

## The Dating Game

by *Bill Lockhart, David Whitten, Bill Lindsey,  
Jay Hawkins and Carol Serr*

© *Bill Lockhart 2004*

### The Ihmsen Glass Company

The Ihmsen family history is very complex. Through three generations, the Ihmsens were involved in glass production in the U. S. from 1795 to 1900. Although several researchers have reported on the Ihmsen glass factories, each has confused the various lineages at some point. The earliest two sources (Knittle 1927:337-338; Van Rensselaer 1969:180; 185-186; 191) offered factual tidbits but never tied their information into comprehensive accounts. McKearin and McKearin (1941:590; 593) separated the companies into two groups but confused what factories belonged to which groups. McKearin and Wilson (1978:118-119; 152-154) addressed the William Ihmsen plant separately but tied the other businesses together. May Jones (1968:15) provided a pretty good synopsis of the company compiled almost entirely from the McKearin books, although she, too, confused many of the factories and companies. Toulouse (1971:261-264) attempted to form a comprehensive account and divided the factories into three major groups.

One of the main problems involved in trying to sort out the businesses is that most companies during the 19<sup>th</sup> century had one name for their factories and another for the operating company or owner. Thus, we have the Birmingham glass works owned by Ensell, Wendt & Co. in 1810, by Ihmsen, Wendt & Co. in 1811, and by Belzhoover, Wendt & Co. in 1812. In some cases, earlier researchers only referred to "the green glass factory" with no company name or to a factory name but no company or to a company but no factory name. If this is not confusing enough, early sources did not include addresses, so the factories cannot be pinpointed by that method.

We have attempted to combine the assembled accounts with information from a local document and Pittsburgh city directories provided by Jay Hawkins. By looking at the relationships between company names, factory names (or descriptions), products made, and sources,

we have formed a new chronology that we hope makes sense. It is certain that Christian Ihmsen succeeded his father in business. His brother, William, seems to have mostly opted out of the family business and opened his own. Christian's sons, Charles T. and William followed their father into the firm.

Bob Bowers provided us with genealogical information on the Ihmsen family. Charles Ihmsen was born about 1769 in Steinbach, Westphalia, Germany. His wife, Phillipine Katrine Ney, also German, was born February 11, 1770. The couple had six sons, Jacob Charles, Thomas Oswald, Christian, Adam, Henry, and Martin; two daughters, Catherine and Mary; and a William, Phillipina's son by an earlier marriage. Charles apparently adopted William and introduced him to the glass business when he grew up. The senior Ihmsen died on September 8, 1828.

According to Bowers, Christian was the real entrepreneur of the family. Christian was born on May 22, 1804, in Frederick, Maryland. He married Eleanor O'Connor, and the couple had five sons, Charles T., William, Frederick Lorenz, Michael O'Connor, and Christian T.; and four daughters, Ann Elena, Phillipina A., Amelia, and Eleanor. Christian died on December 11, 1862. His half-brother, William, was also a success in the glass business. William was born about 1794 at Frederick, Maryland. He married Mary Augusta Morrison, but the couple had no children. He died December 11, 1836, only about 42 years of age. The remaining second-generation children seem to have opted out of the glass business.

The third generation of Ihmsens were mostly descendants of Christian. Two of his sons, Charles T. and William, followed him directly into the glass business. Christian was not very impressed with his two sons (and their records show they were not inspired businessmen). According to Bowers, Christian's will gave the sons control of the glass making operation for a

period of only five years, suggesting that he knew how incapable his sons were. William Ihmsen (likely named after his uncle) was born in 1831 at Birmingham, Pennsylvania. He married Johanna Crouse, and the couple had two children, neither of whom entered into the glass business. William died in September 1875. Charles T. Ihmsen was born in 1828, also in Birmingham. Charles married Maria G. Mulvaney, and they produced two children whom also chose non-glass-related professions. Charles died on May 29, 1870. A final, third-generation brother was also quite successful in the glass field. Christian T. Ihmsen, Jr., was born in October, 1845 at East Birmingham. He married Stella Horner, and the couple only had a single child, Simpson Horner. Christian, Jr., died on December 2, 1901.

Dominick O'Connor Ihmsen was the son of Thomas Oswald Ihmsen, brother of Charles T. and William. Born on August 19, 1836, at Birmingham, Dominick was by far the most successful glass maker of the third generation of Ihmsens. Dominick married Mary Adelaide Mitchell, and the couple had six sons, Herbert Lawrence, Thomas Oswald, Dominick O'Connor, Henry Phillips, William Pollard, and Paulinus Dionysius; and four daughters, Mary Adelaide, Adelaide Virginia, Blanche Josephine, and Anna M. Dominick died on March 25, 1903.

