

Bottles on the Border:

The History and Bottles of the Soft Drink Industry

in El Paso, Texas, 1881-2000



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Chapter 8a

Chapter 8a

Magnolia Bottling Company

Even the competitors admitted that Coca-Cola was the most popular soft drink in El Paso, but the Magnolia Bottling Company began as a small plant bottling soda water in fruit flavors. Its founder, Hope Melnotte Smith, had the insight in 1911 to contract with the best-selling, fastest-growing non-alcoholic beverage company in the United States – Coca-Cola. By doing so, he established himself permanently in El Paso and became an important business and civic leader of the city. The business he established in late 1907 or early 1908 remains active in the 21st century.

Magnolia Bottling Co. (1908-1915)

History

The Trail to Texas

Smith's story began in Jefferson, Texas, where he was born in 1883. His birthplace was a small town, but there were Magnolia trees "all over Jefferson," and the young Smith loved them. Later, he would try to transplant Magnolias in El Paso, but they would never grow. Although Smith, himself, was not a strong "church-goer" in later life, his father had been an ardent Methodist (Goetting interviews).

As a youth (possibly as young as eight years of age), Hope worked for an uncle, J.M. De Ware, delivering ice and laboring in the bottling plant at Jefferson, before he moved on to seek his fortune at the age of eighteen. His exact path is unknown, but, despite the inauspicious start as a bottle washer (EPHP 4/20/1931 1:5) for a soft drink producer, he enjoyed working in the industry and labored in bottling plants in Hattiesburg, McComb, and Greenwood, Mississippi (Lucky manuscript 1979).

Smith may have been first introduced to the drink that would bring him success in the bottling business at the Coca-Cola Bottling Works of Greenwood, which began bottling the well-known soft drink in 1904. When he moved on to Hattiesburg, he may have also worked for Coca-Cola. The Hattiesburg Coca-Cola Bottling Company began operation as a Mississippi corporation in 1906 in a rented building that was only 30 by 50 feet in size. The company sold 175 cases in its first week and deposited \$80.55 in its bank account. A second plant where Smith

may have worked was the Hattiesburg Bottling Works that opened around the turn of the century. The plant, located in a two-story building on Main St., was noted for Jarvis Celery Tonic as well as soda water (McCarty 1982:39; Munsey 1972:303; *Hattiesburg American* 8/20/1981; EPT 11/28/1959 1:2; 6/28/1977 G13:1; EPHP 11/27/1959 1:6).

In 1907,¹ the McComb Coca-Cola Bottling Company started business. I have been unable to find another bottler in early McComb history, so this may have been the last bottling company that employed Smith prior to his move to El Paso. The Coca-Cola connection would have been an obvious one: In 1894, Joseph A. Biedenharn of Vicksburg, Mississippi, was the first to bottle Coca-Cola. Prior to that date, Coca-Cola was only available as a fountain drink. Mississippi rapidly became the hot-spot for Coca-Cola sales (McComb Chamber of Commerce; Munsey 1972:303).

Smith may have worked at any combination of the Mississippi companies prior to relocating to Stamford, Texas, as the manager for the Stamford Ice and Refrigerating Co. “that also operated a bottling works” (EPT 11/28/1959 1:6). The *Times* claims that Smith moved to Stamford in 1904. While at Stamford, Smith wrote a short piece of advice about carbonating water for other bottlers (Blumenthal [1907] 1988:29). Stamford was apparently the last place Smith worked prior to his migration to El Paso. He finally arrived at El Paso in August of 1907² and was soon followed by his brother, Clopton (Goetting interviews). Clopton joined his brother as a soda bottler (Figure 8-1).



Figure 8-1 – The Smith family; Hope is standing far right, Clopton kneeling far right (Courtesy of Kurt Goetting)

¹ Note that this date does not fit with the timing described in the rest of the narrative. Since much of the early information derived from memories and family traditions, the sequence could have been slightly different, dates may be inaccurate, and/or Smith may never have been in McComb at all.

² It is unclear when Smith actually started the Magnolia Bottling Co. Almost all sources place Smith’s *arrival* in El Paso at 1907, but the only sources we have for 1907 as the start of the business are from memories. The business certainly began in late 1907 or early 1908.

The founding of the Magnolia Bottling Co. (ca. 1908-1911)

The wandering Smith (Figure 8-2) apparently arrived too late in 1907 to be included in the El Paso City Directory, as he was not listed until the following year. The 1908 City Directory lists the proprietors of the newly-formed Magnolia Bottling Company as Carl Kirchner, H. Clay Bouldin, and William S. Campbell. Hope M. Smith, although not one of the owners, managed the company and was probably responsible for its inception. With his already notable background in bottling, Smith likely convinced the three backers that El Paso was ripe for a new soft drink bottler (EPCD 1908).

