

Bottles on the Border:

The History and Bottles of the Soft Drink Industry

in El Paso, Texas, 1881-2000

**VESS MIXERS ON SALE**

**AT NATIONAL BRANDS STORES**

Vess Dry—Lime Rickey—Hi-Ball Special—  
Table Rock Water. Recommended for  
Delicious Quality

**Mar-Dale**  
BRAND  
**Waffle**  
**Syrup**  
Made From  
Cane Sugar  
and  
Maple Syrup

**Toltec**  
BRAND  
**Apple Cider**  
**Vinegar**  
Let Your  
Next Bottle Be  
**TOLTEC**

ASK FOR THESE PRODUCTS AT NATIONAL BRANDS STORES.

**Woodlawn Bottling Co.**

800 South Florence St.Main 306

© Bill Lockhart 2010

[Revised Edition – Originally Published Online in 2000]

Chapter 7b



## **Chapter 7b**

### **Woodlawn Bottling Co., Whistle, and Nesbitt's Orange**

Woodlawn Bottling Co. (1909-1955)

#### **Bottles and Artifacts**

Woodlawn advertised regularly in the city directories between 1919 and the early 1950s. Some ads were incorporated into the individual listings, and others were published separately in the advertisement section. The larger ads, of course, gave more information, but both were informative about which products were sold at that time. According to Angus and Harris, Woodlawn and Toltec brands were bottled in the early days of the company and can probably be considered as the original brand names for the company (Angus & Harris 1993:146). However, the Toltec brand was probably not offered until ca. 1916 or so (see the section on Toltec below).

In 1919, the company advertised Barlo, a near-beer but switched to Blatz cereal beverage by July 1920. That year, Woodlawn became more informative, when the ad listed Whistle, Toltec Punch, Toltec Ginger Ale, Toltec Grape, and Apple Cider in glass jars. True Fruit Beverages appeared in 1921, with Whiz and Vess Dry added in 1928. Almost a decade passed without major changes.

In 1935, Woodlawn added the new challenger to Coca-Cola's supremacy, Pepsi-Cola. At that time (or earlier), the company dropped production of Whistle, Whiz, and True Fruit Beverages. Clicquot Club products (first introduced in Millis, Massachusetts in 1881) replaced Vess in 1941, and Nesbitt's Orange was added in 1944. In 1945, Woodlawn's oldest remaining product, Toltec, was advertised for the last time, leaving Pepsi and Nesbitt's Orange as the only two products still advertised.

#### **Woodlawn House Brand**

Early Woodlawn bottles were generic as to contents and came in at least three varieties. These may also have been paper labels affixed to the bottles. The first is found is a solarized-amethyst color (Figure 7-16), but the others are all either light blue or aqua.

**Method of Manufacture:** Blown into Mold

**Color:** Solarized Amethyst

**Size (in cm.):** 20.0 (h); 6.1-6.3 (d)

**Primary Labeling Style:** Embossed

**Finish:** Crown

**Capacity:** ca. 7 oz.

**Overall Bottle Design:** Cylindrical

**Front Description**

**Body:** Embossed - (circular plate) WOODLAWN BOTTLING Co.  
(period below “o”; arch) / EL PASO, TEXAS (inverted arch)]

**Back Description**

**Body:** Bare

**Heel:** Bare

**Base:** Bare

**Manufacturer:** Unknown

**Dating:** [1909-ca. 1913] Mouth-blown bottles embossed with the Woodlawn name probably date from the company’s beginning in 1909 to the general switch to machine-made bottles in El Paso (and nationwide) about 1913. Using current methods, it is difficult to date specific bottles, although I have placed them in their likely chronological order.

**Collection(s):** Becky Garrett Collection; John Gross collection; Bill Ethridge collection; David Cole collection; author’s collection.



Figure 7-16 – Solarized amethyst Woodlawn bottle, possibly the earliest (David Cole collection)

**Variations:**

1. See above. This was the simplest of the mouth-blown bottles and was probably the first one. I can find no hint as to the manufacturer.
2. A light blue bottle style was slightly fatter than the first one, 20.4 cm. in height and 6.4 cm. in diameter. The embossing was in a slightly oval plate: “WOODLAWN BOTTLING (arch) / CO. (horizontally across the center) / EL PASO, TEX. (inverted arch).” The back heel is embossed “322.02.” This was a model number for a bottle made by the Illinois Glass Co. Both the illustration in the Illinois Glass Co. 1908 catalog and the measurements match as closely as is possible on a mouth-blown bottle (Figures 7-17, 7-18, & 7-19). The bottles held eight ounces.
3. A slight variation of the second bottle was embossed in the same plate “WOODLAWN BOTTLING (arch) / CO. (horizontal) / THIS BOTTLE (horizontal) / TO BE RETURNED (inverted arch) / EL PASO, TEX. (inverted arch).” The outer lettering (“WOODLAWN



Figure 7-17 – Model 322 (Illinois Glass Co. 1908:329)



Figure 7-18 – Heelmark: 322.02

BOTTLING” and “EL PASO, TEX.”) was identical to that of the second bottle (above); the return information was in much smaller letters – possibly added to the plate (Figure 7-20). The reverse heel was also embossed “322.02” – the same model. These bottles measured 20.4 cm. in

height and 6.4 cm. in diameter. The bottle was also light blue in color. It is likely that the third variation was the later one.

Oddly, the style of crown is different in Variation 2 and Variation 3, even though they were made by the same manufacturer and had the same model number. Possibly, the technique improved, although the change may only indicate the use of two different individual tools by two workers (Figure 7-21).

