

Chapter 3

Bottle Descriptions and Photographs

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Descriptions

Descriptions of bottles generally require some explanations. As with all specialties, bottles have their own set of nomenclature. Figure 3-1 illustrates some names commonly used in this work.

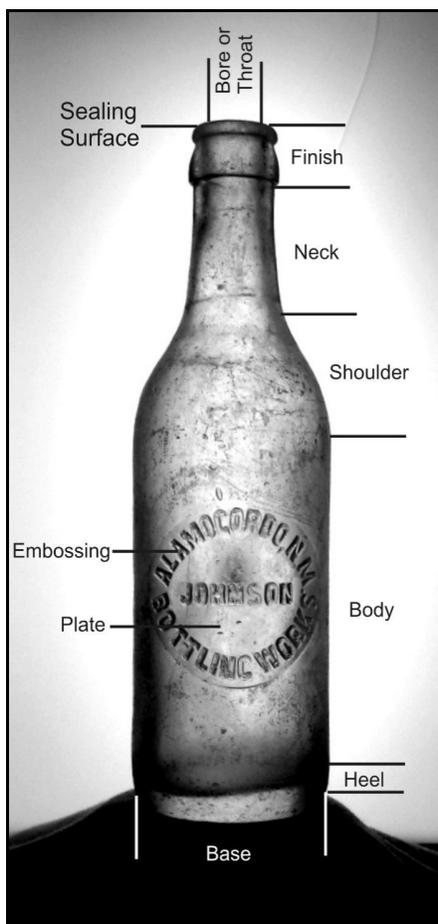


Figure 3-1 – Parts of a Bottle

Bore or Throat – the inside diameter of the neck

Sealing Surface – the extreme upper surface (called “lip” by collectors)

Finish – the final, upper section of the bottle, including part or, occasionally, all of the neck

Neck – the usually narrow area between the shoulder and the finish

Shoulder – the change in slope where the body begins to narrow to form the neck

Body – the central section of the bottle, usually containing advertisements and messages

Embossing – raised glass lettering (or pictures) that are an integral part of the molding process

Plate – an area, usually round or oval on soda bottles, cut into the mold, with an embossed plate inserted

Heel – the lower section of the body, just above the base

Base – the actual bottom of the bottle; the part of the bottle that actually contacts a surface is the resting point or bearing surface

The finish received its name because it was the last part of the bottle to be “finished” in the mouth-blown manufacturing process. In El Paso soda bottles, only two types of finishes were generally used. The earliest, Hutchinson-style finish (shown in Figure 2-1) was used on only ca.

eight El Paso bottles, and some of these almost certain made their way to Alamogordo. The crown finish, still in use today, became the most common of all soda bottle finishes at El Paso as in the rest of the world. The continuous-thread finish was used on non-returnable bottles from about the 1960s but is not within the scope of this work.

Initially, bottlers had to buy the molds that glass houses used to make their bottles – if they wanted their names embossed on the containers. In 1867, however, James J. Christie patented a “glass bottle mold fitted with a removable panel that was inscribed with the name and address to be molded in the bottle.” Whitall Tatum & Co. began using the plates in 1868 (Griffenhagen & Bogard 1999:36). Soon, plates were in use everywhere. By the 1880s, the use of the plate mold was the norm.

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Wherever possible, I have used descriptive terms found in Jones and Sullivan (1989), such as “ribs” to describe vertical, embossed, rounded ridges, or other bottle parts. However, I have continued to use spelling common to the 20th century United States (e.g. mold rather than mould – the Canadian spelling and the form used in the late 19th and early 20th centuries).

Although I have attempted to be as comprehensive as possible, it is important to note that the list of bottles in this volume is probably incomplete. Collectors, archaeologists, and antique dealers discover new additions to the list periodically – such as the “Johnson” bottle plowed up in 2010 (see the story in the 2011 Foreword and section on the Alamogordo Bottling Works, Chapter 5). Representative samples are lacking from at least three owners of Alamogordo Bottling Works, and examples of at least several known beverage types advertised by local bottlers are as yet unfound. There are undoubtedly undiscovered bottle styles and variations from bottlers whose more common containers are listed in this work. With many of the paper-label variations, the ravages of time may have destroyed all examples. The descriptions of bottles are as complete as I could make them.

Descriptions Within the Text

Every Alamogordo bottle listed in the text is described using the same format.¹ At the top of each bottle description is a paragraph (or more) that highlights the container's history and/or outstanding features. This is followed by a tabular format that describes each bottle, one part at a time. If certain sections (e.g. neck or heel) are excluded in a given description, it is because they contain no labeling or descriptive design.

Embossing, printing, or ACL labeling is presented in either capitals or mixed letters as it appears on the bottle or printed label. Details (such as italics, arches, upwardly slanted labels, etc.) follow the lettering in parentheses (). A line change is indicated by a slash (/) between words (e.g. BOTTLE STERILIZED / BEFORE FILLING means the second two words appear below the first two words).

Method of Manufacture: Only two methods of manufacture were used for Alamogordo soda bottles: hand production and machine manufacture. Hand production is noted by the phrase: "Mouth blown into a mold." Machine manufacture is indicated only by the word "machine."

