

Bottles on the Border:

The History and Bottles of the Soft Drink Industry

in El Paso, Texas, 1881-2000



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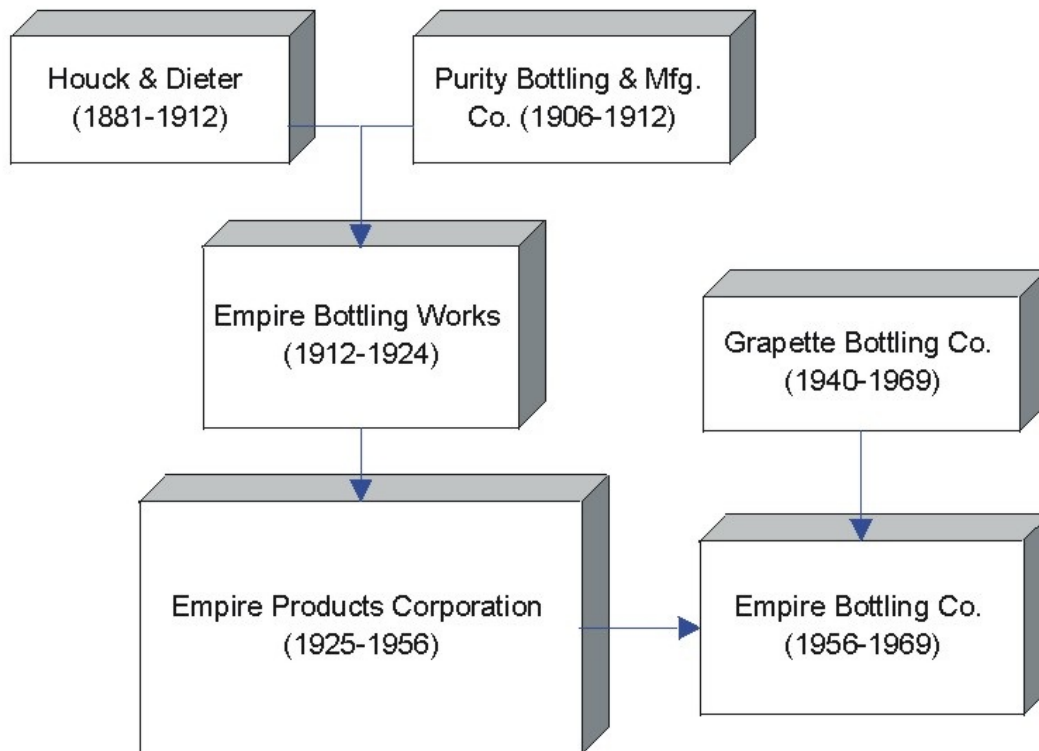
Chapter 5a

Chapter 5a

Houck & Dieter and Related Companies

[Parts of this history were previously published in *Password*, the Journal of the El Paso County Historical Society (see Lockhart 1997a).]

By the middle of the 1920s Empire Bottling Works was the largest and most successful of the non-franchised El Paso bottlers, vending its products across the United States and even to Puerto Rico and Mexico City. The company successfully competed with biggest and best in the business, second only to Coca-Cola in product sales in El Paso. The firm's inception in 1912 resulted from the merging of two older companies: Purity Bottling and Manufacturing Company and Houck & Dieter. Lon Gardner founded Purity in 1906, but the firm of Houck & Dieter was the first soda water manufacturer in the City of El Paso dating back to 1881. Empire Products Corp., next to last in a series of Empire companies, was bought by the Grapette Bottling Company in 1956 and existed under that management until 1969 (Figure 5-1).



Glass of any sort was scarce in El Paso prior to the coming of the railroads. During the Spanish Colonial Period (1556-1821), goods were transported by *careta* (ox cart) from Mexico City along *El Camino Real* (The Royal Road) to Santa Fé, New Mexico, utilizing *El Paso del Norte* as a way station. The long trip necessitated taking only essential items, allowing very few glass articles to penetrate into the area. When the Santa Fe Trail opened in 1821 the caravans often continued to El Paso and into Mexico, but glass items remained at a premium. It was not until the Southern Pacific Railway, coming from the west, arrived in El Paso on May 19, 1881, that bottles, windows, and other glassware became commonplace in the small dusty town. On December 16, the Southern Pacific met the Galveston, Harrisonburg, and San Antonio at Sierra Blanca, Texas, linking the town to both coasts (Lockhart 1996:151-152; 2001:49-51; Timmons 1990).

A.L. Houck & Co. (1880-1882)

History

Although not an El Paso bottler, the A.L. Houck Co., liquor dealers, beer distributors, and soda bottlers, in Santa Fe was the parent company that launched Houck & Dieter in El Paso (see below). The company had a strong beginning in Santa Fe by at least June of 1880, “leasing the large building and yards of J.L. Johnson on San Miguel Street.” According to Houck, who came to Santa Fe in person to oversee the early development of the business, “A special brew of beer is made for us at the Anheuser Busch brewery in St. Louis,” for which the firm charged a higher price than for ordinary cask beer. A yield of 6,000 bottles of beer could be processed by the Houck machinery, one hundred dozen bottles (1,200) of which were distributed in Santa Fe. Houck sold the rest throughout New Mexico where he was the sole authorized dealer.

Apparently, the company was unconcerned about personalizing its bottles:

Walking into the yard, there was to be seen nothing but bottles, bottles, everywhere. Bottles in kegs, bottles in boxes and barrels, and bottles in high heaps. Of them all, Houck informed the reporter, there were over a million on hand then. “I let people know that I pay the highest market price for bottles, and they come to me every day in immense quantities, from all over the Territory.” (SFWNM 7/5/1880 1:3)

The A.L. Houck Company also manufactured lighter drinks, including soda, ginger ale, sarsaparilla, seltzer, and champagne. Demand for these softer beverages was obviously lighter, as the firm only produced two hundred dozen (2,400) of them daily. At what Houck called “low” prices, the firm sold “beer at \$2.50 per dozen, soda at 60 cts, sarsaparilla 60 cts, ginger ale 50 cts, seltzer \$2.50.” Although I have been unable to ascertain with certainty how long A.L. Houck & Co. were in business, the firm was planning to construct a new building in March 1881 and continued to advertise Anheuser Busch Lager Beer and Crystal Ice throughout that year (SFWNM 7/5/1880 1:3; 1/9/1881; 3/9/1881; 3/17/1881).

Although the firm continued to produce soft drinks, it primarily associated itself with alcoholic beverages, listing itself as “Houck, A.L. & Co., Beer Bottlers and Ice Dealers” in 1882 (Green 1882:130). The firm was beset with bad luck a year later when a fire destroyed part of the plant around February 5. Most of the company’s energy at the time was devoted to cutting and hauling between 8,000 and 10,000 tons of ice, much of which was shipped to Albuquerque. Although the ice haulers feared that the fire damage would result in the loss of their winter’s wages, Houck paid them off on February 8. By the eleventh, Peter Winne, an insurance agent from Denver, had made good on Houck’s losses. Houck apparently went out of business in 1882, possibly because of the fire, and redirected his energy into Houck & Dieter (SFDNM 1/8/1883-2/11/1883). According to the *El Paso Times* (9/24/1907), A. L. Houck & Co. also had a branch in Albuquerque, but I have found no other reference to the business.

Bottles and Artifacts

Because Houck was only in business in Santa Fe for two years or less (1880-1882), the only known bottles have Hutchinson finishes (Figures 5-2). There are least two variations (Wood 1998).

A.L. Houck – Hutchinson Style

Method of Manufacture: Blown into mold

Color: Aqua

Size (in cm.): 16.5 (h); 6.4 (d) [18.9 (h); 5.4 (d)] (although Wood gives measurements in inches, I have converted them into centimeters)

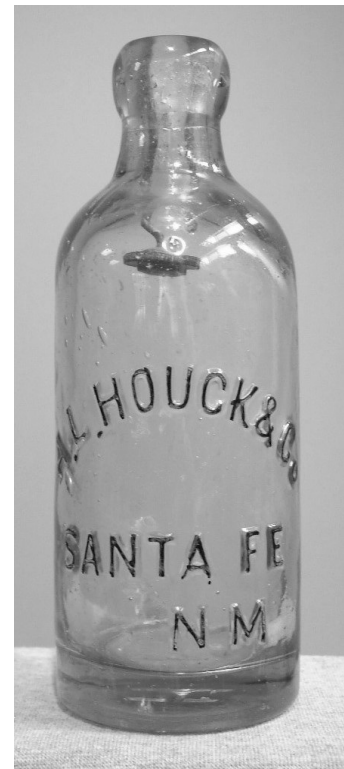


Figure 5-2 – A.L. Houck – plain bottom (Lynn Loomis collection)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Hutchinson

Capacity: ca. 10 oz. (est.)

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Embossed - A. L. HOUCK & Co (arch) / SANTA FE / N M
(both horizontal)

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: I.G.Co.

Base: Embossed - H

Manufacturer: Illinois Glass Co. (ca. 1880-ca. 1911) [Lockhart 2004e:24-25]

Dating: [1880-1882] Houck & Dieter was only in business these two years.

Collection(s): Lynn Loomis collection; Wood (1998)

Variation

The only variation has the same embossing. Only the heel and lower body is different, with a ten-panel, scalloped “mug” bottom (Figure 5-3).



Figure 5-3 – A.L. Houck – mug bottom (Lynn Loomis collection)

Houck & Dieter, El Paso, Texas (1881-1912)

History

John Philip Dieter was a man who saw opportunity and took action. As the railroad approached El Paso, he and his partner, A.L. Houck of Wichita, Kansas, could see that the population of the small village would increase and that a larger, thirsty population would be ready for beer and other drinks. According to the *El Paso Times* (1/1/1885), “The firm of Houck & Dieter which commenced business as wholesale agents for beer and mineral waters, on the 2nd of February, 1880, has during the year been doing good business.” The date is probably a typo (certainly in error); all other sources place Dieter in El Paso no earlier than 1881 – the correct date is probably February 2, 1881.

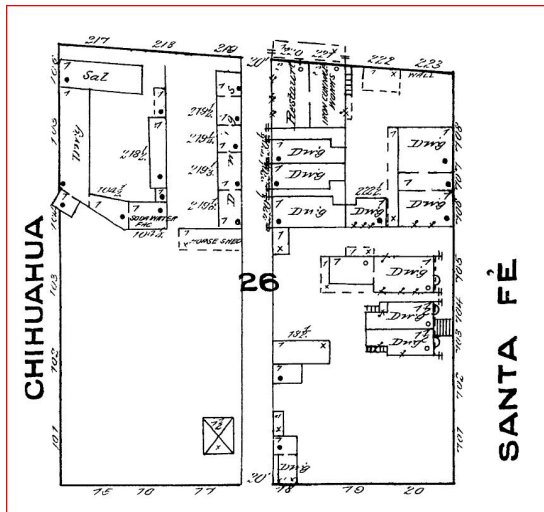


Figure 5-4 – Houck & Dieter soda plant (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1883)

The original warehouse was on San Francisco St., and the firm only sold beer and mineral water that came from outside the city. Originally, all bottled goods were brought by wagon from the end of track. According to the *Times*, “the first car load of beer was hauled by teams from the construction camp [at] the ‘front.’” The 1883 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows a “SODA WATER FAC” in a small building that was part of a complex on the corner of San Francisco and Chihuahua. The complex was built on the Spanish design with rooms around a central courtyard. A saloon fronted on Chihuahua St. at the corner with a dwelling extending from its side southward on Chihuahua. The soda water factory was on the southeast corner of the complex well off-set from the street (Figure 5-4).

