Perfection Water Bottle Company – E. D. Beckwith & Company

By Barry L. Bernas

INTRODUCTION

In the past, I've written extensively about the Perfection Glass Company and the products that were made in its Washington, Pennsylvania factory. Also, the histories of the Novelty Glass Works, Sterling Glass Company and Perfection Manufacturing Company, predecessor firms, were briefly documented as well as their manufactured articles. These items were turned out from within the same structures Perfection Glass would occupy from mid-1903 to late 1906.[1]

Throughout a nearly five-year manufacturing and marketing cycle within these firms, the lineage of one product is clearly evident. It is the William B. Fenn-conceived, March 30th, 1897-patented, machine-made separating water bottle. This unique carafe started to be blown and pressed mechanically by workers at the Novelty Glass Works during the first quarter of 1902.[2] It continued to be produced by Sterling Glass[3] personnel and finally by Perfection Glass hands until this corporation too passed into history.

Most likely, this utilitarian item was machine-made in the Novelty Glass Works for the Perfection Bottle Company of Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania.[4] Thereafter, the latter concern relocated to the southwestern part of the Commonwealth. For a brief period, it operated under the same Perfection Bottle Company label in Washington until the Perfection Manufacturing Company was formed out of it.[5]

The simplistic nature, durability, sparkling character, clarity and separating feature of Mr. Fenn's water bottle was soon adapted for an expanded line of similarly constructed tableware pieces that were intended to be used on hotel, rooming house, restaurant, steamship, riverboat, railroad, tavern and household dining tables. Also mechanically made, these counterparts followed a similar production and commercial trail as the Fenn water bottle until the Perfection Glass Company absorbed both of the manufacturing and marketing functions.

Having already discussed this patented model and its associated line in considerable detail, I'd like to turn away from the machine-made side of the story and focus on its earlier handmade part.[6] Before the Novelty Glass Works-Perfection Bottle Company (Wilkes Barre) team was formed, there were at least two other businesses that either made or marketed or just marketed the pre-machine-made water bottle turned out to Mr. Fenn's 1897 patent. These organizations and their hand-blown flint/lime glass versions of the later Perfection machine-made water bottle with exterior patterns either hand cut or molded onto the bowl are the topics for this article.

PATENTED WATER BOTTLE

You cannot discuss the history of either of the firms listed in the title of this piece without considering William B. Fenn's remarkably simple concept for a water bottle which came apart for easy filling and cleaning. His idea was the prime reason for the existence of both as a commercial enterprise.

Taken directly from his patent application, two profiles of this detachable carafe, in their conceptual form with numeral identifiers still in place, can be seen in Figure 1.[7]

In his own words, here is how Mr. Fenn described his invention. The numbers in the text below refer to the digits on the Figure 1 drawings.

"… I provide a bottle or vessel … which consists of a base or body portion 5 … and which is provided

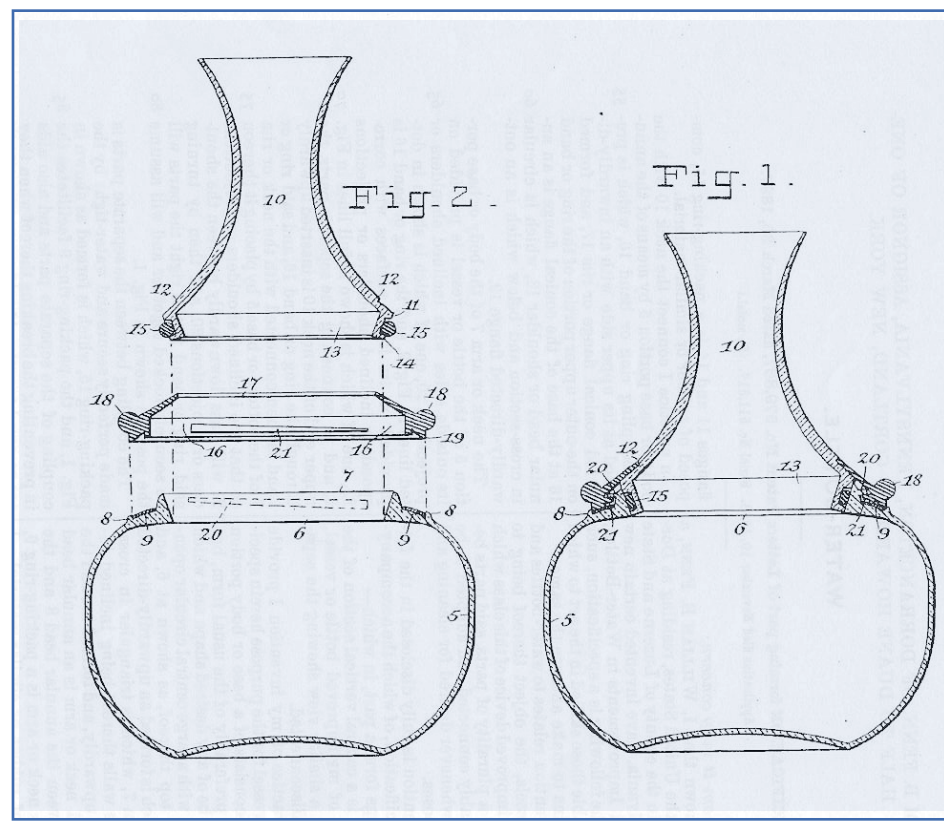


Figure 1

with a large central circular opening in the top thereof being inclined inwardly and upwardly, and formed around the base of said neck or arm is an annular bead 8, and between the annular bead 8 and the base of the neck or arm is a packing-ring 9, composed of rubber or similar material. I also provide a detachable neck 10, which is preferably of the form shown, the base thereof being much greater in diameter than the upper end and the upper end being greater in diameter than the central portion, and said neck is provided at its lower end with an outwardly-directed annular flange 11, above which is an annular shoulder 12, and below the annular flange 11 is an inwardly and downwardly directed annular rim 13, at the bottom of which is an outwardly-directed annular flange 14, and placed between the flanges 11 and 14 is a packing-ring 15, composed of rubber or similar material. In practice I connect the neck 10 with the body or base portion 5 by means of an annular coupling ring or band 16, which is provided at its upper side with an inwardly-directed conical flange or rim 17, and formed on the outer upper portion of the ring or band 16 at the base of the conical flange is an annular bead or shoulder 18, which is circular in cross-section and below which is an outwardly-directed flange 19.

