

Keene-Marlboro-Street Glassworks

Bill Lockhart, Beau Schriever, Bill Lindsey, and Carol Serr

The Keene-Marlboro-Street Glassworks opened under the direction of Henry Schoolcraft and his two partners in 1815 and continued in operation under a bewildering variety of operating firms for the next 35 years. Although the vast majority of the plant's products appear to have been unmarked, the factory made several flasks embossed with initials of an owner or the location name – all of which may be closely dated.

History

Keene-Marlboro-Street Glassworks, Keene, New Hampshire (1815-ca. 1850)

Although plans for the plant that would become the Keene-Marlboro-Street Glassworks (originally known as the Flint Glass Factory or the South Glass House) were advertised as early as March 11, 1814, actual construction was begun in January 1815, and the first glass was not produced until November. The founding partners were Daniel Watson and Timothy Twitchell, although they soon brought in Henry R. Schoolcraft – the son of a well-known glass man – as a superintendent and third partner, naming the firm Twitchell & Schoolcraft on August 10, 1815.¹ The partnership broke up on March 30, 1816, and Schoolcraft teamed up with Nathaniel Sprague as Schoolcraft & Sprague. The business failed in early 1817, and the partnership dissolved on February 3. Justus Perry, the main creditor, gained control of the operation, making bottles, fluted flasks, blacking and snuff bottles, and inks (Knittle 1927:242; McKearin & McKearin 1941:593; McKearin & Wilson 1978:99-101; Wilson 1972:159-161).

On September 14, 1822, Perry took on John V. Wood (possibly John B. Wood), a brother-in-law as a partner in Perry & Wood. When Wood left in September 1826, Perry then partnered with his half-brother, Sumner Wheeler (Perry & Wheeler), then added Quincy Wheeler, another half-brother, in 1830, making the firm Perry, Wheeler & Co. Although the business again failed in September 1835, Sumner and Quincy Wheeler attempted to revive the

¹ For a description of the workings of the plant, see Van Rensselaer (1969:58-59).

company, but that, too, failed by 1841, when Joseph Foster attempted to make the business work – with no greater success. Sumner Wheeler and Almond Wood (Sumner Wheeler & Co.) attempted to rejuvenate the operation but dissolved the partnership on June 15, 1848, and Wheeler closed the factory permanently ca. 1850 (McKearin & McKearin 1941:593; McKearin & Wilson 1978:99-101; Wilson 1972:159-161). See Table 1 for a chronology of the operating firms.

Table 1 – Operating Firms – Keen-Marlboro Street Glass Works

Firm Name	Dates
Watson, Twitchell & Schoolcraft*	1815
Twitchell & Schoolcraft	August 10, 1815-March 30, 1816
Schoolcraft & Sprague	March 30, 1816-February 3, 1817
Justus Perry	1817-September 14, 1822
Perry & Wood	September 14, 1822-September 1826
Perry & Wheeler	September 1826-1830
Perry, Wheeler & Co.	1830-September 1835
S&Q Wheeler	September 1835-ca. 1841
Joseph Foster	ca. 1841-?
Sumner Wheeler & Co.	?-June 15, 1848
Sumner Wheeler	June 15, 1848-ca. 1850

* This was a partnership between Daniel Watson, Timothy Twitchell, and Henry Schoolcraft but the actual name of the firm appears to have not been recorded.

Containers and Marks

Although no other products seem to have been marked, the plant made a few “signed” flasks. The earliest was marked “HS” for Henry Schoolcraft, followed by “HP” (actually IP connected by a bar), then “IP” (without the bar), all on the same design of Masonic flask. Another design with two variations was embossed “KEENE” – with three variations in the word

“KEENE.” A final “signed” flask had a sunburst design and was marked both “P&W” and “KEENE” (McKearin & McKearin 1941:593; McKearin & Wilson 1978:103-104; Wilson 1972:163-164). McKearin & Wilson (1972:164) also identified other flasks made by the firm, although we have only included those with actual markings that indicated the manufacturer.