In all likelihood, the two groups of companies listed by Toulouse (1971:261-264) as Charles Ihmsen & Co. and Christian Ihmsen & Sons are an understandably-confused rendition of the same set of companies. He was correct, however, in separating the Ihmsen Glass Co. as a separate entity. Similarly, McKearin and McKearin (1941:590, 593) tried to separate the wrong companies. McKearin and Wilson's attempt to treat the entire group of companies as a single entity (with the exception of William Ihmsen's Williamsport companies and Cunningham & Ihmsen) was also faulty. We have finally reduced the complex set of often-interrelated companies to five: 1) Charles Ihmsen's short-lived Baltimore Glass House; 2) Charles Ihmsen's original Birmingham (Pittsburgh) companies (eventually becoming C. Ihmsen & Co, Ihmsen & Sons, then Ihmsen & Co.); 3) the Ihmsen Glass Co.; 4) the Williamsport Glass Works factories; and 5) Cunningham & Ihmsen.

## Ihmsen Company Histories

### Charles Ihmsen's Baltimore Glass House

According to McKearin and McKearin (1949:44), Charles Ihmsen "is credited with building Baltimore's first glasshouse" in 1795. In 1803, however, the firm declared bankruptcy, and Ihmsen moved to Pittsburgh, where he worked as a glass blower.

### Christian Ihmsen & Sons<sup>1</sup>

In 1810, the firm of Ensell, Wendt & Co. built the Birmingham Glass Works to manufacture windows. They soon added a second factory to make green (aqua) glass bottles and vials, but the exact date for the second factory is unclear. Both factories apparently went under the name of the Birmingham Glass Works. About 1811, the owning firm was renamed Ihmsen, Wendt & Co., probably to reflect Charles Ihmsen's increasingly-important role in production. The firm was renamed Beltzhoover, Wendt & Co. around 1812 and was again reorganized as Sutton, Wendt & Co. sometime before 1822. Charles Ihmsen died in 1828, and his son, Christian, inherited his interest in the two glass factories at Birmingham. Charles Ihmsen may have established an independent window glass factory in Birmingham about 1814, although McKearin and McKearin may have been referring to the already-established Birmingham Glass Works.

About 1837,<sup>2</sup> a number of changes occurred. First, the operating firm was reorganized as Whitehead, Ihmsen & Phillips. Apparently, Ihmsen and his backers needed additional funding to expand. The new firm built the Pennsylvania Flint Glass Works to make cut, plain, engraved, and pressed tableware and the Pennsylvania Black Glass Works for bottles, both in Birmingham. Van Rensselaer (1969:186) noted that the firm "conducted four large factories" (i.e., the two older Birmingham Glass Works plants and the two new ones).

At this point, things become confused. It appears probable that a split occurred sometime between 1836 and 1841. By 1841, C. Ihmsen & Co.<sup>3</sup> completely controlled the Birmingham Glass Works plants. Even though the McKearins stated that C. Ihmsen & Co. stopped making window glass in 1840, the firm continued to advertise window glass until at least 1870. About 1855, Christian brought his sons, Charles T. and William, into the

company, and the firm became known as Ihmsen & Sons. After Christian's death in 1862, his sons continued to operate the Birmingham Glass Works. By 1885, the brothers renamed the company Ihmsen & Co. The last listing for the group was in 1895.

Meanwhile, Whitehead, Ihmsen & Phillips continued to run the Pittsburgh Flint Glass Works and Pittsburgh Black Glass Works. The firm was reorganized sometime prior to 1846 as Young, Ihmsen & Puckett.<sup>4</sup> The last recorded listing for the group was in 1867. McKearin and Wilson (1978:153) speculated that "the firm may have failed during the long depression from 1873 to 1879."

### Ihmsen Glass Co.

Another third-generation brother, Christian T. Ihmsen, Jr., started a glass factory in Pittsburgh.<sup>5</sup> The company first appeared in the 1878 city directory (Hawkins information) as Ihmsen Glass Co., Limited. It was located at the "foot" of 14<sup>th</sup> St. (soon listed as 14<sup>th</sup> & Neville). The company manufactured vials and bottles. By at least 1883 (probably earlier), Ihmsen made "flint prescription" bottles as well. The firm also added window glass to its product list no later than 1884. Although the word, Limited, was dropped from the directory listings in 1897, that may reflect the way the company was listed rather than an actual change. The company last appeared in 1900 (city directories; McKearin & Wilson 1978:153; Toulouse 1971:263).