The neck or arm 7 of the body or base portion 5 of the bottle or vessel is provided on its outside sides with inclined shoulders or projections 20, one of which is shown in dotted lines in Fig. 2, and the ring or band 16 is provided on its inner surfaces with corresponding inclined shoulders or projections 21, one of which is shown in full line in Fig. 2, and in connecting the separate parts the upper end of the neck 10 is inserted upwardly through the ring or band 16, and said ring or band is then connected with the neck or rim 7 of the bottom or base 5 by placing it thereon so that the inclined shoulders or projections 21 will pass downwardly between the shoulders or projections 20, and then by turning said ring or band to the right the parts will be securely locked together and will assume the position shown in Fig. 1 …" [8]

Neither the drawing nor the remaining verbiage that accompanied it in the 1896 patent submission revealed a desire by Mr. Fenn for an exterior design to be on either the neck or bowl segments of his water bottle. In the application's write-up, the closest he came to addressing these issues was in a comment about the bottom part's shape. Here is what he had to say.

"In the practice of my invention I provide a bottle or vessel for the purpose herein specified which consists of a base or body portion 5, which is preferably of the usual form, but which may be of any desired shape … "

There was a lack of specificity about the coupling device as well. Whether it was to be outwardly adorned wasn't mentioned. Also, the composition of the joining ring wasn't provided. I'm assuming it was to be made of metal but that was only a guess on my part. Mr. Fenn did allude to a glass tightening and/or sealing ring as being one possibility; however, beyond that brief statement, he was silent.

One intriguing revelation from his patent request was the following comment. After the description of his water bottle in that document, he wrote: "My invention is not limited to the material of which the bottle or vessel is made, and any desired material may be employed, such as chinaware, glassware, or other forms of earthenware or metal, or a combination of metals may be employed … "

Due to the lack of precise detail in the November 1896 application about the outward appearance of his water bottle, the earliest production models of William B. Fenn's separating carafe may have been without any pattern on their major two glass parts or on their coupling rings. Likewise, examples may have been turned out from materials other than glass.

PRE-1900

Did William B. Fenn begin to make and sell his idea immediately after being granted a patent for it? Unfortunately, I don't know for sure. Since no example has been found that corresponds to his Figure 1 design, I would guess that it wasn't manufactured or marketed between March 1897 and the turn of the new century. However, I must caveat my supposition by further stating that I've nothing concrete to back-up my nebulous musing.

On the other hand, the tidbits of information I've been able to find add credence to my presumption. This evidence points to Mr. Fenn following other lines of endeavors at least for this three-year period.

In May 1897, he filed another patent request for a raisin seeder from Dorranceton, Pennsylvania.[9] This Luzerne County location was the same one from which the 1896 water bottle submission was forwarded. Since the rights to this innovation were signed over to the Monarch Seeder Company, Limited, of Kingston, Pennsylvania, I assume Mr. Fenn was working for this firm in some capacity.

Early the next year on February 7th, 1898, he submitted his seventh patent application. This one was also for a raisin seeder but this time it was forwarded to the United States Patent Office from New York City.[10] The 1898 *City Directory* for this Empire State municipality carried the following entry for him:

"Wm. Fenn carpenter, h 146
W. End Ave."[11]

The subsequent document from 1899 showed Mr. Fenn living at the same address but working as a patternmaker.[12]

The aforementioned fragmentary data, the lack of any ephemera about his water bottle and the absence of an actual example all suggest William B. Fenn's 1897 concept wasn't pursued from 1897 through 1899.

If there had been one made, the neck of the initial model shown in Figure 1 would probably have been hand pressed on a machine in a two-piece mold. Conversely, the bowl from the same illustration would undoubtedly have been blown by an experienced

glass blower in a two or three-piece mold.

In the case of the former, the only indication of its pressing would be the traces of a mold seam, if these weren't fire polished away by a finisher, running lengthwise along the top section. For the latter, I would expect to see aligned vertical mold seams from the lip to the base, a ground or partially ground and partially smooth lip atop the bottom's finish and a pattern-less underside with the remnants of a smoothly polished pontil scar.[13]

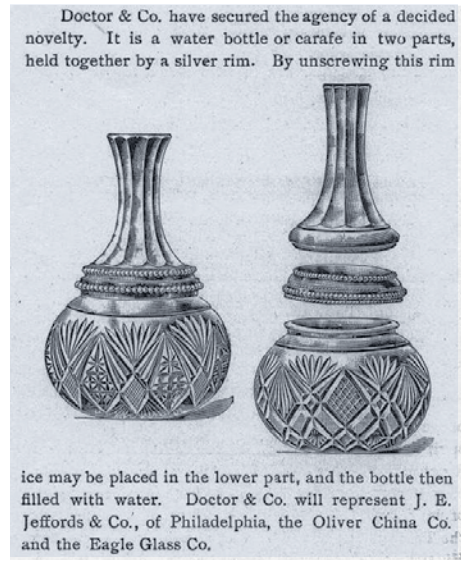
Taking this theoretical discussion one step further, a design of some type could have graced the exterior of both the top and bottom sections of the water bottle shown in Figure 1. Depending upon the target audience for this carafe, the patterns, if present, could have varied from simple to the quite ornate.