HS in an oval (1815-1817)



Figure 1 – HS flask (Corning Museum)

The HS mark was placed on Masonic flasks by Henry Schoolcraft between 1815 and 1817 (Figures 1 & 2). Schoolcraft made the flasks at the Keene Glass Works, Keene, New Hampshire, operated during 1815 and 1816 by Twitchell & Schoolcraft and in 1816 and 1817 by Schoolcraft & Sprague (Toulouse 1971:254-257). The mark was also noted by Knittle (1927:441).

McKearin and Wilson (1978:591) illustrated the HS mark as well as “IP” and another re-cut mark of HP (actually “IP” with the bar that looks like “HP”), all on the same type of Masonic flask (Figure 3 – also see the next entry). They noted that Toulouse was

the first to suggest the alteration from HS to HP (or IP) based on drawings in their first book (also see Toulouse 1971:252-253). They fully accepted

his logic. Examples of the HS bottle were found in the May 1818 shipwreck of the *Caesar*. However, they dated the bottle as made in 1815 (McKearin & Wilson 1978:103, 438).



Figure 2 – HS logo (Corning Museum)



Figure 3 – HS flask (McKearin & Wilson 1978:591)

I-P in an oval (1817)



Figure 4 – IP flask (Lindsey 2016)



Figure 5 – IP logo (Corning Museum)

This is actually an IP connected by a line. Toulouse (1971:252-254, 430) attributed this mark to Justus Perry, owner of the Keene Glass Works, Keene, New Hampshire. Toulouse noted that Perry took over the operation of the factory from Henry Schoolcraft in 1817 and made Masonic flasks from the Schoolcraft molds by peening out the “S” in the “HS” mark and re-cutting it to a connected “HP.” In actual photographs, however, the bar between “I” and “P” seems very abbreviated (Figures 4 & 5). See Toulouse

(1971:253-254) for a complete description of the alteration (Figure 6) and Lindsey (2016) for a discussion of the flask type.. McKearin and Wilson (1978:103) dated the flasks as probably being made between in 1817, soon after Perry acquired the business.

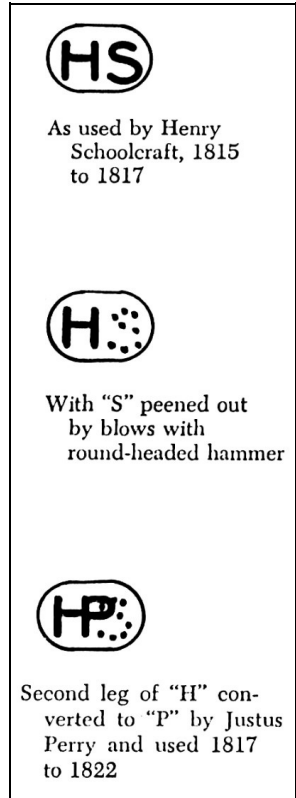


Figure 6 – HS-IP (Toulouse 1971:253)

KEENE (1820s)

The name “KEENE” was embossed on the reverse side of a single type of Masonic/Eagle flask, probably made in the 1820s (Figures 7 & 8). Two error variations included one with the central bar of each “E” missing and the other with all three “E” letters blanked out. The flasks were made at the Keene, New Hampshire glass works, probably in the 1820s (McKearin & Wilson 1978:103, 438, 595). Toulouse (1971:430) was unsure of the dates.



Figure 7 – Keene-Masonic flask (American Bottle Auction)

companies owning the Keene glass works from 1822 to 1830 (McKearin & Wilson 1978:103-104, 438, 611). Toulouse (1971:430) was unaware of the dates of manufacture, although he addressed dating for the P&W mark found on the same flask! See Lindsey (2016) for a discussion on sunburst flasks.

