

Chapter 5a

Alamogordo Bottling Works (1910-1930)

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History

Although R.L. Reber had built and operated a bottling works in late 1898 and early 1899, the Alamogordo Bottling Works was first long-term soda plant in the town. When George Weigele, Jr., founded the bottling operation in 1910, the timing was right. The business went through three names, seven owners and four locations (counting Weigele's bakery) before it finally gave way to national franchises in 1948. See Table 6-1 for a summary of bottlers.

George A. Weigele, Jr. (1910-1-14)

Despite the general decline in business in Alamogordo between 1905 and 1912 (Sholly 1971:77-90), George A. Weigele opened Weigele's New Store in 1910.¹ His advertisement located the business "Next to Evans Jewelry Store" and offered "Candles[,] Crackers[,] Cheese[, and] Everything fresh that is good to eat in bakery, confectionery and lunch goods" (Figure 5a-1). The final lines offered "Weigele's Pop on Ice[,] Fone [*sic*] 41" (*Alamogordo News* April 21, 1910 - June 9, 1910).



Figure 5a-1 – Announcement for Weigele's New Store (*Alamogordo News* 4/21/1910)

Although not mentioned in the ad, Weigele apparently started the Alamogordo Bottling Works to provide "Weigele's Pop." The Alamogordo Bottling Works was not advertised in the State Directory until 1913 under the auspices of George A Weigele, Jr. (New Mexico State Business Directory 1913-14), although George Jr. operated the bottling works from at least 1910, listing himself in the census that year as "Baker & Bottler" at a "Bakery & Bottle Works." The date Weigele opened the works is uncertain, although it was probably not much earlier than the initial ads for Weigele's Pop in his father's store (i.e. sometime in early 1910).

¹ The story of the Weigele family and the Hotel Weigele is told in Chapter 5b. The location of the Weigele Store is a bit unclear, and that will also be discussed in Chapter 5b.

George, Jr., apparently began bottling in a room of the family bakery at the corner of New York and 9th St.,² although the sodas were apparently sold through the store. The couple had owned the lot since 1903, about the time they had arrived at Alamogordo and had opened the bakery by at least 1905 (see Chapter 5b for more background on the Weigeles and their Alamogordo businesses). Since the only competition was 90 miles away by rail, the soda business apparently flourished.

In 1911, Weigele moved the bottling operation to 811 Delaware Ave. (Figure 5a-2). The building (Lot 19, Block 16), marked “BOTTLE STORAGE” on the 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, had originally been purchased by George, Jr., for \$800.00 on October 15, 1908, and he had sold it to his father on May 5, 1911, for “One Dollar and other valuable consideration [*sic*].” This move also probably marked the official use of the name “Alamogordo Bottling Works.” The relocation also marked the adoption of the only embossed bottle used by the Weigeles.³ Sales at the bottling works probably began to increase after New Mexico became a state on January 6, 1912, and Alamogordo began once again to flourish. However, the plant only remained at the Delaware Ave. location as long as the Weigele family owned it. George Weigele, Jr. was listed as proprietor of the Alamogordo Bottling Works in 1913, but he sold the plant in 1914 (Stanley 1963:8; NMSBD 1911-12, 1913-14; Otero County Deed Records, b. 23, p. 601-602; Sanborn Maps, 1911).

Jerry M. Johnson (1914-1920)

Jerry M. Johnson bought the business from George Weigele, Jr., about the first of April, 1914 (*Otero County News* April 3, 1914). Johnson was born in Illinois in 1876. He was 38 years old when he bought Alamogordo Bottling Works and listed his employment in the 1920 census as “Retail Merchant[,] Soda Water.” Johnson and his wife, Emma, had four children as of 1920: Julia, 21, a telephone operator; Edwin, 17, a drug store clerk; Wilma, 13; and Jerry, 12, both in school (14th U. S. Census, 1920; NMSBD 1915).

² That would be the “Bakery & Bottle Works” noted in the 1910 census.

³ The bottle, with its “11” (1911) date code is discussed in the bottle section at the end of the history.

