

The Dating Game

In Pursuit of the Elusive Diamond G

By Bill Lockhart

This will be a bit different from our usual articles and will be much more informal. It is basically a look at how I traced a single manufacturer's mark and determined who used it. Typically, we just present the finished product with virtually no pathway – no discussion about how we get from our first notice of a mark to the discovery of the glass house that used it.

Already, I have used the word “we” in my descriptions. Typically, *The Dating Game* is written by the members of the Bottle Research Group – Bill Lindsey, Carol Serr, Pete Schulz (listed in the order in which we came together) – and me, of course. The others are involved in various pursuits, and I did most of this research alone, so it is just me this time.

While I'm introducing, I should tell you just a bit about how we work. Our long-range goal is a to write a book or a multi-volumer series about manufacturer's marks on bottles. During the process, we are publishing articles in various places (notably *Bottle and Extras*) about some of the marks we have researched.

Another little side trip concerns how we select what to research, and that occurs in several ways. Since we are basically writing our book in alphabetical order by companies, some of our articles are just based on research we found interesting. Sometimes, we encounter a snowball effect, where a look at one mark leads us into other marks, other companies and other bottles. We will have one of those coming up next time.

Often, we are sparked by questions from collectors or archaeologists about bottles they have found that they cannot identify. Sometimes, we strike out; other times, we open a door to a whole new world. Sometimes, we just encounter a new (to us) mark on eBay or on a bottle we spot in an antique store or a bottle show.

In this case, a man (not even a collector) bought a box of bottles at

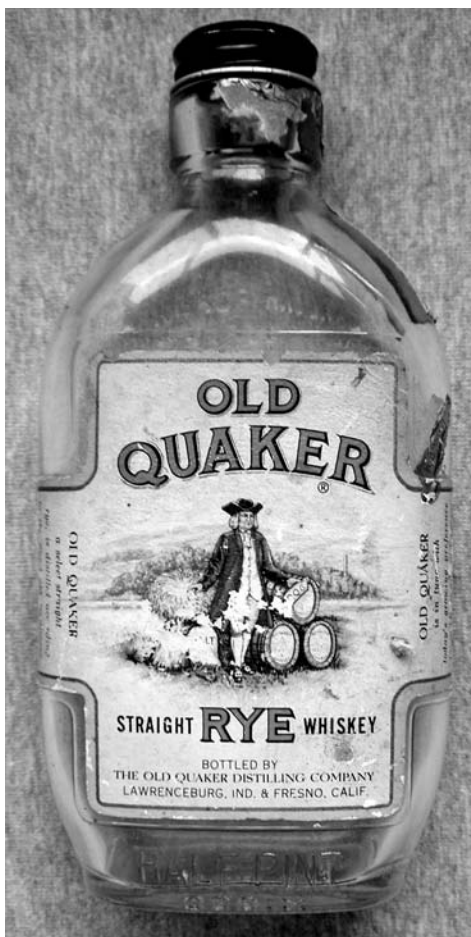


Figure 1 – Old Quaker flask with paper label



Figure 2 – Embossed Quaker on reverse of flask

a flea market and asked me to look at them. They were pretty typical “junk” bottles – generic (slick-sided), colorless – the sort that you usually do not even



Figure 3 – Base of Old Quaker flask with Diamond-G mark

look at. One, however, was an “Old Quaker” flask with an embossed picture of an obvious Quaker man on one side. The base was embossed “D-134 / M-87-C / 67 {G in a diamond} 7.” The diamond was narrow (unlike the elongated diamonds used by the Illinois Glass Co. and several others) – like a box tilted onto one corner – with the “G” inside (Figures 1-3).

Federal Liquor Codes

For those not familiar with liquor bottle codes, the federal government created a new law at the end of Prohibition that required specific markings on the heels or bases of all bottles that were made to contain liquor. The new code went into effect November 1, 1934. Most noticeably, the warning – FEDERAL LAW FORBIDS SALE OR RE-USE OF THIS BOTTLE – had to be embossed prominently on the shoulder of each bottle. As an aside, some eBay sellers post that the third word is “PROHIBITS” – but no one has ever shown us an actual bottle with that word. The law clearly required the word “FORBIDS,” and that is all we have ever seen on bottles.

