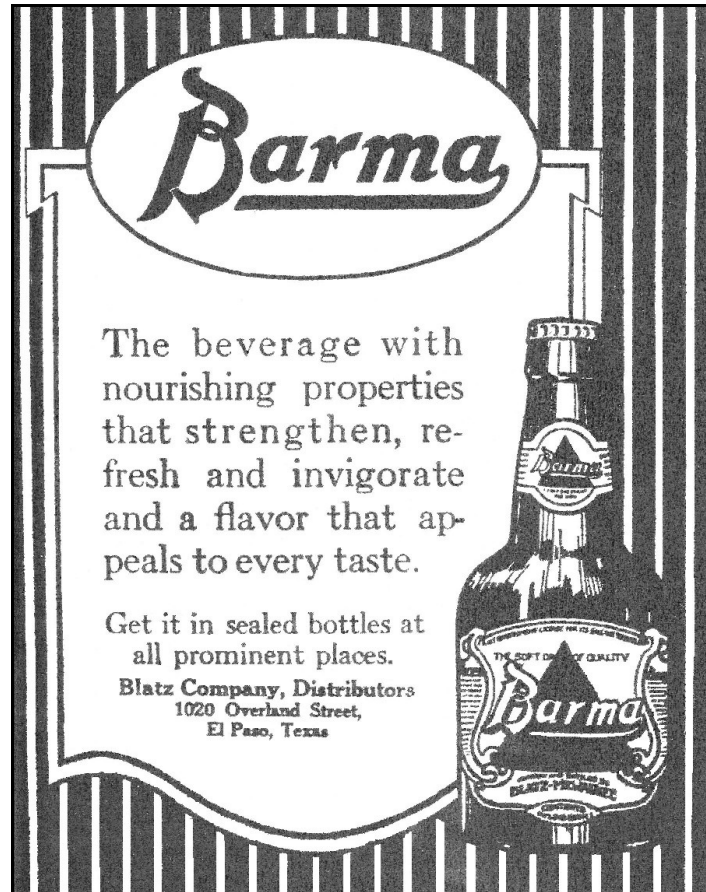


Bottles on the Border: The History and Bottles of the Soft Drink Industry in El Paso, Texas, 1881-2000



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[Revised Edition – Originally Published Online in 2000]

Chapter 12a

Chapter 12a

Small Bottlers – 1880-1919

Small, local companies comprised the bulk of El Paso's soda bottlers until the mid-1930s. Few, however, were able to survive the Great Depression. Although not actually bottlers, occasional large-scale grocers or brokerage firms acted as wholesale distributors for soft drinks and cereal beverages during the 1920s and 1930s. Distributors vied strongly with bottlers in the distribution of near-beers (cereal beverages) during Prohibition and the period immediately preceding it. Some of these distributors carried soft drinks, especially ginger ales.

In the 2000 edition of this book, I enumerated what I called "single-year" bottlers in a separate chapter. In most cases, however, there is simply not enough information about these short-lived firms to *know* whether they were only in business of one year or whether they were only *listed* a single time. As a result, I have included those firms as part of the "small bottlers" section.

Just a few El Paso bottlers were only listed in the city directories for a single year. A rash of small bottlers appeared during and just prior to the Prohibition era (1918-1932) to take advantage of the cessation of the sales of alcoholic beverages. Such entrepreneurs likely thought that the thirsty public would turn to softer drinks to assuage their cravings. In general, they were wrong – as demonstrated by the number of small bottlers who vanished into anonymity just a few years after they joined the ranks of the city's carbonated beverage manufacturers.

The Mysterious R.C. Pardu

R.C. Pardu, a 49-year-old widower from New York, listed "Water Maker" as his occupation in the 1880 census. The only type of water making that I know of from that time period (the first distilled water in the city came later) was soda water. This may indicate that T.L. Reber (see next entry) had arrived in the city at some point during 1880. It is also possible that Pardu represents an even earlier soda bottler in town or that "Water Maker" indicates something else entirely.

History

The Remarkable T.L. Reber

Theodore L. Reber and his wife, Rebecca, wended their way across New Mexico, leaving a legacy of soda bottlers behind them. Indeed, Reber could be called the Johnny Appleseed of soda bottling. Although possibly an apocryphal remark, Reber, himself, claimed to have started more than 50 soda bottling businesses, mostly within the borders of New Mexico. Although that number may be inflated, as of early 2011, a group researching the couple has discovered at least 18 bottling works created by Reber, and we have circumstantial evidence for several more. Reber may have been correct in his claim.

Reber was in the business of selling soda bottling outfits, and his unique method was to build a plant, develop the business, then sell out and move on. Once called “the perambulating soda water manufacturer,” Reber’s bottling career began by ca. 1879 and continued into the first few years of the 20th century. Fairly early, the couple perambulated to El Paso. Although Pardu (see above) *may* have been an earlier bottler, Reber & Co. was the first clearly documented soda bottler in El Paso.

The Houck & Dieter Connection

In 1899, when T.L. Reber was at Alamogordo, he claimed that he “sold the first plant that was ever in El Paso, Texas, to Houck & Dieter” (*Sacramento Chief* 5/22/1899). Houck & Dieter, an El Paso liquor dealer, began soda bottling on April 1, 1881. When the article used the term “first plant that was ever in El Paso,” it almost certainly referred to Reber & Co. – a bottling works. As noted above, Reber’s well-established *modus operandi* was to move into a town with no soda bottler, establish his bottling works, develop a good business, then sell out and move on. Just prior to the arrival of El Paso’s first railroad, the city must have been ripe.

Unfortunately, we do not know when Reber came to El Paso. He had arrived at nearby Mesilla, New Mexico, on July 1, 1880, intending to set up a bottling operation in that town (*Messilla News* 7/1/1880). Unfortunately, I have not discovered a record of when he left. In

order to have sold his bottling outfit to Houck & Dieter, Reber must have opened his El Paso operation by at least March 1881, probably earlier.

The day after Houck & Dieter opened, the *El Paso Times* (5-2-1881) ran a short piece on Reber:

Reber & Co., have removed their business to the new store room on El Paso Street next to Palace Drug Store, where they will be glad to welcome their friends and former patrons. Their stock of Stationary, Periodicals, Sodawater, Sarsaparilla, etc., will be increased and their facilities for handling the same greatly added to. Call them and see.

The removal of the business to a “new store room” was probably occasioned by the sale of the equipment to Houck & Dieter. Either Reber had built up a supply of drinks that he needed to sell off, or he had a second set of bottling equipment. He was still selling “Sodawater.” At this point, at least, he seemed to have had no thoughts of leaving town.

The 1883 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows a “Soda Water Fac.” as part of a business that includes a saloon at the corner of Chihuahua and San Francisco (Figure 12a-1 – arrow at left). This was the first location of the Houck & Dieter bottling plant, so it was almost certainly also

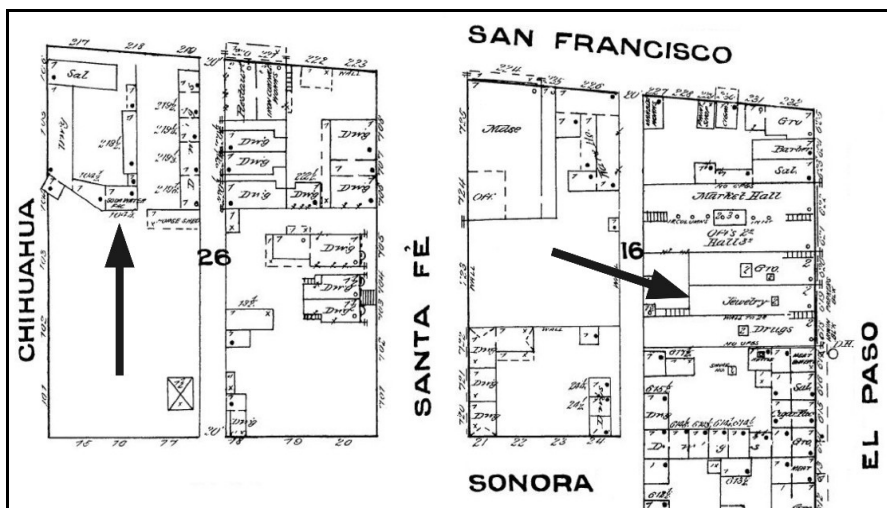


Figure 12a-1 – Location of Reber’s “Soda Water Fac.” and El Paso St. businesses (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1883)

Reber’s initial location. By the 1885 map, the bottling works had been replaced by a dwelling – reflecting Houck & Dieter’s move to 4th and Chihuahua after a flood in 1884 (*El Paso Times* 1/1/1885).

The Coffin & Co. Connection

Reber apparently scored another bottling outfit sale soon thereafter. In early June, Coffin & Co. advertised that it had “Just Received a Complete Outfit for Manufacturing Mineral Water, Seltzer, Ginger Ale, Lemon, Sarsaparilla Etc., Etc.” and invited the public to try its drinks (*El Paso Times* 6/10/1881 – also see next entry). In late September, Reber was noted as carrying the “largest lot of blank books in the city, just received from the manufacturers in New York; also envelopes and paper. Must be sold in the next 30 days. Remember the place. Reber & Co.” (*El Paso Herald* 9/28/1881). This time, no mention was made of sodas, probably because Reber had sold his last “Outfit” to Coffin & Co.

Reber’s last mention was on October 5, when J.A. Kammis opened a watchmaker and jewelry store “located in the store with Reber & Co.” (*El Paso Herald* 10/5/1881). It is notable that once again, there was no mention of sodas. It is very likely that Reber realized that the soda bottling outfit market was saturated, and the book and stationary business was rapidly becoming so. W.A. Irvin & Co., one of El Paso’s earliest and most successful drug stores, also sold books and stationary – and another book and “paper” store was just opening. In addition, the October 5 issue of the *Herald* also carried the last ad for Coffin & Co. Coffin may have been pressuring Reber to return the “outfit for manufacturing mineral water” that it first advertised about August. With this combination of circumstances, Reber probably left, as the September write-up suggested, before the end of October 1881.

Although Reber had left town prior to the drawing of the 1883 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, it shows the probable location of his second business. Reber moved to “El Paso Street next to Palace Drug Store,” and his place was taken by a jeweler and watch maker. The 1883 map only shows one drug store on El Paso St., and it has a jewelry store next to it. The jewelry store is almost certainly on the spot formerly housing Reber & Co. Both locations were only a block apart (See Figure 12a-1 – arrow on right).

Bottles and Artifacts

Hutchinson Bottles

New Mexico collectors have discovered four variations of Hutchinson-finished soda bottles embossed with “REBER & CO.”; “REBER BOTTLING WORKS”; or just “REBER.” All but one of them are also embossed “N.M.” This should not come as a surprise, as Reber spent most of the years between 1879 and 1912 in New Mexico (with occasional, relatively short sojourns to Arizona, Colorado, and Texas).

The one exception was made of colorless glass, with a typical Hutchinson finish and “REBER & CO.” in a circular plate mold on the front of the bottle. These bottles *could* have been used anywhere: El Paso, Colorado, Arizona, or New Mexico. At this point, I do not know of any found in El Paso excavations.

Method of Manufacture: Mouth-blown into a mold

Color: Colorless

Size (in cm.): unknown

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Hutchinson

Capacity: ca. 8 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Embossed - (plate) REBER & Co. (arch)

Heel: Bare

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Bare

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: [ca. 1880-1881] Although not certain, these bottles were probably used by T.L. Reber during his time at El Paso.

Collection(s): Author's collection.

The Mysterious Circles

Houck & Dieter used Hutchinson bottles, which almost certainly indicates that similar bottles were used by Reber – since Houck & Dieter purchased Reber’s equipment. Two of Reber’s bottles were almost identical – except that one was embossed “REBER & CO. (arch) / N.M. (horizontal)” in a circular plate, and the other lacked the “N.M.” (Figure 11a-3). The “N.M.” bottle was aqua in color and had an applied finish. The non-“N.M.” bottle was colorless and had a very oddly applied finish (much lower on the shoulder than usual).

The plate on the colorless bottle shows three distinct circles clustered at the lower center, and these require a bit of background information. Three methods were used during the late 19th and early 20th centuries to correct errors in engraving. First, a new letter or number was simply stamped or engraved directly over the old one. This method was usually only used for very small letters or numbers. Second, the old digits were peened flat, and the new ones were engraved, often leaving “ghost” marks, where the peened-out sections showed up very lightly.

Finally, and most important to this discussion, major errors were drilled out and filled in with machined plugs – which were then ground into the shape of the bottle or plate. The three circles on this second bottle’s plate look exactly like repair or change-of-embossing plugs I have seen on other bottles. The reason for three drilled plugs is probably because the largest drill they had was insufficient to cover the necessary area.

