

# Chapter 6

## El Paso Drug Stores in Photographs



Bill Lockhart  
2015



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At some point during the 1990s (possibly even the early 2000s), I came into possession of 22 photographs of El Paso drug stores from the M.G. McKinney collection. In addition, the El Paso County Historical Society provided six more, and I found two others on the El Paso County Library webpage. The chapter is rounded out by two photographs from Bill Rakocy's 1980 book and a calendar from the Upson Avenue Drug Store given to me by Keith Austin. I also found three signatures from the owners of these stores in the 1929 Census of Distribution. These photos range from 1881 to the 1960s or later. As with the rest of the book, these drug photos and histories are presented in alphabetical order by store or company name.

### Histories and Photos

The includes histories and photographs from 22 Drug Stores, including 31 photos, three signature scans, and one calendar.

#### Cleveland Square Drug Store, Inc. (1918-1919)

The Cleveland Square Drug Store, Inc., placed an advertisement in the *El Paso Herald* on December 21, 1918. R.W. Knoblauch was the manager at 215 Upson Ave. (also see Knoblauch Drug below). The store carried drugs, sundries, rubber goods, cigars, tobacco, ice cream, and soda fountain drinks. The drug store motto was "If it is to be had, we never say no" (Figure 6-1). The store was only listed in the 1919 city directory. By 1920, the name had been changed to the Providence Drug Store in the El Paso city directories. The New Mexico State Business Directory for 1920 noted Arthur A. Lee as operating a

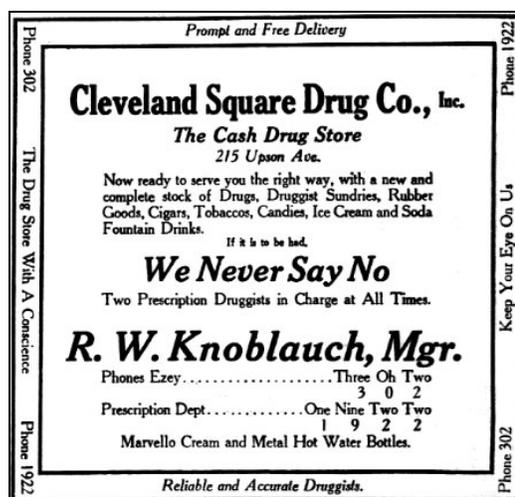


Figure 6-1 – Cleveland Square Drug Store ad (*El Paso Herald* 12/21/1918)

drug store at 215 Upson Ave., and the Arizona State Business Directory for 1922 claimed Lee & Head as the proprietors. It is unclear whether Lee and possibly Head were members of the corporation that operated Cleveland Square, but there was certainly a major change between late 1919 and early 1920.



Figure 6-2 – Cleveland Square Drug (El Paso County Historical Society)

The photo provided by the El Paso County Historical Society clearly shows the Cleveland Square Drug Store. Unfortunately, both street signs are so out of

focus that a positive identification of the intersection is impossible. In the photo, the drug store



Figure 6-3 – Cleveland Square closeup

is the second building on the right, behind the telephone pole. The photo appears to have been taken from the edge of Grand View Park (now Mundy Park) at the intersection of Porfirio Diaz Ave. and Upson Ave. Upson extends to the left of the picture, while Porfirio Diaz flows from the lower right corner to the center. W. Boulevard (now Yandell Ave.) goes across the photo from left to right (Figures 6-2 & 6-3).

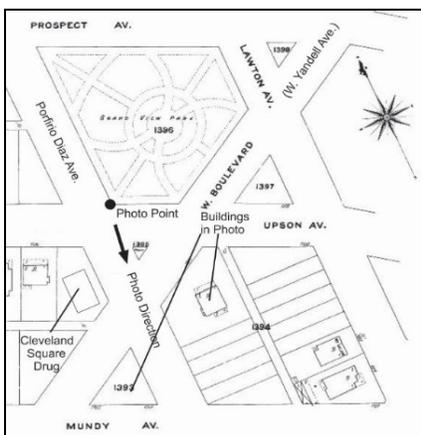


Figure 6-4 – Cleveland Square location (Sanborn Map, 1908)

Figure 6-4 shows the area from the 1908 Sanborn Map. Since the photo was taken 10 years after the map was drawn, the buildings had changed, but the abridged map indicates the location and photo direction.

### **Cortez Drug Store (1939-1954)**

An ad in the September 11, 1939, *El Paso Herald*, the “Hotel Cortez, El Paso’s fine downtown hotel, now offers El Pasoans a new, modernly equipped DRUG STORE. The new Cortez Drug Store carries a complete line of drugs, cosmetics, fine candies, toiletries, Ice Cream, and all brands of Ginger Ale.” Miss Thelma O’Keefe was in charge of the prescription department, and John Walker was the store manager (Figure 6-5). The store was located in the hotel at 201 Mills, and the telephone number was Main 161. Sam Hendricks was the store manager by at least April 19, 1943. By August 31, 1950, the manager was “Mr. Reynolds.” The last mention for the store I have found in the *El Paso Herald* was on December 28, 1951, although the store remained listed in the city directories until 1954.



Figure 6-5 – John Walker of Cortez Drug (Stout-Feldman Studio [ca. 1957])

### **Edgarden Pharmacy**

This photo from the McKinney collection could be very misleading without the text on the back (Figure 6-6). McKinney noted that name of the pharmacy and other buildings were “applied for movie setting only and are not applicable to actual [buildings]. Hotel Briston (left); Hotel Green Tree (right); Hotel Krahrmer (faint bldg behind Green Tree).” There was never an Edgarden Pharmacy in El Paso. This was only a movie set. The 1908 Sanborn map shows the Hotel Green Tree at 604 San Francisco St., an



Figure 6-6 – Edgarden Pharmacy (M.G. McKinney)

address confirmed by the 1920 New Mexico State Business Directory. The map also shows the unnamed building next door (called the Hotel Briston by McKinney) with the main entrance at the arch on the left side of the photo (Figure 6-7).

