

Maryland Glass Corp.

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History

[Most of this section was originally published in Lockhart et al. 2014.]

Maryland Glass Corp., Baltimore, Maryland (1907-1956)

The Maryland Glass Corp. began under the aegis of the Emerson Drug Co.¹ Emerson Drug made Bromo-Seltzer, a remedy so popular that it seemed advisable to manufacture its own bottles. With Isaac E. Emerson at the helm, a group incorporated the Maryland Glass Co. in 1907 at Mt. Winans, Maryland.² The firm was incorporated under the laws of New Jersey with a capital of \$100,000 – with Emerson owning almost the entire stock. The firm appointed J. Harry Williams as the plant manager on November 1, 1907. Williams was hired “as supervisor of [the plant’s] construction.” Thereafter, he was in “charge of manufacture of all bottles produced at above works, make all glass, hire all blowers, hire all other labor and office force necessary.” Williams left the firm in May of 1918 (Perkins 1920:322, 328). A charitable man who cared about his employees, Emerson started the factory as a Union shop from the beginning

During the first few years, the factory was dependent on hand production, but the corporation acquired Olean semi-automatic machines about 1911 (Toulouse 1971:339-340). By 1913, Maryland Glass made a general line of glassware at three continuous tanks with 11 rings, entirely by semiautomatic machines (*Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* 1913:952). Assuming that Toulouse was correct about the installation of machines in 1911, Maryland Glass apparently ceased mouth-blown methods no more than two years later.

¹ For a history of Emerson, see Lockhart et al. 2014.

² Mount Winans was a small village southwest of Baltimore, along the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. The area was engulfed by the larger city and is currently a neighborhood in Baltimore.

In 1913, Maryland Glass also captured the exclusive Owens license to manufacture Bromo-Seltzer in blue glass bottles (*National Glass Budget* 1913:1). Walbridge (1920:96) stated, “It was considered advisable to concentrate as far as possible, all the production of blue glass for which there was a limited demand, under the control of one factory.” It is unclear just *whom* considered this concentration advisable, but it was most likely both Owens and Maryland Glass. By November 1916, the plant used one 6-arm Owens machine and one 10-arm machine to make “Bromo-Seltzer ware” (Palmer 1917:213).

The officers of the firm reorganized in late December 1914 as a Maryland corporation, again with \$100,000 in capital stock. As with the initial corporation, all the skilled laborers were union members (Perkins 1920:324-325). In 1917, the *Glassworker* (*Glassworker* 1917:4) presented a cameo view of the Maryland Glass Corp. operation:

The old tank at this plant is being worked with two Owens automatic machines, one Olean machine and one press shop are being worked and blue bottles and jars are being made. The new tank which was recently built is being equipped with an Owens automatic machine and will be put in blast July 10 and amber ware will be made. . . . The Olean machine is being worked two shifts and wide mouth ware is being made. Cream jars and stoppers are made on the press shop. About 90 per cent of the blue bottles used in the United States are made here and about 30 per cent of the ware turned out is used by the Bromo-Seltzer Company.

The next year (1918), the plant operated “three Owens, two Olean machines and two blow shops (*Glassworker* 1918:12). Clearly, hand manufacture had not completely ceased by that time, or the plant had resumed hand production. Unfortunately, the source did not list which products were made by which method. It is highly likely, however, that the plant made all Bromo-Seltzer bottles by machine.

A December 1921 ad noted that “automatic machinery of the highest type enables us to produce economically, bottles of sterling quality” (*Glass Container* 1921:22). This *may* indicate that the full conversion to automatic production occurred in 1921. The glass corporation was so connected to Bromo Seltzer that the company office was located in the Bromo-Seltzer Tower building, Baltimore, by 1923 (Kelly Publishing Co. 1923:1931).

By 1927, the factory made “prescriptions, patent, proprietary, and a general line of bottles; blue, green tint and flint” at three continuous tanks, adding O’Neill and Lynch machines in 1928.³ During that period, the ads called the dominant color “Royal Blue” (Figure 1). The listings dropped prescriptions in 1933, and the plant added perfume the following year, along with the adjustment that products were made on “O’Neil and Lynch and I-S machines.” The machines were modified to “O’Neill and I-S machines in 1935 and continued through 1936. By at least 1938, the firm called its color “Maryland Blue” (Figure 2). In 1940, the product list remained unchanged, but the plant now used Lynch and Individual Section (I-S) machines. In 1943, flint was the only color listed (*American Glass Review* 1927:141; 1928:142-143; 1933:68; 1934:95-96; 1935:88; 1938:93; 1940:98; 1943:104; *Glass Container* 1929:39).⁴