Although Dieter was primarily interested in alcoholic beverages, he was farsighted enough to realize that the coming of the railroads meant an opportunity to fill the needs of a multitude of different thirsts. On April 1, 1881, less than two months prior to the arrival of the railroad and only two months after their opening, the firm of Houck & Dieter launched its soda bottling establishment in El Paso. According to the *El Paso Times*, the new establishment was “a branch of A.L. Houck & Co., Santa Fe, New Mexico, the largest and most extensive wholesale beer and soda house in the territory.” Dieter managed the El Paso branch that the *Times* crowed was “the largest establishment west of Chicago, employing a large number of men” (EPT 1/1/1882 2:3).

Although the *Times* may have exaggerated, Houck & Dieter could rightfully claim a thriving business. The firm bottled Soda Water, Sarsaparilla, Royal Ginger Ale, Seltzer Water, Champagne Cider, and other carbonated beverages. Royal Ginger Ale enjoyed a particularly good reputation in early El Paso. In addition, the firm distributed Appolinaris Water, Nassau Selter, Manitou Mineral water products, and Stafford Mineral Springs Water. The El Paso branch bottled five hundred dozen sodas a day, while their second plant, across the Rio Grande in Paso del Norte (later called Juarez), Mexico, had a capacity for two hundred fifty bottles per

day.¹ In addition, the firm sold Anheuser Busch St. Louis Beer and was the city's leading supplier of ice (EPT 6/10/1881 3; EPT 1/1/1882 2:3).

In the beginning, its only competitor was Coffin & Co. who sold "Complete Outfit[s] for Manufacturing Mineral Water, Selter, Ginger Ale, Lemon, Sarsaparilla" and other carbonated beverages. Coffin & Co. promised that "All orders in the City and along the line of the Railroad will receive prompt attention" (EPT 6/10/1881 4:6). These were actually kits to enable El Paso residents to manufacture their own sodas. Houck & Dieter, during the same period, concentrated on alcoholic beverages and mineral water sales (Figure 5-5).

The firm was originally located on San Francisco St. (the later location of the Tivoli garden) but moved to Fourth St. between Santa Fe and Chihuahua Streets after a flood in 1884. The new location was on higher ground. Shortly after the move, the partners built "a large icehouse . . . in which this winter 600 tons of natural ice will be stored, so that should we be so unfortunate as to suffer from washouts again this year, we will not suffer from the want of cooling drinks" (EPT 1/1/1885). Although it is still unclear when Houck & Dieter began processing ice, it was before the flood of 1884.



Figure 5-5 – Houck & Dieter ad (*El Paso Herald* 8/5/1883)

An ad in the *El Paso Times* (5/19/1883) the previous year offered "Ice! Ice! Ice! Parties desiring Ice delivered at their houses In Any Part of the City Can be accommodated by leaving their orders at the office of Houck & Dieter, San Francisco St. . . GO AND SEE THEM." The term "natural ice" probably refers to ice cut in the mountains during the winter, hauled to El Paso, and stored in a well-insulated building. This appears to be the same method used by A. L. Houck & Co. in Santa Fe, although there the ice supply would be closer.

The 1885 Sanford Fire Insurance Map shows only an ice house/beer storage building connected to a storage room and office. The buildings front on Fourth St. with yard, sheds, an a well with pump slightly to the north and a railroad spur actually encroaching into Fourth St. Across the alley to the east is an empty barrel house. The property is identified as the "Houck

¹ We have found no other mention of this Mexican branch of Houck & Dieter. It may have been short lived, or it may have evolved into Dieter & Sauer (see Dieter & Sauer section below).

and Dieter Beer Vault.” Even though we know that the company was continually bottling soft drinks, there is no identification of the bottling plant on the property. It is possible that the company still bottled at the old location. This probably actually reflects the configuration of the property prior to the 1884 move (Figure 5-6).

Although originally a partnership, the firm appears to have been run *in absentia*, with both Houck and Dieter residing elsewhere until Dieter relocated permanently to El Paso in 1888 to take over personal operation of the business. Dieter, however, had come to El Paso at least long enough to get the business well established before vanishing again. He was still in the city on New Year's Day to be interviewed by the *Times*, although when he left again is unknown. The first extant El Paso City Directory (1885) lists Dieter at the firm's address. He is shown living at the Grand Central Hotel by 1888.

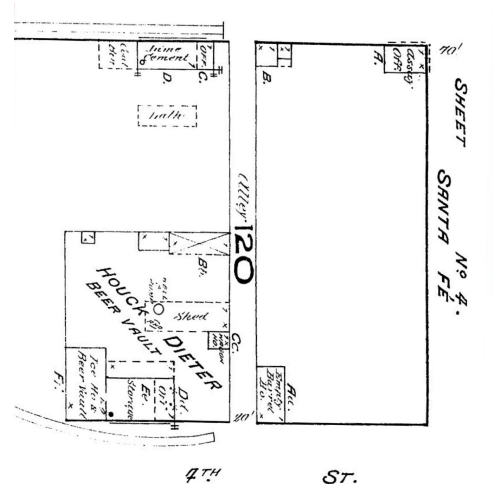


Figure 5-6 – Houck & Dieter Beer Vault (Sanford Fire Insurance Map 1885)

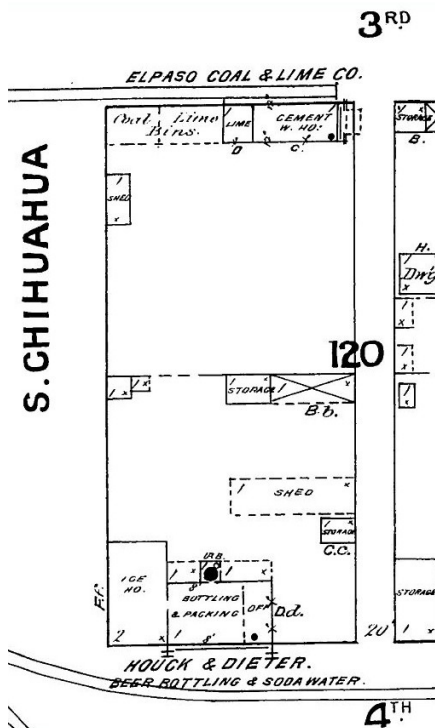


Figure 5-7 – Houck & Dieter Beer Bottling & Soda Water (Sanford Fire Insurance Map 1885)

The 1888 Sanborn map shows a few changes in Houck & Dieter, beginning with a sub-heading of “Beer Bottling & Soda Water.” The storage unit fronting Fourth St. is now labeled “Bottling & Packing” (with the office still at the east end), and the storage shed across the alley to the east appears to be in use (Figure 5-7). No apparent occurred during the rest of the 1880s.

An 1892 letterhead continues to advertise Crystal Ice and features “St. Louis Beer” without the mention of a brewer. Several breweries copied the Anheuser-Busch “St Louis Beer” logo, so this is not revealing. The letterhead mentions ginger ale, sodas, champagne cider, and all kinds of mineral water. Although Dieter is listed in El Paso (Figure 5-8 & 5-9), Houck resides in Wichita, Kansas (Figure 5-10).

The 1893 Sanborn map shows considerable growth. The firm is now billed as “the El Paso Bott’g W’ks. Houck & Dieter, Prop’s.” The Houck & Dieter property has now



Figure 5-8 – John Phillip Dieter, October 27, 1895 (Sacramento Mountain Historical Society, J.P. Dieter Collection)

expanded from a quarter block (half of the west half of the block) to 3/4 of the west half. The major change is the construction of three new buildings along the alley.

From south to north, they were labeled “Tobacco Storage,” “W.

Ho.” (warehouse), and a two-story building that says “Sleeping Room” on top. The shed across the alley now says “Storage Empty Beer Bb’ls” (barrels). The central building on Fourth St. is now marked “Soda & Bottling Wks,” and the former office is now a store room. The office apparently moved off the “Works” property, although the first mention of that I have found was in 1900 (see below).

Figure 5-9 – Dieter’s signature, 1895 (Anonymous 2007)

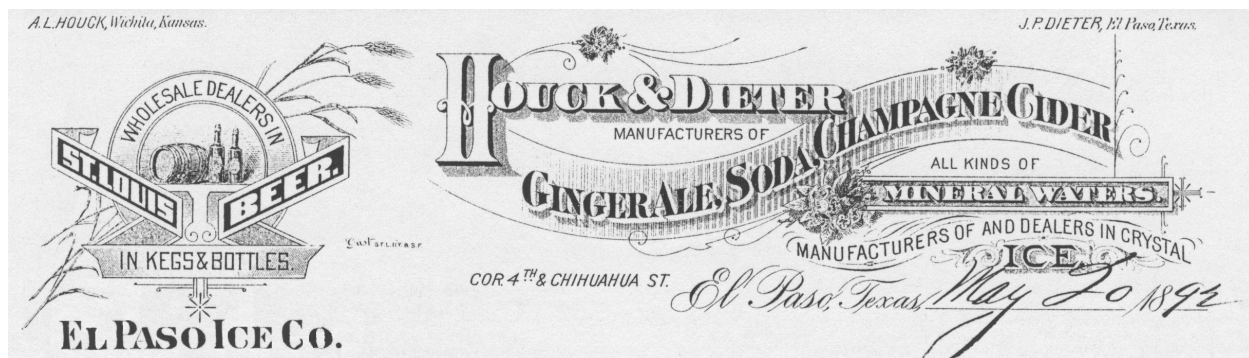


Figure 5-10 – 1892 Houck & Dieter letterhead (Jim Cullen collection)

By 1898, the map shows a “Wagon Shed” extending west from the third building (which is now a hay loft and sleeping quarters) to Chihuahua St., and the tobacco storage is now combined with the second building to form a “Liquor W. Ho.” The storage shed across the alley is now just “Storage Empty Bbls.” The place was now labeled “Houck & Dieter Bottling Wks.” With minor changes in names, the layout remained the same until at least 1908 (Figure 5-11).

With a capital of \$90,000, the firm incorporated in 1900 with J. Philip Dieter as president and Fred G. Lemley as secretary and treasurer and opened an office at 220 South El Paso Dr. (EPCD1902, p. 82 “Corporations”). Along with El Paso, the company sold to anyone wishing service up and down the railroad line. Houck & Dieter advertisements ran in newspapers in

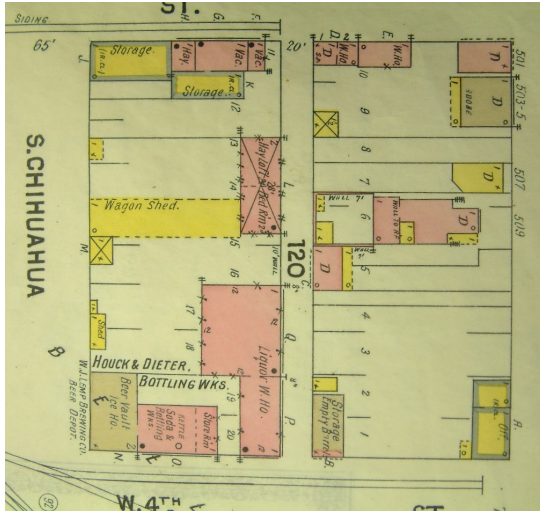


Figure 5-11 – El Paso Bottling Works, Houck & Dieter (Sanford Fire Insurance Map 1893)

Alamogordo (from 1899-1904) and Las Cruces, New Mexico. The 1900 Sanborn map reflected little change. The ice house now also says “Beer Vault” and “W.J. Lemp Brew’g. Co’s. Beer Depot.” is written along Fourth St.

This Lemp designation may be helpful in dating two photographs provided by the Dieter descendants. The photos show a sign for “W.J. LEMP’S ST. LOUIS LAGER BEER DEPOT” facing Fourth St. above the soda bottling works building (Figures 5-12). The building at the corner of Fourth St. and the alley has “DEPOT / W^M J. LEMP” on the side facing Fourth St. (south side) and “EST’D / 1881

HOUCK & DIETER 1881” on the east side (facing the alley). The second warehouse building (also along the alley) is signed “THE EL PASO BOTTLING WORKS / WARE-HOUSE.” On the building farthest north, only “HOUCK &” is visible. The bottle storage shed is visible in the foreground (Figure 5-13 & 5-14). A wagon delivering Lemp’s beer in kegs, also provided by the Dieter descendants, many have been taken at the same time (Figure 5-15).



