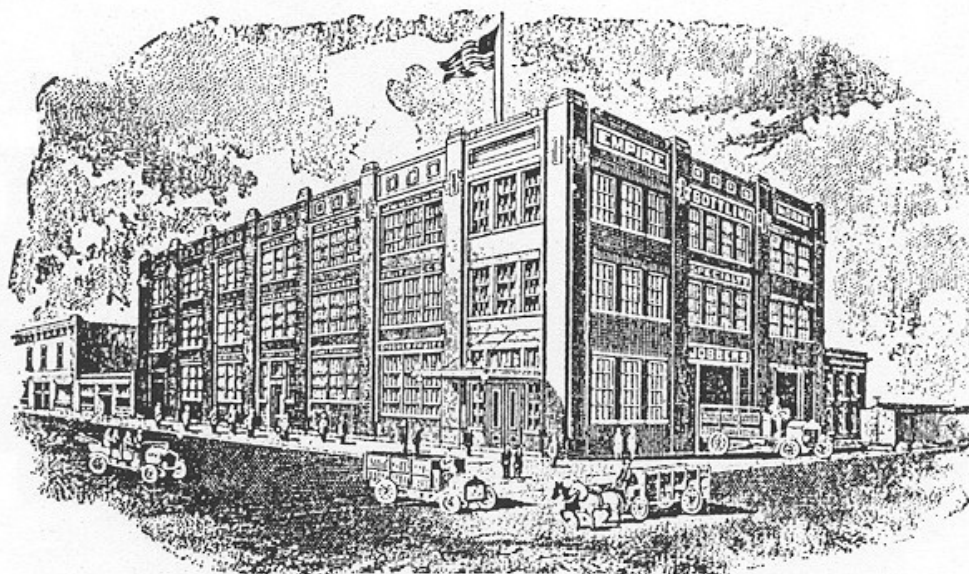


Bottles on the Border:

The History and Bottles of the Soft Drink Industry

in El Paso, Texas, 1881-2000



Empire Bottling Works

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Chapter 5b

Chapter 5b

Purity Bottling & Mfg. Co. and Empire Bottling Works

Purity Bottling & Manufacturing Company (1906-1912)

History

Although little is known of Lawrence Gardner's early life, he may have been influenced by what he saw of the liquor and soda water trade as a driver for the El Paso Ice and Refrigeration Company in 1905 (Gardner did not appear in the 1904 City Directory, but was listed as Lon *Garner*, residing at 306 S. Campbell, in 1905). He was, by his own admission, a man with a purpose. Around the turn of the century, liquor dealers, primarily Houck & Dieter and Henry Pfaff, controlled all soda bottling in El Paso. According to Gardner "the soft drink industry was slow in developing and the consumption of 'pop' as it was then called, was limited to 'chasers' for alcoholic beverages" (EPHP 9/2/1939 8:6). He was convinced that the time was right for the carbonated bottling industry to stand on its own.

Gardner, known at that point in his life as Lon or Lonnie, galvanized into action. With \$1,750 in venture capital, he opened the Purity Bottling & Manufacturing Company in April 1906. The original works, located "in a small adobe shack at Texas and Campbell Streets"¹ (EPHP 9/2/1939 8:6), filled about 200 dozen bottles per day (Figure 5-49). This hand-operated plant produced a sufficient quantity of "pop" to warrant the purchase of "a lovable, but spavined old horse, called Friday" from Joe Wright at a cost of \$15.00 (EPHP 9/2/1939 8:6). Although Friday's front legs were so stiff that they would hardly bend, he was able to pull a "little wagon [Gardner] had bought from the Myers Vehicle Co. with a small payment down and the rest eventually" (EPH 2/11/1928 1:1). At

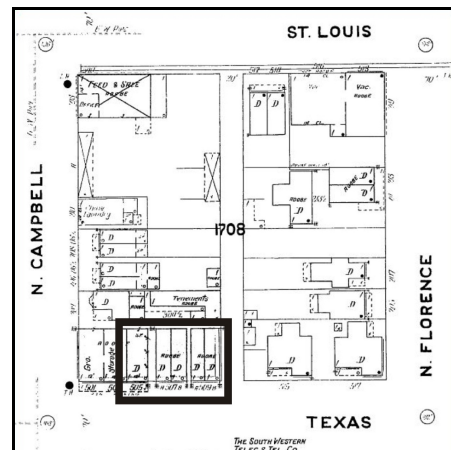


Figure 5-49 – Probable location of Purity Bottling & Mfg. Co. (Sanborn map 1908)

¹ Gardner's memory seems to have slipped during the 33 year interval. Three lots at Texas and Campbell were vacant on both the 1905 and 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. A grocery store (and druggist in 1905) sat at the other corner, with drug storage next door. Near the corner were other businesses, the Orpheus Theater, and dwellings, not one of which could hardly be called a "shack." He may have been in one of the five vacant adobe stores just north of the drug storage unit on Campbell St.

that time, Gardner made all his own deliveries.

Gardner claimed that he “pioneered soft drinks into stores and soda stands” (EPH 2/11/1928 1:1). He encouraged high school (and younger) students to set up their own small businesses in the form of soda stands where each passerby could slake his or her thirst with a cold bottle of Purity’s Pale Dry Ginger Ale or one of his other flavors. Success inspired other students to set up their own stands made from empty boxes, and young entrepreneurs, many of whom later became successful El Paso businessmen, soon were vending Purity beverages throughout the city (EPHP 9/2/1939 8:6).

Gardner wrote a short but interesting piece for fellow bottlers in *The Bottler’s Helper* in 1907:

On entering the field with competition, I find the best medium for gaining recognition is to have each bottle labelled. (*sic*). Labels are cheap and a boy can do the work at a small expense. It adds to the appearance of the goods, and in fact increases the consumption. It attracts the consumer who is curious enough to try to drink. If you try the labelling (*sic*) idea you will find that it pays (Blumenthal [1907] 1988:260).

There are two interesting implications from this article. First, Gardner was obviously highly involved in the bottling industry even at this early period of his career. This may indicate that he had some experience in bottling (other than delivering for El Paso Ice and Refrigeration Co.) previous to the beginnings of Purity. Second, he implies that his bottles had paper labels. The other common labeling device at the time was embossing. Embossing was certainly not cheap or easily applied. That implication is far reaching in that it also suggests that his competitors may have used paper labels. Thus far, I have discovered no examples of paper labels on early El Paso bottles.

Apparently Gardner had begun expansion even at this early date. Phoenix, Arizona collectors report digging numerous bottles from Purity Bottling & Mfg. Co. in city dumps. This created somewhat of a mystery for them. Gardner did not label his Purity bottles with the El Paso city designation, so Arizona collectors assumed it was an Arizona company, and some thought the bottles may have belonged to the Purity Soda Works of Tucson (personal communication, Michael R. Miller). The railroad connection, however, made intercity (and interstate) commerce not only possible but fairly easy.

By 1908, Gardner, along with a partner, Benjamin A. Booth, began listing the company in the City Directory. Booth had come to El Paso in 1903 and worked for two years at Busy Bee Confectionery before operating a boarding house at 215 Wyoming. He continued to maintain the boarding house when he entered in business with Gardner. Born in 1867 in Missouri, Booth rented a home where he lived with his wife, Margarite, and their eight-year-old son, Denitt, in 1910. The couple had been married for nine years. After leaving Gardner, Booth became a wholesale merchant. Purity became such a success that Gardner and Booth were forced to seek larger quarters, moving the firm to 613 San Antonio St. in 1909 (EPCD 1903-1910; 1910 census) (Figure 5-50).

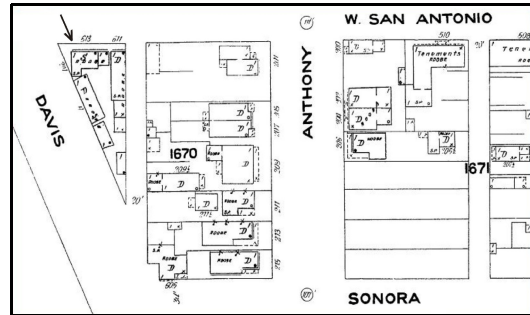


Figure 5-50 – Location of Purity Bottling & Mfg. Co., 613 San Antonio St. (Sanborn map, 1908)



Figure 5-51 – Purity wall ad – ca. 1911 or later (M.G. McKinney collection)

In 1909, Booth was replaced by William R. Piper, a cashier for Austin & Marr. Like Booth, Piper had come to El Paso in 1903. He was a cashier for Southwest Telephone & Telegraph prior to joining Austin & Marr (a real estate, rental, loans, and insurance company) in 1910. Piper was born in Tennessee in 1883. He boarded with Louis R. Villars in 1910 and listed himself on the census that year as “Book Keeper” in “Real Estate.” He remained with Austin & Marr until the firm became the James L. Marr Co., where he held the position of secretary in 1916. He continued his position and added the responsibilities of secretary and treasurer for the Marr Brothers Investment Co. and treasurer for the Mortgage Trust Co. from 1918 to 1923 (EPCD 1903-1923).