For the former model, the outer bowl motif would be imparted by the blower when he blew and hand formed this item most likely out of less expensive lime glass. Alternately, the latter specimen probably was blown as a clear and pattern-less blank out of the heavier but softer metal - flint glass. After annealing, a skilled worker would later cut the decorative design onto the blank's outer surface.

During the 1897-1900 timeframe, Mr. Fenn would have had to have sought the services of one or more glass making firms to produce either style of his water bottle. Likewise, to market this separating carafe, he needed to advertise it in trade journals or popular magazines to generate a demand while simultaneously forming a company himself or employing an existing one to sell it. To further bolster my contention that he didn't pursue his patented innovation before the start of the twentieth century, I've found no evidence to suggest any of the above three necessities occurred.

DUAL FIRMS

Once the 1900s arrived, a different story began to unfold. Advertisements for William B. Fenn's separating water bottle started to appear in prominent periodicals. Also, no less than two firms were formed to market and/or produce the same carafe. Based on the documented record of both of these events, I think it can be confidently stated that this is the point in time when this item started to be manufactured by the hand blown and pressing processes I briefly detailed in the prior section.[14]


Doctor & Co. have secured the agency of a decided novelty. It is a water bottle or carafe in two parts, held together by a silver rim. By unscrewing this rim

ice may be placed in the lower part, and the bottle then filled with water. Doctor & Co. will represent J. E. Jeffords & Co., of Philadelphia, the Oliver China Co. and the Eagle Glass Co.

Figure 2

Figure 2 carries the first advertisement I've come across for Mr. Fenn's water bottle.[15] As you can see, the separating carafe has undergone quite an upgrade from the plain model depicted in Figure 1. Panels have been added to the neck and at least two distinctive patterns are shown on the bowl's outer surface. Also, the decorated connecting band is presented in two styles each with two rows of raised dots. According to the brief description in the Figure 2 ad, this ring was made of silver and unscrewed. Whether or not the inclined lugs which formed the joining apparatus from the 1897 patent were retained or a new kind of closure comprised of a screw thread was added cannot be determined. The drawing of the bowl's finish in Figure 2 is inconclusive on this issue.

Six days after this initial promotion appeared in *Crockery and Glass Journal*, William B. Fenn filed his eighth patent request from Winfield, New York for an improvement to the water bottle carried in Figure 1. Specifically, the band holding the two sections together was modified. The band upgrade wasn't a screw type so it would have been awkward to use, to say the least. In my opinion, calling it an improvement is a stretch in terminology. In addition, an ice container was added inside the bottom section. It was a glass jar with a top suspended inside the base. As I look at it, this enhancement would classify as the real improvement.[16]

The brief announcement of Mr. Fenn's novel water bottle was supplemented with more details when the February 8th, 1900 edition of *Crockery and Glass Journal* carried the below statement.

"The Perfection Water Bottle Co. have {*sic* – has} opened an office at 32 Park Place. This is the bottle we illustrated last week, divided at the bulge of the bowl so that ice may be inserted. The neck is screwed on with a silver clasp."[17]

The initial Perfection Water Bottle Company advertisement appeared in the *Jewelers' Circular-Weekly* on February 21st, 1900.[18] It can be viewed in Figure 3.

The water bottle in this sale's enticement matches the right-hand model seen in Figure 2. Accompanying this example was a textual component which gave more data about the carafe and the Perfection Water Bottle Company.

For the carafe's neck section, a plain or ornamented (paneled?) motif was available.

The joining ring was made of silver or of some unidentified metal which was silver plated. Although the ring was said to screw both halves together, the finish on the bowl was still devoid of either lugs or a screw thread. Since the electrotype was the same one as in Figure 2, the newly submitted patent request for an improvement to the water bottle's coupling mechanism wasn't incorporated as of yet.

Nothing was said about the name of the pattern on the bowl. I assume at least the two designs seen in Figure 2

THE "PERFECTION" WATER BOTTLE.

A DECIDED novelty in glassware is the "Perfection" water bottle, made in three pieces which screw together. The neck and bowl of the body are of glass, plain cut or ornamented, while the connecting metal mounting is in either silver or silver plate. This is the only water bottle of conventional shape into which ice can be placed, and in cases where the ice is required to be kept out of contact with the water a separate ice chamber is provided which locks automatically inside the bowl. These bottles come in a large variety of grades, from pressed glass to the finest cut crystal, and are of many prices. The manufacturers, The Perfection Water Bottle Co., Little Falls, N. Y., recently established a New York office at 32 Park Place. THE RAMBLER.

THE THREE SECTIONS OF THE "PERFECTION" WATER BOTTLE.

Figure 3

were being marketed.

The ad also mentioned that Mr. Fenn's water bottle could be made in a " … large variety of grades, from pressed glass to the finest cut crystal, and are of many prices … "

In addition, the Figure 3 Perfection Water Bottle promotion did announce the separate ice container which was one of the improvements mentioned in the February 7th, 1900 patent submission by Mr. Fenn.

And finally, we find out that the Perfection Water Bottle Company was actually from Little Falls, New York and only recently set-up an office in New York City at 32 Park Place.[19]

All of the pieces that were missing from the era of 1896-1900 are now in place. Mr. Fenn's water bottle is being displayed in New York City, advertised in trade journals and marketed by an actual company.

