

Chapter 3

Maine Seals on Milk Bottles

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Like Massachusetts, Maine required all milk and cream bottles used in the state to be “sealed” – i.e., to be certified as containing the proper amount of milk or cream. Massachusetts started the trend in 1900, when it enacted the first seal laws, requiring each dairy to bring bottles to local sealers who etched their initials, the date, and (usually) the place on each bottle with acceptable measurements. In late 1909, the onus shifted to the manufacturers, who were required to post a bond in the state, guaranteeing that the bottles held the correct amount of milk. Maine seals followed a slightly different historical path than their Massachusetts counterparts and had a slightly different general format, but the two systems shared many similarities. See Chapter 2 for more on the Massachusetts seals and Chapter 1 for a study on the number system that developed during the same period.

Laws

Maine enacted its initial seal law in 1913. The law allowed sealing to take two forms. First, “all dealers in milk or cream who use glass bottles or jars for the distribution of milk or cream to consumers, which have not been sealed by the manufacturer, shall bring in such bottles or jars to the office of their city or town sealer to be sealed.” Containers sealed by the glass manufacturer had to “be marked with the name, initials or trade mark of the manufacturer, and designating number” assigned by the state. Each bottle maker had to post a \$1,000 bond with the State of Maine (Public Laws of Maine 1913:78-79).

The law was slightly modified in 1915 to require the “designating number and the words “Maine Seal” [to] be marked on the outside of the upper half of each bottle.” The bond and other requirements remained the same (Public Laws of Maine 1915:28). The state enacted this requirement because the participating glass makers were embossing their seals on the base, in the front plate with the dairy information, and just about anywhere and in any format they chose. Since the law did not specify that the mark be *embossed*, some manufacturers began to use pyroglazing (also called Applied Color Lettering) for the seal.

The laws remained unchanged until 1947, when there was a major modification. The need for the term “Maine Seal” was stricken from record, and each bottle then needed to be “clearly and permanently marked with its capacity, with word “Sealed” and for purposes of identification, with the name, initials, or trade-mark of the manufacturer, and . . . the manufacturer’s mold designation, which identifies the pattern or design of the bottle.” The law further required that “the capacity designation and the word “Sealed” shall not be on the bottom of the bottle.” The bond remained at \$1,000 (Public Laws of Maine 1947:295-296).

Carlow (1987:61, 68, 8891, 97, 119) provided empirical evidence that 1947 was the last year of the Maine Seal system. He illustrated and described bottles from 1947 (Owens-Illinois marks) both with and without Maine Seals.

The *Kennebec Journal* (4/5/1916) noted the numbers of companies registered by 1916:

- 1 Thatcher Mfg. Co., Elmira, New York
- F-2 Fidelity Glass Co., Tarentum, Pennsylvania
- P-3 Poughkeepsie Glass Works, Poughkeepsie, New York
- E-4 Essex Glass Co., Mt. Vernon, New York
- T-19 Travis Glass Co., Clarksburg, West Virginia

The Dairy Antiques Site (2016) provided the following list of firms (reorganized in roughly numerical order (we do not have examples of all of these):

MAINE LGCO 01 SEAL	Lockport Glass Company
MAINE 1 SEAL	Thatcher Manufacturing Company
MAINE B1 SEAL	Buck Glass Company
MAINE A.B.C.2 SEAL	Atlantic Bottle Company
MAINE F-2 SEAL	Fidelity Glass Company
MAINE P-3 SEAL	Poughkeepsie Glass Works
MAINE E-4 SEAL	Essex Glass Company
MAINE E-5 SEAL	Weis Fibre Container Corporation (wax containers)
MAINE 5 over W SEAL	Winslow Glass Company
MAINE P.V. 7 SEAL	Purity Paper Vessels Company (wax containers)
MAINE K9 SEAL	Knox Glass Bottle Company

MAINE 11 SEAL	Thatcher Manufacturing Company
MAINE T-19 SEAL	Travis Glass Company
MAINE W.019 SEAL	Wisconsin Fibre Bottle Company (wax containers)
MAINE 48 SEAL	Berney-Bond Glass Company
MAINE 51 SEAL	Universal Glass Products Company
MAINE L52 SEAL	Lamb Glass Company
MAINE L52 SEAL	Lamb Glass Company (“52” in the crook of the “L”)
MAINE L-52 SEAL	Lamb Glass Company
MAINE S. CO. SEAL	Sealright Company (wax containers)

Maine Seals by Number and Description

Unfortunately, virtually all the information we have on individual seals is empirical, derived from eBay photos and the bottle in Laurah Brown’s collection. Still, this provides a good sample. Additional seals will almost certainly surface in the future.