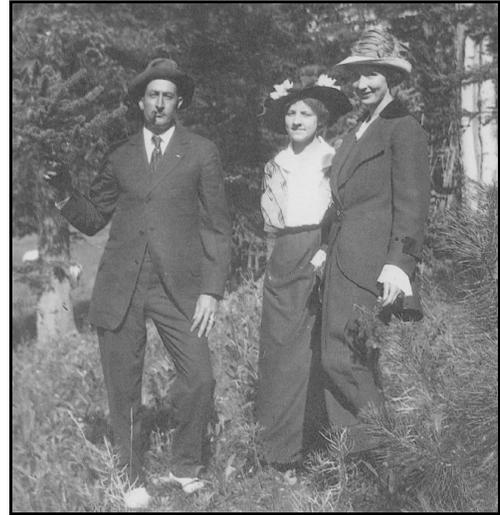


Figure 8-2 – A clowning Hope Smith with his wife (or future wife), Milda Conoly, to his immediate left (Courtesy of Kurt Goetting)

A year later, in 1909, Magnolia became incorporated, with Kirchner as the first president, Bouldin as secretary, and Smith continuing as manager. Apparently, Campbell became disassociated with the firm during the incorporation proceedings as he is not mentioned after 1908. In 1909 Bouldin, too, was absent, and Kirchner became both president and secretary. In the 1910 census, Smith listed himself as “Manager” of a “Brewing Co.” He was 28. His 21-year-old brother, Clopton, was a workman on a streetcar (EPCD 1909-1910; census).

Carl Kirchner

Carl Kirchner was a colorful character long before he settled in El Paso. Born in Bee County, Texas, on November 19, 1867, he began his service as a Texas Ranger on May 18, 1889, and rose to the rank of First Sergeant. By the time he was discharged on July 24, 1895, he had been in several gunfights and killed an indeterminable number of men in the line of duty. He was involved in the famous gunfight on San Elizario Island in 1895, when Ranger Captain Frank Jones was killed. Kirchner was also involved in the later retrieval of Jones’ body. He served in West Texas, stationed at Shafter, Marfa, Pecos, Alpine, and Ysleta (ca. 12 miles southeast of El Paso) before settling in El Paso after his discharge (Metz 1989:295; Sonnichsen 1968:315; Stephens 1978:77-78).

Although the date of purchase is unknown, Kirchner operated the Silver King Saloon from sometime after 1895 to at least 1905. On October 30, 1899, he wed Mary Beck in San Antonio and brought her home to El Paso. Although he was not involved in any gunfights after his retirement from the rangers, Kirchner carried a sidearm for the rest of his life in the belief that some of his old enemies might want revenge (Metz 1989:295; Sonnichsen 1968:315; Stephens 1978:77-78).

If Kirchner had an occupation during the next few years, he did not let the city directory know what it was, but, about the time he became involved with Magnolia Bottling Company (1908), he also became the agent for the San Antonio Brewing Assoc. and the Houston Ice & Brewing Co. With Magnolia's incorporation in 1909, Kirchner became president and treasurer and held those positions until his death. Carl Kirchner contracted typhus while viewing the bodies of revolutionaries in Ciudad Juárez and died on January 28, 1911 (Stephens 1978:80; EPCD 1888-1912).

Bouldin and Campbell

Henry Clay Bouldin also came to El Paso in the 1890s and worked as a printer for the El Paso Daily Herald until the turn of the century, when he briefly worked for the Galveston, Harrisonburg, and San Antonio Railway before returning to printing in 1902. In 1904, he became the bookkeeper for the San Antonio Brewing Assoc. at El Paso and continued to keep books there and for Kirchner while being an officer for Magnolia. He was listed as one of the principals of Magnolia in 1908 and as secretary in 1909 when the company incorporated. After that, he disappeared from El Paso records. Like many others of his day, he was known as Henry C. prior to his elevation into bookkeeping, when he became H. Clay Bouldin (EPCD 1888-1912).

William S. Campbell was a latecomer compared to the other two, arriving in the West-Texas town in 1903. He started out as a clerk for the El Paso and Southwest Railroad Company but became a bartender the following year. He soon became part owner of a saloon, known first as Campbell & Lancaster (1906), then as Campbell & Truit in 1907. Concurrent with his saloon business, he was a driver for the San Antonio Brewing Association and continued in that capacity along with running his two saloons and his position with Magnolia. By 1909, he had apparently given up Magnolia for his saloons and was no longer recorded at Magnolia (EPCD 1903-1912).

The First Plant

The first Magnolia plant was a one-room building on the northeast corner of Main Dr. and North Kansas St. where the six foot, five inch tall, 230 pound Smith mixed and bottled fruit flavors under the brand name “Hope’s” for a population of 25,000 thirsty El Pasoans. The new building sat beside the railroad tracks and housed the foot-powered bottling machine that Smith operated by himself. He bottled beverages in the mornings and delivered the finished product from a horse-drawn wagon in the afternoons (Lucky interview).

