

## **From Premium Glass Co. to Bartlett-Collins**

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When poet Robert Burns wrote, “The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men, gang aft agley,” he could have been telling the story of the Pioneer Flint Glass Co. and its successors. Charles Overmyer conceived his fruit jar invention in Upland, Indiana, but created the Cicero Glass Co. (Cicero, Indiana) at the former Bonita Glass Co. plant. The firm soon moved to Coffeyville, Kansas, as the Pioneer Flint Glass Co. – primarily making tableware – and shortly thereafter became the Premium Glass Co. As the focus shifted away from tableware, the plant moved from Coffeyville to Sapulpa, Oklahoma, to concentrate on making fruit jars and other containers.

When George F. Collins, the owner of Premium, joined with H.U. Bartlett, the firm of Bartlett-Collins opened a new plant to return to the manufacture of tableware. The old plant continued to make jars. Yet another unplanned change took place when the two owners had a falling out, and Collins left the firm to open the Liberty Glass Co. Bartlett-Collins soon discontinued jar production to concentrate on tableware. Liberty Glass, meanwhile, concentrated on milk bottles. Even that soon changed with the addition of soda bottles. After years of continual shifting, both firms finally settled into long-term production patterns.

### **Histories**

#### **Cicero Glass Co., Cicero, Indiana (1902-1903)**

Charles G. Overmyer received a patent for a jar closure device on March 19, 1901, at Upland, Indiana, and began promoting a glass factory to produce jars and lids by at least that December. The *Upland Monitor* (February 6, 1902) illustrated a cut of the jar, embossed “FIRST / PREMIUM.” However, by April, Overmyer had closed a deal at Cicero, Indiana, to locate a plant (Roller 2011:193).

Overmyer chose the former Bonita Glass Co. factory, idle for about two years, and renamed the firm the Cicero Glass Co. The plant was reported as “started. A patent fruit jar is being produced.” However, something (not disclosed) was amiss. By November 1903,

Overmyer had already begun a new firm at Coffeyville, Kansas. The new operation dismantled the Cicero plant ca. March 1904 (Roller 2011:193).

## Containers and Marks

The jar dynasty that would become the Premium series almost certainly began with the Cicero Glass Co. Despite the early failure of this initial firm, the plant made *some* jars.

### FIRST PREMIUM (1902-1903; 1906)

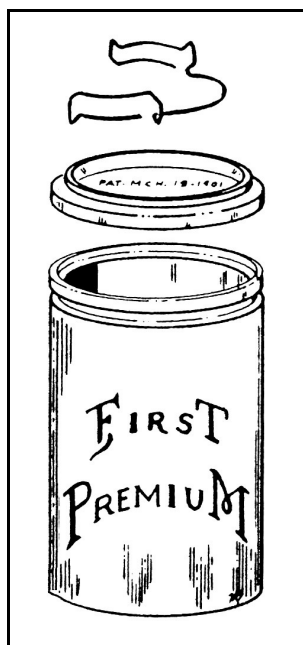


Figure 2 – First Premium jar (Creswick 1987:105)

Charles G. Overmyer of Upland, Indiana, applied for a patent for a “Jar-Closure” on August 22, 1900, and received Patent No. 670,292 on March 19, 1901 (Figure 1). The patent drawing was obviously for the Coffeyville jars (see below) and the PREMIUM jar described here. Overmyer did not assign the patent to anyone, but he was the founder of the Cicero and Coffeyville plants.

Creswick (1987b:105) illustrated a jar that she said was “likely the earliest of the Premium jar series” (Figure 2). The jar was mouth

blown (ground lip), and Creswick said only one jar was ever reported (Figure 3). The slightly domed lid was embossed “PAT. MCH. 19-1901” horizontally across the center (Figure 4). She noted that 1906 records from the Pioneer Flint Glass Co. stated that the firm had intended to make the jars at that point.

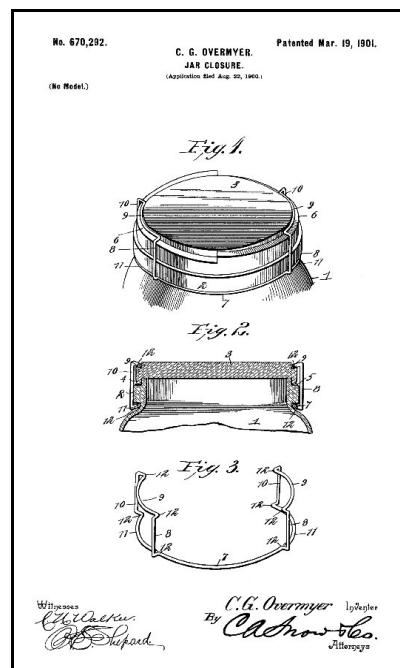


Figure 1 – Overmyer’s March 19, 1901, patent



Figure 3 – Ground rim of first jar (North American Glass)



Figure 4 – Lid with embossing (North American Glass)

The jar was embossed “FIRST / PREMIUM” with both words in arches and having larger first and last letters (Figure 5). A drawing of the First Premium jar in an Upland, Indiana, newspaper demonstrates that Creswick was correct about this being the first jar in the series. It is very likely that at least a few of these jars were manufactured at the Cicero plant in late 1902 or 1903. It is also likely that the Pioneer Flint Glass Co. made others in 1906.

### **Pioneer Flint Glass Co, Coffeyville, Kansas (1904-1907)**

Overmyer had formed the Pioneer Flint Glass Co. at Coffeyville, Kansas, by November 27, 1903. The new firm had finished moving the equipment from the former Cicero Glass Co. to the new location about March 1904 and began production on April 18 of that year. The factory began with a ten-ring continuous tank operating five shops per shift. The plant made blown and pressed tableware, lantern globes, and novelties (Roller 1998a; 2011:193).

In April 1905, Superintendent R.H. Thomas reported four presses and two shops for blown glass, making lamps and tableware. Thomas noted that the firm would be producing “the Premium fruit jar” in the near future. Pioneer was the “sole patentee” of the jar (Roller 1998a; 2011:193).

### **Containers and Marks**

As noted in the history section, Pioneer Flint Glass was also short lived, but the plant probably also made a few of the “First Premium” jars in 1906. It is likely that the factory made nothing else that was marked, including the “Pioneer” jar discussed below.

