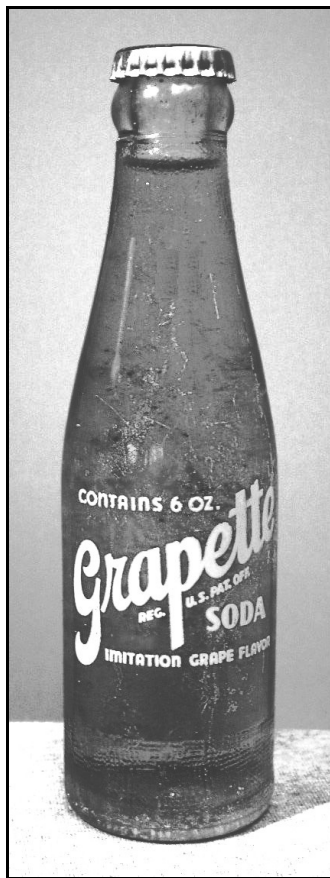


Bottles on the Border:

The History and Bottles of the Soft Drink Industry

in El Paso, Texas, 1881-2000



© Bill Lockhart 2010

[Revised Edition – Originally Published Online in 2000]

Chapter 5d

Chapter 5d

Later Empire Companies, Part II, and Duffy's Draft Beverages

Grapette Bottling Company (1941-1969)

History

Grapette was a relative latecomer to the El Paso bottling industry, although the company began shortly after franchises were first offered by the Grapette Company of Camden, Arkansas, in 1940. The founder of Grapette, Benjamin T. Fooks, originally opened a service station in Camden, Arkansas, but had left the business to begin a bottling plant by 1926. He expanded over the next few years and experimented with flavors including a grape drink. He purchased the registered trademarks, Grapette, Lemonette, and Orangette from Rube Goldstein in 1940 and officially began marketing Grapette in the Spring of that year as the B.T. Fooks Mfg. Co. In 1946, he renamed the business the Grapette Co. He sold the company in 1972 to the Rheingold Corp., a group that became the victim of a hostile takeover by PepsiCo in 1975. Pepsi sold the Grapette line to Monarch in 1977, and the brand was discontinued in the U.S. The drink is still available overseas in 1998 (Magnum 1998).

The Grapette Bottling Co. opened its doors in El Paso in 1941, during the World War II sugar rationing period and survived until 1969. In its earliest days, Grapette actually bottled Seven-Up for A.L. Randle who then distributed the product from the Seven-Up Bottling Company next door. Within a few years, however, Randle obtained the necessary equipment and began his own bottling operation (Echaniz interview; Riley 1958:269, 286-287).

The Grapette franchise in El Paso was located at 2127-29 Texas Ave. The owner of the franchise, Jennings A. Smith, a newcomer to El Paso, operated the company until 1947 when he sold it to Charles R. Magness, Jr. Magness, the former owner of a shoe store in Little Rock, Arkansas, moved the plant to 541 Magoffin Ave. to begin his new operation. Magness was apparently a better shoe salesman than a bottler; the company deteriorated until he was willing to dispose of it at "a bargain price" in 1952 (Price interview; EPCD 1942-1955; EPT 4/5/1953 B13:4).

William Kent Elliott, John Christie, and Richard C. Price bought Grapette in November 1952. Price, born in Denver, Colorado, in 1924, was and is (as of the 1996 interview) a colorful

character, lively and enthusiastic. His personality well fitted him for the roll of arbiter and peacemaker among the El Paso bottlers. He lived in Denver, Colorado, prior to the purchase of Grapette and had heard of a wholesale tobacco and candy business in Colorado Springs that he wanted to buy, but he could not get the financing. About that time, he called his brothers-in-law, Elliott and Christie, in El Paso in an attempt to raise the necessary money. Elliott and Christie said that Price's mother-in-law, Mary Wilcox, had previously bought the Grapette Bottling Company as a tax write-off but was tired of the place. He offered Price the opportunity to come to El Paso and run it. Price took the chance, and, along with Elliott and Christie, began the operation of Grapette (Price interview).

Elliott and Christie were each married to one of Price's wife's sisters. Both were long-time El Paso residents. William Elliott started out in El Paso (in 1947) as a salesman for Continental Oil Company but had switched to selling cars at Rugel Motors by 1950. He stayed at Rugel, becoming general sales manager by 1955, until he became involved with Grapette (1956) – although he continued selling cars for his father's dealership, Lone Star Motor Company. By 1957, he had already had enough of Grapette and devoted his time to the automotive industry as vice president of Lone Star Motor Company, Lone Star Equipment Company, and Lone Star Motor Finance Company (Price interview; EPCD 1947-1957).