By 1925, the firm had become the Marr-Piper Co. with Piper as president; he was concurrently secretary treasurer for the Southwestern Tourist Camp Co. The following year, he had dropped the tourist business but remained top man at Marr-Piper. Marr-Piper continued in existence until 1937, although Piper became involved in various other real estate, rental, and loan agencies concurrent with his activities in Marr-Piper into the 1940s (EPCD 1925-1944).

John Shea, a new arrival in El Paso, joined Piper and Gardner in 1910. By this time, Purity was painting ads on the sides of buildings in El Paso (Figure 5-51). Gardner, Piper, and Shea continued their involvement together until the merger with Houck & Dieter in 1912. With the dissolution of Purity, Shea became a conductor from 1913 to 1916, then worked as a jitney operator and elevator man at the smelter until he retired in 1920 (EPCD 1923-1940). Gardner remained in the business.

Containers and Artifacts

Purity bottled Pale Dry Ginger Ale along with other flavors, possibly soda and mineral waters. By 1906, when the company began business, the crown cap was popular and appeared on all Purity bottles. Although only two embossed bottle styles are known, Gardner (the manager) implied in 1907 that Purity used paper labels to identify its products (Blumenthal [1907] 1988:260). Thus far, I have been unable to locate any Purity bottles with paper labels or find any advertisements.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Light Blue; Solarized Amethyst; Colorless

Size (in cm.): 23.0 (h); 6.1 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: ca. 8 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with embossed vertical ribs around the heel

Front Description

Body: Embossed plate mold - PURITY (downward arch) / BOTTLING / & / MFG. CO. (upward arch)

Heel: Embossed vertical ribs

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed vertical ribs

Base: Embossed - PURITY

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: [1906-1912] Bottles of this type were likely used during the entire life of the company from 1906-1912.

Collection(s): Becky Garrett Collection, El Paso Museum of History; author's collection.

Variation

The less fancy variation may have been the original bottle (therefore, only used during the first 2-3 years), or it may have been a replacement during a period of shortage (Figure 5-52). Although these only appear to have been made in light blue color, the only other differences are the lack of the ribbed heel, no “PURITY” embossed on the base, and a slightly lesser capacity (ca. 7.5 oz.; 19.4 cm. tall and 6.0 cm. in diameter). I have only seen one example.

The fluted variation, on the other hand, is quite common (Figure 5-53). Like the Houck & Dieter six-panel bottles described in Chapter 6a, these were so ubiquitous in the collectors’ dig at Chamizal in the 1950s that many collectors just threw the bottles into a pile in disgust. Also, as noted in the Houck & Dieter section, this indicates that the decision to merge must have been pretty sudden. Virtually overnight, a large supply of embossed bottles became obsolete, and the Empire Bottling Works management simply discarded them all. See Table 5-2 for a chronology of these bottles.



Figure 5-52 – Purity’s plain-bottom bottle Figure 5-53 – Purity’s fluted-bottom bottle

Table 5-2 - Bottle Chronology for Purity Bottling & Manufacturing Co.

Style Changes	Dates
Plate mold; no flutes	1906-1908?
Plate mold; fluted heel	1906-1912

Empire Bottling Works (1912-1924)

History

Just who initiated the move to combine Purity and Houck & Dieter in 1912 is unknown, but Houck & Dieter, the older, longer established firm, transferred most of its officers into the new company, while only Gardner remained from Purity (Figure 5-54). In any event, El Paso was growing, and competition had increased. In addition to the Magnolia Bottling Co. that had just started carrying Coca-Cola the previous year, Southwestern Liquor Co. had its own line of carbonated beverages, and both Crystal Bottling Works and Woodlawn Bottling Co. had begun operations. Sales may have declined for Houck & Dieter with the death of J. Philip Dieter in 1907, so Abe Heineman may have had his eye on Gardner's phenomenal success. Regardless of the cause, the two firms merged late in 1912 (EPCD 1912-1913; EPH2/11/1928 1:1; EPT 5/1923 "50 Years of Progress," n. p; also see Lockhart & Olszweski 1995).

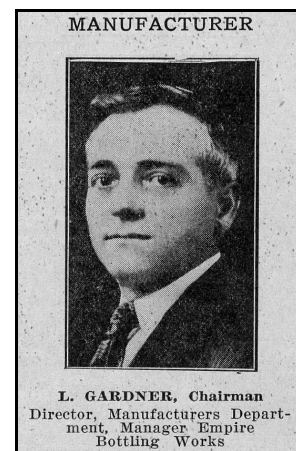


Figure 5-54 – Lon Gardner in 1920 (El Paso Chamber of Commerce 1920)

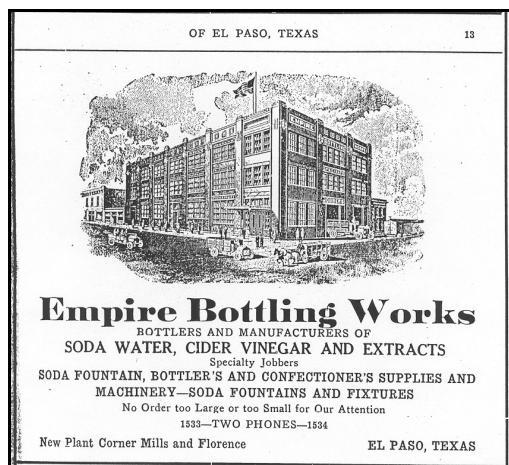


Figure 5-55 – Empire Bottling Works, 1918 (El Paso City Directory 1918:18).

The new business chose a new location, moving into a large building at 400-402 Mills Ave. (see Figure 5-55). Following the precedent of Houck & Dieter, Empire Bottling Works incorporated with a capital of \$25,000. Abe M Heineman remained as president (from Houck & Dieter) with Hugo Eichwald as vice president, Rudolph A Nooke as secretary and treasurer, and Lon Gardner as general manager. Although Nooke was a newcomer to the board of directors, he had been the bookkeeper for Houck & Dieter since his arrival in El Paso in 1907. The new position may have been a reward for his long and devoted service.

The new corporation, although best noted for its carbonated beverage production in 1913 (Figure 5-56), became a leader in other areas. It became noted as a beverage supply company with one of the largest selections of soda fountain accessories and equipment in the southwest. These included extracts, colors, fruits and syrups, fruit paste, liquid carbonic gas, charging

outfits, soda fountains, ice cream cones, lemonade straws, ice cream powder, and ice cream machinery. In addition, the firm carried bakers' supplies and supported a large candy factory under the same roof. If this were not enough, Empire also began to offer Electro-Puro Table Water for both commercial and home use about 1916 (Figure 5-57). Along with a change in his career, Gardner's lifestyle altered in another way. In 1914, he married the former Nell Corbett who had come to El Paso in 1911 (EPCD 1907-1913; EPH 2/11/1928 1:1; EPHP 9/22/1964 1B:2; EPT 5/23/1915:19; 5/26/1915:14; 5/30/1915:24; 6/24/1970 1B:2).

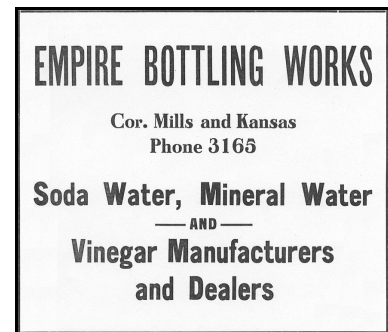


Figure 5-56 – First Empire Bottling Works city directory ad, 1913

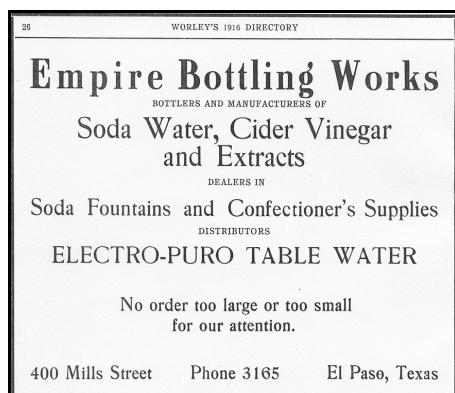


Figure 5-57 – Empire ad for 1916, featuring Electro-Puro Water (El Paso City Directory 1916:26)

Nell Corbett, along with her husband, who was in ill health, and her daughter, Isabella, moved from New Orleans to El Paso in 1911. Her husband died soon after, and Nell began her career as a businesswoman. She first worked for City National Bank but changed to the El Paso Foundry & Machine Co. Although she married Gardner in 1914, she remained active in business outside the bottling works. She established Mrs. Lawrence Gardner's Commercial College in 1928, an institution that set high standards for its students. Although she became the secretary of

Empire Products Corp. in 1930, she continued to enjoy her outside interests as she maintained the school until 1943. That year, she began to work for Empire on a full-time basis (EPCD 1930; EPT 7/9/1978 D1:1).

