet was reportedly embossed “IGC” on the back heel. This latter may be a case where the “o” in “IGCo” was very lightly embossed and difficult to see.

Herskovitz (1978:8) also recorded an “IGO” mark accompanied by the numeral 1. This is likely a bad strike by the engraver or a misidentification by Herskovitz (probably the former). If it were an engraver’s error, it would fit into the same pattern as the “IGC” mark. Although we originally argued that this mark may have been used by Ihmsen, a larger sample of bottle with IGCo logos suggest no such relationship. Unfortunately, we have never seen an example, even though we examined the Herskovitz collection and spent an entire day looking at bottle fragments on the surface of Fort Bowie. We suspect that the mark does not actually exist. If, in fact, there is such a mark, it is almost certainly a corruption of the IGCo logo.

### **IGCoL (1876-1883)**

Wilson (1981:118), Herskovitz (1978:8), Clint (1976:127), Feldhaus (1986:23, 38, 42), and von Mechow (2016) illustrated or described examples of the “IGCoL” mark on beer bottle bases, and we found examples at Fort Laramie, Wyoming (Figure 12). Sometimes, the logo appeared alone (i.e., no letters, numbers, etc.), but others were marked with letters from D-K and





Figure 12 – IGCoL base (Fort Laramie)

numbers from 6-15, as well as a single base with a Maltese cross. The mark appeared in two variations, one with large letters and one with smaller letters. In both cases, the logo was embossed horizontally across the bases of beer bottles and other container types.

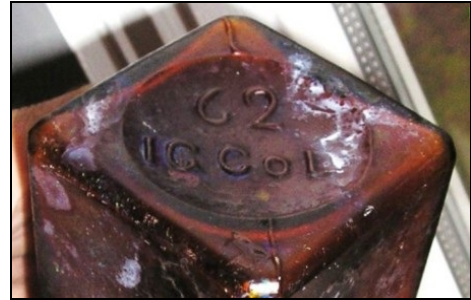


Figure 13 – IGCoL base (eBay)

Wilson and Wilson (1969:41) showed four examples of the mark on the bases of square bottles embossed “DR. J. HOSTETTER’S STOMACH BITTERS” (Figure 13), although they made no attempt to attribute the mark to any maker. The Wilsons (1969:34) noted that S. McKee made the first embossed Hostetter’s bottles in 1859, so containers produced by other makers should be dated after that time. Fike (1987:36) also noted that Hostetter’s bottles were made by Ihmsen but did not directly address the marks. Siri (2005:60) illustrated a base with a two-digit number above the horizontal mark. Hutchbook (Fowler 2016) listed four Hutchinson soda bottles with “IGCoL” logos on their reverse heels. The probable date range for the “IGCoL” mark is ca. 1879 to 1896, when bottle production ceased.

In the Tucson Urban Renewal (TUR) collection, only one bottle with the “IGCoL” mark had an applied, two-part finish with a sharp lower ring. The others had either a rounded lower ring or a one-part finish. This is in keeping with the dates established by current research. Two-part finishes on export beer bottles were intended for use with wired-down corks. Lockhart (2007) suggested that lower rings of the finishes with sharp edges (whether in wedge or flared forms) were generally used on bottles made between 1873 and ca. 1882. Two-part finishes with rounded lower rings were probably not used until the late 1870s and continued in use until ca. 1915. All two-part finishes with sharp-edged lower rings were applied to the end of the neck. Applied finishes were the industry standard for export beer bottles until at least 1896. Tooled finishes began to be used on some embossed beer bottles by ca. 1890 but were uncommon until after ca. 1896. They completely dominated the industry by ca. 1900.

**Cunningham & Ihmsen** (1865-1878)

**Dominick Ihmsen** (1882-1883)

**Ihmsen Glass Mfg. Co.** (1883)

**Butler Flint Bottle Co., Ltd.** (1883-1888)

**Butler Glass Co., Ltd.** (1889-ca. 1890)

We addressed Dominick Ihmsen's role in the firm of Cunningham & Ihmsen in the Cunningham family section. Open from 1876 to 1878, the firm was a prolific producer of bottles and jars embossed with its full name or initials. See the Cunningham section or Lockhart et al. (2005b) for details on both the history of the firm and its logos.