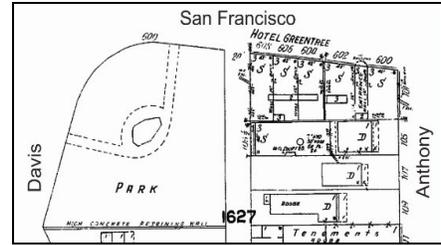


Figure 6-7 – Hotel Green Tree (Sanborn Map, 1908)

**El Paso Pharmacy (1961-1968)**



Figure 6-8 – El Paso Pharmacy (M.G. McKinney)

The El Paso Pharmacy was first listed in the *El Paso Herald-Post* on September 19, 1961. The store was located in the Mills Building, 305 N. Oregon. The business was short lived. On December 14, 1968, the *Herald-Post* announced that the “McKee Pharmacy has acquired the prescription files of



Figure 6-9 – El Paso Pharmacy closeup (M.G. McKinney)

the El Paso Pharmacy.” The business survived long enough for someone to take a photograph from the top of the Hotel Cortez (Figure 6-8 & 6-9). The photograph found a home in the McKinney collection.

**Gunning-Casteel Drug Co. (1913-1974)**

I discussed the history of the Gunning-Casteel drug store chain in Chapter 5. Like the preceding photo, this one shows the San Jacinto Plaza, although the angle is almost opposite of the El Paso Pharmacy shot. The photo was taken from the corner of N. Oregon and W. Main, from the structure just northeast of the Mills Building – looking at the intersection of W. Mills and N. Mesa. The building on the left is the Hotel Cortez, the spot where the preceding photo was taken. Gunning-Casteel is on the right (W. Mills), next to Zales (Figure 6-10 & 6-11). The picture was probably taken soon after Gunning-Casteel acquired the location in 1967.



Figure 6-10 – Gunning-Casteel Drug Co. (M.G. McKinney)



Figure 6-11 – Gunning-Casteel closeup (M.G. McKinney)

## Harris Drug Co. (1926-1967)



Figure 6-12 – John L. Harris signature (Census of Distribution, 1929)

The store was first listed in the El Paso city directory in 1926 at 114 W. Mills and remained at that location until it sold. An ad in the October 12, 1928, edition of the *El Paso Herald* noted that the Harris Drug Co. occupied two locations. No. 1 was in the Roberts-Banner Building (almost certainly the 114 W. Mills address), and No. 2 was at 327 E. San Antonio. The latter address was formerly Peoples Drug Store (see Chapter 4).

According to the Census of Distribution for 1929, John F. Harris was the sole owner of the Harris Drug Co. (Figure 6-12). The business was fairly new, opening on May 1, 1926. An ad in the April 28, 1956, edition of the *El Paso Herald-Post* indicated that the Harris Drug Co. opened in 1925, but Harris' date of May

The store was first listed in the El Paso city directory in 1926 at 114 W. Mills and



Figure 6-13 – Harris Drug ad (*El Paso Herald-Post* 4/28/1956)



Figure 6-14 – John F. Harris (Stout-Feldman Studio [ca. 1957])



Figure 6-15 – Harris Drug 1927 (M.G. McKinney)

1, 1926, is probably correct (Figure 6-13). Although we have found no documentary evidence, a photo described below was taken of the San Antonio location in 1927 – showing that branch No. 2 was open by that time. However, I can find no mention of the branch after 1930. Apparently the unit closed, probably prior to the 1929 Census of Distribution.

In 1929, Harris employed four men and three women at the No. 1 store, paying them all a total of \$7,644 for the year. Rent for the store was \$3,600 per year, and his total expenses aside from salaries was \$1,875. He had \$19,190 worth of stock on hand, and his net sales for the year totaled \$49,682. John F. Harris, son of John L. Harris, had the store remodeled in November 1949 (Figure 6-14). The Gunning-Casteel Drug Co. purchased the location in May 1967 (*El Paso Herald-Post* 11/28/1949; 5/24/1967).



Figure 6-16 – Harris Drug 1926 (M.G. McKinney)

An interesting photo from the McKinney collection showed a veterans' parade on June 21, 1927 (Figure 6-15). The camera was at the intersection of E. San Antonio and N. Stanton, looking west down E. San Antonio, with N. Stanton extending to the right. This was the former location of Peoples Drug Store, and the Peoples sign is still visible at the top of the picture. Another McKinney photo was taken on July 6, 1926, from almost the same angle – but from the top of the Trust Building across the intersection from the drug store (Figure 6-16). The New Trust Building was just across from the Trust Building – where the photo was taken. This slightly earlier photo shows the Peoples signs more clearly.

### **W.A. Irvin & Co. (1881-1903)**

As noted in Chapter 4, W.A. Irvin & Co. opened at El Paso in 1881. In conjunction with two other firms, Irvin built a brick building at 113 El Paso St. in 1883 and occupied that spot until 1903, when Irvin sold the location to A.K. Albers. The McKinney photo was taken from San Antonio St., looking directly at the building. Irvin is on the left. Note the sign



Figure 6-17 – W.A. Irvin & Co. (M.G. McKinney)

for Drugs, Books, News Stand, Paints, Glass, & Wall Paper above the roof and “IRVIN” in stone above the store. The sign above the door appears to say “W.A. IRVIN & Co. DRUGS / BOOKS & STATIONERY.” The photo was probably taken fairly soon after the store opened (Figure 6-17).