### Williamsport Glass Works

Another of Charles Ihmsen's sons, William Ihmsen (not to be confused with Christian's son, William, partner of Charles T. in C. Ihmsen & Sons), started a completely separate glass company at Williamsport (about 14 miles south of Pittsburgh along the Monongahela River).<sup>6</sup> The Williamsport Glass Co. began about 1820. William leased a second glass factory in the same area in 1846 (Knittle 1927:337; McKearin & Wilson 1978:118-119). Innes (1976:33), however, noted that William leased a factory in Williamsport "around 1826." McKearin & Wilson (1978:118) stated that "by 1831, [William] had formed a copartnership with his brother Christian in still another glassworks" which they speculated was the one at Williamsport. Although Christian was no longer mentioned, William Ihmsen took on

William McCully as a partner in 1833. Upon Ihmsen's death in 1840, McCully assumed control of the plant which remained in business until about 1886 (McKearin & Wilson 1978:119; Toulouse 1971:352, 541).

### Cunninghams & Ihmsen

Another Pittsburgh firm, this plant originated as Cunningham & Duncan and was renamed Cunninghams & Ihmsen in 1865, when Dominick Ihmsen joined Wilson Cunningham as a partner. When Wilson's son, Dominec, joined the firm in 1879, Ihmsen retired, and the father/son team renamed the business Cunninghams & Co. (Toulouse 1971:119, 132).

## Bottles and Marks

### W. IHMSEN, S (1820-1840)

McKearin and McKearin (1941:504) discussed a flask with an embossed eagle on the front with W.IHMSEN, S "above the eagle in a semi-circle." Toulouse dated this mark to the Williamsport Glass Works era (1820-1834). Flasks of this type were generally made between the early 1810s and the civil war. Knittle (1927:337) also noted that W. Ihmsens "appears on certain bottles." McKearin & Wilson (1978:119, 491, 506, 559) claimed that only a single bottle style was marked W. IHMSEN, S (although they sometimes used an apostrophe and otherwise used a comma) and was probably made in the 1820s. The authors provided a good biographical sketch of William Ihmsen (McKearin & Wilson 1978:118-119). Innes (1976:33, 211) used the apostrophe in the mark but also showed it with no punctuation except a period after W. and no "S." Despite Toulouse's date range, the flask may have been made during the entire tenure of the Williamsport Glass Works – 1820-1840.

### C. IHMSEN GLASS MANUFACTURER (ca. late 1830s-early 1870s)

Another mark from the same period was illustrated by Jones (1966:7; 1968:15) and Wilson (1980:118). The bottle base was embossed C. IHMSEN GLASS MANUFACTURER in a circle around the edge. These words were embossed in one of the early plate molds. Patented in England in 1821, the Ricketts mold was the first known to have used a separate plate around the outer edges of the base (Jones & Sullivan 1989:48-49). The Ihmsen bottle

used the same style of embossed baseplate mold. Although Jones and Sullivan cited an 1867 patent as the “official” stating date for plate mold use in the United States, the style used by Ihmsen could certainly predate that year.

The mark was probably used by Ihmsen beginning sometime between ca. 1836-1840 and possibly lasting until the 1870s by which time virtually all manufacturers were using embossed marks in post-bottom molds.



Figure 1 – Ihmsen Mark on a Ricketts-Type Mold (Wilson 1980:118)



Figure 2 – Ihmsen Mark on a Fruit Jar (Creswick 1995:87)

#### C. IHMSEN & SONS (1855-1885)

An interesting variation of the circular mark was C. IHMSEN & SONS (downward arch from the top)/GLASS MANUFACTURERS (upwardly arched from the bottom) with what appears to be a stylized “I” and a cluster of grapes embossed in the center of the base. Jones (1968:15) showed the base, although it was absent from her earlier publications. Jones provided no other information about this mark.

C. Ihmsen & Sons was first in the city directory in 1855 and was apparently used until 1885 when the name was simplified to Ihmsen & Co. However, this identification also creates a slight problem. Since this basal marking so closely resembles the one discussed immediately above, it is strange that they would be used by two different companies – even ones operated by the same family.

C. Ihmsen & Son also made fruit jars. These were marked C.IHMSEN & SON PITTSBURGH, PA. or C.IHMSEN & SONS PITTSBURGH, PA. Dating of these marks is currently uncertain. Creswick (1995:87) showed two variations of a groove ring wax sealer, both with SON (singular). She dated the jars 1860-1862 but did not explain her reasons. Roller (1983:162) listed another wax sealer with almost identical embossing, but this time the plural, SONS, was used.

Figured flasks were also made by C. Ihmsen & Sons and had C I & Sons embossed as part of the figural on the sides of the bottles (McKearin & Wilson 1978:153, 490, 650-651). Other flasks were marked C. IHMSEN & Co/ PITTSBURGH PA, also on the sides (McKearin & Wilson 1978:499, 640). These, too, would have been dated between 1855 and 1885.