It is important to ask what these drilled areas cover. Figure 12a-3 clearly shows that the circles are in the exact position to cover the letters “N.M.” Please note that the photos of the two bottles were taken by two different people (the left one by me, the right by Lynn Loomis) from two slightly different angles. Nonetheless, the results are notable. Also note that the embossing “REBER & CO.” is exactly the same on both bottles.



Figure 12a-2 – Two early Hutchinson bottles used by Reber & Co. (Courtesy of Lynn Loomis)

A second question is: Why would Reber go to this extra expense? Reber may have used a Hutchinson bottle in the Black Range or Mesilla (or both). The “N.M.” initials make sense in a New Mexico context. However, when he crossed the border to El Paso, the initials became a liability. El Paso must have seemed to Reber like the promised land. It was a large community that was rapidly growing in response to the coming of the railroad – from both the east and the west. Reber probably decided to settle down – making the extra cost of the bottle alteration acceptable.

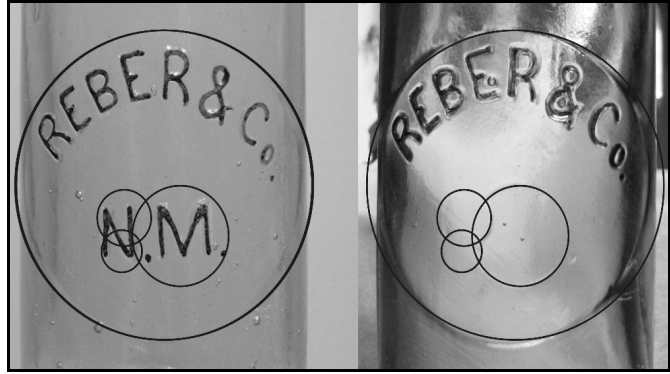


Figure 12a-3 – Plates on the two Reber bottles with superimposed circles (Courtesy of Lynn Loomis)

An interesting complication also arises at this point. When Reber moved, he still sold sodas. Although Reber could have bought the sodas from another manufacturer, that does not fit his *modus operandi*. He always made his own, then sold the entire business. Thus, Reber probably had or bought another bottling outfit.

As noted above, Coffin & Co. advertised that it had “Just Received a Complete Outfit for Manufacturing Mineral Water, Seltzer, Ginger Ale, Lemon, Sarsaparilla Etc., Etc.” and invited the public to try its drinks in early June of 1881 (*El Paso Times* 6/10/1881). The logical place for Coffin & Co. to have “just received” a bottling outfit was Reber. The timing is perfect. Reber’s September blurb in the newspapers did not mention sodas and noted that he was selling out. Reber’s last mention was on October 5.

This opens yet another bottle question. Coffin & Co. used bottles sealed by Christin stoppers (see Figures 12a-6 and 12a-7 below). *If* Coffin & Co. bought Reber’s second outfit, then Reber must have used Christin bottles. He may have switched styles to try out something different, or he may have had some kind of agreement with Houck & Dieter not to compete with the same type of bottle. Assuming this is correct, Reber certainly returned to the use of Hutchinson bottles when he left El Paso.

Coffin & Co. (1881)

[Note: I completely misunderstood the history of this firm in the 2000 edition of this book. I simply did not yet have some vital bits of information that have now fallen into place.]

History

In the *El Paso Times* of June 10, 1881, an advertisement appeared, stating:

WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED A Complete Outfit for
Manufacturing **Mineral Water, Seltzer**, GINGER ALE, LEMON,
SARSAPARILLA ETC., ETC. All orders in the City and along
the line of the Railroad will receive prompt attention. Overland
Building, El Paso, Texas. **Coffin & Co.**

A second ad appeared in the *El Paso Herald* of September 28, 1881 (Figure 12a-4):

The timing of the opening of this firm fits incredibly well with the story of T.L. Reber (see section above). Reber sold soda bottling apparatus, and he stopped advertising sodas about the time Coffin & Co. placed its first ad, noting that the firm had “just received” its bottling “outfit.” About the time Coffin & Co. ceased its ads, Reber left town. Whether those two events were connected was not recorded. However, it is very likely that Coffin & Co. began soda production in June 1881 but closed down soon after its last ad in the *Herald* on October 5, 1881.

Several people named Coffin were listed in the 1885 and later city directories, and Cameron O. Coffin is the one most likely connected with Coffin & Co. With Oliver G. Seeton, he started the firm of Coffin & Seeton by 1883. The partners advertised that they were:

W. COFFIN & CO.
(Overland Building)
—Have a—
COMPLETE OUT-FIT
—FOR—
Manufacturing
MINERAL
WATERS!
—
GINGER ALE, SARSAPARILLA
LEMON and SELTZER.
—
ORDERS
In the City and along the Line of the
Railroad will receive PROMPT ATTEN
TION.

Figure 12a-4 – Ad for Coffin & Co.
(*El Paso Herald* 9/28/1881)

dealers in Grain, Hay, and Flour. Special Prices made on Car-Load Lots. We handle nothing but first class Kansas Corn, Oats, Corn Chop, Shipstuffs, California Barley, Ground Barley, Oat, Barley and Alfalfa Hay. The Best Grade of Kansas Flour a Specialty. Orders from a distance will receive prompt attention. All goods delivered free of charge on cars or in the city (EPH 8/5/1883).

Although a positive connection may not be certain, Coffin & Seaton also worked out of the Overland Building – the same location advertised by Coffin & Co. Coffin & Co. placed no additional advertisements in any surviving El Paso newspapers, and nothing more is currently known about the firm.

Coffin & Seaton continued to be listed in the El Paso directories from 1885 to 1892. By the time the 1895 directory was printed, Coffin was a farrier (EPCD 1885-1895).

Bottles and Artifacts

Several Coffin & Co. bottles were excavated at the site of the El Paso Civic Center. All are identical with each other and with the one in my collection. The Coffin & Co. bottle is completely unique among El Paso glass containers (Figure 12a-5). The Christin finish looks like a blob top, but it was made with an internal groove ca. 1.0 cm. wide and ca. 0.2 cm. in depth. The throat is also wider than a Hutchinson finish and is not constricted where it enters the bottle (Figures 12a-6 & 12a-7).

Arthur Christin applied for a patent for an “Improvement in Bottle-Stoppers” on December 21, 1874, and received Patent No. 161,863 on April 13, 1875 (Figure 12a-8), but these closures never became very popular. The stopper, itself, was made of hard rubber and sealed against a rubber gasket held within a special groove debossed into the inside of the neck. The bottle was filled with the stopper inside and the gasket in place. A wire tool was inserted into the bottle and slid into two thin grooves on either side of the top of the stopper. Once engaged, the wire tool was lifted, pulling the



Figure 12a-5 – Coffin & Co. bottle

stopper up to seal against the gasket in the throat. Pressure from the carbonation held the stopper in place.

Method of Manufacture: Blown into a mold

Color: Aqua

Size (in cm.): 19.5 (h); 6.0 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Christin

Capacity: ca. 10 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Embossed - (no plate) COFFIN & Co. (arch) / EL PASO / TEXAS (both horizontal)

Heel: Embossed - ARTHUR CHRISTIN

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - A&D.H.C. / PAT. APR. 13TH 1875 (note that the superscript "TH" had dots directly under each letter)

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: A.&D.H. Chambers (1865-1880s)

Dating: [1881] Although bottles with Christin stoppers could have been manufactured as early as 1875, the only known ads for the El Paso containers were issued in 1881. Bottles of this type appeared in Colorado but are rare outside that state in the western U.S. (Clint 1976:26; Preble 1987:11-12).

Collection(s): Centennial Museum, UTEP; Author's collection.



Figure 12a-6 – Christin Finish – side view (Centennial Museum, UTEP)

Figure 12a-7 – Christin Finish – top view (Centennial Museum, UTEP)

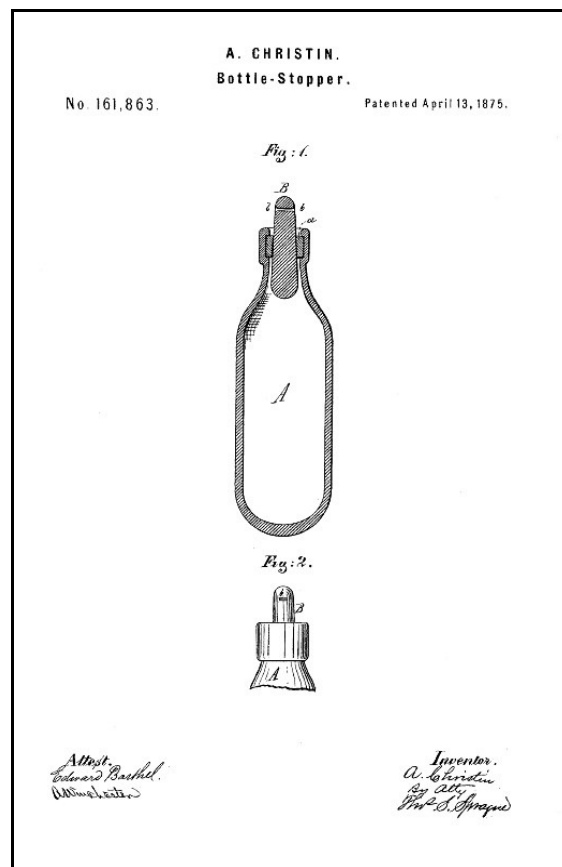


Figure 12a-8 – Patent Arthur Christin's stopper

H.D. Zachry (1882?-1885?)

History and Bottles

In the collections at the Centennial Museum, University of Texas at El Paso, resides a single example of an aqua, Hutchinson-finished bottle embossed “H.D. ZACHRY (arch) / EL PASO (horizontal) / TEX. (inverted arch)” in a circular plate mold on the front of the bottle (Figure 12a-79). Although the finish in this example is mostly missing, enough remains to ascertain that it was applied. There was no trace of a manufacturer’s mark or date code.

I have found no information about the firm or the person. No one named Zachry was listed in the city directories between 1885 and 1895. The bottle was probably made during the ca. 1881-1886 period, although it could have been slightly later.



Figure 12a-9 – H.D. Zachry Hutchinson bottle (Centennial Museum, UTEP)

G. Edwin Angerstein (1884)

History

Advertisements for bottler G. Edwin Angerstein first appeared in the *El Paso Lone Star* on April 2, 1884 and continued until the November 6, 1884 edition of the *El Paso Times*. He may, of course, have been in business prior to and/or after those dates, but his ads are the only record he left as an El Paso bottler. A typical ad offered:

Mineral Waters G. Edwin Angerstein notifies dealers and the public in general that he has established in El Paso a manufactory for all kinds of MINERAL AND CARBONATED BEVERAGES. He is prepared to sell and deliver in this city or

ship to other places such waters as Seltzer, Kissenger (*sic*),¹ Soda, Sarsaparilla and Ginger. Can also prepare any particular water ordered in quantities. Address all communications to G. EDWIN ANGERSTEIN El Paso, Texas (*El Paso Lone Star* 7/23/1884 2:7).

Other solicitations added Apollinaris and Vichy² to the carbonated beverage list and suggested that “the Trade [will be] supplied on reasonable Terms. Orders from a distance will receive prompt attention” (EPT 5/3/1884 3:5).

Angerstein (pronounced Angerstyne, not Angersteen) was the son of Ernest and Cenobia Madrid Angerstein (Figures 12a-10 & 12a-11). A native of Germany, Ernest was no stranger to the west, having served as a Sergeant in the U.S. Army on the frontier from 1852 to 1857. He was a store proprietor at Mesilla, Arizona (later Mesilla, New Mexico) by 1860 and continued to be a

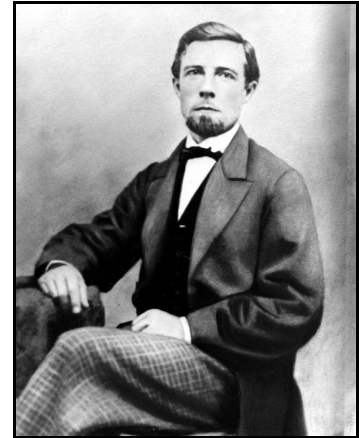


Figure 12a-10 – Ernest Angerstein (El Paso County Historical Society)



Figure 12a-11 – Cenobia Madrid Angerstein (El Paso County Historical Society)

merchant until his death. The elder Angerstein became the post trader at Fort Bliss on December 12, 1872 and, by 1874, had taken on a partner named Lewinsky (Fierman 1962:43-44, 51-54). The two men also advertised themselves as “WHOLESALE & RETAIL MERCHANTS” in Paso del Norte, Mexico, across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas. Their advertisement claimed “the best stock of goods in The El Paso Valley” (*Mesilla News*, 3/14/1874 3:3).