In addition, several codes had to be embossed on the base, heel, or the combination of base and heel of each bottle (*Glass Packer* 1934:502-503). These codes contain important information in liquor bottle identification. First was the user's permit number. Users were defined in three categories: Distillers (D), Rectifiers (R) (i.e., people who “doctored” whiskey by adding something to it), and Importers

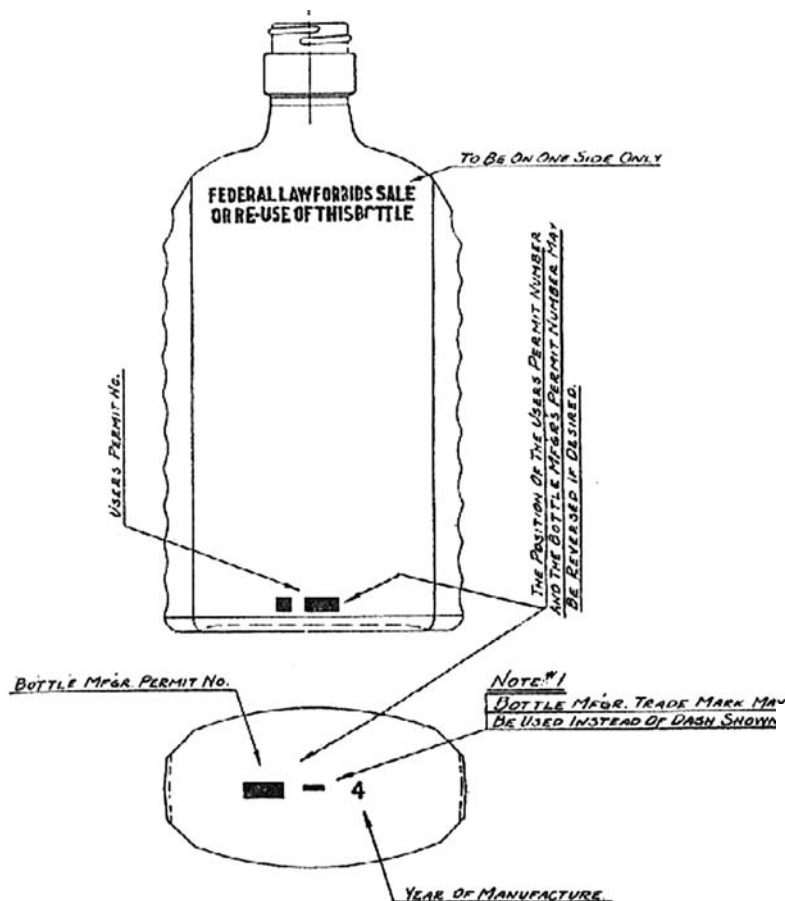


Figure 4 – Code markings – Style 1 (Glass Packer 1934:503)