#### C & I (1865-1879)

According to Toulouse (1971:132), this mark was used by Cunningham & Ihmsen from 1865 to 1879. The mark was noted by Wilson (1981:114) among the beer bottles at Fort Union and appears in large letters on bases of beer bottles (Wilson 1981:114) embossed horizontally across the center. Herskovitz (1978:8) also noted five examples found at Fort Bowie (1862-1894) and Feldhaus (1986:11) listed an example (C & I 1202) embossed on a beer bottle base. The mark also appears on the heels of Hutchinson-finished soda bottles. Innes (1976:218) noted that the mark was used on at least one flask. The full name, both as CUNNINGHAM & IHMSEN and CUNNINGHAMS & IHMSEN, was also used on fruit jars, always accompanied by PITTSBURGH, PA set in a circular pattern around the edges of the base (Creswick 1995:39; Roller 83:99). Roller (1983:99) also noted that metal lids for the fruit jars were embossed C & I. The full name was embossed on at least one style of flask. In addition to these marks, David Whitten observed a C & I Co mark embossed above



Figure 3 – Cunninghams & Ihmsen Flask (Bill Lindsey)



Figure 4 – Cunninghams & Ihmsen Mark on Fruit Jar (eBay)

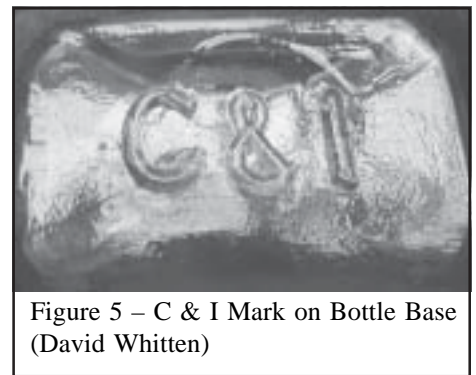


Figure 5 – C & I Mark on Bottle Base (David Whitten)

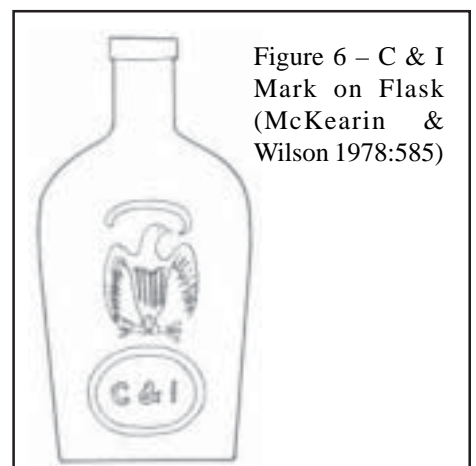


Figure 6 – C & I Mark on Flask (McKearin & Wilson 1978:585)

the heel on an early blobtop soda bottle at a recent bottle show. He estimates the bottle was made ca. 1865.

I G Co (possibly 1897-1900)

Although most bottles with the I G Co mark wear the logo on the heel, a few have the mark embossed on the base. Toulouse (1971:261) maintained that I G Co was used by the Ihmsen Glass Co., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, "circa 1870 to 1895." He continued, "The use of the 'I G Co' trademark is rare and found on some unmistakably Pittsburgh bottles" (Toulouse 1971:263). Unfortunately, he did not indicate what made the bottles "unmistakably Pittsburgh."

Wilson (1981:117-118) showed eight variations of the I G Co mark including the mark alone and several different single letters or (in one case) a numeral, all on bottle bases. Like Toulouse (see above), he suggested that mark belonged to Ihmsen Glass Co., but he did not discuss why. From his descriptions, these marks were probably all found on export-style beer bottle bases.

May Jones, in her last bottle newsletter (1968:17) noted that the McKearins [Helen and George] gave "one date as definite for the I. G. CO. with window glass. You follow that reference through and find it can be used - anytime - and reasonably so. UPTO 1895 at least. Bottles too." Unfortunately, in her rambling style, she referred to the date the McKearins gave for the termination of Ihmsen Glass Co. rather than any date connected to the mark. Even that date is too early; the company was in business until at least 1900 (see above).

It is possible that bottles with the I G Co mark on the bases are from the Ihmsen Glass Co. The vast majority of bottles with an I G Co mark (which we have identified as being from the Illinois Glass Co. – see Lockhart et al. 2005) bear the embossing on the heel. Later marks known to be used by Ihmsen (see below) also have basemarks rather than heelmarks. These I G Co basemarks (if, indeed, they were used by Ihmsen) can probably be dated from 1878 (the inception of the company) to 1900 (the last listing for Ihmsen Glass Co.), although the marks may only reflect the time period from 1897 to 1900 when the "Limited" was dropped from the company name in the city directories.