With a small break about 1950, as assistant secretary and treasurer of C.L. Hill, Inc., an investment company, John P. Christie made a career with Pioneer Abstract & Guarantee Title Company, a group controlled by his wife's family. Like Elliott, his association with Grapette was temporary. Price's wife was the former Jean Wilcox; her father, Harvey Wilcox, owned Lone Star Motor Company and was the distributor for all GMC automotive products in El Paso except Buick (Price interview; EPCD 1950-1957).

The Grapette plant at that time employed seven people, all managed by Price. Price announced in 1954 that the company intended "to make El Paso and the vicinity more soft drink conscious" (EPT 4/25/1954 E11:2) by administering a "test survey of its 11 beverages and . . . revising ingredients of meet results of the survey" (EPHP 4/25/1954 39:1). Originally, Grapette products were marketed in six-ounce bottles packed in thirty-bottle cases. Grapette was made with almost pure grape juice – and very little carbonation.

One El Paso church purchased twelve cases of Grapette and stored their supply in a closet throughout the winter. In the spring, the church passed out the drinks to their young choir members who promptly displayed evidence of intoxication. Investigation disclosed that the

Grapette had fermented during the winter to become a weak wine. Price and the church officials agreed that in the future, Grapette would only be consumed while fresh from the bottler (Price interview).

During the 1950s, many Lower Valley agriculturists, such as Lee Moore and Sam Moore, operated vast farms that employed large numbers of Braceros from Mexico. Most of these large farms operated their own commissaries along with other support businesses, such as blacksmith shops and/or drug stores. Generally these stores were supplied by wholesalers, such as Freedman & Bendolin who offered low-quality gloves and other supplies to Braceros at inflated prices (Price interview).

These commissaries also carried large quantities of bottled sodas. Even though many of the Braceros would throw away the bottles instead of returning them, the high-volume sales attracted bottlers like Price to the Lower Valley trade. Price would have his drivers load their trucks until he was “afraid the tires would blow” and sent them to the Lower Valley farms. The lucrative trade continued until the late early 1960s when the bottlers were “run out by pills, powder, and punch mix” (Price interview).

Price became good friends with John Yowell, owner and manager of Barq’s Bottling Co. Because the two men could trust each other, they devised ways to use cooperation as a tool to benefit both companies. Between them, they controlled 85-90% of the flavor business in El Paso, so they divided the public schools between them – Barq’s would have a machine in one school, Grapette/Empire in the next. That way each company would have less stops, which added up to less unproductive driving time, but would still vend approximately the same amount of product. It was a situation where both companies could gain and no one would lose (Price interview).

Bottles and Artifacts

In the 1950 El Paso City Directory, the Grapette Bottling Co. advertised Grapette, Orangette, and Botl-o, all available through the Grapette franchise. An ad for Mason’s Old Fashioned Root Beer first appeared in the Summer 1953 telephone directory. A 1953 *Times* article referred to Botl-o as “Botlo multiple flavor drink” (EPT 4/5/1953 B13:4). The *Times* added Lemonette in 1954, and the *Herald Post* included five Botl-o flavors along with Squirt and the Empire flavors inherited from Empire Products Corporation in 1956 (EPHP 4/28/1956 F12:1; EPT 4/25/1954 E11:2).

Grapette in 6-Ounce Bottles

Grapette was originally produced in 6-ounce bottles packaged in thirty-bottle cases, usually selling for \$1.00 per case. Although Grapette bottles held almost as much beverage as the 6½ to 7-ounce bottle generally used at the time, they were much smaller because they were made with 50% less glass (Figure 5-122). Although this made a more fragile bottle, it was much lighter and chilled notably faster than the thicker bottles. The case was lighter and three inches shorter than the typical soft drink case, but it held 25% more bottles. Not only was this easier on the drivers, it allowed the use of lighter delivery vehicles (Magnum 1998). See Table 5-8 for significant Grapette dates.

Table 5-8 – Significant Dates for Grapette Bottles (after Magnum 1998)

Event	Date
Grapette introduced by B. T. Fooks Mfg. Co. (6-ounce)	1940
Botl-O and Sunburst introduced	ca. 1940
Slogan: Close to Nature	1940
Slogan: The Reason is in the Bottle	ca. 1941
Slogan: Made Just Right	1941
Slogan: Thirst's Best Bet	ca. 1942?
Botl-O and Sunburst dropped	ca. 1942
Slogan: Thirsty of Not	1944
Name changed to Grapette Co.	1946
Lemonette introduced (6-ounce)	1946
Orangette introduced (6-ounce)	1947
Botl-O and Sunburst reintroduced	1948
Embossed "twist" on center body	1950
Mr. Cola introduced	1962
Lymette (short lived)	1963
Fooks sold to Rheingold Corp.	1972

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Colorless

Size (in cm.): 18.1 (h); 5.6 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: White ACL

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 6 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with light embossed stippling around neck and heel