George Edwin Angerstein was born in Germany in December 1846. A literate man, Angerstein became a naturalized American citizen in 1870. He and his wife, Frederica, were married in 1883. Frederica, born in Germany in January 1851, had borne four children,

¹ One type of water was actually called Kissingen, not Kissenger. It was a variety, not a brand name. Kissingen water was bottled by a number of bottlers.

² Like Kissingen, Vichy was a type of water. Apollinaris was both a type and a brand name and was variously spelled with either one (incorrect) or two els.

three of whom were still living in 1900. In 1900, his two daughters, Julia, age 13 and Elizabeth, age 9, were attending school, while his son, Rudolf, was a candy salesman at the age of 16 (Twelfth Census 1900).

Edwin Angerstein acted as executor in behalf of his mother, Cenobia Angerstein, in the disposition of Ernest Angerstein's Paso del Norte (now Ciudad Juárez) store. He solicited a price of \$6,082.88 from the Schutz Brothers (Max and Aaron) for the more than 8,000 item inventory on December 7, 1876. Earnest Angerstein had died the previous year on July 4 (Fierman 1962:54; El Paso County Deed Records, Book F, pp. 403-422).

Although Angerstein ran his soda bottling business in 1884, he listed himself as a salesman at 38 S. El Paso Dr. in 1885. By 1898, however, he was back in the soda water business, working for R.F. Johnson & Co. (see R.F. Johnson & Co., Chapter 6). In 1900, Angerstein owned his house on Second St. at St. Vrain St., and listed himself as a Soda Water Maker, almost certainly now working for Henry Pfaff, successor to R.F. Johnson (EPCD 1885-1888-89; Twelfth Census 1900). Although he may have continued working as a bottler, he left no further trace in the El Paso historic record and may have returned to Paso del Norte, Mexico, retired, or died. By 1900, he was 53.

Bottles and Artifacts

Even though Angerstein was only in business for a short time, a few of his bottles have survived. These all have Hutchinson finishes. Angerstein advertised a variety of waters and probably bottled them all in a single style of container (Figure 12a-12).

These bottles contain an engraver's error in the plate. Close examination reveals that the engraver began with the initials "C.E." rather than Angerstein's correct initials of "G.E." To cover his error, he then connected the letter "C" to the following period to form a "G" in its place. A comparison with the "G" in the name "ANGERSTEIN" shows the difference between a normal "G" with a straight, pointed tail and the altered "G" with a blunt, curved tail (Figure 12a-13).

Method of Manufacture: Mouth-blown into a mold

Color: Aqua; Green (darker than aquamarine)

Size (in cm.): 17.6 (h); 5.8-6.1 (d) [17.3 (h); 6.0 (d)]

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Hutchinson (applied)

Capacity: ca. 8.5 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with round plate mold

Front Description

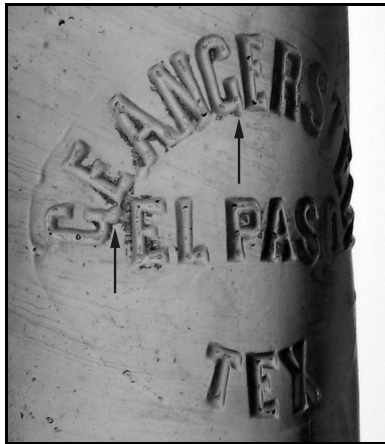


Figure 12a-13 – Error plate –
C.E. Angerstein altered to G.E.

Body: Embossed - GE.

ANGERSTEIN (arch) / EL PASO
(horizontal) / TEX (inverted arch)

Back Description

Body: Bare

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: 1884 – the only year
Angerstein advertised.

Collection(s): David Cole collection;
El Paso Centennial Museum collection; author's collection.



Figure 12a-12 – G.E.
Angerstein Hutchinson
bottle

El Paso Bottling Works (1901)

History

A rather surprising listing in 1901 is the El Paso Bottling Works. A single entry for this business was found in the 1901 city directory. What is strange is that Houck & Dieter are also listed as the El Paso Bottling Works during this year. This plant, however, was located at the northeast corner of St. Louis and Stanton, and the proprietors were F.L. Giff and Zach C. Farmer. The business was not listed in any other directory, and I have found no other mention of it from any other source (EPCD 1901).

On the 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, the northeast corner of St. Louis and Stanton is occupied by the Richelieu Hotel, with furnished rooms on the second floor and two store fronts

below. Giff and Farmer probably occupied the store front immediately on the corner and roomed above. Since the map was made in March, the pair probably set up business too late to be included. The front directly on the corner is listed on the map as “VAC. 1st” [i.e., vacant first floor] (Figure 12a-14).

Zach C. Farmer first appeared in El Paso records as a traveling salesman in 1900. After an unsuccessful attempt at bottling, he joined a man listed only as Zilligan to run the Hyde Park Road House, an equally short-lived venture, in 1902. He then faded from El Paso history. I have found no mention of Giff (EPCD 1900-1902).

W.C. White & Co. (1902-1916)

History

W.C. White & Co. began business in 1902 at the corner of St. Louis and Stanton. Initially, William C. and Marion G. White ran the business together and lived in the same building with the store (EPCD 1902-1910). In late 1910, the company moved to 500 N. Kansas (corner of Kansas and Franklin). The building was 75 x 75 feet with extra storage in the basement. The firm carried “everything in the line of canned and bottled goods, staple and fancy groceries, teas, coffees.” White was a native of Virginia and had moved to El Paso about 1894 (El Paso Chamber of Commerce 1911:70). The company expanded the structure in 1913 and named it the White building. Although I have found no explanation, the company was no longer listed after 1916 (EPCD 1911-1916).

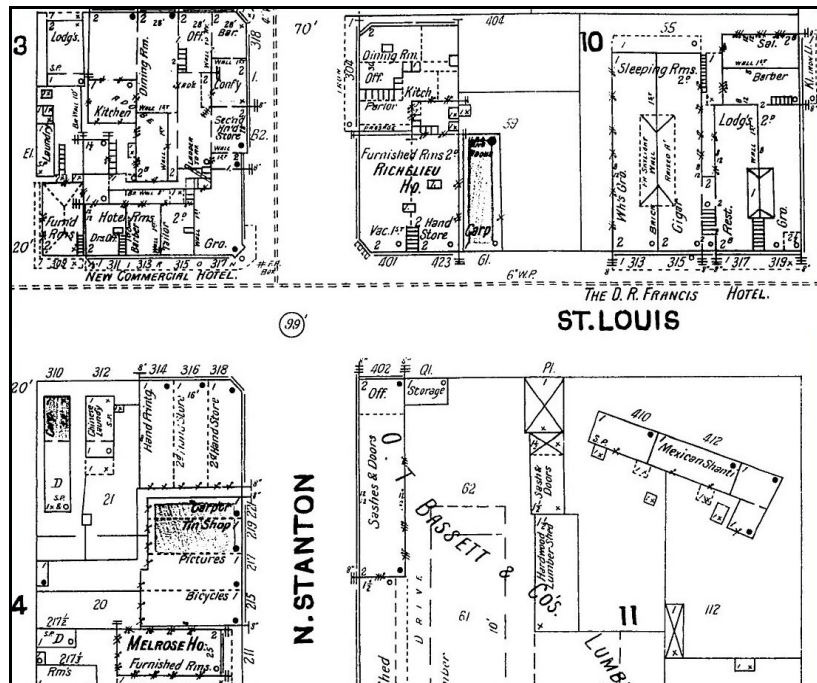


Figure 12a-14 – Location of the El Paso Bottling Works, St. Louis & Stanton (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1902)

Bottles and Artifacts

Clicquot Club Ginger Ale

In 1910, in an advertisement that also offered jalapeños, olive oil, vinegar, currants, and Marilla cherries, W.C. White & Co. touted the company as “exclusive agents for Clicquot Club Ginger Ale” in El Paso (Figure 12a-15). They called Clicquot Club “the most healthful and invigorating summer drink ever bottled. Known the world over. Try one bottle and you’ll be satisfied with no other.” At this point, I do not know how long White & Co. carried the beverage, but it was advertised by the James A. Dick Co. in 1916 (cf. EPT 7/10/1910).



Figure 12a-15 – W.C. White & Co. Ad for Clicquot Club Ginger Ale (*El Paso Times* 7/10/1910)

Crystal Bottling Works (1911-1915)

History

The Crystal Bottling Works was initially listed in 1912 at 306 Hills St. in 1912, although the owner, Francisco L. Negrete, had listed himself as a bottler in 1911 – almost certainly the same business. Negrete was a grocer as well as a bottler but was not listed in city directories prior to 1911.

The second entry for the Crystal Bottling Works occurred three years later in 1915 at 1244 San Antonio St. This time, the proprietor was Porras and Company, operated by Pedro Porras and Ernesto Archer. Neither Porras nor Archer appeared in earlier editions of the city directories. The possibility exists that Negrete neglected to list the company during the intervening years, then sold to Porras & Co. With different addresses and the lack of intervening entries in the directories, it is also possible that the choice of names was incidental, and the two companies were unrelated (EPDC 1911-1915). I have found no bottles bearing the Crystal Bottling Works name.

Crown Bottling Works (ca. 1914-ca. 1922)

History

Although empirical evidence from a Crown bottle (see dating below) suggests that the company may have been started in 1914, the New Mexico State Business Directory did not show Crown until 1915, and the El Paso city directories did not list the business until 1916. In 1916, two brothers, Bill and Nicholas Nicholson were the owners of Crown Bottling Works, located on Durango St. at the northeast corner of West Second St.

A William L. Nicholson was first listed in the directories in 1904 as a driver for the Troy Steam Laundry. He was a solicitor for the firm by 1908 and became a collector for the company in 1909. He retained that position until 1915 when he became involved with Crown. Another Nicholson (possibly another brother), John P., was in charge a year later, along with George D. Carameros (see "The Arrival of the Greeks" below). In 1918, Carameros had disappeared from the listings, leaving only Nicholson (EPCD 1915-1918; New Mexico State Business Directory, 1915).

By 1919, Nicholson was replaced by Joseph L. Davis, who moved the company to 2401 E. Boulevard (later renamed Yandell Blvd.). All three Nicholsons, along with Carameros, were newcomers to El Paso, and the Nicholsons apparently continued a nomadic existence after leaving Crown. Joseph Lamar Davis, however, had been around since 1910, first with Turner and Davis, then as a driver for Herrick & Bishop, grocers. He drove for the J.H. Nations Meat & Supply Co. in 1913, then worked in a variety of grocery stores, including C.O.D. Grocery (1915), McMickles Grocery (1916), and Standard Grocery Co. (1917) before becoming the proprietor of Crown in 1919. The last listing in the city directories was 1920 (EPCD 1910-1920). Personnel changed during almost every year the firm was operational, indicating an unstable management and probably an unsuccessful business.

The State of Texas began cracking down on public health issues in 1920. The March report for that year (Hoffman 1920:10) stated that:

the department has given a considerable amount of time and work to the correction of conditions existing in the carbonated beverage industry. The

principal trouble is the insanitary condition often found in many small bottling plants. Without equipment, without capital, with no means of even partially cleansing the containers, bottlers of many localities are selling to the public “soda pops” badly contaminated and decidedly injurious to public health.

“Soda pop” bottles in many instances find their way from the city dumps to the bottling plants with only a partial, cold water rinsing, as the sole means of cleansing. The correction of a large percentage of existing bad conditions—the erection of modern plants, with caustic soda soakers and steam sterilizers, are the reward of the efforts of the department in this line of activity.

The list of seven plants in El Paso strangely included the Crown Bottling Works twice – with two separate identification numbers. The meaning of the two listings is unknown to me, but, in both cases, the plants were identified as “illegal” – suggesting that they had not passed the state examination (Hoffman 1920:40). This may have led to the closing of the Davis operation and the new management by Hernandez (see below).

Although the Crown Bottling Works was unlisted in the 1921 city directory, the company was enumerated again in the 1921 El Paso telephone directory. Unlike the city directories, telephone lists, unfortunately, do not include management or owners. It has already been ascertained that city directory listings do not always exactly match dates for the inception or dissolution of businesses, so it seems likely that Crown continued to exist until at least 1921, probably into the next year (EPTD, 1921).

According to family tradition, Rayo Hernandez once “ran” the Crown Bottling Works (Figure 12a-16). Although a Rayo Hernandez was listed as a laborer in 1913, the next listing for Rayo is in 1919 as a dairyman for Librado Chacon (listed as a dairy from 1917 to 1921). Hernandez remained a dairyman until 1921, when he was listed as a “bottler,” although the directory does not mention which company (there were ten bottlers in El Paso in 1921). This likely makes him



Figure 12a-16 – Rayo Hernandez and his wife (Courtesy of Ted Williams)

the final owner of the company. Although Rayo Hernandez was unlisted in 1922, he was again a dairyman in 1923 before moving to Santa Barbara, California (personal correspondence with Ted Williams; EPCD 1913-1923).