Empire grew rapidly. In 1917, the firm constructed a “five story brick building which houses the largest soft drink supply business in the entire country” on the corner of Mills Ave. and Florence St.² (Figures 5-58 & 5-59). Empire now

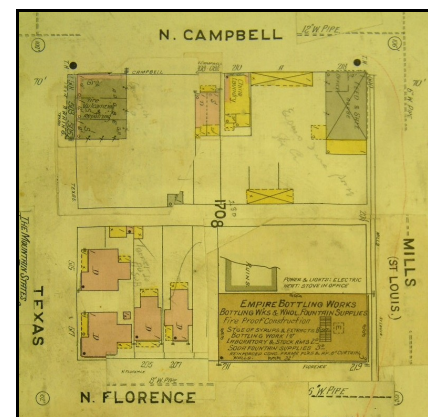


Figure 5-58 – Empire Bottling Works, Florence & Mills (Sanborn map, 1927)

² This report must be in error. All of the drawings (and the only photo I have seen) show the building as three stories in height. Gardner must have really liked the area. Purity, Empire

serviced “a territory from San Antonio to Phoenix” (EPH 7/14/1920 5:5). At some point during 1920, Empire opened a branch in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and advertised its products as being available from both plants. The Juárez location was not mentioned in 1919 ads, and the plant was probably closed with the change to Empire Products Corp. in 1925 (EPHP 7/3/20 12:1). Empire strongly advertised its “Fruit Thrills (fruit-flavored sodas) and Empire Belfast-Type Ginger Ale, offered by both plants (Figure 5-60). Although Heineman retained his position as president of the corporation, he moved to Los Angeles to expand operations to the West Coast (EPCD 1917).

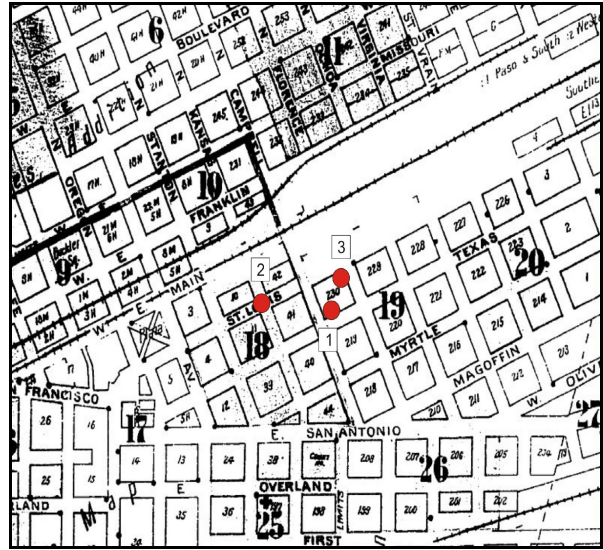


Figure 5-59 – Locations of Purity (1), Empire’s first location (2), and Empire’s second location (3) (all superimposed on the 1905 Sanborn map)



Figure 5-60 – Fruit Thrills Ad – note paper label over the embossed bottle (*El Paso Herald* 7/3/1920)

About this same time, Gardner may have done some growing on his own. In 1916, he opened the Deming Coca-Cola Bottling Works, Deming, New Mexico. Since Hope Smith had captured the rapidly expanding Coca-Cola franchise for El Paso, branching into New Mexico was Gardner’s only opportunity to capitalize on this popular brand. With his wife and several of the Empire Bottling Works officers, Gardner expanded the Deming firm into the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. The franchise used the same style of six-panel bottles previously used by Houck & Dieter and concurrently used by the Empire Bottling Works. Eventually, Southwestern grew to four branches in New Mexico and seven in Arizona before most of the plants closed in 1929. See Lockhart and Miller (2007) for the full story.

Bottling Works, and Empire Products Corp. were all located within a two-block area (see Figure 5-58).

Empire also attempted to take advantage of the fad for near beer or cereal beverages with the advent of Texas Prohibition on April 15, 1918. By mid-June, just two months after the law went into effect, the company advertised Famo (EPT 6/27/1918), a near beer brewed by Schlitz and later a cereal beverage only labeled by the company name, Schlitz. By 1922, however, Empire carried Budweiser, still in near-beer form (Figure 5-61). Records are unclear about how long Empire continued to sell near beer, but the general trend had weakened significantly by 1924. An Empire ad in 1918 (EPT 9/15/1918) also provides a look at where Empire products were sold in El Paso. The ad lists 39 dealers carrying Empire's Belfast Type Ginger Ale. These included ten confectionaries and 15 drug stores.



Figure 5-61 – Empire Budweiser near-beer ad (El Paso Times 8/18/1920)

By 1920, Empire had expanded its capitalization to \$100,000 and was doing a \$500,000 a year business. The business employed four drivers, four clerical workers, two people in the shipping department, 17 general laborers, two salesmen “in the field,” and two “in the city.” Empire’s territory at this point included all of New Mexico, Arizona to Phoenix, Southern Colorado, and western Texas to Fort Worth and Big Bend. Texas business was handled by using two railroads, the Galveston Harrison & San Antonio and the Texas & Pacific, both running out of El Paso. In addition, the firm was “doing an excellent cash business in Mexico and has placed orders as far South as Mexico City” (El Paso Chamber of Commerce 1920:104).

The operation was obviously big. Railroad carloads of glassware, bottles, and straws were commonly stored on the premises, and the list of wholesale supplies was impressive:

beverages, baker supplies, carbonators, cash registers, chairs, confections, cider, cigar display cases, club room supplies, coffee urns, colors, cooling coils, crushed fruits and syrups, chocolate, cocoa powders, dispensing fountains and supplies, draft arms, drink mixers, extracts, fixtures, furniture-steel, gas charging outfits, ginger ale, grape juice, glass-ware-fountain, goose necks, ice cream powder, ice boxes, ice tools, paste colors, root beer outfits, silverware, soda fountains, soda tanks, steam tables, tools, syrup jars, vinegar, water coolers, in addition to all supplies and accessories for fountains, bottlers and ice cream makers (El Paso Chamber of Commerce 1920:104).

Expansion continued in 1922 with the addition of Edmundson B. Link as vice president in charge of the candy department and the addition of Empire-Link Industries as a selling organization for Empire Bottling Works (Figure 5-62). Link was first noted in El Paso in 1920 as a Trust Officer for El Paso Bank & Trust Company. He moved to Crombie & Co. the next year, becoming president there by the time he joined Empire. During the corporate reorganization, Gardner (now known as Lawrence) moved up to a position as vice president, although he maintained his job as general manager. Nook retained his position as treasurer, and Edmond Dorsey became secretary for the corporation. At that time, the Empire list of products included beverages, crushed fruits and syrups, cider, vinegar and extracts, along with soda fountains and fixtures, bottler and confectioner supplies and machinery (EPCD 1920-1924). But another, far-reaching reorganization was about to happen.

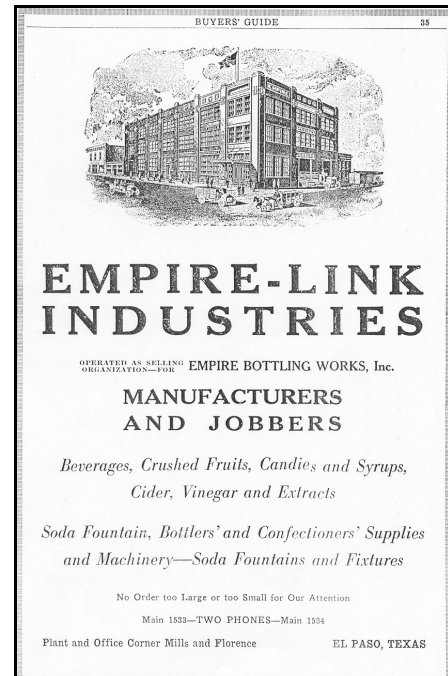


Figure 5-62 – Empire-Link ad (El Paso City Directory 1922:35)

Containers and Artifacts

The Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Connection

I need to begin this section on a personal note. This will be the fifth chronology I have written for the six-panel bottles used by Houck & Dieter, Empire Bottling Works, Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Empire Products Corp., and the New Mexico Coca-Cola Bottling Co. The first of these was the original edition of this book (Lockhart 2000). At that time, I had not looked into New Mexico soda bottles, so I was unaware of the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. and Gardner's involvement with it. Thus, the chronology only included Houck & Dieter and the Empire incarnations. I also made some assumptions that were invalid, although they fit the evidence available at the time.