### **Kelly & Pollard (ca. 1893-1922)**

As noted in Chapter 4, Kelly & Pollard were retail drug dealers from ca. 1893 to ca. 1922. It also became a wholesale house by 1910 and continued that business until 1930. The McKinney photo was taken from the southeast corner of E. San Antonio and N. Oregon, looking at the northwest corner. The large building, central to the photo was called the Bronson Block

(Figure 6-18). The business on the corner (which seems to have attracted a small crowd) was a bank. The building had four other store fronts on San Antonio St. (left side of the building in the photo).

The store to the immediate left of the bank was boarded up (Figure 6-19). This should have been Fred Schaefer's Drug Store (see discussion and photos below). Schaefer was first listed in the



Figure 6-18 – Bronson Block (M.G. McKinney)

1889 city directory

and was located at 115 E. San Antonio by 1892. The area under construction was the San Antonio entrance to the building, with a jewelry store to the immediate left of the scaffolding. The final storefront at the west (left) corner of the building is of more interest to us. This was 109 E. San Antonio, the location of A.K. Albers Palace Drug Store (see Chapter 3 for a history).



Figure 6-19 – Bronson & Hotel Sheldon (Sanborn Map, 1898)

The photo barely showed the Kelly & Pollard retail store at the far right in the Sheldon Hotel (201 N. Oregon), the corner of N. Oregon

and San Francisco (Figure 6-20). The Sheldon is just past the Coney Island Saloon to the right in the photo (also see Figure 6-19). The sign extends out into the street. The photo may have been taken prior to the opening of Schaefer's Drug in either 1889 or 1892; however, there are at least five automobiles in the photo, so it seems later than the early 1890s. The 1898 Sanborn map showed an awning over both the San Antonio and Oregon stores in the Bronson block, so the photo predates that year.



Figure 6-20 – Closeup of Kelly & Pollard (M.G. McKinney)

## Knoblauch Drug Co. (1908-1918)

On July 3, 1908, Richard W. Knoblauch, Charles F. Knoblauch, and Albertina Knoblauch incorporated the Knoblauch Drug Co., with a capital of \$10,000. The family store was located at 300 Mesa Ave., on the corner of Mills St. in the Orndorff Block. Richard was president and manager, with Charles as vice president. The firm made use of both telephone services, with two numbers from Southwest – 731 and 732 – and a single number from Auto – 1393. On January 12, 1910, the *El Paso Herald* described the senior Knoblauch as “a first-class druggist and apothecary, being a graduate and registered pharmacist of several years standing.” The *Herald* added that the store had a “full and complete supply of drugs, chemicals, toilet articles, patent medicines, fancy goods, stationery and candles, being the sole agents for the famous Dolly Varden chocolates.” The store also carried cosmetics and French perfume. In 1909, the family enlarged the store “to accommodate its increasing business.”

Milton A. Warner (see Warner Drug in Chapter 5) purchased a half interest in the business in 1914, but it was apparently not a happy match. The Knoblauch-Warner Drug Co. was only listed in the city directory in 1914 and 1915. After an absence in the directory in 1916 and 1917, the Knoblauch Drug Co. reappeared in 1918 at 206 Mills. The corporation officially dissolved on

April 15, 1918. The Knoblauch family apparently made some of its own products. The *El Paso Herald* of March 20, 1915 mentioned “Knoblauch’s Lilac Cream and Knoblauch’s Quinine Hair Tonic —both preparations which enjoyed wide popularity here.”

Unfortunately, the only photo from the McKinney collection just shows an ad for the Knoblauch Drug Co. The photo appears to be looking north along El Paso St., near the Gem Theater. The building on the left has a painted sign for the Knoblauch Drug Co. (Figure 6-21), although the focus is not clear enough to read the fine print on the sign.



Figure 6-21 – Knoblauch Drug Co. sign (M.G. McKinney)

The El Paso Chamber of Commerce ([1909]:42) provided a photo of the inside of the Knoblauch Drug Store from 1909. The photo shows a fairly typical drug store of the period – long and narrow, with counters extending the length of the store on both sides. Behind the counters were shelves of medicines and products. Although the photo is not sufficiently in focus to ascertain details about individual products, there are boxes of candy (Whitman’s Samplers) in the glass cases at front right and a rack of greeting cards in the center (Figure 6-22).



Figure 6-22 – Knoblauch Drug Co. inside (El Paso Chamber of Commerce [1909]:42)

### **Miskimins Pharmacy** (ca. 1939-ca. 1948)

Miskimins Pharmacy was first listed in the El Paso city directory in 1939 at 910 N. Piedras St. I have only found two newspaper listings (*El Paso Herald*) – February 28, 1941, and December 20, 1945.

Occasionally, the directory reported the address as 910-12 N. Piedras. The last listing was in the 1948 edition of the directory. The El Paso County Historical Society provided a single photo of the inside of Miskimins Pharmacy but had no date for the picture. The photo shows a much wider space than the typical drug store (possibly because of the double – 1910-1912 – address), with an apparently popular soda fountain at the right, with tables in front (Figure 6-23).