A more likely explanation is that the use of the mark by Ihmsen Glass Co. can be identified by the accompaniment of either letters below the mark or a number above

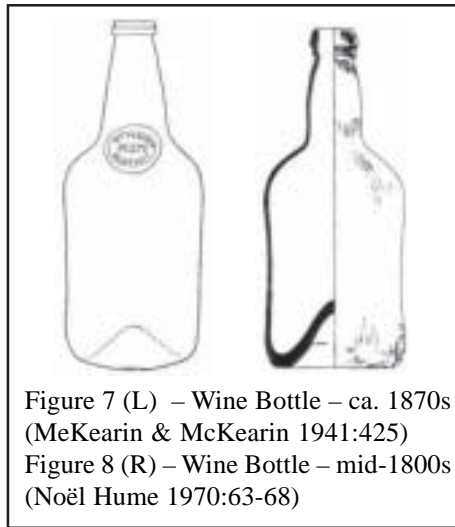


Figure 7 (L) – Wine Bottle – ca. 1870s (MeKearin & MeKearin 1941:425)  
Figure 8 (R) – Wine Bottle – mid-1800s (Noël Hume 1970:63-68)

the mark. Wilson (1981:118) showed the I G Co L mark (see below – certainly used by Ihmsen) with a 6 above the mark (or a Maltese cross in one case) and usually single, capital letters below the mark. The I G Co marks (no "L") shown on the same page all have single, capital letters below the mark. The use of letters or a single number does not fit any pattern seen on clearly-identified Illinois Glass Co. bottles. Therefore, it is likely that these additional letters or numbers, along with the I G Co mark, identify the Ihmsen Glass Co.

In all verifiable contexts (on beer bottles<sup>7</sup>) we have found so far, the I G Co basemark has a lower-case "o" as the final



Figure 9 – Export-Style Beer Bottle (Bill Lockhart)

letter, although punctuation may be present, partial, or absent. All bottles were also made with post-bottom molds, although that may be a product of age rather than a specific company. Heelmarked bottles (almost certainly from Illinois Glass Co.) may have either post-bottom or cup-bottom characteristics. We have found I G Co basemarks on at least three types of bottles: food (one example), soft drink (Hutchinson-finished bottle - one example), and export-style beer bottles (numerous examples).

To further complicate the issue, Herskovitz (1978:8) also listed three examples of beer bottle bases marked with IGC<sup>o</sup>. The underlined, superscript "O" is not reported by any other source, and we have never actually seen an example. Herskovitz did not record any accompanying letters or numbers, so this mark was probably used by the Illinois Glass Co. instead of Ihmsen.

Because many of the bottles bearing the I G Co mark on the base show the characteristics of export-style beer bottles, a brief discussion of beer bottle history is appropriate here. Anheuser Busch was successful in part because of a willingness to innovate. One of the company's most important innovations was the adaptation of the pasteurization process to beer in 1872 or 1873 (Hernon & Ganey 1991:30-31; Wilson 1981:1). Plavchan (1969:70), however, claimed 1872, citing a letter written by Adolphus Busch to W. C. Merry, September 3, 1894. Once beer was pasteurized, it could be stored and shipped in bottles for a long time and a great distance. This meant that the local brewery with its reliance on keg-contained, draught beer was to become less important. Of more interest to bottle daters, this marks the beginning of available, nation-wide bottled beer.

Export-style bottles were the classic quart beer bottles (actually measuring a surprisingly-consistent 26 ounces) used in the American West, although several other styles were used throughout the country. The base was flat (or slightly concave), and the bottle had vertical sides and rounded shoulders topped by a swelled neck (claimed to be a way to deal with foam). Finishes varied but were all originally made in two parts (a "collar" above a "ring") designed to take a cork stopper. A single-part finish was designed for the "Lightning" fastener. The export-style bottle was the most common glass beer container in the Western U.S. from at least the 1880s and

is still used today in 12-ounce returnable bottles. These bottles were usually amber in color, although some were made in aquamarine, various shades of green, a light blue, or occasionally were colorless (some of which have turned purple with exposure to the sun). The earliest ones were produced in post-bottomed, two-piece hinged molds or by the turn-mold process. Later bottles were made in cup-bottomed molds.