4. A final variation is identical to Variation 3 except that it lacks the model number on the reverse heel and is slightly smaller (20.2 cm. in height). A final difference is in the baseplate. Variation 3 used a cup base, while Variation 4 had a post base. Variation 4 was blue-aqua in color and was probably made by a different company (i.e., *not* Illinois Glass Co.).



Figure 7-19 – Woodlawn house brand bottle

Figure 7-20 – Variation of house brand bottle



Figure 7-21 – Different finishes from the same Illinois Glass Co. bottle

Woodlawn also used containers for its house brands made by semiautomatic bottle machines (Figure 22). At any point in the use of Woodlawn brand beverages, unembossed paper-labeled bottles may have been used.

**Method of Manufacture:** Machine

**Color:** Light Blue

**Size (in cm.):** 20.0 (h); 5.9 (d)

**Primary Labeling Style:** Embossed

**Finish:** Crown

**Capacity:** ca. 7 oz.

**Overall Bottle Design:** Cylindrical

**Front Description**

**Neck/Shoulder:** Bare

**Body:** Embossed - (circular plate) WOODLAWN (arch) / BOTTLING CO. (horizontal) / EL PASO, TEXAS. (inverted arch) in oval plate mold

**Back Description**

**Body:** Bare

**Heel:** Bare

**Base:** No embossing but had a double ejection ring (*not* Owens scar or typical machine scar – more like an ejection or valve mark from a jar or milk bottle) (Figure 23)

**Manufacturer:** Unknown

**Dating:** [1912-1915] Bottles of this type were probably used from about 1915 to about 1920 when Woodlawn ads featured a variety of beverages, including the early Toltec Brand, but did not mention Woodlawn as a brand name. The variation marked REGISTERED probably postdated the containers without that designation (Pollard 1993:42).

Although the Gould Act (a rider to the Pure Food & Drug Act of 1906) was passed in 1913, bottlers had until September 1914 to include the volume information on bottles. However, the information could have been embossed or printed on paper labels. Thus, these bottles could have remained in use until ca. 1918, when the trend to generic bottles with paper labels occurred. Although the “REGISTERED” bottle was probably used last, there is no way to determine absolute dates for any of these three variations. I have not seen volume information on any Woodlawn bottles prior to 1928. Such information was probably included on paper labels.

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

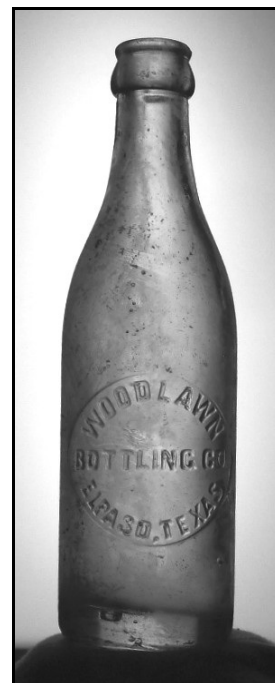


Figure 7-22 – An unusual machine-made Woodlawn house brand bottle



Figure 7-23 – Base of the unusual bottle, showing atypical machine scars

### Variations:

1. See above
2. This was the shortest variation, measuring 19.3 cm. in height and 5.9 cm. in diameter (Figure 7-24). The embossing in the plate mold is identical to that of the other two variations. All three had different sizes of letters and plates, but the positioning and lettering styles were identical. The reverse heel was embossed “OP 62.” The “O” in “OP” indicates the Okmulgee, Oklahoma, plant of the Graham Glass Co. The factory opened in 1910 and began using date codes in 1916 (Lockhart 2006b:20). Thus, the mark, alone, places the manufacture between those years. See more discussion below.
3. The final variation measured 20.7 cm. in height and 6.2 cm. in diameter and was made in light blue glass. Although the information in the plate was identical to the other two variations, this one was also embossed “REGISTERED” in a slight arch at the neck/shoulder joint. The reverse heel was embossed “OP 23” – another mark from the Okmulgee plant of the Graham Glass Co. (Figures 7-25 & 7-26).

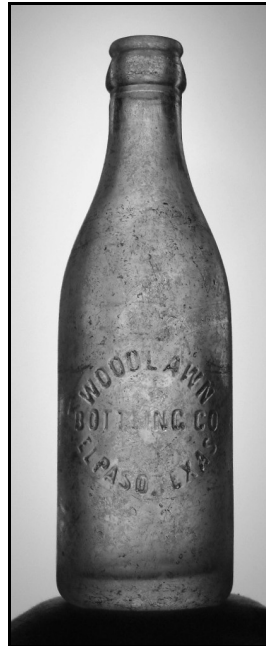


Figure 7-24 – A Woodlawn machine-made variation

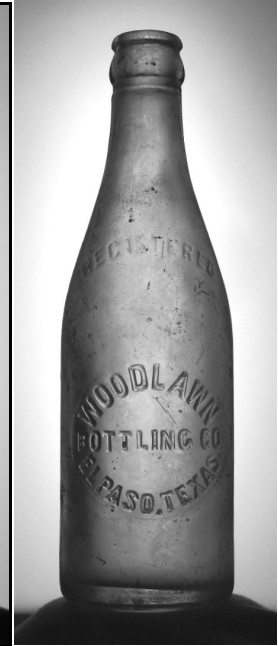


Figure 7-25 – Woodlawn machine-made, Registered

It is possible that all three of these bottles were made by Graham. Graham began working on an automatic bottle machine by 1906 and had an improvement working the following year. The Graham machines were *almost* fully automatic by 1910 (Lockhart 2006b:20). The first variation bottle with the strange double ejection ring may have been made by an early Graham machine. The other two were certainly made prior to the adoption of date codes by Graham in 1916.