Figure 6-23 – Miskimins Pharmacy (El Paso County Historical Society)

## Peoples Drug (1889-1926)

I discussed Peoples Drug Store – along with a bottle and dose glass from the firm – in Chapter 4. The business opened ca. 1889 and closed sometime before May 1, 1926, when the Harris Drug Co. took its



Figure 6-25 – Closeup of Peoples (M.G. McKinney)

show the building while it was still Peoples. Both were probably taken during the 1890s or very early 1900s; there are no automobiles – only horsedrawn carriages – in the photos. One – probably the older of the two – was taken from the top of a building looking east along San Antonio St., with Peoples in the distance (Figure 6-24). Note the Trust Building (with the Use Electric Light sign) across the street. A closeup shows the cigar store in front of the drug (Figure 6-25). The next one was taken from atop the Trust Building, looking down on Peoples and the Model Bar (Figure 6-26).



Figure 6-24 – Peoples Drug Store in distance (M.G. McKinney)

place (see the section on Harris above). Two photos (Figures 6-15 & 6-16) in the Harris section showed the older Peoples Drug signs on the Harris Drug Co. building. Two other McKinney photos



Figure 6-26 – Peoples Drug Store (M.G. McKinney)

## Potter & White (1900-1909)

Scott C. White was listed as a druggist in the 1895 El Paso city directory. The 1896 and 1898 directories listed White as a clerk for W.A. Irvin & Co., and he became part of Potter & White in June 1900 at 4 Plaza Block (city directory; Rakocy 1980:200). The earliest newspaper mention I have found for Potter & White was December 10, 1900. The address was thereafter listed as 4 Pioneer

Plaza, and the location was unoccupied on the 1898 Sanborn map but had a drug store (certainly Potter & White) on the 1900 map (Figure 6-27). Since the 1900 map was released in August, Potter & White was open just in time for inclusion. Potter & White is the drug store on the left side of the map – 4 Plaza Block. The drug store in the lower right corner was the firm of Kelly & Pollard (see Chapter 4).

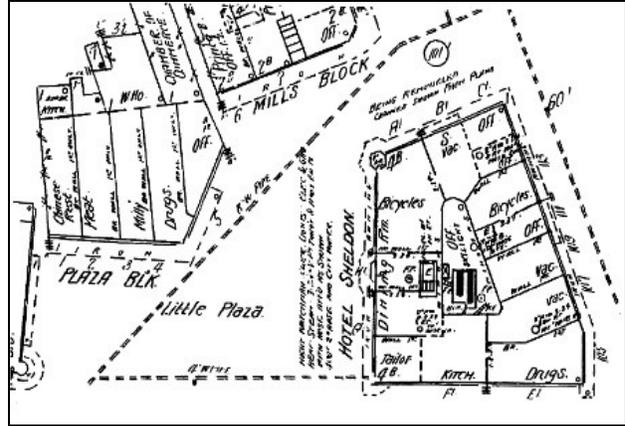


Figure 6-27 – Potter & White (Sanborn Map, 1900)

According to the obituary for Herbert L. White, the senior partner in the firm, he moved to the Southwest “while a young man from Waupun, Wis. after graduating from Northwestern University.” Potter settled in Eddy (now Carlsbad), where was Postmaster, County Commissioner, and Commissioner of the Peace. He moved to El Paso in 1900 and joined with Scott C. White to form Potter & White (*El Paso Herald* 1936).



Figure 6-28 – Potter & White (Rakocy 1980:200)

In the 1906 city directory, they advertised themselves as “druggists, toilet articles, cigars” at 4 Little Plaza (same location) with a telephone number of 356. Their motto was “Potter & White serve the best ice cream and soda water.” On April 7 of the next year, the firm invited the

public to the grand opening of the “Handsome New Soda Fountain” that they had recently installed. They offered free punch, flowers for the ladies, and “a program of music . . . rendered by an orchestra.” They promised “a delightful time” to all who attended (*El Paso Herald* 4/7/1907). The partnership apparently broke up in late 1908 or early 1909, when each pharmacist opened his own store.

Rakocy (1980:200) included a photo of the inside of the Potter & White store. The picture shows elaborately designed wood-and-glass counters and shelves, with an ornate ceiling. The store had gas lights and a spittoon in the lower right corner (Figure 6-28). Rakocy noted that

an advertisement for the store in 1901 had some good things to say: the druggist carried a full line of drugs, patent medicines, perfumes, toilet articles and sundries – all at “living prices.” An elegant soda fountain was offered. The store was kept open day and night every day of the week. Six to eight clerks were on hand to assist customers. This business was started in June of 1900. Mr. Herbert L. Potter was from Carlsbad, New Mexico. Mr. Scott C. White was the partner, an old El Paso name.

### **Potter Drug Co. (1909-1919)**

The Potter Drug Co. was first listed in the El Paso city directories in 1909, emerging from the earlier firm of Potter & White at 4 Pioneer Plaza. In the 1910 edition, Herbert L. Potter advertised the store as “Successor to Potter & White” and offered “drugs, toilet articles, cigars, ice cream, mfrs. of fine candies.” He had two telephones: SW 356 Auto 1356. Potter incorporated the firm under the same name on April 17, 1911, with a capital of \$20,000 (McDonald 1912:79). In the 1912 city directory, the store was listed at 101 S. El Paso Dr. This was not a relocation; the “Plaza” addresses had been changed to street numbers (Figure 6-29). The firm was last listed in 1919, but the Payne-Rice Co. occupied that location in 1920, suggesting that Potter had sold to the new firm.