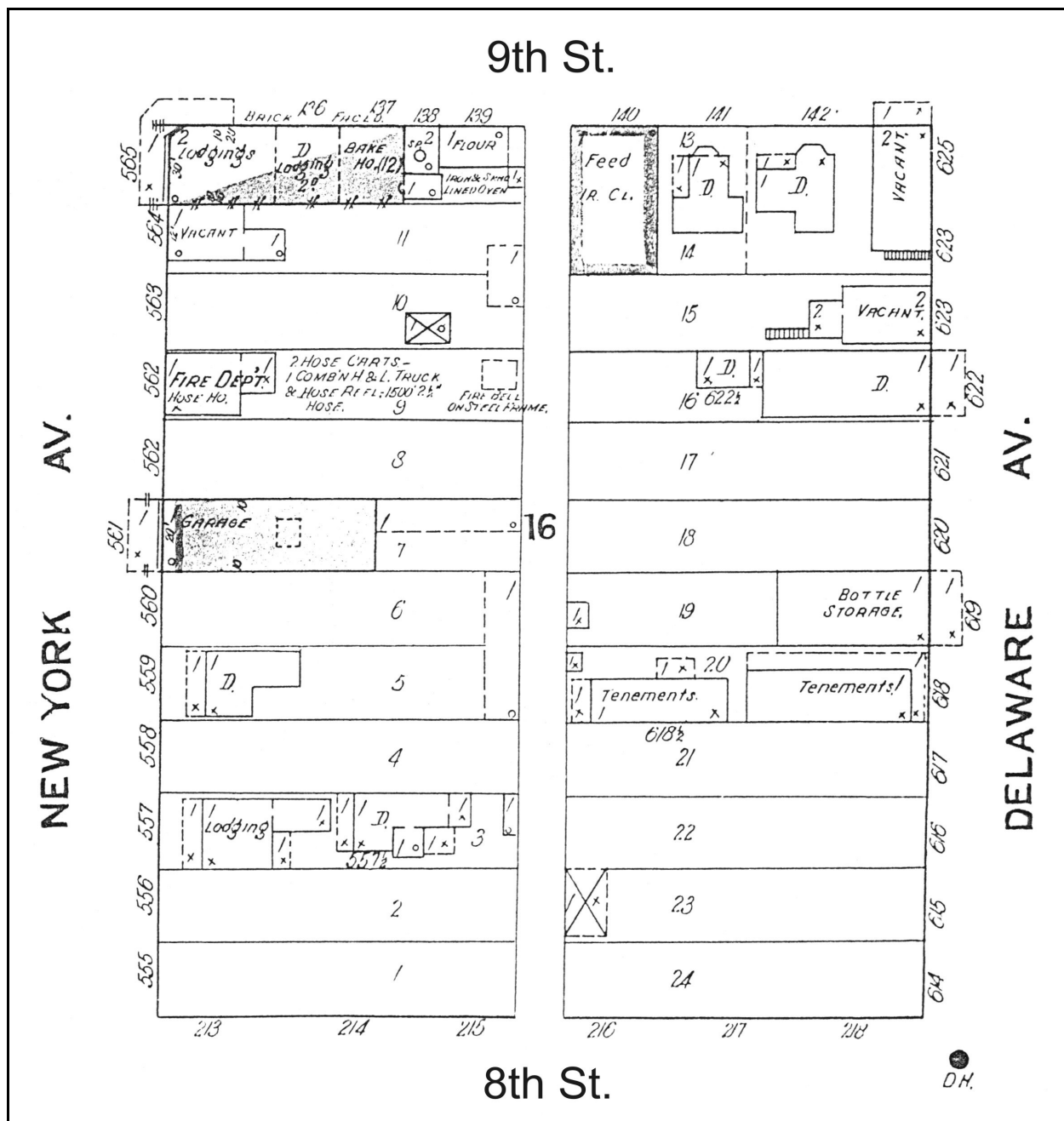


Figure 5a-2 – Alamogordo Bottling Works on Delaware Ave.; Weigle Bakery at 9th St. & New York Ave. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1911)

Johnson moved the bottling works to the Oliver Building, 916 Pennsylvania Ave. (Figure 5a-3), shortly after he gained control of the operation, and it remained there until 1930. Johnson, as well as later owners of Alamogordo Bottling Works, rented the space on Pennsylvania Ave.

(*Otero County News* April 3, 1914; Sanborn Maps, 1921, 1930).⁴ Johnson ran the plant until 1920 when he sold it to L.H. Karosen (NMSBD 1915-1921).

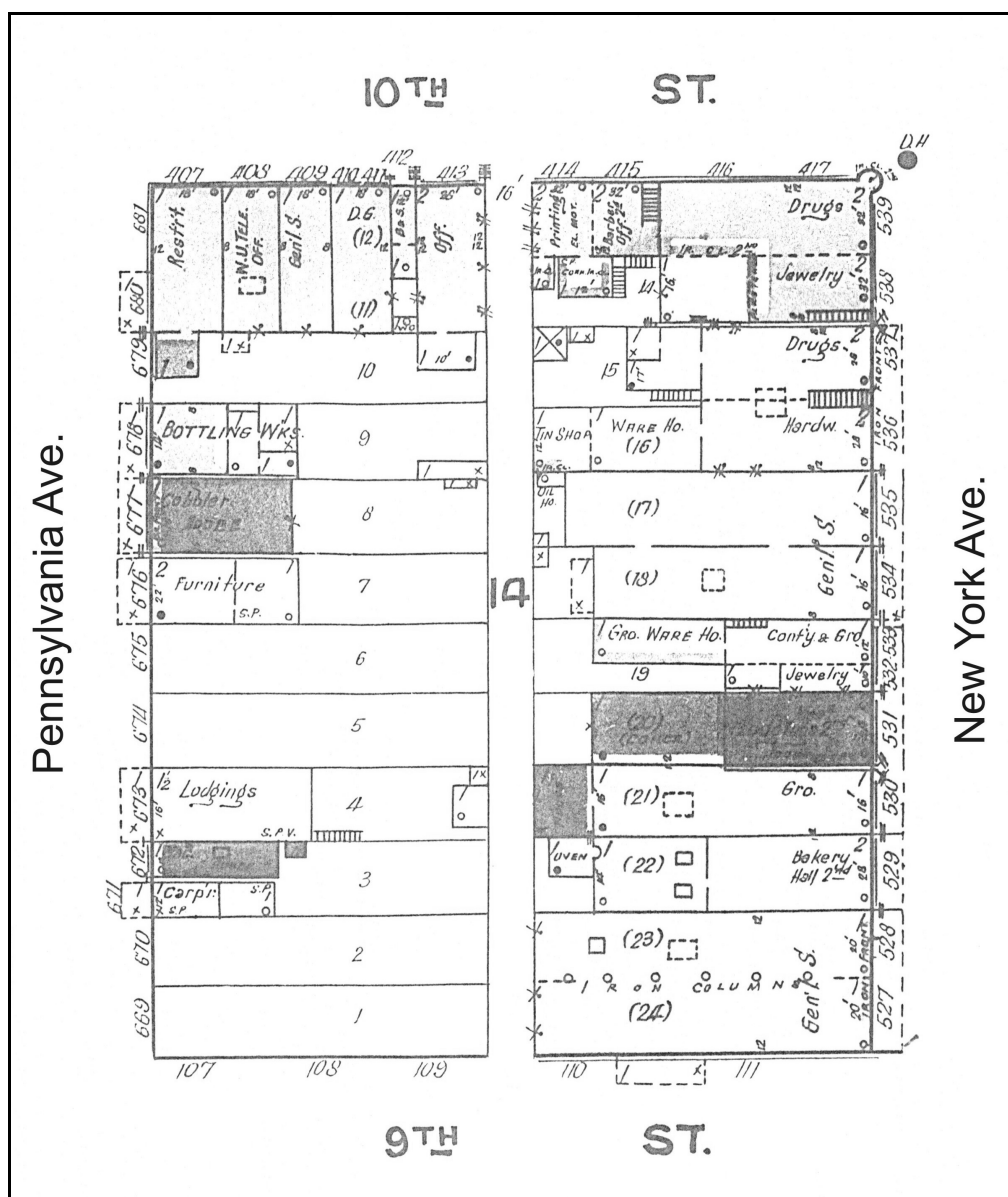


Figure 5a-3 – Relocation of Alamogordo Bottling Works to New York Ave. in 1914 (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1921)

⁴ A thorough search of Otero County Deed Records and Otero County Tax Rolls failed to reveal property owned by bottling works owners: Johnson, Karosen, or Pharr. Rose owned residential property but not the lot occupied by the Alamogordo Bottling Works.