The second attempt was a paper I presented at the 12th Jornada Mogollon (archaeology) Conference in 2001 (Lockhart 2003). By this time, I knew about Southwestern – as it turned out, just enough to make the connection with the six-panel bottles. By then, I also understood a bit more about manufacturing transitions and could date the shift from mouth-blown to machine-

made bottles better. However, I still had not seen some key bottles and continued to make false assumptions that still fit the available data. At least I took better photos.

In 2004, I began a series of articles on dating El Paso bottles for the El Paso Archaeological Society (Lockhart 2003a:29).³ Since this only addressed El Paso bottles, the chronology was limited to those containers. However, I knew a great deal more by that time, had a larger sample of Empire six-panel bottles, and *still* made a false assumption about a major gap that I misunderstood.

About that time, I met Michael R. Miller, an Arizona soda bottle collector. Mike and I almost immediately hit it off pretty well and soon discovered our mutual interest in six-panel bottles. We eventually decided to co-author an article on the Southwestern bottles, with Mike researching the Arizona history, the New Mexico side being my department, and both of us in a collaborative effort on the bottles. The research grew to the point where we published in book form in 2007 (Lockhart & Miller 2007). Collaboration and cooperation are the ways to go. Mike connected with just about every soda bottle collector in Arizona (and some in surrounding states, including New Mexico), and I was by that time working with the Bottle Research Group, and also with Bill Porter, one of the most knowledgeable guys about hobble-skirt Coca-Cola bottles on the planet. By the time of publication, with the help of a bunch of collectors and archeologists, we had the Southwestern chronology down to which individual bottles were ordered by Southwestern each year and which years the firm ordered more than once.

That brings us to the present and two major breakthroughs. First, I finally figured out why I could not find any six-panel bottles used by Empire between 1923 and 1928. They do not exist. Empire followed a national trend toward generic bottles with paper labels. This chronology (I hope) will be my final one (and I reserve the right to eat those words in the future). Second, I finally spotted some parallels between Empire's non-six-panel bottles and the ones used by Southwestern, especially with ginger ales and Orange Crush. Some of the bottles I had originally classified in the same group with the six-panel bottles will now appear in a ginger ale section – where they belong.

³ At that time EPAS was catching up its journal *The Artifact*, so the publication date was 2003, even though I wrote the article in 2004.

Empire Bottle Overview

The first Empire Bottling Works advertisement in the 1913 El Paso City Directory offered only “Soda Water, Mineral Water.” A 1915 ad included Royal Purple Grape Juice. In 1917, the directory added “ELECTRO-PURO TABLE WATER.” The Empire brand (later called Fruit Thrills) and Pale Dry Ginger Ale, however, were bottled from the company’s inception as carry-overs from the Purity Bottling & Mfg. Co. A second ginger ale is mentioned, probably the Belfast Type Ginger Ale advertised in 1920 (EPH 6/9/1920 4:1; EPHP 9/2/1939 8:6; EPT 5/23/1915, 4/5/1953 B13:4). Empire’s contribution to Prohibition was the distribution of Famo, a near-beer brewed by Schlitz, followed by the Schlitz brand, itself. The firm quickly replaced both of those with Budweiser near-beer.

Empire’s Six-Panel Bottles – The House Brand

The main house brand fruit flavor bottles used by the company were copies of the containers used by Houck & Dieter (see Angus & Harris 1993:143-151 or the Houck & Dieter section of this book, Chapter 5a). These bottles were manufactured with six embossed panels that advertised the company and were initially called “‘Empire’ Beverages” in a 1915 ad (EPT 5/23/1915). The ad proclaimed that “Now a better acquaintance will prove their fine fruity flavor and wholesome goodness. A treat for every member of the family” and included price information: “A case of two dozen bottles for One Dollar of any good dealer with a rebate allowance of 25 cents for empty case of bottles.” This may be the earliest use of the deposit system in El Paso. At least as late as 1904 (see Chapter 2), Houck & Dieter was begging dealers for the return of bottles.

Conversion from Mouth to Machine

Two important conversions occurred during the time Empire used the six-panel bottle. Although both are addressed in Chapter 2, a brief summary is appropriate here. The first concerns the transition from mouth-blown techniques to machine manufacture. Because the American Bottle Co. held the exclusive Owens Automatic Bottle Machine license to make beer and soft drink bottles, other soda bottle manufacturers began developing semiautomatic machines by at least 1905. Although there were some hold-outs as late as the early 1920s, most soda bottle makers were using machines by the 1912-1914 period. The earliest Empire six-panel bottle was mouth-blown into a two-piece mold with a cup bottom, probably at the inception of the Empire Bottling Works in 1912 (Figure 5-63). I have used the mouth-blown example as a basemark in the descriptions of the variations below.

The second, six-panel bottle ordered by Empire was machine made but was otherwise identical to the mouth-blown variation, with no embossed volume information. The Gould Act of 1913, an amendment to the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, required that volume be clearly marked on containers, mandatory by September 1914. Always on the cutting edge of bottle and soft drink improvement, it is virtually certain that Gardner initiated the change to bottles with volume markings during 1914.

Enter the Paper Label

By 1920, a diamond-shaped paper label was affixed to the bottle's center and extended across three of the six panels (see Figure 5-60). The product was touted as "Fruit Thrills From. . . Electric Mills. . . The entire flavoring principle of the fruit electrically prepared, combined with pure cane sugar, carbonated and held captive, in sterilized bottles" (EPH 7/3/1920 12:1). The product was available from both the El Paso and Juárez plants. Orange Thrills was advertised as "The Re-Incarnated Soul Of The Tree Ripened Fruit" (EPH 7/14/1920 12:5). Another ad boasted "Lemon Thrills for Thirsty Ills Is Surely Palate Pleasing" (*El Paso Morning Times* 7/11/1920 20:5). These diamond-shaped paper labels were almost certainly used until the reorganization that terminated the Empire Bottling Works and began the Empire Products Corp. ca. 1924. At that point, the company ceased using the six-panel bottles (until 1929) and began using generic bottles with rectangular paper labels.



Figure 5-63 – Empire six-panel bottle – mouth blown

Method of Manufacture: Blown in Mold

Color: Solarized Amethyst, Colorless

Size (in cm.): 20.2 (h); 6.1 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: ca. 8 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with six vertical panels created by embossed lines forming arches at the top, just below the shoulder

Front Description

Body: Embossed in four vertical panels (lettering read with bottle on its side from crown to heel), EMPIRE / BOTTLING WORKS / EL PASO / TEXAS

Heel: Bare

Back Description

Body: See front description

Base: Embossed - EMPIRE

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: [1912] These mouth-blown bottles were almost certainly only ordered once. As noted earlier, Gardner was always at the cutting edge concerning any aspect of beverage bottling. It is almost certain that he ordered machine-made bottles as soon as he knew they were available. These mouth-blown bottles are uncommon at best, probably scarce (I have only found two). This suggests that Empire used them until the supply was exhausted.

Collection(s): El Paso Coliseum Collection, University of Texas at El Paso; Becky Garrett Collection, El Paso Museum of History; John Gross Collection, El Paso; Bill Ward Collection, Oro Grande, New Mexico; author's collection.⁴

Variations:

1. Mouth-blown bottle – described above
2. Machine made, no volume information

This aqua bottle was 6½ ounces in size, although that was not marked on the bottle. The heel was embossed “OS 1012,” but the bottle was otherwise identical to the mouth-blown one (Figure 5-64). The “OS” indicated that the bottle was made at the Okmulgee, Oklahoma, plant of the Graham Glass Co. prior to 1916. Beginning in 1916, Graham began using another letter at the end of the code to indicate the year the bottle was made. A “P” following the four-digit number, for example, would equal 1916 (P is the 16th letter of the alphabet).⁵ The “1012” was the model code for the six-panel bottle. This variation was probably made in 1913.

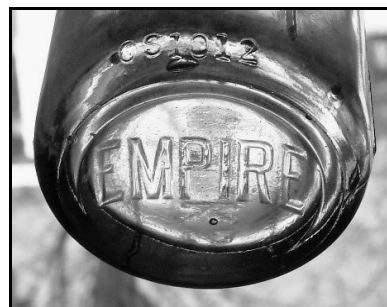


Figure 5-64 – OS 1012 code used on the heel of six-panel bottles by the Graham Glass Co.

⁴ These collections reflect all the sources I used for Empire six-panel bottles.