Front Description

Neck: White ACL - Grapette (script - slight upward slant)

Body: White ACL - CONTAINS 6 FL. OZ. (horizontal) / Grapette (script) / REG. U. S. PAT. OFF / GRAPE SODA (all slightly upwardly slanted)

Back Description

Neck: Same as front

Body: White ACL - Imitation Grape Flavor (script) / INGREDIENTS / CARBONATED WATER - / CANE SUGAR - DEXTROSE / GRAPE JUICE - TARTARIC / ACID - ESTERS - CERTIFIED / COLOR / LESS THAN 1/10 OF 1% / BENZOATE OF SODA / PROPERTY OF / GRAPETTE BOTTLING COMPANY / EL PASO, TEXAS / LICENSED BY / THE GRAPETTE COMPANY / CAMDEN, ARKANSAS / COPR. 1946 T.G. CO.

Heel: Bare

Base: Embossed - 46 / 207 6 / 6 FL. OZ. / 8A / Ball (script)

Manufacturer: Ball Brothers Co. (1919-1969)

Dating: [1941-1952] Bottles of this type (although in the Copr. 1939 variation – see below) were in use in El Paso from the initial opening of the El Paso plant of the Grapette Bottling Co. in 1941 to their replacement by the new style in 1952. Although Magnum (1998) established a date of 1950 for the next bottle style, the El Paso example has a copyright date of 1952. The example described above was certainly the initial order of the Copr. 1946 style, since this one has a 1946 date code on the base.

Collection(s): Mike Morrison collection, Las Cruces; Lawrence Angus collection; Willies F. Tarrazas collection; author's collection.



Figure 5-122 –
Grapette, Copr. 1946 –
6-ounce bottle (Lynn
Loomis Collection)

Variations:

1. Copr. 1946 – Ball (see above)

2. Copr. 1946 – L-G

Price apparently ordered bottles at least annually. A bottle made by the Liberty Glass Co. (1946-1954) had a date code for 1947, the year following the order for the Ball bottle described above. This was slightly different in that it lacked the “Imitation Grape Flavor” designation that was at the top of the reverse on the Ball bottle. The reverse was otherwise identical, except that the local bottler information was placed below the “COPR. 1946.” The back heel was embossed “L-G” – with “6 FL. OZ. / 47” on the base.

It is virtually certain that the firm used at least one or two more bottles prior to adopting the new style ca. 1952. It is obvious that Price let the old bottles wear out (since I have only been able to find two of them), although he almost certainly adopted the new style in 1952 or soon thereafter.

3. Copr. 1939

Although I have only seen the “COPR. 1946” bottles with El Paso labels, it is almost certain that the earlier “COPR. 1939” bottle style was used also. The older style would have been in use from 1941 until ca 1946, when the second style came into use.

In general, the 1939 bottle had several slightly different characteristics (Figure 5-123). First, the “Grapette” in script at the neck/shoulder joint was absent. Second, the examples I have seen all had the following in white ACL on the reverse: “Close to Nature (script) / Enriched with Dextrose (script) / A DEPOSIT OF 1¢ ONLY / REQUIRED ON THIS BOTTLE / COPR. 1939 B. T. FOOKS MFG. CO. / CAMDEN, ARK.”

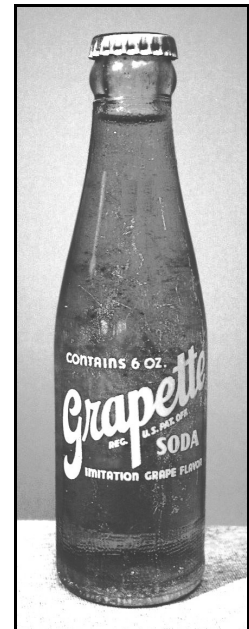


Figure 5-123 –
Grapette, Copr.
1939 – 6-ounce
bottle (Lynn
Loomis Collection)

Grapette Specialty Bottles

In 1950, the home company gave bottlers a choice of changing to seven-, eight-, or ten-ounce bottles, although the franchises do not seem to have picked up the new style until 1951 or

1952. In El Paso, a new colorless, seven-ounce “twist” bottle was introduced by Grapette (Figure 5-124), although Richard Price remembered the choice as being the ten-ounce package (Price interview). It is quite possible that the ten-ounce package was adopted later (in a light aqua or colorless bottle) but was never identified with the El Paso marking.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Colorless

Size (in cm.): 20.8 (h); 5.7 (d) heel & shoulder; 4.8 (d) center

Primary Labeling Style: White and Red ACL

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 7 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with the bottle body divided into three parts: the heel section was cylindrical with no embossing; the central section had rounded, spiraling embossed ribs leading from the heel section to the shoulder section; and the shoulder section resembled the heel section

