

The Early Fruit Jars of the Pacific and San Francisco Glass Works.

By: Dave Hinson. Research by Alex Kerr.

Originally published in the July 1995 *Bottles and Extras* the magazine of the Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors. © 1995 by Dave Hinson.

The fertile, lush valleys of California are ideal for producing equally beautiful fruit. The economy of one of the richest regions of the world, California, is built partly on the fruit industry. Some of the first millionaires in California made their fortunes in the production of table fruit, grapes, wine, olives and citrus. This fact has also made California the source of some of the most interesting jars and preserving bottles known to collectors.

One of these aforementioned entrepreneurs, Francis Cutting, was a businessman with a wide range of interests including fruit growing, fruit packing, meat packing, pickles, vinegar, banking, railroading and oil. Probably his most significant contribution to California history, however, was his creation of the Cutting Fruit Packing Company. The Cutting company became the principle founding member of the California Fruit Canners Association, whose brand name "Del Monte" (named after the prestigious Del Monte hotel in Monterey, California,) is familiar to families today. 1

Born of necessity, Francis Cutting, with the help of a partner, became the first glassmaker on the Pacific coast. Shipping glass from the East proved costly because of high freight costs and delays. Adding to the expense and uncertainty, shipping routes rounded the hazardous Strait of Magellan, a 350 mile passage between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans at the southern tip of South America. This was the primary over-sea shipping route used by business to ship goods from the east coast



San Francisco Glassworks display at 1877s Mid-Winter Expo in San Francisco. In the display are examples and advertisements for Gem, Porcelain Lined and Hero Improved fruit jars. There are also wax sealers, whimsies and target balls.

to the west coast. In addition to the extreme distance, the strait, surrounded by snow-covered mountains, is often plagued by wind, fog, tidal rips and a tidal range of sixty feet. Breakage caused on the rough trip from New York to California was common, (about 50%) adding to the cost of shipping empty containers over these thousands of miles. Even the best of sailors routinely took days to traverse the horn.

Refusing to deal with such a handicap, Mr. Cutting formed his own glassworks in 1859. The company, known as Baker and Cutting, was located in San Francisco on Beale Street between Howard and Mission. California's first glassworks remained

in business for less than a year, however. Cutting was not a glass man and there were few professional glass blowers in California. Glassblowing was an eastern industry and San Francisco Bay was a long way from New York or Pennsylvania. Due to poor manufacturing and poor-quality materials being used, the company was destined to fail.

Fruit jar collectors have, however, one relic by which to remember the company -- a groove-ring wax sealer embossed CUTTING AND CO SAN FRANCISCO!

What historians consider as the first genuine (successful) glass works on the west coast is the Pacific Coast Glass Works. Inspired by Cuttings' idea for west coast glass production, a Dr.

George W. Post saw the potential of a glassworks in San Francisco. In 1862, with the help of Cutting and three other businessmen (John Taylor, Charles Kohler and a gentleman named Turner) he erected a small glass-making plant, or furnace, in the North Beach area of the region. When authorities raised objection to the location of the furnace, the investors moved their fledgling enterprise to the Portero area and raised another \$100,000 capital for the project.

This group of investors founded the Pacific Coast Glass Works in October 1862; the first bottle blown there was on June 16, 1863. A gentleman named Giles H. Gray was listed as president with Charles Kohler as Vice President. John Taylor worked as the company's principle agent.

The company started production with five pots. The investors built the plant on ten acres of land purchased expressly for the purpose of constructing the glass works. The plant employed twenty-five or thirty experienced glassblowers from the east coast and used superior materials which the company either imported or extracted locally. This set the Pacific Glass Works apart from Cutting's unsuccessful attempt at glass making. Sand came from the San Francisco hills, and manganese came from Red Rock, in San Francisco Bay. A local chemical works provided "salt cake", produced as a by-product from nitrate of soda, that proved good enough to use in colored glass. The company did, however, import their soda ash from England. Records show that the company ran about eight or nine months out of each year manufacturing green, black and blue glass. They made wine, liquor and mineral-water bottles. The company produced bottles for packing pickles, mustard and a host of condiments. They also made medicine and chemical bottles, insulators and fruit jars.