### **PIONEER**

Roller (1983:286) listed a grooved-ring, wax-sealer jar embossed “PIONEER” on the base (Figure 6). He noted that the

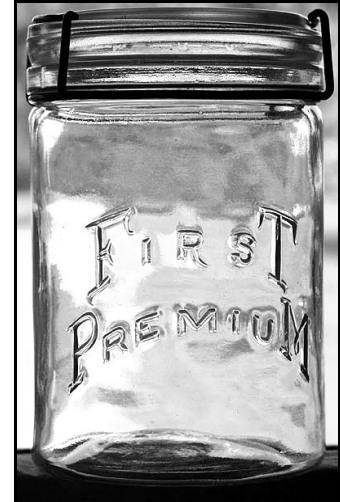


Figure 5 – First Premium jar (North American Glass)

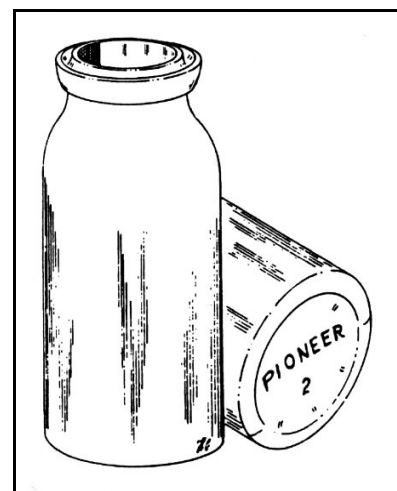


Figure 6 – PIONEER jar (Creswick 1987)

maker was uncertain, but it was probably the Pioneer Glass Co., Birmingham, Alabama, a firm that made flasks and fruit jars from at least September 1888 to ca. April 1889. Wax sealers were popular during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but some continued in production until the 1920s. McCann (2014:283) added that

a note in the September 29, 1888 issue of *The Commoner and Glassworker* stated that “the new Pioneer Glass Works at Birmingham, Ala., are in operation making flasks and fruit jars.” By April 3, 1889, the glass works was reported as “Out of Operation.”

Creswick (1987a:175) and Roller (2011:424) both noted that the jars were made with either a “1” or a “2” below the “PIONEER” basemark – probably indicating that two molds were made. All agree that the jar was made by the earlier, Alabama firm – not the Pioneer Glass Co. at Coffeyville.

The firm did use its entire name on advertising plates. These fancy plates with filagree designs encircling the outside rim. Each was embossed “MANUFACTURED BY (arch) / THE PIONEER / FLINT GLASS CO. (both horizontal) / COFFEYVILLE, KANS. (inverted arch).” The plates were almost certainly only made once (Figure 7).



Figure 7 – Pioneer Flint Glass Co. plate  
(Live Auctioneers)

### **PREMIUM – horizontal (1906-1907)**

According to Roller (1983:291; 2011:429), the second jar in the sequence was colorless with a glass lid held in place by a spring clamp, pressed on from the side (see Table 1 for a sequence and chronology of variations of the Premium jars). The jar was embossed “PREMIUM” horizontally on the front with “PREMIUM JAR PAT’D MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup> 1901” embossed on the inside of the lid. Roller included a drawing of one of the jars from an undated brochure put out by the Pioneer Flint Glass Co. (Figure 8). Although Roller was unsure, he noted that the maker was probably the Pioneer Flint Glass Co., Coffeyville, Kansas – a firm that

intended to make the jars during the 1905-1907 period. The jar was mouth blown (ground lip) and may have been made as a salesman's sample. Creswick (1987b:105) also illustrated the jar and lid but made no attempt to date either of them.

### **Premium Glass Co., Coffeyville, Kansas (1907-1912)**

At some point in 1907 (possibly April), the Pioneer Flint Glass Co. was reorganized as the Premium Glass Co. with Charles G. Overmyer as vice president. The plant continued to operate the same ten-ring continuous tank, apparently making novelties. Because of overproduction, the market was flooded with fruit jars in 1907, so Premium did not produce any during that blowing season. When the plant opened up for the 1908 season, it made its first Premium jars (Roller 1983:292; 1998a).

On May 15, 1909, *Commoner and Glassworker* noted that "the Premium Glass Co. can hardly fill their numerous orders." Despite the cheery note in May, Premium shut down its furnace by December 4, 1909, and the firm went out of business the following year. The company reorganized during the same year (1910) – with F.T. Weaver as president, George F. Collins as secretary and manager, and A.O. Colvin as treasurer – and rebuilt the furnace. However, on May 13, 1911, the plant burned – prior to the production of any jars (Roller 1983:292; 1998b).

### **Containers and Marks**

This factory began the actual production of the Premium jar series.

### **PREMIUM – arch (1909-1909)**

Roller (1983:291) noted a variation that was identical to the one described above, except that "PREMIUM" was in an arch. Creswick (1987b:105) illustrated the second variation (Figure 9), which must

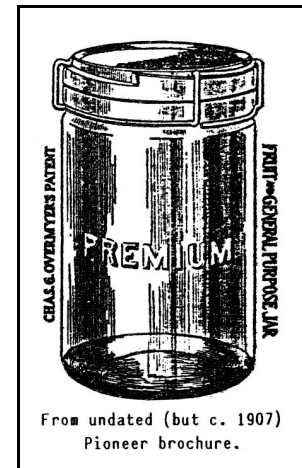


Figure 8 – PREMIUM – horizontal (Roller 1983:291)



Figure 9 – PREMIUM – arch (Creswick 1987:105)

have been in production longer. She noted that the colorless jar was machine made but, again, made no attempt to date it. Although Creswick had noted four variations of the lid, Roller (2011:429) only listed one, embossed “PAT MAR 19<sup>TH</sup> 1901 APPN PEND ON IMPVTS.” Creswick added that the “9” in “19<sup>TH</sup>” was sometimes reversed.

As noted in the history section, there was no market for fruit jars during 1907, so the first documented Premium jars were the ones produced by April 1908, apparently on two machines – although the plant added a third in 1909. However, production ceased on December 1, 1909, and fire destroyed the plant in May 1910. These jars – including a variation with an arrow near the front shoulder – were therefore only made during 1908 and 1909 – at the Coffeyville factory.

Apparently a short run of these jars was made with the new lid style (see discussion and explanation below). Those could only have been made during 1909.