Unlike his predecessor, Johnson had a bit of competition in the form of the Woodlawn Bottling Co. from El Paso. Although it is currently unknown when Woodlawn established a branch at Cloudcroft, it was certainly in place by 1914. Scott B. Williams, Woodlawn's Cloudcroft agent, advertised the branch as "Manufacturers of Soda Water, Seltzer, Ginger ale, Jersey Cream and all kinds of carbonated and mineral waters," along with Oliver Salad Oils and Oliver Bluing. The ads ran until April 5, 1919, although Williams' name was dropped after January 19, 1917 (*Weekly Cloudcrofter* May 15, 1914).

L.H. Karosen (1920-1922)

Sometime between August 12 and August 19, 1920, Johnson sold the bottling works to L.H. Karosen, "better know to the ball fans as 'Lefty' Carson." An inveterate baseball player, Karosen had moved to Alamogordo from Kansas City in July "to pitch for the local nine." He became "so impressed with our city and climate that he has decided to become one of our permanent residents" (*Alamogordo News* August 19, 1920).

Karosen advertised the rest of that year, calling the plant the Alamo Bottling Works and claiming the company to be "Manufacturers of Highest Grade of Sodas in all flavors (Under New Management)." He noted that he sold "Cool and refreshing Beverages—Ideal for Every Occasion of family use" (Figure 5a-4). To show where his real interest lay, he signed the ad "L.H. Karosen, Proprietor (Pitcher of Alamo Baseballt (sic) Team)" (*Alamogordo News* August 26, 1920).

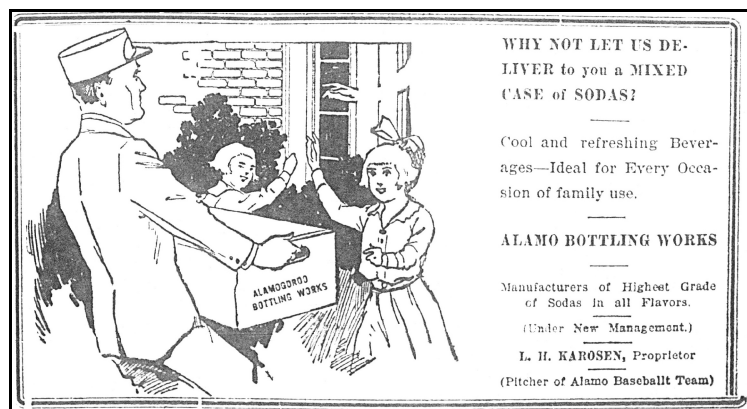


Figure 5a-4 – Alamogordo Bottling Works ad, L.H. Karosen (*Alamogordo News* 8/26/1920)

Karosen was apparently far-sighted. In June 1921, a newspaper advertisement for Alamogordo Bottling Works showed a bottle of Coca-Cola and recommended that the readers, "Drink Coca-Cola in Bottles[,] Delicious and Refreshing." (Figure 5a-5) The plant further offered "7 other Fruit Drinks" and suggested that the public, "Buy by the Case" (*Alamogordo*

News June 9, 1921). Although the first ad was placed in June, Karosen was not officially contracted as a distributor with Coca-Cola until August 6, 1921. The Alamogordo Bottling Works thus became the city's first Coca-Cola franchise agent (Letter from Kimberly D. Russell, Consumer Affairs Specialist, The Coca-Cola Co., Atlanta, Georgia, March 12, 1998). The seven "other fruit drinks" were offered in embossed bottles (see bottle section) that may also have had paper labels. Despite his wisdom in bottling Coca-Cola, Karosen sold out the following year (1922) to D.R. Pharr (NMSBD 1922-1924).



Figure 5a-5 – Karosen's 1921 ad for Coca-Cola (*Alamogordo News* 6/9/1921)

D.H. Pharr (1922-1923)

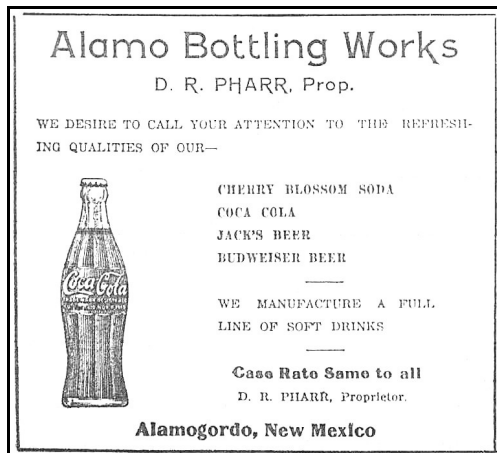


Figure 5a-6 – Ad by D.H. Pharr (*Alamogordo News*, 6/8/1922)

On June 8, 1922, D.H. Pharr first advertised Cherry Blossom Soda, Coca-Cola, and "a full line of soft drinks" (Figure 5a-6). Along with sodas, Pharr sold Jack's Beer and Budweiser Beer (Since Prohibition had gone into effect in New Mexico in 1918, he obviously meant cereal beverages or near-beers. Alcohol consumption would not return until 1933). He bragged that his "case rate [was the] same to all" (*Alamogordo News*, June 8, 1922). Although Pharr removed Jack's Beer from the ads in July, he continued to run them until August 31, 1922.

At this point (and almost certainly earlier), the Alamogordo Bottling Works was only open during the hotter parts of the year. On April 9, Pharr announced that "the Alamogordo Bottling Works of Alamogordo, N. Mex., will open for [the] season on April 10th." He offered "a full line of soda water, cereal beverages and Coca Cola" and guaranteed that every bottle would be of the highest quality (*Alamogordo News*, April 9, 1923 – also see Figure 2-6). Despite his announcement, Pharr was a short-term owner and sold out to A. B. Rose a few days later.

A.B. Rose (1923-1928)

A.B. Rose had lived in Alamogordo for a decade prior to his purchase of the bottling works shortly after Pharr's opening ad on April 9. He had previous bottling experience and had overhauled the plant's machinery in preparation for the 1923 season. Rose ordered his own bottles and introduced Delaware Punch, a drink previously unavailable in the area. His assistant, Earl Parker, had "gained considerable adeptness in the business in the employ of two former proprietors" – probably L.H. Karosen and D.R. Pharr (*Alamogordo News*, April 19, 1923).

Rose continued to sell Coca-Cola along with "Ginger Mint Julip and all fruit flavors" (NMSBD 1924). He informed the public that "The Alamogordo Bottling Works opened for the season on Wednesday, April 18th under new management. We will manufacture a full line of soft drinks and have several specialties which will be introduced" (*Alamogordo Times*, April 19, 1923 – also see Figure 2-7). The firm's franchise extended to both Otero and Lincoln Counties, and the plant manufactured "a complete line of carbonated sodas" (Figure 5a-7). The ad prominently featured a bottle of Coke (*Alamogordo Times* May 17, 1923).