Figure 7-26 – OP 23 heelmark – Okmulgee, Oklahoma plant, Graham Glass Co.

### Paper Labels

By at least 1921, the Woodlawn house brand and the Toltec brand (see below) were both called True-Fruit Beverages. Although True-Fruit Beverages were advertised in the city directories, I have found no ads for the brand in the newspapers, except on a label in a drawing of

a Toltec bottle. This supports the idea that True-Fruit was the house brand. I have rarely seen house brands advertised, especially in newspapers.

Woodlawn probably used the embossed bottles until the supply was exhausted, then adopted generic bottles with paper labels. The paper labels, of course, could also have been affixed to the embossed containers. About 1918, there was a national trend toward the use of generic bottles with paper labels, so the time period for Woodlawn's switch fits almost exactly. It is highly probable that the brand was discontinued soon after the adoption of the Vess line in 1928.

### Toltec Flavors

The Toltec brand was in place by at least 1916, possibly earlier. The Brand was probably begun in honor of the Toltec Club, an elegant men's club of the early twentieth century. Founded in 1902,<sup>1</sup> the Toltec Club catered to wealthy members who could afford the \$100 initiation fee and dues of \$50 per year. A formal organization, it entertained such distinguished visitors to El Paso as Mexican presidents, Porfirio Díaz and Francisco Madero, as well as U.S. president, Theodore Roosevelt. The club flourished until 1917 but began its deterioration with the onset of Prohibition. In its weakened condition, it could not survive the perils of the Depression (Sonnichsen 1968:270-271). The name, however, lived on as a Woodlawn beverage until the 1940s. The earliest bottles I have found were made in 1916 (Figure 7-27).

**Method of Manufacture:** Machine

**Color:** Aqua

**Size (in cm.):** 19.6 (h); 5.9 (d)

**Primary Labeling Style:** Embossed

**Finish:** Crown

**Capacity:** ca. 7.5 oz.

**Overall Bottle Design:** Cylindrical

#### **Front Description**

**Neck/Shoulder:** Embossed - TOLTEC Brand

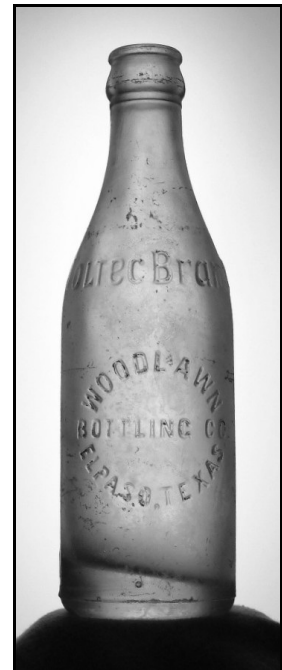


Figure 7-27 – Toltec Brand, early machine-made bottle

---

<sup>1</sup> Owen P. White says the club was founded in 1904 (White 1923:325).



**Body:** Embossed - WOODLAWN (arch) / BOTTLING CO. (horizontal) / EL PASO, TEXAS. (inverted arch)

**Back Description**

**Neck/Shoulder:** Bare

**Body:** Bare

**Heel:** Embossed OS 1202 P

**Base:** Bare

**Manufacturer:** Graham Glass Co.

**Dating:** [ca. 1912-ca. 1918] The “OS” in the manufacturer’s code identifies the Okmulgee plant of the Graham Glass Co. The “P” is the firm’s original date code for 1916 (P is the 16<sup>th</sup> letter of the alphabet), used until the adoption of the two-digit numerical codes in 1920 (Lockhart 2006b:20). Thus, these bottles were in use by at least 1916, even though the first ad I have found was in 1920 (Figure 7-28).

I have only examined four of these bottles. Unfortunately, the first two were recorded early in my career, and I may have missed the faint Graham heelcodes. Thus, I have two examples that are otherwise identical with no recorded heelmarks. Those could have been made by ca. 1912 or even earlier. The 1916 bottle was probably the last (see the paper label discussion below).



Figure 7-28 – OP 1202 P heelmark – Okmulgee plant, Graham Glass Co., 1916 date code

These bottles are also an interesting case in variation. Individual machine-made bottles with the same OS 1202 mold mark vary as much as 3 cm. or more (the two in the author’s collection are 19.3 and 19.6 cm. in height).

**Collection(s):** Becky Garrett Collection, El Paso Museum of History; David Cole collection, Bangs, Texas; author’s collection.

**Paper Labels**

For an unspecified period (probably around 1918 to 1929), Toltec brands were bottled in generic, paper-labeled containers. An ad in the *Herald* shows an unembossed bottle with a paper label in the shape of a modified diamond (right and left points flattened). The flavor advertised was Toltec Grape Punch. A bunch of grapes graced the upper center of the label with “TOLTEC / GRAPE PUNCH / TRUE FRUIT BEVERAGES / WOODLAWN / BOTTLING CO. / EL PASO / TEX.” filling out the rest of the label (Figure 7-29). The punch was advertised as “Cooling, Refreshing, Healthful. . . For Sale By All First Class Grocers” (EPH 8/31/1923 6:6).