⁵ I am indebted to my friend, Bill Porter, for making this observation. In this dating scheme, P=1916; Q=1917; R=1918; S=1919. Graham adopted a two-digit date code in 1920.

3. 7½ -ounce bottle

Empire ordered a six-panel bottle in either 1914 or 1915 (probably the former year) that complied with the 1913 Gould Act that required volume information. This bottle was embossed “EMPIRE / BOTTLING WORKS / EL PASO / TEXAS / CONTENTS 7½ FL.OZ. / TELEPHONE No. 3165” with the last two designations appearing in the formerly empty panels.

These were also aqua in color, and were otherwise identical to the first machine-made bottles – including the OS 1012 heelmark. An interesting error on this bottle is that it was originally engraved “7/2 FL.OZ.” The engraver added a tiny “1” as an afterthought (Figure 5-65). These were 20.2 cm. tall and 6.0 cm. in diameter.

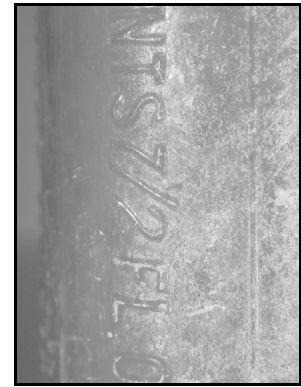


Figure 5-65 – Error marking on 7½-ounce bottle

4. 6½-ounce bottles

By at least 1917, Empire adopted the six-panel bottle in 6½-ounce size. These were again identical except for size and the “6½ FL.OZ.” embossing (Figure 5-66 & 5-67). However, these bottles were made by the Streator, Illinois, plant of the American Bottle Co. The earliest heel code I have seen was “17 S 3.” In this case “17” indicated 1917; “S” equaled Streator; and “3” was a mold code. At this point, I have seen other codes of “18 S 1”; “20 S 2”; and “21 S 2.”



Figure 5-66 – Marking on 6½-ounce bottle

What may be the final 6½ bottle in this series was marked exactly like the others, except “3729A ROOT 23” embossed on the heel.⁶ The manufacturer was the Root Glass Co., and “23” was a date code for 1923. These bottles were 19.0 cm. tall and 6.0 cm. in diameter, and they almost certainly continued in use until the reorganization of the Empire Products Corp. ca. 1924 – although the firm may have used some generic bottles with paper labels before the transition.



Figure 5-67 – Empire 6½-ounce six-panel bottle

⁶ I am amazed at how often serendipity takes place in this research. As I was writing this section, I paused to do my weekly eBay search for bottle information, and there was an auction for a six-panel Empire bottle. The bottle was the only six-panel I had seen that was made by the Root Glass Co. and the latest – 1923. The auction closed in ten hours. If I had waited another day, I would have missed it.

Because all of these six-panel bottles used by Empire were scarce to rare, several more date codes for these bottles may be found.⁷ Gardner's sister company, the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co., for example, ordered bottles at least once a year. It may be that Empire ordered that often, too. In any event, it is clear that the Empire Bottling Works used all of its bottles until they wore out. See Table 5-3 for a chronology of the six-panel bottles.

Beginning in 1920, Empire advertised the six-panel bottles with paper labels affixed over the embossing. The paper label was diamond-shaped with a drawing of fruits (e.g. oranges) both cut and whole on a twig with leaves. Across the drawing was the word THRILLS. Along the upper left edge of the label was "[?] MANUFACTURED AND" with "BOTTLING AUTHOR[?]" on the right edge. The left bottom edge stated "EMPIRE[?] BOTTLING WORKS," the right, "EL PASO, TEXAS, & JUAREZ, MEX.[?]." Empire called the brand "Fruit Thrills" (see Figure 5-60). The use of these labels almost certainly continued until the 1924 reorganization.

Table 5-3 – Bottle Chronology for Empire Beverages and Fruit Thrills

Style Changes	Company	Dates
6-panels; blown-in-mold; no capacity designation	Empire Bottling Works	1912
6-panels; machine made; no capacity designation*	Empire Bottling Works	ca. 1913
6-panels; machine made; 7½ oz.; Empire Bottling Works*	Empire Bottling Works	ca. 1914
6-panels; machine made; 6½ oz.; Empire Bottling Works	Empire Bottling Works	1916-ca. 1922
6-panels; machine made; 6½ oz.; Empire Beverages	Empire Products Corp.	1929
6-panels; machine made; 6½ oz. Beverages REGISTERED	Empire Products Corp.	1929

* Both of these bottles are very rare. I have only seen one of each of them. The machine-made bottle with no capacity designation is from the El Paso Coliseum Collection; the 7½ oz. bottle is from the author's collection.

After a period of several years when the Empire Products Corp. used generic bottles with paper labels, the firm again adopted the six-panel bottles. Both of these will be discussed in Bottles and Artifacts, Empire Products Corp. below.

⁷ I would not be surprised to eventually find bottles with "16 S" and "19 S" codes, for example.

Empire Ginger Ales

As noted above, Empire offered two different types of ginger ale, and both of these were also house brands. The Pale Dry Ginger Ale was almost certainly a hold-over from Purity Bottling & Mfg. Co., and the Belfast Type Ginger Ale almost equally certainly remained from Houck & Dieter. Since each brand was popular, the firm, wisely, carried both of them, probably from Empire's initiation in 1912. Although I completely missed it in 2000, there is an obvious sequence for Empire ginger ale bottles. It took the Southwestern bottles to make it click.

Seven-Ounce Bottles

Empire used at least four embossed bottles for ginger ale, and these roughly parallel the six-panel bottles. These may be divided according to size. Both of the early bottles held seven ounces and were much shorter than the later two. The first seven-ounce bottle was mouth blown, and I have used this one as the basis for the first two bottles.

Method of Manufacture: Blown into Mold

Color: Light Blue

Size (in cm.): 19.5 (h); 6.0-6.1 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: ca. 7 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with plate mold

Front Description

Body: Embossed plate mold - EMPIRE BOTTLING (arch) / WORKS (horizontal) / EL PASO, TEXAS. (Inverted arch)

Heel: Bare

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - 722

Base: Embossed - EMPIRE

Manufacturer: Illinois Glass Co.

Dating: [ca. 1912] Bottles of this type were almost certainly used immediately after the merger that created the Empire Bottling Works. It is likely that the bottles were only ordered once and were used until they wore out – although it is possible that bottles were reordered before the adoption of machine-made containers.

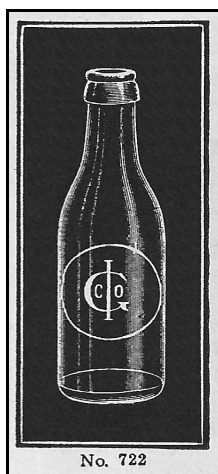


Figure 5-68 –
Illinois Glass Co.,
1908 catalog –
Bottle No. 722
(courtesy Bill
Lindsey)

The Illinois Glass Co. used double numbers for the last two digits of the model or catalog codes for all of its soda bottles (e.g., 33, 55, 122, 244, etc.). The Illinois Glass Co. 1908 catalog illustrated bottle No. 722 on page 333 as 7 5/8" tall and 2 5/16" in diameter with a round plate on the front (Figure 5-68).⁸ These codes were usually accompanied by the IGCo heelmark, almost always to the left of the code. Use of the IGCo mark began ca. 1880, and the company added model/catalog codes ca. 1895. We have confirmed use of the combined codes until ca. 1915. Illinois Glass may have dropped the IGCo logo by the time this bottle was made, or this individual model might have been an anomaly. See Lockhart et al. (2005) for a discussion of Illinois Glass Co. marks and codes.

Collection(s): TRC Fort Bliss collection.

Variations:

1. Mouth-blown variation (above)
2. Machine-made

About 1914, Empire adopted a very similar bottle that was machine-made in aqua color. The bottle was essentially the same shape, although the neck was a bit longer. The front plate was embossed “EMPIRE BOTTLING (arch) / WORKS / CONTENTS 7 FL. OZ. (both horizontal) / EL PASO, TEXAS. (Inverted arch)” (Figure 5-69). The word “WORKS” in the mouth-blown bottle was centered in the plate, but it is above center in the machine-made variation to allow for the volume information. The volume information is in much smaller letters than the other embossing.