Table 12a-1 – Proprietors of Crown Bottling Works

Dates	Names
ca. 1914	unknown – probably Nicholsons
1915-1916	Bill and Nicholas Nicholson
1916-1918	John P. Nicholson and George D. Carameros
1918-1919	John P. Nicholson
1919-1920	Joseph L. Davis
1920-ca. 1922	Rayo Hernandez

The Nicholson Family

John P. Nicholson and George Carameros were originally from Greece (where their names had been Nicolopolous and Karameros) and had moved to El Paso most recently from Mexico City, where they had manufactured candy. The two men were brothers-in-law, and John was a brother to William and Nicholas, the former owners of Crown Bottling Works. Carameros' sister, Alexandra, had married Philip D. Dimitracopulos, General Manager of Cactus Crystal Products Co., Inc., located across the street from Crown. When the bottling business collapsed, Nicholson moved to San Antonio, but Carameros went to work for his brother-in-law at the Cactus Candy factory across the street and eventually gained control of the company – possibly under less-than-ethical circumstances. Carameros remained in El Paso until his death in 1970 (personal communication, Linda Cliff, grandniece of the Nicholsons and Carameros).

The circumstances connected with the three Nicholsons leads to a connection with Constantino “Gus” Nicholson, partner in the Union Bottling Works and later owner of the Nicholson Bottling Works. Gus Nicholson operated a candy store and bottling works in Allende, Coahuila, Mexico, before he migrated to El Paso. He was run out of business during the

Mexican Revolution. John and his brothers also left Mexico, where they had made candy, because of the Revolution. All the Nicholsons had been candy manufacturers, and they all engaged in soda bottling in El Paso. Like John and his brothers, Constantino's surname had formerly been Nicolopolous. Although Alkie Nicholson (son of Gus) did not have any memories of John, Bill, or Nicholas being related, there may well have been a falling out between the Crown group and Gus prior to Alkie's birth.

The Arrival of the Greeks³

Although Bill and Nicholas Nicholson were the first of the family to arrive in El Paso (Bill was first listed in the 1904 city directory), neither of them remained long. George Carameros first appeared in 1917, when he and John P. Nicholson took control of the Crown Bottling Works, formerly operated by the two Nicholson brothers. Carameros lived at 147 Porfirio Diaz St.

Carameros' brother-in-law, Phillip Dimitricopolos, was in to El Paso by August 9, 1917, the date of his marriage. He was married at the Carameros' house (147 Porfirio Diaz). By 1918 he had opened the Rex Confectionery⁴ at 415 S. El Paso Dr. along with Carameros and Louis Alexander. Dimitricopolos lived at 1214 W. Missouri but moved to 520 W. Missouri. Carameros moved in with Dimitricopolos in 1920.

Along with the Rex, Carameros became involved with the Colon Confectionery (509 El Paso Dr.) in 1921, but the business may have failed; it was no longer listed the following year. Dimitricopolos and Alexander apparently sold their interests in the Rex to Carameros, as they were no longer a part of that operation by 1922. However, the brothers-in-law opened both the Alcazar Confectionery at 508 S. El Paso and the El Paso Cactus Candy Co. at 438 Durango, and they both lived at the Cactus Candy location.

³ All the information in this section was taken from the 1917-1930 El Paso City Directories and personal communications 3/27/2007 with Linda Cliff, granddaughter of Phillip Dimitricopolos.

⁴ The Rex, Colon, and Alcazar were all theaters in El Paso, and the corresponding confectioneries were the concession stands in the theater lobbies.

Confused yet? It gets worse!

In 1923, Enrique Lopez-Silva bought the Alcazar, and Carameros sold his part of the cactus candy business to Dimitricopolos, who renamed the business the Cactus Crystal Products Co. Carameros was now sole owner of the Rex Confectionery but had no other business ties. However, both Dimitricopolos and Carameros moved to 911 Missouri. By 1924, Carameros had sold the Rex to C.B. Trias and was not listed as working anywhere. He had moved to 606 N. Estrella. Dimitricopolos, however, had left El Paso and was never again listed in the directories.

In 1925, Carameros opened the Cactus Candy Factory at 427 W. 2nd (corner of Durango) and lived at the factory. The plant telephone is listed for the first time – Main 521. Carameros, it seems, was finally ready to settle down. He continued manufacturing cactus candy until at least 1930.⁵ His wife, Esperanza G. Carameros, was first listed in 1926; the couple lived at 1212 W. Missouri, and their phone number was Main 8030-W.⁶ They moved up the street to 1300 W. Missouri in 1928 (phone – Main 3592). The later history of the couple remains to be written.

Bottles and Artifacts

Crown House Brand

Crown never advertised its products in the city directory, but it is a safe to assume that the company bottled a variety of flavors under the Crown house brand. The bottle type used by the company, although machine made, is more similar to the bottle styles made with the two-piece mold technique (Figure 12a-17).

⁵ At that point, I ran out of time at the library – and never returned. Carameros was certainly in business longer. According to Linda Cliff, he remained at El Paso until his death in 1970.

⁶ The “W” in the phone number probably indicates that the couple was on a party line.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Aque

Size (in cm.): 19.1 (h); 6.0 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 7 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Embossed - (round plate) CROWN / BOTTLING / WORKS / EL PASO, TEXAS (last line in inverted arch)

Heel: Embossed - Bare

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - 1149

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: [ca. 1914] Although the Crown Bottling Works was first listed in 1915, the firm may have begun operations too late in 1914 to make the listing for that years. The Gould Amendment of 1913 required that all bottlers label their products with volume information by no later than September 1914. Although a few bottles without the volume label were made after 1914, most bottlers complied. This was almost certainly the first bottle ordered by Bill and Nicholas Nicholson.

Collection(s): Robert Sproull collection; author's collection.



Figure 12a-17 – Crown bottles – note contents on heel of right bottle

Variations:

1. See description above.
2. Same but CONTENTS 7 FLUID OZ. at front heel (including the 1449 model number on the back heel). This bottle almost certainly followed the first one, although the date could be anytime between 1915 and 1922 – probably closer to the early end of the date range.

Mexican Bottling Works (1915-1917)

Although it was listed under three different names during its short life, the location of this series of bottlers remained the same, and there is a continuity established by the bottles used by the firms.

Gallegos Brothers Bottling Works (ca. 1914-1915)

History

The Gallegos Brothers Bottling Works was only listed in 1915 at 2229 Bassett Ave. The business was run by Carlos and Gregorio Gallegos Medina,⁷ two brothers who resided at the same address. The brothers were not listed in the city directories in previous years and probably lived in Ciudad Juárez, across the Rio Grande. The business may have opened in 1914, too late to have been listed in the city directory for that year (see explanation in Bottle and Artifacts below).

Bottles and Artifacts

Despite the short duration of the Gallegos/La Mexicana business, two bottles with very different labels have survived. The first, described below, was almost certainly the initial bottle used by the Gallegos Medina brothers (Figure 12a-18).

Method of Manufacture: Blown into a Mold

Color: Aqua

Size (in cm.): 22.3 (h); 5.6-5.7 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: ca. 7 oz. (est.)

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with round plate mold

Front Description

⁷ Although the 1915 directory only listed the first half of the brothers' last name (Gallegos), the correct name was Gallegos Medina.

Body: Embossed - La Mexicana (arched script) / {flowing Mexican Flag} / PROPIEDAD EXCLUSIVA / DE / GALLEGOS MEDINA / HERMANOS (underlined) / EL PASO, TEX. (inverted arch)

Heel: Embossed - THIS BOTTLE NOT TO BE SOLD

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed – IGC511

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: Illinois Glass Co.

Dating: [1915-1916] The Gallegos brothers were listed as proprietors in 1915, and Carlos Gallegos Medina was listed before Torres Saldaña in 1916. Because the bottle did not have volume information, it may have been made in 1914. Many businesses were not listed in the city directory during their first year of operation because they opened too late for the enumeration. It is very possible that the Gallegos Medina brothers fell into this category. The bottles were almost certainly used during the entire tenure of the Gallegos Medinas and probably continued to be used by Torres Saldaña until they wore out.

The back heel of the bottle was embossed very faintly with “IGCo 511” – the manufacturer’s mark used by the Illinois Glass Co. from ca. 1880 to ca. 1915. The logo was used in conjunction with the model code after ca. 1895. This particular model code is found on a bottle in the 1908 Illinois Glass Co. catalog (331). Not only is the drawing almost identical, but the measurements (8 1/8" x 2 1/16") match exactly. The bottle held 8 oz. and weighed 15 oz. The “name plate” was round both in the catalog and on the Gallegos Medina bottle. Although many of the earlier soda bottles had been purged from the 1911 catalog (Putnam 1965:243), model #511 remained. Neither catalog, however, listed the “THIS BOTTLE NOT TO BE SOLD” on the back heel. This may only have been offered after 1911. The bottle style no longer appeared in the 1920 catalog.

As noted, the “strikes” on the heelmarks are very faint. This allows one to view the “dot” of the vent mark that was concealed in the embossed letters. On earlier, mouth-blown bottles, the vent marks were usually visible as tiny dots on shoulders, heels, and bases.

Collection(s): Jim Cullen collection, San Marcos, Texas; author’s collection.



Figure 12a-18 – Bottle from La Mexicana (Courtesy of Jim Cullen)

Carlos Gallegos Medina & Co. (1916)

History

In 1916, the company was listed as Carlos Gallegos Medina & Co. with a location at 2227 Bassett Ave. The slight difference in addresses was probably a result of a typographical error in the city directory. Manuel Torres (actually Torres Saldaña - see below) replaced Gregorio Gallegos (Medina) as second proprietor.

La Mexicana (Mexican Bottling Works) (1917)

History

The name in the city directory was again changed to La Mexicana Fabrica de Aguas Gaseosas (the Mexican soda water factory), known in English as the Mexican Bottling Works, and listed as “Mfrs of Soda Waters, Ginger Ale, etc.” Manuel Torres Saldaña was the proprietor at 833 (actually 1833) Magoffin Ave. Either late in 1917 or early in 1918, Torres Saldaña renamed the business the Lone Star Bottling Works, 1831-1833 Magoffin Ave. Along with the new name, he added beer to the sales inventory and had aluminum business cards made. Shortly thereafter, he sold the business to José Urrutia (see Lone Star Bottling Works, Chapter 12b) and moved to Calixico, California.

Two surviving bottles link the three listings (Gallegos Brothers Bottling Works, Carlos Gallegos Medina & Co., and La Mexicana) as a single company. The first bottle contains both the company name (La Mexicana) and the proprietors (Gallegos Medina Hermanos). The second bottle was used after Torres Saldaña took control and Anglicized the name to Mexican Bottling Works. Although the management was clearly unstable (by 1917, the Gallegos Medina brothers were gone), the firm lasted at least three years before Torres Saldaña opened the Lone Star Bottling Works.

Table 12a-2 – Chronology of the Mexican Bottling Works

Company	Owner	Dates
Gallegos Brothers Bottling Works (La Mexicana)	Carlos & Gregorio Gallegos Medina	1914?-1915
Carlos Gallegos Medina & Co. (La Mexicana)	Carlos & Gregorio Gallegos Medina	1916
La Mexicana (Mexican Bottling Works)	Manuel Torres Saldaña	1917-1918?
Lone Star Bottling Works	Manuel Torres Saldaña	1918
Lone Star Bottling Works	Jose Urrutia	1918-1930
Lone Star Bottling & Fuel Co.	Jose Urrutia	1930-1934

*Manuel Torres Saldaña*⁸

Manuel Torres Saldaña was born in Rio Naces, Durango, Mexico, on February 13, 1875. The son of Sevedo Saldaña Torres and Concepción Saldaña – affectionately known as Mama Chonita – he was part of a large family. Married on May 5, 1870, Sevedo and Mama Chonita had eighteen children, only seven of whom survived. Manuel had two older brothers, Tíburcio and Severo and four younger sisters: María, Rosenda, Manuela, and Carmen (Figure 12a-19).



Figure 12a-19 – The family of Manuel Torres Saldaña – Manuel is the child in the center (Courtesy of Enriqueta Torres Quihuis)

⁸ This section on Manuel Torres Saldaña is derived from the Memoirs of Enriqueta Torres Quihuis, daughter of Manuel Torres Saldaña.