Why did he choose to produce so many versions of his product? I think the next quotation covers one of the reasons. "THE FANCY GLASS MARKET. - Cut Glass is Having a Great Call in the East. - The demand for fancy glassware has been better this fall than for the past five years. Cut glass is beyond doubt the leader in this line. The finest goods are manufactured in this country. We have so far surpassed European productions that American made cut glass articles are found in all the large jewelry and fancy good shops of the old world, says the New York Commercial … . The reason the export trade does not increase more rapidly is due to the high duty imposed on cut glass in foreign countries. There is still a very small amount of goods imported, but the appearance is not nearly as handsome as that of articles made here, and the goods are much more expensive. As is usual every year the buyers who come to the market are always on the lookout for something new. However, the number of styles in cut glass has almost been exhausted, and although the manufacturers are showing a few new combinations, there is practically no change from last year. The prices are very firm, as is always the case when goods are selling freely, but there has been no advance. There seems to be a growing disposition in the fine trade for colored effects. The favorite colors are red and green, but there are some beautiful shading in violet and amber. Silver trimmings are largely used on the better grade of goods. It is almost impossible to state just what articles in the line are receiving the most attention. Tableware of all kinds is particularly strong. Among some of the handsomest pieces suitable for the dining table are large punch bowls, with glasses to match. Everything that can possibly be used on a dining table is being shown in cut glass … Some excellent imitations of cut glass are being shown in this market, which can hardly be distinguished from the real … Liquor glasses of all kinds often with a decanter to match, are good property..." [20]

This demand might have been the catalyst which caused William B. Fenn to birth his 1897 patent at the dawn of the new century. Furthermore, it certainly explains for me why an advertisement was placed in the *Jewelers - Circular Weekly* and what group was being focused on for sales. Together with ads in *Crockery and Glass Journal*, it isn't too difficult to surmise the early marketing strategy established by the officers of the Perfection Water Bottle Company.

Who were the leaders of this new concern? The 1900 *City Directory* for New York City provided a partial answer to this question with the next listings.

"Wm. B. Fenn, sec, 32 Park Place, pl h 247 W. 25th … Russell Uhl, waists 621 Broadway & pres 32 Park Place, h. Pa … Perfection Bottle Co. 32 Park pl."[21]

Russell Uhl, a businessman from Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania[22], was the president of the Perfection Water Bottle Company which was located at 32 Park Place. William B. Fenn was identified as this firm's secretary. Unfortunately, the vice president and treasurer weren't revealed so I don't know who else was involved with or invested in this company.

The February 28th, 1900 issue of *Jewelers' Circular-Weekly* contained the subsequent Perfection ad displayed in Figure 4.[23] It continued to appear in the same publication for the first three weeks in March as well.

As you can see, the information about the officers from the Perfection Water Bottle Company on this promotion conflicted with that carried in the 1900 *Directory* from New York City. This contrasting snippet listed E. D. Beckwith as the organization's president and treasurer and W. B. Fenn as a general salesman for the Company. Which source is correct? I can't say for sure. On the other hand, I do know that this murkiness doesn't get any clearer with time; it only get cloudier.

Figure 4

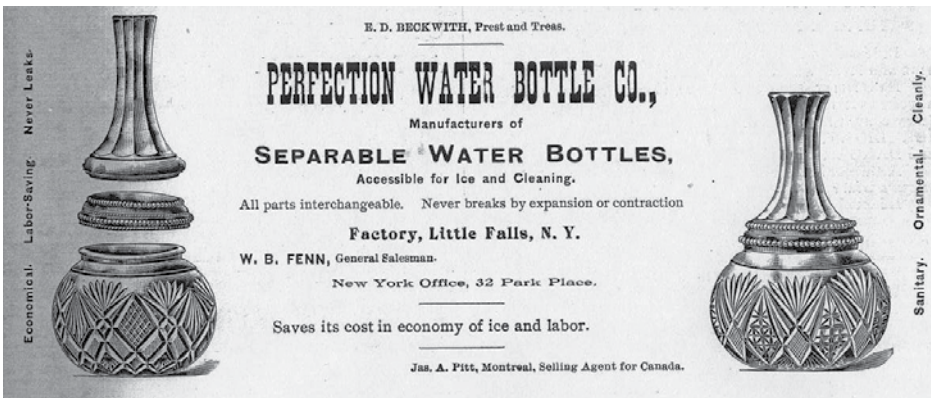


Figure 5

The Figure 4 enticement shows the same two water bottles seen in Figure 2. The only new bits of information gleaned from it were the location of the factory in Little Falls, New York which supposedly made these items and the opening of a marketing office in Montreal, Canada to sell them.[24]

This newly formed business with across the northern border ties was apparently off on the right foot as the next report from the March 1st, 1900 issue of *Crockery and Glass Journal* indicates.

"Attention is called to the advertisement of the Perfection Water Bottle Co. on another page. This useful article has struck the popular fancy and is selling rapidly wherever shown." [25]

Figure 5 contains the marketing ploy referred to in the above quotation.[26] It was just a rework of the Figure 4 advertisement. Also, it ran in the same trade publication through the March 22nd, 1900 edition.

A prolific inventor, William B. Fenn continued to add variety to his 1897 concept. On March 7th, 1900, he forwarded three more applications to the United States Patent Office. His ninth, 10th and 11th filings were for the issuance of three design patents for separating water bottles. The Patent Office concurred on April 3rd, 1900. [27] See Figure 6.

At first, the absence of advertisements from the Perfection Water Bottle Company from March 22nd through May 3rd, 1900 didn't cause me any concern. However, when I found out that William B. Fenn had secured a $5,000 loan on May 4th, 1900 from John P. Elkin to start-up a glass house in Indiana, Pennsylvania, I began to wonder what was happening with this organization.[28]

My suspicion deepened when the May 10th, 1900 issue of *Crockery and Glass Journal* carried an announcement from the Perfection Water Bottle Company and an ad from E. D. Beckwith & Company about the same subject – a separating water bottle. Here is the pronouncement.

> "The Perfection Water Bottle Co. make an offer this week that everybody should accept. This bottle or carafe is made in two parts in such a way that ice may be put into the bowl portion. The neck is screwed on perfectly water-tight. Besides being a useful article it is very ornamental on a table. Their offer is to send one bottle to a firm for 75 cents in order to introduce it. This will not pay for the fastening which holds the two parts together; but as they want everybody to have a sample they are advertising it in this way. Read their card and then send for a bottle."[29]

Figure 7 shows the promotion.[30] It ran for three more consecutive weeks in May in the same publication.

