

# J.M. Clark & Co.

## Unlisted Patented Fruit Jar Closure

By Jeff Eastland

"Curiosity over the patent dates on the jar lid led me to do some research"

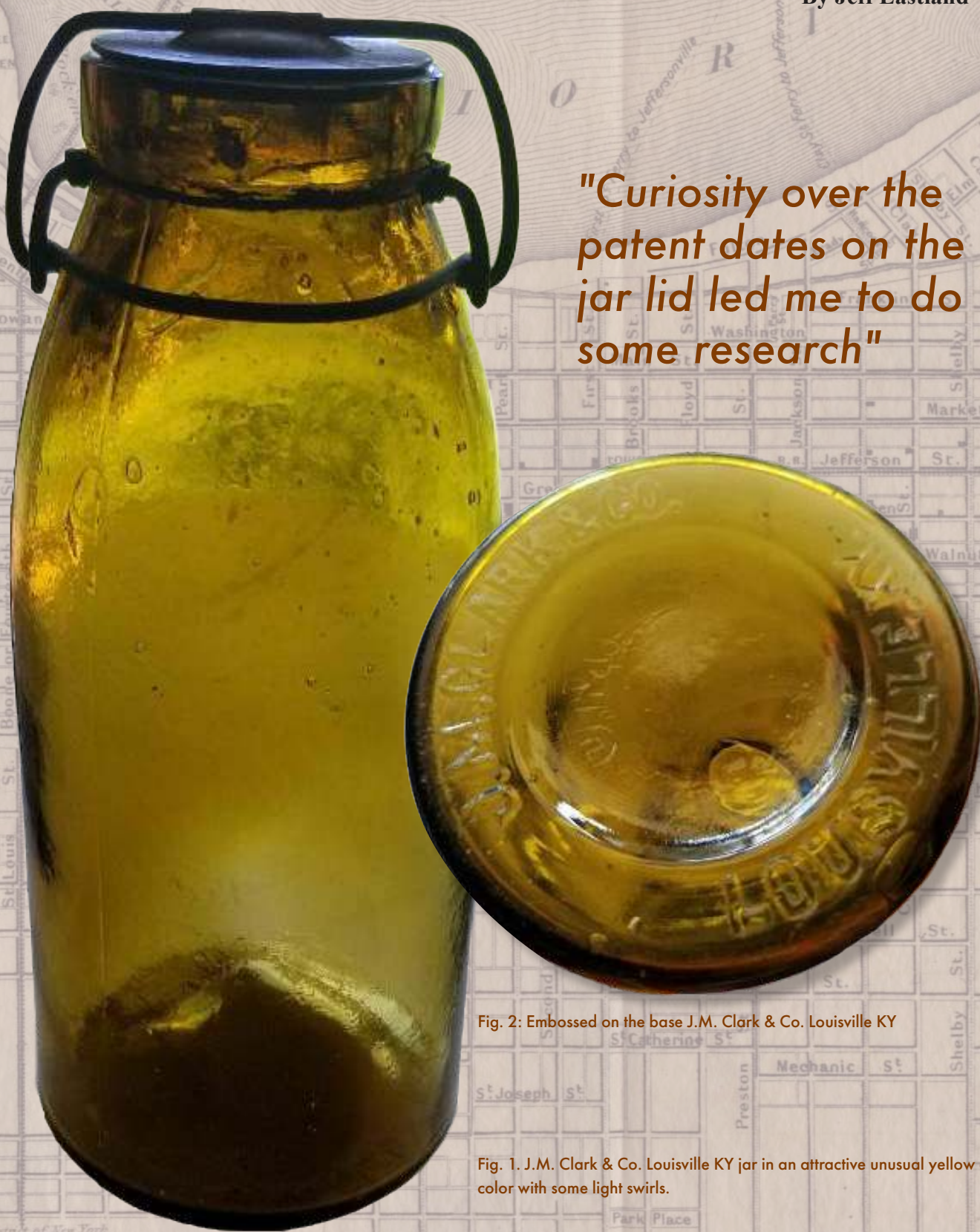


Fig. 2: Embossed on the base J.M. Clark & Co. Louisville KY

Fig. 1. J.M. Clark & Co. Louisville KY jar in an attractive unusual yellow olive color with some light swirls.



A few years ago I bought a tall pint (18 oz. at the shoulder), base-embossed, J.M. Clark & Co. Louisville Ky. jar in an attractive unusual yellow olive color with some light swirls. (Fig. 1. Fig. 2 shows base embossing). The J.M. Clark jars are fairly common, at least in a standard amber color, and also are found with a shoulder embossing. What was even more unusual than the appealing color however, was the metal closure.

The closure is a metal closure with a depression fitting snugly into the jar mouth, with a metal wire soldered to the top. A wire bail lightning type fulcrum closure snaps it shut. Two patent dates are sharply stamped in the lid: "April 3, 1883, and Oct. 25, 1892". (Fig. 3 & Fig. 4).