**Table 1 – Premium Jars**

Embossing	Company	Dates	Source
FIRST / PREMIUM	Cicero Glass Co.	1902	Roller (2010:193)
PREMIUM (horizontal)	Pioneer Flint Glass Co.	1906-1907	Creswick (1987:105) Roller (1983:291)
PREMIUM (arch)	Premium Glass Co., Coffeyville	1909	Creswick (1987:105) Roller (1983:291)
PREMIUM / COFFEYVILLE, KAS	Premium Glass Co., Coffeyville	ca. 1909-1912 (1901 lid)	Creswick (1987:106) Roller (1983:291-292) Toulouse (1969:246)
PREMIUM / COFFEYVILLE, KAS	Premium Glass Co., Coffeyville	1909 (1910 lid)	Roller (2010:430)
Premium IMPROVED w/ Coffeyville ghosted on back	Premium Glass Co.	1912-1916	Creswick (1987:106) Roller (1983:292)
Premium IMPROVED	Premium Glass Co.	1912-1916	Creswick (1987:106) Roller (1983:292) Toulouse (1969:246)
Premium IMPROVED	Bartlett-Collins Glass Co.	1916-1918	Thomas Pub. Co. 1917:4104; 1918:4430

## PREMIUM COFFEYVILLE KAS (1909)

Toulouse (1969:246) recorded a colorless fruit jar embossed “PREMIUM (arch) / COFFEYVILLE KAS (horizontal)” on the front body. The glass lid was held in place by a spring clam, pressed on from the side. The lid was embossed “PAT’D MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup> 1901” in a circle. He dated the jars ca. 1904-1915 and noted that the maker was the Premium Glass Co. at Coffeyville” (although he misspelled the town name as “Coffeerville”).

Roller (1983:291-292) described two variations of the jar. The first, which he noted as made by the Premium Glass Co. between ca. 1908 (when the firm began fruit jar production) and ca. 1909 (when the company failed), was the one noted by Toulouse (above). Roller (1983:291) described the closure as “Top seal (in shallow well), glass lid with two inclined ramps on top, held down by wire clamp encircling lid and jar neck.” Roller noted three variations in lid embossing:

1. PAT MAR 19<sup>TH</sup> 1901 – embossed on the outside of the lid
2. PAT’D MAR 19<sup>TH</sup> 1901 – embossed on the inside of the lid
3. PAT MAR 19<sup>TH</sup> 1901 APPN PEND ON IMPVTS – embossed on the outside of the lid

**Table 2 – Premium Jar Lids, Overmyer 1901 Patent Style (after Roller 2010:429)**

Lid Embossing	Company	Dates
PAT. MCH. 19-1901	Cicero Glass Co.	1902-1903
PAT. MCH. 19-1901	Pioneer Flint Glass Co.	1906
PREMIUM JAR PAT’D MARCH 19 <sup>TH</sup> 1901 (inside)	Pioneer Flint Glass Co.	1906-1907
PAT MAR 19 <sup>TH</sup> 1901 APPN PEND ON IMPVTS*	Pioneer Flint Glass Co.	1908-1909
PAT MAR 19 <sup>TH</sup> 1901	Pioneer Flint Glass Co.?	1908-1909
PAT’D MAR 19 <sup>TH</sup> 1901 (inside)	Premium Glass Co.	1908-1909

\* The “9” in “19<sup>TH</sup>” was sometimes reversed.

Creswick (1987b:106) only noted and illustrated the first variation, along with the Coffeyville jar (Figure 10). See Tables 2 & 3 for a chronology of lid variations. The term “APPN PEND ON IMPVTS (application pending on improvements)” on Lid #3 almost certainly referred to a stackable feature that was added to the jars/lids ca. 1906. The embossing suggests that Overmyer applied for a separate patent for a slight alteration of the lids and bases of the jars to allow them to stack easily. It is obvious from the addition of this feature to Overmyer’s 1910 patent that his application was turned down during this period. This feature is discussed further in the Second Patent section below.



Figure 10 – PREMIUM / COFFEYVILLE, KAS.  
(Creswick 1987:106)

**Table 3 – Premium Jar Lids, Overmyer 1910 Patent Style (after Roller 2010:430-431)**

Lid Embossing	Company	Dates
COFFEYVILLE KAS. / PAT. MAR. 19 <sup>TH</sup> . 01.	Premium Glass Co.	1909
PAT'D MAR 19 <sup>TH</sup> 1901 (inside)	Premium Glass Co.	1909-1916
PAT. MAR. 19 <sup>TH</sup> 1901 DEC 13 <sup>TH</sup> 1910	Premium Glass Co.	1910-1916
PAT. MAR. 19 <sup>TH</sup> 1901 DEC 13 <sup>TH</sup> 1910*	Bartlett-Collins Glass Co	1916-1918

\* See explanation in Table 1.

### Overmyer’s Second Patent

The second variation requires a bit of explanation. On March 9, 1910, Charles G. Overmyer applied for another patent, this time for a “Glass Jar.” He received Patent No. 978,634 on December 13, 1910, and assigned one-half of the rights to George F. Collins (Figure 11). This was actually a major revision of the finish and lid from those of the 1901 jar. Roller (1983:292) called this one a “Straddle-lip top seal” but otherwise gave the same description.



Although both lids were held in place by a virtually identical wire clamps, the main differences were that the earlier lid fit into a sort of cap-seat finish, where a protrusion of the lid sat *inside* the throat of the jar. The new arrangement had a protrusion of the *finish* that fit inside the *lid*. The two systems were completely different, so the lids and jars could not be interchanged (Figure 12).

Roller (1983:292) called attention to the stackable qualities of the 1901-patent jars. Notice in Figures 2, 9, & 10 that the lids are hollowed out and the bases of the jars are inset to allow the sealed jars to be stacked conveniently. The First Premium jars did not have this feature, although it was found on subsequent ones. However, the jars made for the 1910-patent lids were *not* stackable and lacked the inset bases and concave lids. See Table 4 for a list of differences in the finishes.