Strangely, the sale's enticement in Figure 7 was sponsored by E. D. Beckwith & Company and not the Perfection Water Bottle Company. Also, the tenor of both the announcement and promotion had a tinge of desperation. Perhaps the detachable carafe wasn't selling as quickly as the writer of the March 1st, 1900 account in *Crockery and Glass Journal* opined? Or

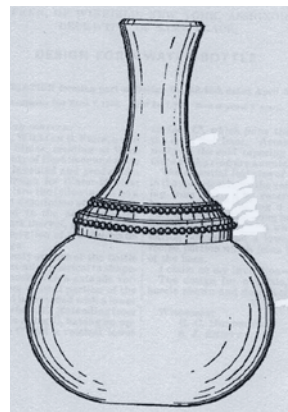


Figure 6 left

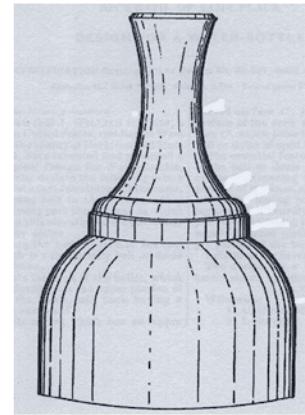


Figure 6 middle

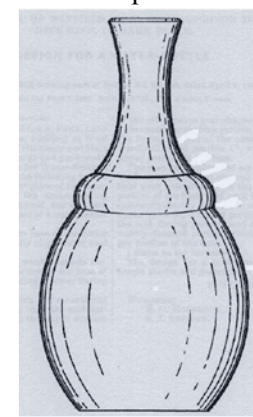


Figure 6 right

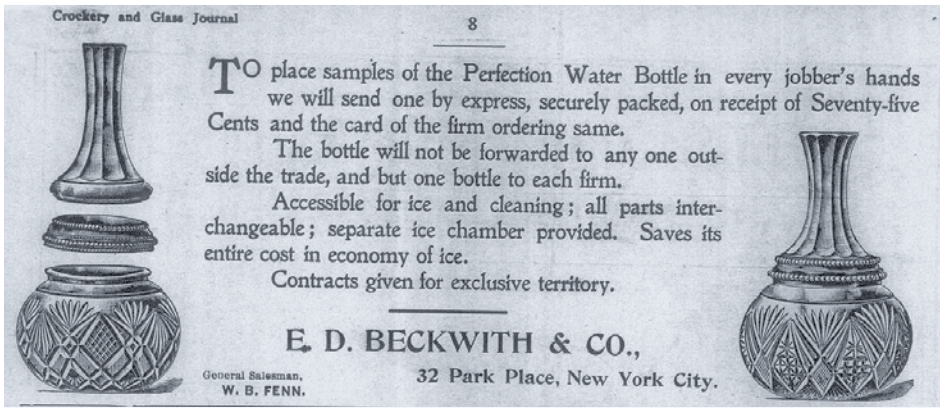


Figure 7

Figure 8

maybe a rift developed between officials within the Perfection Water Bottle Company, causing the creation of a separate organization by some of the same people? Could the Beckwith concern have been created to market only the improved water bottle with an ice chamber? Or possibly, something else was afoot altogether? We may never know for sure. But what is clear is that something occurred because there were no more ads in *Crockery and Glass Journal* or *Jewelers' Circular-Weekly* from either concern throughout the remainder of 1900. Likewise, there were no reports about a new glass company being formed in Indiana, Pennsylvania in any trade journal I reviewed.[31]

To add another level of complexity to this tale, the 1901 *Directory* for New York City listed the following: "Wm. B. Fenn, sec 32 Park Pl h 247 W. 25th; Perfection Bottle Co., 32 Park pl ; Russell Uhl, waists 621 Broadway & Pres 32 Park pl, h Pa."[32]

If one takes this reference at face value, the Perfection Water Bottle Company was still open for business in New York City. In fact, it was as the Figure 8 promotion reveals.[33]

Appearing in the February 7th, 1901 edition of *Crockery and Glass Journal*, this ad showed several enhancements to Mr. Fenn's separating carafe. For one, the bowl had a new pattern on its exterior. Another one was the addition of a screw thread to the finish of the bottom section, indicating a closure modification. A third change occurred to the coupling band. Its vertical side wall was decorated with just one line of beading.[34]

Curiously, the company placing this advertisement didn't appear in it. However, in *Buyer's Directory* section of the same trade magazine, the Perfection Water Bottle Company was identified as the sponsoring agency.[35] This marketing technique was repeated in the following week's issue of *Crockery and Glass Journal*.

Two months later, the sale's enticement pictured in Figure 9 appeared in the May 1901 issue of

Figure 9

Figure 10

the popular magazine - *The Munsey*. It depicted a further modification to the exterior pattern on the two water bottles, making this design slightly different from those shown in the Figure 8 ad. Another anomaly was the originator. In this case, it was the Perfection Bottle Company of Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania and not the Perfection Water Bottle Company of New York City.

From the advertisements shown in Figures 2-4 and 7-9, I believe two or more periods of production techniques can be clearly identified. For certain, the February through May 1900 ads refer to water bottles that were handmade. In my estimation, the two February 1901 promotions probably referenced the initial machine-made water bottles. Thereafter, the May 1901 marketing ploy depicted another machine-produced specimen with the eventual Royal motif on its bowl.

With the move away from New York City, I believe this side of the story comes to a close.[36] The initial hand blown and pressed separating carafes and the firms that made or sold them passed into history. Both the method of production and the organization that marketed the separating water from Mr. Fenn underwent changes. While the process of manufacture moved to a machine, the firm that promoted them relocated to a large northeastern Pennsylvania city.

HANDMADE PIECE

I've religiously searched for an example of William B. Fenn's work from the early 1900 period. However, I'd never come across one until now. I believe the water bottle shown in Figure 10, which belongs to Adele and Orrin Klitzner of Andover, New Jersey, is the first model to be reported from the era in question.