MAINE LGC01 SEAL

According to the Dairy Antique Site (see above), Maine awarded the Lockport Glass Co. Seal No. LGC01, almost certainly to match the firm’s No. 1 that it used in most states (Figure 1). The Thatcher Mfg. Co. apparently applied for a number earlier than Lockport, receiving No. 1.



Figure 3-1 – Maine LGC01 Seal

MAINE 1 SEAL

As noted in the *Kennebec Journal*, the Thatcher Mfg. Co. received the number 1 for use on Maine seals. The Thatcher Mfg. Co. (renamed the Thatcher Glass Mfg. Co. in 1946) was one of the earliest companies to emboss date codes on its containers (and the first milk bottle manufacturer to do so). From late 1909 to 1926, Thatcher embossed two-digit date codes in association with its logo on the bases of milk bottles. This creates much tighter date ranges for Thatcher products and provides strong evidence for dating stylistic changes. During a transition period (1920-1924), both the TMC mark and the date codes could be found on either the heel or

base of the bottles or both. When the company settled into the M^TC mark (with the “M” and “C” nestled under the “wings” of the “T”) from 1923 to ca. 1949, the two-digit date code and a letter identifying the factory settled onto the base. Thatcher had captured the exclusive license to make milk bottles on the Owens Automatic Bottle Machine, so all of the bottles until at least the mid-1920s had the distinctive, feathered Owens basal scar (Lockhart et al. 2007c:58-60).

Thatcher created Maine Seals with the number 1 in at least eight embossed formats as well as one in Applied Color Lettering (ACL). Also see the Maine 11 Seal section – another Thatcher number (see discussion below).

Embossed

1. Embossed “1” in a front, full-sized plate with “T MFG CO / 11” on the base (Figure 2). This may be some sort of pre-seal marking. Although Maine enacted the seal law in 1913, there was almost certainly some discussion about the idea earlier, and this may have been part of a pilot study worked out between Thatcher and Maine. It is also possible that the “11” indicated the Thatcher number rather than a date code.



Figure 3-4 – Maine Seal 1 HISCO (eBay)



Figure 3-2 – 1 in a plate



Figure 3-3 – Maine Seal 1 (eBay)

2. “MAINE SEAL (arch) / 1 (horizontal)” with “14 / T.MFG.CO.” in between (Figure 3). The bottle was made in 1914. On several of these bases, the Owens scar obliterated the “1” – but every example we have seen had the “14” date code.

3. “MAINE SEAL 1” in an inverted arch as part of the front plate (Figure 4). These only appeared on milk bottles embossed “HISCO” in a cross format.



Figure 3-5 – Maine Seal 1 (eBay)

4. “MAINE SEAL 1” in a slight arch on the back shoulder, accompanied by the T MFG Co basemark. The date code, if any, on our example was obliterated by the Owens scar (Figure 5)

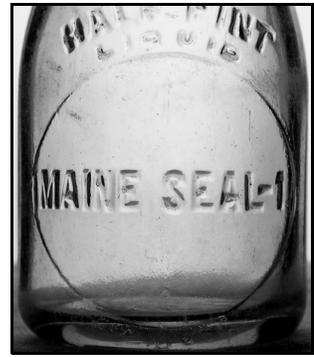


Figure 3-6 – Maine Seal-1

5. “MAINE SEAL-1” horizontal across the center of a front plate (Figure 6) Thatcher mfg. mark with “16” date code

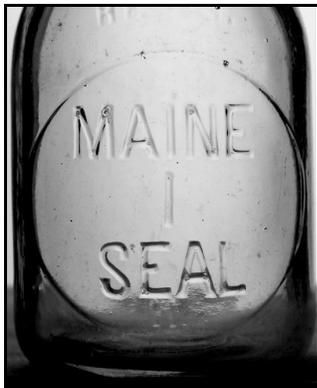


Figure 3-7 – Maine 1 Seal

6. Same as #5 but in the center of the front plate (with dairy embossing above and below)



Figure 3-8 – Maine 1 Seal

7. “MAINE / 1 / SEAL” in a round front plate (Figure 7)

8. “MAINE / 1 / SEAL” in a circular format on the shoulder (usually front but may be back); may be in plate or not (Figure 8). These were in use by at least 1917 as shown by a base embossed “11 T.MFG.CO. 17” (Figure 9). The “11” was not a date code in this case; it was one of the state numbers assigned to Thatcher. By buying up other glass houses, Thatcher eventually accumulated four different numbers (1, 7, 11, 14). A variation was embossed in the center of a front body plate, surrounded by company information (Figure 10).