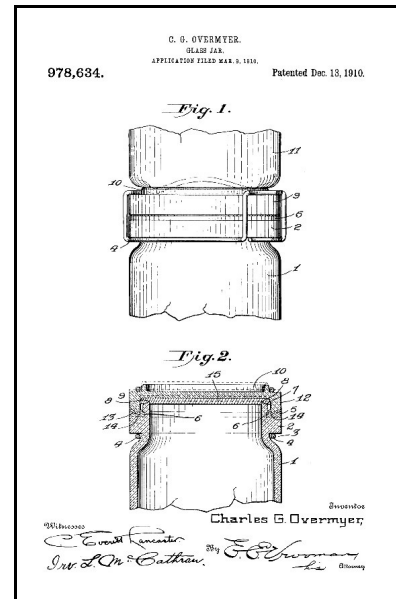


Figure 11 – Overmyer's December 13, 1910, patent

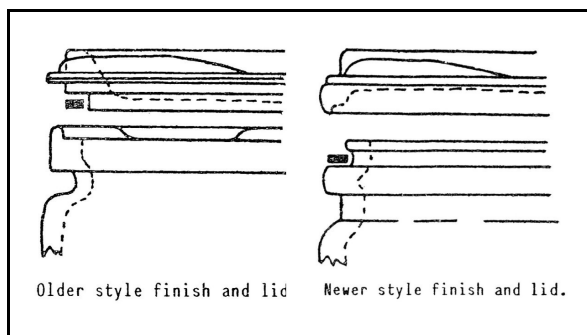


Figure 12 – Drawings of the 1901 lid (left) and the 1910 lid (right) (Roller 1983L292)

which did not mention the feature – actually *were* stackable, while jars made to the later patent – which *illustrated* the feature – did *not* actually have it. Overmyer probably conceived the idea sometime around 1906 and instituted it on the jars. It is, however, strange that the feature vanished just about the time that it was patented.

This feature is quite odd, when you consider that the 1901 patent made *no* mention of this feature, but the 1910 patent stated that the first drawing was “a view in elevation of the lower portion of a jar nestled on the cover of a jar constructed in accordance with this invention.” Note in Figure 12 that the illustration clearly shows the jars in stacked position. Thus, jars made to the earlier patent –

Roller (1983:292; 2011:430) noted that the second style of lid was made ca. November 1909, just before the firm failed. Despite that, the factory managed to make some jars of the “COFFEYVILLE” variation with the new finish and lid styles. These were almost certainly only

manufactured in 1909. Roller (2011:430) noted two lids that fit the jars: 1) COFFEYVILLE KAS. / PAT. MAR. 19<sup>TH</sup>. 01. embossed on the underside; and PAT D MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup> 1901 also on the underside.

**Table 4 – Differences in the 1901 and 1910 Premium-Patent Lids**

Characteristic	1901 Patent Lid*	1910 Patent Lid*
Depression for stacking	no (yes)	yes (no)
Ramps for sealing pressure	yes (yes)	no (no)
Flange	short	long
Edge of flange	rounded	sharp
Sealing surface	sealing ring	sealing ring or rim (lip)
Spring clamp	yes (yes)	yes (yes)

\* Parentheses = actual; otherwise references are to the patent drawing

#### **Premium Glass Co., Sapulpa, Oklahoma (1912-1916)**

By 1913, the corporation – still with the same officers – had moved the plant from Coffeyville to Sapulpa, Oklahoma. The new factory operated a single six-ring continuous tank and continued to use the same name – Premium Glass Co. Production resumed using two O’Neil machines that had been salvaged from the wreckage of the Coffeyville plant. In 1914, after another reorganization, George F. Collins became president of the corporation, with G.T. Henderson as secretary and J.L. Crothers as treasurer. J.A. Collins was added as vice president the following year. In 1915, the plant was listed as making fruit jars, packers, preservers, and milk jars by both hand and machine processes (Roller 1983:292; 1998b).

Harry Reaper, representative for the American Flint Glass Workers Association (AFGWU), assessed the situation at Sapulpa in June 1914:

Well, boys, at present we have three first class, up-to-date glass factories located in our beautiful city, and the prospects are very favorable for another in the near future. At present, the Premium Glass Co., formerly of Coffeyville, Kas., is located here, and is operating to its full capacity, turning out a complete line of

table tumblers, hand blown and machine made ware. . . . We have two machines working we have a few greens<sup>1</sup> who come into the limelight (Reaper 1914:54).

At some point, probably during late 1914 or early 1915, George Collins merged his interests with H.U. Bartlett to form the Bartlett-Collins Glass Co.; however, the Premium plant continued to operate under its own name. Reaper summed up the firm's activities as of March 1915:

The Premium Glass Co. is working one lathe [i.e., tank], the six-ring continuous, to its full capacity, with three machines, two blow shops and one press shop. Their production is of a miscellaneous line: Milks, brandies and prescription bottles, lamp, lantern, globes and an up-to-date line of peanuts, jellies and common tumblers. This finds everything moving along nicely with an output of from three to five cars per week and orders coming in continually for more glassware. This finds our little superintendent, Mr. Geo. F. Collins, a very busy man these days, as just across the beautiful Oil City, he has started to build another glass factory, which when completed will consist of a fourteen pot furnace and a six ring tank. The general output of this plant will be mostly shades, gas and electric (Reaper 1915a:41-42).

The plant added a day tank with four rings in 1915. On July 17, 1915, the *National Glass Budget* announced that the "Premium Glass Co. has just accepted a contract to produce Mason fruit jars for the Schram Glass Co., of this city, and has installed two Miller one-man machines which are turning out quart jars like tacks . . . ." (Roller 1998b; Toulouse 1971:76, 321).

By October 1915, Premium had begun using a new, four-ring continuous tank. Six shops, three on each "turn," made milk bottles and a variety of tumblers. At that time, the firm was

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<sup>1</sup> Window producers aside, the major division in the glass industry was between tableware and bottle manufacture, fomenting the formation of separate unions. Workers at the tableware plants generally produced colorless or "flint" glass and became known as the "flints." Bottles were generally made from cheaper glass that was aqua in color but was known during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century as "common green" or just "green" glass. Bottle blowers were therefore called the "greens." Even most bottle plants that made colorless glass were considered "green" – although the designations became more confused over time.

constructing a second 25-ton tank with six rings (Reaper 1915f:41). Reaper (1916:39) reported the dissolution of Premium in March 1916:

Things at the Bartlett-Collins plant and the Premium Glass Co., of Sapulpa, have changed since my last writing. The Bartlett-Collins Co. has taken the Premium Glass Co.'s stock over, making both plants under the same company and the same management, The Bartlett and Collins Co. So therefore in the future there shall be no Premium Glass Co. The plants will be known as B.C. No. 1 and B.C. No. 2. The B.C. No. 2 is the past Premium Glass Co. At B.C. No. 1 conditions remain about the same as in my past writings.