The actual one-room bottling works showed up on the 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Figure 8-3 and 8-4). The small building, marked “SODA WATER MAKING,” sat just northeast of the “San Antonio Brewing Ass’n’s BEER STORAGE” building. The San Antonio office on the west side of the building faced N. Kansas, and a loading platform on the south faced the railroad tracks.³

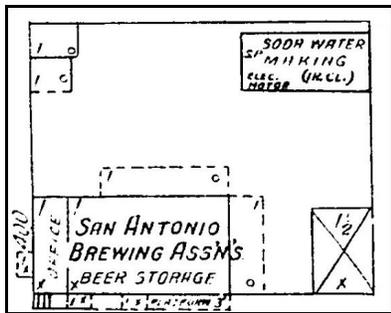


Figure 8-4 – Magnolia Bottling Co., first location (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1908)

Further details can be gleaned from two photos (Rakocy 1980:276-277). The first shows San Antonio Brewing Association and Houston Ice & Brewing Co. building, a long wooden structure with four wagons lined up at the loading platform by the tracks (Figure 8-5). Standing on the platform are Dan Lovelady (far left – who took over the operation upon Kirchner’s death), Carl Kirchner (in the left doorway), and Hope Smith (standing on the platform to the right – unfortunately decapitated by the inserted photo of the Smith brothers). The photo is entitled “First home of the Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Co.” – although it is really the combined distribution center for the beer manufactured by the San Antonio Brewing Co. and the Houston Ice & Brewing Co. The

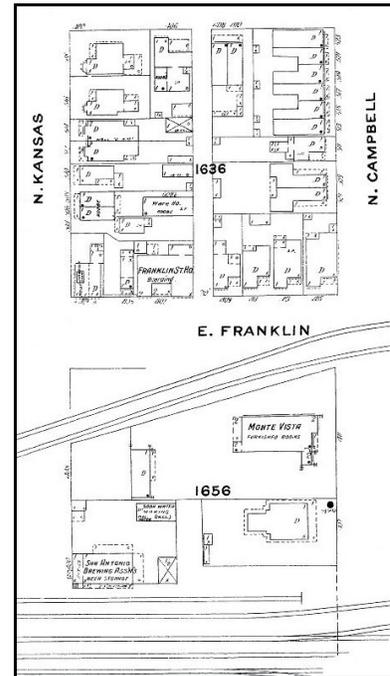


Figure 8-3 – San Antonio Brewing Assn. & Magnolia Bottling Co. locations (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1908)

³ The tracks were laid on what had been Main St. and were labeled with both the street name and the Southern Pacific Main Tracks.

second photo shows a corrugated steel building with a sign on the front: Temporary Location of Magnolia Bottling Co. High Grade Soft Drinks, Visitors Welcome (Figure 8-6). This is the smaller building shown in the upper right corner of the Sanborn map (see Figure 8-4).

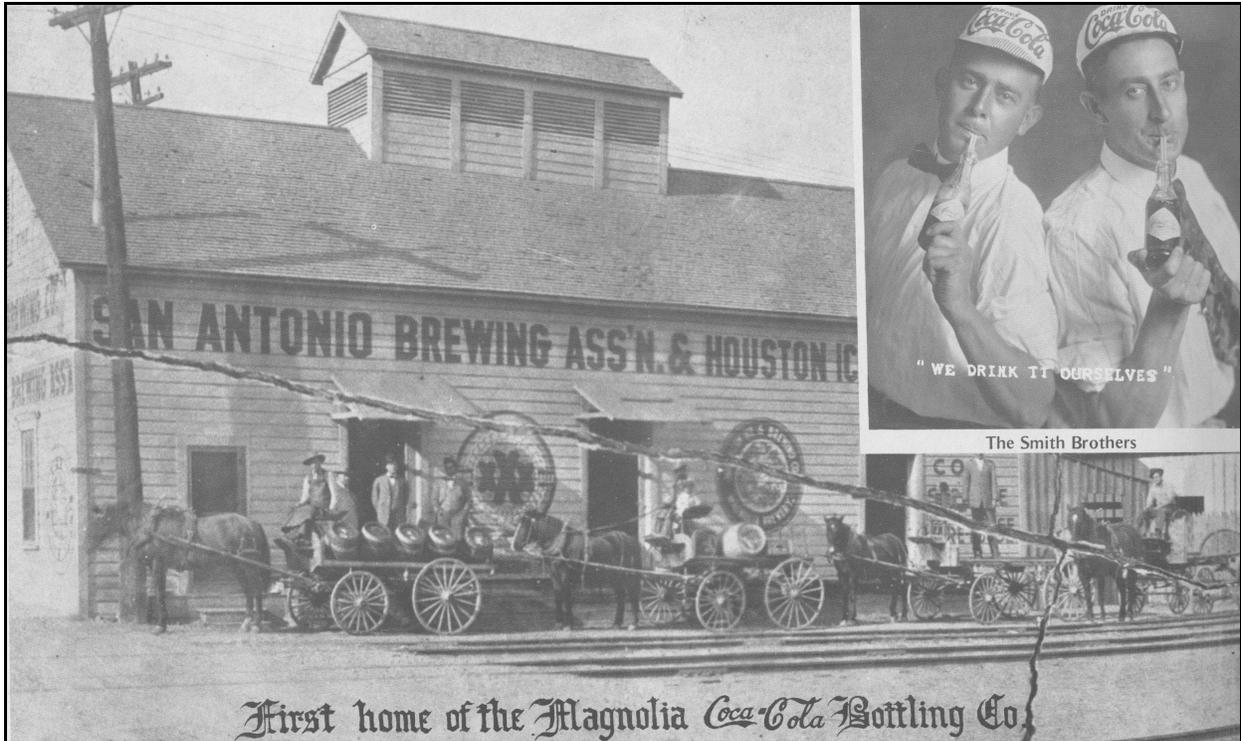


Figure 8-5 – San Antonio Brewing Assoc. building with photo of the Smith brothers at upper right (Rackocy 1980:276)