The back heel was embossed “OP 79” – a mark used by the Okmulgee, Oklahoma, factory of the Graham Glass Co. The lack of a letter or two-digit date code indicates that the bottle was made prior to Graham’s inception of date codes in 1916. This style was almost

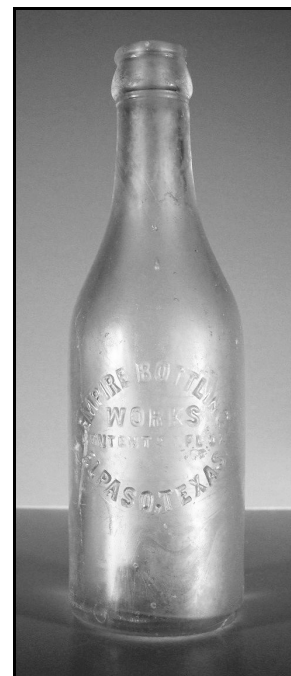


Figure 5-69 – Early machine-made ginger ale bottle, Empire Bottling Works

⁸ These measurements in inches match the corresponding cm. designation, confirming the bottle identification.

certainly adopted to comply with the 1913 Gould Act, requiring volume information. Volume information became mandatory as of September 1914.

Ten-Ounce Bottles

Belfast Type Ginger Ale was first advertised by at least September 15, 1918 (EPT) as “the real smack of old Ireland[,] a superior domestic product.” It further suggested, “Try a bottle today and remember ever after its bewitching goodness.” The *El Paso Herald* on June 6, 1920, used the heading, “DON'T BE A PUSSYFOOT / GET A REAL MAN'S DRINK / EMPIRE BELFAST TYPE GINGER ALE.” The ad went on to inform prospective drinkers that the product “invigorates the whole human system, provokes the appetite, assists digestion and resists the heat. Sip it like champagne and you will never be satisfied with un-Irish imitations. At better dealers in western America and in the famous Juarez Highballs, across the Rio Grande” (EPH 6/9/1920 4:1). Note the inference to U.S. Prohibition, only six months old at the time.

The depicted bottle had a crown cap and slightly rounded heel. No embossing was evident; the product was identified by a diamond-shaped paper label on the body with a small shield at the upper point (used often by the Empire Products Corp. – see next section). Descending from the shield in highlighted rectangles were “SUPERIOR” on the left and “DOMESTIC” on the right with circles at right and left corners enclosing EBW monograms. The words “GINGER ALE” were in a solid bar extending across the center with “EMPIRE BOTTLING WORKS” along the bottom two edges, broken at the “l.” In the triangle created between the crest and the “GINGER ALE” bar was printed “MADE IN / EL PASO / U. S. A.” with “BELFAST / TYPE” in the lower triangle.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Green

Size (in cm.): 23.3 (h); 6.0 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 10 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with plate mold

Front Description

Body: Embossed plate mold - EMPIRE (arch) / BEVERAGES (horizontal) / EL PASO, TEX. (Inverted arch)

Heel: Embossed - CONTENTS 10 OUNCES / 32808 ROOT 22

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Bare

Base: Embossed - EMPIRE in concave center

Manufacturer: Root Glass Co.

Dating: [ca. 1919-ca. 1924] Empire advertised bottles of this type for Belfast Style Ginger Ale in 1919. They were probably used from about 1919 to the inception of the colorless bottle in the mid-1920s. It is certain that other bottles were ordered during this period. Some may have been generic, but Gardner seems to have preferred some embossed identification on Empire bottles. These will almost certainly have other date and manufacturer's codes.

Collection(s): Author's collection.

1. Green bottle with rounded heel (above)

The relationship between the green bottles and the 1919-1920 ads for the Empire Superior Domestic Belfast Type Ginger Ales should have been obvious to me in 2000, but I had only discovered a single ad by then (Figures 5-70 & 5-71). The 1906 Illinois Glass Co. catalog (p. 248) illustrated this type of bottle as a "Ginger Ale" bottle, "Mould No. 36." The container was described as a "desirable new bottle" with a "round bottom, but furnished with a seat the size of a nickle, so that the bottle can be made to stand up for serving." The bottles were 9 1/4" tall and 2 5/16" in diameter (Figure 5-72). This suggests that these bottles with rounded bottoms and concave centers were first made about 1906. Mould No. 36 did not appear in the 1903 catalog.

2. Colorless bottle – heel less rounded

At some point, Empire adopted a colorless bottle. Logically, the restructuring of the company was the most probable time for the change in bottles. This bottle was roughly the same



Figure 5-70 – Empire Belfast Type Ginger Ale (from El Paso newspaper ad)

Figure 5-71 – Green, round-heeled, Empire ginger ale bottle (David Cole collection)

Figure 5-72 – Illinois Glass Co., 1906 catalog – round heeled ginger ale bottle (courtesy Bill Lindsey)

shape, but the heel was much less rounded. The only example I have found was made in 1928 and will be discussed in the section on the Empire Products Corp. bottles. The last two entries in Table 5-4 are very rough estimates based on bottles I have seen.

Gardner's other firm, the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co., used very similar, colorless bottles for Old Mission Ginger Ale, advertised by at least 1924. It was this connection that made me realize *why* the plate-mold bottles did not fit into the six-panel "house brand" chronology and create a table for ginger ale bottles.

Table 5-4 - Bottle Chronology for Empire's Ginger Ale Bottles

Style Changes	Dates
Colorless; plate mold; blown in mold; no capacity designation	1912-ca. 1914
Colorless; plate mold; machine made; 7 oz.; Empire Bottling Works	ca. 1914-ca. 1917*
Green; Plate mold; machine made; 10 oz.; Empire Beverages	1918-ca. 1924*
Colorless; plate mold; machine made; 10 oz. Empire Beverages	ca. 1924-ca. 1934**
Generic bottles with rectangular paper labels	ca. 1934-ca. 1939

* There may have been a generic bottle or another embossed one used during these periods.

** Empire's house brand flavor bottles may have been used during part of this time, especially after 1930.

Soda Water or Seltzer

Although Empire Bottling Works advertised "Soda Water" during its entire tenure, it is unclear whether that meant seltzer (carbonated water) or soft drinks. Unfortunately, the term has been used to mean both types of water. Regardless of the intended meaning in the city directory ads, Empire sold some striking electric blue, large siphon bottles used to dispense seltzer (Figure 5-73). These were probably sold between 1912 and 1924. Although I have heard of a colorless siphon bottle used by Empire, I do not know if it was during the Empire Bottling Works period or that of the Empire Products Corp.

Method of Manufacture: Blown in Mold

Color: Electric Blue

Size (in cm.): 30.0 (h); 10.9 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Etched

Finish: One-part with squared edges for siphon top

Top: Siphon top, stamped – EMPIRE BOTTLING WORKS / EL PASO. TEX; made from tin with two threaded sections that clamp together to form a grommet on which the main siphon top screws

Capacity: ca. 35 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Etched - THIS BOTTLE / PROPERTY OF (both slight arch), above EMPIRE BOTTLING WORKS (arch) / EPW monogram (horizontal) / EL PASO, TEXAS (inverted arch) all stenciled in an etched circle, with IS NEVER SOLD in a slight inverted arch below

Back Description

Body: Bare

Base: Etched - {Czech eagle} / THE / KOSCHERAK / SIPHON / MADE IN BOHEMIA⁹

Manufacturer: The Koscherak, Bohemia, Austria

Dating: [1912-1924] These were very likely used during the entire tenure of Empire Bottling Works. Although the siphon bottles were made in Austria, they were distributed in the U.S. by the Koscherak Siphon Bottle Works, Hoboken, New Jersey. As late as 1931, Anton F. Waltz assigned Patent No. 1,808,330 (for a Terminal Connector) to the Koscherak Siphon Bottle Works (Rich 1909). Thus, this bottle could have been made at any time the Empire Bottling Works was in business.

Collection(s): Author's collection.



Figure 5-73 – Siphon Bottle, Empire Bottling Works

Siphon Bottles

[The Siphon Bottle section is reproduced (with minor changes) from “Dating El Paso Soft Drink Bottles, Part 3: Syphon Bottles and Embossed, Machine-Made Bottles from El Paso’s Smaller Bottlers.” *The Artifact* 42:1-29 (Lockhart 2004f.)]

Both Backerman (unknown date) and Kaplan (1982:131) noted that siphon bottles were patented in England in 1813 by Charles Plinth. By at least 1872, a siphon bottle was featured in the U.S. in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*. The most useful feature of the bottles was that the

⁹ Some similar bottles reported online say “BOHEMIA, AUSTRIA.”

liquid could be withdrawn without losing the carbonation of the remaining water. Most of the early bottles were made in Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany, and France. In the late 1800s, some U.S. companies also began production. Capacities were normally 18, 28, 37, and 44 ounces (Fowler 1986:5).¹⁰

Around 1890, these bottles became popular in the United States. They are almost all high-quality containers made of thick glass to withstand heavy internal pressures. Almost all of these bottles were made using the turn-mold process. The bottle's finish is a one-part, expanded rim. The pure tin siphon head was made in three pieces: a two-part collar that fit around the bottle's finish and the valve-and-spigot assemblage that screwed into place to hold the collar tightly against the finish. Because the contents were under pressure from the carbon dioxide, opening the valve in the siphon head allowed the carbonated water to gush forth through the spigot (Clint 1976:225).