Figure 5-12 – The Houck & Dieter complex seen from Fourth St. (Dieter descendants)



Figure 5-13 – The Houck & Dieter complex seen from the alley (Dieter descendants)

The firm also maintained its own brands of whiskey. The left side of the 1903 letterheads show three stacked whiskey barrels with the note below them: OUR BRANDS. In addition to the Houck & Dieter name plus the location (El Paso, Texas), each barrel bears a name: Old Ingleside Whiskey, Old Baltimore Rye, and Glenrock Bourbon. The right side of the letterhead reads: “FINE KENTUCKY WHISKIES SHIPPED DIRECT FROM THE DISTILLERIES” (Figure 5-16). Another major change in 1903 was the

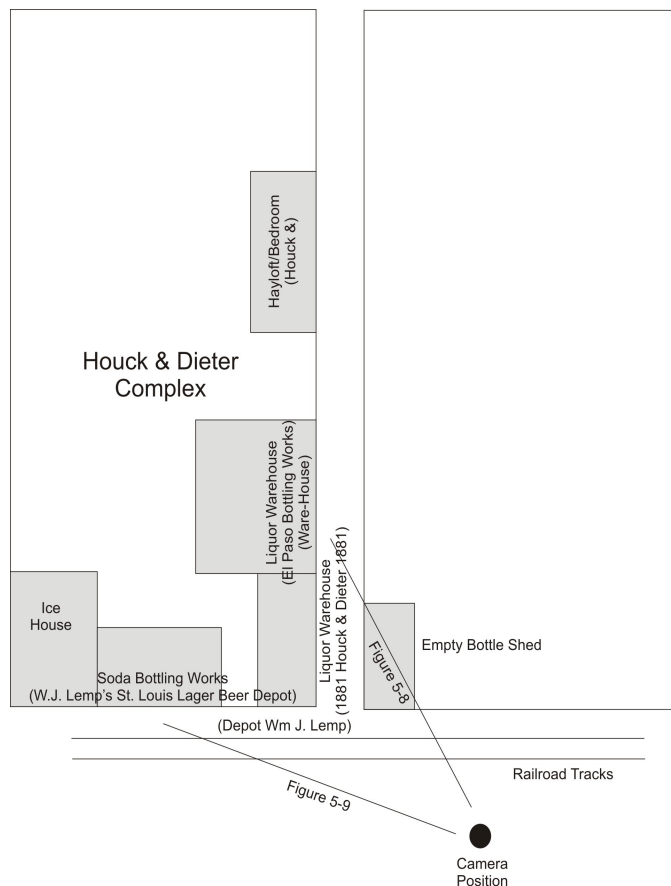


Figure 5-14 – Photo angles of Houck & Dieter complex



Figure 5-15 – Houck & Dieter Lemp's Beer wagon (Dieter descendants)

expansion of the business into Douglas, Arizona (see below for the history and bottles of the Douglas plant). Although not directly concerned, the El Paso Brewery also opened in 1903. Dieter purchased the brewery on March 14, 1905, and formed a corporation to run it (see Lockhart 2004d for a history of the brewery).

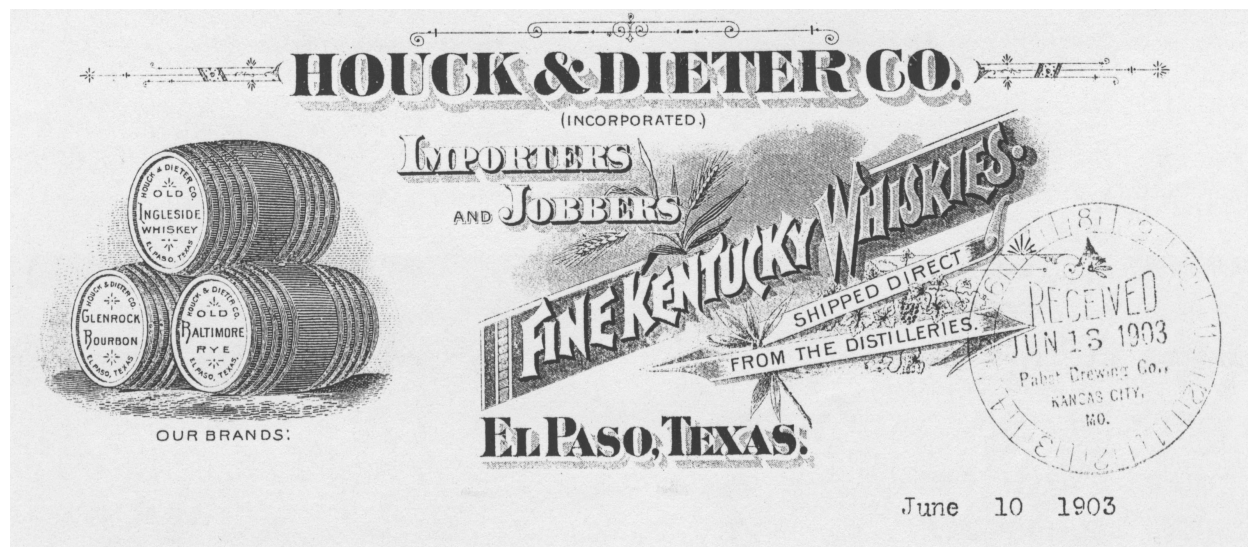


Figure 5-16 – 1903 Houck & Dieter letterhead (courtesy of Jim Cullen)

Houck & Dieter actually registered two brands of whiskey in 1905: Glen-Rock (note slightly different spelling from the letterhead) and Elm Grove (Snyder [2002]). Although I have found no evidence of which distillery (or probably distilleries) in Kentucky actually made the brands, it is clear that they were exclusive to Houck & Dieter.

At some point Houck & Dieter published an undated booklet called *200 Spicy Toasts* – at a price of ten cents. The booklet listed various toasts for all occasions, contained a series of exotic drink recipes, and advertised Hed-Eez.² Captions like “Hed-Eez cures Hed-Akes,” “Hed-Eez is made of Celery,” “Hed-Eez moves the Bowels,” or “Hed-Eez is a Nerve Tonic” formed headers on all pages of the booklet. Although the product never appeared in any of Houck & Dieter’s city directory ads, the firm must have sold the concoction at some point. The booklet suggested that Hed-Eez was available at “the Soda Fountain” (Richard Chavez collection, El Paso).

By 1905, the Houck & Dieter Company had spread to encompass all of block 120. The former wagon shed was now the bottle shed, and the wagons were once again relegated to the smaller structure used in 1885. Barrel storage, along with an office, had migrated to a building at the corner of Fourth and S. Santa Fe. New additions had also quadrupled the size of the old barrel storage building which now housed the bottle beer storage. Although no mention was made of what type of beer was stored, this marks a major shift from barrels as the main delivery

mode to bottles. A “Beer Vault” was at the north end of the lot on Third St. The old “Beer Vault [and] Ice House” at the corner of Fourth and Chihuahua was now mark “Refrigr.” (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1905).

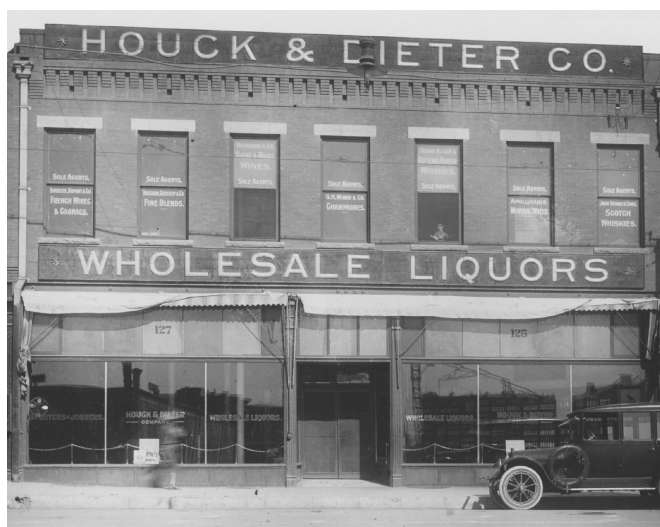


Figure 5-17 – Houck & Dieter office, 125-127 San Francisco St. (M.G. McKinney collection)

When John Phillip Dieter died in late 1907, it required a restructuring of the corporation. Abe M. Heineman assumed the presidency with Hugo Eichwald as vice-president, although Fred G Lemley remained in the position of secretary and treasurer. The power structure remained the same until

² Hed-Eez was made from at least 1902 to at least 1907.

the merger with Purity to form Empire Bottling Works in 1912. The office moved to 125-127 San Francisco St. by 1909 (possibly late 1908) and remained there until the company dissolved (Figure 5-17) (EPCD 1907-1909).

A few other changes occurred at the company complex by 1908 (Figure 5-18). The old ice house /refrigerator at the corner of Fourth and Chihuahua was now a bottle storage area, adjacent to the bottling works, and a new building had been built just north along Chihuahua for more bottle storage. The office was no longer in evidence (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1908).

Even though Houck & Dieter terminated its production of carbonated beverages with the advent of the Empire Bottling Works (see Chapter 5b), the firm continued in the liquor trade until 1918.

Although Heineman continued to serve as president of Empire, Hugo Eichwald became president of Houck & Dieter in 1916 and held that position until the corporate dissolution two years later. Despite the break with Empire, Houck & Dieter continued to distribute mineral waters until the firm closed (EPCD 1908-1918).

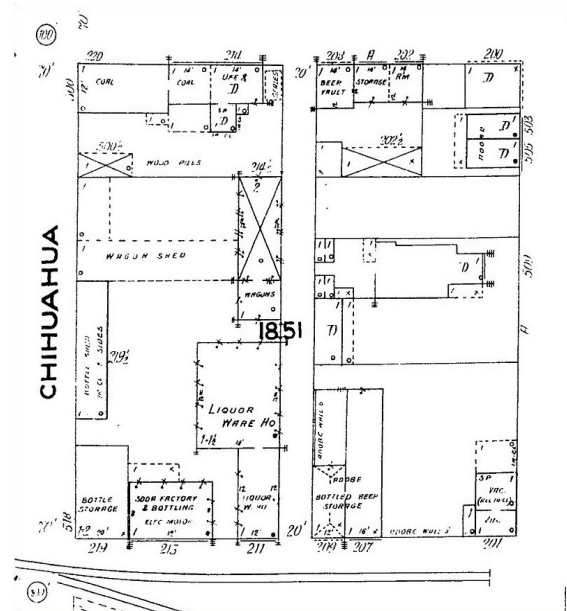


Figure 5-18 – Houck & Dieter Company (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1908)

On July 15, 1918, a new Texas law went into effect that created a state of Prohibition in El Paso. The law required that all sales and manufacture of alcoholic beverages cease within ten miles of a military reservation. Since all of El Paso was, at that time, within ten miles of Fort Bliss, the State effectively legislated local Prohibition. The *El Paso Times* (6/16/1918) described what happened at Houck & Dieter:

At Houck & Dieters, the big wholesale house on San Francisco street, the stock was so depleted that buyers had to take what they could get during the evening hours. The last bottle of “Black and White” was sold by 10 o’clock and other Scotch whiskeys were equally hard to get. American whiskeys were also sold heavily, and sales in the evening were confined to odd lots of wines. Officials were loath to estimate the quantity of goods sold, but put it in the thousands of dollars.

Houck & Dieter attempted to remain in business by distributing a non-alcoholic cereal beverage or near-beer. Since the company had distributed Lemp's beer, it advertised Lemp's Cerva (near-beer) in 1918. The firm's ads had ceased by October, almost certainly heralding the closing of the business (EPT 6/28/1918).

