

Collection #
SC 2951

**ROOT GLASS COMPANY
LETTER, OCTOBER 26, 1922**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 folder

COLLECTION
DATES: October 26, 1922

PROVENANCE: Ruth S. Klopp

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NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Root Glass Company originated as Root Glass Works in Vigo County, Indiana. Businessman and Pennsylvania native Chapman J. Root (abt. 1864-1945) opened the glass company on May 27, 1901, at Third and Voorhees Streets a year after he moved to the city of Terre Haute. By 1904 the company was manufacturing beverage bottles for the Coca-Cola Bottling Company based in Georgia. Between 1905 and 1912 the workforce increased from 600 to 825 people. In 1915, Root's company entered a bid to exclusively manufacture a "new bottle, a distinctive package" for Coca-Cola. The company submitted a voluptuous "hobble skirt" design created by Chapman J. Root, plant supervisor Alexander Samuelson, auditor Clyde Edwards, and staff machinist Earl R. Dean. The design won over eleven other designs in the competition. Dean's bottle design was patented on November 16, 1915, and in 1916 Root established a lucrative partnership with Coca-Cola, making 5 cents per 144 bottles manufactured. This partnership continued into the early 1980s.

Root sold his Glass Company to the Owens-Illinois Glass Company in 1932. The iconic Coca-Cola bottle design made at Root Glass Company's Terre Haute factories was officially trademarked by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in 1977. This recognition happened some time after the New Jersey American-Wheaton Glass Corporation purchased the plant, which was being used as a warehouse in 1960. The building was razed, and a new plant was constructed. The American-Wheaton plant was sold to the American Can Corporation in 1962, and the buildings were purchased by the Midland Glass Company six years later. In 1982 the Root family sold its Associated Coca-Cola stock, which was worth \$417.5 million. The Midland Glass plant closed two years later, and by the 1990s the buildings had been razed. There is now a state marker at this location.

The Root family made several large philanthropic donations in the 1980s to the Moench Hall at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and the Terre Haute Boys Club. Chapman S. and Susan Root partly funded the construction of Root Hall, an office building on the campus of Indiana University which opened in 1989. Descendents of Chapman J. Root also donated their private collection of "Coca-Cola memorabilia" to the Vigo County Historical Society in Terre Haute.

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of a letter from the Root Glass Company in Terre Haute, Indiana (on formal letterhead), to the Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Douglas, Georgia. The letter is dated October 26, 1922, and includes a small, color print of the soda bottle exclusively manufactured for Coca-Cola. In the letter a representative of the Root Glass Company inquires about the date that Coca-Cola made a payment at the Union Bank.

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Letter from the Root Glass Company to the Coca-Cola
Bottling Company, October 26, 1922

CONTAINER

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