Siphon bottles were made of thick glass to withstand the 150-pound-per-square-inch pressure created during filling. Bottles were filled after they were fully assembled. Because of the high pressure and flaws in the glass, many workers wore woven steel masks and aprons along with other protective gear. These bottles were also very expensive, wholesaling about \$1.00 per case. Retail price was about \$1.50 per case (six bottles per case) along with a 50 cent deposit (Elliott 1971:11-12). After World War II, the increase in bottled club soda and sparkling waters caused a decrease in siphon use (Fowler 1986:5).

Royal Purple Grape Juice

Royal Purple Grape Juice was sold in El Paso and distributed by Empire Bottling Works at least as early as 1915 (EPT 5/23/1915), although I found no other Empire ads for the product. A Nations ad in the *El Paso Times* (6/28/1916) offered a special on Royal Purple Grape Juice, calling the product "Nature's Gift from the Vineyard to you. The Grape Juice with a body—quality and that delightful grapey flavor. Made from the famous New York Concords scientifically pressed and bottled." The ad continued to say that "served with crushed ice it makes an unexcelled Summer beverage that satisfies and makes you forget the warm weather." Special prices for that week included:

6-OUNCE BOTTLES, PER DOZEN

\$1.00

¹⁰ Despite these size ranges, all the siphon bottles used by Empire were 35 ounce.

½ - PINT BOTTLES, PER DOZEN	\$1.60
1 - PINT BOTTLES, PER DOZEN	\$2.50
1 - QUART BOTTLES, PER DOZEN	\$4.75
½ - GALLON BOTTLES, PER DOZEN	\$8.00

Very small bottles (contents about four ounces), embossed “ROYAL PURPLE” just below the shoulder, were found at the El Paso Coliseum site in relative abundance (Lockhart & Olszewski 1995). The colorless containers measure 13.1 cm. in height and 5.3 cm. in diameter. Larger bottles of the drink were apparently generic with no embossing. We have very little data about Royal Purple, but the J. Hungerford Smith Grape Juice Co. apparently first offered the drink ca. April 1914, and it was advertised in at least 1915 and 1916 (Figure 5-74). Smith received a trade mark for Royal Purple in 1916 (Hull-Walski & Ayers 1989:97; McCullen 2001:119; *Midland Druggist and Pharmaceutical Review* 1914:185; Zumwalt 1980:381). The descendant firm remains in business today, but it probably ceased production of Royal Purple in 1916 or fairly soon thereafter. I have not found any references to the product after 1916. The tiny, four-ounce containers are fairly common throughout the

Southwest and possibly elsewhere. These are colorless bottles with crown finishes, and most (probably all) solarize to a distinct amethyst color.



Figure 5-75 – Royal Purple bottle (eBay)

The bottles appear in at least two variations, both originally with paper labels. The most common has “Royal Purple” embossed around the bottle just below the shoulder and a single letter on the base (Figure 5-75). A second, illustrated by Hull-Walski and Ayres (1989:97), is embossed “Royal Purple (arch) / F / GRAPE JUICE (inverted arch)” on the base. Each example we have found had a distinctive Owens scar on the base, indicating a manufacture by the Owens Automatic Bottle Machine. The Owens Bottle Machine Co. retained the license to manufacture grape juice bottles at the Toledo plant in 1909 (Lockhart et al. 2010; Miller & McNichol 2000:7; Toulouse 1971:394). Thus, the timing (1915-1916) and marking (Owens scar) indicate that the bottles could only have been made by Owens.



Figure 5-74 – Royal Purple Ad, 1915 (MagazineArt.org 2009)

Thus far, we have found four small letters embossed in the center of the bases of Royal Purple bottles: “F,” “G,” “L,” and “N.” Although the original grape juice bottle license was issued to the Toledo plant in 1909, the Fairmont factory also made grape juice bottles when it began production in 1909, and Owens may have shifted manufacture to other factories prior to 1919.

Thus, it is probable that the “L” indicates the Libbey St. factory (No. 1) at Toledo after it was rebuilt in 1912 (it was mostly used as an experimental plant prior to that time). The time period suggests that the Greenfield plant (1917-1921) would have been the likely user of the “G,” although its presence on Royal Purple bottles (1915-1916) suggests that one of the Glassboro operations (acquired in 1915 and 1917) is a more likely choice. The “F” pretty certainly indicates the Owens plant at Fairmont, West Virginia (Figure 5-76). We have observed the letter “N” beneath a “6” (or above a “9”) on a machine-made, colorless, 10-sided catsup bottle. Aside from an Owens scar, the bottle had no other markings. The mark was probably used by the Northwestern Ohio Bottle Co. during the early period of manufacture, 1909-ca. 1912, although that does not fit the date range for Royal Purple. Owens retained the license for catsup bottles, and the plant made these containers by 1909 (see Lockhart et al. 2010:57).



Figure 5-76 – F basemark – Fairmont plant, Owens Bottle Machine Co.

Electro-Puro Water or Electro Puro Table Water

The Empire Bottling Works advertised Electro-Puro Water in 1915 (EPCD 1915:26; EPT 5/26/1915, 5/30/1915) in half-gallon bottles. The first ad offered “Six Half-Gallon Bottles of Electro Puro Water Delivered to Your Home for 25c. 50c Deposit Required on Bottles and Case.” The ad was placed by the Electro Puro Water Co. “associated with Empire Bottling Co. Mills and Kansas.” An interesting point in this ad is the use of “Co.” instead of “Works” in the name of the firm. Apparently both designations were used interchangeably.

The second ad noted that Empire would send the water to “adjacent towns” – almost certainly along the railroad. The firm also offered coolers, although a separate company (not specified) had to provide the ice. This time, the ad featured “Empire Bottling Works, Distributors” and “Electro Puro Water Co., Selling Agents.” This strongly suggests that the Water Co. was actually a part of Empire. I have been unable to find any other source of information on Electro Puro Water or any ads aside from 1915.

Empire sold the water in long-necked, half-gallon bottles that were typically used for water at the time (Figure 5-77). The bottles used a Hutter-stopper, a modified Lightning-style closure that consisted of a ceramic plug with a leather gasket held in place by a wire-bale arrangement. Karl Hutter patented this type of stopper on February 7, 1893, and they became quite popular on pre-Prohibition beer bottles and, obviously, water bottles (Lockhart 2007:56).¹¹ The bottle had a paper label with “EMPIRE BOTTLING WORKS / EL PASO INC. TEXAS / ELECTOR / PURO / {drawing of some kind of insulator radiating jagged (electric) lines} / TABLE WATER” inside a shield (EPT 5/30/1915). Since these bottles were generic, only a remnant label would identify them in an archaeological context (Figure 5-78).

Orange Crush

The only evidence for the use Orange Crush by the Empire Bottling Works is an undated ad from an El Paso newspaper in the Rick Chavez collection (Figure 5-79). The ad illustrates one of the colorless Orange Crush bottles, patented in 1920. The ad also called the drink “Ward’s Orange-Crush,” a term that was used in ads by the Southwestern Coca-Cola Co., Gardner’s other company, in 1924 but “Ward’s” did not appear in subsequent ads (Lockhart & Miller 2007:64-65).

The ad in the Rick Chavez collection calls the firm the Empire Bottling Co., which, of course, brings up questions. When Nell Gardner sold the Empire Products Corp. in 1956, the new owner renamed the business the Empire Bottling Co. However, nothing in the ad fits with that late a date. Since Empire occasionally used the term “Co.” as early as 1915 (see the Electro Puro section above), this ad was almost certainly placed by the Empire Bottling Works.

Unfortunately, virtually all bottles used by the Empire Bottling Works are scarce, and I have only found a single example of the colorless Orange Crush bottle with “EMPIRE”

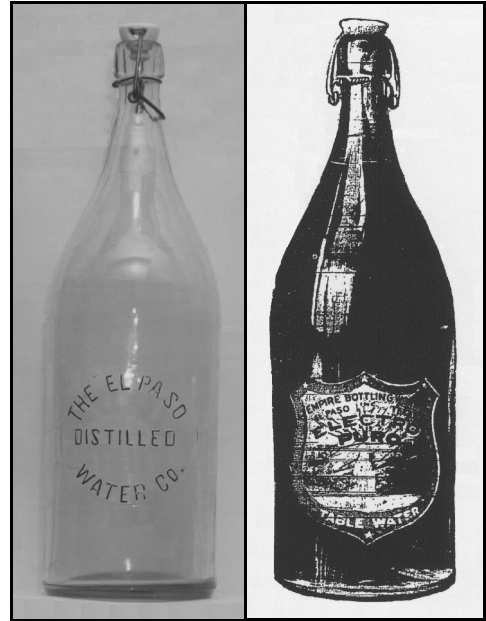


Figure 5-77 – Water bottle used by El Paso Distilled Water Co. (David Cole collection)
Figure 5-78 – Electro Puro Water bottle from Empire Water Co. (ad (El Paso Times 5/30/1915)

¹¹ This style of stopper is still used on some beer and other specialty bottles.

embossed on its base. This example has a date code of “28” (1928), and I will describe it in detail in the Empire Products Corp. bottle section. Empire probably adopted Orange Crush in late 1924 or early 1925, about the same time it picked up the product a Southwestern. Thus, it was probably only used by the “Works” during its last year. As in other Empire sections, more bottles with different date codes will almost certainly surface in the future.