San Antonio Brewing Association

In addition to bottling soft drinks, Smith distributed beer from Kirchner’s San Antonio Brewing Assoc. and Houston Ice & Brewing Co. and worked as bartender at night⁴ (Lucky interview). The beer distribution center, therefore, was an important place in Smith’s life. By at least the middle of 1899, James W. Magoffin advertised the sale of beer from the San Antonio Brewery at his location at the northwest corner



Figure 8-6 – Magnolia’s first home (Rackocy 1980:277)

⁴ Although this is pure speculation, one of Bouldin’s saloons is a likely place for Smith to have bartended.

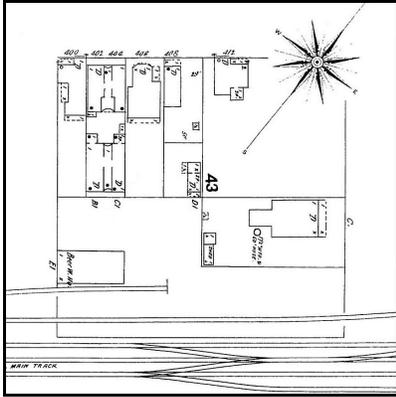


Figure 8-7 – San Antonio Brewing Assoc. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1898)

of Main and Kansas (*Alamogordo News* 7/27/1899; EPCD 1900). The warehouse was probably built in 1898, too late to be included in the city directory for that year. Although not listed in earlier directories, and the dealership appeared on the 1898 Sanborn map – although not on earlier ones (Figure 8-7).

Magoffin went into partnership with Mark Miller in 1903, but their union was short lived. William A. Griffin was the San Antonio agent in 1904 and 1905, but the location was

listed at the *northeast* corner of Main and Kansas. This discrepancy as to which specific corner the building occupied was certainly an error in reporting in the 1900-1903 city directories. The location of the businesses was always on the northeast corner (EPCD 1903-1905). Succeeding Sanborn maps show improvements in the building, but the small structure that housed Magnolia did not appear on early photos nor on Sanborn maps prior to 1908 (Figures 8-8, 8-9, and 8-10).

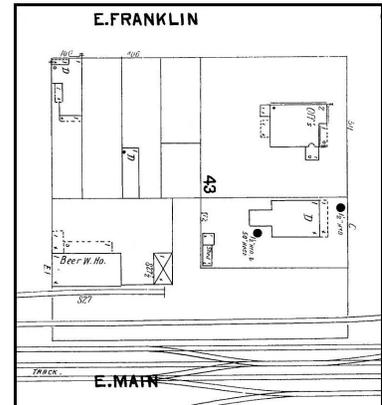


Figure 8-8 – San Antonio Brewing Assoc. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1902)



Figure 8-9 – San Antonio Brewing Assoc. (M.G. McKinney collection)

Because the San Antonio Brewing Association was an early part of Magnolia and of Smith’s El Paso experience, a short history of the company is relevant. The firm began when a group of San Antonio businessmen bought the J.B. Behloradsky Brewery in 1883. The brewery had been in operation since 1881. From 1883 to 1888, the firm was listed as the San Antonio Brewing Co. before it became the San Antonio Brewing Association (Hennech 2001:16-17).

In 1916, the association incorporated. As with many breweries, the company shut its doors with the advent of Texas Prohibition in 1918. The operation reopened in 1933 and continued brewing Pearl Beer. Because the beer was so successful, the association renamed itself the Pearl Brewing Co. in 1952 and was engulfed by the Pabst Brewing Co. in 1990 (VanWieren 1995:370; Hennech 2000:110-118). The firm used at least two embossed bottle styles, an amber quart with a one-part, “beer” finish (for corks) and a “split” (pint) bottle with a crown finish (Figure 8-11) that came in both amber and colorless (Hennech 2001:15). Splits were certainly sold in El Paso by the time Smith became involved.



Figure 8-10 – San Antonio Brewing Assoc. (M.G. McKinney collection)

Houston Ice & Brewing Co.

Although Kirchner did not become the distributor for the San Antonio Brewery until 1906, he had earlier been involved with Houston Ice & Brewing Co. He introduced the Houston brew to El Paso in 1904 at 206 San Antonio. In 1906, he combined the two firms and moved the Houston business into the building at Main and Kansas. When Smith opened up Magnolia in 1908, it was housed in the same block. Both beer and soft drinks continued to be offered until Kirchner’s death in 1911. By 1912, Smith and Magnolia had moved, and Daniel T. Lovelady had taken over the beer trade at Main and Kansas. Lovelady dropped the San Antonio brew in 1915 but continued to distribute Houston Ice and Brewing Co. beer until shortly before Prohibition in 1918 (EPCD 1904-1918).