Export-style beer bottles appear to have descended from wine bottles. George and Helen McKearin (1941:423-425) traced the evolution of wine or spirit bottles from about 1650 to about 1865-1875. Their final style is remarkably similar to the export-style beer bottle even to the two-part "brandy" finish (although the swelled neck is absent). Ivor Noël Hume (1970:63-68) presented a similar study based on bottles excavated at Williamsburg, Virginia. His study extended from 1652 to 1834 and did not include date ranges as did the McKearins. His final bottles, however, again showed a close resemblance to the export-style container (again including the finish) but had a higher kick-up, and most lacked the swelling of the neck. A single example even had a slightly swelled neck. Only two final alterations were necessary to produce the first beer bottles: the removal of the kick-up to form a flatter base and the addition of the swelled neck. Reasons for the changes are currently unknown. Kick-ups allow a bottle to look much larger than its actual capacity. Breweries may have feared that beer drinkers would have figured that out.

#### I G C (1872-1894)

Herskovitz (1978:8) noted six examples of this mark on beer bottles from Fort Bowie. The excavated portion of the fort was officially open from 1862 to 1894, although beer bottles were only transported for long distances from the factories beginning in 1872. Thus, 1872 to 1894 are the only dates currently known for this mark. He reported accompanying letters/number of B, H, and 3+. In addition, a bottle for sale on the internet was embossed I G C on the back heel (according to the seller). This latter may be a case where the "o" in I G Co was very lightly embossed and difficult to see.

Herskovitz (1978:8) also recorded an I G O mark accompanied by the numeral 1. This is likely a misstrike by the engraver or a misidentification by Heskowitz

(probably the former). If it were an engraver's error, it would fit into the same pattern as the I G C mark.

Neither of the two marks, however, fit into the same pattern as the ones known from the Illinois Glass Co. All known Illinois Glass I G Co marks either had nothing else embossed with the logo or had a two- to three-digit number beside the mark (when found on heels). None had letters, single-digit numbers, or a plus sign (+) or cross. These marks fit the pattern of other marks used by the Ihmsen Glass Co. (see above and below).

#### I G Co L (1878-1897 – possibly as late as 1900)

Wilson (1981:118) also showed four beer bottle bases with the I G Co L mark, a logo also observed by two of our research group, David Whitten and Bill Lindsey, and by Jay Hawkins of Pittsburgh. These I G Co L marks in Wilson were accompanied by either a numeral 6 or a Maltese cross above the mark and a letter (I, D, or K) or nothing below the mark. The mark appears in two variations, one with large letters and one with smaller letters. In both cases, the mark is embossed horizontally across the bases of beer bottles and other container types. The I G Co L mark also appears without either accompanying letters or numbers. Wilson and Wilson (1969:41) showed four examples of the mark on DR. J. HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS bottle bases, although they made no attempt to attribute the mark to any maker. The Wilsons (1969:34) noted that S. McKee made the first embossed Hostetter's bottles in 1859, so containers produced by other makers should be dated after that time. Fike (1987:36) also noted that Hostetter's bottles were made by Ihmsen but did not directly address the marks.

Ayres et al (1980:19) noted that the Ihmsen Glass Co. was succeeded by the Ihmsen Glass Co., Ltd. in 1886 and that the firm "apparently ended in 1899." Their source, McKearin & Wilson (1978:153), however, noted that the limited partnership was in place "by 1886," so the change could have taken place slightly earlier. Hawkins' research in the Pittsburgh city directories, however, shows that the company was "Limited" during its entire existence from 1878 to 1900. The illustrations in Ayres et al. show I G Co (no periods), I G Co L, and I G Co. L (note punctuation) on bottle bases but not on heels. This confirms the use of the IGCo mark by Ihmsen and explains the

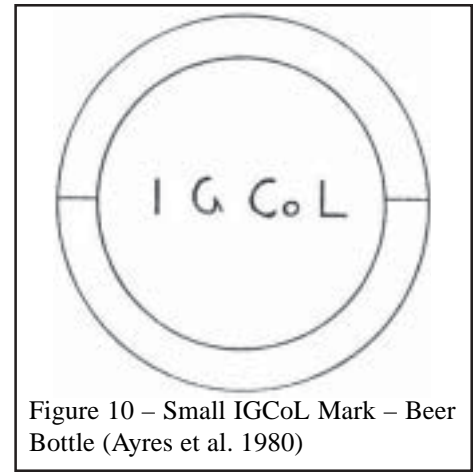


Figure 10 – Small IGCoL Mark – Beer Bottle (Ayres et al. 1980)