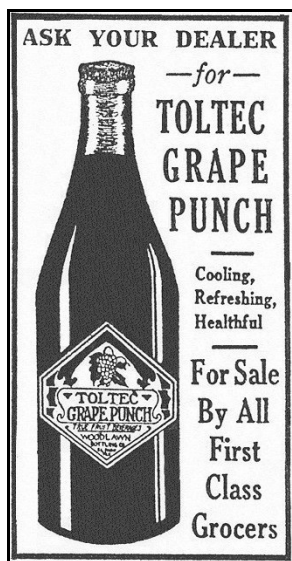


Figure 7-29 – Toltec Brand ad (*El Paso Herald* 8/31/1923)

I have discovered the remnant of a single generic bottle with a Woodlawn paper label. The remnant appears to have the same shape as the label in the ad and has identical wording below the cluster of grapes – except that “GRAPE PUNCH” is replaced by “PUNCH” alone. The grapes and shadows behind the larger letters are blue and shadows behind the larger letters are brown and the label has a brown outline (Figure 30).

The bottle, itself, deserves a bit of explanation. The shoulders are embossed “Armour’s” in italics on both front and back, and the base is embossed “T / 3.” The bottle



Figure 7-30 – Toltec paper label on Armstrong bottle

has a four-ounce capacity and is virtually identical to the Royal Purple bottles discussed in Chapter 5. The basemark is unusual and has not been researched. It is similar to marks used by the Owens Bottle Co., but the “T” does not fit well with names of any of the Owens factory locations. The base of the bottle has a machine scar, but it does not have the “feathering” of the typical Owens scar. It should be noted, however, that not *all* scars from the Owens machine have feathering; however, non-feathered scars were made by most forms of non-Owens semiautomatic and fully automatic machines.

The bottle, itself, was probably originally made for Armour & Co., a meat-packing company established in the early 1860s. Armour added many other culinary items after 1912, including “grape juice and soda fountain supplies” (Zumwalt 1980:30). Aside from the curiosity of the basemark, Woodlawn’s use of a Armour’s bottle requires some discussion. Like many small bottlers, Woodlawn apparently used just about any type of generic bottle for its drinks – at least in the days prior to the boom that followed World War II. I suspect that Toltec labels also appeared on Royal Purple bottles. Most of these grape juice bottles were not intended to be reused – although that certainly did not stop desperate bottlers during the Great Depression.

## Specialty Bottles

Paper labeled containers were followed by specialty (proprietary) bottles in 1929 (Figures 7-31 & 7-32). As discussed in Chapter 2, this trend began in the mid-1920s but did not become strong until the later part of the decade. Despite the expense involved, specialty bottles remained popular until they were replaced by ACL bottles in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Woodlawn only used one type of specialty bottle for its own brand (see the Vess brands – below – for other specialty bottles).

**Method of Manufacture:** Machine

**Color:** Colorless

**Size (in cm.):** 21.7 (h); 5.4 (d)

**Primary Labeling Style:** Embossed

**Finish:** Crown

**Capacity:** 7 oz.

**Overall Bottle Design:** Cylindrical with an embossed “crackled” appearance (similar to the effect caused by heating a glass surface then cooling it rapidly) on all surfaces except labeling areas. Three labeling areas are set apart from the crackled surface by embossed rings, each set of two rings creating a narrow band around the bottle: one at the shoulder, one at the body center, and one at the heel. The central band is wider than the other two and has full-faced embossed portraits of Indian faces (presumably Toltecs) on front and rear.

### Front Description

**Shoulder:** Embossed - TOLTEC BRAND

**Body:** Embossed - TOLTEC between the two faces

**Heel:** Embossed - WOODLAWN BOTTLING CO. EL PASO, TEX. [S-in-Star] 29

### Back Description

**Shoulder:** Embossed - 7 FL. OZ.

**Body:** See front

**Heel:** See front

**Base:** Embossed - S-in-a-star (embossed on both heel and base)

**Manufacturer:** Southern Glass Company (1917-1931)



Figure 7-31 – Toltec Brand specialty bottle  
Figure 7-32 – Toltec Brand specialty bottle – side view

**Dating:** [1929] I have only examined a few of these bottles. All were embossed with the Southern Star mark of the Southern Glass Co. and a 1929 date code (Figure 7-33). It is very likely that the bottle was only ordered once. Woodlawn suffered to the point of desperation in the Great Depression and likely returned to the use of generic bottles with paper labels as soon as the supply of the specialty bottles was exhausted. Even though Toltec was advertised until 1945, I know of no ACL or other embossed bottles.

**Collection(s):** Willie F. Terrazas collection; David Cole collection; author's collection.



Figure 7-33 – Southern Star manufacturer's mark with 29 date code on specialty bottle

### Barlo and Blatz

In 1919, the company advertised Barlo, a beer-like beverage for the depression tastes, but it was no longer mentioned in their 1920 directory ad. By at least 1915, the Wurzbarger Ginger Ale Co., Portsmouth, Virginia, was making Barlo (Bulletin 1915:8). However, it is more likely that the Barlo sold in El Paso was brewed by the Gipps Brewing Corp. (1882-1920). It is likely that Woodlawn was forced to drop the brand when Gipps ceased production in 1920 (Stanley et al. 2010:29; Van Wieren 1995:89).

By July 1920, Woodlawn advertised Blatz (Figure 7-34). Blatz, of course, had previously been a beer and turned only to the non-alcoholic trade because of Prohibition. Along with the regular cereal beverage, Blatz produced Gold Star Cherry Soda, Tom Collins, ginger ale, grapefruit soda, root beer, white soda, Red Star Ginger Ale, lime rickey, Orange Blossom, and cherry semble, although it is unlikely that many (if any) of them were distributed in El Paso (Bates et al 1992b:2). Woodlawn distributed Blatz from 1920 to an undisclosed time, probably not later than ca. 1923 or so, when the bottom fell out of near-beer sales. The public wanted the alcohol – not just the taste.