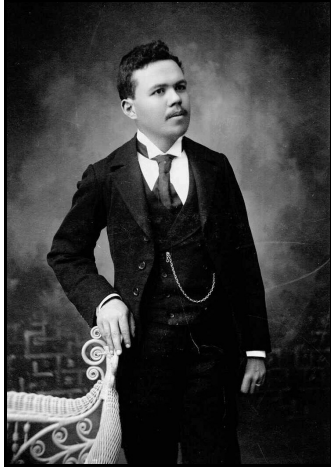


Figure 12a-20 – Manuel Torres Saldaña as a young man (Courtesy of Enriqueta Torres Quihuis)

Torres Saldaña's once-wealthy family had an extensive history in Mexico and were pioneers who brought cattle from Argentina to Veracruz in the early 18th century. One of his uncles was a former governor of Durango. Prior to the Mexican Revolution, Torres Saldaña had traveled quite a bit in southern Mexico. An educated man, Manuel worked for the government. It was during this period when he met Guadalupe Najera Briones who worked at a post office (Figures 12a-20 & 12a-21).



Figure 12a-21 – Manuel's wife, Guadalupe Najera Briones (Courtesy of Enriqueta Torres Quihuis)

Manuel had eyes for three women at the time and considered all three as prospective brides. He proposed to the closest one first, and was wed to Guadalupe, his first cousin, on February 7, 1907, in Topia, the place of her birth. Born on July 11, 1885, Guadalupe was ten years younger than her husband, and the couple made an ideal match as their marriage lasted at least 18 years.

The couple moved north to Chihuahua in an attempt to avoid the bloodshed of the revolution, and, there, their daughter, Enriqueta, was born on December 5, 1910. After two of Torres Saldaña's uncles were killed by Pancho Villa's raiders, the family migrated from the revolution-wracked country to the United States on December 18, 1912. Along with many others fleeing the revolution's



Figure 12a-22 – Manuel Torres Saldaña with his family (Courtesy of Enriqueta Torres Quihuis)

destruction, the Torres Saldaña family passed through Ciudad Juárez to El Paso, Texas, and began the naturalization process to achieve US citizenship. Two more daughters, Emma Antonia (born October 19, 1913) and Refugio "Cuca" (born July 4, 1915), soon followed (Figure 12a-22).

Torres Saldaña bought the Mexican Bottling Works in El Paso and renamed it the Lone Star Bottling Works before selling out and moving to Calexico, California, in 1918. There, he opened a Tortilla shop called El Metate and later went back into the soda business with the Gay-Ola Bottling Works in Mexicali, Mexico (Figure 12a-23).⁹ Finally tiring of running two businesses, Manuel sold them both and the family moved to Hurley, New Mexico, where Mama Chonita ran a restaurant for miners.

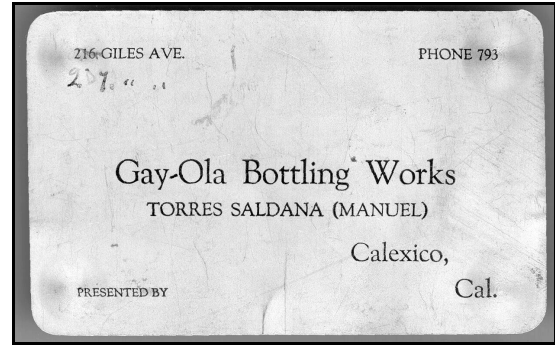


Figure 12a-23 – Business card from Gay-Ola Bottling Works (Courtesy of Enriqueta Torres Quihuis)

By 1923, the family was back in El Paso for a year and then was off to Miami, Arizona, where Manuel opened another restaurant for miners, this one called El Original Chile Colorado. When Enriqueta fell in love with a boy, and her father did not approve, Manuel closed the restaurant and again moved the family – this time to Phoenix where he opened a tortilleria that he called El Metate (named after his shop in Calexico). The shop was on 5th and Madison, and business was great. After a move to 4th and Jefferson, Manuel renamed the shop EL Superior Tortillas and Tamales, and the local people soon called him *el viejo del mitote* (old man trouble maker).

Enriqueta remembered:

My father was very smart and had a good business mind. He was a good promoter but was the type that he didn't like to get his hands dirty. He hired people to do the work and he took care of managing his business. He was not afraid to go after his ideas and start a new business. The problem with my father was he couldn't stick with something over a long time.

⁹ Although Enriqueta remembered the plant as being in Mexicali, Torres Saldaña's business card located it in Calexico.

Bottles and Artifacts

In 1917, the Mexican Bottling works carried soda water and ginger ale, but nothing else is known about the flavors used by the company. It is almost certain that the bottle listed below was the only one used by the firm (Figure 12a-24).

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Light Blue and Aqua

Size (in cm.): 19.3 (h); 5.9 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 7 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with round plate mold

Front Description

Body: Embossed - (round plate) MEXICAN BOTTLING WORKS (arch) / TORRES SALDAÑA / CONTENTS 7 OZ. (horizontal) / EL PASO, TEX. (Inverted arch)

Heel: Bare

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - OP02 [Note: the “0” is *not* a “Q”]

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: Graham Glass Co.

Dating: [1916-1917] Torres Saldaña was first listed in 1917, but he could have purchased the works in late 1916. He was not listed after 1917. The Graham Glass Co. began using the letter “P” as a date codes in 1916; however, we do not know the date or the month. It is possible that Torres Saldaña purchased the plant early enough in 1916 to have bottles made that did not have the “P” code.

Collection(s): Jim Cullen collection, San Marcos, Texas; author’s collection.



Figure 12a-24 – Mexican Bottling Works bottle (Courtesy of Jim Cullen)

Variations:

1. See description above.
2. The slight variation was aqua in color but was otherwise the same.

National Bottling Works (1915-1917)

History

Francisco Carreon arrived at El Paso in 1912 and went to work for the Woodlawn Bottling Co. During the three years of his employment with Woodlawn (1912-1914), he apparently felt he had learned enough to branch out on his own. In 1915, he joined with Francisco Gonzalez in the grocery business as Carreon & Gonzalez and founded the National Bottling Works at 520 Park Dr. The final listing for the firm was in 1917 when Carreon disappeared from the record. Gonzalez renamed the company Texas Bottling Works (EPCD1912-1917). I have never found a bottle from this firm.

International Bottling Works (1917)

History

All I have found about the International Bottling Works is that it was managed by Joe Kite in 1917 at 325 Leon St. Kite was not listed prior to 1917 but was a bookkeeper for Krakauer, Zork & Moye the following year and roomed at the YMCA. He was not listed after 1918. Kite may have been a victim of the Spanish Influenza that ravaged the entire world in 1918. The influenza hit El Paso around the first of October and had killed over 600 people by the end of the month. The mayor closed schools and banned all unnecessary public gatherings in an attempt to halt the devastation (Luckingham 1984:6-13). Although Kite may merely have moved away from El Paso, the timing of his disappearance is cause for speculation. I have never found a bottle.

Loretz, Pegram & Co.

History

In 1912, Loretz, Pegram & Co. opened at 118-120 Durango with William H. Lawrence as president, R.B. Pallet as secretary, and H.P. Vaughn as treasurer. The company name is a bit puzzling, as none of the officers are named either Loretz or Pegram. The firm carried "whol produce, fruits, candies etc." The company never varied in its listing in the city directories through its last entry in the 1923 edition (EPCD 1912-1923).

Bottles and Artifacts

Sheboygan Ginger Ale

The firm advertised Sheboygan Ginger Ale in the *El Paso Times* on July 6, 1917. The El Paso company obviously distributed the drink rather than bottling it (the ad states that the drink was bottled by the Sheboygan Mineral Water Co.).

The Sheboygan ad began with a poorly inspired poem:

If the noble Duke of York
Had gingered up his men
With good Sheboygan Ginger Ale
They'd not have marched down again

The ad continued:

Take this liquid goody with you on that picnic—everybody will enjoy its liveliness and snap. Sheboygan Ginger Ale stands first among beverages every day. Piquant—rich with the flavor of fine ginger—sparkling—pure—beneficial. Serve it at home—take it with you if you're starting for an outing—cool bottles, wrap in paper and they will stay cold. Served at leading fountains, hotels, clubs, country clubs, cafes and on dining cars.

The drink was bottled by the Sheboygan Mineral Water Co., Sheboygan, Wisconsin. The ad also noted that Sheboygan root beer and sarsaparilla were also available (Figure 12a-25).

The ad also shows a drawing of what appears to be a generic, colorless, crown-capped bottle with a paper label. The label contains a logo at the top and the word Sheboygan (underlined script with a slight upward slant), but any other lettering is illegible due to the size of the ad (EPT 7/6/1917).



Figure 12a-25 – Sheboygan Ginger Ale ad - Lorettz, Pegram & Co. (*El Paso Times* 7/16/1917)

M. Ainsa & Sons (1886-ca. 1922)

History

According to a 1925 ad in the El Paso city directory, Manuel Ainsa first established his grocery business in 1886 with his store at 109 Overland St. By 1892, Ainsa had entered the wholesale grocery business as well as retail, and his two oldest sons, Fred and Alexander, were working as clerks in his business. The business had expanded by 1898 to include “113, 115 E. Overland,” and Frank had been promoted to bookkeeper (EPCD 1886-1900).

In 1901, Manuel brought Frank S. Ainsa and Alexander V. Ainsa fully into the business and demonstrated the new promotion by changing the name of the business to M. Ainsa & Sons. He brought William Woods into the partnership a year later and ceased retail

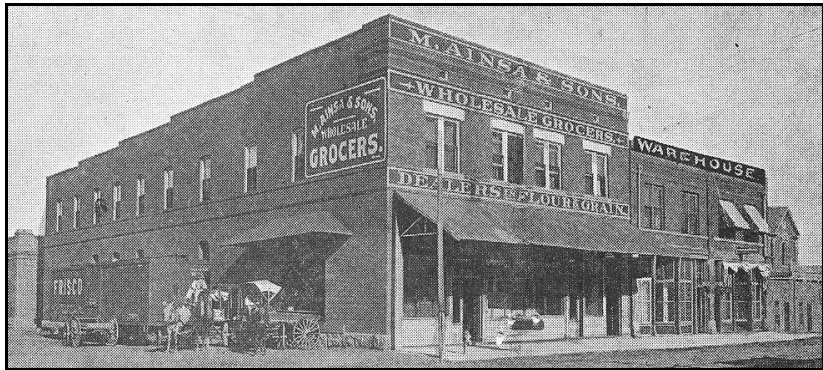


Figure 12a-26 – M. Ainsa & Sons ca. 1908 (*El Paso* Courtesy of the El Paso County Historical Society)

activities. The address was now 213-215 Overland [this is probably correct; early editions of the city directories were notorious for inaccuracies]. In 1903, the family moved the business to 300-308 S. Stanton, and Woods was no longer involved (Figure 102a-26). The elder Ainsa died in late 1903 or early 1904. Another brother, Richard A. Ainsa, joined the company in 1909 (EPCD 1901-1909).

In 1911, the El Paso Chamber of Commerce (1911:70) described M. Ainsa & Sons as “jobbers and wholesale dealers in staple and fancy groceries, canned and bottled goods, flour, feed and mill stuffs, a city salesman being employed to look out for the city trade while and extensive business is done throughout New Mexico and Arizona.” The brick building housing the company was two stories in height with a frontage of 100 feet along Stanton street and a depth of 150 feet to connect with the Texas & Pacific Railroad. The business at that time was the “oldest of the kind in El Paso.”

In 1914, the brothers incorporated with Frank as president, Richard as vice president, and C.L. Pomeroy as secretary. Although we will probably never know the story, Alexander was not

involved in the reorganization and had probably either died or left town between 1913 and 1914. The business reorganized in 1919 as two operations. The older business, M. Ainsa & Sons, moved to 220 S. Stanton with Richard Ainsa as president. Along with wholesale groceries, they offered flour, grain, and automobile tires. M. Ainsa & Sons closed in late 1922 or early 1923 (EPCD 1910-1923).

The new corporation, the F.S. Ainsa Co. had Frank as president, Pomeroy as vice president, D.L. Pickens as secretary, and J.S. Bunting as treasurer. This group remained in the old location and continued to be listed as “wholesale grocers, dealers in flour and grain” (Figure 12a-27) Again, I suspect there is an interesting story about the breakup of the corporation. The business continued until late 1934 or early 1935 (EPCD 1919-1935).

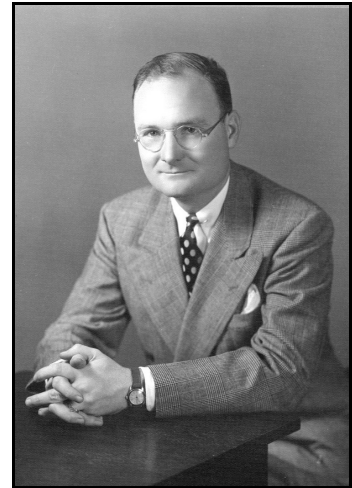


Figure 12a-27 – Francis S. Ainsa, probably one of the third generation (Stout-Fedman Studios ca. 1940)

Bottles and Artifacts

Bevo

Although the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Co. continued to produce full-strength Budweiser beer, the firm introduced Bevo, one of the first of the cereal beverages or near beers developed to face the growing threat of Prohibition, in 1916 (Figure 12a-28). The name “Bevo” was an Americanization of “pivo” – a Bohemian word meaning beer. Bevo was made from barley malt, rice, hops, yeast, and water. The drink had the tart taste of beer without the alcohol. Although sales initially skyrocketed, they dropped dramatically by 1923 – reflecting the deteriorating market for near-beers in general (Figure 12a-29). Anheuser-Busch may have hurt its Bevo sales by converting Budweiser into a near-beer in 1920 – in response to National Prohibition. Despite the low sales, the firm continued to produce Bevo until 1929 (Krebs & Orthwein 1953:96-103).