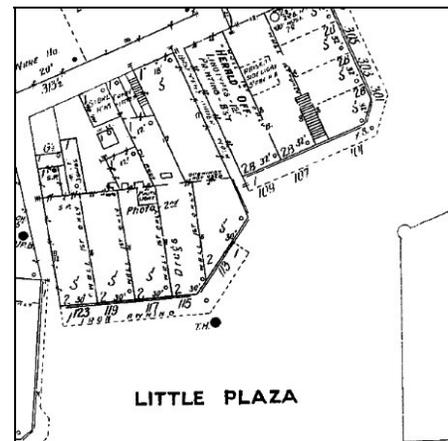


Figure 6-29 – Potter Drug Co. (Sanborn Map, 1908)

The McKinney collection contained five photographs featuring the Potter Drug Co. Probably the earliest photo of the store appears to have been taken from a balcony across the plaza. The photo looks down St. Louis, with San Jacinto Plaza in the middle background. The turret on the right is the corner of the Sheldon Hotel. Note the awnings as well as the street car and buggies in the photo – with only one very old-style automobile (Figure 6-30).



Figure 6-30 – Potter Drug Co. 1 (M.G. McKinney)



Figure 6-31 – Potter Drug Co. 2 (M.G. McKinney)

hundreds of hits. In the photo, the flags are waving, so this may be a July 4<sup>th</sup> parade, or it may be connected with the Army's hunt for Pancho Villa in 1916 (Figure 6-31).

A third photo also showed a patriotic parade with flags flying – possibly 4<sup>th</sup> of July, possibly connected with the Pancho Villa raids. This was taken from a different angle across the plaza from Potter Drug, looking

A second photo showed a parade of what appear to be military trucks. The lead truck was marked "QMC" – Quartermaster Corps. The Potter Drug Co. is in the left center of the photo – taken from across the plaza. Although the building housing the Potter Drug has a sign for the "Grand Hotel," I have been unable to find a clear reference to the name at that location. Unfortunately, an internet search for "Grand Hotel" and "El Paso" brings up

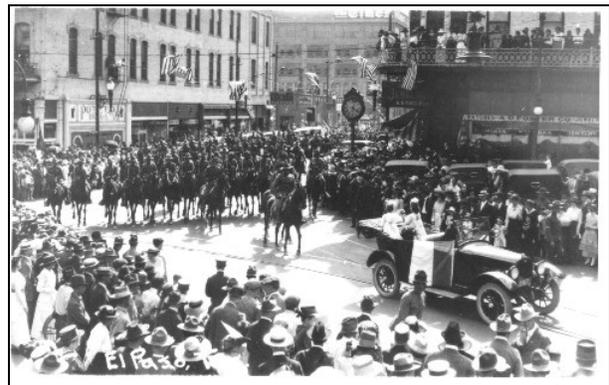


Figure 6-32 – Potter Drug Co. 3 (M.G. McKinney)



Figure 6-33 – Potter ad on theater curtain (M.G. McKinney)

McKinney also had photos of one stage background and one theater curtain with Potter Drug Co. ads. These were apparently used at one of the theaters of the era, possibly the Crawford Theater in the Crawford Hotel at 403 N. Mesa. The stage background has a picture of dancers in the center, surrounded by ads (Figure 6-33). The Potter ad is in the lower center (Figure 6-34). The curtain is similar, except that the central figure was a group of Indians on horseback (Figure 6-35).

slightly down St. Louis but from a lower vantage point than the first,

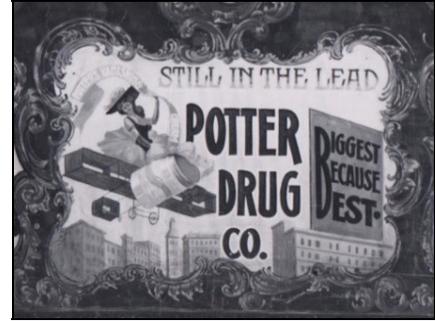


Figure 6-34 – Closeup of Potter ad

probably oldest, photo. Potter Drug is in the left background (Figure 6-32).



Figure 6-35 – Potter ad on theater curtain (M.G. McKinney)

## Rio Grande Pharmacy (1881-1903)

Opened on September 19, 1881, the Rio Grande Pharmacy was one of the earliest in El Paso. For the full history, see Chapter 4. The firm became Grayson's Drug Store in 1903.

One of the greatest of the McKinney photos was of the Rio Grande Pharmacy. Below the photo, itself, was a hand-written caption: "NE Corner of S. El Paso & San Antonio Sts., January 1, 1882. Llew. H. Davis and Mother in Middle of group." The back of the print noted that the original photo was made for Llewellyn H. Davis, owner of pharmacy. The picture shows the Rio

Grande Pharmacy, with its clearly legible new sign, next door to the State National Bank – with a harness and boot shop just east of the pharmacy. Five people are standing in front of the store next to a huge pile of bricks and some construction equipment (Figure 6-36).



Figure 6-36 – Rio Grande Pharmacy (M.G. McKinney)

**Schaefer’s Drug (1889-1946)**

According to Fred Schaefer’s obituary (*El Paso Herald* 12/3/1935), he arrived at El Paso in 1886. He probably worked for one of the early drug stores for the first three years. His ad on a theater curtain (Figure 6-37; also see Figure 6-35) claimed that he opened his drug store in 1889. The 1892 city directory called the business “Schaefer & Co. (Fred)” and located the firm

at 115 San Antonio. Although the *El Paso Herald* (7/15/1898) called the business “Fred Schaefer’s Drug Store” in 1898, the firm was only listed as F. Schaefer in the directories. The listing remained either Fred or Frederick Schaefer until after Fred’s death on December 3, 1935.