Figure 7-34 – Woodlawn for Blatz near-beer (*El Paso Herald* 7/20/1920)

Blatz played on nostalgia for the real thing in a 1920 ad that reminded the drinker that “you will like Blatz for the same reason your father and his father did—its snappy beer-flavor; rich, heavy invigorating body and sparkling beauty—the result of the old-time methods of brewing and lagering.” If that were not sufficiently effective, it continued that “Blatz will not only bring you pleasant memories—it will stimulate, and satisfy your thirst. . . . Blatz of Today—Brewed the Same Old Way. . . . de-alcoholized” (EPH 7/20/1920 10:6).

The bottle depicted was a typical amber beer bottle with swollen neck and paper label. The bottle was embossed with BLATZ across the shoulder and a paper neck label affixed to the neck that stated, Blatz (script) / SERVE COLD. The square body label contained an equilateral triangle with a Mogen David (Star of David) in the upper center followed by Blatz (script) / (illegible) / BLATZ, MILWAUKEE. Printing to the left of the triangle was illegible in the ad, but the right side proclaimed CONTENTS / 12 FLUID OUNCES followed by more illegible words.

### Clicquot Club

In Millis, Michigan, Lansing Millis founded the Clicquot Club Co. in 1881. Millis began using the trade mark of an Eskimo boy holding a large bottle of Clicquot Club in 1913, although he had begun advertising in national magazines as early as 1907. Initially, he bottled his sodas only at the Millis plant, but, by 1938, the demand became greater than a single bottler could handle. Clicquot Club then began branching out into other cities (Hopson 2000a; Periodical Publishers Assoc. 1934:25).

The brand was carried in El Paso by W.C. White & Co., apparently a grocery wholesaler by 1910 and by the James A. Dick Co. by at least 1916, although I do not know if it was distributed by any other El Paso firms between then and the acquisition of the brand by Woodlawn. Woodlawn carried the brand from 1941 to 1947.

I have not discovered an exact chronology of Clicquot Club bottles, but two embossed bottle types are fairly common in the area. Both were probably in use prior to the first Woodlawn advertisement. At least two paper label bottles may have been used during the early part of

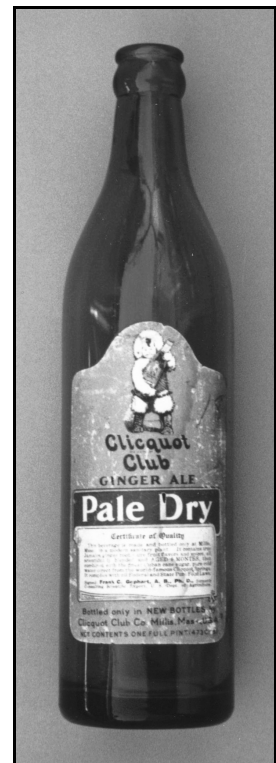


Figure 7-35 –  
Clicquot Club bottle  
with paper label

the 1941 to 1947 time period when Clicquot Club was distributed by Woodlawn (Figure 7-35). The two paper label bottles I have examined contain no manufacturer's marks or information about local distributors.

Various bichrome and polychrome ACL bottles were in use from at least 1942 to the late 1960s. Color combinations of white and red or white, blue, and red were used at different periods with Eskimo faces appearing on shoulder labels, body labels, or both. Clicquot Club mixers were available in seven-, eight-, ten-, twelve-, and thirty-two-ounce packages at various times throughout the ACL span (Bates et al 1996a:C-19-20). I have been unable to discover any indicators that hint about what type of bottle was used by Woodlawn.

### Whistle Co. of El Paso (1920)

#### History

The Whistle Co. of El Paso began business in 1920 at 408 San Francisco St. with A.T. (Alpha Thomas) Jones as its president. Members of the Jones family were lifelong friends of the Sweeneys. Clinton L. "Bud" Jones was mentioned earlier in this chapter and at the end of Chapter 6. He was the Pepsi-Cola representative for the Western states and later founded Duffy's Draft Beverages in El Paso. His two sons, A.T. and Silvester "Vess" Jones both remained in the soda business (EPCD 1920; Walraven interview, 7/7/2002).

Vess Jones founded Whistle and Vess Beverages, Inc., of St. Louis, Missouri, and franchised Whistle (an orange drink), Whiz, and Vess Dry (ginger ale). Whistle was originally franchised in 1916; Vess Dry followed a decade later. The same company later produced Three V Cola and Vess flavors<sup>2</sup> (Riley 1958:262-264, 286-288; Condon interview). For more information about the later Vess and Three V drinks, see the section on the Olague Bottling Corp. and Vess Distributing Co. in Chapter 12.

By the end of 1920, Whistle Company of El Paso had been absorbed into the Woodlawn Bottling Company and continued as a joint entity until at least 1928 when Margaret E. Sweeney was the president of both companies. Although Woodlawn continued to distribute Whistle until

---

<sup>2</sup> Walraven told me that the company started by Vess Jones went out of business during the Great Depression. He may have begun a second firm later. Current sources are very unclear about Vess and his company during this segment of time.

the mid-1930s, no further mention was made of the company in El Paso city directories (EPCD 1921-1936).