Near-Beer

In an attempt to avoid bankruptcy, most breweries attempted to ride out Prohibition by offering cereal beverages – also called near-beers – that tasted like beer but lacked the alcohol. The craze was short lived. People wanted the alcohol, not just the taste. With very-wet Juárez just across the river, sales of near-beer plummeted in El Paso. As people found alternatives all over the U.S., almost all breweries dropped the near-beer brands by late 1924. Many breweries, of course (including the El Paso Brewery) did not survive Prohibition.

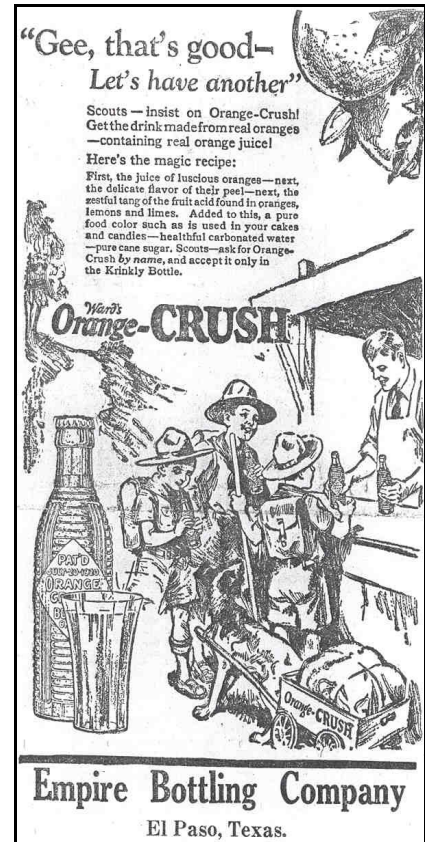


Figure 5-79 – Orange Crush ad (Rick Chavez collection)

Famo

During the early part of Prohibition, Empire distributed Famo, a near-beer brewed by Schlitz. Brewers at the time were emphasizing cleanliness by saying that “Schlitz Famo goes through a pulp filter—then through a sterilized pipe line to glass-lined tanks in a cool cellar for aging. A sterilized line carries it to automatic filling machines containing sterilized bottles, thence to Pasteurization” (EPT 6/27/1918). They further stressed the nutritional values of their products. The company boasted that

Schlitz Famo is more than a drink[.] It is a food. Every time you take a glass of Schlitz Famo you are taking something to eat. Every compound essential to the human body is present in Schlitz Famo—protein, carbohydrates, mineral matter and water—the only factor absent being fats, and they are formed in the body from the carbohydrates. These elements repair and build up broken-down tissues and impart to the body heat and muscular energy. That’s why we say Schlitz Famo is

a *worth-while* cereal beverage. It is non-intoxicating. It is healthful, refreshing and satisfying. It has the wonderful hop aroma (EPT 7/3/1918).

The ad showed a drawing of a Famo bottle. The neck label was a circle with wings extending from both sides and A PURE / Schlitz / BEVERAGES in the center. The body label was a parallelogram with a smaller parallelogram extending above the larger. The smaller one said Schlitz / FAMO / A PURE / NON-INTOXICATING BEVERAGE. To the left of the smaller parallelogram was CONTENTS / 12 FLUID / OUNCES; to the right was U.S. / GOVERNMENT / LICENSE FOR / ITS SALE / NOT REQUIRED. Below was the Schlitz emblem and MADE MILWAUKEE / FAMOUS / SERVE COLD / SCHLITZ – MILWAUKEE (Figure 80). The bottle appears to be amber in color (EPT 7/3/1918). Ads for Famo began in May 1918 and continued until at least June 1919 (EPT 6/11-1919)

A slightly later ad (EPT 7/3/1918) noted, “Famo is more than a drink. It is a food. Every time you take a glass of Schlitz Famo you are taking something to eat. . . . That’s why we say Schlitz Famo is a *worth-while* cereal beverage.” The noted saying “Schlitz, the beer that made Milwaukee famous” was now replaced by “Schlitz made Milwaukee famous.”

Schlitz

Schlitz apparently dropped the Famo brand by 1920 in favor of its own, older name. Empire now advertised “Schlitz in Brown Bottles.” The emphasis on brown bottles was probably a reminder that the brew had once been beer. Empire continued to stress that “Schlitz, the famous cereal drink. . . . is made pure—aged in glass lined tanks, cooled in filtered air in plate glass rooms, every bottle is sterilized by the Pasteur process, and the Schlitz Brown Bottle protects its purity till it reaches your glass.” Although breweries were prohibited by law from using the word “beer,” Schlitz further modified its well-known saying to read, “Schlitz The Drink That Made Milwaukee Famous” (EPH 7/15/1920 5:1). The amber bottle contained a modified version of the Schlitz paper beer label (Figure 5-81).¹² Along with the near beer, Schlitz also attempted to survive Prohibition by making other flavors or mixers, such as Fizz, Sprudel, and Ginger Ale (Bates 1992b:9), although none of these were advertised in El Paso.

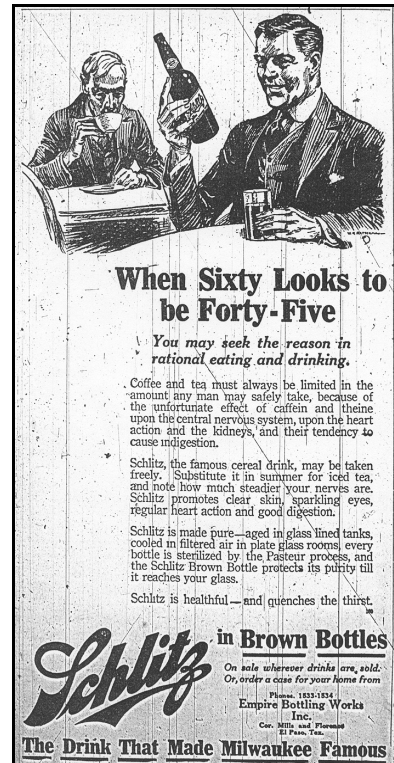


Figure 5-80 – Schlitz Famo – Empire near-beer ad (*El Paso Times* 7/3/1918)

¹² The Schlitz ad was from an old microfilm – beyond cleaning up!

Budweiser

Although Anheuser-Busch had produced a near-beer called Bevo, introduced by Anheuser-Busch in 1916 and brewed until 1930 (Drummond 2001:22), Empire advertised Budweiser (see Figure 5-61). This Budweiser, however, was also a cereal beverage, and the word “beer” was noticeably absent from the Empire Ad (EPT 8/18/1922). The ad was much simpler, showing a bottle of Budweiser and “The nation’s first choice for over half a century.” Empire Bottling Works probably continued trying to sell Budweiser near-beer until the reorganization that formed the Empire Products Corp. ca. 1924.



When Sixty Looks to be Forty-Five

You may seek the reason in rational eating and drinking.

Coffee and tea must always be limited in the amount any man may safely take, because of the unfortunate effect of caffeine and theine upon the central nervous system, upon the heart action and the kidneys, and their tendency to cause indigestion.

Schlitz, the famous cereal drink, may be taken freely. Substitute it in summer for iced tea, and note how much steadier your nerves are. Schlitz promotes clear skin, sparkling eyes, regular heart action and good digestion.

Schlitz is made pure—aged in glass lined tanks, cooled in filtered air in plate glass rooms, every bottle is sterilized by the Pasteur process, and the Schlitz Brown Bottle protects its purity till it reaches your glass.

Schlitz is healthful—and quenches the thirst.

Schlitz in Brown Bottles

*On sale wherever drinks are sold.
Or, order a case for your home from*

Please, 1923-1924
Empire Bottling Works
Inc.
Cor. Main and Flaming
El Paso, Tex.

The Drink That Made Milwaukee Famous

Figure 5-81 – Schlitz in Brown Bottles – another Empire near-beer ad (*El Paso Herald* 7/15/1920 5:1)