The most famous jar produced at the Pacific Glass Works has got to be the Pacific Glassworks SF Victory jar. The owner of the patent for the Victory jars was William W. Lyman — also famous for the W.W. Lyman jars made

SAN FRANCISCO AND PACIFIC GLASS WORKS.

ESTABLISHED 1865.

C. NEWMAN, - - - - - President

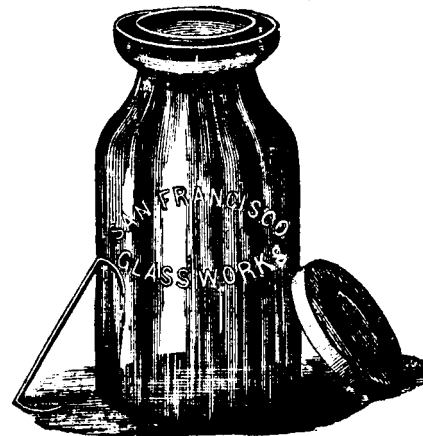
Office and Works, KING STREET, near foot of Fourth, San Francisco.

Manufacturers of all kinds of FLINT, GREEN and BLACK GLASSWARE. All kinds of Plain and lettered bottles furnished at short notice.

C. NEWMAN'S IMPROVED ELASTIC DEMIJOHN. (Patented January 20th, 1875.) By referring to the engraving, in the foreground will be seen a bottle partially covered; a represents the glass, b the tulle reed, and c the wicker-work. It will be seen that the bottle is first covered with the tulle reed—a soft elastic substance—forming a cushion, on which the rattan is woven. By this means the bottle is doubly protected, and made doubly valuable from its immunity from breakage. Its advantages are so many and obvious, that it needs no argument to prove its merits. Those who use demi-johns will see at once the superiority it possesses over all other covered bottles.



THE GROOVE RING FRUIT JAR.



This Jar has been extensively used in the East for several years, and from its simplicity of construction, cheapness and reliability, has become one of the most popular jars now in use.

This page from the San Francisco City Directory (1881) shows Demijohns, wax sealers and a Mason's Patent Nov. 30th 1858.

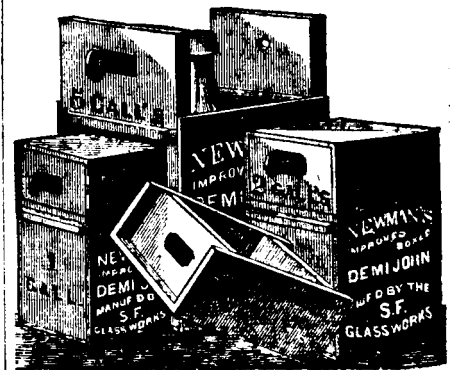
by William McCully company in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. How or why the Pacific Glass Works came to manufacture the Victory jars is unknown. Nonetheless, the jars were undoubtedly one of their top products. 2

The Pacific Glass Works survived well into the 1870s -- until its arch competitor, the San Francisco Flint Glass Works, finally purchased and dis-

NEWMAN'S IMPROVED BOX DEMIJOHN.

(PATENTED MARCH 30TH, 1875.)

These boxed demi-johns are the simplest, best and cheapest in the market. They are neat in appearance, compact, and securely packed, and are always ready for shipment by any conveyance, without danger of breakage. They will save 50 per cent. in freight. The demi-john in the box being glass, cannot destroy the flavor of the liquid, and consequently should take the place of wooden kegs for all purposes.



PORCELAIN LINED.



mantled it.

Carlton Newman, the founder of the San Francisco Flint Glass Works, was undoubtedly born to be a glassmaker. Mr. Newman came into the world on June 26, 1829, in the town of Wheeling, West Virginia. He learned the glass-blowing trade at an early age. Although it is not clear what happened to his father, Newman moved his

San Francisco Glass Works

ESTABLISHED 1868.