## Bottles and Artifacts

### Whistle

Woodlawn's first Whistle advertisement appeared in the June 25, 1920, *Herald Post*. It shows a drawing of a Whistle bottle that contains a paper label and fits the characterization of the bottle described below. The paper label is diamond-shaped with the word, WHISTLE, centered in a horizontal bar. The actual label was probably more detailed than the one shown in the drawing. The first ad showed a little girl drinking Whistle through a straw. It suggested that "as a child you had a hunch that sugar was good for you and the longer you live the stronger the hunch. Sugar is man's greatest energizer and Whistle is liquid sugar energy" (EPHP 6/25/1920 3:6).

The ad was quickly replaced with one showing a little boy, also drinking through a straw (Figure 7-36). The male version stated that "these husky hunks of humanity know that Whistle is good for them and that 'Strawing' is the best way to drink it" (EPHP 7/25/1920 7:1). The ad was certainly among the first for Whistle in the State of Texas; indeed, Woodlawn may have obtained the first Whistle franchise within the state. By 1922, only three Texas bottlers maintained franchises with Whistle (Dunagan 2002).

### Paper Label

The bottles pictured in the early Woodlawn ads are commonly found around the country. They are colorless and used a combination of embossing and paper labels. The bottles were embossed "WHISTLE / REGISTERED" and "WHISTLE / 6½ FLD. OZS." around the shoulder just above a series of connected rectangles, also encircling the shoulder. The body was bare for the paper label. The heel was usually embossed with a



Figure 7-36 – Whistle ad (*El Paso Herald Post* 7/25/1920)

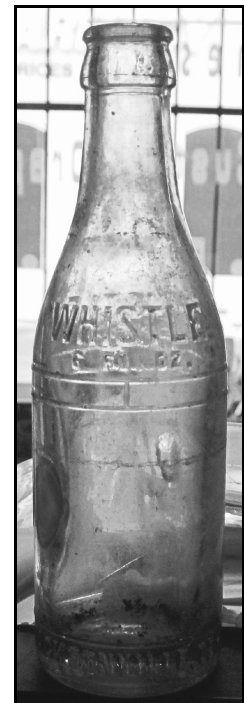


Figure 7-37 – Whistle's paper-label bottle (eBay)

bottling company name, although either the name or a city/state was often embossed on the base (Figure 7-37).

Woodlawn first advertised Whistle in 1920, and bottles of this type probably date from around that time until the specialty bottle described below was adopted in 1928. Whistle had been first introduced in 1916 (Riley 1958:262). According to Hopson (2000b), paper label bottles were in use from the inception of Whistle in 1916 until the mid-1920s. Although I have never found one of these bottles with Woodlawn or El Paso embossing, they were certainly used by the firm. It is possible that the bottle was generic, and Woodlawn was only identified on the paper label.

### Specialty Bottle

Woodlawn adopted a specialty (proprietary) bottle, probably in 1928 (Figure 7-38). Bottles of this style were also available in a larger, 24-ounce sizes (see Wade 2003:97-98), but I have not found the larger sized bottle from El Paso.

**Method of Manufacture:** Machine

**Color:** Colorless

**Size (in cm.):** 22.0 (h); 5.6 (d) shoulder; 4.5 (d) waist; 6.1 (d) heel

**Primary Labeling Style:** Embossed

**Finish:** Crown

**Capacity:** 6.5 oz.

**Overall Bottle Design:** Cylindrical with a fine pattern of embossed crisscrossed lines forming a pattern of uneven, differentially-sized diamonds with small vertical lines in the center except for the neck/shoulder and body labeling areas. The bare body and neck/shoulder labeling areas were not bounded by any form of lines. Beginning at the heel, the bottle tapered to a constricted waist before expanding into the shoulder.

### Front Description

**Neck/Shoulder:** Embossed - WHISTLE / REGISTERED

**Body:** Embossed - WHISTLE on both right and left sides (90 degrees offset from the neck/shoulder embossments) with a smaller line below wrapped around the total circumference of the bottle that said REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. BOTL. PAT. NO. 70843-1926

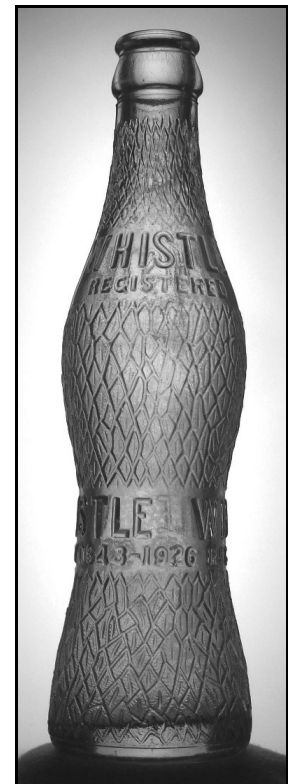


Figure 7-38 – Whistle specialty bottle



### **Back Description**

**Neck/Shoulder:** Embossed - WHISTLE / 6½ FLD. OZS.

**Body:** Embossed - See front

**Base:** Embossed - EL PASO, (arch) / S-in-a-star / 28 / TEXAS (inverted arch)

**Manufacturer:** Southern Glass Co. (1917-1931)

**Dating:** [1928] Vess Jones applied for a patent for a “Bottle for Soft Drinks” on January 30, 1926, and received Design Patent No. 70843 on August 17 of that year (Figure 7-39).

Thus, the bottles were probably unavailable until at least the middle of 1926. The El Paso bottle has a 1928 date code, and, because Woodlawn was hard hit by the Great Depression, it was probably only ordered once. Hopson (2000b) suggests a use of “pinch” bottles between the mid-1920s and ca. 1938.