Figure 5a-7 – 1923 ad from A.B. Rose (*Alamogordo Times* 5/17/1923)

The last ad Rose posted for 1923 left his name off, although it identified the Alamogordo Bottling Works (Figure 5a-8). The ad listed the products available from the firm:

Ginger Ale
Coco Cola (*sic*)
Delaware Punch
Lemon
Orange
Peach
Grape
Cream Soda
Cereal Beverages

The “cereal beverages” were also called near-beers. These were alcohol-free (or almost so) beers, usually brewed by former breweries that were hoping to ride out Prohibition. However, the market for near-beers dropped to almost nothing by 1924. The last 1923 ad also promised, “We can assort a case for you” (*Alamogordo Times* August 30, 1923).

Rose resumed advertising from May to August 1924 but seems to have discontinued his ads after that point. On May 5, 1927, however, Rose returned to the newspaper, when he announced that the Alamogordo Bottling Works was “now open for the season [-] All common flavors in Soda Water are being bottled daily[.] Order a case today The most healthful and refreshing drinks for hot weather” (*Alamogordo News* May 5, 1927).

**REFRESHING and HEALTHFUL
FOR HOT WEATHER**

You should have a case of our



GINGER ALE
COCO COLA
DELAWARE PUNCH
LEMON
ORANGE
PEACH
GRAPE
CREAM SODA
CEREAL BEVERAGES.

They come very handy these hot days.
We can assort a case for you.

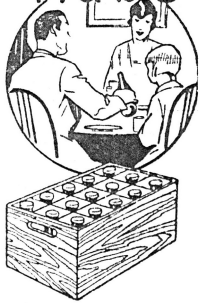
Phone 85
Alamogordo Bottling Works

Figure 5a-8 – Another A.B. Rose 1923 ad (*Alamogordo Times* 8/30/1923)

DON'T MAKE a bottle of temptingly flavored and highly healthful carbonated water an EVENT. Make it a regularly enjoyed pleasure in your home. Alamo Bottling Works beverages, soda water, gingerale, fruit juices and tonics are to be had in case deliveries for home consumption. Buy it by the case. Take home a case this week.

Only 75c

TAKE HOME A CASE



Alamo Bottling Works

Figure 5a-9 – 1927 ad from A.B. Rose (*Alamogordo News* 5/12, 1927)

by the case. Take a case home this week. Only 75¢” (Figure 5a-9) A drawing in the ad showed a high-topped case with 15 bottles in three rows of five, an unusual configuration. In addition, the case has dividers, an unlikely situation – see the discussion at the end of this chapter (*Alamogordo News* May 12, 1927).

He followed that with a more prolific ad which stated, “Don’t make a bottle of temptingly flavored and highly healthful carbonated water an EVENT. Make it a regularly enjoyed pleasure in your home. Alamo Bottling Works Beverages, soda water, ginger ale, fruit juices and tonics are to be had in case deliveries for home consumption. Buy it

FOR SALE—CHEAP

Alamogordo Bottling Works

Manufacturers of Soft drinks with valuable franchises for Lincoln and Otero Counties.

**Box 164 or
Phone 153**

Alamogordo, N. Mex.

Figure 5a-10 – 1927 For Sale ad (*Alamogordo News* 3/17/1927)

Rose apparently needed or wanted to get out of the bottling business. He advertised in March 1927 that the Alamogordo Bottling Works was “For Sale—Cheap” (Figure 5a-10). He added that the plant made “soft drinks with valuable franchises for Lincoln and Otero Counties” (*Alamogordo News* March 17, 1927). Although he sold the bottling works in 1928, Rose remained in Alamogordo until his death on January 24, 1938 (Funeral Records, Hamilton-O'Dell Funeral Home, Alamogordo).

The “valuable franchises” noted in the “For Sale” ad were almost certainly for Coca-Cola and Delaware Punch. However, Rose apparently divested himself of the Coke franchise prior to selling the business. An ad in the *News* from May 12 to September 1, 1927, announced that the Alamogordo Ruidoso Truck Line was the “Distributor for Coca-Cola, Sodas for Alamogordo[,] Carizozo, Tularosa[,] and Ruidoso.” By 1929, Bennett’s Truck Line advertised as “Agents for the famous Coca-Cola.” (*Alamogordo News* May 14, 1929). See Chapter 7 for more information and discussion about Coca-Cola in Alamogordo.

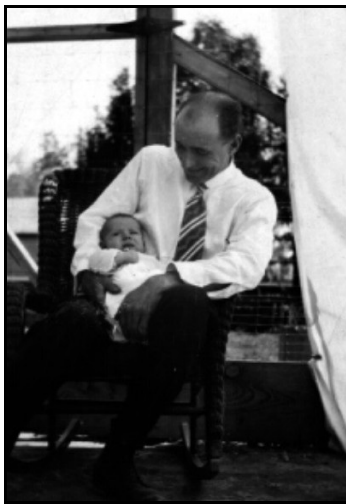


Figure 5a-11 – Ezra L. Craig and his son, Bobbie (Courtesy of Robert Craig)

E.L. Craig (1928-1930)

According to the *Alamogordo News* (August 23, 1928), “A deal was closed this week, whereby Israel L. Cregg (*sic*) of Pueblo, Colo., purchased the Alamo Bottling Works of A.B. Rose, owner for the past several years. New machinery will arrive soon, and preparations are being made for the season’s business.” The new owner’s name was actually Ezra L. Craig (Figure 5a-11).



Figure 5a-12 – Lillian Craig with Bobbie (Courtesy of Robert Craig)

At some point, probably in late 1928 or early 1929, Craig changed the name of the operation from Alamogordo Bottling Works to Crystal Bottling Co., although he also referred to the plant as Crystal Bottling Works. According to Robert Craig, Ezra’s son (personal communication 7/30/2009), Ezra’s wife, Lillian, probably made the name change (Figure 5a-12). She apparently was the bookkeeper, while Ezra ran the plant and delivered the bottled product.