Eichwald, Lemley, and Heineman

Eichwald came to El Paso in 1906 and worked as a salesman for Kohlburg Brothers. He maintained his vice presidency at Houck & Dieter throughout its corporate life, although his living arrangements implied a lack of permanence. Throughout his tenure in El Paso, he boarded at hotels, notably the Hotel Regis and Hotel McCoy. Lemley had been an employee of the firm since the 1890s and continued in the positions of secretary and treasurer until Houck & Dieter merged with Purity Bottling & Manufacturing Company in 1912 (EPCD 1888-1917).

Born in North Carolina in 1867, Heineman arrived in El Paso a year after Eichwald (1907) and was just in time to be elected president of Houck & Dieter. He may, in fact, have been imported to fill the position. Like Eichwald, he lived in hotels (such as the Hotel McCoy, Hotel Lincoln, and Hotel Linden), although he had moved into a house with his wife, Mary, two boarders, and a Chinese servant named Charlie Gong by 1910. Heinman was married in 1887 and rented his El Paso dwelling. In 1917, still nominally the head of Empire, he moved to Los Angeles and never returned to El Paso (EPCD 1907-1917; 1910 census). He remained, however, connected with the Empire Bottling Works.

John Phillip Dieter

J. Philip Dieter was an interesting figure in early El Paso. Born Johan Philipp Dieter in Gross-Bieberhau, Germany, on February 2, 1851, Dieter came to the United States as a young man and married his first wife, Anna E. McNeal, on November 12, 1873. The couple lived in Wichita, Kansas, and produced three children all of whom were victims of a cholera epidemic there. He met and befriended Amos L. Houck in Wichita and arrived in El Paso prior to the arrival of the railroads in 1881 (Dieter n.d.:19; genealogical material prepared by Sigrid O. Harnsberger and other descendants of Dieter).

The *El Paso Times* described him as "a courteous gentleman thoroughly posted in all the details of this extensive manufactory, and is always ready to impart information to the many people who visit the works" (EPT1/10/1881 2:3). A later edition showed that Dieter may not always have been so courteous at home; his wife, Annie, divorced him on October 22, 1887

(Beard 1995:291; EPT 10/23/1887 3). He soon remarried to Minna Sophie Henriette Bruhn, sister of his lifelong friend, Henning Bruhn. Bruhn, a fellow German, was manager of the Lone Star Brewing Company of San Antonio. In response to Dieter's long-range proposal, Minna had telegraphed a reply that consisted of a single word: Ja. After the couple enjoyed a three-month honeymoon in Europe, they returned to El Paso (Harnsberger genealogical data).

Prior to his remarriage, Dieter had lived at the Grand Central Hotel, but the couple moved to 302 S. Stanton St. while waiting for the construction of their eleven room house at 404 Magoffin Ave. – not completed until 1898. By the turn of the century, Dieter was president of the El Paso Cigar Manufacturing Company, president of Consumers Ice Company, and president of the International Light and Power Company – along with his connections to Houck & Dieter and Dieter & Sauer. In 1905, Dieter bought the El Paso Brewery out of receivership for \$60,000 against a bid by William Griesser, the original builder and promoter of the establishment.³ At the time the brewery contained in its vats 2,793 barrels of beer worth \$30,000 (EPCD 1896-1905; Lockhart 2004d).

Apparently, Dieter had another side that was less well known to the public. At some point, he met Etta Clark, a noted El Paso madam and one of the few Western women noted for being in a gunfight:

At some time during her career – quite possibly while streetwalking with her sister – the trigger-tempered madam met one of El Paso's most prominent businessmen, J.P. Dieter, and charmed the pants right off him. Although married and the father of several children, the liquor wholesaler was so smitten with Etta that he agreed to finance the building and outfit a new brothel for her. Construction started on January 1, 1889[,] and the massive edifice was finished nine months later. The new bordello, located at the corner of Utah and Second streets, was three stories high and contained thirty-two rooms, including two parlor rooms, a huge dining room, an upstairs ballroom, and many, many bedrooms. The decor and furnishings were the finest: carved, gilded wood abounded, expensive murals were everywhere. Certain rooms were decorated in themes – a Red Room, a Blue Room, a Green Room – the place was truly as elegant as any in the United States.

³ Henning Dieter's notes in Minna Dieter's diary disagrees with the \$60,000 figure in the *Times* article. Henning notes on page 52 that on March 1, "Dieter bought the El Paso Brewery for \$76,500, paid \$25,000 down, signed a note for \$51,500. He sold the brewery in September for \$225,000 cash and paid off the note on December 7."

Obviously, the place cost Dieter a bundle of money: \$75,000 for construction, \$50,000 for decorations and furnishings. But it cost the infatuated millionaire even more: his wife divorced him before the building had been completed, and taking their children, went back to her home in the East. Dieter remained in El Paso with “his Etta,” and although never married to each other, the two were like husband and wife for many years (Frost 1983:60).

J. Philip Dieter died September 23, 1907, and was buried in Concordia Cemetery in El Paso (EPCD 1888-1908; EPT 3/15/1905 8:5; Tombstone of J. P. Dieter, Concordia Cemetery). His tombstone reads:

J P Dieter
Born February 2, 1851
Died September 23, 1907
Ein Feste Burg Ist Unser Gott!
(A Sturdy Castle is Our God - a German Hymn)



Figure 5-19 – Dieter’s mansion/Hotel Dieu Hospital, ca. 1892 (El Paso Public Library)

He was best remembered by some El Pasoans as the owner a mansion that he built for his wife, Annie, around 1880. The house was constructed of dark red brick with a beautiful walnut staircase leading to the upper story. The main entrance had “doors paned with sand blasted glass and etched in fancy design” (EPHP 8/27/1935 6:3). The house was so ponderous that it became the second site of the Hotel Dieu Hospital in March 1892 (Figure 5-19) and was later used as a boarding house before it was razed in 1936 (EPHP 11/14/1936 3:2; EPT 12/23/1936).

Dieter’s brother, John Adam, also worked as a bottler. Born at Langen, near Frankfort, Germany, on February 5, 1862, Adam emigrated to the United States in 1875 and came to El Paso with his brother in 1881. He worked for his brother as a bottler at Houck & Dieter until 1887, when he went to San Diego, California. While there, he married Mrs. Belle Bolt, a widow with two children. He worked as a bottler in California until 1892, when he returned to El Paso.

Shortly after his return, he moved to Tularosa, New Mexico, where he dealt in general merchandise until 1898, when he again returned to El Paso and resumed his position as a bottler and manager at Houck & Dieter. At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War (April 25, 1898), Adam enlisted in the First Regiment of the U.S. Volunteer Infantry, and served as a corporal of Company C, but the war ended on December 10 before his company was activated. He remained with Houck & Dieter until his death on June 16, 1906, a year and a half before his brother died.

Amos L. Houck

Dieter's partner in the firm, Amos L. Houck, was equally as noteworthy. Born in Massillon, Ohio, of Pennsylvanian parents around 1847, Houck had married his wife, Jennie, by at least 1876. Jennie, too, was from Ohio, and the couple had two children, a boy named, Rex, and a daughter that the census only enumerated as "Baby" in 1880 (Twelfth census 1880). Houck was in Wichita at least as early as 1872, when he and partner with J.A. Wallace formed the firm of Wallace & Houck, "dealers in farm machinery, wagons, buggies, etc." (Anonymous 1881:51). The farm machinery was displayed at 308 and 310 Douglas, while the "spacious carriage and wagon repository" was located across the street. The firm of Wallace & Houck was so successful that they opened branches in Kingman, New Mexico Territory (now Arizona), and Saratoga, Kansas.

By 1878, Houck was listed in the City Directory as a partner in Houck Brothers Hardware along with his father, Samuel (Bentley 1910). The Houcks shared a home at that time but moved into separate quarters the following year – although they remained in business together until at least 1880 when Amos listed himself as a "Hardware merchant." In 1887, he extended his operations to join W.A. Thomas in the firm of Houck & Thomas Real Estate. The following year, the company added loans to their listing and, as Houck, Thomas & Co., had become proprietors of Sarcxie Lime Works (Wichita Board of Trade 1887:107; Wichita City Directories 1877-1878, 1881-1888; Tenth Census 1880:5).

Houck apparently left the hardware business at some point to concentrate on real estate. In the 1891 City Directory, the hardware business is listed as Samuel Houck, Hardware, Stoves, and Tinware. Like his El Paso partner, J. Philip Dieter, Houck built a mansion. Located on North Topeka Ave., the structure soared five stories into the air with an elaborate, wrap-around porch in front and a minaret-like tower guarding the approach. Houck may have suffered setbacks and/or ill health, however. He was listed as a boarder at the Carey Hotel in 1894 and thereafter vanished from the Wichita City Directory (Wichita Board of Trade 1887:34; Wichita

City Directories 1889-1895; *Wichita Daily Eagle* 10/9/1887. The boom in Wichita was over but where Houck resided during the next nine years is unknown. However, he resurfaced in El Paso in 1903 and worked as a salesman for Houck & Dieter until 1906. At that point the impressive Mr. Houck again vanished, possibly this time in death (EPCD 1903-1906).

Bottles and Artifacts

Although Houck & Dieter sold Soda Water, Sarsaparilla, Royal Ginger Ale, Seltzer Water, Champagne Cider, and other carbonated beverages, all drinks were probably bottled in the same type of containers. Their 1881 ad offered “MINERAL WATERS, Ginger Ale and Champagne” and called special attention to “our SPARKLING CIDER in Keg or Bottle” (EPT 6/10/1881 3:2). The firm continued to advertise Ginger Ale, Soda, and Champagne Cider until at least 1888. By 1889, they added “English Ginger Ale.” In the same newspaper, Dieter & Sauer offered competition in the form of Apollinaris Company Mineral Water. Four years later, Houck & Dieter boasted that they were sole agents for the Apollinaris Co. Limited, London; Nassau Selter Co., Ober Selter, Germany; and White Rock Mineral Water Co., Waukesha, Wisconsin (White Rock mineral waters were first bottled in Waukesha in 1883. Riley, 256).

The firm discontinued Nassau Selter in 1895 (EPT 3/3/1895 1:1) but apparently continued distributing White Rock until around 1900 and Apollinaris Water until the firm merged with Purity Bottling & Manufacturing Company in 1912. In 1896, the company introduced “Stafford Mineral Springs Water, A Cure for All Kidney Diseases, Bright’s Disease, Diabetes, Dyspepsia. Springs near Vossburg, Miss. For Sale by Houck & Dieter” and continued to distribute the water until about 1900 (EPT 5/23/1896 1:1). The company was very proud of its new product informing the public in 1898, “Just Received A Carload of Stafford Water. For sale at all drug stores” (EPT 12/6/1898:8:2). Neither Houck & Dieter nor Dieter & Sauer were still advertising soda water in their 1905 advertisements, although Houck & Dieter continued bottling sodas until their merge with Purity to form Empire Bottling Works in 1912 (EPCD 1885-1900; EPT 12/25/1889 1:1, 8:4; 9/29/1893 1; 3/23/1905 2).

Houck & Dieter Hutchinson Bottles

Houck & Dieter used at least three soda bottle styles during their years of operation. Initially, the firm used Hutchinson-style bottles with the company name embossed on the front. These were followed by crown-finished bottles with similar embossing. The final style was a six-panel bottle that was the prototype for bottles used by the companies that followed. The

chronology for the different bottles is confusing at best (Table 5-1).

Hutchinson-style bottles were almost certainly used from the inception of the firm in 1881 to ca. 1905. However, I only know of two styles of Hutchinson bottles. The earliest one had a notably taller, applied finish. According to Elliott & Gould (1988:35-36), applied finishes were found on Hutchinson bottles from the stopper's invention (late 1879) to about 1885, and these bottles were probably used by Houck & Dieter during most of that period. The front label was embossed directly on the bottle – *not* in a plate (Figure 5-20 & 5-21).