Front Description

Neck: Bare

Shoulder: White ACL - Grapette (script) / ® / GRAPE SODA enclosed in a red and white oval

Body: Embossed spiral ribs (also called a “twist”)

Heel: White ACL - “Thirsty or Not” (with quotation marks) enclosed in a rectangle

Back Description

Neck: Bare

Shoulder: White ACL - Imitation Grape Flavor (arched script) / INGREDIENTS: / CARBONATED WATER / CANE SUGAR–DEXTROSE / GRAPE JUICE / TARTARIC ACID–ESTERS / U. S. CERTIFIED COLOR / LESS THAN 1/10 OF 1% / BENZOATE OF SODA [Note that some bottles do not contain the colon (:)]

Body: Same as front

Heel: White ACL - LICENSED BY / THE GRAPETTE COMPANY / CAMDEN, ARKANSAS / Copr. 1952 T. G. Co.–Des. Pat. 167,345 / BOTTLED BY / GRAPETTE BOTTLING COMPANY / EL PASO, TEXAS [some 7-ounce bottles do not contain the comma (,) in the patent number]

Base: Embossed - DES. PAT. 167,345 (arch) / 5 / 5 53 / H-superimposed-on-an-anchor / CONTENTS / 7 FL. OZ. (all horizontal)

Manufacturer: Anchor Hocking Glass Corp. (1938-1969)



Figure 5-124 –
Grapette, 7-ounce
“twist” bottle

Dating: [1952-ca. 1969] These bottles were likely in use from 1952 until the company ceased production in 1969. Bates et al. 1992a:G-11) show this style in use until at least 1970. How late actual bottles were marked with the El Paso location, however, is unknown to me.

Collection(s): Rick Chavez Collection; author's collection.

Orangette and Lemonette

The Grapette home office also offered Orangette (Figure 5-125) and Lemonette (Figure 5-126) in similar bottles. Orangette came with a black ACL label, but Lemonette was in red. As noted above, the El Paso Grapette advertised Orangette by at least 1950, so the drink may have been part of the production line from the opening of the plant in 1941. The first ad for Lemonette appeared in 1954, but that line was probably discontinued when Price bought the Empire plant and inherited the Empire flavors. I have only seen a single Orangette bottle from El Paso and have not yet discovered one of the Lemonettes.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Colorless

Size (in cm.): 18.0 (h); 5.2 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Black ACL

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 6 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Neck: Black ACL - Orangette (script - slight upward slant)

Body: Black ACL - Orangette (script - slight upward slant) / REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

Back Description

Neck: Same as front

Body: Black ACL - INGREDIENTS / FILTERED WATER - SUGAR / ORANGE JUICE AND OIL / FLAVOR OF PEEL - CITRIC / ACID - CERTIFIED COLOR / LESS THAN 1/10 OF 1% / BENZOATE OF SODA. / LICENSED BY / THE GRAPETTE COMPANY / CAMDEN, ARKANSAS / COPR - 1947 T.G. CO. / BOTTLED BY GRAPETTE BOTTLING CO. / EL PASO, TEXAS

Base: Embossed - J-in-a-keystone



Figure 5-125 – Orangette (Tom Leachman collection)

Figure 5-126 – Lemonette (eBay)

Manufacturer: Knox Glass Bottle Co., Jackson, Mississippi (1932-1953)

Dating: [1947-1950 or 1952] Containers of this type were probably bottled in El Paso from the inception of Orangette in 1947 until about the next style change about 1950 or 1952. Since the Jackson plant of the Knox Glass Bottle Co. adopted the K-in-a-keystone mark ca. 1952, this bottle cannot be older than that. The bottle that followed was labeled “Orangette / Lemonette” – but I have never seen one of these with any local designations.

Collection(s): Tom Leachman collection.

Botl-o

Botl-o was offered in eight-, ten-, and twelve-ounce packages. Toward the end of the period, the neck logo was upwardly-slanted. In 1955, a similar bottle was developed with a red and white label, but it may only have been in use for two or three years and may not have been used in El Paso (Bates et al 1996a:B-21). I have only seen El Paso examples in ten-ounce sizes (Figure 5-127).

G 06

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Colorless

Size (in cm.): 24.4 (h); 6.0 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: White and Green ACL

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 10 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Neck/Shoulder: White ACL with BOTL-O in letters that expanded in height to the center of the word then contracted to return to the same size as the beginning

Body: Green ACL BOTL-O (large, open letters) / REG. U. S. PAT. OFF., on a scroll superimposed over a double circle of green fading into white

Back Description

Neck/Shoulder: Same as front

Body: White ACL - COPR. 1939 BY / B. T. FOOKS MFG. CO. / TASTE (vertical open capitals) / The DIFFERENCE (inverted arch) / BOTTLED BY / GRAPETTE BOTTLING CO. / EL PASO, TEXAS.