In 1917 (EPT 6/19/1917), M. Ainsa & Sons advertised Bevo (Figure 12a-30). Although Texas did not declare state Prohibition until April 15, 1918, the Ainsa brothers apparently decided to prepare ahead of time. Anheuser Busch, the brewer of Bevo, had apparently reached the same conclusion (Figure 12a-30). It is currently unknown how long the Ainsas carried Bevo.

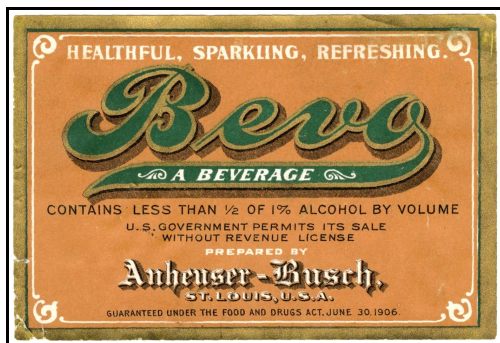


Figure 12a-28 – Early Bevo label
(Courtesy of Bob Kay)



Figure 12a-29 – Later Bevo label
(Courtesy of Bob Kay)

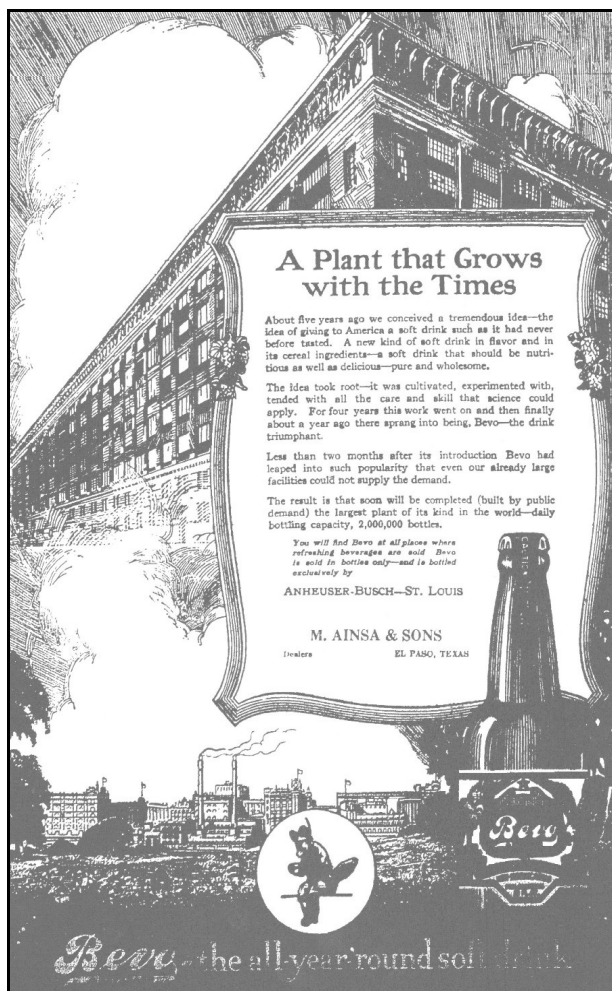


Figure 12a-30 – Bevo ad, M. Ainsa & Sons (*El Paso Times* 6/19/1917)

James A. Dick Co. (1905-present)

History

The James A. Dick Co. was formed as a corporation in 1905 (possibly started a year earlier and incorporated in 1905) with James A. Dick as president, J.E. Buckley as vice president, W. Cooley as treasurer, and C. Louis Kerr as secretary. The firm was listed as wholesale grocers and was located at 405-409 St. Louis. The company spread its operations to include 405-413 St. Louis the following year. Although Dick remained at the helm, corporate officers changed almost annually. In 1911, the address changed to 405-413 Mills – a change of street name, not a relocation (EPCD 1904-1911).

At that time, the building was described as “a substantial two-story brick warehouse with frontage of 84 feet and depth of 130, with unloading platform, connected with the main line of the [Galveston, Harrison & San Antonio Railroad], by private switch accommodating eight or ten cars at a time.” The company’s trade territory included the eastern half of Arizona, southern New Mexico, Texas as far east as Sanderson, and “a large section of northern Mexico.” The company employed 25 men (including six salesmen) and bought directly from the manufacturers in railroad car lots. The firm carried three of its own brands: Dicksie, Avondale, and Joy (El Paso Chamber of Commerce 1911:70).

The firm added “wholesale grocers and coffee roasters” to their ad in 1914 (EPCD 1912-1916). In late June 1916, the building burned, creating some problems for the firm. A notice in the *El Paso Times* on June 30 boasted, “Despite the Fire Ready and Doing Business TODAY,” but it also warned that “we respectfully ask the indulgence of all merchants in West Texas, New Mexico and Arizona in case shipments for a few days are a bit tardy.”

In 1929, James A. Dick, Jr., was added to the Board of Directors as a vice president and secretary. Although corporate officers changed throughout the years, the next important shift occurred in 1949 when James A. Dick, Jr. replaced his father as president (Figure 12a-31). Although the senior Dick continued to be listed as an officer for the next two years, the power had clearly shifted to his son. In 1952, the company moved to 6500 Montana and was listed in 1953 as “Dick, James A. Wholesale Grocery Co. (Div of Safeway Stores, Inc.)” (EPCD 1917-1953). The firm remains in business in 2011.

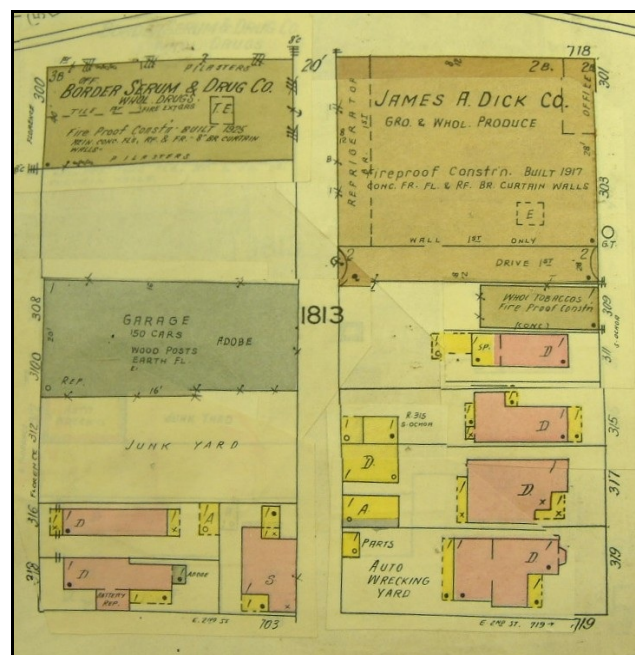


Figure 12a-31 – Location of the James A. Dick Co. in 1941 (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1941)

Bottles and Artifacts

Circle A Ginger Ale

El Paso Distribution

Although not a bottler, the James A. Dick Co. distributed “Circle A” Ginger Ale during the Prohibition era. A 1920 ad in the *El Paso Morning Times* (7/15/1920 16:1) promised, “You’ll appreciate ‘Circle A’ after trying other brands.” During the 1920s, the James A. Dick Co. maintained branches in El Paso, Deming, New Mexico, and Phoenix, Arizona. The firm was the exclusive distributor for Circle A in El Paso.

The Goldoft Liquor Co. advertised Circle A Ginger Ale in the *El Paso Times* on July 19, 1916. They claimed that Circle A was “Good at the Cafes[,] Good in the Home or in the Hospital” [ginger ale was considered a hangover and headache cure at the time], and Goldoft billed it as “The Worlds (sic) Best Ginger-Ale.” A drawing showed the original round-bottomed bottle in a special holder with a diamond-shaped paper label with a lower label that says “SPECIAL BOTTLING FOR / U.S. / ARMY AND NAVY” (see Ellis 1979:114 for a photo of that bottle style and label). Although originally named the Goldoft Bros. (Maurice and Nathan), the firm had incorporated by 1915 with O.B. Eads as president. They expanded their stock about that time and probably first offered Circle A about 1915 (Figure 12a-32). By 1917, Goldoft had vanished from the listings (EPCD 1912-1917).

Just a few days after the Goldoft ad, W.H. Hull advertised Circle A ginger ale in the same paper (EPT 7/25/1916). A simpler ad, this one showed A MAN’S DRINK above CIRCLE A GINGER ALE superimposed on a world globe (Figure 12a-33). Although Hull left little evidence of his firm, he was in business from at least June 1916 until 1917, although he was not listed in the 1918 El Paso City Directory. The James A. Dick Co. probably acquired Circle A after Hull went out of business.

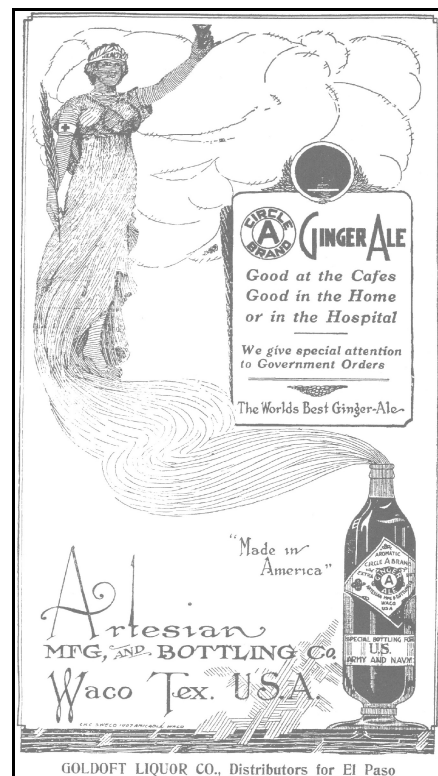


Figure 12a-32 – Circle-A Ginger Ale ad, Goldoft Liquor Co. (*El Paso Times* 7/19/1916)

Circle A was this distributed in El Paso from at least 1916 to 1920. I have been unable to trace how much later the brand was sold or who by. It is possible that the James A. Dick Co. continued to carry Circle A but ceased newspaper advertising. None of the actual bottling works in town ever bottled the brand.

National Distribution

Circle A Ginger Ale was bottled by the Artesian Mfg. & Bottling Co., of Waco, Texas. Originated by R.S. Lazenby in 1884, Circle A had become so popular by 1898 that its inventor was able to obtain a federal contract to supply the U.S. Army and Navy during the Spanish American War. In 1916, American troops guarding the U.S./Mexican border during the Mexican Revolution consumed more than two million bottles of Circle A Ginger Ale. Because of the proximity of Fort Bliss to El Paso, the product was obviously no stranger to military personnel by the time the James A. Dick Co. advertised it in 1920. Artesian was also the original bottler of Dr. Pepper and discontinued Circle A in 1940 to devote its full time to the newer and now more popular product (Ellis 1979:101, 109-115).¹⁰

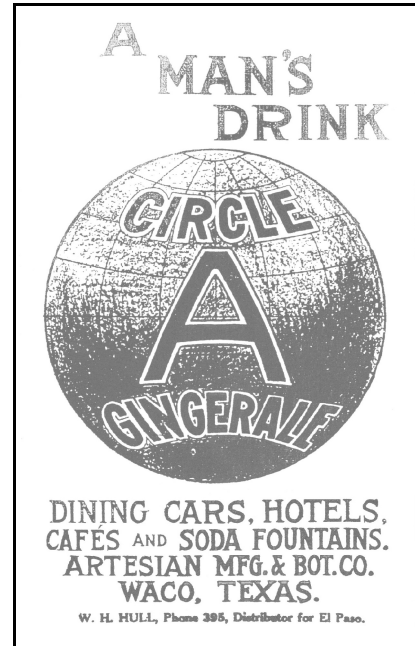


Figure 12a-33 – Circle-A Ginger Ale ad, W.H. Hull (*El Paso Times* 7/25/1916)