Although we have not discovered Dominick's whereabouts or occupation during the four-year period between Cunningham & Ihmsen and the founding of his own firm, as a member of the third generation, he may have worked for his brother, Christian, during that time – or he may have worked outside the glass business. In any event, Dominick constructed the Hamilton Glass Works in the fall of 1882 at Butler, Pennsylvania, making prescription ware, flasks, and bottles at a single eight-pot furnace (Hawkins 2009:278).

Dominick Ihmsen reorganized the firm as the Ihmsen Glass Mfg. Co. in 1883, despite the protest of Christian Ihmsen over the similarity of that name with his Ihmsen Glass Co. – although the courts overruled his complaint. The plant experienced financial difficulties in May but attempted to rebound – with no success. The entire property was sold at auction on October 24, 1883 (Hawkins 2009:278).

The high bid went to the recently organized Butler Flint Bottle Co., Ltd., with Dominick O. Ihmsen as president and W.J. McKee as secretary and treasurer. Conrad Smith, John Smith, John Farrell, James J. Hayes, John W. Vogel, and A.P. McKee were the other directors. On December 8, 1883, the plant was operating again – this time as a cooperative. Ihmsen retired then died in March 1887, the same year the plant added a second furnace with 12 pots. The entire factory burned to the ground in June 1888 – damage estimated at \$25,000, only \$16,500 of which was insured. The firm sold the property and moved to Anderson, Indiana, reorganizing as the Anderson Flint Bottle Co. The reorganized company continued in business until ca. 1913, although we have never discovered any use of a logo (Hawkins 2009:278; Roller 1998).



Charles Duffy, Thomas H. Gallagher, and other local businessmen (including some members of the Butler Flint Bottle Co.) organized the Butler Glass Co., Ltd., on August 30, 1889, with Duffy as president and Gallagher as secretary. The firm built a new factory on the original site but sold to J.T.&A. Hamilton the following year (Hawkins 2006:279). See the Hamilton glass factories section for more information.

### **William Ihmsen**

William Ihmsen, the other second-generation brother, chose to go his own way, rather than remaining with his brother, Christian.

### **Williamsport Glass Works** (ca. 1824-1836)

Another of Charles Ihmsen's sons, William Ihmsen (not to be confused with Christian's son, William, partner of Charles T. in C. Ihmsen & Sons), started a completely separate glass company – the Williamsport Glass Works – making window glass at Williamsport (about 14 miles south of Pittsburgh along the Monongahela River) ca. 1824.<sup>4</sup> Warne, Parkinson & Co. (James Warne, William Parkinson, Joel Butler, and Benjamin Butler) built the plant on Coal St., below Washington (now Second St.) in 1816 but ran into financial trouble and sold the factory to Samuel Black, J. McGrew, and R. McGrew, who operated it until 1824, when William Ihmsen & Co. leased the plant (Hawkins 2009:279; Knittle 1927:337; McKearin & Wilson 1978:118-119).

Ihmsen took on William McCully as a partner in 1833, but the partnership lasted no more than three years (for more information on McCully, see the William McCully factories section in the W volume). In 1834, Ihmsen built a new plant – known locally as the “New Factory” – in Williamsport to manufacture bottles. Upon Ihmsen's death in 1836, the picture gets a bit cloudy. Henry Ihmsen, probably William's half-brother (see genealogy section), appears to have run the operation for a while, but a William H. Johnson was also listed. It seems probable that Henry came to town to settle William's affairs, then sold the factory or turned it over to Johnson. The plant may have continued in operation until 1889 or later (Hawkins 2009:279-280).

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<sup>4</sup> The name was changed to Monongahela City in 1837 and today is called Monogahela.

## Containers and Marks

### W. IHMSEN'S (1834-1840)

McKearin and McKearin (1941:504) discussed a flask with an embossed eagle on the front and “W.IHMSEN, S” in an arch above the eagle (Figure 14). It seems likely that the comma (,) was intended to be an apostrophe ('). Toulouse dated this mark to the Williamsport Glass Works era (1820-1834). Flasks of this type were generally made between the early 1810s and the civil war. Knittle (1927:337) also noted that W. Ihmsens “appears on certain bottles.” McKearin & Wilson (1978:119, 491, 506, 559) claimed that only a single bottle style was marked “W. IHMSEN, S”<sup>5</sup> – probably made in the 1820s. The authors provided a good biographical sketch of William Ihmsen (McKearin & Wilson 1978:118-119). Innes (1976:33, 211) used the apostrophe in the mark but also showed it with no punctuation except a period after W. and no “S.” The flask was probably made between 1834, when the second factory was built to make bottles, and 1836, when Ihmsen died – although production of the flask may have continued until later.