Figure 5-20 – Houck & Dieter Hutchinson bottle – applied finish

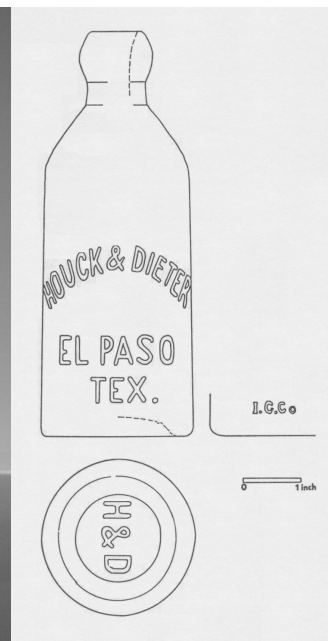


Figure 5-21 – Drawing of the early Hutchinson bottle (Staski 1984:59)



Figure 5-22 – Houck & Dieter Hutchinson bottle – tooled finish (David Cole collection)

The second “known” style had a tooled finish, a technique that probably began ca. 1885 or a bit before. About 1900, Hutchinson finishes were generally standardized (with a few exceptions). One of the exceptions is called a “funnel top,” and that appears to be the style used on this second type (see Elliott & Gould 1988:35-36). These bottles had the company information embossed in a round plate mold and were embossed “20” on the front heel (Figure 5-22). The “20” was a model number applied to the front heels of Hutchinson bottles by the Western Glass Mfg. Co. of Denver – a firm only in business from 1900 to 1909. The second style was certainly used after 1900, probably to ca. 1905. These were probably only ordered once and used until they wore out.

It is possible that these last bottles were not ordered until 1903, when Houck & Dieter opened the Douglas branch of the firm. The Douglas Hutchinson bottles were the same style as these later El Paso Hutchinsons and were embossed on the front heels with the same “20” model code. It is also possible that the Douglas bottles were ordered because the El Paso unit had already tried them.

This leaves a period of at least 15 years unaccounted for. Since all examples I have found of the early bottles were made by the Illinois Glass Co., one of the most successful glass plants of the period, it is highly unlikely that the firm would have clung for long to an outmoded technique. Therefore, one of two explanations is likely. There may be another style of bottles, perhaps even the same style with tooled finishes, that we have not yet discovered. Since the plant certainly used each bottle until it wore out (these *were* returnable bottles), this is within the realm of possibility. It seems more likely, however, that the firm adopted generic Hutchinson bottles during the period – ones identified only by paper labels.

Staski (1984b:59, 192-193, 204) found several Houck & Dieter bases in a feature with an identified context of late 1880s-early 1890s. Staski's drawing (p. 59) fits the early style, although he failed to identify the finish technique. Staski's bottles are almost certainly the first style, and the context supports an 1881-ca. 1885 date range for the bottles.

Table 5-1 - Bottle Chronology for Houck & Dieter⁴

Style Changes	Dates
Hutchinson; tall, applied finish; no plate	1881-ca. 1885
Unknown; probably Hutchinson; paper label	ca. 1885-ca. 1900
Hutchinson; "funnel," tooled finish; round plate on front	ca. 1900-ca. 1905*
Embossed; 2-pc mold, crown finish; "tombstone"-shaped label	ca. 1898-ca. 1905*
Crown finish; 6-panel; embossed	ca. 1903-1912

* See text for discussion of overlaps.

Method of Manufacture: Blown into mold

Color: Light Blue, Aqua

Size (in cm.): 18.2 (h); 7.2 (d) [16.8-16.9 (h); 6.3 (d)]

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Hutchinson - The Houck & Dieter bottles used a spring stopper, probably the style manufactured by W. H. Hutchinson & Son, patented April 8, 1879. The Hutchinson's Patent Spring Stopper was in general use from 1880 to about 1905 or later when it was replaced by the crown cap. Some varieties, however, continued to be made as late as 1918 (Paul & Parmalee

⁴ Note that all this information reflects a major update on Lockhart (2000) and Lockhart (2003:3-6)

1973:12-20).

Capacity: ca. 10 oz. (est.) [ca. 9 oz.]

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical, tapering from heel to shoulder, with steep shoulder and short neck

Front Description

Body: Embossed - HOUCK & DIETER (arch) / EL PASO / TEX. (both horizontal) [9 oz. plate mold bottle had same logo, but TEX. was upward arch] [9 oz. w/o plate mold - same as 10 oz.]

Heel: Bare

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - I.G.Co [20] [I.G.Co] [20=Western Glass Mfg. Co., Denver, 1900-1909 (Oppelt 2005:7)]

Base: Embossed - H&D

Manufacturer: Illinois Glass Co. (ca. 1880-ca. 1911) [Lockhart 2004e:24-25]

Dating: [1881-ca. 1885] The bottle was probably used from the inception of the company in 1881 to 1885 (see explanation above). Bottles were almost certainly ordered at least three times. I recorded these in two different sizes of aqua bottles, and the bottle owned by Bill Ethridge is a deep light blue. Although this is not a perfect match, this bottle is probably “Mould No. 88” in the 1896 Illinois Glass Co. catalog (p. 97). No. 88 was “specifically designed for Matthews’ Patent Stopper.” That is the only design in the catalog with a neck of this style and shoulder rounded in the shape found on this bottle. Illinois Glass did not begin embossing model (mould) numbers to the right of its I.G.Co. logo until ca. 1895, and it was not always done after that.

Collection(s): Bill Ethridge collection; David Cole collection; author’s collection.

Variation – “funnel” finish

The only variation we have found differs in being a solarized amethyst color, having a more rounded shoulder, and having a tooled “funnel” finish. Elliott & Gould (1988:35-36) dated this finish style ca. 1900 and later. The bottle was embossed “HOUCK & DIETER (arch) / EL PASO (horizontal) / TEXAS (inverted arch)” in a circular plate on the front, with “20” on the front heel.

As noted above, the front heelmark was used by the Western Glass Mfg. Co., Denver, from 1900 to 1909, and this bottle was probably used by Houck & Dieter from ca. 1900 (possibly not until 1903) until ca. 1905 or until the supply wore out. These bottles were probably only ordered once. This was the same model (and same heelmark) as found on the Houck & Dieter

Hutchinson bottle used at Douglas, Arizona. Even the style of lettering in the circular plate matches (see Douglas discussion below).

Houck & Dieter Crown-Finished Bottle

Sometime (probably about 1898 or earlier) Houck & Dieter switched to the crown cap as a sealer, a process that probably began about 1898 (possibly as early as 1895). Houck & Dieter's major competitor, R.F. Johnson & Co., adopted a crown-finish bottle sometime between 1895 and 1898 (see R.F. Johnson & Co.). The company very likely used the earliest crown-capped containers simultaneously with the last of the Hutchinson bottles. This was apparently a fairly common practice. Elliott & Gould (1988:44) explain:

Though many bottlers made the switch from Hutchinsons to crowns at some point during this period a number of them retained their Hutchinson machinery and continued to use Hutchinson bottles as well as crowns. This was practical for two reasons. First, the bottler's existing Hutchinson machinery represented a large investment that was still perfectly good; and secondly, people tend to resist change, and a whole generation had grown accustomed to drinking from the Hutchinson bottles.

When making bottles for soda works that used both Hutchinsons and crowns the glass houses generally made a dual set of molds or plates, one for the Hutchinsons and one for the crown tops, so that both types of bottles could be blown simultaneously, speeding production. The same design was usually cut into each plate and if the engraver was doing fine work the lettering on the resulting Hutchinsons and crowns, though never quite identical, was often very similar.

The later Houck & Dieter Hutchinson bottles are *not* a match with the crown-capped bottles. The styles of lettering are quite different. In fact, the shape of the lettering on the front and the lack of plate mold are a very close match for the older, original Hutchinson (Matthews) bottle (Figure 5-23).

Method of Manufacture: Blown into mold

Color: Light Blue

Size (in cm.): 19.8-20.3 (h); 6.5-6.6 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: ca. 10 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Embossed - HOUCK & DIETER (arch) / EL PASO / TEX.
(both horizontal)

Heel: Bare

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - I.G.Co.

Base: Embossed - H&D

Manufacturer: Illinois Glass Co. (ca. 1880-ca. 1911) [Lockhart 2004e:24-25]

Dating: [ca. 1898-ca. 1905] These bottles may have come into use as early as 1895, the approximate year that Henry Pfaff began using crown-topped bottles in R.F. Johnson & Co. Because these containers are uncommon, they were probably only used for a few years between about 1895 and about 1905. This was probably an interim style, bought once, and used until the supply was exhausted. These bottles were probably used pretty concurrently with the second (last) style of Hutchinson bottle described above.

Collection(s): Becky Garrett collection, David Cole collection; Jim Cullen Collection; author's collection.



Figure 5-23 – Houck & Dieter – first crown bottle

Sometime between 1900 and ca. 1905, Houck & Dieter redesigned their entire crown-finished bottle. The new bottle was narrower and fancier with a shorter neck and six vertical panels around the circumference (Figure 24). The bottle was so popular that the design was retained by Houck & Dieter's successor, Empire Bottling Works and by the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co., with branches in New Mexico and Arizona (see Lockhart & Miller 2007).

Houck & Dieter Six-Panel Bottle

Method of Manufacture: Two-Piece Mold

Color: Solarized Purple, Light Blue, Common Green, Colorless

Size (in cm.): 20.3 (h); 6.1 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: ca. 8.5 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with six vertical panels created by embossed lines forming arches at the upper extremities

Front Description

Body: Embossed in four of six vertical panels (lettering read with bottle on its side from crown to heel), HOUCK & DIETER / COMPANY / EL PASO, / TEXAS

Back Description

Body: See front description

Base: Embossed - H&D Co.

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: [ca. 1903-1912] These bottles were in use from about 1900 to the company's merger with Purity Bottling & Manufacturing Company in 1912. Since the merger happened suddenly, a large supply of these bottles were simply discarded at the Chamizal Dump. Beck Garrett, who dug at the dump in the 1950s told me that these bottles were so common that the diggers just threw them into a pile when they found them.



Figure 5-24 – Houck & Dieter – six-panel bottle

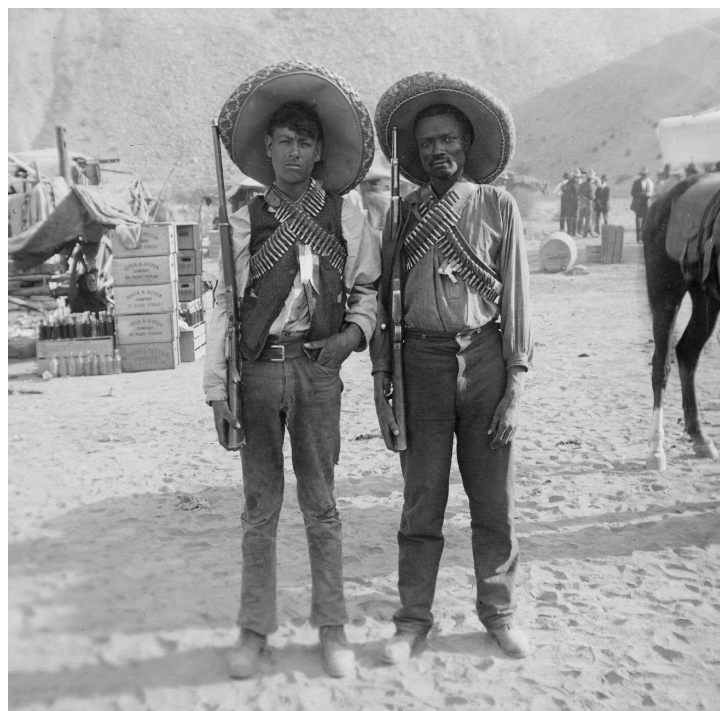


Figure 5-25 – Young soldiers at the Francisco Madero camp – with Houck & Dieter sodas stacked in the left background (El Paso County Historical Society)

Collection(s):

Becky Garrett Collection, El Paso Museum of History; John Gross Collection; Rick Chavez Collection; Mike Morrison Collection, Las Cruces; author's collection.