Figure 1 – Royal Blue ad (*Glass Container* 1929:39)



Figure 2 – Maryland Blue ad (*American Glass Review* 1938:93)

The Emerson Drug Co. sold the plants – both glass and medicinal – to the Warner-Lambert Pharmaceutical Co. in 1956, and the Dorsey Corp. acquired the Maryland Glass Corp. in 1971 (Fike 1987:81; Toulouse 1971:340-341). Dorsey placed the Maryland Glass Corp. under the Chattanooga Glass Co. umbrella, although the factory continued production under its own name. On October 25, 1978, Chattanooga Glass sold the assets for the Baltimore plant to Stephen Kelly, under the name of Kelly Glass. Kelly soon adopted the older name of Maryland Glass Corp. (Leagle [2014] 1985).

³ For more about O’Neill machines, see Lockhart 2013. We have yet to produce a study on the Lynch machines.

⁴ This listing is highly unlikely. We have found Cobalt Blue Bromo-Seltzer bottles in formats that could only have been made in the 1940s. However, the use of cobalt may have been restricted during World War II, and Maryland Glass may have *only* used it for Bromo bottles.

Kelly almost immediately suffered financial difficulties and on, October 31, 1979, filed a voluntary petition for reorganization under Chapter XI of the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1978. Maryland Glass began laying off its employees in December 1980 and closed all operations on February 25, 1981. On April 21, the firm was officially adjudicated as bankrupt, and liquidation proceedings began (Leagle [2014] 1985; Open Jurist 2014).

Containers and Marks

The company was best known and was created to make its blue bottles for the Emerson Drug Co., especially Bromo-Seltzer (Figure 3).⁵ However, by at least 1911, the plant also produced colorless bottles (Toulouse 1971:339, 341). Whitten (2017a) noted that Maryland Glass specialized in “all kinds of cobalt blue bottles and jars. Many of the blue glass containers made for Phillips Milk of Magnesia, Bromo-Seltzer, Bromo-Caffeine, Vicks Vapo-Rub, Noxzema, and other products were produced here.” The first Maryland Glass ad in our collection appeared in 1921, and the ads in *Glass Container* only offered “Royal Blue” and “Green Tint” colors. The initial ad for “flint” bottles was sometime between May 1924 and October 1925. After that time, the “flint” designation was always present in the ads. A 1923 ad noted that the company made “chemical, pharmaceutical preparations, proprietary remedies, cosmetics, inks, etc.” (*Glass Container* 1923:44).



Figure 3 – Bromo-Seltzer bottle (eBay)

M (ca. 1921-1956)

According to Toulouse (1971:341), “a number of blue bottles have been seen having the “M” without the circle. These may have been made before the adoption of the 1916 trademark.” Whitten (2017b) noted that the “exact period of use [of the “M” logo was] uncertain,” although it was verified on the base of a “cobalt ‘Milk of Magnesia’ bottle from circa 1950.” He added that

⁵ For a complete study of Bromo Seltzer bottles, see Lockhart et al. 2014.

“Maryland Glass was acquired by the Dorsey Corporation in 1968, and I believe that the ‘M’ mark was used for a time thereafter, but eventually discontinued sometime in the early 1970s” (Whitten 2017a).

Lockhart and Olszewski (1993; 1995) found a cobalt blue bottle embossed with the letter “M” (no circle) and a machine scar, and the Bottle Research Group has discovered numerous Phillips Milk of Magnesia bottles from eBay auctions and other source (e.g.,

antique stores) that were machine made and had the uncircled “M” logo on the base. Thus far we have never discovered the “M” basemark on a cobalt blue bottle that was mouth blown or that

had an Owens machine scar. The only examples we can find were in conjunction with either Phillips Milk of Magnesia bottles or with bases embossed “UDCO” – addressed in the next section below.



Figure 5 – Base number (eBay)

Seltzer bottles made by Maryland Glass prior to 1921 had no logo other than one- or two-digit numbers. Many of these had Owens scars, although some had other machine scars (Figure 4). In 1921, Maryland Glass began using the Circle-M logo (see that section above).

The second study – Phillips Milk of Magnesia bottles – remains in progress as this is written and was begun to address the “M” mark. Similarities between this and the Bromo Seltzer are unmistakable. Early, non-machine bottles were made by another firm, and the early, cobalt-blue, machine-made bottles were embossed on their bases with one- or two-digit numbers – just like most of the early machine-made Bromo Seltzer bottles (Figure 5). The early bottles – mouth blown and machine made – all had one-part finishes, either rounded or squared (Figure 6). This similarity makes it highly likely that Maryland Glass made the cobalt-blue bottles with the numbered bases.