### **Containers and Marks**

#### **Premium IMPROVED (1912-1916)**

Toulouse (1969:245-246) noted a colorless fruit jar with a continuous-thread finish and Mason shoulder-seal lid. The front was embossed "Premium (script) / IMPROVED." Although Toulouse did not mention a manufacturer, he dated the jar to the same ca. 1904-1915 period as the one from Coffeyville.<sup>2</sup>

Roller (2011:430), however, noted that "PREMIUM (arch) / COFFEYVILLE KAS" appeared as a "ghost" mark on the back of some of these jars, with "Premium (script) / IMPROVED" on the front. The lids was the same style as the one on the second variation of the Coffeyville jar, but there were two variations: 1) "PAT. MAR. 19<sup>TH</sup> 1901 DEC 13<sup>TH</sup> 1910"; and 2) PAT'D MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup> 1901. Roller dated these ca. 1913-1915 and noted that they were made by the Premium Glass Co. at Sapulpa, Oklahoma. Some of the jars lacked the ghosting on the back. Creswick (1987b:106) also listed both variations and dated them ca. 1914-1915 (Figure 13).



Figure 13 – Premium / IMPROVED (Creswick 1987b:106)

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<sup>2</sup> Toulouse is in error here. The Premium Improved jars had lids and finishes made to Overmyer's 1910 patent. They sealed on a bead – not on the shoulder.

Since Premium continued under its own name until March of 1916, we extend the final date to that year. We also extend the initial date of the Premium Improved jar to 1912, the date that the plant opened in Sapulpa. In addition, it is possible that Bartlett-Collins continued to make the jars until as late as 1918. As noted below, the Thomas Registers continued to list jars as a Bartlett-Collins product until 1918. About that time, Bartlett-Collins began making food jars for the war effort, and that almost certainly did not include fruit jars.

### **Bartlett-Collins Glass Co., Sapulpa, Oklahoma (1915-2008)**

H.U. Bartlett, George F. Collins, and E.B. Rankin incorporated the Bartlett-Collins Glass Co. at Sapulpa with a capital of \$150,000 in July 1915 (*Iron Age* 1915:280).<sup>3</sup> Harry Reaper, the AFGWU representative, first mentioned what would become the Bartlett-Collins plant in March 1915. However, various workers were migrating into the new plant by May, and all but two of the tableware shops had already relocated. The old Premium plant was being retooled for container manufacture. By June, almost all of the tableware crews had moved into the Bartlett-Collins plant and were planning to begin production on June 15 (Reaper 1915b:44; 1915c:40).

The AFGWU established Local Union No. 106 at Sapulpa for the Bartlett-Collins plant on June 20 (Reaper 1915d:19). One tableware shop had still not moved by the July report (probably mid-June). Reaper (1915d:44) noted, “With the exception of one machine making jellies, peanuts and common tumblers at the Premium Glass Company the rest of the Flints that were employed there have left, going over to the Bartlett & Collins plant to continue to perform their daily duties.

Production finally commenced on June 28. By October, the factory was working at full capacity. The six-ring continuous tank began machine production early in October, and the furnace was working “eleven good pots.” The plant had just received four new A.H. Heisey presses, bringing their total to eight (Reaper 1915e:47; 1915f:21, 42).

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<sup>3</sup> Although secondary sources (Toulouse 1971:76, 321; Roller 1983:292; and Roller 1998b) presented conflicting dates, contemporary sources place the incorporation at July 1915. The internet is filled with copycat sites that have incorrectly repeated 1914 as the date Bartlett-Collins began. This probably refers to the 1914 reorganization of the Premium Glass Co., but Bartlett was *not* listed as one of the officers. Interestingly, Bartlett-Collins celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1964 – apparently claiming 1914 as the year of its foundation.

As noted above, Reaper (1916:39-40) reported the demise of the Premium Glass Co. in March 1916, creating B.C. No. 1 (the tableware plant) and B.C. No. 2 (the former Premium Glass factory, making jars). He added:

At the B.C. No. 2 this is exclusively a milk bottle factory and the men here are members of the G.B.B.A. [Glass Bottle Blowers Association]. The writer does not wish to say anything at the present time in regard to this plant as they have just started and conditions do not permit. . . . I will give you the dope upon B.C. No. 2 in the next issue.<sup>4</sup>

A different 1916 listing reported that the plant used three continuous tanks with 18 rings and one furnace with 12 pots and began semiautomatic machine production, although much hand manufacture continued. The next year, the listing added one day tank and noted tableware, cut glass, lamps, milk bottles, and packers' goods as products (Roller 1998b). Toulouse (1971:76) noted 1916 as the year the firm obtained its first semiautomatic tumbler machine.

According to Giarde (1980:13), Bartlett-Collins made milk bottles at the former Premium Glass Co. plant from ca. 1914 to 1918.<sup>5</sup> Bartlett-Collins was first listed in the Thomas Registers in 1917 under bottles, druggists' ware, milk bottles, packers' ware, and fruit jars. Although fruit jars were dropped from the listing after 1918, the other bottle types continued until at least 1921 (Thomas Publishing Co. 1917:730, 733-734, 4104; 1918:810, 813-814, 4430; 1921:782, 784, 3823, 3826).<sup>6</sup> Despite the late listing, it is highly likely that milk bottle production at Bartlett-Collins ceased in 1918.

In 1918 (Bristow 1918:7), Plant No. 1 (the newer plant) had a:

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<sup>4</sup> Despite his cheery prediction, Harry Reaper did not write another report. By November 1916, he was replaced by Con Boren – a not-nearly-so-newsy reporter, especially where B.C. No. 2 was concerned.

<sup>5</sup> The early date is almost certainly based on the first Toulouse assignment (1971:76); although Collins began making milk bottles at Premium in 1915, the plant was not called Bartlett-Collins until 1916.

<sup>6</sup> The 1921 edition of the Thomas Registers is the most recent one we have currently been able to obtain.

12-pot furnace and ten-ring continuous tank . . . with twelve press, five punch tumbler, three iron mold and one German system shade shop on which pressed tumblers, lamps, punch tumblers, oil cans, shades, lantern globes and numerous other varieties of ware are made. Battery jars, which are made German system is [*sic*] one of the new articles being turned out. Numerous kinds of cut and decorated ware are also made here.

Plant No. 2 ran “three semi-automatic one-man machines three shifts on milks and two semi-automatic one-man machines two shifts on tumblers” (Bristow 1918:7). Around October 1918, a falling out between Bartlett and Collins culminated with Collins leaving the company. Union representative Frank Robin (1918a:41) documented the split:

George F. Collins has disposed of his interest in the plant [i.e., Bartlett-Collins Plant No. 1] and has taken over the old Premium plant, which now goes by the name of the Liberty Glass Co. They will be making milk bottles by the first of October.