CARLTON NEWMAN, PROPRIETOR

Office and Works, KING ST., near FOOT OF FOURTH, San Francisco.

Manufacturer of all kinds of GREEN AND BLACK GLASSWARE.

ALL KINDS OF PLAIN AND LETTERED BOTTLES Furnished at short Notice.

From a circa 1870s advertisement.

mother and siblings to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1848. In Pittsburgh he perfected his skill in the glass making trade and became an early inventor. In December of 1859, at the age of thirty, he filed a patent for his Newman's Patent Fruit Jar. Upon studying the jar, it's doubtful that it consistently obtained an airtight seal. However, a local Pittsburgh glass house, Bakewell and Pears, advertised it amongst their wares. Imperfect as it was, the jar is significant because of its early age.

By selling two of his patents, Newman raised enough money to bring his family to San Francisco. He arrived in California in 1863, close to the same time that production started at the Pacific Glass Works. Again, what inspired Newman to make the move to California is unknown. However, I can't help wondering if there was some Pittsburgh connection.

In 1865, with the help of investors, Newman and partner Patrick T. Brannan (or possibly Brennen) founded the San Francisco Flint Glass Works. Fruit jars immediately became an important part of the company's production.

In 1868, fire destroyed the glass works. Undaunted, Newman, with the help of other partners, reestablished the business better than ever. As California industry, especially the fruit and food industries, experienced rapid growth, the demand for glass containers increased accordingly. Newman's glassworks made it through the depression of 1878 (thanks to home canning, always increasing during tough economic times) and by May of the following year were doing a large business in bottles and glass containers. The

company produced both Mason, Hero Improved, Porcelain Lined, and Gem jars as well as a reportedly large quantity of groove-ring wax sealers from Robert Arthur's patent.

Most collectors are familiar with the wax sealers embossed "San Francisco Glass Works". If you're lucky, perhaps you have seen one or two of these in your lifetime. According to the Pacific Rural Press of June 20, 1874, the jars were being made in "immense quantities". Describing the virtues of the wax sealer, the publication stated that it cost one-fourth less than other jars and was simple to use. "It is, moreover, a California manufacture, immense quantities of them being turned out at the San Francisco Glass Works in this city." Why don't we see more San Francisco wax sealers? Another hobby mystery...3

At the state fair of 1867 Newman entered two displays, one winning a gold medal. The first display included the wares of his company including prescription bottles "from one half drachm to sixteen ounces". Oval, panel and fluted prescriptions (poison bottles perhaps), extracts, oil bottles, ink bottles, whiskeys, flasks, mustard bottles, wine bottles, soda bottles, biters bottles, Carboys, retorts, chemical ware including flasks, tubing, funnels, etc., lamp chimneys, locomotive and light house chimneys and of course fruit jars -- all produced by his company. Newman rightly bragged that his company was the first to produce clear glass on the west coast.

The second display that won Newman a special award was of his "patent self-sealing fruit jars." No specific record exists, however, as to how

the jars were embossed!

Newman did more than make bottles. He held patents for an improved melting pot, and later, for improvements in the production and shipment of the demijohn.

The consolidation of the San Francisco and Pacific Glass Works took place on June 9, 1876. Carlton Newman was head of the new company and served as president and General Manager. In this corporation, fruit jar production figured prominently. As previously mentioned, the company produced both wax sealers and mason jars. By the fall of 1880, the company employed about 200 workers and was producing glassware to the tune of over \$250,000 annually. The works covered a lot 200 feet x 250 feet that was crowded by buildings. Desperate for expansion, the company bought land at the corner of 7th and Townsend streets in San Francisco and erected a factory for the increased production of flint glass in 1883. (The new expansion included the installation of an eight-pot, gas-fired Siemen-Martin furnace.)