The Houston Ice and Brewing Co. opened the Magnolia Brewery at 4th and Washington in Houston in 1893. After a somewhat sudden reorganization and name change in 1915 to Houston Ice & Brewing Association, the company brewed beer until operations shut down for Texas Prohibition in 1918. Although the firm sold most of its beer in



Figure 8-11 – San Antonio Brewing Assoc. bottle



Figure 8-12 – Houston Ice & Brewing Co. bottle

generic bottles with paper labels, it sold “splits” in embossed bottles from ca. 1910 to ca. 1918 (Figure 8-12). However, the company brewed a non-intoxicating cereal beverage called Bone Dry in an attempt to survive Prohibition. After Prohibition, the firm reopened in 1934 (Hennech 2000:83-95; Van Wieren 1995:368).

What’s in a Name?

The *El Paso Times* (6/28/1977 G13:1) contended that Hope Smith named the Magnolia Bottling Co. for the Magnolia trees of his East Texas youth, a claim substantiated by his nephew, Curt Goetting. However, Smith was also a confirmed, life-long beer drinker. It is an interesting coincidence that a beer company intimately connected with

Smith – the Houston Ice & Beer Assoc. – operated the *Magnolia Brewery*, making *Magnolia* beer (Figure 8-13). I have a strong suspicion that Magnolia beer had at least some influence on Smith’s choice.



Figure 8-13 – Magnolia Pale beer label (Courtesy of Bob Kay)

Magnolia Bottling Co. and Coca-Cola Bottling Co. (1911-1915)

In 1911, three occurrences changed the direction of Hope Smith’s life. First, he purchased Kirchner’s share of Magnolia from the Kirchner heirs for \$10,000, money given him by his aunt, Lizzie Haywood. Smith then became both president of the corporation and manager of the bottling operations. Freed from the oversight of corporate directors, Smith could now change the direction of the business.

The second occurrence was Smith’s change of direction. He contracted with the Coca-Cola company in 1911 to sell flavor syrup for the drink in El Paso. At that time, Coca-Cola was primarily a local drink in the South, although it began spreading by the turn of the century. Although I will discuss the history of the Magnolia Bottling Co. in this chapter, I will address the Coca-Cola side of the company in Chapter 8b. The final major change was a move. Freed from Kirchner’s influence, Smith moved Magnolia to a larger building at 921 Myrtle Ave.

In 1912, the year after Smith obtained the Coca-Cola contract, the firm was listed separately as the Magnolia Bottling Co. *and* the Coca-Cola Bottling Co., both at the same address. This double listing continued until 1914, so 1915 was the first year that the name Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Co. was published. In the early days, the main Coca-Cola company required its contractors (and later, franchises) to either incorporate the Coca-Cola name into the bottler's former title (like the Crystal Coca-Cola Bottling Co., formerly the Crystal Bottling Co. in Roswell, New Mexico) or list its business under its former name *and* as the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Until 1915, Smith chose the second approach.

Like all other companies that used returnable bottles, Magnolia had problems convincing customers to restore the bottles to their legal owner. Although many customers were unaware, all returnable bottles were the property of the bottler; the customer only purchased the drinks the bottles contained. The eventual answer to the problem was to charge a deposit on each bottle. On June 1, 1913, under the heading of "The Clean Bottles of Soft Drinks," the Magnolia Bottling Co. joined other bottlers around the country in requiring a deposit for its bottles. The notice made Magnolia's position quite clear:

To Our Customers:

The loose system of the way our bottles are being thrown away and broken, and the heavy loss upon us, causes us to adopt a more businesslike method for our protection. Quite a few of our customers have stated that they will be glad to charge 5 cents for each bottle taken away from their place. We advise all to do likewise. On and after June 1st, we will charge a deposit on 25 cents on each two dozen case of soda bottles, and 30 cents deposit on each case of seltzer of six bottles. Bottles short will be charged at the rate of 1 cent each for soda water, and 5 cents each for seltzer bottles, which is by no means anything near the value. Our bottles are at no time ever sold. We hope you will look at our position in a reasonable way and will help us stop the useless destruction of our property (EPT 6/3/1913).

Magnolia added a postscript: "We will furnish dealers, Free, with cards that they sign and read as follows: RETURN THIS TICKET WITH ONE (1) MAGNOLIA BOTTLING CO.'S BOTTLE AND RECEIVE 5 CENTS IN CASH. NAME OF DEALER" The idea remained as long as returnable bottles were sold. It is likely that Magnolia was the first El Paso bottler to charge a deposit, but the others almost certainly followed as soon as it was clear that the plan worked.

In late 1915 or early 1916, Smith apparently tired of the dual listing and adopted the name Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Co. for the firm. Although longer and somewhat unwieldy, the title remained in use to the present (2010), despite several ownership and location changes. Smith's tribute to the trees of East Texas (or to beer) has withstood the test of time. However, date codes on bottles show that the Magnolia Bottling Co. name continued in use until at least 1918.