Craig invited the public to “Drink Crystal Sweets” (Figure 5a-13) and to Order a case from your grocer today” (*Alamogordo News* May 3, 1929). In preparation for the 1929 4th of July celebration, he stated that the plant was “equipped to take care of all orders—large or small. Order Now For The Fourth.” Craig noted that the business was located on “Pennsylvania Avenue, near Tenth Street” (*Alamogordo Advertiser* June 18, 1929). The ads ran until July 9. Craig also advised his public to “Try a bottle of new HAPPYWINE A REAL KOLA DRINK” (*Alamogordo Advertiser* August 22, 1929 – Figure 5a-14). He sold the operation to Thomas J. O’Conor in 1930 (*Alamogordo News* March 17, 1932, June 20, 1946).

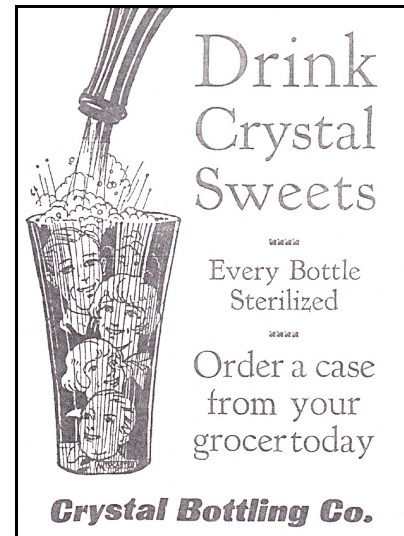


Figure 5a-13 – Crystal Bottling Works ad (*Alamogordo News* May 3, 1929)

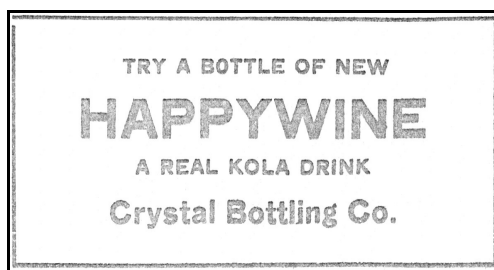
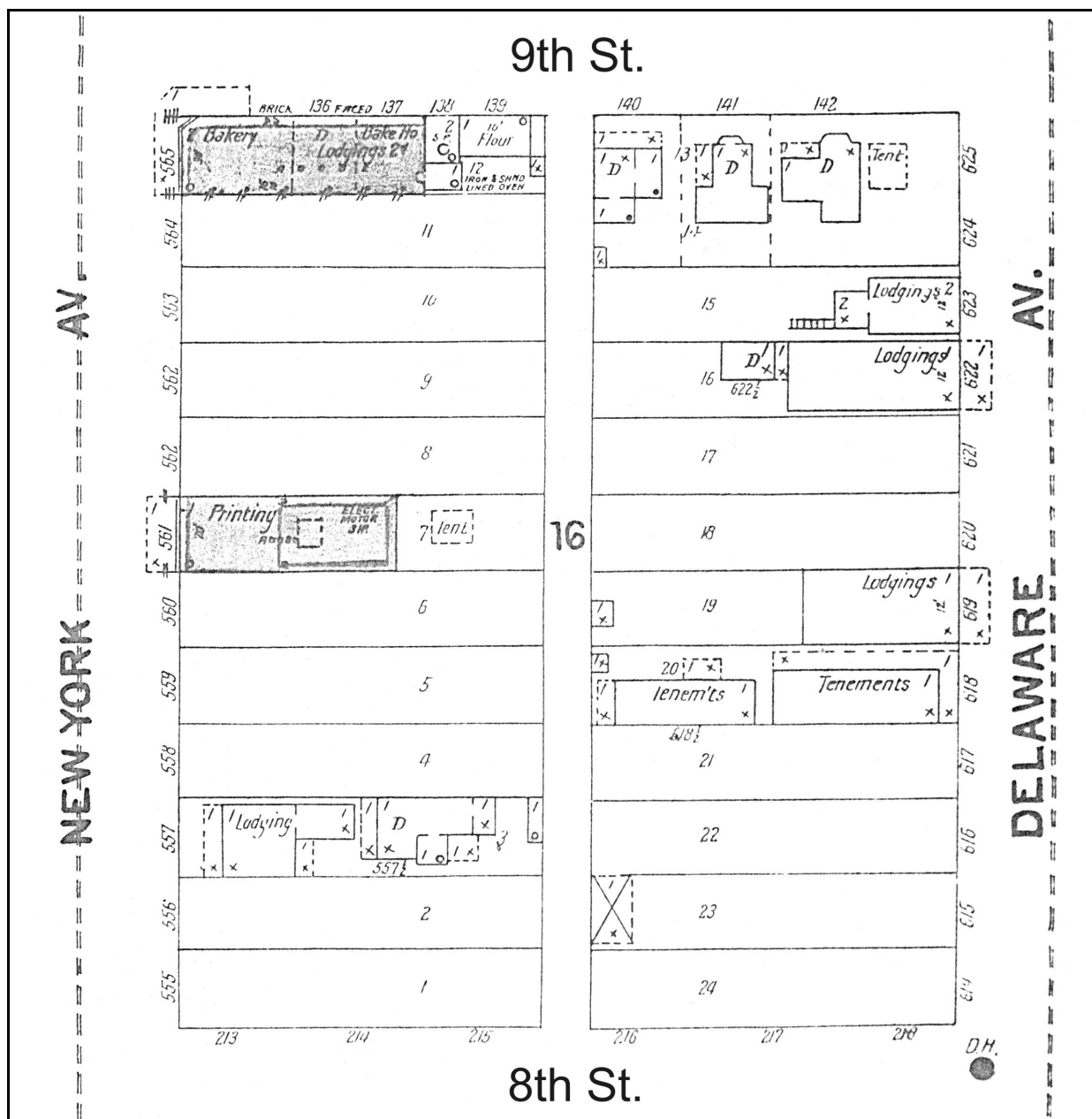


Figure 5a-14 – Ad for Happywine Kola (*Alamogordo Advertiser* 8/22/1929)

The couple probably sold the business because Craig’s wife was in poor health. Her health may have been one of the reasons for the relocation of the family from Colorado to Alamogordo. The Craigs returned to Colorado to be closer to family and friends, and Mrs. Craig died there a few years later (Robert Craig, personal communication 7/30/2009).