Betty Zumwalt's seminal book, *Ketchup Pickles Sauces* 1980, lists the J.M. Clark & Co. jars in amber and olive green. The jar is rated as common. The closure is listed as unknown.

The Red Book of Fruit Jars No. 12 also lists the J.M. Clark & Co. jars in various shades of amber, and also yellow olive but in the quart shoulder embossing only. The closure listed is 'possibly a cork.'

Curiosity over the patent dates on the jar lid led me to do some research which revealed an article written for sha.org on the Warren and Whiteman glass houses by noted authors Pete Schulz, Bill Lockhart, Carol Serr, and Bill Lindsey, showing patent records for the two patent dates on the Clark jar.

Fig. 5 shows Abram Whiteman's April 3, 1883 patent for a "Stopper or Cover for Bottles or Jars," which was apparently used on milk jars, according to available information. The lid is pictured in Fig. 6.

Fig. 7 shows an Oct. 25, 1892 patent for a "Bottle Stopper" by Benjamin Sanborn, and an example of the lid, also used for milk jars, including jars produced by the Thatcher Co.

The difference apparent here is the metal lids pictured on the milk jars are slightly different in design than the patent embossed lid on the Clark jar, and in addition do not have the embossed date(s) on the lid.

So what we now have is a J.M. Clark jar, but in a pint size, in an unusual yellow olive color, which is unlisted for that size, with a patented dated closure that was previously unlisted for this fruit/food jar.

I have forwarded the patented lid and jar information to Doug Leybourne for inclusion in future editions of the Fruit Jar Red Book.



Fig. 3: Two patent dates are sharply stamped in the lid: "April 3, 1883, and Oct. 25, 1892". The image above showing the later date

#### April 3, 1883 – Stopper or Cover for Bottles or Jars

On October 1, 1882, Abram V. Whiteman applied for a patent for a "Stopper or Cover for Bottles or Jars." He received Patent No. 275,101 on April 3, 1883. This was Abram's first patent. Unlike both patents obtained by brother Louis, this closure was made from "two pieces or thicknesses of sheet metal fitting snugly together and having their edges overlapped, one provided with a downwardly-extending annular rim or projection adapted to fit within the mouth of the bottle or jar," although the lid was still held in place by a wire swing bail (Figure 11). This cover was flat and was probably superseded by the September 4 lid.

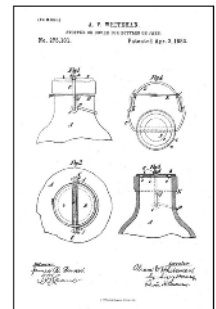


Figure 11 – Whiteman's first 1883 patent

Fig. 5 shows Abram Whiteman's April 3, 1883 patent for a "Stopper or Cover for Bottles or Jars"



Figure 12 – Tin-top bail lid with no patent information (Paul Doucette)

Dairy Antiques (2016) showed a photograph of a Cream Line milk bottle (Whiteman 1890 patent) with an "enameled tin bail top" that they identified as the one patented by Whiteman on April 3, 1883. The bottle base had the 144 Chambers St. address. An example from Paul Doucette confirms a lack of embossing on a lid that appears to be from the April 3, 1883 patent and is also affixed to a Cream Line milk bottle (Figure 12). It seems strange that the older lid was still used on a bottle that is at least seven years newer – despite at least three patent changes in between. It may be that the other lids did not prove to be as effective. This actual bottle style was used from 1883 until at least the 1890s (Figure 13).



Figure 13 – Bottle used from 1883 to at least the 1890s (Dale Murschell)

Fig. 6: The lid is pictured in Abram Whiteman's April 3, 1883 patent

#### October 25, 1892 – Bottle-Stopper

Benjamin F. Sanborn, Flatlands, New York, applied for a patent for a "Bottle-Stopper" on December 30, 1891, and was awarded Patent No. 485,139 on October 25, 1892. He assigned the patent to Abram V. Whiteman. The stopper was a flat-top metal design held in place by a wire bail (Figure 24 & 25). The Sanborn patent was basically a slight modification of the 1888 Carll patent. Dairy Antiques (2016) described a



Figure 25 – Sanborn's 1892-patent lid (cBay)

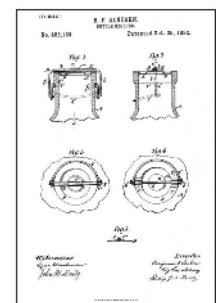


Figure 24 – Benjamin F. Sanborn's 1892 milk jar patent

Fig. 7: shows an Oct. 25, 1892 patent for a "Bottle Stopper" by Benjamin Sanborn



Fig. 4: Two patent dates are sharply stamped in the lid: "April 3, 1883, and Oct. 25, 1892." The image to the left showing the earlier date at the top.