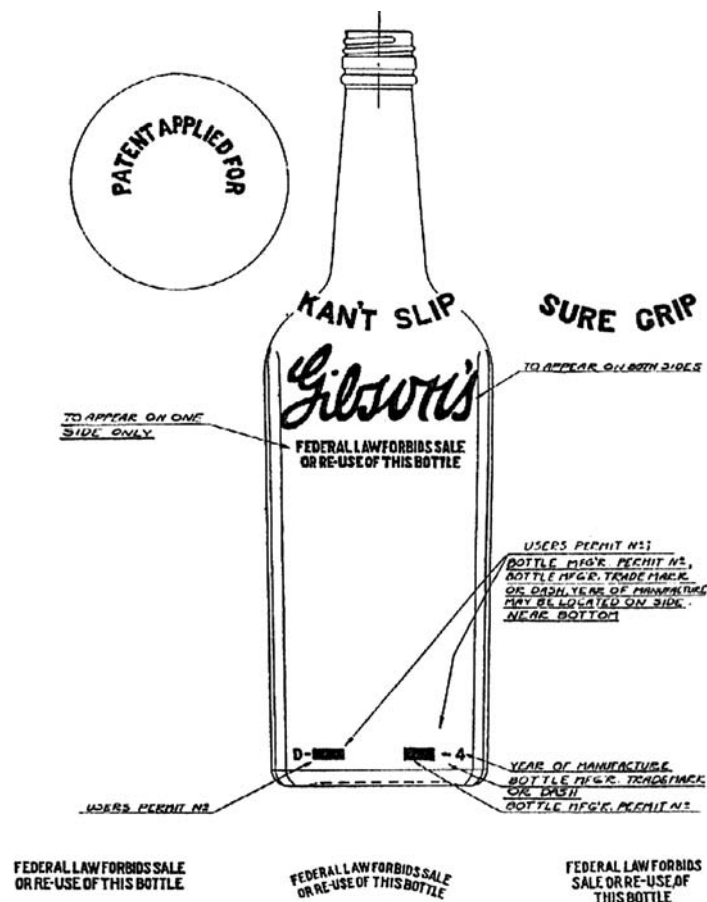


Figure 5 – Code markings – Style 2 (Glass Packer 1934:503)

(I). This code used the initial letter, followed by a dash, then a one- to three-digit identifying number. For example, a mark of “D-435” would indicate the Abbott’s Brandy Co. (Figures 4-6).

The second code set had two or three parts. The most common form was {manufacturer’s number} {manufacturer’s logo} {date code}, although the logo could be replaced by a dash, if the glass house either did not use a logo or preferred to place it elsewhere. Thus, a code of 1-5 would indicate that the bottle was made by the F.E. Reed Glass Co. (the receiver of the first liquor code – No. 1), and the bottle was made in 1935 (Glass Packer 1934:502-503).

The system remained in use until 1964 (Busch 1991: 121), although various changes occurred, and, as always, there were occasional exceptions – legal or otherwise. For example, even though most glass houses only received a single number, the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. was given several, possibly because of its sheer magnitude. A few others also received more than one number. Unfortunately,



Figure 6 – Code markings – Style 3 (Glass Packer 1934:503)

our only lists (courtesy of the kind folks at Owens-Illinois) were from 1969 and 1973. At this point, we have been unable to locate any of the early lists for either user (distiller) codes or manufacturer (glass house) codes.

At some point, manufacturers were allowed to emboss the federal warning on the bottle base instead of the shoulder. This, however, was very late in the sequence, although we have not discovered a good date range. The other change is important. All initial date codes were just single digits. While that was irrelevant during the 1930s (e.g., 6 would equal 1936), it became more complicated when the 1940s rolled around. The problem would not have mattered until 1944 (3 could *only* equal 1943; the law did not take effect until November 1934), but some kind of statement (or possibly a regulation) was apparently made during 1940. Most glass houses began using two-digit date codes at that point. A few, however, were inconsistent, so single-digit date codes may not be entirely reliable. It is also important to note that the number to the left is *not* the date code. As tempting as it may seem, a “56” to the left, is one of the codes for the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. – *not* a date code for 1956. The code to the *right* of the Owens-Illinois logo (or to the right of the dash) is the real date code – even if it is only a single digit.

Collecting Data

Looking back at our Old Quaker flask, the “D-134” had to be the distiller; “M-87-C” is an unknown code, not shown in the 1934 formula; 67 indicated the glass house (a factory that was not on 1969 or 1973 lists); the Diamond-G (possibly the logo for the unknown glass house); and “7” was most likely 1937. I had seen so many exceptions that I was not willing to be firm about the date yet.