Location

The original location of the Alamogordo Bottling Works was almost certainly at the rear of Weigele’s Bakery at the corner of New York and 9th St. When George Weigele, Jr., listed his occupation as “Baker & Bottler” in the 1910 census, at a “Bakery & Bottle Works.” One of the first purchases made at Alamogordo by George’s parents – George, Sr., and Alma Weigele – was Lot 12 on Block 19, the corner of New York and 9th, where they built their bakery and boarding house. The 1905 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the buildings, although they had almost certainly been modified in 1910 to make space for the bottling operation (Figure 5a-15).



In 1911, Weigele moved the bottling operation to 811 Delaware Ave.,⁵ but that was only its home for the next three years of its existence – from 1911 to 1914 (see Figure 5a-2). George Weigele, Jr., was the original owner of both the lot and the plant. I have not been able to discover whether Weigele refused to sell the lot or Jerry Johnson, the next owner of the bottling works, was uninterested in buying the property (or was unable to do so).

Regardless of the reason, when Weigele sold the bottling works to Johnson in 1914, Weigele retained the land. Neither Johnson nor the next five proprietors of the plant actually owned the property where the bottling works was situated. When Jerry M. Johnson acquired the business in 1914, he relocated the plant to 916 New York Ave. where it remained until 1930 (see Figure 5a-3). Although Ezra Craig renamed the business as the Crystal Bottling Co., probably in 1929, it remained at the same location.

Bottles

George A. Weigele, Jr., and Weigele's Pop (1910-1914)

Virtually nothing is known about Weigele's Pop except that it was first advertised in Alamogordo around 1910. The first embossed bottle (discussed below) was made in 1911, so the initial bottles were probably generic and may or may not have had paper labels. The term "Weigele's Pop on Ice" – used in the only ads I have found – suggests bottled soda, instead of that sold from a fountain. An embossed bottle from this first year remains a possibility, although probably a remote one.

It is likely that Weigele offered the popular fruit flavors of the time including grape, orange, lemon, and lime. The only embossed bottles I have found were typical of the period, with an oval plate with the firm's name and location (Figure 5a-16). The mold used to make the example I possess in 2011 was badly worn. One shoulder joint had deteriorated to the point where it almost created a fin (extrusion of glass). However, the mold, itself, could have been used on thousands of other bottles. Only the front plate was unique to the Weigele bottle. The bottle was probably only ordered once, shortly after Weigele opened the new plant in 1911.

⁵ The street number changed at some point. The number on the 1905 map is 619.

Method of Manufacture: Two-Piece Mold

Color: Common Green

Size (in cm.): 20.5 (h); 6.1 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 9 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Embossed in oval plate - ALAMOGORDO, N. M. (arch) / WEIGELE (horizontal) / BOTTLING WORKS (inverted arch)

Heel: Bare

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - 11-SABCo (Figure 5a-17)

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: American Bottle Co. (1905-1916)

Dating: [1911] Although the heelmarks ran together, they were actually two different codes. The first “11-S” was a double code, with “11”



Figure 5a-16 – Embossed bottle used by Weigele

indicating 1911, and “S” representing the factory at Streator, Illinois. “ABCo” was the logo for the American Bottle Co. Although the American Bottle Co. captured the license for the Owens Automatic Bottle Machine,⁶ the plants made soda bottles with embossed label by blowing them into two-leaf molds. The Streator plant ceased all hand production in 1914.

Collection(s): Tularosa Basin Historical Society Museum, Alamogordo, donated by Dale Barbour; author’s collection.

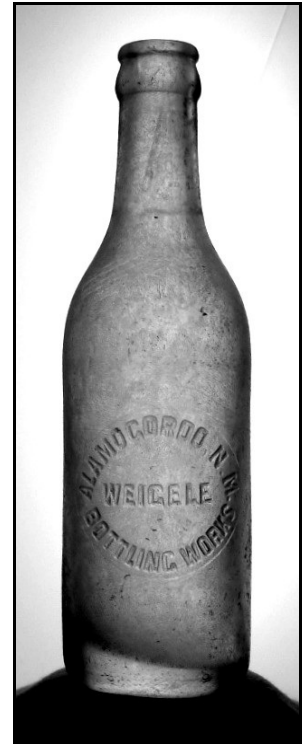


Figure 5a-16 – Embossed bottle used by Weigele

⁶ Actually, the license was issued to American Bottle’s predecessor, the Ohio Bottle Co., in 1904. When American Bottle was formed in 1905, it inherited the license.

Jerry S. Johnson (1914-1921)

In May 2010, Cliff McDonald was plowing his garden, when he unearthed a bottle from the Johnson era. Neither archaeologists nor collectors had previously reported any of these bottles. This bottle was crudely made in a mold that was badly worn (Figure 5a-18). The mold halves had deteriorated sufficiently to create tiny fins at one shoulder joint. The manufacturer's mark and date code (see below) were also crudely engraved, and this may have been one of the last mouth-blown bottles ever made at the Streator plant of the American Bottle Co. The bottle was *not* marked with the typical logo used by the glass house.

Method of Manufacture: Blown into a Mold

Color: Aqua

Size (in cm.): 20.6 (h); 6.1-6.2 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 9 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Embossed in circular plate mold - ALAMOGORDO, N. M. (Arch) / JOHNSON (horizontal) / BOTTLING WORKS (inverted arch)

Heel: Bare

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - S 14 (Figure 5a-19)

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: American Bottle Co. (1905-1914)

Dating: [1914] The "S 14" heelmark was fairly typical of a late date code used by the American Bottle Co., prior to its sale to the Owens Bottle Co. in 1916. The code indicated the Streator plant and a manufacturing date of 1914 – the last year that the plant made bottles by hand.



Figure 5a-18 – 11-SABCo heelmark on Weigle bottle



Figure 5a-19 – Embossed bottle used by Johnson

Typically, the maker's mark "ABCo" was also embossed on such bottles, although it is not present on this one – and this may reflect how late the bottle was made. This container may well have been one of the last ones made at the factory, using a mold that would have been discarded in earlier years. Aside from the lack of a manufacturer's logo, a difference in date code, and Johnson's name, the bottle is virtually identical with the one used by Weigele three years earlier. Johnson almost certainly used Weigele's bottles as his model.

Collection(s): Tularosa Basin Historical Society Museum, Alamogordo, donated by Cliff McDonald.