Clopton Smith

Hope's brother, Clopton T. Smith, although involved very early, did not become secretary for the firm until 1930. Born in 1892, Clopton served in World War I and was wounded in France. Although listed as secretary of the corporation, Clopton was actually owned half the company stock – the other half belonging to his brother, Hope (see Figures 8-1 and 8-5 for photos of Clopton). Known to his nephews as "Uncle Doc," he was very intelligent and mechanically inclined. In the early days of the business, he worked with the equipment. His talents complemented the organizational skills of Hope. Unfortunately, Clopton began drinking heavily after his return from the war (Lucky interview; Goetting interviews; EPCD 1910-1912; "The History of Coca-Cola;" EPHP 11/27/1959 1: 6; EPT 11/28/1959 1:2).

Bottles and Artifacts

Because the inception of the Magnolia Bottling Company occurred sixteen years after the invention of the crown cap, even the oldest Magnolia bottles contain the familiar crown finish that has remained the industry standard for returnable bottles. Bottles were embossed with the Magnolia Bottling Co. name from the beginning of the business in 1908 until the name officially became the Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in 1915. The question of when Smith actually began *bottling* Coca-Cola will be addressed in Chapter 8b. Hope's flavors, the house brand, however, continued to be embossed "Magnolia Bottling Co." until 1918.

Ginger Ale

Although I have not found an ad that specifically named ginger ale until 1920, it is virtually certain that ginger ale was one of the earliest drinks sold by the Magnolia Bottling Co. At least one very crude Magnolia ginger ale bottle has survived (Figure 8-14). The general overall configuration of the container, especially the rounded, indented base (Figure 8-15), is reminiscent of the Circle "A" Brand ginger ale bottles used extensively around the turn of the

century. See Chapter 5b, pp. 127-130, for a discussion about the shapes of early 20th century ginger ale bottles.

Method of Manufacture: Blown into Mold

Color: Aqua

Size (in cm.): 22.6 (h); 5.8 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed (Plate)

Finish: Crown

Capacity: ca. 11 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with a highly rounded shoulder and an equally rounded base with a small concave area in the center which allowed the bottle to stand upright.

Front Description

Body: Embossed circular plate – MAGNOLIA (arch) / BOT. CO. (horizontal) / EL PASO, TEX. (inverted arch)

Back Description

Body: Bare

Base: Rounded, concave, bare

Manufacturer: Unknown

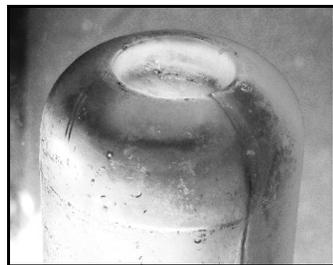


Figure 8-15 – Base of the ginger ale bottle

Dating: [1908-ca. 1910] These were probably some of the earliest Magnolia bottles, beginning around 1908. These bottles were crudely made and were probably only ordered once. The individual example stands canted to the left, a flaw in the base. Although not a pontil, there is a jagged section in the center of the concave base, another manufacturing defect. Although Smith certainly continued to make and sell ginger ale, he probably either used the same bottles as he did for Hope's house brand (see below) or used generic bottles with paper labels.

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



Figure 8-14 – Magnolia Bottling Co. ginger ale bottle – tilt is how bottle actually stands

Hope's House Brand

[Even though the Hope's brand continued to be sold by the company until 1935 – well into the Coca-Cola era, covered in the next sub-chapter – I have included all of the Hope's brand bottles (at least, all that I have discovered) in this section for continuity.]

Like the bottlers described in earlier chapters, Magnolia relied on its own house brand for fruit flavors. The flavors were called “Hope's” – obviously named after the modest Smith. The plant bottled Hope's flavors from the inception of the company until ca. 1935. Smith discontinued the flavors because the Coca-Cola home office requested that all franchises discontinue other brands to concentrate entirely on Coca-Cola. Even though most franchises did not elect to follow this request, Smith chose to do so.

Embossed Bottles

Magnolia's first house brand bottles were comparatively tall and thin (Figure 8-16), although not as tall or as thin as the ginger ale bottles. All of the early bottles (1908-ca. 1918) were embossed, although some were obviously meant to include paper labels.

Method of Manufacture: Blown into Mold

Color: Solarized Amethyst; Aqua

Size (in cm.): 21.1-22.1 (h); 5.7-6.0 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed (some with plate)

Finish: Crown

Capacity: ca. 8 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with slightly rounded base

Front Description

Body: Embossed (plate mold) - MAGNOLIA (arch) / BOTTLING CO. (horizontal) / EL PASO, TEX. (inverted arch)

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: I.G.Co. 422

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: Illinois Glass Company (1880-1900)



Figure 8-16 – Magnolia's earliest house brand bottle – Illinois Glass Co.

Dating: [ca. 1908-ca. 1913] Bottles of this type were probably used from the beginning of the company and were likely use continued until ca. 1913. Model No. 422 was offered by the Illinois Glass Co. at least as early as 1903 and continued to be part of the line until at least 1908.

Collection(s): Author's collection.

Variations:

1. See description above. Illinois Glass made at least two plates for this bottle. Although both had identical embossing, one had periods after both "CO." and "TEXAS.,"; the other only had a period after "TEXAS." (Figure 8-17) Bottles with both plates were made of solarized amethyst glass, and at least one of the second variation was made in aqua. The two amethyst bottles, one a full centimeter shorter than the other, show the variation caused by hand manufacture (Figure 8-18).