Figure 9 – 1917 base (eBay)

not (Figure 8). These were in use by at least 1917 as shown by a base embossed “11 T.MFG.CO. 17” (Figure 9). The “11” was not a date code in this case; it was one of the state numbers assigned to Thatcher. By buying up other glass houses, Thatcher eventually accumulated four different numbers (1, 7, 11, 14). A variation was embossed in the center of a front body plate, surrounded by company information (Figure 10).



Figure 3-10 – Maine 1 Seal (eBay)

Pyroglazed

9. “MAINE / 1 / SEAL in three lines (not circular) format on the shoulder (Figure 11). The eBay example was red.



Figure 3-11 – Maine 1 Seal ACL (eBay)

10. “MAINE 1 SEAL” in one line on the shoulder (Figure 12). The eBay example was black.



Figure 3-12 – Maine 1 Seal ACL (eBay)

MAINE A.B.C.2 Seal

The Atlantic Bottle Co. purchased the Fidelity Glass Co. at Brackenridge, Pennsylvania, in 1916 and began production of milk bottles almost immediately. The firm remained in business until the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. acquired the factory in 1930. Maine seals could not have been used earlier than 1916, and it may have taken a few years before Atlantic applied for the Maine bond. The last seals were likely used in 1930, possibly a couple of years later as Owens-Illinois filled existing contracts and used up the old molds.

1. “MAINE / A.B.C.2 / SEAL” in a circular format on the shoulder (Figure 13). Examples we have seen were not in a plate.



Figure 3-13 – Maine A.B.C.2 Seal

MAINE B1 SEAL

The Buck Glass Co. purchased the Nivison Glass Co. at Baltimore, Maryland, in 1909, almost immediately producing milk bottles by machine. The Knox Glass Bottle Co. bought the Buck plant in 1961.

1. “MAINE / B1 / SEAL” in a circular format in a plate on the shoulder (Figure 14). Our example is from the Buck Glass Co., embossed “3077-1B46” in an inverted arch on the base. The date code suggests that this bottle was made in 1946 – just before Maine lifted the seal law.



Figure 3-14 – Maine B1 Seal

MAINE E4 SEAL

Specializing in milk bottle manufacture, the Essex Glass Co. opened in 1906 at Mt. Vernon, Ohio, and continued in operation until the Thatcher Mfg. Co. acquired the firm in 1920. The Maine E4 seals appeared in at least two formats.

1. “MAINE SEAL E4” in an inverted arch at the bottom of a round plate on the front of the bottle (Figure 15). The HISCO cross (described above) filled the center of the plate. Since we recorded at least two other HISCO milk bottles with different seals but the same configuration, it seems likely that HISCO required that format – at least prior to the 1915 law change.

2. “MAINE / E4 / SEAL” in a circular format on the shoulder with no plate mold (Figure 16).

MAINE 5W SEAL

The Winslow Glass Co. opened in 1898 at Matthews, Indiana, making a general line of containers until ca. 1905. In 1902, however, the firm opened a new plant at Columbus, Ohio, still producing a general line of glassware and adding machine-made milk bottles by 1909. By 1918, the factory was making milk bottles exclusively. The Berney-Bond Glass Co. purchased the Winslow plant on May 1, 1927.

1. MAINE / 5 / W / SEAL in a circular format in a small plate on the shoulder. The “5” was between the “legs” of the “W” (Figure 17). Our example bottle had the “5 / W” heelmark.



Figure 3-15 – Maine Seal E4 (eBay)



Figure 3-16 – Maine E4 Seal



Figure 3-17 – Maine 5W Seal

MAINE K9 SEAL

The letter “K” indicated the Knox Glass Bottle Co. Knox Glass began operations at Knox, Pennsylvania, in 1917 and grew into a giant with a total of 20 factory locations at various times. Initially, each plant had its own logo, identified by different initials in an embossed keystone. In 1952, however, the parent company mandated the use of the Keystone-K logo for all plants. Knox became a subsidiary of Hunt Foods & Industries, Inc., on October 15, 1965, but was then sold to the Glass Container Corp. in 1968.

Knox probably began making milk bottles when the first plant opened in 1917, certainly reasonably soon thereafter, acquiring “9” as its milk bottle number. The firm probably joined the Maine seal system during that period. In 1932, however, milk bottle production ceased, when Knox sold that portion of the business to the Thatcher Mfg. Co. By at least 1943, however, Knox was back in the milk bottle business, this time using a “K-14” code, although we have not seen that designation as a Maine seal. It is certain that Thatcher also acquired the K9 logo in general and as both the Massachusetts and Main seals. Giarde (1980:118-119) noted that the “K9” mark was embossed on milk bottles that also contained the Thatcher logo, although that probably only lasted until the molds wore out.