The overall height of this specimen is 7 inches. When filled with water to the base of the finish, it holds 16 ounces. In Figure 6, the center design was said by Mr. Fenn to come with either a dome or bell-shaped bowl. Clearly, the middle drawing represents the dome-shaped version. I think the one shown in Figure 10 could be its bell-shaped mate.

Figure 11 has a close-up look at the finish (left) and base (right) of the bowl. This part is 3-1/2 inches tall. As you can see, the lip is partly ground and partly smooth. Below it on the vertical portion of the bowl's finish is a screw thread. There are 10 flat-surfaced panels around the outer body of the bottom section. Rounded upward at the top and downward at the bottom, the width of an individual exterior flute has a top measurement of 1-1/8 inches and an opposite end tally of 1-7/16 inches. Inside of this piece, the reverse surface is smooth.

On the underneath side, there is no embossed or debossed pattern. According to Adele and Orrin, the mark that you see on the base is a rough polished pontil.

The top section can be seen in Figure 12. On the left is a profile while beside it is a view of its bottom side. Two opposite facing mold seams run along its exterior surface. Around the same area are 10 flat surfaced panels of equal height, width and form. At its base, the circular flange under the annular bead is 1/2-inch long and angles inward. I mentioned this fact because on most machine-made versions, the same

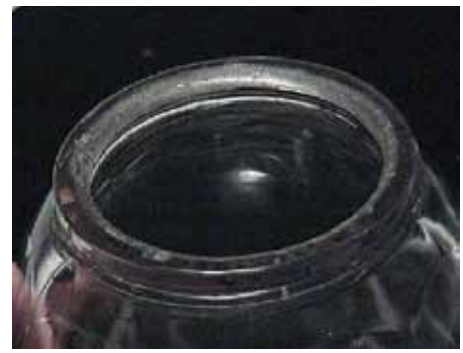


Figure 11 – left

Figure 11 – right

Figure 12 – left

Figure 12 – right

feature is only 3/16-inch in length.

To finish, the coupling ring for this early model is made of tin.

This unique water bottle was likely formed partially by machine (neck pressed in a two-piece mold and screw band spun) and partially by hand (bowl blown in a two-piece mold and finished). The bottom exterior design was a result of the hand blowing process. It wasn't from the work of a glass cutter. Likewise, the metal that it was formed from wasn't of the heavier flint type but of the commoner lime variety.

POSSIBLE EARLY MACHINE-MADE PIECE

I believe the water bottle shown in Figures 13-15 is an example of an early machine-made piece of separating ware.

The carafe profiled in Figure 13 is 9-1/8 inches tall. It weighs two pounds, 11 ounces and can hold 38 ounces of liquid

Figure 13

when measured at the bowl's shoulder parting line or 46 ounces when filled to the overflow point.

The pattern-less bowl for this likely early machine-made model can be seen on the left in Figure 14. It is 4-7/16inches tall and weighs twenty-seven and one-half ounces. Two

Figure 14 – left

opposite facing mold seams run from the base through the lip. Its finish has an interrupted screw thread on the outer side wall. The flat lip and interior surface have been slightly ground and possess a rough feel and murky white appearance. Also, take note of the raised shoulder region just below the finish. This feature is prominent in the Figure 8 1901 advertisement.

Turning to the underneath portion on the right in Figure 14, this area has an embossed pattern on it. Twenty-four petal-shaped objects are set in a circular pattern around a central meeting point. What is unusual about this design is that it was embossed vice being debossed (indented) on later versions.

Of equal size, width and form, there are 10 flat surface panels on the neck that have rounded upward tops and curved downward bottoms. These decorative flutes are aligned side by

Figure 15 – left

Figure 14 – right

side around the exterior of the top section.

Figure 15 has two views of this top part. On the left is a lengthwise look while the right-hand picture shows its underneath construction. Two opposite facing mold seams run along a portion of the outer surface. Starting at the bottom edge of the circular and angled inward flange, which is ½ inch in length, the seam goes over the horizontal annular bead and up the initial vertical section until it terminates at the beginning of the flared up and inward flute. Throughout the remaining body of the neck and the lip area, the same two lines have been removed.

Of note, instead of having a smooth outer surface as the Figure 12 specimen does, the circular flange on the top in Figure 15 has an initial 3/16-inch slanted inward segment followed by an outward and curved down projection which has a less angled side wall. The latter part of the circular flange is

Figure 15 – right

5/16 inch in length. The last segment forms somewhat of a ledge, possible to support the ice container apparatus described earlier as an improvement to Mr. Fenn's 1897 patent.

To round out the description of this carafe, the screw band for this probable early model is made of an unidentified metal.

WRAP UP

I'd like to lead off this ending section with a quotation. It came from the circa late-1903 product catalog – *The Evolution of Table Glass* – from the Perfection Glass Company.

"We started where the regular glassware makers left off. We made a patented separating water bottle in cut glass, hundreds of them, that cost us $4.00 each to turn out, but a bottle in cut glass is only within reach of the well-to-do. Then we made a bottle in flint glass, thousands of them; the public were eager for them, but still we were not satisfied, for we realized that even the slight additional cost of these goods over the non-separable stood in the way of many sales, notwithstanding the immense advantages of the article over non-separating ware. We kept everlastingly at it, realizing that it was possible to make separating glass just as cheaply as the non-separating, and once this fact was accomplished, nothing short of the millennium would prevent its universal use. That the former is now a reality, and the latter about to become one, can be readily seen when we state that less than three years ago we made but one article (a water bottle). We had these made for us by a glass factory, about five hundred of them a day. Since then our business has rapidly increased so that now we own and operate our own plant, in which we make and sell over thirty-five thousand pieces of glass daily, working twenty-four hours to the day, and equipped with our own automatic patented machinery, having a capacity of a completed article every four seconds … "[37]

I think these sentences pretty well summarize the manufacturing and marketing history of William B. Fenn's 1897 innovation. In the former, three distinct production phases were briefly discussed.