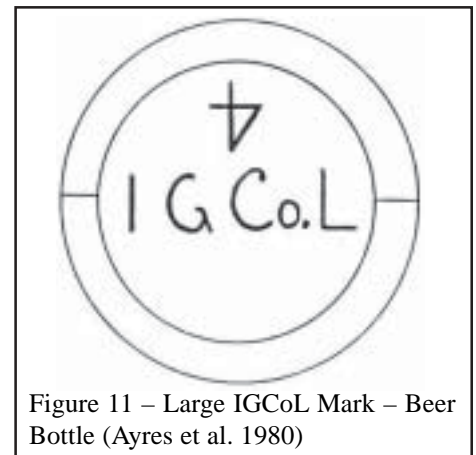


Figure 11 – Large IGCoL Mark – Beer Bottle (Ayres et al. 1980)



Figure 12 – Large IGCoL Mark – Beer Bottle (Jay Hawkins)

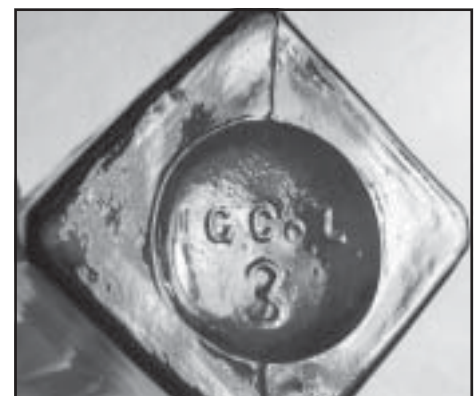


Figure 13 – IGCoL Mark on Hostetters Stomach Bitters Bottle (Bill Lindsey)

L. Thus, the probable date range for the I G Co L mark is ca. 1878 to 1900 (although the use of the "L" may have stopped in 1897 when the "Limited" was dropped from the city directory listings).

Herskovitz (1978:8) reported four examples (I.G.CO.L.) accompanied by numbers (11-13). Feldhaus (1986:23, 38, 42) listed a bottle made for the St. Paul Bottling Co. (Minnesota) marked with I G CO L and the number 15 as well as two more examples with no accompanying numbers or letters. The bottler was in business from 1887 to 1889. Wilson (1981:118) showed four examples with letters (D, I, and K) as well as one with no accompanying marks. Clint (1976:127) illustrated a single example of the mark on a beer or soda bottle from Denver, Colorado. The mark was accompanied by no numbers or letters and was embossed on the base of an aqua bottle with an applied blob finish.

### Discussion and Conclusions

It is clear that the Ihmsen family had a long and complex history in glass production. The similarity in names (e.g., Christian Ihmsen and Charles Ihmsen) can often confuse identification of firms by the embossing on bottle bases. Generally, however, we have been able, through the process of elimination, to identify the specific users of each mark (see above).

The major controversy within the research group has been over the question of whether or not the Ihmsen Glass Co. used the I G Co mark. There is no question that the I G Co mark was used profusely by the Illinois Glass Co. Suggestions by various collectors for identifying the Ihmsen use of the mark have been: 1) location on the base (Illinois Glass Co. used the heel); 2) the use (or lack) of punctuation, and; 3) the capital or lower case "O." The location of the mark is most likely a product of a trend that began in the late 1870s, where soft drink (and some beer) bottlers had the company name, owner's initials, or logo embossed on the base. Frequently, the manufacturer's mark was moved to the heel to avoid confusion. The Illinois Glass Co. undoubtedly used heelmarks, although we have found *no* evidence that Ihmsen placed any marks in that location. However, it is likely that the placement of the mark had more to do with policy within the company than between the two companies.

The use of punctuation includes I G Co, I. G. Co., I G Co., I. G Co, and other combinations. These variations appear on both heelmarks and basemarks. They were probably added or ignored at the whim of the individual engravers who made the molds. The use of a capital or lower case "o" appears on heelmarks, but only the lower-case "o" is found on beer bottle basemarks (at least one capital "O" was

embossed on a flask). Again, these were likely the idiosyncracies of the individual mold makers, although the basemark variation seems to be consistent.

The only identifying feature that may distinguish the two companies on basemarks is the presence of letters, numbers, and/or crosses. The Maltese cross is distinctly associated with the I G Co L mark as are the number 6 above the logo and single, capital letters below the mark. None of these additional marks are associated with the Illinois Glass Co. It is thus probable that these accompanying letters, numbers, or crosses on the bases of bottles marked I G Co identify the Ihmsen Glass Co.

### Acknowledgements

The group would like to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Jay Hawkins of Pittsburgh. Jay is a local collector who freely shared his research in the city directories as well as his personal knowledge about bottles made in Pittsburgh. His help made this article *much* more complete and a great deal more interesting. A debt of gratitude is owed to genealogy researcher, Bob Bowers, for providing us with a genealogy of the Ihmsen family. Thanks also to Douglas M. Leybourne, Jr., for granting us permission to use illustrations from *The Fruit Jar Works* by Alice M. Creswick.