2. Aqua color; identical to the first variation above (i.e., periods after both "CO." and "TEXAS." – Figure 8-19). However, this variation has no plate and is embossed "1116 ROOT 9" at the heel. The bottle was made by the Root Glass Co. in 1909, the first year the company used date codes.



Figure 8-18 – Magnolia's earliest house brand bottles – note difference in heights

required volume labels (e.g., CONTENTS 7 FL. OZ.) by September 1914.

The machine-made bottles were slightly shorter than the mouth-blown ones used previously. These early machine-made bottles were designed for paper labels (Figure 8-20).

3. It is possible that other variations of this bottle exist. It is also possible that a "missing link" will be found that fits between this style and the one below – made in 1914.

As Magnolia flavor bottles passed through the transition from mouth-blown to machine manufacture, they also entered the era of volume labeling. As noted in earlier chapters, the 1913 Gould Act



Figure 8-17 – Variation in plates with periods after "CO." and "TEXAS." and just after "TEXAS."



Figure 8-19 – Root Glass Co. Magnolia bottle – 1909

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Green aqua

Size (in cm.): 19.5 (h); 5.9 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed/Paper

Finish: Crown

Capacity: ca. 7 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Body: Bare for paper label

Heel: Embossed - PROPERTY OF MAGNOLIA / 1527 14

Back Description

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - BOTTLING CO.EL PASO, TEX. (no space between CO. and EL)

Base: Embossed - ROOT

Manufacturer: Unknown [Root Glass Co. (1901-1932)]

Dating: [ca. 1913- ca. 1915] This individual bottle was made in 1914. Bottles with no volume information were probably not made later than 1914, although a stretch into 1915 is possible. Volume information was probably in place by 1915. All of these bottles had the main body area bare for a paper label.

Collection(s): El Paso Coliseum Collection; author's collection.



Figure 8-20 – Machine-made flavor bottle – no volume information

Variations:

1. (See above) – The 1914 bottle did not have embossed volume information.
2. Very early in my research, I recorded a bottle embossed on the front heel with “PROPERTY OF MAGNOLIA” and on the rear heel with “BOTTLING CO.EL PASO, TEX. (no space between CO. and EL) / ROOT 1527.” I am certain that there was also a date code that I missed, possibly one for 1913. This bottle probably did not include embossed volume information.
3. A third variation also lacked embossed volume information. These were embossed “PROPERTY OF MAGNOLIA / OS1005” on the front and “BOTTLING CO.EL PASO, TEX. (no space between CO. and EL).” These were made at the Okmulgee, Oklahoma, plant of the Graham Glass Co., prior to 1916, the date the company first used embossed date codes (Lockhart 2006b:20). Magnolia probably switched to Graham bottles ca. 1915.

At this point, dating and sequencing both become more difficult. Three bottles fit during the next period, but none have manufacturer's marks or date codes. However, we have some good hints. Both the order and the dates for the next two entries are based on best probability as per current knowledge.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Dark blue aqua

Size (in cm.): 19.8 (h); 5.9 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 6 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Neck/Shoulder: Embossed - a single star / SODA WATER

Body: Embossed (upper body, right below shoulder) - PROPERTY OF / COCA-COLA / BOTTLING CO.

Heel: Embossed - MINIMUM CONTENTS / 6 - FLUID OZ.

Back Description

Neck/Shoulder: Same as front

Body: Bare

Heel: Embossed - PROPERTY OF / COCA-COLA BOTTLING WORKS

Base: Embossed - EL PASO, TEXAS. in a tight circle around a single star (Figure 8-21)

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: [ca. 1915] Because of the volume embossing, the bottle is likely post-1914; however, the identification as the "COCA-COLA BOTTLING CO" suggests a date no later than 1915 (see discussion under Variations (below).

Collection(s): Author's collection.



Figure 8-21 – Base of "star" bottle

Variations:

1. See above. This bottle has several characteristics, some of interest on their own merit, some helpful in dating. The designation "MINIMUM CONTENTS 6 - FLUID OZ" almost certainly indicates a post-1913 manufacture, as the Gould Act required volume information that year.

However, bottlers were not required to fulfill the law until September 1914. Since the previous bottle had a date code for 1914, this one was probably made late in 1914 or early in 1915.

As noted above, Magnolia listed itself in the city directories as both the Magnolia Bottling Co. and the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. from 1912 to 1914. Since the original contract with Coca-Cola was signed in 1911, the name may have begun use that year, and it may have extended into early 1915. Thus, the use of the volume designation *and* the name Coca-Cola Bottling Co. strongly suggests a manufacture in late 1914 or early 1915.

An oddity that probably has no important meaning (and may just be an error) is that the body is marked “COCA-COLA BOTTLING CO” – but the heel is embossed “COCA-COLA BOTTLING WORKS.” Of more interest is why Smith had the bottles embossed with block letters rather than the script logo. One obvious possibility is to identify a flavor bottle rather than one to hold Coca-Cola – although this is certainly not absolute.