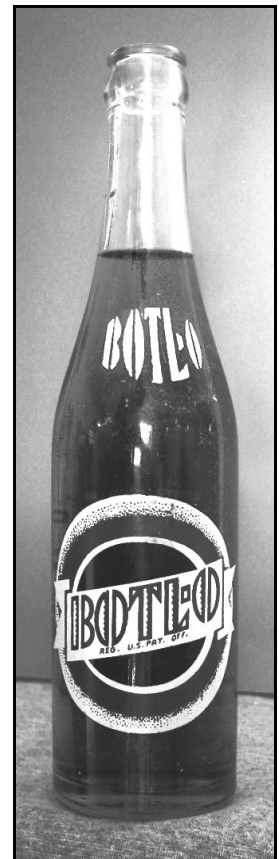


Figure 5-127 – Botl-o

Base: Embossed - 54-B-10 (arch) / 9 / T-in-a-keystone / 4A (all horizontal) / CONT. 10 FL. OZS. (inverted arch)

Manufacturer: Know Glass Bottle Co., Palestine, Texas (1941-1968)

Dating: [1941-1942; 1948-1956] Magnum (1998) indicated that Botl-O was present from the inception of the company but was discontinued “when World War II began,” although that would have meant that it was dropped before it began (the US entered World War II in 1939). It was probably discontinued about 1942 but was reintroduced in 1948. Botl-o was probably in production at the inception of the Grapette Bottling Company in El Paso in 1941, and was used until the home office discontinued the brand ca. 1942. Botl-o was discussed in a 1953 newspaper article, so the brand was probably sold locally from the post-war re-introduction in 1948 until the purchase of the Empire Products Corp. in 1956.

Collection(s): Lawrence Angus collection; Mike Morrison Collection; author’s collection.

Variations:

1. Knox Glass Bottle Co.

Interestingly, the T-in-a-keystone¹ bottles (Figure 5-128) did not contain the dimples or protrusions usually present on ACL bottles to serve as a guide to place the enamel between the mold lines. As a result, some of the bottles have the labels superimposed on the mold marks. Unfortunately, Knox did not use date codes on most bottles. In the 54-B-10 code, the “54” is a model code; “B” equals “beverage”; and “10” indicated 10 ounces (Lockhart et al. 2008).



Figure 5-128 – The T-in-a-keystone mark of the Palestine, Texas, plant of the Knox Glass Bottle Co.

¹ This bottle actually changed my life. Even after a thorough search, I could find nothing in the literature about the T-in-a-keystone mark – so I tracked it down. That resulted in the first article I wrote in *Bottles and Extras* magazine (Lockhart 2004g). Bill Lindsey, Carol Serr, and I were already meeting daily via e-mail to discuss bottles, and that article attracted David Whitten. My focus broadened to the study of manufacturer’s marks, and the Bottle Research Group was born.



Figure 5-129 – Goetz Pale Near Beer (1950 ad – Rick Chavez collection)

2. Brockway Glass Co.

The only variation I have seen had “MINIMUM CONTENTS 10 FLUID OUNCES” in white ACL below “DIFFERENCE” on the reverse, with portions of five other lines of printing that were partially worn away leaving the message illegible. The base was embossed “B-in-a-circle” – the mark of the Brockway Glass Company (1925-present). Like Knox, Brockway almost never used a date code.

Goetz Pale Near Beer

In 1950, Grapette advertised Goetz Pale Near Beer and billed it as the “NEAR BEER with the REAL Beer flavor” (Figure 5-129). The beverage was brewed by the K. Goetz Brewing Co., St. Joseph, Missouri, and Kansas City, Missouri. Grapette advertised the drink in 12-ounce bottles and cone-top cans (ad dated 1950 in Rick Chavez collection). It is currently unknown how long the company continued to offer the product.

Mason’s Root Beer

Mason’s Root Beer was bottled in an amber container with a swelled neck, similar to the export beer bottle – an obvious visual play on the word “beer” in the name (Figure 5-130).

G 07

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Amber

Size (in cm.): 22.1 (h); 6.1 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Yellow and Red ACL

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 10 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with irregular embossed horizontal ribs at shoulder and heel



Figure 5-130 – Mason’s Root Beer

Front Description

Neck: Yellow ACL - Mason's

Body: A yellow ACL rectangle enclosed a thick, red circle around a line drawing of a man behind a root beer keg. The word, MASON'S, appeared in the upper part of the circle with stars near the base, OLD FASHIONED across the barrel, and ROOT BEER in a red bar across the base of the rectangle. Stenciled into the upper right corner of the yellow background was CONTENTS, with 10 FL. OZS. in the left corner.