Even though George Collins had abandoned the enterprise, the name remained as Bartlett-Collins because George’s son, J.W. Collins remained as vice president (Roller 1998b; Toulouse 171:75). With the defection of Plant No. 2, it is virtually certain that Bartlett-Collins ceased all milk bottle manufacture. Because of World War I, production at Bartlett-Collins shifted slightly. Union rep Frank Robin (1918b:42) noted, “We are working practically on a war basis, making food containers and lighting goods.” Presumably, the plant resumed its concentration on tableware at the close of World War I, dropping all container manufacture.

In 1927, the plant used one furnace with 12 pots and two continuous tanks with 12 rings to make “plain and decorated tableware, tumblers, goblets, lamp chimneys, plain tumblers, stemware, bar goods, cut glass, novelties and specialties” by both machine and hand production (*American Glass Review* 1927:81-82). In 1929, the firm dropped “glass” and the name was shortened to the Bartlett-Collins Co. (Toulouse 1971:76-77).

Hand production ceased in 1941, with the installation of a “Hartford ‘paste’ mold-blowing machine.” This was followed by a “burn-off machine” in 1946. The company celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1964 (Toulouse 1971:76).

In 1977, the company listed two plants (one manufacturing, one decorating), with two furnaces operating eight machines (“2MDP; 1MPLCB; 1 Lynch TT; 4 Hartford 28”), making “glassware plain and decorated.” The Lancaster Colony Corp. acquired Bartlett-Collins in 1982, but the 1985 listing noted the same machines as were listed in 1977 (Perrine 1985:13; Roller 1998b).

The Bartlett-Collins Co. remained in business at Sapulpa in 2005 (ECNext 2005), although there were rumors that the plant would shut down in December (*Sapulpa Daily Herald* 11/25/2005). Despite the rumors, the plant remained open. On February 1, 2008, however, the Anchor Hocking Co., new owner of the property since November, announced that it would close the plant (Manufacturing.net 2008). An era was over.

## **Containers and Marks**

### **BACO**

According to Toulouse (1971:75), the BACO mark was only used on heat-resistant glass from 1916 to 1918. The mark was not used on bottles.

### **B-C (1916-1918 – for bottles)**

Toulouse (1971:75-77) noted the use of the B-C mark “since circa 1921.” He also warned that “Bartlett-Collins may never have used their marks on bottles since its bottle-making days were confined to a brief period around 1914; the first use of the ‘B-C’ initials dates to about 1921 on tumblers.” Girade (1980:13) noted that “the mark of this company as used on milk bottles has not previously been identified, [but] the B-C mark has been confirmed on a sun-colored purple milk bottle.” He dated the use of the mark at 1914-1918. However, information from the Thomas Registers (see above) suggest that bottles and jars may only have been made with Bartlett-Collins marks between 1916 and 1918.

An eBay auction offered an aqua Atlas E-Z Seal jar with “B-C 8” embossed on the base (Figures 14 & 15). This might be interpreted two ways:





Figure 14 – Atlas EZ-SEAL jar (eBay)

1. Bartlett-Collins may have made a jar for Atlas Glass Co. or Hazel-Atlas Glass Co.

2. Hazel-Atlas may have used a mold code designation of “B-C.”

We consider the second explanation as the most likely, although the Premium Glass Co. *did* make Mason jars for the Schram Glass Co. in 1915 (see above).



Figure 15 – Base with B-C (eBay)

### B-C in two joined circles (1916-1918 – for bottles)

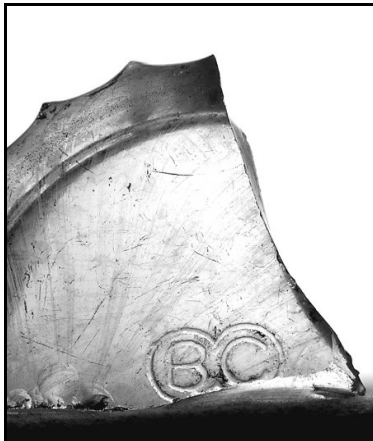


Figure 16 – Bartlett-Collins tumbler base from Fort Bayard, New Mexico

Toulouse (1971:75) called this an “alternate form” of the B-C mark and dated it also as being used after ca. 1921.

Lockhart and Olszewski (1993:35; 1995:27) recorded the mark on a colorless tumbler, and we have found tumbler

fragments with the

mark at other sites (Figure 16). However, the BC-in-circles mark was reported on a single bottle. A 1917 ad (*Milk Dealer* 1917) for Bartlett-Collins milk bottles illustrated the mark (Figure 17). As reported by Giarde (see above), it is likely that this variation was used on milk bottles.

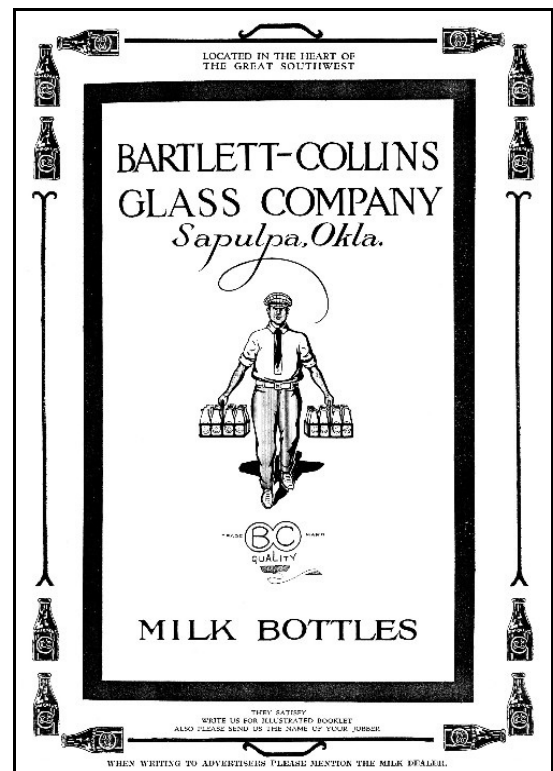


Figure 17 – Bartlett-Collins milk bottles (*Milk Dealer* 1917:53)

Interestingly, Peterson (1968:48) listed the mark as “B - C in two incomplete, contiguous circles” and noted it was first used by Bartlett-Collins in 1932. Logos Database (2013) filled in the details. The trademark was filed on July 19, 1947, and first used on June 23, 1932 for use on oyster cocktail glasses, sherbet glasses, glass tumblers, and other glass articles, namely, goblets, jugs, ice tubs, ice tea coasters, colonial percolator tops, and caster cups (Figure 18).