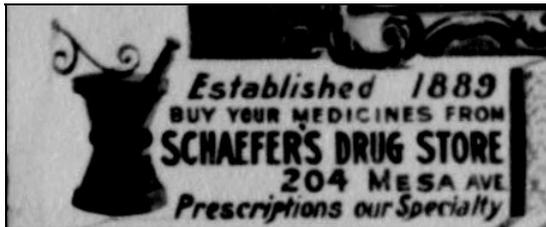


Figure 6-37 – Schaefer ad on theater curtain (M.G. McKinney)

In 1910, Schaefer moved the business to 204 Mesa and shifted locations again to 216 S. Stanton in 1918. At some point, his son or nephew, Herbert, joined him in the business. The notation on the back of the photo in Figure 6-38 (El Paso County Historical Society) identified the two as Herbert and Fred Schaefer ca. 1909. If this date was correct, there may have been both a son and a nephew named Herbert. Another Historical Society photo (Figure 6-39) showed “Herbert C. Schaefer in Fred Schaefer’s Drug Store, 115 San Antonio, 1904-1905.” This was clearly a much older

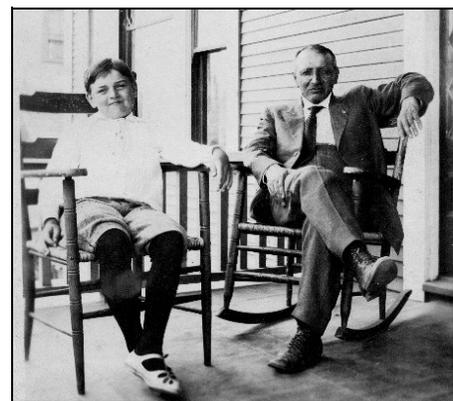


Figure 6-38 – Herbert & Fred Schaefer (El Paso County Historical Society)



Figure 6-39 – Herbert Schaefer at work (El Paso County Historical Society)

Herbert, although the photo was dated 4-5 years earlier than the one of Fred and the younger child. It is also possible that the photo of Fred and Herbert was misdated. In 1922, Schaefer again relocated the firm to 500 N. Stanton, this time permanently.



Figure 6-40 – Fred Schaefer signature (Census of Distribution, 1929)

On April 5, 1930, when Fred Schaefer signed the Census of Distribution for Schaefer's Drug Store, the store was located at 500 N. Stanton St., and Schaefer was the sole owner (Figure 6-40). He claimed the date of original establishment as 1889 and noted that he had owned the store for the entire period. He only had two employees, both male. He rented the store for \$1,500 per year and claimed other expenses of only \$455. He



Figure 6-41 – Schaefer Christmas card (El Paso County Historical Society)



Figure 6-42 – Interior of Schaefer's Drug (El Paso County Historical Society)

had \$3,500 worth of stock on hand, and his net sales totaled \$13,000. Herbert renamed the business as Schaefer's Drug Store upon his uncle's death at the end of 1935. The store was last listed in the *Herald* on February 21, 1946.

The El Paso County Historical Society also made available two additional interesting photos. The first was apparently a Christmas

card. Figure 6-41 stated “Feliz Año” (Merry Christmas) and was dated 1911. A note on the back of the photo identified “Abel Soto - clerk in Schaefer’s Drug Store.” Figure 6-42 is a photo of Fred Schaefer’s Drug Store with “Herbert Schaefer, chemist and nephew of Fred behind counter to left” and “Abel Soto, clerk, behind right counter.”

### Scott White & Co. (1908-1929)

When the firm of Potter & White broke up in 1908 (see above), both men opened drug stores. Scott White & Co. was first listed at 204 N. Oregon in the 1908 city directory. By 1910, White had opened a second store at 606 San Francisco. The 1912 listing had three stores at 305 N. Oregon, 204 Mills, and 606 San Francisco. The address of the second store was changed to 116 Mills in 1915, and, in 1918, the address of the third store became 314 San Francisco. The 1925 directory clarified the locations as No. 1 – Mills Bldg., 305 N. Oregon; No. 2 – Roberts-Banner Bldg., 116 Mills, and No. 3 – 314 San Francisco. White sold the drug store on October 3, 1929, to devote his full energy to his second job as a U.S. Marshall (see the section on the Renfro-Cordell Drug below).



Figure 6-43 – Scott White & Co. ad (M.G. McKinney)



Figure 6-44 – Closeup of ad (M.G. McKinney)

The only photo for this firm is of an advertisement painted on the side of a building (Figure 6-43). The ad stated: “SCOTT WHITE & CO. / Prescriptions Druggists / NOW At 204 Mills St. / LATER IN THE MILLS BL’D’G” (Figure 6-44). The ad was probably painted ca. 1910 or 1911. The original store was at 204 N. Oregon, but the move to 305 N. Oregon (the Mills Bldg.) was complete by 1912.

## Union Drug Co. (1917-1928)

Dale S. Haifner, William White, and other unnamed El Pasoans incorporated the Union Drug Co. in late February 1917. The store was



Figure 6-46 – Union Drug (M.G. McKinney)

located at 400 E. San Antonio, corner of Stanton. A 1917 ad featured cosmetics and other items for the ladies, although the 1918 Christmas ad featured articles for both sexes (Figure 6-

45). The firm experienced

financial difficulties, and the court appointed Grover C. Smith as the receiver. Smith instituted an auction on Monday, October 8, 1928, when C.E. Kelly – senior partner of Kelly & Pollard (see Chapter 4) – purchased the assets of the Union Drug Co. (*El Paso Herald* 12/7/1918; 10/6/1928; 10/9/1928; *Texan Trade Review and Industrial Record* 1917:16).