L.H. Karosen (1921-1922)

L.H. Karosen bottled his seven fruit flavors in embossed bottles. The manufacturer apparently made a mistake that Karosen chose to live with: the bottles are all embossed *F. H. Karosen* (Figure 5a-20). Although Karosen was the owner who initiated the Coca-Cola franchise in Alamogordo, no bottles (either the "Christmas Coke" of 1923 or the In U.S. Patent Office variety that followed) from the period have been found. Either Karosen ordered his product already bottled from El Paso, or he used bottles without the city/state designation on the base.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Common Green

Size (in cm.): 24.3 (h); 5.8-6.0 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 7 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Embossed in circular plate mold - ALAMOGORDO (arch) / BOTTLING WORKS (horizontal) / F.H. KAROSEN (horizontal) / ALAMOGORDO, N. MEX. (Inverted arch)

Heel: Bare

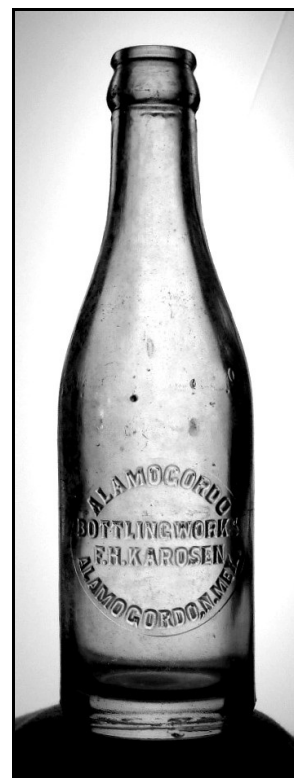


Figure 5a-20 –
Embossed bottle used
by Karosen

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - OP106R G21 [“1” over peened out “0”]

Base: Embossed - 7 FL. OZS.

Manufacturer: Graham Glass Co., Okmulgee, Oklahoma

Dating: [1921] Like his predecessors, Karosen probably only

ordered bottles once. The embossing on the bottle is triangular or wedge-shaped in cross section, rather than the more typical rounded embossing. While the wedge is much more distinctive, it also wears out faster.

The Graham Glass Co. Began using that name in 1912 and started using letter dated codes in 1916. Graham developed a complex code system. The “O” indicates the Okmulgee, Oklahoma, plant, and the “P” is probably a code for the bottle type.⁷ Next is the model number (106), followed by the original date code (R for 1918). When Graham stopped using the letter date codes, in 1920, the engravers merely ignored the older code system and added a “G” (Graham) and a two-digit date code (Figure 5a-21).

Although it has little to do with either Karosen or Alamogordo, we can trace the history of this mold through the Graham codes. The mold was originally made in 1918 ®, then reused in 1920. When Graham continued to use a mold, the engravers followed one of two paths to add a new date code. Often, they merely stamped or carved in a new letter or number right over the old one. Other times, they took a ball-peen hammer and pounded out the old number before carving or stamping in a new one. On this bottle, the “0” has been peened out and a “1” added, making 1921 the year that the Karosen bottles was made.

Collection(s): Ken Malone collection, Wichita Falls, Texas; author’s collection.

D. H. Pharr (1922-1923)

Pharr carried Coca-Cola and Cherry Blossom soda along with “a full line of soft drinks.” He also offered “Jack’s Beer and Budweiser Beer,” both near-beers or cereal beverages despite his use of the word “beer” (*Alamogordo News*, July 6, 1922). Just before he sold the plant, he offered “a full line of soda water, cereal beverages and Coca Cola” and guaranteed



Figure 5a-21 – OP106R G21 heelmark on Karosen bottle

⁷ Graham used letter date codes for four years, beginning with “P” (16th letter of the alphabet) for 1916 and ending with “S” (1919). Two-digit date codes – usually preceded by “G” – began in 1920.

that every bottle would be of the highest quality (*Alamogordo News*, April 9, 1923). The cereal beverages probably referred to Budweiser “beer” (Jack’s was dropped from July 1922 ads).

Thus far, I have not found any bottles from D.H. Pharr. A new trend began about 1916 or so and was in full swing by 1918. Virtually all El Paso newspaper ads from 1918 into the late 1920s illustrated bottles with paper labels. In most locations, collectors report a time when no bottles are found, generally in the 1918-1929 period. Almost certainly Pharr joined the national trend in 1922 and either used generic bottles with paper labels or no labeling at all.

A.B. Rose (1923-1928)

Like his immediate predecessors, Rose bottled Coca-Cola, and he introduced Delaware Punch to the area. In addition, he sold ginger ale, lemon, orange, peach, grape, cream soda, and cereal beverages (*Alamogordo News* August 30, 1923). By 1924, he added “Ginger Mint Julip and all fruit flavors” (NMSBD 1924). As of April 19, 1923 (*Alamogordo News*), he had “sent in orders for a larger equipment of bottles and will endeavor to have 1000 cases of bottles available in a short time.” Either none of these seem to have survived, or he used generic bottles with paper labels – likely the latter. During the last year of his ownership, Rose apparently lost or discontinued the Coca-Cola franchise; newspaper ads show that the product was hauled in by various truck lines.

E.L. Craig (1928-1930)

Craig called his regular line “Crystal Sweets” (*Alamogordo News* May 3, 1928). According to Bob Craig, Ezra’s son (personal communication 7/30/2009), his father talked little about the business. However, he mentioned that “banana pop” was the most popular flavor among his Hispanic customers. A photo of Bob as baby shows him among “Crystal pop” bottles. None of the bottles appear to have either embossing or paper labels (Figure 5a-22).



Figure 5a-22 – Bobbie Craig among Crystal Sweets bottles (Courtesy of Robert Craig)

Happwine Kola

Craig offered “Happywine a Real Kola Drink” from August 22, 1929 to August 29, 1930 (cf. *Alamogordo Advertiser* August 22, 1929). I have been unable to find *any* other reference to this drink. It *may* have been Craig’s own formula.

Bottle Summary

To date, I have found no Alamogordo Bottling Works bottles aside from those used by Weigele, Johnson, and Karosen. Although no physical evidence exists (or has yet been discovered), there is reason to believe that a different style of container should have been present between about 1920 and 1930. Soda bottlers followed a general trend in the 1920s toward generic bottles with paper labels (see Chapter 2 - Dating Containers from Small Bottlers). It is also possible that other bottlers, like Craig, used generic bottles with no paper labels. In a small town with no competition, labels would have been much less important.

Shells

To my knowledge, only a single shell (wooden case) from the Alamogordo Bottling Works has survived. To set the terminology, a wooden container full of bottles is called a case. The same wooden container, when empty, is a shell. Below, therefore, I discuss the shell.