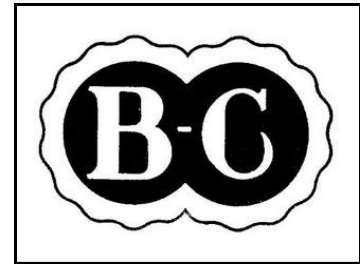


Figure 18 – B-C trademark

## Discussion and Conclusions

Thanks to the older work of Dick Roller and the more recent publication by his editors, Jerry McCann and Barry Bernas (along with our research, of course), the histories of the Bartlett-Collins Glass Co., and the two preceding firms, are reasonably complete. Table 5 gives a chronology of the glass houses leading to and involved with Bartlett-Collins.

### Premium Jars

Table 1 provides a good summary of the probable periods of use and company names for the variations of the Premium fruit jars. It is virtually certain that the bulk of the jars with the first lid style (Overmyer’s 1901 patent) were made by the Premium Glass Co. at Coffeyville between 1908 and ca. 1910 or later. Premium Glass apparently discontinued the original patent when the Premium Improved (Overmyer 1910 patent) entered the market. It is virtually certain that the bulk of the Premium Improved jars were made at the Sapulpa plant, although some were certainly produced at Coffeyville. Tables 2 & 3 show the probable chronologies for lids based on each of the two patents.

An important question is not fully answered. Did Bartlett-Collins ever make fruit jars? Roller (1983:292) says there is no evidence that Bartlett-Collins made fruit jars. The Thomas Registers, however, list fruit jars during 1917 and 1918, the years when B-C No. 2 (the former Premium Glass Co.) was operated under the Bartlett-Collins name. Since George F. Collins owned half of the patent rights, and Overmyer (owner of the other half) had apparently moved back to Indiana before the plant relocated to Oklahoma, it seems likely that fruit jar production ceased no later than 1918 – when George Collins left the firm.

**Table 5 – Glass Companies Leading to or Associated with Bartlett-Collins**

Glass House	Location	Dates
Cicero Glass Co.	Cicero, Indiana	1902-1903
Pioneer Flint Glass Co.	Coffeyville, Kansas	1904-1907
Premium Glass Co.	Coffeyville, Kansas	1907-1912
Premium Glass Co.	Sapulpa, Oklahoma	1912-1916
Bartlett-Collins Glass Co	Sapulpa, Oklahoma	1914-2008

As an aside, Charles G. Overmyer patented three additional jar closure designs, although there is no evidence that any jars were actually made to any of these:

October 20, 1914 – Jar-Closure (Patent No. 1,114,703), applied November 15, 1913 [Hartford City, Indiana]

November 8, 1938 – Closure for Jars and the Like (Patent No. 2,135,834), applied March 25, 1936 [Tulsa, Oklahoma]

April 2, 1940 – Closure for Jars and the Like (Patent No. 2,195,422), applied July 9, 1934 [Hartford City, Indiana]

### **Milk Bottles**

By 1915, the Premium Glass Co. was listed as making milk bottles. Although there is no known manufacturer's mark for Premium, there are quite a few milk bottle maker's numbers that have still not been matched to a glass house.<sup>7</sup> Any of these numbers may be associated with a letter "P" or with the initials "PG," "PGC," or "PGCo."

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<sup>7</sup> By 1910, the State of New York required both a logo (or initial) and an assigned number for every glass house wishing to sell milk bottles within the state. Other states quickly followed suit, and, soon, milk bottle manufacturers were embossing the same number, along with their logos or initials, in every state. For many, the number became part of the logo. See Lockhart et al. (2010) for more information.

Since Premium retained its name until early 1916 – and made the containers for the joined Premium Glass and Bartlett-Collins plants – it is unlikely that any of the Premium Glass Co. products, including milk bottles, were marked with a Bartlett-Collins logo prior to that time. However, between 1916 and the split that created the Liberty Glass Co. in 1918, B-C No. 2, the former Premium Glass Co. plant, made milk bottles under the Bartlett-Collins name. As noted above, one of the Bartlett-Collins marks appeared in a 1917 Bartlett-Collins milk bottle ad. It is thus virtually certain that Bartlett-Collins used the “B-C in two circles” logo on milk bottles from 1916 to 1918.

### **Other Bottles or Jars**

We have found no evidence that any Premium or Bartlett-Collins mark was used on any other bottle types. However, the possibility still remains. Since this is a study of manufacturer’s marks on containers, we have not attempted to trace the use of the Bartlett-Collins logos on tableware.

### **Acknowledgments**

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## Appendix A

Harry Reaper, the representative of the American Flint Glass Workers Union at Sapulpa, Oklahoma, left an account of the formation of the Bartlett-Collins Glass Co. from a worker's viewpoint. During the years 1914 and 1915, Reaper reported on the changes and progress of the Premium Glass Co. and Bartlett-Collins in the *American Flint*, the union publication. The journal was published monthly. Flint glass meant colorless glass, but the entries in the journal make it clear that almost all of the factories supported by the union made tableware, lamp chimneys, and other non-container items.

## **Sapulpa, Oklahoma**

January 1914 (p. 29)

Local Union No. 129 was organized at Sapulpa, Okla., Nov. 1, 1913.

June 1914 (p.54)

Well, boys, at present we have three first class, up-to-date glass factories located in our beautiful city, and the prospects are very favorable for another in the near future. At present, the Premium Glass Co., formerly of Coffeyville, Kas., is located here, and is operating to its full capacity, turning out a complete line of table tumblers, hand blown and machine made ware. . . .We have two machines working we have a few greens who come into the limelight.

March 1915 (p. 41)

The Premium Glass Co. is working one lathe [i.e., tank], the six-ring continuous, to its full capacity, with three machines, two blow shops and one press shop. Their production is of a miscellaneous line: Milks,

(p. 42)

brandies and prescription bottles, lamp, lantern, globes and an up-to-date line of peanuts, jellies and common tumblers. This finds everything moving along nicely with an output of from three to five cars per week and orders coming in continually for more glassware. This finds our little superintendent, Mr. Geo. F. Collins, a very busy man these days, as just across the beautiful Oil City, he has started to build another glass factory, which when completed will consist of a fourteen pot furnace and a six ring tank. The general output of this plant will be mostly shades, gas and electric.

April 1915 (p. 42)

. . . things have changed considerably in this location, and things are bright at the present time at the Premium Glass company's plant. The new plant [i.e., Bartlett-Collins] is still progressing rapidly.