Now, it was time to collect data, so I looked at one of my favorite resources – eBay. One seller reported an identical flask, with the addition of “HALF PINT” below the “D-134” and a date code of “6.” Another was the same (without the “HALF PINT”) but with a “5” date code. Both had the “67” glass

house code. Later, after more searching and quite a few more examples, those were the only date codes I discovered that were associated with the Diamond-G mark. Of course, the glass house that used the Diamond-G mark also made other flasks besides the ones for Old Quaker (**Figures 7 & 8**).^[1]

I checked my archaeological reports and found that Hull-Walski and Ayres (1989:87) recorded a slight variation embossed “67 D - 126 5 / 1012 {G in a diamond} 6 / DES. 92901 PAT.” William Guyer received Patent No. 92,901 for a bottle design on July 31, 1934 (*not* the Old Quaker bottle design). He assigned the patent to Joseph E. Seagrams & Sons, Inc., Laurenceburg, Indiana. It now looked like the date codes on my bottle and the ones from eBay were for 1935-1937.



Figure 7 – Different flask with Diamond-G mark (eBay)



Figure 8 – Base with Diamond-G mark and rectifier code R-502 (eBay)

I began searching the local antique stores and found another container marked “D-9 / 51 {G in a diamond} 5 I / M-163 APT” on the base. The number “51” is not on either glass house list, and the “5” is likely a date code for 1935. Other Old Quaker flasks reported on eBay had the letter “M” or “F” in the glass house symbol (not code) position and some variation of the M-{2-3 digit number}-letter code (whatever *that* code means). Two other flasks (without a Diamond-G mark) were reported by different eBay sellers as each being marked “D-9 83 41 M 167 F,” suggesting 1941 date codes. Another had a “70-H-8” code series (probably, the “H” was actually the H-superimposed-over-an-anchor mark – Anchor Hocking).

The Anchor-Hocking Hypothesis

It was now time to try to come up with some tentative solutions, so I began by looking in our files for companies whose names began with the letter G. Several “G” companies could probably be eliminated. By 1969, Glenshaw Glass Works used #14 and #176 as manufacturer’s codes on liquor bottles, so the “67” code was unlikely. The Glass Container Corp. used #22; Gayner Glass Works, a division of Star City Glass Works, used #123 (Anonymous 1969; Dept. of Treasury 1973), so these were also poor choices. The Graham Glass Co., too, could be ruled out; it was sold to Owens 1916 and lost its identity by 1927.

From empirical research, Carol Serr determined that the “67” code was used by the Anchor-Hocking Glass Co. Since this same “67” code was on all the bottles with the Diamond-G logo, it was logical to assume that Anchor-Hocking was the maker of those bottles, so I began testing to see if that hypothesis would work. As Carol predicted, the number appeared on several flasks that were also marked with the Anchor-Hocking logo. For example, an Old Quaker flask had a basal embossing of “Lou-D-2 / 67 {Anchor-and-H mark} 56 / M 858.” This mark, an “H” superimposed over an anchor, was used by Anchor-Hocking from 1938 to ca. 1977 (**Figure 9**).



Figure 9 – Old Quaker flask with Anchor-Hocking base and code #67

That led to a closer look at Anchor-Hocking codes on liquor bottles and flasks. One bottle with the Anchor-Hocking logo was reported to have a “51” code in the glass house position. By the 1969 and 1971 lists, Anchor-Hocking only used the number “9” (Anonymous 1969; Dept. of Treasury 1973), so we do not have a good time sense for the use of the “51” company codes, and we have not seen the “51” associated with Anchor-Hocking in any other context (although it was on at least one Diamond-G flask noted above). It is possible, however, that Anchor-Hocking used the number in the 1930s (as noted above, several companies were assigned more than one number – e.g., Owens-Illinois or Brockway).

Our empirical research shows that Anchor-Hocking used both “13” and “67” by at least the early 1940s. If the “70-H-8” base (noted above) really *did* have the Anchor-H mark where the seller only indicated an “H,” then the number would have been used by Anchor-Hocking as early as 1938. This would actually become important later.