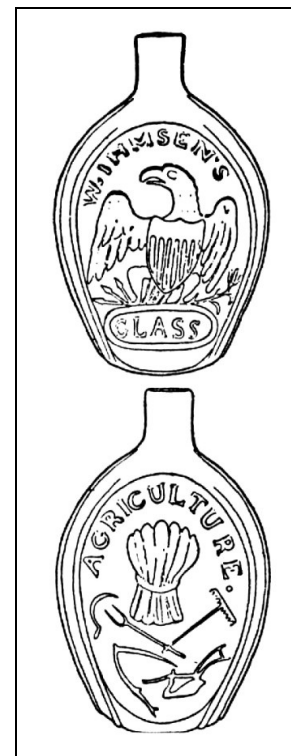


Figure 14 – W Ihmsen,s  
(McKearin and McKearin  
1941:504)

### WI

Hawkins (2008) noted that a “WI” on bottles has been attributed to William Ihmsen. We have not seen the mark.

### Other Ihmsen Companies

Two of these glass concerns were apparently side interests for Christian Ihmsen. In both cases, there seems to have been no compelling reason for Ihmsen to support a competing firm. Since Ihmsen was already occupied with C. Ihmsen & Co., he may have been helping friends or

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<sup>5</sup> The McKearins sometimes used an apostrophe and otherwise used a comma.

former co-workers get a start in business. Henry Ihmsen, on the other hand, seems to have been a minor player in the glass game, but he may also have been supportive of struggling friends. In all three cases the Ihmsen involvement seems to have been limited.

**Young, Plunkett & Ihmsen, Birmingham, Pennsylvania** (ca. 1846-1852)

**Ihmsen, Plunkett & McKnight, Birmingham, Pennsylvania** (1852-1855)

William P. Young, Christian Ihmsen, and Francis T. Plunkett formed the firm of Young, Plunkett & Ihmsen ca. 1846. Although the record is unclear, they likely built the Jefferson Glass Works at Carson and McKee Streets in Birmingham. The plant made bottles, porters, and pint flasks as well as flint glass (Hawkins 2009:536).

In 1852, Charles McKnight purchased Young's interest in the partnership, and the new firm became Ihmsen, Plunkett & McKnight. Ihmsen apparently purchased the shares of Plunkett and McKnight in 1855, bringing the Jefferson Glass Works under the control of C. Ihmsen & Co. (Hawkins 2009:274).

**Ihmsen & Ulam or Ulam & Ihmsen** (1859-ca. 1860)

Patrick Mulvaney, William O'Leary, and James Robinson formed O'Leary, Mulvaney & Co. to open the Birmingham Flint Glass Works ca. 1832 on the south side of the Monongahela River at Birmingham. When O'Leary left sometime between 1841 and 1844, the firm became Mulvaney & Co. Mulvaney took in James T. Leslie as a partner, making the company Mulvaney & Leslie in 1847. The factory mainly produced Tableware (Hawkins 2009:376).

James T. Ledlie and A.T. Ulam formed the firm of Ledlie & Ulam ca. 1853 to operate the old Mulvaney Glass Works, calling the plant the Birmingham White Flint Glass Works. When Ledlie died in 1858, Christian Ihmsen purchased his share of the works. The plant produced bottles and possibly flint glass. Oliver Blackburn purchased Ihmsen's interest in 1860, creating Blackburn & Ulam. Ulam disappeared from the listing in 1862, and Blackburn vanished the following year (Hawkins 2009:82-83, 284, 314). If any of these firms used a glass mark, we have not found it.

## **Ihmsen, Fox & Co., Monongahela, Pennsylvania (1880)**

Henry Ihmsen, Gregory Fox, John J. O’Leary, and James Beck formed Ihmsen, Fox & Co. to build the Monongahela Glass Works, a window-glass plant, at Monongahela, Pennsylvania. Thomas O’Leary bought the interest of Gregor Fox in 1881, renaming the operating company O’Leary, Beck & Co. Thomas O’Leary, Jr., purchased Henry Ihmsen’s share the following year, making the firm O’Leary Brothers & Co. The brothers remained in operation until ca. 1893 (Hawkins 2009:396-397).