Back Description

Neck: Same as front

Body: Yellow ACL - BOTTLED UNDER AUTHORITY OF MASON & MASON INC., CHICAGO, ILL. / BOTTLED BY / GRAPETTE BOTTLING COMPANY / EL PASO, TEXAS

Base: Embossed - L-815/5 H-superimposed-on-an-anchor 53 / 10 FL. OZ. / 7

Manufacturer: Anchor Hocking Glass Corp. (1938-1969)

Dating: [1953-ca. 1956] Grapette first advertised Mason's in El Paso in 1953, but the brand was probably discontinued when Price bought Empire in 1956. I have only seen ten-ounce sizes from El Paso.

Collection(s): Mike Morrison Collection, Las Cruces; author's collection.

Empire Bottling Company (1956-1969)

History

Price became interested in Empire Product Corp. because Empire was a popular name in El Paso, and the company operated the Squirt franchise. Because Squirt was such a popular drink in El Paso, Price figured all the advantages were in his favor in buying Empire. In early 1956, Price purchased the Empire Products Corp., renaming it Empire Bottling Co. and initiated a \$60,000 expansion program. The company operated under the Empire name and moved into the old Empire facility at 2210 Mills Street, but it continued to produce Grapette and its associated products (Price interview; EPCD 1956-1963; EPHP 4/28/1956 F12:1).

By the time Price bought Empire, the territory had been reduced to El Paso alone; the old coast-to-coast popularity of Bronco and Old Monk had long vanished. Price, in fact, further reduced the delivery area, refusing to go beyond the first big bend of Dyer St. in Northeast El Paso. The new company did not continue to bottle Bronco or Old Monk, although Price used the same Old Monk formula in his Empire grape beverages. In fact, the only beverages still bottled by the company were Empire flavors, Squirt, Mason's Root Beer, and Grapette (Price interview).

Price finally tired of the bottling trade, although he remembered it as a “fun business.” Along with local rancher, Jay T. Calley, he became involved with Pearl Beer. Pearl was popular at the time, and sales soared. However, when Pearl’s popularity declined in 1972, Price and Calley liquidated the business (Price interview).

Raymond A. Shapiro purchased the company from Price in 1963 and continued bottling and distributing both Empire and Grapette drinks until cans became popular on the market. The change to cans required a major retooling of the entire production line that had heretofore been entirely devoted to returnable bottles. The cost and effort required to meet the new demands of the market led to Shapiro’s decision to dissolve the Empire Bottling Company in 1969 (Price interview; EPCD 1963-1969).

Bottles and Artifacts

The first Empire Bottling Co. advertisement I have found appeared in the February 1964 telephone directory – during the Shapiro years. The ad included Dad’s Old Fashioned Root Beer, Squirt, Grapette, Mr. Cola (Low Calorie), Sunburst Flavors, and Empire Flavors. Notably missing were the former Grapette Bottling Co. brands of Orangette, Lemonette, Botl-o, and Mason’s Root Beer. Some of these had probably been dropped by Price in 1956 in favor of the Empire flavors, although he stated that he kept the Mason’s Root Beer. Shapiro apparently added Dad’s, Mr. Cola, and Sunburst Flavors. The final Empire ad that I have found, in 1965, dropped Sunburst from the listing but added Schweppes Tonic and Bitter Lemon.

Empire House Brand Fruit Flavors

When Nell Gardner sold Empire in 1956, the newly-named Empire Bottling Co. used bottles that were virtually identical to the last ACL bottles used by Empire Products Corp., except for minor changes on the reverse (Figures 5-131 & 5-132). See Table 5-9 for a chronology of Empire Bottling Co. house brand bottles.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Colorless

Size (in cm.): 24.5 (h); 6.3 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: White ACL

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 10 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with a single embossed ring around the neck, four rings around the shoulder, and one ring around the heel

Front Description

Neck/Shoulder: White ACL in a slight upward arch - ENJOY / EMPIRE QUALITY

Body: A round-cornered white-outlined rectangle contained a white horizontal bar across the center. The word, EMPIRE, in white appeared within the upper outline with BEVERAGES stenciled into the bar. The lower section contained, Wholesome/and/Refreshing in upwardly-slanted white script.

Heel: Bare (embossed ring)

Back Description

Neck/Shoulder: Same as front

Body: White ACL - EVERY / BOTTLE / Sterilized (script) / RETURN/TO YOUR DEALER / AND COLLECT DEPOSIT / ON THIS BOTTLE / Empire Bottling Company / El Paso, Texas

Heel: See front

Base: Embossed - NET CONTENTS 10-OZS / 15 I-in-an-oval 60 / 1

Manufacturer: Owens Illinois Glass Co. (1954-present)

Dating: [1956-ca. 1963] These bottles were probably used during the Richard Price ownership. The 1960 date code on one example shows that Price used the bottles for at least the first four years of his tenure, and it is logical that he would have continued for the next three years.