Figure 7-40 – Vess Dry specialty bottle (Mike Morrison collection)

While it is possible that

Woodlawn ordered the specialty bottles a second time, it is more likely that the brand was discontinued when the supply of the pinch-waist bottles was exhausted. These bottles are at least scarce, if not rare; I have only seen two of them. If a second order was ever made, it, too, was used until the bottles completely wore out – a very common procedure during the Great Depression.

**Collection(s):** Author’s collection.

### **Vess Dry**

Woodlawn used at least three bottle configurations for Vess Dry, a ginger ale offered as a companion to Whistle. The earliest Woodlawn ad for Vess Dry appeared in the 1928 city directory and was identical to the Whistle specialty bottle, except that vertical embossed ribs replaced the diamond motif (Figure 7-40). As with the Whistle bottle, a larger size (1 pt. 4 oz.) was available (see Wade 2003:98), but I doubt if these were sold in El Paso. The specialty bottle was forest green in color.

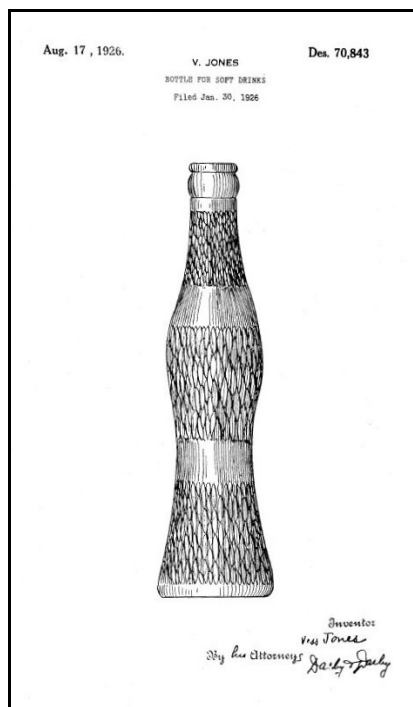


Figure 7-39 – Vess Jones patent for the Whistle bottle design (U.S. Patent Office)

## Specialty Bottle

**Method of Manufacture:** Machine

**Color:** Forest Green

**Size (in cm.):** 22.0 (h); 5.8 (d) shoulder; 4.6 (d) waist; 6.1 (d) heel

**Primary Labeling Style:** Embossed

**Finish:** Crown

**Capacity:** 6.5 oz.

**Overall Bottle Design:** Cylindrical with vertical ribs extending throughout the container's surface except labeling areas at waist and neck/shoulder and the extreme upper neck and finish. The two labeling areas were bounded by embossed rings encircling the bottle. Beginning at the heel, the bottle tapered to a constricted waist before expanding into the shoulder.

### Front Description

**Neck/Shoulder:** Embossed labels were offset 90 degrees from the waist-belt labels and read VESS DRY / REGISTERED on one side and VESS DRY / 6½ FLD. OZS. on the other

**Body:** Embossed - VESS DRY / BOTTLE PATENTED

### Back Description

**Neck/Shoulder:** See front

**Body:** Embossed - VESS DRY / 6½ FLD. OZS.

**Base:** Embossed - EL PASO TEXAS 28 around the circumference with the S-in-a-star mark in the center

**Manufacturer:** Southern Glass Company (1917-1931)

**Dating:** [1928] As with the Whistle bottle above, this was probably only ordered once and the supply used until it was exhausted. Like the Whistle bottles, these are scarce to rare, and I have only seen two of them. Hopson (2000b) places the origin of Vess Flavors about 1927.

**Collection(s):** Bill Ethridge collection; Mike Morrison Collection.



Figure 7-41 – Vess Dry ad (*El Paso Times* 2/22/1936)

Although the brand was probably dropped during the early 1930s, Woodlawn advertised “Vess Mixers on Sale Vess Dry — Lime Rickey — Hi-Ball Special — Table Rock Water. Recommended for Delicious Quality” by 1936 to celebrate the return of alcohol to the U.S. (Figure 7-41). These were sold in generic bottles with paper labels. The ad also showed foil wrapping at the neck.

## Paper Label

**Method of Manufacture:** Machine

**Color:** Forest Green

**Size (in cm.):** 24.4 (h); 6.6 (d)

**Primary Labeling Style:** Paper

**Finish:** Crown

**Capacity:** 12 oz.

**Overall Bottle Design:** Cylindrical

### Front Description

**Shoulder:** The paper label had a pale-yellow, gold-bordered background with a red seal in the center. White letters within a white circle proclaimed, Seal / of / Quality with the signature, Vess Jones across the bottom of the seal. To the left appeared, SERVE / COLD with SHELLLED / ICE to the right (both in black).

**Body:** A round-cornered, rectangular paper label had a pale-yellow background with a gold-border (Figure 7-42). White outlined, shadowed blue letters proclaimed VESS DRY (V & D in larger caps) / REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. (red) / GINGER signed Seal of Quality (same as on neck/shoulder label) ALE (blue letters) / (in scroll) OUR GUARANTEE (red): FREE FROM CAPSICUM, / PRESERVATIVES, OR SYNTHETIC INGREDIENTS. / CONTAINING THE PUREST SPICES, / GENUINE JAMAICA GINGER, PURE CANE / SUGAR AND BLENDED FRUIT ESSENCES. (all in black) / MANUFACTURED UNDER LICENSE ISSUED BY / VESS DRY CO. U.S.A. (all in red).