Figure 3-18 – Maine K9 Seal (eBay)

1. “MAINE / K9 / SEAL” in circular format in a small plate on the front shoulder (Figure 18).

MAINE 11 SEAL

The Thatcher Mfg. Co. used the “MAINE 11 SEAL” as well as the number “1” – although we have not discovered the circumstances involved in the need for two numbers. As noted above, Thatcher had the rights to numbers 1, 7, 11, and 14 (as well as 9 after the Knox sale), but why the firm chose to use the number “11” on a HISCO bottle is unknown.

1. “MAINE SEAL 11” in an inverted arch at the bottom of the front plate, with Thatcher’s TMC / 11 at the front heel and a “C” in the ejection scar on the base (Figure 19). Each “11” was sans



Figure 3-19 – Maine Seal 11

serif. Our example is peculiar for other reasons as well. The HISCO bottles all appear to have a round plate inside a round plate, but the inner plate was always centered in the other examples (see Figures 4 and 15). On this one, however, the inner plate is off-center toward the top of the outer plate. In addition, the inner plate was slightly rotated so that the HISCO cross was a bit tilted.



Figure 3-20 – Maine 11 Seal (eBay)

2. “MAINE / 11 / SEAL” in a circular format in a plate on the shoulder (Figure 20).

MAINE 48 SEAL

The number “48” was assigned to the Berney-Bond Glass Co. Berney-Bond was formed as a merger between the Berney Glass Co. and the Bond Glass Co. on September 24, 1904. The firm began making a general line of bottles but added machines in 1917 and specialized in milk bottles after that. The Owens-Illinois Glass Co. took over the plants in 1930.

Berney-Bond used both the BBGCo48 and BB48 logos to mark its glass bottles. Once Owens-Illinois gained control of the firm, it continued to use the “48” number, but it only continued the BB48 marks. The study of Massachusetts seals determined that all sealed bottles from that state were embossed with “BBGCo48” heelmarks during the Berney-Bond period, but the logos changed to “BB48” once Owens-Illinois took over.

Carlow (1987:23, 49, 53, 54, 86, 107) showed that the Maine Seal bottles from Berney-Bond had “BBGCo48” embossed on the heel. Once the bottles had the Owens-Illinois symbol on the base, they were heelmarked “BB48.” So, the Maine sealed bottles follow the same pattern as the ones from Massachusetts (see the section on Massachusetts seals).

1. “MAINE (slight arch) / 48 (horizontal) / SEAL (slight inverted arch)” at the top of a front plate (Figure 21).



Figure 3-21 – Maine 48 Seal (eBay)

2. “MAINE / 48 / SEAL” in circular format – with or without plate (Figure 22). An unusual example of this – with the typical HISCO front plate design – had the typical circular shoulder seal plus “MAINE SEAL” in an inverted arch at the bottom of a front plate. This bottle was unusual. Although there was no number following the seal, the bottle had a BBGCo48 heelmark (Figure 23).



Figure 3-22 – Maine 48 Seal (eBay)



Figure 3-23 – Maine Seal (eBay)

MAINE 51 SEAL

In 1921, Universal Glass Products Co. took over the former Brown Tumbler Co. factory at Parkersburg, West Virginia. The National Bottle Corp. acquired the company in 1960 but operated it under the Universal name. The firm opened a second plant at Joliet, Illinois, in 1962 and operated both factories until at least 1979.

1. “MAINE / 51 / SEAL” in a circular format with abasemark of “UGP 51” (Carlow 1987:86). We have not yet discovered an example.

MAINE L SEAL

With no number attached, this seal is unusual. The letter may simply have indicated the Lamb Glass Co. – the user of the L52 logos discussed below. In that context, it could even have been an engraver’s error, leaving out the numerals. However, the seal could also belong to different “L” glass house. With Lockport Glass Co. represented by the “LGCo01” seal, and Lamb with at least four, possibly five variations, the only other major milk bottle producer with the correct initial would have been the Liberty Glass Co. of Sapulpa, Oklahoma. Although the

firm generally concentrated on the western and central U.S., it manufactured milk bottles between 1918 and 1994 – and may have used Maine as a trial market in the East.

1. “MAINE / L / SEAL” in a circular format on a Hood Dairy bottle with a 1941 date code (Figure 24).