Figure 6-48 – Union Drug (M.G. McKinney)

The store's 400 E. San Antonio location was the corner of San Antonio and Stanton Streets, directly across from the Model Bar, just north of Peoples Drug (see Peoples Drug above). The McKinney collection provided two photos of Union Drug. The first photo was taken from Stanton St. looking north at the Trust Building – with the “USE ELECTRIC LIGHT” sign – 400 E. San Antonio (Figure 9-46). A closer view shows Union Drug (center), Model Bar (right, along Stanton), and just a glimpse of the Peoples Drug sign above and just behind the Model Bar

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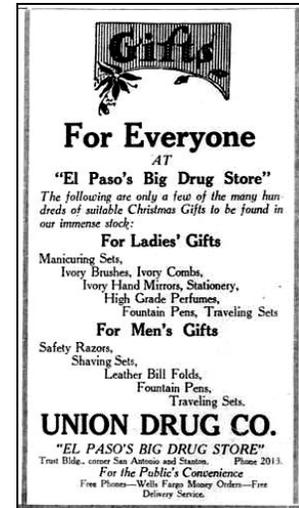


Figure 6-45 – Union Drug Co. Christmas ad (*El Paso Herald* 12/7/1918)



Figure 6-47 – Union Drug closeup

(Figure 6-47). In the second photo, Union Drug is in the tall building at the right front (Figure 6-48). The photo looks east along San Antonio St. A closer look (Figure 6-49) shows the sign (left center). Just above the doorway is the sign that was visible in Figure 47.



Figure 6-49 – Union Drug closeup (M.G. McKinney)

### Upson Avenue Drug Store (1920-1961)

Although the Upson Avenue Drug Store remained in business for four decades, I have found very little information about it. The firm opened in 1922 as a partnership between J.H. Hurxthol and F.T. Preisler; however, when Preisler died after a lengthy illness on January 23, 1933, Hurxthol became the sole owner. The business was listed in both the newspapers and the city directories at 215 Upson Ave. until 1934, when the number became 217 (Census of Distribution, 1929; *El Paso Herald* 1/24/1933).

The 1929 Census of Distribution, however, used the 217 address, so that was likely correct from the beginning. By that time, the partners employed eight men at a total wage of \$7,000. They paid \$3,000 for rent and had \$1,537 in other expenses. The inventory of stock on hand totaled \$5,450, and their net sales for the year came to \$53,809. The store apparently expanded ca. 1933, when the address was written as 217-219 Upson Ave. A July 24, 1967, ad in the *Herald* informed the public: “Prescriptions Carefully and Accurately Filled[;] Air Conditioned For Your Comfort.” Although the *Herald* ran want ads for the store about once a year, it mentioned nothing else of note. The final entry in the city directories was 1931.

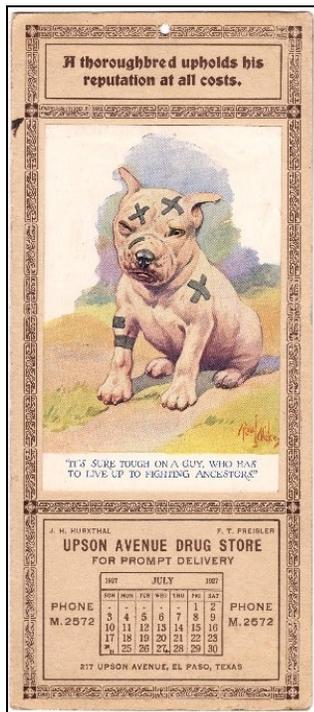


Figure 6-50 – Upson Ave. Drug calendar

The Upson Avenue Drug Store is represented in this study by a single calendar from 1927. The drawing on the calendar showed a picture of a beat-up pit bull with numerous bandages and the caption “It’s sure tough on a guy who live up to fighting ancestors.” Above is the slogan, “A thoroughbred upholds his reputation at all costs” (Figure 6-50).

**Walgreen Drug Store (ca. 1914?-present)**

With the size and popularity of the Walgreen drug chain in 2014, it is surprisingly difficult to discover any historical data for the El Paso stores. The earliest ad I have found in El Paso newspapers filled most of a page in the *El Paso Herald* on January 16, 1914 (Figure 6-51). The store was located at 115 N. Mesa Dr. The firm was not listed in the city directories until 1936 as the Walgreen-Texas Drug Co. The following year, the directories called it the Walgreen Drug Co. of Texas but dropped “of Texas” the following year. As late as the mid-1950s, the firm was still only listed at 115 N. Mesa, even though there were certainly multiple locations by that time. The chain is one of the largest in the U.S. in 2014, still serving multiple locations in El Paso.

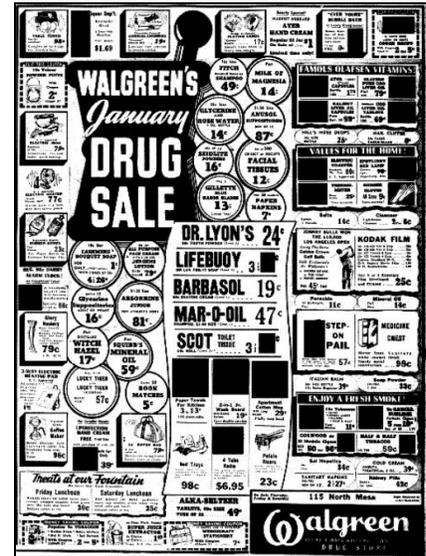


Figure 6-51 – Walgreen ad (*El Paso Herald* 1/16/1914)



Figure 6-52 – Postcard showing Walgreen’s (right) and Gunning-Casteel (left)

I have found a single postcard of a Walgreen’s store (Figure 6-52). Although the postcard was labeled “TEXAS STREET LOOKING EAST, EL PASO, TEXAS – 2317,” The retouched photo also showed a Gunning-Casteel Drug branch across the street (see the history of Gunning-Casteel in Chapter 5), Judging by the cars in the drawing, the postcard was made in the 1930s, possibly early 1940s. The cross street on the street sign is N.