**Heel:** Bare

### Back Description

**Shoulder:** Bare

**Body:** Bare

**Heel:** Bare

**Base:** Embossed - 31E / 8

**Manufacturer:** Probably Owens-Illinois Glass Co.

**Dating:** [ca. 1936-1941] These bottles were in use by 1936 (as per the Woodlawn ads in the *El Paso Times* for February 22 and April 11, 1936), possibly as early as 1934, when liquor was again served within the U.S. borders. The “31” on the base is a date code for 1931, and similar markings and codes were used by the American Bottle Co. (a subsidiary of the Owens Bottle



Figure 7-42 – Vess Dry paper label

Co.) on this same type of generic, forest-green, 12-ounce bottle prior to the merger that created the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. in 1929. The similarity of the bottle type, along with a virtually identical code (albeit with different letters from the “S” or “N” used by American Bottle), make it likely that these were made by Owens-Illinois during 1930 and 1931. Bottles of this type made after that time have the typical Owens-Illinois manufacturer’s mark. The 1931 date code does not guarantee that the label was used at that time.

**Collection(s):** Author’s collection.

## Whiz

Whiz was also franchised by the Whistle Company and was bottled in a container similar to the constricted-waist bottles of Whistle and Vess Dry (Phoenix Antiques, Bottles, & Collectibles Club 1989:[22]). Woodlawn advertised Whiz from 1928 to 1935. These bottles have a different type of embossed diamond design, and they are very rare (Figure 7-43). Apparently, the drink was *not* popular.

**Method of Manufacture:** Machine

**Color:** Amber

**Size (in cm.):** 22.0 (h); 5.6 (d) shoulder; 4.5 (d) waist; 6.1 (d) heel

**Primary Labeling Style:** Embossed

**Finish:** Crown

**Capacity:** 6.5 oz.

**Overall Bottle Design:** Cylindrical with eight vertical rows of embossed diamonds extending from heel to almost the base of the crown finish except for the two labeling areas. Both shoulder/neck and body labeling areas were bounded by embossed rings encircling the bottle. Beginning at the heel, the bottle tapered to a constricted waist before expanding into the shoulder.

### Front Description

**Neck/Shoulder:** Embossed encircling neck: WHIZ WHIZ / REGISTERED 6½ OZS.

**Body:** Embossed encircling body: WHIZ WHIZ / REG. U. S. PAT. OFF. NO. 70843 - 1926

### Back Description

**Neck/Shoulder:** See front

**Body:** See front

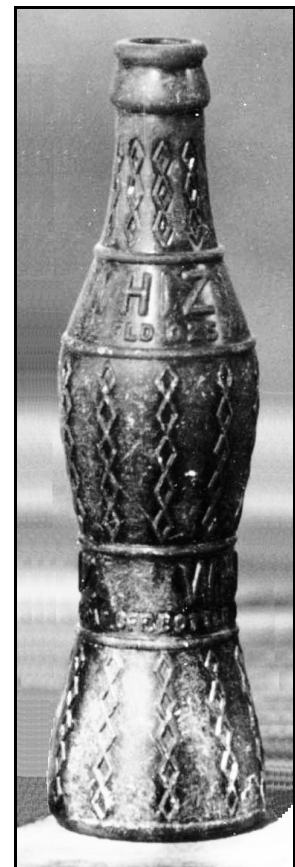


Figure 7-43 – Whizz  
(Jim Cullen collection)

**Base:** Embossed - EL PASO 5 (arch) / [S-in-a-star] / 28 TEXAS (inverted arch)

**Manufacturer:** Southern Glass Co. (1917-1931)

**Dating:** [1928-1935] This bottle was made to the same 1926 patent as the pinched-waist Whistle container, the only bottle I have ever seen or heard of is also dated 1928, the year that Woodlawn first advertised Whiz. This container, too, was almost certainly only ordered once.

**Collection(s):** Jim Cullen collection.

Nesbitt Orange Bottling Co. (1948-1955)

## History

Although Woodlawn listed Nesbitt Orange as one of their beverages as early as 1944, the Nesbitt Orange Bottling Company was not officially listed in the City Directory until 1948 with Margaret Sweeney and May Condon as officers. When Marshall E. Condon took the presidency of Woodlawn in 1952, he also inherited the same title for Nesbitt Orange. Nesbitt's flavors were discontinued by the company in 1955 when the Condons decided to devote the firm's full energy to Pepsi-Cola products. Nesbitt's Orange had been originated in 1924 and was franchised from Nesbitt Fruit Products, Inc., Los Angeles, California (Riley 1958:264, 586-288; Condon letter; EPCD 1944-1955).

## Bottles and Artifacts

### Nesbitt's Orange

Although Nesbitt's came in a variety of flavors, all were marketed in the same bottle and identified by different caps. Nesbitt's containers came in several configurations, all in ACL bottles. Woodlawn probably used black-labeled bottles between 1943 and 1952, and these were probably used by the parent company (Nesbitt) as early as 1938 (Figure 7-44). The larger bottles (10 oz.) may have been introduced later than the seven-ounce size, but, because the date is unsure, they should also be dated from 1943 to 1952 in El Paso. Twenty-Six-ounce bottles were also available during the same period, but I have no idea whether they were offered by Woodlawn.



Figure 7-44 –  
Nesbitt's Orange  
bottle (Lynn Loomis  
collection)

Woodlawn probably used the white-labeled bottles that replaced the black-labeled containers from 1952 until they discontinued the product in 1955. About that time, Barq's Bottling Company began distribution of Nesbitt's, and further discussion is continued in that section.