There is no question that Anchor-Hocking made liquor containers from its inception, but the probable date codes of “5” (presumably equaling 1935), “6,” and “7” on flasks with the Diamond-G mark is problematic. Anchor and Hocking did not merge to become Anchor-Hocking until 1937. This suggests that there may be a problem with the codes. As noted above, date codes on liquor containers generally consisted of two digits by 1940, although there were exceptions. Flasks with the “5” date code *could*, therefore, date to 1945, although that is unlikely – especially with “6” and “7” codes on the flasks.

All this was interesting, but it did not seem to be leading me anywhere. The problem now was: How do you explain

a “G” in connection with Anchor-Hocking? Isaac J. Collins and E.B. Good formed the Hocking Glass Co. in 1905, so maybe Good had a big ego and wanted a logo with his initial on it. But how would Collins feel about that? There seemed to be no other founders’ names that began with “G”; this appeared to be a dead end – at least for now.

Looking at Distillers’ Codes

Trying to force the various codes associated with the Diamond-G and other marks on Old Quaker flasks to fit with Anchor-Hocking did not seem to be working, so I tried a different tack. Maybe the “G” inside the diamond indicated the distiller, instead of the glass house. The mark was in the glass house “position,” but we have encountered unusual exceptions before.

Further empirical research revealed that both the D-2, D-9, and D-134 distiller’s codes are associated with the “Old Quaker” brand. Although the brand name was first used in 1878, Old Quaker brand was registered by the Corning Co., Cleveland, Ohio, in 1879; by the Corning Co., Peoria, Illinois, in 1894; and by Corning & Co., Peoria, in 1905 (Snyder 2002). Each of the “D” codes may reflect a different distillery where Old Quaker was produced.

The Corning Co. (or Corning & Co.) was in business from at least 1879 to 1918, and its main product was Old Quaker, a brand of whiskey (Pre-Pro.com 2006). Although much older, the Schenley Products Co. (predecessor of Schenley Distillers Corp.) bought the Schenley, Pennsylvania, distillery in 1923 and acquired the Old Quaker brand (along with several others) prior to 1933. During 1933, Schenley purchased the Squibb Distillery in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, and drew the first barrels of Old Quaker from that facility in 1936 (BourbonEnthusiast.com 2005).

In 1846, W.P. and G.W. Squibb began business at Aurora, Indiana, as Rectifiers. With Frederick Komos as a partner, the Squibbs built a distillery in Indiana in 1867. In 1871, Komos sold his shares to William P. Squibb. W.P. Squibb & Co. obtained Distillery No. 8, and that passed

to Schenley in 1933, with the acquisition of Squibb. J.W. McCulloch introduced Green River Whiskey in 1891, and the Green River Distilling Co. acquired Distillery No. 9 by at least 1911 (probably much earlier). Schenley gained control of the Green River distillery in 1940 (BourbonEnthusiast.com 2005). But, none of this seemed to fit with a Diamond-G mark. It was all a red herring.

We have been unable to trace the D-134 number in a historical context, although it shows up frequently on the bases of Old Quaker flasks from the 1935-early 1940s period. Both the screw-top, metal closure flask embossed with a profile of a Quaker, and the Diamond-G mark seem to be closely tied to this period, although the flasks continued to be made until at least the late 1950s. Flasks of this sort were also made by at least the Fairmount Glass Works (**Figures 10 & 11 – note the much nicer embossing of the Old Quaker picture**) and the Owens-Illinois Glass Co., as well as the user of the Diamond-G mark. If Anchor-Hocking were, indeed, the user of the Diamond-G mark, it had discontinued that logo in favor of the Anchor-H mark no later than 1940 and probably by 1938.



Figure 10 – Fairmount Glass Works logo on Old Quaker flask (eBay)



Figure 11 – Old Quaker embossing on Fairmount flask (eBay)

The Solution

Frequently, we have discovered that the answer was in front of us all the time – although sometimes it just was not obvious. In this case, taking yet another look at the history of Anchor-Hocking provided the key. Anchor-Hocking was formed as a conglomerate of several companies, and everything fell into place for me as I reread our own Anchor-Hocking file.