---

### References

- Ayres, James E., William Liesenbien, Lee Fratt, and Linda Eure  
1980 "Beer Bottles from the Tucson Urban Renewal Project, Tucson, AZ." Unpublished manuscript, Arizona State Museum Archives, RG5, Sg3, Series 2, Subseries 1, Folder 220.
- Clint, David K  
1976 *Colorado Historical Bottles & Etc., 1859-1915*. Antique Bottle Collectors of Colorado, Inc., Boulder.
- Creswick, Alice  
1995 *The Fruit Jar Works, Vol. I, Listing Jars Made Circa 1820 to 1920's*. Douglas M. Leybourne, N. Muskegon, Michigan.
- Feldhaus, Ron  
1986 *The Bottles, Breweriana and Advertising Jugs of Minnesota 1850-1920: Volume 1: Beer, Soda, Household*. North Star Historical Bottle Collectors Association, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Fike, Richard E.  
1965 *Handbook for the Bottle-ologist*. Privately printed, Ogden, Utah.
- Hernon, Peter and Terry Ganey  
1991 *Under the Influence: The Unauthorized Story of the Anheuser-Busch Dynasty*. Simon & Schuster, New York.
- Herskovitz, Robert M.  
1978 *Fort Bowie Material Culture*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.
- Innes, Lowell  
1976 *Pittsburgh Glass, 1797-1891: A History and Guide for Collectors*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston.
- Jones, May  
1968 *The Bottle Trail, Volume 9*. Nara Vista, New Mexico.
- Jones, Olive and Catherine Sullivan  
1989 *The Parks Canada Glass Glossary for the Description of Containers, Tableware, Flat Glass, and Closures*. Parks Canada, Ottawa.
- Lockhart, Bill, Bill Lindsey, David Whitten, and Carol Serr  
2005 "The Dating Game: Illinois Glass Co." *Bottles and Extras* 16(1).
- Knittle, Rhea Mansfield  
1934 *Early American Glass*. Appleton-Century, New York.
- McKearin, Helen and George McKearin  
1941 *American Glass*. Crown Publishers, New York.
- 1949 *Two Hundred Years of American Blown Glass*. Bonanza Books, New York.
- McKearin, Helen, and Kenneth M. Wilson  
1978 *American Bottles & Flasks and Their Ancestry*. Crown Publishers, New York.
- Noël Hume, Ivor  
1961 "The Glass Wine Bottle in Colonial Virginia." *Journal of Glass Studies* 3:90-117.
- Plavchan, Ronald J.  
1969 "A History of Anheuser-Busch, 1852-1933." Doctoral dissertation, St. Louis University.
- Roller, Dick  
1983 *Standard Fruit Jar Reference*. Privately published.

Toulouse, Julian Harrison  
1971 *Bottle Makers and Their Marks*.  
Thomas Nelson, New York.

Wilson, Bill and Betty Wilson  
1969 *Western Bitters*. Old Time Bottle  
Publishing Co., Salem, Oregon.

Wilson, Rex  
1981 *Bottles on the Western Frontier*.  
University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Because this information is a compilation of all the above-mentioned sources, I have not attempted to cite each researcher individually in this section.

<sup>2</sup>The 1836 date was chosen by the various researchers because 1837 is the first listing in the city directories (Hawkins). However, Hawkins found a previously-unknown 1888 document that claimed the year was 1838. Thus, 1837 becomes an acceptable compromise.

<sup>3</sup>Hawkins' 1888 document stated that the name did not officially become C. Ihmsen & Co. until 1855. The name may have been used informally at an earlier date, or the document's author may have already confused the business with the Ihmsen Glass Co.

<sup>4</sup>Innes (1976:36) claimed that the Birmingham (Pittsburgh) Flint Glass Co. was operated by Ihmsen & Ulam beginning sometime after 1850 and that the factory closed in 1860.

<sup>5</sup>McKearin and McKearin (1941:590) claimed that the Ihmsen Glass Co. began in 1855. Although McKearin and Wilson (1978:153) and Toulouse (1971:262) parroted that date, it is not corroborated by any other source. Pittsburgh directories were in print at least as early as 1837, yet the first mention of the Ihmsen Glass Co. is in 1878, a much more likely date for the start of the company. Christian T. Ihmsen, Jr. would have been 10 years old in 1855. By 1878, he would have been 33.

<sup>6</sup>The name was changed to Monongahela City in 1837 and today is called Monogahela.

<sup>7</sup>At least one flask is embossed I G CO (capital "O") on the base, so the lower-case "o" may only be consistent on beer bottles (Bill Lindsey collection).

Bill Lockhart  
1313 14th Street, Apt. 21  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
(505) 439-8158  
bottlebill@tularosa.net