Figure 3-24 – Maine L Seal

MAINE L52 SEAL

The Lamb Glass Co. opened at Mt. Vernon, Ohio, in 1921 and immediately adopted the number 52. The logo evolved from L-52 in the early 1920s to L.G.CO. 52 during the latter part of the decade (possibly both used simultaneously), finally adopting L52 (with “52” in the crook of the “L”) ca. 1929. The firm continued to use the L52 mark until it was engulfed by the Dorsey Corp. in 1963 and may have continued to use the logo until 1971 or later.



Figure 3-25 – Maine L-52 Seal

1. MAINE / L-52 / SEAL in circular format; embossed bottle (Figure 25) with L.G.CO. 52 embossed on the heel.

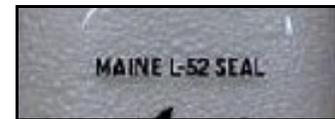


Figure 3-26 – Maine L-52 Seal (eBay)

2. “MAINE L-52 SEAL” (all horizontal); brown or green pyroglaze at shoulder (Figure 26)



Figure 3-27 – Maine L52 Seal (eBay)



Figure 3-28 – Maine L52 Seal

3. “MAINE / L52 / SEAL” in circular format; red ACL at shoulder (Figure 27)

4. “MAINE / L52 / SEAL” in circular format – these have the “52” nestled in the crook of the “L” with the same mark at the heel (Figure 28). One example of the seal appeared on a HOOD dairy bottle with a 1936 date code on the base.

4a. Same as #4 but with no “L”¹

¹ The 52 seal with no “L” has been reported to us; We have not seen an example.

MAINE L MFG CO SEAL



Figure 3-29 – Maine Seal L Mfg Co. (eBay)

Currently, this firm remains a mystery. Since we have not discovered a glass house with these initials, this was very likely a jobber, selling milk bottles, possibly manufacturing other products for use by dairies.

1. “MAINE SEAL (arch) / L MFG CO (inverted arch)” around a PC monogram – all on the base of the bottle (Figure 29). The front of the multi-sided bottle was also embossed with PC monogram on the shoulder and “PORTLAND / CREAMERY” on the body (Figure 30).



Figure 3-30 – Portland Creamery bottle (eBay)

MAINE SEAL S.CO.

Growing out of the Oswego Falls Pulp and Paper Co., the Oswego Falls-Sealright Co. incorporated in 1917, producing cone-shaped paper milk bottles called the Sealright Kone in 1921. The firm expanded and remains in business today (Funding Universe 2014).

1. “MAINE SEAL” (arch) / “100” (inverted arch) between two circles with “S.CO.” in the center – on waxed paper cartons made by the Sealright Co., Inc., Fulton, New York (Carlow 1987:110).

MAINE T19 SEAL

The Travis Glass Co. used the number “19” during its entire term in business. Travis opened at Clarksburg, West Virginia, in 1908, adding plants at Weston and Cedar Grove ca. 1916 and 1917, respectively. The firm used a logo composed of a “T” in the center of an inverted triangle embossed on the bases of its bottles – with a code sequence of “T-19-12” in an inverted arch. The final number was a date code, ranging from 12-19

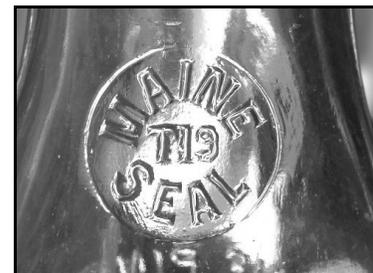


Figure 3-31 – Maine T19 Seal

(1912-1919), although many of the codes were partially or totally obliterated by machine scars. The Thatcher Mfg. Co. acquired Travis in early 1920.

1. “MAINE / T19 / SEAL” in circular format with “T” in an inverted triangle in the center of the base and “T-19-15” in an inverted arch at the bottom of the base (Figure 31). The “15” was a date code for 1915 and indicates that the circular format was in place by at least that date.

MAINE F-2, P-3, E-5, P.V. 7, and W.019

Although all of these were listed by the Dairy Antique Site, we have not found examples. The latter three were used on waxed-paper containers and are not directly relevant to this study.

Discussion and Conclusions

Like Massachusetts, Maine had a rich history of milk bottle seals. The state authorized at least 15 seals with at least 31 total variations. Variations included circular basemarks, circular heelmarks, circular body marks, arches, inverted arches, and horizontal seals. Al Morin contributed an odd, almost bizarre example embossed “MAINE SEAL (arch) / B1 / MASS (inverted arch)” on the front shoulder – almost certainly intended to cover both states.

It is important to recognize that this is only a pilot study. There were almost certainly more variations and possibly more seals – maybe even more of the double state seals. Future research should center around finding new venues to discover other variations.

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