Figure 4 – Owens Scar (eBay)



Figure 6 – Squared finish (eBay)



Figure 7 – CT finish (eBay)

We have cataloged five different types of Phillips base marks with the “M” logo, all with continuous-thread finishes – a finish type developed in the mid-1920s (Figures 7 & 8). These were almost certainly a continuation of the numbered bases made by the Maryland Glass Corp. In 1921, the Kearns-Gorsuch Glass Co. began producing cobalt-blue bottles in competition with Maryland Glass, and Phillips began ordering from both glass houses, probably during the mid- to late 1920s (see the section on the Kearns glass houses for more information on Kearns-Gorsuch). It seems likely that Maryland Glass placed its priority on the production of Bromo-Seltzer bottles for Emerson, so Phillips’ demand may have exceeded the Maryland Glass Corp. output. Maryland Glass seems to have only used its Owens machines for the Bromo-Seltzer bottles; we have found no other cobalt-blue bottles with Owens machine scars.

These Phillips Milk of Magnesia bottles were probably made into the 1950s – concurrently with Bromo-Seltzer bottles (and other types) that had the Circle-M basemarks. At this point, we have only seen the non-circle “M” logos on Phillips bottles and ones with the “UDCO” trademark (discussed below). We have no explanation for why Maryland Glass selected these two firms for differential treatment –



Figure 8 – M bases (eBay)

although both might have requested a maker's mark with no circle. A reason, however, remains lacking. The "M" logo was therefore probably used between 1921 and 1956, possibly later.

The study of the "M" logo is complicated by the presence of at least one – probably two or more – unrelated logos. One was used on beer bottles in the late 19th century, another on prescription bottles from the 1890s to the first decade of the 20th century. These were too early to have been made by the Maryland Glass Corp. and are addressed in the Other M section.

UDCo / M (ca. 1921-1944)

Toulouse (1971:509) stated, "Actually this is a combination of two marks. The 'UDCo' initials stand for United Drug, while the 'M' is for the Maryland Glass Co. [actually Corp.], Baltimore, Md., who made the cobalt blue bottle on which both trademarks were used." He dated the marks ca. 1910 to 1930. Both Richardson & Richardson (1992:162) and Griffenhagen & Bogard (1999:129) noted the UDCo mark and also attributed it to the United Drug Co. They followed the Toulouse dates of 1910 to 1930. Toulouse admitted that he did not know when the United Drug Co. was in business.

At the behest of Louis K. Liggett, forty druggists each contributed \$1,000 in 1902 to form the United Drug Co., a franchising firm that distributed drugs to its outlets. The following year, the company opened at 43 Leon St., Boston, using the brand name Rexall for its products. By 1921, United Drug operated 21 manufacturing factories throughout the U.S., supplying 10,000 stores. When Liggett retired in 1944, the new president, Justin Dart, renamed the firm the Rexall Drug Co., moving the headquarters to Los Angeles (Northeastern University 1996).

Apparently, the United Drug Co. used several manufacturers for their bottles but always had their initials also embossed on the bases. Toulouse (1971:509) also showed the mark in conjunction with a CH monogram (ca. 1910-1920), but he had no suggestion for a possible manufacturer – nor do we. The UDCo mark also appeared in an arch on a bottle with WGW in an inverted arch. He suggested that WGW may indicate the Woodbury Glass Works (1882-1896 – see the section on Woodbury for more information) but admitted he was not



Figure 9 – M UDCO (Jim Royle)

certain. He noted that the dates were not established for the mark. Our only example – provided by Jim Royle – cobalt blue in color, was embossed “M / UDCO / 70” and had a circular valve scar near the center of the base (Figure 9). See the Other M section for more on the UDCO logo.

Circle M (1921-1971)

Toulouse (1971:341) stated that “the symbol ‘M in a circle’ was adopted [by Maryland Glass Corp.] in 1916 and appears on bottles made after that date.” Peterson (1968:49), however, placed the mark as being first used by the Maryland Glass Corp. in 1921 on “the bottom of its colorful bottles.” Creswick (1987:154) noted that the Maryland Glass Corp. registered the Circle-M trademark (No. 255,523) on March 22, 1927, and was renewed on March 22, 1947. The actual U.S. Patent Office record showed the mark as being first used in January 1921, on “glass bottles” where it was “applied to the goods by blowing the same into the bottoms of the bottles.”