Figure 5a-23 – Alamogordo Bottling Works shell – side view

The shell is painted a light, almost pastel green with black stenciled letters that identify the “ALAMOGORDO / BOTTLING WORKS / ALAMOGORDO N. M.” on each long side (Figure 5a-23). The shell measures 41.0 cm. in length, 27.5 cm. in width, and 10.5 cm. in height. There is surprisingly little variance in the measurements. The shell is constructed from five boards: two boards 0.8-1.0 cm. thick on each long side; two boards ca. 2.0 cm. thick on the two short sides with ca. 8.0-2.0 cm. handles cut into the upper portions of the boards; and a single 41.0 x 24.5 x 0.8 cm. plywood board as a base (Figure 5a-24). The shell contains no internal spacers of any kind.

The shell is surprisingly small in comparison with later shells. Part of the difference is explained by the lack of spacers. Even the simple two board dividers that create four rectangular spaces for six-pack containers add extra size to the outside dimensions. The more complex, twenty-four hole shells require even greater outside dimensions relative to the size of the bottles. The inside dimensions of the shell are 25.6 x 37.2 cm. With no other constraints (e.g. cardboard for 6-pack containers), 24 of any of the three known

Alamogordo Bottling Works bottles, Weigele (6.1 cm. in diameter), Johnson (6.1-6.2 cm.) and Karosen (5.8-6.0 cm.), would have fit comfortably into the case. Unfortunately, that gives us no clue as to when the shell was used. It could have been in use any time during the 18-year tenure of the company (1910-1928).

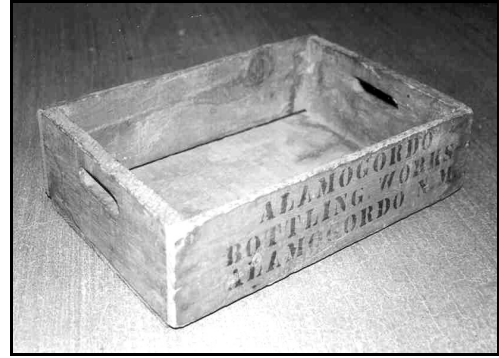


Figure 5a-24 – Alamogordo Bottling Works shell – corner view

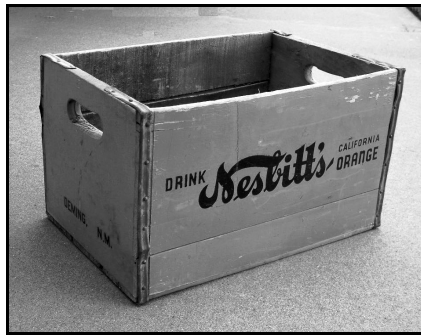


Figure 5a-25 – Older-style high-sided shell from Deming, NM

According to Curt Goetting (nephew of Hope Smith, founder of the Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of El Paso), the switch from the earlier, high-sided cases (Figure 5a-25) to the lower ones occurred ca. 1913. Of course, the transition spread over several years, probably even a decade or more in some areas. But 1913 gives us a target date. Assuming that Goetting is correct, this shell was probably not used by Weigele or even by Johnson.

Since bottling transitions have generally been initiated in cities, it is likely that the change from high-sided to lower cases occurred at Alamogordo a bit later than in El Paso and other cities. In addition to this speculation, the only ad featuring L.H. Karosen's name (see Figure 5a-4), illustrated a high-sided case. Although Karosen may just have liked the drawing, it more likely represents the type of case he was used to. The case was thus probably used after ca. 1922.

Although six-packs were first used in the 1920s, they were probably restricted to store sales and were probably first used only by the larger national brands. The standard for all bottlers up to that time and probably for quite some time afterward was the mixed case. This consisted of a case of 24 bottles with a variety of flavors all within the same shell. At least as late as 1923,

A.B. Rose advertised, “We can assort a case for you” (*Alamogordo Times* August 30, 1923), and it is very likely that the practice extended into the Crystal Beverage Co. period during the 1930s.

At some point, probably during the late 1920s or very early 1930s, bottlers began to realize that some form of separation was a good idea. This discovery may have occurred by accident – when someone noticed less breakage in cases where the thin cardboard in six-pack cartons separated the bottles. This led to the invention of wooden separators in shells. These were slats placed cross-wise within the shell to separate the individual bottles (Figure 5a-26). They were very effective in reducing breakage by keeping the bottles from colliding with each other. Unfortunately, this invention came too late to help us date the Alamogordo Bottling Works shell.

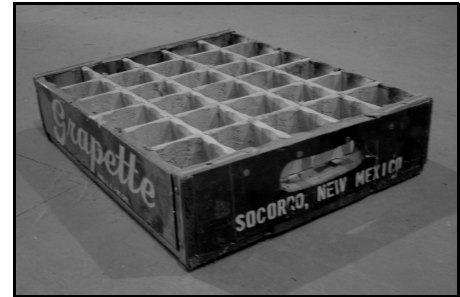


Figure 5a-26 – Newer shell with wooden separators

Although we cannot pinpoint the date of the change, I have a shell – with wooden-slat dividers – that was used by the Victory Bottling Works at El Paso (see Lockhart 2010, Chapter 12b). Victory was open from 1923 to 1931, and the bottles in the case (which was full, when I bought it) were embossed on their bases with “A.M.” – the initials of Alejandro Marquez, the final owner – 1927-1931. Thus, shells with wooden dividers were in place by at least the 1927-1931 period.

One of the final ads placed by Rose (*Alamogordo News* May 12, 1927) illustrated a case that was almost certainly just an artist’s rendition; it had little connection to an actual case of bottles used by a real bottler. The case was the older, high-sided style that was probably phased out earlier in the decade. The case held three rows, with five bottles in each row – a total of 15 bottles – a *very* unlikely size. The bottle tops in the drawing do *not* look like crown caps.

Despite all these unrealistic features, the case has one very interesting characteristic. The bottles are separated by dividers. There is no reason – even in an unrealistic rendition – for the dividers to be present if they did not exist in real life. The artist must have had *some* idea of what he or she was drawing. Logically, the dividers were in place in time for the 1927 ad.

In summary, the shell was probably made during the ca. 1922-1928 period. Although Israel Craig would probably have used shells with the Alamogordo Bottling Works name during the 1929-1930 period when he called the works the Crystal Bottling Co., he would not have ordered shells marked with that name. By the time that Thomas O'Connor opened the Crystal Beverage Co., he certainly had and used his own shells. The shell was very likely ordered and used by A.B. Rose during the last eight years that he was in business.