I am very sorry to state that the Schram plant closed down indefinitely on account of shortage of gas. Most of the men employed there have departed here. . . . The plant was a fruit jar factory and the men referred to were all Greens [i.e., members of the green glass workers' union – actually makers of any color of glass except colorless].

(p. 43)

Among the Greens of this plant, we find . . . .

Outside of starting to build the stack of their furnace and changing their minds and plans from a 14-pot furnace to a 12-pot, and I guess I am out of dope [i.e., information].

May 1915 (p. 7)

The Premium Glass Company of Sapulpa, Oklahoma, is erecting a fourteen pot furnace and a six ring continuous tank. They expect it to manufacture pressed and blown shades.

May 1915 (p. 44)

Since my last writing things are about the same. The Premium Glass Co. is operating as usual to its full capacity. The new plant, which will be known by name through the trade, when running, will be the Bartlett and Collins plant, and is progressing rapidly and they will try to start the pot furnace by June 1st if the building is completed and the weather will permit.

There are two new arrivals . . . . They are mould makers and come to get the moulds and repairs ready for the new plant. They are completing a new mould shop . . . .

There are only two flint shops left at the old factory, which will leave as soon as the new one starts, as they intend to turn the old plant into a machine factory exclusively, which will be operated by the Greens.

June 1915 (p. 40)

Since my last writing to the Flint things are progressing rapidly in this community. The new plant of Bartlett & Collins is nearly completed. The office is open and it is very pleasant and

neatly arranged for the benefit of the sturdy office crew. And likewise the rest of the plant appears the same. They have a wood fire in the stack at present drying it out. They expect to set pots as soon as possible. From all indications at present the new mould shop will get started in about two weeks and they still expect to start the furnace by June 15<sup>th</sup>.

July 1915 (19)

Local Union No. 106, composed of employees of the Bartlett-Collins Glass Company, Sapulpa, Okla., was instituted at Sapulpa, Okla. Sunday, June 20 by organizer Elberts.

(p. 43)

At the present time things are on the go at the oil city [i.e., Sapulpa]. The Premium Glass Company has just accepted a contract to produce Mason fruit jars for the Schram Glass Company of this city and has installed two Miller one-man machines which are turning out quart jars like tacks, and the future

(p. 44)

looks bright for a steady run until the first day of August providing the mercury will stay low enough to permit.

Our busy little manager, Mr. Geo. Aikin, formerly of the Hazel-Atlas Glass Company of Washington, Pa., is very busy these days improving about the plant, as conditions here are not entirely favorable. George also states that next fire [i.e., next time the furnace is lit and the plant is in production] he is going to have a first class up-to-date machine factory for the southwest.

. . . . The plant received permission from our National Office and Executive Board to run through the summer stop, and owing to the fact that they got started so late in the season were granted same. Here's hoping they get away with a good start and may have a continuous prosperous run. With the exception of one machine making jellies, peanuts and common tumblers at the Premium Glass Company the rest of the Flints that were employed there have left, going over to the Bartlett & Collins plant to continue to perform their daily duties.

August 1915 (p. 46-47)

We started off on June 28th with 12 good pots and nine shops and everybody getting good time and the outlook is good. The company expects to put on more shops and the boys are glad to get started. The tank will be ready to start August 1<sup>st</sup>.

September 1915 (p. 44)

[correcting someone else's erroneous statement] We are not making 11 turns per week here, but I am sorry we are not. Seven turns is the average that prevails here at the present. . . . The mould shop is working steadily every day, but no overtime prevails in this department yet.

October 1915 (p. 21)

The Bartlett-Collins Glass Company of Sapulpa, Okla., are operating their factory in full, turning out a high grade of pressed, paste, and iron mould ware, with plenty of orders on hand.

(p. 41)

Since my last writing to the Flint the Premium Glass Co. has started their new four-ring continuous tank with six shops, three on each turn, making [glassware] full time, turning out an up-to-date line of milks, jellies, peanuts, ice teas and common tumblers. The big six-ring tank has been completely torn down to the stack, and their hustling manager, Geo. F. Atkins, is busy building a new one, which will be a six-ring square nose, and will melt twenty-five tons every twenty-four hours.

(p. 42)

At the Bartlett-Collins plant, things are about the same as usual. Their manager, Ed. Roland, is busy making preparations to start their six-ring tank October 1<sup>st</sup>. They have eleven good pots in their twelve-pot furnace and the average among the men is eight to nine turns per week. Of course we all know that a new factory is not an old one, and I do hope by next writing that I can say full time prevails at this plant.

Four more of A.H. Heisey's presses, which make eight in all, have been received and everything for the benefit of the men is being done to the best of the management's ability. The mold shop

has completed their melting, grinding and cracking off machines and are now very busy turning snaps and molds.

March 1916 (p. 39)

Things at the Bartlett-Collins plant and the Premium Glass Co., of Sapulpa, have changed since my last writing. The Bartlett-Collins Co. has taken the Premium Glass Co.'s stock over, making both plants under the same company and the same management, The Bartlett and Collins Co. So therefore in the future there shall be no Premium Glass Co. The plants will be known as B.C. No. 1 and B.C. No. 2. The B.C. No. 2 is the past Premium Glass Co. At B.C. No. 1 conditions remain about the same as in my past writings.

(p. 40)

At the B.C. No. 2 this is exclusively a milk bottle factory and the men here are members of the G.B.B.A. [Glass Bottle Blowers Association]. The writer does not wish to say anything at the present time in regard to this plant as they have just started and conditions do not permit. . . . I will give you the done upon B.C. No. 2 in the next issue.

Despite his cheery prediction, Harry Reaper did not write another report. By November 1916 Con Boren – a not-nearly-so-newsy reporter, especially where B.C. No. 2 was concerned – took over as the union representativ.

January 1917 – Con Boren (p. 41)

Our 10-ring tank, 12-pot furnace, and day tank are running to their capacity and everyone is happy.

June 1918 – A.J. Coleman (p. 54)

Dick Wilson has accepted the position as Assistant Superintendent for this company [i.e., Bartlett-Collins] at the No. 2 plant. [Plant No. 2 was still part of B-C by this time.]

October 1918 – Frank Robin (p. 41)

George F. Collins has disposed of his interest in the plant and has taken over the old Premium plant, which now goes by the name of the Liberty Glass Co. They will be making milk bottles by the first of October.

November 1918 (p. 42)

We are working practically on a war basis, making food containers and lighting goods.