A photo of Francisco Madero's camp shows a stack of cases stenciled with the Houck & Dieter name. Bottles stacked alongside the cases are the six-panel style. Since Madero challenged the Porfirio Díaz regime in 1910, and Houck & Dieter merged with the Purity Bottling & Mfg. Co. in 1912, the photo must have been taken during the very early years of the Mexican Revolution (Figures 5-25 & 5-26).

Liquor and Wine Bottles

In addition, the firm sold liquor in bottles that were probably only identified by paper labels. The fancier bottles (or higher-priced brands) were likely sealed with a cork like the rest, but the corks were covered with porcelain caps that identified Houck & Dieter (Figure 5-27). The firm displayed its most impressive imported



Figure 5-27 – Houck & Dieter caps for corks

wines (Figure 5-28), but these bore no markings that identified Houck & Dieter. However,

the company did add its name to labels on some of the domestic wines that it carried. The name at the bottom of the label in Figure 5-29 is illegible, but “Houck & Dieter Co.” is printed on it.⁵



Figure 5-26 – Cases of Houck & Dieter sodas at the Madero camp – six-panel bottles.



Figure 5-28 – Wines sold by Houck & Dieter (El Paso Chamber of Commerce 1909)



Figure 5-29 – Port bottle with Houck & Dieter Co. at bottom of label

⁵ I have lost the provenience for this bottle. If anyone recognizes it, please let me know so that I may properly cite the owner.

Related Brands

Apollinaris Water

Apollinaris Co. Limited

Apollinaris water was a naturally sparkling mineral water bottled in Bad Neuenahr, Germany. The water was imported to England by the Apollinaris Company, Ltd., of London then exported to the United States. Although Apollinaris water was apparently discontinued in El Paso with the termination of Houck & Dieter, it is again available in the late 20th and early 21st centuries at El Paso grocery stores in one-liter (33.8-ounce) bottles, still using paper labels. The current bottles are imported directly from Germany.

Georg Kreuzberg of Ahrweiler, Germany, a wine producer, obtained a vineyard near Bad Neuenahr at auction for 15 talers in 1822. The reason for the low price became obvious when the soil failed to produce healthy vines. Suspecting that mineral inclusions were the problem Kreuzberg drilled wells that generated highly carbonated water. Because a wayside shrine to St. Apollinaris was located nearby, he named the spring after the saint (Anonymous [1993]:110). St. Apollinaris was a bishop during the second century and was accorded his status for intervening with Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius in favor of the Christians. Although persecutions continued until Constantine later declared Christianity the state religion, it was tempered after the letter from Apollinaris to the emperor.

Kreuzberg formed a company, CommandirGesellschaft Georg Kreuzberg & Cie., in 1853 for the sale of the spring water, known as Apollinaris Water. The water was originally bottled in ceramic containers. He leased the Heppinger Spring, and other nearby mineral spring in 1870 and purchased the property it was on in 1885. In 1873, Kreuzberg also founded the Apollinaris Company Limited in London for distribution of the water outside Germany, opening a world market through the London office (Anonymous [1993]:110).

An unidentified English journalist traveling through the Ahr Valley in 1877 left an account of the Apollinaris Company as it existed in the late 19th century. He identified St. Apollinaris as the patron saint of wine. In his description, the first building a visitor encountered was the bottle washing department “where Lieschens and Lottchens with looped-up petticoats and kerchief-covered heads were clustered round an apparatus not unlike a huge cart-wheel, revolving horizontally in the centre of a tank.” Jets of water shot up from each of the twenty-four

spokes, and the girls rinsed bottles on them (40-50,000 per day) prior to filling which was accomplished in the next section (Apollinaris Brunnen 1976:6-8).

The water was pumped by steam power to the gallery where fifty men and boys filled and corked each bottle, “one man filling and corking while another wired” on twenty-one bottling machines. The remaining men carried bottles. On average the men filled 40,000 bottles each day (Apollinaris Brunnen 1976:8-9).

The effervescence caused by the “carbonic acid gas” was strong and was produced without “admixture or foreign agent.” The gas escaping from the spring itself was so strong that the gates were kept locked to avoid accidental inhalation. The English journalist described the water as “clear as crystal, soft as velvet, and effervescent as champagne . . . not only of the highest purity, but preserves its sparkling freshness longer than any artificially aerated water” (Apollinaris Brunnen 1976:9-12).

The bottles were packed in “huge oblong boxes on wheels, in each of which 4000 pints or 3000 quart bottles were already packed away” on “a dozen waggons (*sic*).” These were taken to Remagen on the Rhine River where they went to England or other destinations outside Germany. In 1875, one million bottles were shipped within Germany with an equal number to Holland. England, the company’s largest customer, received six million bottles. The journalist quipped that “on the whole, the Ahr valley profits largely by the badness of our drinking water (Apollinaris Brunnen 1976:13-14).

Kreuzberg died in 1876, and his heirs reformed the company naming it Aktiengesellschaft Apollinaris-Brunnen, vorm (Anonymous [1993]:110-111). In 1897, Frederick Gordon of England purchased both the English and German businesses, although the firm returned to German hands in 1956 when the Dortmunder Union Brauerei gained a controlling share of the stock. The company, by then know as Apollinaris Brunnen, merged with Schweppes GmbH in 1991, and Cadbury Schweppes acquired the voting share of the stock in 2002 (Munsey 2002:10, 14).

A poster ca. 1899 advertises “A Whiskey and a Small ‘Polly’” (Munsey 2002:11), suggesting that Apollinaris water was used as a chaser for alcoholic drinks. The nickname “Polly” was apparently in use by that time but faded into obscurity later. A photo of an unnamed bar in El Paso shows posters from Apollinaris featuring “Pretty Polly,” a race horse sponsored by the company, as well as bar ads for Lemp Beer and White Rock water (Figure 5-30 & 5-31).

Munsy (2002:15) provides more information on the horse and dates Pretty Polly's career to the early 1900s.



Figure 5-30 – Unknown El Paso bar with bar ads for Apollinaris Water [left], Lemp Beer, and the White Rock fairy [both right] (James A. Ward collection)



Figure 5-31 – Closeup of the Pretty Polly bar ads

Sales in 1896 reached 16 million bottles. By 1980, the company had sold 335 million bottles of Apollinaris products during the preceding year (Anonymous [1993]:111). The company adopted the now familiar logo with the word Apollinaris superimposed over a red triangle by 1894, along with the slogan “Queen of Table Waters” (Munsey 2002:13-14). Munsey also suggested that glass bottles may have been in use as early as 1888. Some of the earliest bottles, possibly prior to that date, were almost certainly only used in Germany (Figure 5-32).

By the time Houck & Dieter began advertising Apollinaris Water, the product would have been bottled in glass bottles with blob tops for wiring down corks (Figure 5-33).⁶ Wilson (1981:38) illustrated and



Figure 5-32 – German Apollinaris bottle

⁶ Apollinaris bottles were so popular that Anheuser Busch adopted them as the first beer bottle in 1872. Although Anheuser-Busch switched to the almost instantly popular export beer bottle soon thereafter, the brewery continued using Apollinaris bottles until they wore out. Some of these returnable bottles were reused by either Anheuser-Busch or local breweries until at least the 1890s (Lockhart 2007:50-52).

described an almost identical bottle (with paper label mostly intact) excavated at Fort Union, New Mexico, in an 1875-1890 context. Later, crown finish bottles may have found their way to the city (Figure 5-34). Although it is unlikely, some of the older ceramic bottles may have arrived in El Paso prior to the arrival of the railroad.

Also by that time, Apollinaris had become a *type* of mineral water. James W. Tufts, in his catalog and manual for making carbonated beverages (ca. 1885), offered a recipe for Apollinaris Water.

Water . . . 25 gallons. Put in fountain and charge with twenty-five lbs. gas. Then add to water in fountain:

Bicarbonate of Soda . . . 5 ounces.

Common Salt . . . “

Glauber Salt . . . “

Take two quarts of lime (or marble dust), one quart of muriatic acid and mix together, and add more marble (or lime) until it stops boiling. Then add water sufficient to make it indicate 25° on hydrometer (Tufts 1969:93). Sounds delightful!

Nassau Selter

Houck & Dieter offered Nassau Selter imported from the Nassau Selter Co., Ober Selter, Germany from 1893 to 1895. The company bottled its products in ceramic containers. These are:

straight-sided, circular stoneware jugs . . . wheel-thrown, jugger-made . . . the bases usually exhibit a series of concentric looped ridges left by the wire used to cut the clay base off the wheel. The exterior surface is salt-glazed. The necks are quite short and bear a series of encircling embossed ridges intended to help secure the wire for the cork. Each jug has a single applied handle which loops from just



Figure 5-33 –
Apollinaris bottle –
exported to the U.S.
through England

Figure 5-34 – Crown-
finished Apollinaris
bottle – still exported
through London

below the base of the neck to the base of the shoulder. . . . They were manufactured in the Nassau District in western Germany at Hohr, Grenzhausen, and other towns (Schulz et al 1980:115).

Nassau Selter bottles carried an impressed seal with SELTERS (arch) / NASSAU (inverted arch) around a German eagle that contains the initials, F.R., on a shield on his chest (Figure 5-35). The bottles were exported to England by at least the early 19th century and may have arrived in the U.S. as early as 1846 at a price of 15-25¢ each, although a few years later the price had increased by 5¢. Sales of German selters may have continued until the beginning of World War I (Schulz et al 1980:116-117), although Houck & Dieter ceased carrying the brand in 1895.

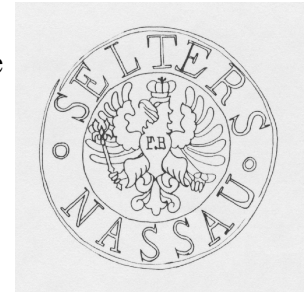


Figure 5-35 – Nassau Selters – one of the seals (Schulz 1980:116)

Munsey (1971:135) states that Nassau is in the province of Hesse. He dates such bottles as “c. 1880-1900” (Munsey 1971:139). Wilson (1981:32) describes Nassau “SEKTERS” (*sic*) as “salt-glazed, wheel-thrown stoneware with a ringed neck and a ring-lip neck finish.” His dates are the general dates for Fort Laramie bottles: 1860-1890. Blee et al (1986:205-208) depicts an example found in Alaska and notes that “mineral water was a popular cure-all of the nineteenth century well known to Russian physicians” (Figure 5-36).

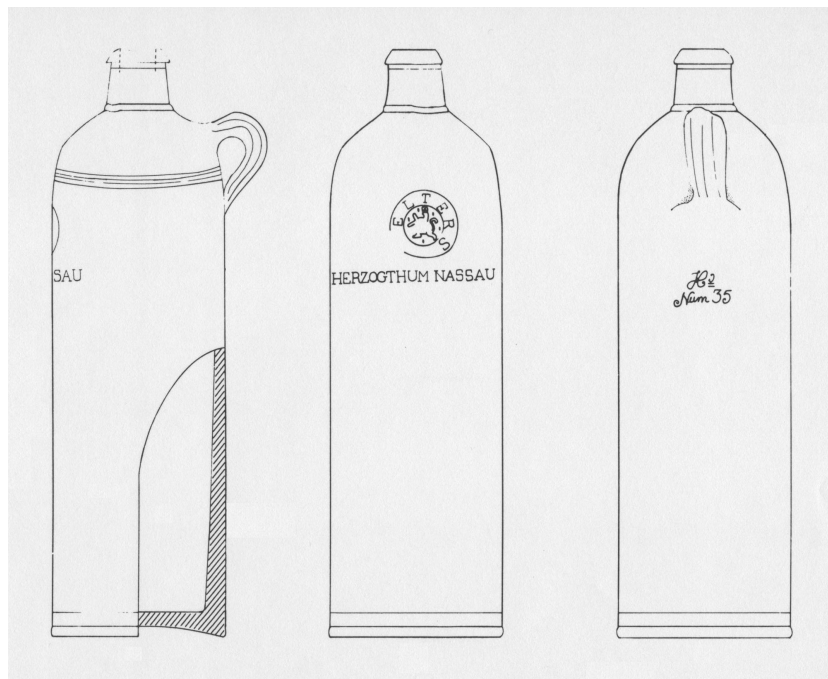


Figure 5-36 – Nassau Selters (Blee 1986:207)

Lambrechtsen (2001:8) provides a good description from 1819:

The water which is imported at London is brought over in stone bottles, closely corked and cemented containing about three English pints each, which means the water, as long as the common air is excluded, will retain many of its excellent qualities for several months; but this caution is so necessary, that if too large an empty space is left even in the neck of the bottle, it soon loses in a great degree the brisk, smart, pungent taste, which principally characterised its excellence, and is more liable to be injured by keeping than any other mineral water. The water abounds with an alkaline salt in a much greater quantity than any of the other known mineral waters.