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

In our first history of the Ihmsen family (Lockhart et al. 2005c), we centered our introduction around the major flaws with the previous studies. We have eliminated that discussion here because we produced an improved study at that time, and Jay Hawkins in his excellent book on Pittsburgh glass houses (Hawkins 2009) further increased the level of knowledge and accuracy. We have drawn heavily on Hawkins for this section, occasionally adding some speculation about motives and explanations.

Although complex, the history and dating of the Ihmsen firms is now clear and complete within reasonable parameters. Similarly, the logos used by the companies are now well defined and dated to acceptable periods. It is clear from the research that *none* of the Ihmsen companies used *any* logo consistently – with the exception of the “IGCoL” mark on the bases of export beer bottles. These inconsistent uses mean that our dates reflect the periods during which a given logo could have been used. For example, the whiskey base embossed “C. IHMSEN GLASS MANUFACTURER” could have been used anytime between the late 1830s and the early 1870s – although it is highly probable that the marking was only used on one mold. The life of that mold was likely only a few years, so it could have been used from 1850 to 1853 or from 1864 to 1870 or any other short period during that time. Using current methods, we simply cannot pin the dates down any closer than the possible date ranges.

The major controversy among collectors has been over the question of whether or not the Ihmsen Glass Co. used the “IGCo” mark. There is no question that the IGCo mark was used profusely by the Illinois Glass Co. Suggestions by various collectors for identifying the Ihmsen

use of the “IGCo” logo have been: 1) location on the base (Illinois Glass Co. generally used the heel); 2) the use (or lack) of punctuation, and; 3) the capital or lower case “O.”

The location of the mark is most likely a product of a trend that began in the late 1870s, where soft drink (and some beer) bottlers had the company name, owner’s initials, or a logo embossed on the base. Frequently, the manufacturer’s mark was moved to the heel to avoid confusion. The Illinois Glass Co. undoubtedly and extensively used heelmarks, although we have found no evidence that Ihmsen placed any marks in that location except for a few examples on Hutchinson soda bottles. However, it is likely that the placement of the mark had more to do with policy within each company than between the two companies.

Although the most “IGCo” logos had full punctuation, some had none, and others had every combination of periods (e.g., “I.GCo” or “IGCo.”) on both heelmarks and basemarks. They were probably added or ignored at the whim of the individual engravers who made the molds. The “O” in “Co” could be capital, lower case, or underlined superscript. The superscript variation was older but the other two were likely the idiosyncracies of the individual mold makers. In both the “IGCo” and “IGCoL” mark, the “o” in “Co” was usually lower case, but both logos also appeared in with a capital “O” – and each variation was also made with an underlined, superscript “o.” None of these have proven to be useful in diagnosing the specific company.

Although we originally suggested that some accompanying numbers, letters, or symbols were diagnostic (e.g., that the Maltese cross was only found on Ihmsen bottles), that, too, has proven spurious with a larger sample of bottles and logos. What is certain is that the vast majority of bottles with “IGCo” basemarks or heelmarks were made by the Illinois Glass Co. We have found no reliable or accurate evidence that any “IGCo” logo was used by the Ihmsen Glass Co. – although the “IGCoL” mark was almost certainly an Ihmsen characteristic.

A final series of observations and speculation may impact how we look at early glass house operations. In many cases, the principals in the early glass houses changed often, seemingly with no pattern, although the same names were frequently involved in more than one operating firm, sometimes simultaneously. Because this occurred often, there may have been a good reason. Although this is pure speculation, investors and cooperative glass blowers may

have entered into many of these organization just to strengthen the glass industry in a specific location – in the case, Pittsburgh. Many of these investors may have never intended to remain in the industry, providing financial infusions with the plan to then recover their investments and move on as someone else provided the next capital.

The next observation is specifically targeted at Christian Ihmsen, although it also may explain similar behavior by other successful glass factory owners. As explained above, Ihmsen's involvement with Young, Plunket & Ihmsen and with Ihmsen & Ulam while he was actively involved in C. Ihmsen & Co., a competing firm, seems illogical. However, the glass community may have been a much tighter group that heretofore noted. Assuming that Ihmsen was a personal friend of Young or Plunket, for example, he may have just joined their enterprise for the specified purpose of helping them become financially viable – with the full intention of being bought out once the firm was stable. This altruistic behavior may have been much more common than previously explored and should be considered by future researchers.

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