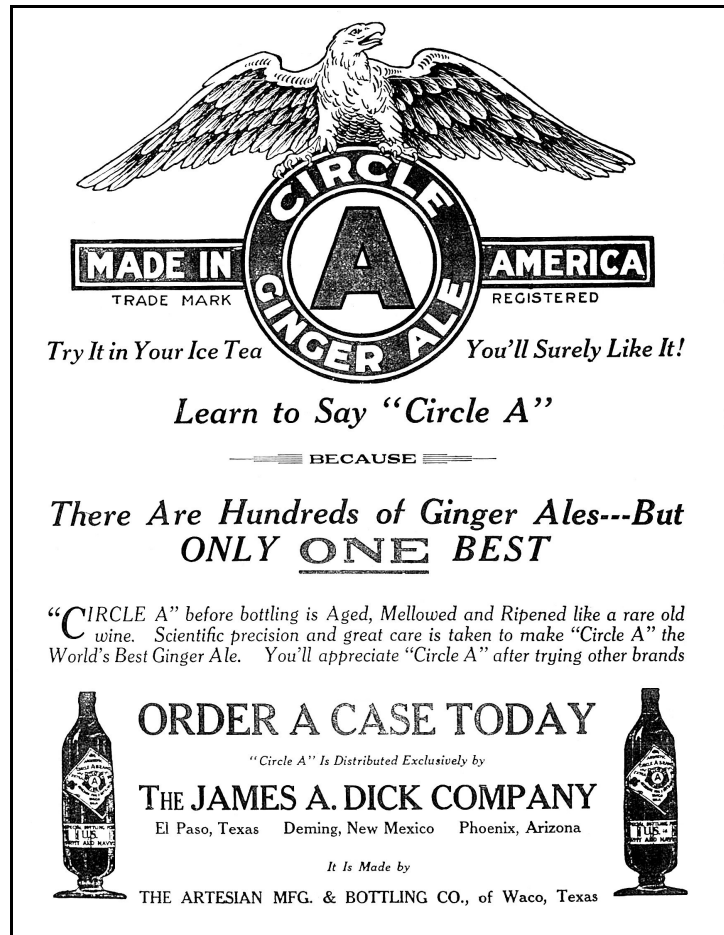
James A. Dick Co. Ads

A 1920 ad boasted:

There Are Hundreds of Ginger Ales—But ONLY ONE BEST. . .”CIRCLE A” before bottling is Aged, Mellowed and Ripened like a rare old wine. Scientific precision and great care is taken to make “Circle A” the World's Best Ginger Ale. You'll appreciate “Circle A” after trying other brands (EPT 7/15/1920 16:1).

¹⁰ Ellis (1979:102-113) shows several photos and ads with different varieties of Circle A bottles and labels.

The bottle advertised in 1920 was circular in cross-section, round-bottomed, and sealed with a crown cap; it had two paper labels. The label on center body was diamond-shaped with an added rectangle along the bottom right edge. In the center of the diamond was a bold A with the word TRADE to the right, MARK to the left, and REGISTERED below. The A was surrounded by a thick circle which contained the words GINGER (arch) and ALE (inverted arch). Above the circle was printed AROMATIC / CIRCLE "A" BRAND with EXTRA to the left and DRY to the right. Below the circle was ARTESIAN MFG & BOTTLING CO. / WACO / U.S.A. The additional rectangle contained a message touting the quality of the product. A second rectangular label, affixed below the first above the heel of the bottle, proclaimed SPECIAL BOTTLING FOR / U.S. / ARMY AND NAVY (Figure 12a-34). The bottles fit into a special holder used to maintain the container in an upright position (Ellis 1979:100; EPT 7/15/1920 16:1).



The advertisement for Circle A Ginger Ale features a central logo of an eagle with spread wings perched atop a circular emblem. The emblem contains a large 'A' with 'CIRCLE' above it and 'GINGER ALE' below it. Flanking the emblem are the words 'MADE IN' and 'AMERICA' with 'TRADE MARK' and 'REGISTERED' underneath. Below the logo, the text reads: 'Try It in Your Ice Tea' and 'You'll Surely Like It!'. A large slogan states: 'Learn to Say "Circle A"'. Below this, a line of text says 'BECAUSE'. The main body of the ad contains the text: 'There Are Hundreds of Ginger Ales---But ONLY ONE BEST'. A quote follows: '"CIRCLE A" before bottling is Aged, Mellowed and Ripened like a rare old wine. Scientific precision and great care is taken to make "Circle A" the World's Best Ginger Ale. You'll appreciate "Circle A" after trying other brands'. At the bottom, it says 'ORDER A CASE TODAY' and 'The JAMES A. DICK COMPANY' with locations 'El Paso, Texas', 'Deming, New Mexico', and 'Phoenix, Arizona'. It also mentions 'It Is Made by THE ARTESIAN MFG. & BOTTLING CO., of Waco, Texas'. Two bottles of the product are shown on either side of the bottom text.

Earlier bottles had been embossed A.M.&BCo. / CIRCLE / A / BRAND (logo) / WACO, TEXAS / U.S.A. / 10. OZS., along with variations that lacked the city, state, country, and capacity information. Another (presumably later) style had a flatter base with an oval paper label with the information CIRCLE "A" CORPORATION OF AMERICA / CIRCLE A / A / GINGER ALE (in logo form) / 10 [illegible] OZ. / "AGED IN THE WOOD" / {formula information} / THE SIGNATURE / R.S. Lazenby (Ellis 1979:107, 112-113).

Clicquot Club Ginger Ale

On June 20, 1917, the James A. Dick Co. advertised Clicquot Club Ginger Ale in the *El Paso Times*. The ad shows an Eskimo clinging to the words Clicquot Club with his feet resting on a bottle of ginger ale. Clicquot Club's slogan was "For the thirst that wants more than water, drink Clicquot Club Ginger Ale." The ad stated that the drink was "sold by the case by grocers and druggists. At fountains, restaurants, hotels and clubs." The bottle shown has a paper label. A second ad on July 5 showed a clearer drawing of the same bottle (Figure 12a-35).

The timing of the 1917 ad is interesting. The W.C. White Co., a grocery supply firm, had carried the brand in 1910 (EPT 7/10/1910 – also see above). Thus far, I have not found ads for Clicquot Club in any other years, but White went out of business in late 1916 or early 1917. The James A. Dick Co. must have picked up the brand almost immediately. Much later (1941-1947), the Woodlawn Bottling Co. offered the Clicquot Club; however, I have not been able to find any evidence that the drink was available in El Paso in the intervening years.

I found the bottle described below in an El Paso antique store. It matches the drawing in the 1917 ad (Figure 12a-36). It is possible that the W.C. White Co. used one of the earlier Clicquot Club bottles that was embossed on the sides. Both embossed Clicquot Club bottles and bottles with unembossed sides (but the Eskimo embossed on the base) have been found in El Paso contexts.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Aqua

Size (in cm.): 25.1 (h); 6.6-6.7 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Paper - White with gold trim and black lettering

Finish: Crown



Figure 12a-34 – Circle-A Ginger Ale ad, James A. Dick Co. (*El Paso Times* 7/15/1920)

Capacity: 15.5 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Shoulder: Paper label - CLICQUOT CLUB PRODUCTS (underlined between two arrows) / GINGER ALE ROOT BEER / SARSAPARILLA ORANGE PHOSPHATE / BIRCH BEER LEMON SOUR

Body: Paper label - CELEBRATED / Clicquot Club (back slanted script) / PRONOUNCED KLEE-KO / REG. U.S. PAT. OFFICE / EXTRA DRY / GINGER ALE / NET MEASURE 15½ FLUID OUNCES / MADE FROM CLICQUOT SPRING WATER / HIGHLY CARBONATED FLAVORED WITH / THE FINEST JAMAICA GINGER WITH / DASHES OF PURE FRUIT FLAVORS / AND A MINUTE AMOUNT OF / CAPSICUM (PEPPER). SWEETENED / WITH THE PUREST SUGAR. / The Clicquot Club Co. / MILLIS, MASS. / H. DANGEL CO., BOSTON (fine print) A drawing of an Eskimo with a giant bottle in his arms is centered in the midst of the contents information.

Back Description

Body: Bare

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: [ca. 1916] This type of bottle was shown in the 1917 ad (EPT 6/20/1917:8) placed by the James A. Dick Co. Currently, I do not know anything else about the chronology of this label type.

Collection(s): Author's collection.



Figure 12a-36 –
Clicquot Club bottle

Bevo

The James A. Dick Co. joined the flow toward cereal beverages or near-beers. By August 1919, the firm advertised Bevo, brewed by Anheuser Busch (Figure 12a-37). A cute ad said that Bevo was “a word that is embedding itself in our language. Soon to appear in all good dictionaries.” The ad suggested that Webster would say, “A delicious non-alcoholic beverage,

noted for its purity, nutritive qualities, sparkling golden color and richness of natural flavor of the ingredients from which it is manufactured. Became nationally popular, with all classes, in a single season.” The logo called the drink “Bevo The Beverage” (EPT 8/20/1919).

The brag from the manufacturer was a bit overstated – Bevo and the other cereal beverages only enjoyed a brief popularity. By 1923, near-beer ads had disappeared from El Paso newspapers, and several of the companies that bottled them exclusively (including the El Paso Brewery) were out of business or had adopted other products. I currently do not know when the James A. Dick Co. stopped carrying Bevo.

A word that is imbedding itself in our language. Soon to appear in all good dictionaries:

What Webster's will say about it:

B-E-V-O, (n.) [*<OF. bevoce. <bevoce, drinking. <bevoce, drink. <L. bibo, drink.*] A delicious non-alcoholic beverage, noted for its purity, nutritive qualities, sparkling golden color and richness of natural flavor of the ingredients from which it is manufactured. Became nationally popular, with all classes, in a single season. Created by Anheuser-Busch, St. Louis, and manufactured in great quantities in the most modern, sanitary and perfect beverage plant in the world.

Synonyms: None. Antonyms: About 200 imitations put up in bottles similar to the Bevo package, and bearing names as nearly like Bevo as the law will permit.

Derivative. Bevoer—one who constantly enjoys the best of soft drinks.

Bevo
THE BEVERAGE

The all year 'round soft drink
ANHEUSER-BUSCH ST. LOUIS

The James A. Dick Co.
Wholesale Distributors EL PASO, TEX

Figure 12a-37 – Bevo ad, James A. Dick Co. (*El Paso Times* 8/20/1919)



Figure 12a-38 – Avondale spice tins by the James A. Dick Co.

Avondale Spices

The James A. Dick also sold spices, and some of his Avondale spice tins and circular boxes have survived. He at least carried Cayenne and Ginger. The tins advertised his business as extending beyond El Paso to Deming and Silver City in New Mexico and Phoenix, Arizona (Figure 12a-38).

Dicksie Cider Vinegar

Although not a soda bottle, I found an example of this brand of cider vinegar, also distributed by the James A. Dick Co.

The paper label was only partly preserved, and the bottle is unusual for a vinegar container (Figures 12a-39 & 12a-40).

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Colorless

Size (in cm.): 18.2 (h); 9.9 (d); 4.6 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Paper

Finish: Two part for cap with continuous threads

Capacity: 1 pt.

Overall Bottle Design: Oval in cross-section with embossed ribs along the center of the right and left sides for improved grip.

Front Description

Body: Embossed designs above and below central labeling area. Gold-outlined, white oval paper label - with . . . CK . . E . . [C is very partial – almost certainly DICKSIE – one of three “house” brands sold by the company] (downward arch) / gold-outlined half circle with blond-haired, white girl / CI . . R . . . INEGA . . . [CIDER VINEGAR] / . . . CED [REDUCED] TO ½ % ACID / . . A . . . ES A. DICK . . . [JAMES A. DICK CO.] / D . . . TRI . . . U . . . [DISTRIBUTORS] / EL . . . ASO, TE . . . A . . . [EL PASO, TEXAS]

Heel: Embossed - PINT

Back Description

Body: Same as front but no paper label

Heel: Embossed - PINT

Base: Embossed - 9 (or 6)

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: [after 1905] Currently, not enough information is known to achieve a close date range. The example in my possession was excavated (not in dated context) and retains only a partial label

Collection(s): Author's collection.



Figure 12a-39 – Dicksie Cider Vinegar, James A. Dick Co.



Figure 12a-40 – Closeup of Dicksie label

Blatz Co., Distributors (1918-ca. 1919)

History

Texas law banned any alcoholic beverage sale within ten miles of a military reservation beginning April 15, 1918. The day after the law went into effect (EPT 4/16/1918), the Blatz Co., Distributors, located at 1020 Overland St., began advertising a near-beer (cereal beverage) called Barma. Formerly called the Val. Blatz Brewing Co., the firm had only begun business earlier in the year after the former distributor, the Goldoft Liquor Co., had gone out of business. Albert Weight managed the short-lived business that ceased operation in late 1919 or early 1920 (EPCD 1918-1920).