According to the *Winchester Journal-Herald* (10/12/1965), the General Glass Corp. was organized in 1931 and took over the Turner Glass Co. plants. Hocking Glass Co. owned 50% of General and acquired the remaining assets in 1935. In 1937, General was dissolved, and all assets became part of Hocking. This was Hocking's initial breakthrough into the glass container field.

All Old Quaker (and other) flasks with Diamond-G manufacturer's marks that we have found have date codes of "5," "6," or "7" – generally the latter two dates. These dates are a perfect fit for the General Glass Co. dates of operation. Since General was entirely absorbed into Anchor-Hocking in 1937, the plant number "67" continued to be used by Anchor-Hocking for a currently unknown period of time. In our sample, the "67" code does not show up until 1940 (a "40" date code), but the eBay flask with the "H" manufacturer's mark (as stated above, most likely the Anchor-H logo) had an "8" date code, very likely setting the "67" code as being used by Anchor-Hocking in 1938 – immediately after General Glass was absorbed by Anchor-Hocking.

Postscripts

There is one loose end to tie up – the "51" code on the base of one flask with a date code of "5" (1935) and the Diamond-G mark. It was also reported by an eBay seller in association with Anchor-Hocking's H-and-anchor mark. There are at least two possible explanations, beginning with the most likely. First, the Turner Glass Co. may have decided to join the rush toward liquor container manufacturing at the end of Prohibition, thereby obtaining the number "51" in 1934. When General Glass took over, it then used the Turner number, while it waited for its own number (67) to

process. Thus, the "51" code would probably only show up on flasks made during 1934 or 1935, with the Diamond-G and "51" codes together only showing up in 1935. When Anchor-Hocking took control, it would have inherited both codes. It may be that Anchor-Hocking used different codes for different plants.

Second, (and I think this is unlikely), General could have been overloaded with orders and asked a currently unknown company to make some Old Quaker flasks with molds that had the Diamond-G mark. The other company used its own "51" code.

Although this has been a discussion about liquor flasks, there was at least one other product with the Diamond-G logo. Roller (1983:238) illustrated the mark as found above the word MASON'S on an aqua jar, but he included no details and had no identification for the manufacturer. Roller's drawing of the Diamond-G mark almost exactly matches the mark embossed on Old

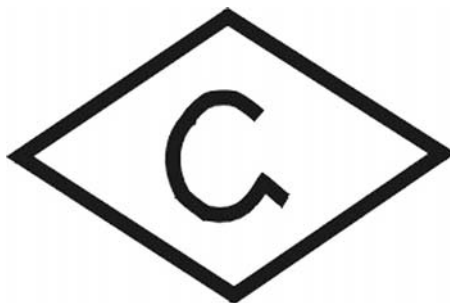


Figure 12 – Diamond-G mark on a wax-sealer fruit jar (Roller 1983:238)

Quaker flasks (**Figure 12**). These jars were almost certainly made by the same company – General Glass Co. – that made the flasks from 1935-1937.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the other members of the Bottle Research Group for all their assistance (and skepticism) in this and all of the other research I have conducted independently. Virtually everything I now do concerning historical bottles has been tremendously influenced by my compatriots. Gratitude also goes to Russell Hoenig and Phil Perry, both of Owens-Illinois, for providing the 1969 and 1973 lists of the glass manufacturer numbers for liquor bottles and literally

hundreds of other bits of information and to Owens-Illinois for allowing them to share information. Thanks to Pete Schulz, friend and fellow BRG member, for finding and making available the *Glass Container* article that provided the key to unlocking the codes. A final bouquet of gratitude to my wife, Wanda Wakkinen, for listening to my endless speculation on these and other bottle-related issues.

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[1] The example (Figures 7 & 8) was used by a rectifier with the code R 502 – currently unknown to me.