Collection(s): Lawrence Angus collection, El Paso; Mike Morrison Collection, Las Cruces; author's collection.



Figure 5-131 – Empire, Wholesome and Refreshing – front Figure 5-132 – Empire, Wholesome and Refreshing – reverse

At some point, probably when Shapiro took ownership, the white ACL labels changed (Figure 5-133). Shapiro also chose a new manufacturer.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Colorless

Size (in cm.): 24.6 (h); 6.2 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: White ACL

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 10 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with a single embossed ring around the neck, four rings around the shoulder, and one ring around the heel

Front Description

Neck/Shoulder: White ACL EMPIRE / {white line} / KING SIZE

Body: A round-cornered, white-outlined rectangle contained a white horizontal bar across the center. The word, EMPIRE, in white appeared within the upper outline with BEVERAGES stenciled into the bar. The lower section contained the words, For over a half century / El Paso's favorite, in white script.

Heel: Bare (embossed ring)

Back Description

Neck/Shoulder: Same as front

Body: Same as front

Heel: See front

Base: Embossed - NET / CONTENTS / 10-OZS. / 15 I in an oval 64 / 3

Manufacturer: Owens Illinois Glass Co. (1954-present)

Dating: [ca. 1963-1969] These bottles were almost certainly introduced by Shapiro, when he acquired Empire in 1963 and continued in use until the company ceased production in 1969.

Collection(s): Rick Chavez Collection, El Paso; author's collection.



Figure 5-133 – Empire,
For over a half century

...

Variations:

1. 10-ounce – Owens-Illinois (see above)

2. 10-ounce – Liberty Glass Co.

These bottles were identical with the ones made by Owens-Illinois, except for the manufacturer's information and the addition of "CONTENTS 10 FL. OZ." below the label on the reverse. The base was embossed "LG 65 / 912 1." The Liberty Glass Co. made bottles from 1918 to 1994 (Lockhart 2004h).

3. 16-ounce

In 1962 or 1963, Vess/3B Cola introduced the first 16-ounce bottles in El Paso. Barq's, Coca-Cola, Empire, and others soon followed suit. This was concurrent with Shapiro's purchase of the Empire Bottling Co. The Empire 16-ounce bottle measured 28.3 cm. in height and was 6.3 cm. in diameter (Figure 5-134). It lacked the neck ring that was prominent on the ten-ounce bottle and had "EMPIRE / 16 / OUNCES" in white ACL on the neck/shoulder area. Both back and front labels were identical with the second 10-ounce variation described immediately above. The base was embossed "LG 65 / 16 FL. OZ. / 882-1." These bottles were almost certainly used from ca. 1963 to 1969.

Table 5-9 – Empire Bottling Co. House Brand Bottles

Style Changes	Dates
White ACL; Wholesome and Refreshing – 10 oz.	ca. 1956-ca. 1962
White ACL; For over a half century . . . – 10 oz.	ca. 1962-1969
White ACL; For over a half century . . . – 16 oz.	ca. 1962-1969



Figure 5-134 – Empire, 16-ounce

Empire Shell

Occasional Empire shells (wooden cases) have survived (Figure 5-135). The external dimensions of one such case are 47.0 x 37.5 x 10.0, with two internal boards dividing the space into four identical rectangles to hold six-pack cartons of product. Side boards measure ca. 1.0 cm. in thickness with end boards ca. 1.9 cm. All measurements vary slightly due to wear and/or warping of the wood. The shell is held together by two steel bands (1.5 cm. in width), one on each end that bind the side and bottom boards to the end boards. Each end board contains a cutout handle that measures ca. 8.5 x 2.5 cm.



Figure 5-135 – Empire Shell (wooden case)

Both sides are labeled on the outside "EMPIRE / QUALITY BEVERAGES" and on the inside with "EMPIRE," followed by a logo that consists of a stenciled star on a circular red background with a red coniferous tree in

the center. Below the logo is “TEMPLE MFG. CO. / DALLAS, TEX. / 3 - 60.” Each end board is labeled “EMPIRE BOTTLING CO. / EL PASO, TEXAS.” All lettering is in red.

The “60” is probably a date code for 1960. That would be consistent with the word “QUALITY” on both the shell and the bottles used by the Empire Bottling Co. between ca. 1956 and ca. 1963 – during the Price tenure.

Dad’s Root Beer, Squirt, Mr. Cola, and Sunburst Flavors

By the 1960s, almost all franchisers had eliminated the local designations on ACL soda bottles. Although I have looked at numerous Dad’s and Squirt bottles (and a single Mr. Cola), I have never seen one with an El Paso or Empire designation. I have never seen a Sunset bottle. Dad’s was franchised by the Dad’s Root Beer Co., Chicago, Illinois, and the bottle shown in Figure 5-136 was used nationally from the late 1940s to ca. 1960. Squirt bottles by the late 1950s and 1960s were made in a swirl pattern (Figure 5-137). Mr. Cola was a diet drink franchised by Grapette (Figure 15-138), but the drink did not seem to have been very popular.