In the first one, the $4 apiece cut glass water bottles were made at a yet to be identified factory via the hand blown and pressed method. I maintain Figures 10-12 represent a single example from this era.[38]

For the next phase, the carafe shown in Figures 13-15 likely is a representative of the early machine-made timeframe. Where it was first turned out is unknown. However, after December 1901, models like it came from the Novelty Glass Works.

The last period of production probably comes after Mr. Fenn's glass pressing and blowing machine was perfected and patented.[39] At this point, the Sterling Glass Company was making this product and others on Fenn's improved machine until the Perfection Glass Company was founded and took over this task. [40]

Turning to the latter, the initial phase almost certainly refers to the involvement of the Perfection Water Bottle Company and/or E.D. Beckwith & Company.

The early machine-made articles were popularized initially by the Perfection Water Bottle Company of New York City and then by the renamed Perfection Bottle Company of Wilkes Barre and then Washington, Pennsylvania.

In the final stage, the recently formed Perfection Manufacturing Company marketed the separating carafe and other tableware items until it was absorbed by the Perfection Glass Company.

As much as possible, I've laid out the entire story about William B. Fenn's separating water bottle and the subsequent expanded tableware list of products made to his 1897 patent. Also, I've documented the firms that produced and sold these items. If you have any information to add to this comprehensive tale or possess another example from the hand blown era, please don't hesitate to contact me directly so that your piece can be reported as well. BLB

NOTES

[1] *Two Corners in Time*, Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, Winter 2005, pgs. 66-71; *Perfection, Another Glasshouse in A Glass Town*, Barry L. Bernas, Spring 2005, pgs. 56-63 and *Perfection Glass Company, One of Many Glass Houses in Washington, Pennsylvania*, Barry L. Bernas, 239 Ridge Avenue, Gettysburg, PA 17325, 2005.

[2] *Crockery and Glass Journal*, April 17, 1902, pg. 29. This was the first report I found that indicated the Novelty Glass Works was using semiautomatic pressing and blowing machines to turn out water bottles and an expanded separating tableware line. Prior to Mr. Fenn coming to this firm in early December 1901, company hands only made machine pressed items from glass melted in pots.

[3] *Commoner and Glassworker*, September 20, 1902, pg. 16.

[4] *The Munsey*, May 1901. The referenced magazine contained an advertisement sponsored by the Perfection Bottle Company of Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. This enticement shows a Royal patterned water bottle bowl with a screw thread on its finish. Based on this fact, it appears the Novelty Glass Works wasn't the first or only firm to manufacture Mr. Fenn's patented idea. This company may not even have been the first glass maker to turn out the separating carafe on a semiautomatic machine. Where these earlier water bottles sold by the Perfection Bottle Company of Wilkes Barre were manufactured isn't yet known. Likewise, it isn't apparent if the threaded finish Royal patterned bowls transitioned from being hand blown in a mold by a glass blower to then being blown by compressed air on a machine.

[5] *Crockery and Glass Journal*, October 16, 1902.

[6] *The William B. Fenn Patented Water Bottle, Made For Perfection*, Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, Summer 2004, pgs. 17-19; *More Tableware from Fenn*, Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, Fall 2005, pgs. 59-62; *Have You Seen a Scalloped Flange Tumbler?* (Parts One and Two), Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, September-October 2007, pgs. 38-42 and November-December 2007, pgs. 54-60 and *A Third Round of Separating Glassware from Perfection*, Barry L. Bernas, look for this article in a future edition of *Bottles and Extras*.

[7] *Patents Issued to William Beach Fenn* (Part 1 of 2), Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, January-February 2007, pg. 29. See the above reference for more information about this patent.

[8] UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE. WILLIAM B. FENN, OF DORRANCETON, PENNSYLVANIA, ASSIGNOR OF ONE-HALF TO DUANE HOWARD, OF CORTLAND, NEW YORK. WATER-BOTTLE – SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 579,867, dated March 30, 1897. Application filed November 10, 1896, Serial No. 611,617.

[9] UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE. WILLIAM B. FENN OF DORRANCETON,

PENNSYLVANIA, ASSIGNOR TO THE MONARCH SEEDER COMPANY, LIMITED, OF KINGSTON, PENNSYLVANIA. RAISIN-SEEDER. SPECIFICATIONS forming part of Letters Patent No. 620,866, dated March 7, 1899. Application filed May 8, 1897, Serial No. 635,652.

[10] UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE. WILLIAM B. FENN OF NEW YORK, N.Y. RAISIN-SEEDER. SPECIFICATIONS forming part of Letters Patent No. 631,069, dated August 15, 1899. Application filed February 7, 1898, Serial No. 669,430.

[11] *Trow's Directory of the Boroughs of Manhattan and Bronx, City of New York*, Trow Directory, Printing and Bookbinding Company, 21 University Place, Manhattan, City of New York, 1898 (for the year ending July 1, 1899), pg. 397.

[12] *Directory of the Boroughs of Manhattan and Bronx, City of New York*, Trow Directory, Printing and Bookbinding Company, 21 University Place, Manhattan, City of New York, 1899 (for the year ending July 2, 1900), pg. 383.

[13] *EMPONTILLING; a history Part one*, Dr. Julian H. Toulouse, *The Glass Industry*, March 1968, pg. 137. A quotation from this source is relevant. It reads: " … On pieces of very fine glassware the roughened area left by breaking off the glass-tipped pontil was sometimes ground away and polished smooth … "

[14] *Revolution in Glassmaking Entrepreneurship and Technological Change In the American Industry 1880-1920*, Warren C. Scoville, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1948, pg. 155. The following quotation from the above reference shows that the bowl from William B. Fenn's water bottle that was depicted in early 1900 advertisements undoubtedly wasn't machine-made. Later in 1902, it would be. " … As the nineteenth century ended, the manufacture of wide-mouth jars (as contrasted with bottles) was undergoing really radical changes. Rather simple machines, most often designed to make only one jar at a time, were gradually coming into use. They were frequently operated by hand and relied upon skilled gatherers to feed them with glass taken from the furnace … "

[15] *Crockery and Glass Journal*, February 1, 1900, pg. 26.