The water originated at Selters Spring in Niderselters, Germany, a naturally carbonated spring. According to Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (10th ed.), the word, seltzer, is derived from Niderselters. The spring was the best-known in Germany, and waters were exported worldwide during the 18th and 19th centuries. The ceramic bottles were manufactured in the Westerwald Mountains, known as the "jug baking land/district." Under the handle of each bottle is stamped the first initial of the jugmaker's location and the person's individual number. Various types of stoneware bottles were used as early as the 13th century, although they were more rounded or "belly shaped." Handles appeared in the 17th century, and taller, cylindrical bottles date from about 1850. The stamp on the front of the bottle has gone through several variations, and bottle necks vary in length (Lambrechtsen 2001:6-7).

Jug-making was a cottage industry in the Westerwald area where families in at least nine villages manufactured the Selters bottles. Identification on the front of the bottles, such as Herzogthum Nasau (literally Dutchy of Nassau) identify the political territory of the local nobility or councils that licensed the exportation of the water. Because of the competition from glass containers, the jug trade declined by the end of the 19th century and was reduced to 49 jugmakers by 1926 (Lambrechtsen 2001:6-7).

White Rock Mineral Water

Although Houck & Dieter called their supplier the White Rock Mineral Water Co., the bottler termed itself the White Rock Mineral Springs Co. Located in Waukesha, Wisconsin, White Rock produced a carbonated, lithiated water, sarsaparilla, and possibly other flavors. The White Rock website (White Rock 2008) includes a history of the company and various versions



Figure 5-37 – Psyche, the White Rock logo, of 1893 (Whiter Rock)

of “Psyche” – the fairy who appeared on the White Rock labels. Psych first appeared in 1893, inspired by the painting “Psyche at Nature’s Mirror” by Paul Thumann. Figure 5-37 is the Psyche of 1893, almost certainly the one used during the ca. 1893-1900 period when Houck & Dieter carried the water. The depiction of Psyche has changed several times during the last century, and Figure 5-38 shows a 20th century bottle and label.

In 1871, pharmacist, H.M. Colver, gained title to a spring that was filtered through 1,400 feet of “white magnesian rocks.” The new company, White Rock, began bottling products made with the water, but the date is in some dispute. According to the company (White Rock 2008) “within five years [of the purchase date of 1871], the enterprising Colver was bottling the spring’s water for distribution throughout the country . . .” Riley (1958:256) and Periodical Publishers Assoc. (1934:92), however, give 1883 as a beginning date for bottling, although the company did not use the White Rock name and the “fairy on the rock” trademark until 1906 when it began advertising in the national media. The original bottles contained blob-top finishes and paper labels. White Rock’s turn of the century crown finish bottles also bore paper labels (Personal communication from John M. Schoenknecht, White Rock bottle collector from Waukesha, Wisconsin). White Rock apparently never used an embossed bottle, but the company modernized to the ACL labeling process in the early 1950s (Bates et al. 1996a:W-4-W-6).



Figure 5-38 – 20th century White Rock Bottle (eBay)

Stafford Mineral Springs Water

Although Houck & Dieter only advertised Stafford Mineral Springs Water from 1896 to 1900, the water was popular both before and after that time period. The spring was originally called Bogohama (purportedly meaning water of life) by the Choctaw Indians and was one of their dwelling spots. After the White settlers drove the Choctaw away from their traditional lands, the spring was apparently forgotten. The spring, initially overrun by a creek, was on land later owned by Captain Edward W. Stafford, a local farmer. During a drought about 1888, Stafford discovered the spring and rerouted the creek to leave it exposed. He claimed that the

spring had healing properties and began to draw attention locally (Stafford Mineral Springs Hotel Co. 1906:7; Wilkerson 2010).

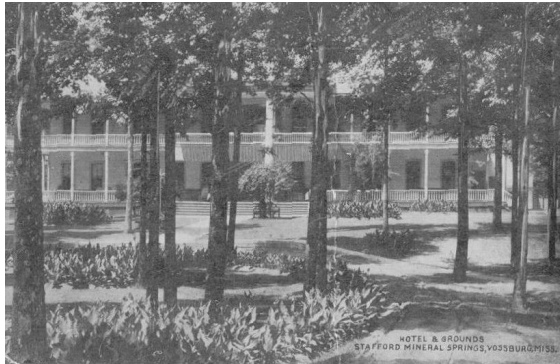


Figure 40 Figure 5-39 – Postcard of Stafford Springs Hotel, front view (Wilkerson)



Figure 5-40 – Postcard of Stafford Springs Hotel, side view (Wilkerson)

As testimony to the curative qualities spread, a group of capitalists formed the Stafford Mineral Springs Company, Limited, and incorporated in Louisiana on May 19, 1892. On March 7, 1893, the group formed the Stafford Mineral Springs and Hotel Company, Limited and soon built a bottling works that could produce two railroad carloads per day (Stafford Mineral Springs Hotel Co. 1906:4-6). The Stafford Inn, described as “a large and comfortable hotel, with wide porches, airy rooms, comfortable office, bath rooms and all modern conveniences,” opened in 1899 (Figures 5-39 & 5-40). The owners promised that “rates are reasonable” (Stafford Mineral Springs Hotel Co. 1906:7; Wilkerson 2010).

Although the springs and hotel were originally considered a part of Vossburg, the area eventually became known as Stafford Springs, Mississippi. Faith in the curative powers of the water declined in the 20th century, and the resort deteriorated. The hotel was razed in 1956. John L. and Dorothy Blanks bought the property in 1961 rebuilt the resort into a motor lodge with a dude ranch theme. However, business was sluggish, and the facility was short lived. Several owners attempted to make the business profitable, including William “Little Bill” Martin, who built a gas station in the remains of the old water building. Before the end of the 1980s, even the most optimistic of the investors had given up, and only a few abandoned motel buildings remain (Wilkerson 2010).

According to Keith Wilkerson (personal communication, 2003), bottling of the spring water continued until sometime between 1950 and 1958. Wilkerson’s information is worth quoting:

My father, who was a first year high school math and chemistry teacher, came to Vossburg in 1950. At that time, the old hotel was still in operation and they were still bottling water. Some years later, in circa 1958, when I was about 6 years old, I remember my grandfather stopping at Stafford and taking me inside the old stone sided water building. If you look at the Motor lodge post card that I have posted on my site, the water building is shown at the rear of the lodge office. It's the section of the building with the steep gable roof [Figure 5-41]. Inside, I remember a local black man, wearing rubber boots, working to manually fill the glass jugs. This was accomplished by positioning multiple jugs on the workbench and filling them with a water hose. Wooden crates, specifically designed to cradle the glass bottles, were used to ship the water. At that time (1958), the train no longer stopped at Vossburg and they were forced to ship the water by truck. The volume sold was apparently very low and a majority of the business stemmed from local customers. I'm not sure of the exact date that bottling of the water ceased, but I'm sure that it had stopped by the time that the property was purchased by the Blanks family in 1961.



Figure 5-41 – Postcard of Stafford Springs Motel – old bottle house is peaked-roof section (Wilkerson 2010)

Stafford Mineral Springs Water was sold in “Carboy, Bottle, or Jug,” and always contained the registered trade mark, a “RED HEART” and the word “BO-GO-HA-MA,” printed upon it in White Letters upon a black background” (Stafford Mineral Springs Hotel Co. 1906:21).

The half-gallon bottle was apparently colorless with a single-part finish (for use with corks) and paper label (Figure 5-42). On the label was printed “STAFFORD / MINERAL SPRINGS / WATER” above the red heart with “THE / BO-HO-GA-MA / (WATER OF LIFE) OF THE INDIAN” in an upward sweeping arc. On both sides of the heart were claims for the water’s curative properties followed by finer print that is illegible in the drawing in the booklet (Stafford Mineral Springs Hotel Co. 1906:21).



Figure 5-42 – Stafford Springs water bottle (Stafford Mineral Springs Hotel Co. 1906:21)

Cerva Near Beer

By May 8, 1918, in an attempt to remain in business, Houck & Dieter advertised Cerva, a cereal beverage or near-beer brewed by the Lemp Brewery in St. Louis, one of their main former brands of beer. With good timing, the ad showed up less than a month after a new Texas law took effect. The new law prohibited the manufacture or sale of any alcoholic beverage within ten miles of a military post. Since El Paso was still relatively small, the entire city was within a ten-mile radius of Fort Bliss, so the law effectively created Prohibition almost two years prior to the national amendment.

Unlike most near-beers, sold in regular beer bottles, the Cerva bottle pictured in the ad looked more like a soft drink container (Figure 5-43). The paper label stated “‘Bear’ In Mind / CERVA / The World’s Best Beverage” along with two bears at the right and left sides of the label. The ad further suggested, “Enjoy the good taste of hops, the foam and the sparkle. Drink all you want—it’s non-intoxicating. At grocers, at druggists, in fact at all places where good drinks are sold” (EPT 6/28/1918).

The ad also noted that Cerva was sold along with United Profit Sharing Coupons. Similar to Green Stamps thirty years later, these coupons allowed the purchaser to redeem a sufficient number of coupons for merchandise. The company promised that forty coupons “(2 coupons each denomination 20) are packed in every case. Exchangeable for valuable premiums” (EPT 6/28/1918).

The name is strange. Cerva means deer or doe in Italian – yet the ad makes word play with “bear,” including a couple of bears frolicking at the top. Cerva could also be a diminutive for “cerveza” – the Spanish word for beer.

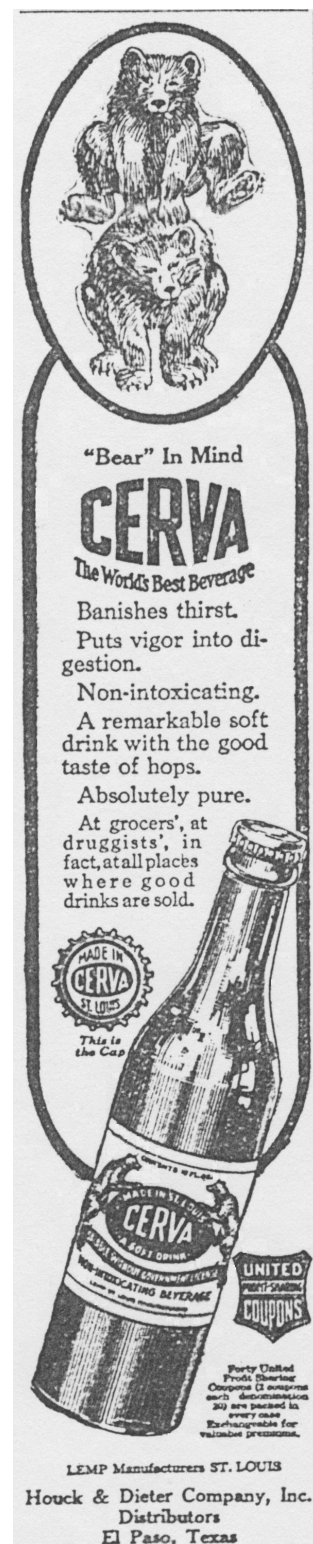


Figure 5-43 – Cerva ad
(*El Paso Times*
9/13/1918:5)

History

Houck & Dieter eventually branched out to Douglas, Arizona, in a deal with the Pabst Brewing Co., Kansas City, Missouri. Dieter had earlier acquired control of some property through Pabst, when he convinced the brewer to buy the Senate Saloon and accompanying restaurant in 1899 (Lockhart 2006c) as well as other possible real estate transactions in El Paso. By June of 1903, Dieter had already purchased the property for the Douglas business and sent the warranty deed and a map of the town to Pabst (unfortunately, the map did not survive with the letter). Dieter also assured Pabst that “we shall have free and undisturbed access” to a side track of the railroad he described “and use thereof.” Access to the railroad for the delivery of Pabst beer (and soda manufactured by Houck & Dieter) was a necessity. Dieter further stated the need for a “light delivery wagon for one horse” to transport the beer from the side track to the new plant (Dieter letter June 10, 1903).