Color: This refers only to the color of the glass (e.g. Georgia Green, colorless, or amethyst), not to labeling colors. Glass that contains no apparent pigmentation is referred to as colorless, not clear. The word, clear – as noted by Jones and Sullivan (1989:13) – is a very ambiguous term. The word, colorless, is much more (pardon the expression) clear.

Early accounts refer to the color caused by iron impurities as common green, rather than aqua or aquamarine. Although I used the term "common green" in my early books and articles, the word "aqua" is more descriptive and less ambiguous – and is used in this work. Manganese-bearing glass is variously described as purple, solarized amethyst, or SCA (sun-colored amethyst). I chose to use the word, amethyst to cover all minor variations.

¹ I did not include full descriptions of El Paso bottles or those used by Reber. Each of the El Paso bottles appearing in this work are described in full detail in my El Paso soda industry book (Lockhart 2010).

Georgia Green is the color popularized by Coca-Cola; Forest Green was chosen by Seven Up. Both colors were used by other companies. Amber glass (in Alamogordo) was used mostly by beer companies who bottled cereal beverages or “near-beers” during the Prohibition period. These almost always carried paper labels and are frequently only distinguishable from beer bottles by the absence of the word “beer” on the paper label.

Size (in cm.): Size is given in centimeters and always includes height (h) and diameter (d) at center body. In most cases, body diameter is the mean diameter of a bottle. Although soft drink bottles appear to be circular in cross-section, they are usually slightly oval. Even relatively new bottles can vary in diametric measurement by as much as 0.1 cm., and older containers sometimes vary by more than 0.2 cm.

If other diametric measurements are important, they are also listed. Bore diameter is generally standard for the use of crown caps and thus is not listed. Both height and diameter tend to vary among individual containers that were blown into molds. Measurements were maintained at a closer tolerance with the advent of machine-made containers.

Primary Labeling Style: Labeling falls into three categories: embossed, ACL, or paper. Embossing consists of raised lettering created during the molding process. Applied Color Lettering (ACL) is the application of heated enamel to the glass surface (also known as painted labels or baked enamel labeling). I commonly use the ACL designation for brevity and because it was used by the Owens-Illinois Glass Co., one of the leaders of the bottling industry. Paper labels are, of course, printed on paper and glued to the glass surface.

Finish: All known Alamogordo soda bottles were manufactured with crown finishes. The earliest Houck & Dieter bottles shipped to El Paso may have had Hutchinson finishes, but they were certainly replaced by crowns early in the 20th century.

Capacity: Capacity is measured in fluid ounces. Where such information was included as a part of the bottle labeling, it is reported as x oz. (e.g. 10 oz.). When circumstances allowed, bottles with no content information on the label were filled with water to approximately 1.5 inches below the sealing surface and then poured into a measuring cup. These were reported as ca. x oz., e.g.: (ca. 10 oz.). Bottles I was unable to measure and which contained no content information were reported as ca. x oz. (est.), e.g.: [ca. 10 oz. (est)].

Overall Bottle Design: This section describes the overall shape of the bottle (usually cylindrical) along with general embossed designs, such as swirls, ribs, constricted waists, etc.

Front Description The sections below refer to the obverse or front side of the bottle. This generally contains the main labeling area.

Neck/Shoulder: Generally, because of the shape of the shoulder, location of the label, or label size, it is unclear whether a label is actually on the shoulder or the neck. In these cases, the designation, neck/shoulder, is appropriate.

Body: Labels or designs on the body (usually the primary labeling area) are described here.

Heel: The heel was often a favorite area for content information, although occasional other data such as manufacturer's marks or mold numbers appear here.

Back Description The sections below refer to the reverse or back side of the bottle.

Neck/Shoulder: Same as front description.

Body: Same as front description.

Heel: Same as front description.

Base: Important dating information such as manufacturer's marks, patent dates, manufacturing date codes, or even initials of the company owner were frequently embossed on the base.

Manufacturer: Where known, the manufacturer is listed, along with the dates for use of the specific mark (in parentheses) – when known.

Dating: The approximate dating period for the bottle appears in brackets (e.g., [1921-1933]). Wherever pertinent, an explanation of how the dating was derived follows.

Collection(s): This section contains names of collectors and/or collections housing examples.

Variations:

Following the descriptive comments and notations, I have added a list and description of variations. For example, each of Thomas O’Conor’s ACL bottles were based on the same basic pattern, so they are all dealt with under a single heading. They differ only in color, back design, and/or label size. Each variation will be listed by number and a description of specifically what is different about the bottle, including date codes.

Bottle descriptions follow the histories of the companies that filled them. For help in cross-referencing, a list of drinks known to have been bottled in Alamogordo and the dates during which each company bottled or distributed them is provided in Appendix B.

Photographs

Bottle photographs are arranged according to the bottler who filled the bottles. For example, Crystal Beverage Co. bottled Crystal brands, Delaware Punch, and a variety of other products. All of these appear at the end of Chapter 6, “Crystal Beverage Co.” These photographs come from a variety of sources, mostly from my own collection. Because of lighting and other considerations, these photos are of varying quality. Details appear better in grayscale images, so I have only used color, if it served a specific purpose. Photos of my collection, taken by me, will not carry citations. If a photo came from another collection, it is labeled just below the picture with the collector’s name or name of the specific collection (for archaeological collections or museums). Photographers’ names (other than mine) will follow the collection name in brackets.