Bottles and Artifacts

Barma

Barma was touted as “the beverage with nourishing properties that strengthen, refresh and invigorate and a flavor that appeals to every taste. Get it in sealed bottles at all prominent places. The ad showed a squat, amber bottle with a circular neck label with wings, featuring the Barma logo in the center and a more complicated body label. The body label centered around a logo with Barma (underlined) across a dark triangle. Above the logo was THE SOFT DRINK OF QUALITY; below was [illegible] AND BOTTLED BY / BLATZ - MILWAUKEE (Figure 12a-41).



Figure 12a-41 – Barma, a near-beer distributed by Blatz (*El Paso Times* 5/16/1918)

History

E.M. McCoy advertised Jus-Rite, a cereal beverage (near-beer) in May of 1918. At this point, I have found no other information on McCoy or Jus-Rite.

Bottles and Artifacts

Jus-Rite

McCoy advertised Jus-Rite in May 1918, but I have not found ads in any other month. The ad played heavily on the name: “Jus-Rite Made right – tastes right – named right and IS RIGHT.” They called the brew “a real preparedness drink – always ready, always the same, always welcome, and the bigger your thirst, the better you’ll like it” (EPT 5/12/1918).

The drink appeared in an amber, paper-labeled beer bottle (with a swelled neck), including a neck label that only said Jus-Rite and a more complex body label. The body label centered around the Jus-Rite Logo with HOP FLAVOR just below it followed by A NON / INTOXICATING BEVERAGE / UNITED STATES BEVERAGE CO. / 2931 ELSTON AVE, CHICAGO. Other lettering on the label is too illegible in the ad to read (EPT 5/12/1918). The company does not sound like a brewery – it may have decided to join in the trend, although the trend proved to be somewhat short lived (Figure 12a-42). When the State of Michigan (1917:33) sampled Jus-Rite in 1917, they found the product to have 0.94% alcohol by volume.



Figure 12a-42 – Jus-Rite, a near-beer distributed by E.M. McCoy (*El Paso Times* 5/12/1918)

Zork-Smith Fruit Co. (1916-1919)

History

The Zork-Smith Fruit Co. was located at 420 E. Overland St. The firm became a Texas corporation on December 10, 1916 (Corporation Wiki 2011). The short-lived firm filed a certificate of dissolution on February 19, 1919 (Mims 1920:215).

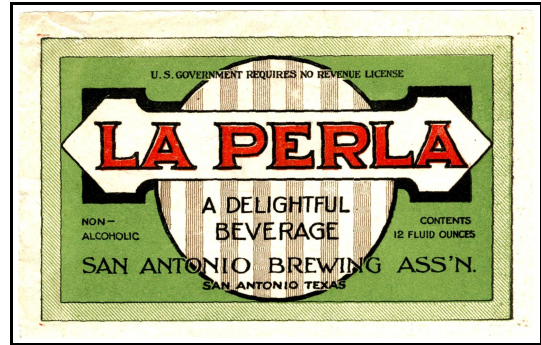


Figure 12a-43 – La Perla, brewed by the San Antonio Brewing Assoc. (Courtesy of Bob Kay)

Bottles and Artifacts

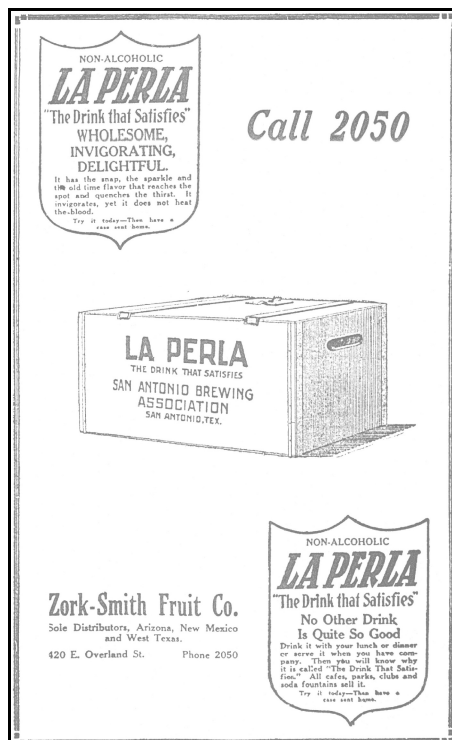


Figure 12a-44 – La Perla, a near-beer distributed by the Zork-Smith Fruit Co. (*El Paso Times* 5/8/1918)

Zork-Smith advertised La Perla “the Drink that Satisfies” in the *El Paso Times* on April 18, 1918. The ad showed a typical export beer bottle with a paper label that had the name “La Perla” just above the center, but the other writing was illegible. See the section on Crombie & Co. for a better label picture and description.

A second add appeared on May 8, 1918. La Perla was a near-beer brewed by the San Antonio Brewing Assoc., San Antonio, Texas (Figure 12a-43). The ad copy included: “It has the snap, the sparkle and the old time flavor that reaches the spot and quenches the thirst. It invigorates, yet it does not heat the blood.” Another section said, “Drink it with your lunch or dinner or serve it when you have company. Then you will know why it is called ‘The Drink that Satisfies.’ All cafes, parks, clubs and soda fountains sell it” (Figure 12a-44).

Crombie & Co. (1904-1959)

History

Crombie & Co. was an old El Paso firm, established in 1904. George M. Crombie and his son, William, had come to El Paso from Trinidad, Colorado, about 1900. The elder Crombie had earlier been a part of the firm of Coulson & Crombie (established in 1900 with T.R. Coulson), dealers in wholesale fruits and produce. When Coulson & Crombie crumbled in 1902, Crombie started his own company two years later. The original Crombie & Co. dealt in wholesale cigars on the northwest corner of St. Louis and Kansas (EPCD 1900-1904; EP Chamber of Commerce 1911).

In 1905, George added his son, William S. Crombie, as a partner and changed the firm's products from cigars to wholesale fruits and produce. The company moved to 306 S. El Paso Dr. in 1907. The firm expanded up the block, changing their address to 308 in 1908 and 315 in 1910. By 1911, the company handled about five railroad carloads per day of fruits and vegetables from California, Florida, Colorado, and Texas, along with bananas shipped in directly from Central America. In turn, the company shipped as far away as California and Colorado. In 1914, they moved to a new location at 211-217 S. Florence (EPCD 1905-1916; El Paso Chamber of Commerce 1911).

Crombie & Co. incorporated in 1917 with a capitalization of \$100,000. George M. Crombie became president, with William S. Crombie as vice president and treasurer, and O.C. McConnell as secretary. They remained dealers in wholesale fruits and produce. R.P. Mossman was added as second vice president two years later (EPCD 1917-1919). William Crombie soon called Mossman his "right hand man" (El Paso Chamber of Commerce 1920:104).

In 1920, the firm underwent a major organizational change with William S. Crombie as the new president. William changed the company name to Crombie Candy & Syrup Co., Inc. with R.P. Mossman as vice president, G.M. Crombie as treasure, and; O.C. McConnell secretary. The new firm advertised itself as "manufactures high grade candies and 'Mother Goose' cane and maple syrup" (EPCD 1920).

By 1920, the company handled "more than half of all the fruit and garden truck [i.e.

vegetables] which is marketed in El Paso.” Their First and Florence streets cold storage rooms held “20 carloads of fruit and truck at one time.” They employed 30 men in their receiving and shipping department and used eight more in the clerical section. It was apparently a good place to work as “most of the men have been with the firm for ten and fifteen years, and are satisfied and happy as a result of their long service and experience, and have helped to build up an ‘esprit de corps’ which makes arriving and departing shipments move like clockwork.” Crombie & Co. shipped fruit, including Valley apples, Bartlett pears, apricots, and peaches, all over the United States. The firm bought entire orchards at a time and brought in their own men to pick the crops (El Paso Chamber of Commerce 1920:104).

Mossman also wrote an article for the 1920 El Paso Chamber of Commerce publication. In it, he mentioned the “vast and loyal trade territory” that included New Mexico, Arizona, West Texas, and Northern Mexico. He also noted that freight costs favored El Paso as “a producing point for manufactured goods.” He also described the quality of labor available in El Paso:

We have a great advantage over most eastern points in our constantly available supply of labor at reasonable cost, due to our geographical location on the border of the republic, south of us. We have, so far, never suffered from a shortage of labor. Labor disturbances of any kind are a rarity and I believe that an increase of manufacturing or other industries here, requiring more labor, would stimulate the constant supply.

The class of labor to be obtained here is untrained, but I have found that, with a little experience, they become very competent, and are as good, if not better producers than other classes of labor to be found in various parts of the country, with which I am familiar.

Just two years later, in 1922, the firm returned to the old name of Crombie & Co. with its business again as wholesale fruit and produce distribution. Except for the loss of Mossman, the firm’s officers remained the same. It is possible that the company retained the Crombie & Co. name during the 1920-1922 period, despite the directory listings. The advertisements in the July 1920 issue of the *El Paso Morning Times* carried the Crombie & Co. heading. No further changes occurred in the firm until 1941, when George M. Crombie’s name was dropped and William S. took on the additional job of treasurer (Figure 12a-45). The elder Crombie had apparently either retired or died (EPCD 1921-1941; *El Paso Morning Times* 7/17/1920 3:1).

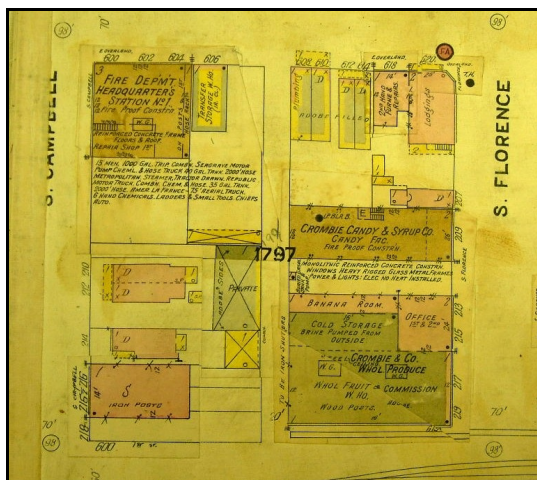


Figure 12a-45 – Map of Crombie & Co. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1927)

William S. Crombie, Jr., joined the firm as vice president in 1949, and F.H. McKinstry was added as buyer in 1952. Two years later William, Jr., became president with his father as treasurer, but the younger Crombie vanished from the record the following year. In 1955, the senior Crombie was back as Chairman of the Board with F.H. McKinstry as president and O.C. McConnell as vice president and secretary. The last listing for Crombie and Co. is 1959, although Crombie (apparently retired) continued to be listed in the directories (EPCD 1942-1961). Interestingly, Eugene F. Smith, brother

to Hope Smith and sales manager for Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Co., worked for Crombie & Co. in the 1930s.

Bottles and Artifacts

La Perla

Crombie & Co. began distributing La Perla, a cereal beverage (or near beer) by at least June 1919 (EPT 6/11/1919) to take advantage of the lack of real beer caused by the Texas law prohibiting the sale of alcohol within ten miles of a military reservation, initiated April 15, 1918 (Figure 12a-46). The drink had formerly been offered by the Zork-Smith Fruit Co., advertising as the “sole distributors for La Perla in Arizona, New Mexico, and West Texas. Zork-Smith apparently captured the brand as soon as it came out (probably early 1918) and was advertising as early as the April 18, 1918, *El Paso Times*., just three days after local prohibition was declared. La Perla was brewed by Alamo Industries, of San Antonio, Texas. Like many brewers in the U.S., the San Antonio Brewing Assoc., through its subsidiary, Alamo Industries, was attempting to wait out Prohibition by selling near beers.



Figure 12a-46 – La Perla, Crombie & Co. (*El Paso Times* 6/11/1919)

Pearl

Although Pearl was a beer prior to Prohibition, Alamo Industries, had offered La Perla, a near-beer in at least 1918 and 1919. Apparently, the name “La Perla” – Spanish for “The Pearl” – was simply not selling. Alamo Industries returned to the name “Pearl” for its near-beer ca. 1920, when Crombie & Co. advertised the brew. Companies were no longer allowed to use the word “beer,” but the ad tried to at least make the new Pearl sound like the real thing (Figure 12a-47). The ad beamed:

AT LAST! A Real Beverage XXX Pearl[.] Old XXX Pearl is back again, ready for you to try, ready to tempt you with its old-time, unexcelled flavor, and its cooling, refreshing joy. XXX Pearl is everything you’ve wanted in a drink an then some. So let your expectations rise skyward—your anticipations are going to answer, “Pearl you're my choice now and forever” (EPT 7/17/1920 3:1).

Pearl remained in an amber beer-style bottle with a swelled neck and crown cap. Its rectangular paper label stated, Pearl / BEVERAGE / XXX (in a circle) / ALAMO INDUSTRIES / SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS. The label included smaller print that did not reproduce legibly in the ad.



Figure 12a-47 – Pearl near-beer, Crombie & Co. (*El Paso Times* 7/17/1920)