Figure 5-136 – Dad’s Root Beer



Figure 5-137 – Squirt (eBay)

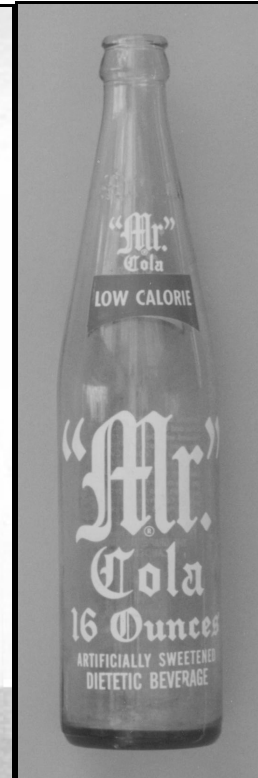


Figure 5-138 – Mr. Cola

Duffy’s Draft Beverage Co. (1952-1993)

Although not a bottler, Duffy’s Draft Beverages deserves mention at this point because the firm distributed Old Monk, the drink originally bottled by Empire. The business was started in 1952 by Clinton L. “Bud” Jones (the same man who convinced his friends the Sweeneys to obtain the Pepsi-Cola franchise in 1935 – see Chapter 7) at 223 N. Copia. The telephone book listed the business as “confy” (confectionery). Although we may never know the full story,

things changed rapidly, and Jones was listed under the El Paso Beverage Syrup Co. the next year, while Duffy's was run by Edward F. Wolf, Shields Norwood Jr, (of Pecos, Texas), and John F. Ogden. Duffy's was now cryptically listed as "whol" with no other explanation. Both businesses occupied the same address: 705 E. Missouri. In 1954, the draft beverages section was closed, but Joseph G. Jarvis operated Duffy's Distributing Co. at 805 E. Missouri,² listed as "whol beverages" (EPCD 1952-1954; EPTD 1952).

Another change occurred in 1956. Although Duffy's Distributing Co. remained, Jones had revived Duffy's Draft Beverage Co., this time as a corporation, still at 705 E. Missouri. Jarvis, however, disappears at this point, although the distributing company remained under Jones for another year. A new firm, Jones & Pfafflin, however, took its place. Along with Charles H. Pfafflin, an El Paso chemist, Jones now also sold baking supplies. The new business shared the same address. By 1958, the distributing company had also disbanded or been absorbed. The company completely reorganized in 1959 as Pfafflin abandoned the business, leaving only a single listing for Duffy's Draft Beverages. Jones remained as president with Charles H. Hudspeth as manager. The new ad read: "Wholesale and Retail Manufacturers and Distributors of Beverages for Fountain Use and Pre-Mixed Soft Drinks, Syrups, Flavors, Toppings and Colors" (EPCD 1956-1959).

Hudspeth soon became vice president and continued as manager. By 1966, Jones was relinquishing his control of the company to Hudspeth who was now president with Jones filling the vice presidential position. Duffy's moved to 800 S. Florence in 1968 and advertised itself as "Manufactures of Fountain Supply, Syrups And Toppings."³ Jones died in late 1977 or early 1978.⁴ The following year, Hudspeth dropped the apostrophe "s" amending the name to Duffy Draft Beverage Co. The company also bottled drinks in gallon jugs and distributed pre-mix fountain syrup in El Paso and throughout the Southwest for Pepsi Cola from the early 1960s to

² The number was probably a misprint on the part of the city directory.

³ The Florence street address was same one used by Woodlawn Bottling Co. for many years.

⁴ A search of the Social Security Death Register only turned up eight men named Clinton Jones who died in 1977 and six in 1978. The only one who died in Texas, however, did so in 1980.

Although Grace Jones is listed as the widow of Clinton beginning in 1978, the company listing continued to place Jones in the vice presidential position until 1981. For more on the life of Clinton Jones, see section on Woodlawn Bottling Company.

1993 when the company finally disbanded (EPCD 1960-1993; Yowell interview).

The picture on the Duffy's repair label may actually be Jones, although it may just be a drawing that appeared fitting to the label's creator (Figure 5-139). The Old Monk label is very detailed (Figure 5-140), but it is not the same as the Old Monk Grape soda that was sold by Empire Bottling Works in the 1920s. It is, however, very likely that Jones picked up the brand when Empire Products Corp. stopped bottling it, probably about the time of the sale to Price in 1956.



Figure 5-139 – Duffy's Draft Beverages repair decal



Figure 5-140 – Old Monk label – Duffy's