P&W (1822-1830)

The P&W mark is only found on the reverses of two variations of a single flask, along with “KEEN” – an error for “KEENE.” The ampersand (&) was tilted 270 degrees relative to the two initials (see Figures 9 & 10). The flasks were made at the Keene-Marlboro-Street Glassworks, Keene, New Hampshire during the 1822-1830 period when the plant was operated by Perry & Wood or Perry & Wheeler (McKearin & Wilson 1978:103-104, 430, 611). Toulouse (1971:430) dated the P&W mark “1822 to 1828, or 1828 to 1830, or both.”

KEEN (1822-1830)

The error “KEEN” (instead of “KEENE”) was embossed on the body of a single style of sunburst flask with two variations (Figures 9 & 10). Each was also embossed with “P&W” for Perry & Wood or Perry & Wheeler, the

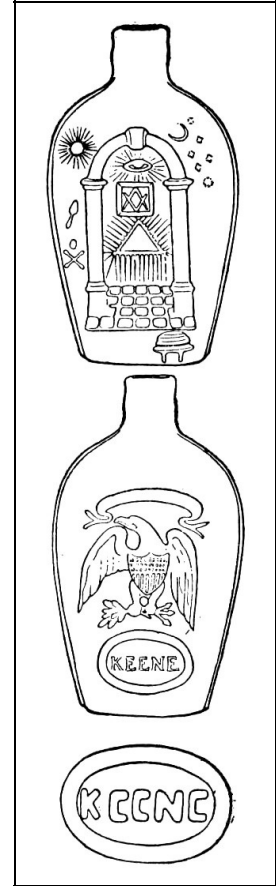


Figure 8 – Keene-Masonic flask (McKearin & Wilson 1978:595)



Figure 9 – Keen figural flask (Glass Works Auction)

PW

Although this mark was not discussed by McKearin & Wilson, Toulouse (1971:430) dated it as being used during the same period as the P&W mark or 1830 to 1835. We have not found this mark in any other source.

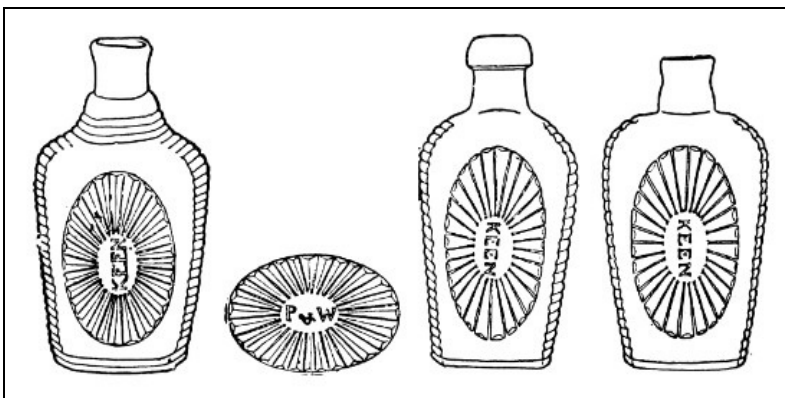


Figure 10 – Keen figural flask (McKearin & Wilson 1978:611)

Discussion and Conclusions

Toulouse brilliantly traced the evolution of the logos on the earliest Keene flasks from “HS” to “I-P.” It should be noted that “Justus” was often written “Iustus” in the early 19th century, hence the “I-P” rather than “J-P.” McKearin and Wilson refined the dates. McKearin & Wilson also neatly identified and dated the other “KEENE” and “KEEN” marks. It is nice to find a set of logos nicely wrapped up and delivered.

The only loose end is probably unimportant. It is unclear in the literature where the name “Keene-Marlboro-Street Glass Works” originated. Secondary sources focused on the operating firms rather than the factory name. McKearin & Wilson (1978:99) cryptically named the site “the glassworks, which is today generally called the Keene-Marlboro-Street Glassworks” – suggesting that the term may be a collector’s name rather than one that was used during the 19th century.

Acknowledgments

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