Oregon. Since neither firm had a store on Texas St., this was initially a mystery. A look at building shapes on the 1905 Sanborn Insurance Map, however, solved the conundrum. The entrance to the Cuning-Casteel branch (left side of the card) was just off the picture at 200 N. Oregon. The entrance to Walgreen’s, however, faced the other direction, opening at 115 N. Mesa. Even though both drug stores show in the Texas St. postcard, neither had a Texas St. address.

## Ward's Pharmacy (ca. 1905-ca. 1925)

I discussed Ward's Pharmacy in Chapter 5, including a photo of the interior. Recall that Ward's was at 109 San Antonio in 1906, moved to 600 N. Stanton by 1913, and finally settled at 706 N. Stanton by 1918. The McKinney collection included two photos of Ward's – one in daylight, the other at night.



Figure 6-53 – Ward's Pharmacy – day (M.G. McKinney)



Figure 6-54 – Ward's Pharmacy – night (M.G. McKinney)

The daylight photo (Figure 53) shows Ward's Pharmacy halfway down the left side of the block at 109 San Antonio St. The photo was taken from S. El Paso St., looking northeast at the 100 block. A theater and pool hall are in the foreground. The night photo (Figure 54) is also taken from El Paso St., looking east down San Antonio St. The same pool hall is in the left foreground with the Ward's sign visible down the block. Across the street is the Wigwam Saloon with another prominent Pool sign and Pullman's Diamond Merchants in the foreground. The large building down the right side with a sign above it is Blumenthals, with the Trust Building (Use Electric Light sign) in the distance.

## Warners Drugs (1902-1953)

I discussed the Warner Drug Co. in Chapter 5. The firm opened in 1902 and remained in business until 1953. The first listing for a location was in the 1916 city directory – at 300 Mesa Ave. Around 1927, the business moved to 212 Mills St. and remained at that location until the last listing in 1963. From 1936 to 1953, the address was 201-212 Mills, indicating an expansion

of the store. The firm may have reduced the space in 1954 or merely reverted to the old address for convenience. Few companies continued to use hyphenated addresses after the 1950s. A 1931 ad in the *El Paso Herald* noted that the store was “in front of the post office.” By 1950, ads noted that the firm was across from the Wigwam.



Figure 6-55 – Warner Drug Co. (Rakocy 1980:236)



Figure 6-56 – M. Aguirre (El Paso Public Library)

Rakocy (1980:236) reproduced a photo captioned “Mills St. & N. Stanton C. 1927” as shown in Figure 6-55. Warner’s Drug is prominently featured in the left foreground. The photo must have been taken shortly after Warner moved to the 212 Mills St. location. Further down the block, on the same side, is a sign for the Harris Drug Co., discussed above (see Figures 6-12 to 6-16). A photo labeled “M. Aguirre, Proprietor and Pharmacist, Warner Drug Co.” (Figure 6-56) was included in *Who’s Who*, published in the 1940s or 1950s (El Paso Public Library).

### **Renfro-Cordell Drug Co. (1927-1929)**

Frank Albert Cordell opened the Cordell Drug Co. at 201 N. Oregon by at least October 5, 1921. Shortly after opening, Cordell purchased the Kelly & Pollard retail establishment at 313 Mills St. (Era Druggists Directory 1921:292). At some point in 1925, Cordell captured the Rexall franchise and called the business The Rexall Drug. He joined the Renfro group, incorporating under the name of Renfro-Cordell Drug Co. on April 4, 1927. By 1929, Renfro’s advertised itself as “the largest drug-chain in Texas” – with 30 stores at Fort Worth, Brownwood, Austin, Wichita Falls, Decatur, Weatherford, Cleburne, and El Paso (University of Texas Annual, 1929). Although the firm advertised heavily in the *El Paso Herald* in 1928, the match was apparently not a happy one.

When the Sheldon Hotel, home of Cordell's original store, burned on April 9, 1929, Cordell apparently sold out his interest in the Mills location to Renfro. The location was only listed as the Renfro Drug Store in the city directories from 1930 to 1939, after which it disappeared from the listings. On October 3, 1929, the *El Paso Herald* reported that Scott C. White had retired from the drug business after 27 years in the trade. He sold his store at the Mills Building to Frank A. Cordell for \$30,000. Cordell had been vacationing in California since the fire in April but had returned and had been seeking a new venue for a drug business.

The new business at 305 N. Oregon was called the Cordell Drug Store. It did not go well. In late 1932, just three years after Cordell bought the store, he had to file involuntary bankruptcy. The *El Paso Herald* reported on February 27, 1933, that, ironically, it was U.S. Marshall Scott C. White who repurchased the drug store at the sheriff's sale. White rehired his former manager, Ray Van Doren, to resume that position, and planned to take an active part in the business as soon as his current term as Marshall expired.

A sign for the Renfro-Cordell Drug Store appears at the right foreground of Figure 6-55, at the far end of the building. Unfortunately, the street light partially obscures the sign, but it is nonetheless visible and identifiable. Since Renfro-Cordell was only open from mid-1927 to mid-1929, Rackocy's (1980:236) date of ca. 1927 for the photo was very accurate.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

This look at El Paso drug stores in photos is limited, of course, to those I could find in pictures. There were numerous other drug stores and pharmacies in the city that were not addressed in this or any other chapter, and, I'm sure, there are many other photos that I have not found. However, these pictures provide an enticing glimpse into the drug establishments of El Paso's past.

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