In 1886, the company found itself in the middle of a fruit jar production war against fruit jar giant Salmon Rowley and the Hero Fruit Jar Company. Newman's company had been making, and supplying at a reasonable price to the jobbers of California, Mason jars, Hero Improved jars and Gem jars under license from Hero. Historical records show that this practice ended when the plant shut down for most of a year in 1885. When the glassworks went back into production, they were suddenly producing other jars. (As to which jar or jars, my records do not document.) Appalled, Hero shipped, via water, a very large quantity of jars to San Francisco. Arriving in time for merchants to purchase and resell for the spring trade, the cheaper jars likely affected Newman's profits. Prices offered on the jars were considerably lower than Newman could produce at his glassworks and it seems likely, to me anyway, that Hero must have lost money on the deal in order to undermine Newman. He and his

company could do little else than stand by until the storm blew over; however, once the market stabilized, Newman plotted his revenge.

The company purchased additional land at 7th and Townsend Streets and, by November of 1886, had updated their glass plant again to become one of the best in the nation. With an eight-ton capacity, Newman swung his company into high gear. The company dismantled its outdated furnaces and concentrated production at the new location making impressive quantities of quality glass for the people of the west coast. Carlton Newman died suddenly of a heart attack on March 8, 1889. The company went on without him, operating under the same name until close to the turn of the century.

Footnotes:

- 1 See Betty Zumwalt's book "Ketchup, Pickles and Sauces 19th Century Food in Glass" for more information on the California Fruit Canner's Association.
- 2 See also RB 2283-1 for another example of an early California fruit jar. "Pacific Glass Works S.F." (base). The jar has a stopper neck finish and was dug some years ago. There is only one jar presently known.
- 3 There is one other wax sealer of record likely produced by the San Francisco Glass Works. Embossed "M. Seller & Co. Portland O.", this jar is also extremely rare. M. Seller was a crockery and glassware dealer in Portland, Oregon.
- 4 References: Brothers, J. Stanley, Jr. Early Glassmaking In California. May 1952 The Glass Industry.
- 5 Langley's San Francisco Directory, 1881.
- 6 Leybourne, Doug. The Collector's Guide to Fruit Jars, Red Book #7. Self Published - 1993.
- 7 The Mining and Scientific Press. Volume 20, #4. January 22, 1870.
- 8 The Pacific Rural Press, June 20, 1874.
- 9 Roller, Dick. The Standard Fruit Jar Reference. Paris, IL, Acorn Press - 1983.
- 10 Toulouse, Julian H. Bottle Makers and Their Marks. New York, NY, Nelson - 1971.
- 11 Zumwalt, Betty, Ketchup, Pickles and Sauces 19th. Century Food In Glass. Fulton, CA, Mark West Pub. - 1980.

CELEBRATED PEACEMAKER STOVE,
For Sale By
A. P. BRAYTON & CO.,



No. 128 Sansome street, near Pine,
BROOKLYN HOTEL BLOCK.....SAN FRANCISCO.
 General Agents for the Pacific Coast,
 DEALERS IN ALL KINDS OF

S T O V E S ,
Tin, Iron, and Copper Ware,
 HOUSE-FURNISHING GOODS, &C.
ALSO....
SOLE AGENTS FOR
HALLER'S
Patent Airtight
FRUIT-JARS,
 The only absolutely reliable Jar in use.
BROOKLYN HOTEL BLOCK. No. 128 Sansome street,
 23 **SAN FRANCISCO.**

A copy of an A.P. Brayton & Co ad from the California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences (July 3, 1863) for stoves and "Haller's Patent Airtight Fruit Jars." A.P. Brayton was in the cast iron business, and likely made the closures for these jars. However, who made the jars? We know that the jars were made pontiled and unpontiled. The date of the ad leaves the Pacific Glassworks the only glass manufacturer in business at that time on the west coast. The known jars are light green to medium green in color.

*Bottles & Extras is published monthly. In addition to the other benefits of joining The **Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors**, you will receive a full year subscription to Bottles & Extras. For information on the **Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors** please write to Treasurer Kevin Sives, 1485 Buck Hill Drive, Southampton, PA 18966. <http://www.fohbc.com> When submitting articles to Bottles and Extras copyrights remain the property of the authors.*