In another letter to the Pabst Brewing Company, dated July 16, 1903, Dieter ordered a “wagon which we deem suitable for the Douglas Business.” At this point, Dieter had already determined that the cost to construct a “cold storage building” in Douglas would be \$1,975. Additional costs would include an architect “to prepare and receive bids” and someone to superintend the actual construction “who is conversant with the requirements of a cold storage house” (Dieter letter, July 16, 1903). Although Dieter never mentioned any bottling equipment, surviving containers attest that the firm also bottled sodas at Douglas. A monthly statement dated October 12, 1903, lists such items as “architect 40 –,” “J. M. Sparks & Bros. Contractors 1900.00,” and “Plumbers Services 88.50” (Figure 5-44). This indicates that work was well on its way. Construction for the beer distribution and soda bottling works was probably finished by late 1903.

MONTHLY STATEMENT.

PASO, TEXAS, October 12, 1903

M. Douglas, President

—IN ACCOUNT WITH—

HOUGH & DIETER CO.

IMPORTERS AND JOBBERS

FINE KENTUCKY WHISKIES.

SHIPPED DIRECT FROM DISTILLERIES.

OUR SPECIALTY.

1903				
July	7	Chas. M. H. Murphy, distiller	75.00	✓
"	11	Good Advertising	3.50	✓
		Chas. M. H. Murphy	40.00	
	23	F. O. Cooper	64.3	
	31	Good Advertising	6.00	102.48
		af. G. M. Spawls distiller	139.00	
		Bill Cooper, distiller	23.60	
		Chas. M. H. Murphy	88.50	212.18
				2284.69
		By Douglas, Douglas	700.00	
			1534.69	

Figure 5-44 – Houck & Dieter statement to Douglas Builders

Their plant was located on the south side of Twelfth St. between F and G, under the management of Charles J. Lachance. Miller (1999:13; 2008:31-32) also notes a “Mr. Godfrey” as a co-manager, although he ceases to be mentioned after 1905. The firm sold wines, liquors,

cigars, Pabst beer, and some form of soda water. Although the business probably began operation late in 1903, it was certainly in place in time to be listed in the 1904 Douglas city directory.

By 1907, the Douglas operation had closed, possibly as a result of heavy competition from the newly formed Copper City Brewery that operated from 1904 to 1916. Because Houck & Dieter's soft drink production was secondary to the liquor and beer trade, they may have been overwhelmed by the new competitor. The Copper City Brewery produced Copper City and Tanhauser beers and attempted to survive Prohibition by selling Barette (two percent beer) along with soft drinks such as soda water and ginger ale. A series of "beer wars" in the city starting in 1904 badly deflated prices and may have contributed to the closing of Houck & Dieter in Douglas (DACD 1904-1907; *Sunsiter* 1/1/1996 1:3). The 1907 closing date may also be connected with Dieter's death in that year. If so, the plant probably closed sometime shortly after September 23, the date of Dieter's death.

Miller (1999:11, 13; 2008:31-32) further notes that the Houck & Dieter plant was also called the Douglas Bottling Works. A second Douglas Bottling Works opened in 1907 and may have been the successor to Houck & Dieter. The new business, owned by J.T. Farnsworth, operated at G Ave between 3rd and 4th streets. In 1909, Farnsworth became partners with someone named Loyar and moved the business to 436 12th St. (possibly the location of the former Houck & Dieter plant). Shortly after the move, the partners sold the business to the Douglas Improvement Co., a firm that operated the business "into the late teens."

Bottles and Artifacts

Hutchinson and Crown-Capped Bottles

The Douglas branch of Houck & Dieter initially used a Hutchinson-style bottle that was almost identical to the final Hutchinson style used by the El Paso unit (Figure 5-45). Aside from the information embossed on the front plate (which has the same type of lettering as the El Paso Hutchinson), the only difference is the "buckle" manufacturer's mark of the Western Glass Mfg. Co. (1900-1909). The model number



Figure 5-45 – Houck & Dieter Hutchinson bottle – Douglas (Mike Miller collection, Colorado)

(20) is embossed in the same location (front heel) as the El Paso bottle, and it is almost certain that both were ordered at the same time. The Hutchinson bottles are rare and were almost certainly ordered once when the plant opened in late 1903. The bottles were almost certainly used until they wore out, possibly until the end of production. These containers have not yet been found in El Paso excavations (Phoenix Antiques, Bottles, & Collectibles Club 1989).

The Douglas branch adopted a crown-finished bottle, probably ordered concurrently with the Hutchinson bottles in 1903 or at least soon thereafter (Figure 5-46). These crown-topped bottles are even more rare than the Hutchinsons, certainly indicating that they, too, were used until the supply was exhausted. Both were made by the Western Glass Mfg. Co. and are embossed with the “buckle” on the base (Figure 5-47). The main differences, aside from the shape of the bottles and finishes are a lower-case “o” in “Co.” on the Hutchinson (with a capital “O” on the crown bottle), an abbreviation of Arizona (ARIZ.) on the Hutchinson, and different model numbers. Both are colorless but can solarize to an amethyst, but the Hutchinson bottle has also been found in a light smokey variation (Miller 2008:31). Only the crown-topped bottle is described below.

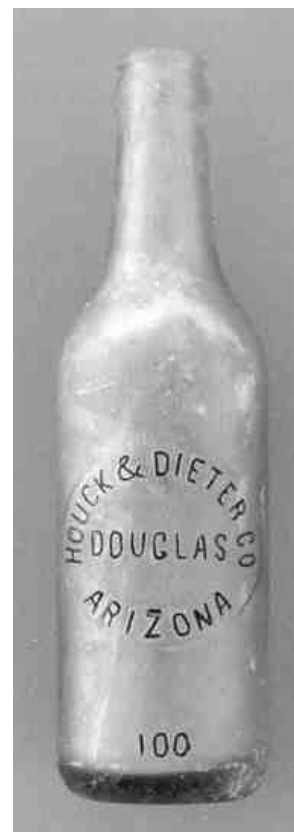


Figure 5-46 – Houck & Dieter Crown-finished bottle – Douglas

Method of Manufacture: Blown in Mold

Color: Colorless, Solarized Amethyst

Size (in cm.): 20.8-21.0 (h); 6.1 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: ca. 9.5 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Round, embossed plate mold - HOUCK & DIETER (arch) / DOUGLAS (horizontal) / ARIZONA (inverted arch)

Heel: Embossed - 100

Back Description

Body: Bare



Figure 5-47 – The “buckle” – manufacturer’s mark of the Western Glass Mfg. Co., Denver (Fort Laramie)

Heel: Bare

Base: Embossed - the “buckle” logo of the Western Glass Manufacturing Co.

Manufacturer: Western Glass Manufacturing Co. (1900-1909) (Clint 1976:37; McDougald & McDougald 1990)

Dating: [ca. 1903-1907] The Douglas branch was probably completed in late 1903, and Dieter almost certainly ordered bottles by then. Both crown-topped and Hutchinson bottles were probably used concurrently during the entire period.

Collection(s): Becky Garrett Collection; Mike Miller (Colorado) collection; Mike Miller (Arizona) collection; author’s collection.

Dieter & Sauer (at least 1898-1907)

History

J. Phillip Dieter was involved in a second firm that was less well known, at least in El Paso. Along with his partner, George D. Sauer, he founded the firm of Dieter & Sauer in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Although the firm was first listed in the El Paso City Directory at the northwest corner of Calle del Comercia and Avenida Lerdo in 1898, it was probably in existence earlier, possibly as the second branch of the bottling works mentioned in the 1882 *Times* article. At least one Hutchinson-finished soda bottle embossed with the name, Dieter & Sauer, still remains as evidence that the company produced sodas at one time. In apparent competition with Houck & Dieter, the company promoted Apollinaris Company Mineral Water in 1898. Dieter & Sauer advertised itself as “transporters and jobbers, groceries, liquors, wines, cigars” (EPCD 1898-89; EPT 1/1/1882 2:3).

In 1906, the company moved across the Rio Grande to locate at 210 San Francisco St. with George D. Sauer as manager. The timing of the move is interesting but requires some background information. On March 17, 1858, *Gobernador* Guerra of the Mexican *estado* of Tamaulipas issued a decree establishing a *Zona Libre* (free zone) along his state’s adjoining border with the American state of Texas. The *Zona Libre* granted bordering towns special exemptions from the exorbitant tariff duties required by Mexico. For most of the nineteenth century, the zone remained active only in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, but Mexico extended the *Zona Libre* to the Pacific Ocean (including El Paso, Mexico – later Ciudad Juárez) on March 25, 1884. These conditions encouraged firms in El Paso, Texas, to establish branches in El Paso, Mexico, or relocate across the Rio Grande. It is likely that Dieter & Sauer had chosen their location to take advantage of the zone’s favorable trade conditions. Mexican President Benito

Juárez abolished the *Zona Libre* on July 1, 1905, thus removing the incentive for firm's Mexican location and probably hastening the move to El Paso the following year (Bell & Smallwood 1982:9-11, 44, 58-59).

The firm was no longer advertised in the city directories after Dieter's death in 1907. Sauer went on to form the George G. Sauer & Company, "commission merchants, export and import" at 715 Myrtle Ave. The firm specialized in "THE CELEBRATED A FLOR DE MEXICO, CUBAN HAND MADE CIGARS" and boasted, "We also make the well known El Paso McGinty 5-Cent Cigar" (EPT 7/19/1906 2:6). In 1915, in addition to running his company, he became president of Runkle & Peacock, Inc. as well as vice president of the El Paso Brewers Association. By 1920, he was no longer involved with Runkle & Peacock and was listed as residing in Red Bank, New Jersey. He returned to El Paso in 1923, rooming at the Toltec Club, but soon went back East permanently to New York City, although his company continued to flourish in El Paso until 1934 (EPCD 1898-99-1908-1930; EPT 12/25/1889 8:4).

Bottles and Artifacts

Although Dieter & Sauer never advertised their own brand of soda, at least one bottle with a Hutchinson-style finish has survived (Figure 5-48).

Method of Manufacture: Blown in Mold

Color: Light Blue (?) Solarized Amethyst (?)

Size (in cm.): unknown

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Hutchinson

Capacity: ca. 9 oz. (est.)

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Embossed - DIETER & SAUER (arch) / CIUDAD JUAREZ (horizontal) / MEXICO (inverted arch)

Heel: Bare

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - R.G.Co.

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: Root Glass Co. (1901-ca. 1905)



Figure 5-48 –
Hutchinson bottle used
by Dieter & Sauer

Dating: [1901-ca. 1905] Dieter & Sauer may have opened as early as 1881 in Juárez, but the first ad in an El Paso source was in 1898. The firm moved to El Paso in 1906, establishing a firm closing date for the Juárez location. Although the Bottle Research Group has not yet published on the use of R.G.Co. by the Root Glass Co., evidence suggests that this was the earliest manufacturer's mark used by the firm.

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