Figure 10 – Circle-M (eBay & TUR)

We have also observed the mark on flasks, although those might have been for pharmaceutical use rather than for alcohol and on colorless as well as cobalt blue containers (Figures 10 & 11). Maryland Glass also produced Royal Blue beer bottles in 1933 (*Glass Packer*



Figure 11 – Circle-M (El Paso Coliseum)

1933:185). These beer bottles would have been machine made with the Circle M manufacturer’s mark. The Circle-M mark appeared on a table of glass trademarks compiled by Owens-Illinois in 1964 (Berge 1980:83) and was still listed in 1971 (Hanlon 1971:6-17). The mark, however, was no longer listed in the 1982 Emhart book of punt marks (1982:74-75).

Whitten (2017c) stated that the Circle-M mark was first used in 1921 and may have been discontinued in the early 1970s, and we concur that the mark terminated in 1971 with the acquisition of the plant by the Dorsey Corp. Whittten also noted that the “‘M in a circle’ mark

has also been used more recently by the Mosser Glass Company (Cambridge, OH, 1971-to date), but in those cases it is usually found on tableware, novelties, toothpick holders, etc.” – not any commercial bottles.

M in an oval G (ca. 1911-1915)

Whitten (2017b) noted this mark “on the base of a cobalt blue rectangular “2 oz” marked bottle, with vertical ribbing on the front; probably an iodine or poison bottle. Also seen on the base of a cobalt “Perfection Ginger Ale, Brooklandwood Springs Company, Baltimore, MD” bottle.” He described the “G” as “very similar in appearance to a horizontally oriented oval” and considered the presence of the logo on the Brooklandwood Springs bottle as evidence that the mark was used by the Maryland Glass Corp. – although its use was rare compared with the Circle-M logo.



Figure 12 – Perfection Ginger Ale & Citro
(Antique Bottles.net)

The May 31, 1910, issue of the *Washington Post* briefly mentioned Perfection Ginger Ale, bottled by the Brooklandwood Springs Co., and the drink was advertised by the Arlington Bottling Co., 1021 27th St NW, in the 1914 Washington, DC, city directory. Brooklandwood Springs also offered a drink called Citro – the Thirst Quencher, and it, too, was packaged in cobalt blue bottles. Both bottles were machine made and bowling pin shaped, adding to the blue color to make them unusual and distinctive (Figure 12). With the Brooklandwood headquarters in Baltimore – obviously near the Maryland Glass Corp. – and the M-in-G logos on the bases, the Maryland Glass identification for the logo is virtually assured. Because they were machine made, the bottles were likely produced ca. 1911 or slightly later – during the ca. 1911-1915 period.

Bromo-Seltzer Bottles

Isaac E. Emerson conceived the plan for a headache remedy at his drugstore in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1888 and incorporated the Emerson Drug Co. in 1891 to market his new product –

Bromo-Seltzer. He soon built factories in both Maryland and New Jersey (Munsey 2011:47). See Lockhart et al. for more information on both the product and the bottles. Although the Maryland Glass Corp. made the vast majority of Bromo-Seltzer bottles, other glass houses produced the containers both before Maryland Glass opened and during its tenure. See Lockhart et al. (2014) for an in-depth discussion about Bromo bottles including the ones made both prior to and after Maryland Glass Corp.

Discussion and Conclusions

There is no question that the Circle-M logo was the dominant mark used by the Maryland Glass Corp. The company claimed first use of the mark in 1921 and almost certainly used it until the factory lost its identity in 1971. It is equally certain that the firm only identified its work with numbers, symbols, or nothing at all in the pre-machine era and prior to 1921.

Less clear is the period of use for the letter “M” on cobalt blue bottles, although it is virtually certain that the Maryland Glass Corp. used the letter on bottles made for Phillips Milk of Magnesia and bottles for the United Drug Co. These may have been made from 1921 to at least the 1950s, possibly later – although much of this dating is guesswork.

The final logo – an “M” surrounded by a horizontally elongated “G” – was very likely the earliest logo used by Maryland Glass – during the ca. 1911-1915 period. As noted above, the plant advertised Royal Blue beer bottles in 1933 and very likely made the Perfection Ginger Ale and Citro bottles earlier. Future research should concentrate on creating a strong chronology for Phillips Milk of Magnesia bottles along with the G-around-M logo and soda bottles made by Maryland Glass.

Acknowledgments

A bouquet of gratitude to Wanda Wakkinen for proofreading and to all the eBay sellers who unknowingly provided incredible amounts of information and photos.

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Last updated 9/11/2017