[16] UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE. WILLIAM B. FENN, OF WINFIELD, NEW YORK, ASSIGNOR TO EZRA D. BECKWITH. OF LITTLE FALLS, NEW YOUR. WATER-BOTTLE. SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 664,472, dated December 25, 1900. Application filed February 7, 1900. Serial No. 4,335 and *Patents Issued to William Beach Fenn* (Part 1 of 2), Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, January-February 2007, pg. 2. 29-30.

[17] *Crockery and Glass Journal*, February 8, 1900, pg. 23. The announcement of this novelty was also carried on page six in the February 10, 1900 edition of *Commoner and Glassworker*. This write-up read as follows: "A New Water Bottle. One of the best novelties of the season in glass is a water bottle or carafe in two parts, held together by a silver rim. By unscrewing this rim ice may be placed in the lower part, and the bottle then filled with water."

[18] *Jewelers' Circular-Weekly*, February 21, 1900, pg. 62.

[19] A review of the Little Falls, New York daily newspaper – *The Evening Times* – between September 14, 1899 and January 8, 1900 failed to turn up any mention of the Perfection Water Bottle Company. Also, the *Little Falls Directory* for 1899-1900 didn't carry a listing for this firm. *Little Falls Directory 1899-1900*, George S. Hughes, 47 Arcade Building, Utica, N.Y.

[20] *The Commoner and Glassworker*, December 9, 1899, pg. 2. The same outlook for 1900 was envisioned. See the following two references for more supporting information. *Commoner and Glassworker*, February 3, 1900, pg. 8 and Ibid, February 19, 1900, pg. 6.

[21] *Trow's Directory of the Boroughs of Manhattan and Bronx, City of New York*, Vol. CXIV for the year ending July 1, 1901, Trow Directory, Printing and Bookbinding Company, 21 University Place, Manhattan, City of New York, pgs 406, 1374, and 1050, respectively.

[22] *Cataloging a Russell Uhl-Patented, Glass Screw Cap*, Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, Spring 2004, pgs. 29-30.

[23] *The Jewelers' Circular-Weekly*, February 28, 1900, pg. 63.

[24] *Additional New Finds*, Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, XXX-XXX 2008, pgs. xx-xx. Oddly, Ezra D. Beckwith filed a patent request with the Canadian Intellectual Properties Office on March 21/23, 1900 for the same water bottle improvement (ice chamber) that William B. Fenn filed with the United States Patent Office on February 7, 1900. Mr. Fenn was listed as the inventor of the water bottle on Mr. Beckwith's submission. The rationale for this action is unclear.

[25] *Crockery and Glass Journal*, March 1, 1900, pg. 20.

[26] *Crockery and Glass Journal*, March 1, 1900, pg. 37.

[27] *Patents Issued to William Beach Fenn* (Part 1 of 2), Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, January-February 2007, pg. 30.

[28] *Perfection Glass Company, One of Many Glass Houses in Washington, Pennsylvania*, Barry L. Bernas, 239 Ridge Avenue, Gettysburg, PA 17325, 2005, pg. 13 and District Court of the United States, for the Western District of Pennsylvania, Docket No. 2339.

[29] *Crockery and Glass Journal*, May 10, 1900, pg. 19.

[30] *Crockery and Glass Journal*, May 10, 1900, pg. 8.

[31] I searched through *Crockery and Glass Journal*, *China, Glass and Lamps*, *National Glass Budget* and *Commoner and Glassworker*. Also, I reviewed the newspaper from Indiana, Pennsylvania – *Indiana Democrat*. Between August 30, 1899 and June 25, 1902, I found no mention of a new glass firm either coming to or being formed in that Borough.

[32] *Directory of the Boroughs of Manhattan and Bronx, City of New York*, Trow's Directory, Printing and Bookbinding Company, 21 University Place, City of New York, 1901, (for the year ending July 1, 1902), pgs. 406, 1050 and 1374. On page 1004 of the above source, there was a listing for the Novelty Glass Works at 55 Park Place. Whether this was an office of the Washington, Pennsylvania based company isn't known. If it was then the later connection between William B. Fenn and Novelty might have occurred because of the proximity of the offices of the Perfection Water Bottle Company and Novelty Glass Works along Park Place.

[33] *Crockery and Glass Journal*, February 7, 1901, pg. 7.

[34] Although I can't prove it just yet, I believe this advertisement was the first one for a separating water bottle blown on a machine vice being hand made.

[35] *Crockery and Glass Journal*, February 7, 1901, pg. 28.

[36] *Williams' Wilkes Barre City Directory 1901*, published by E. M. Williams, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., pg. 201 and *Trow's Business Directory of Greater New York (Five Boroughs Combined) 1902*, Trow Directory, Printing and Bookbinding Company, 21 University Place, Manhattan, City of New York, 1902. The 1901 *Wilkes-Barre City Directory* carried an entry for the Perfection Bottle Company. Its place of business was at 79 East Northampton. Russell Uhl was its president. There was no mention of the Perfection Water Bottle Company in the 1902 version of the *New York City Directory*.

[37] *The Evolution of Table Glass*, Perfection Glass Company, circa 1903.

[38] Adele and Orrin Klitzner observed that the neck of their probable early piece of separating ware has particles of either dirt or metal of some sort imbedded in the glass. This fact is a good indicator that the top section was formed from glass that came from an uncovered pot

[39] *Patents Issued to William Beach Fenn* (Part 1 of 2), Barry L. Bernas, *Bottles and Extras*, January-February 2007, pg. 31-32.

[40] *Commoner and Glassworker*, October 25, 1902, pg 5.