A final oddity that *may* be significant is the embossing style. Essentially, embossing was offered in three styles – all according to how it looked in cross-section:

- a. rounded letters
- b. sharp (basically triangular) letters
- c. flat-topped letters

The first style was by far the most common and showed wear the least. The latter was generally only used for large, broad letters. This bottle used the middle (sharp or wedge-shaped) system. This style creates crisp, distinct letters, but it wears down easily and quickly (Figure 8-22).

2. The second is essentially the same as the first variation (above) – without the star or “SODA WATER.” While it may be a variation of the “star” bottle, it may also be a companion bottle for a Coca-Cola bottle described in Chapter 8b. The two bottles are not embossed with the Magnolia name, but both are embossed “COCA-COLA” and “EL PASO.” For detailed discussion, see Chapter 8b.



Figure 8-22 – Soda Water, Coca-Cola Bottling Co. with star

The next bottle style in this sequence reverted to a plate on the front to identify the company. This was the only bottle type used by Magnolia with “REGISTERED” embossed on the shoulder (Figure 8-23).

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Aqua

Size (in cm.): 19.2 (h); 6.0 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed (plate)

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 6.5 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Shoulder: Embossed - REGISTERED / 6½ FL. OZ

Body: Embossed circular plate - PROPERTY OF (arch) / MAGNOLIA (horizontal) / BOTTLING, CO. (inverted arch) [note comma after BOTTLING].

Back Description

Shoulder: Bare

Body: Bare

Base: Embossed - EL PASO, (arch) / 1 / TEXAS (inverted arch)

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: [ca. 1916-ca. 1918] This bottle was made in at least three variations. Since at least two variations are only different because of a mold number, they may only reflect an order large enough to require more than one mold. See variations below for a more detailed discussion, including specific information about the bases.

Collection(s): Willie F. Terrazas collection; author’s collection.

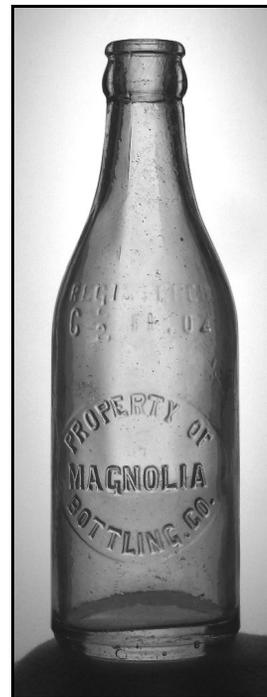


Figure 8-23 – Registered flavor bottle – 6 ½ FL. OZ

Variations:

1. See above. The base of this variation warrants a full description. In the arched “EL PASO,” the capital letters forming the “EL” are the same size, but the “ASO” in “PASO,” are noticeably smaller, although still capitals. The mold mark “1” is placed just above “TEXAS” rather than in the center, and “TEXAS” has all the capital letters the same size (see Figure 8-24).

Although these bottles show no manufacturer’s mark, the basemarks (see other variations below) are similar to those found on Coke bottles used by the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling



Figure 8-24 – Base of Registered bottle

Co. (Lockhart & Miller 2007:39). The Southwestern bottles had mold codes of “1,” “2,” and “4” embossed above the “S.W.C.C.” mark that identified the bottler. While the placement of the numbers was slightly different, the font style was similar. The Southwestern bottles had date codes for 1920 and were made by the Graham Glass Co. Please note that this is not meant to imply a solid identification for the Magnolia bottles.

2. A very slight variation had a “2” replacing the “1” on base (Figure 8-24).

3. Two other possible variations may exist, but I cannot verify either of them. One was identical to the first two (described above) but with no mold number. The other was also identical but with no embossing of the volume or “REGISTERED” on the shoulder. I am particularly skeptical about the latter bottle.

4. The final variation was offered on two separate eBay auctions (indicating either that at least two of these exist, or the same bottle was auctioned twice). These bottles were identical to the first variation described above, but the plate on the front was placed upside down (Figure 8-25).



Figure 8-25 – Registered bottle with upside down plate (eBay)

I initially assumed that this was an error, but, when Pete Schulz and I discussed the bottle, he noted that some ads in the 1890-1920 period were placed upside down in the newspapers to catch the attention of the reader. Therefore, this may have been an intentional ploy as a sales promotion. Thus far, I have not discovered any Magnolia ads that support this idea.

In 1918, Magnolia essentially returned to the same bottle format that it used in 1914, with virtually identical embossing on the heel (Figure 8-26).

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Aqua

Size (in cm.): 19.4 (h); 6.0 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 7 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Shoulder: Embossed - CONTENTS 7 FL. OZ.

Body: Bare for paper label

Front Heel: Embossed - OS 1412 R / PROPERTY OF MAGNOLIA

Back Description

Shoulder: Same as front

Body: Bare

Back Heel: BOTTLING CO. EL PASO, TEX. (no space between “CO.” and “EL”)

Base: Bare

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: [1918] The embossing “OS 1413 R” indicates a manufacture at



Figure 8-27 – Close-up of the “R” – note the right “leg” is thinner and shorter than the left one

the Okmulgee, Oklahoma, plant of the Graham Glass Co. in 1918. The “R” is interesting. It is clear that a “P” was stamped into the mold; then a diagonal line was added to form the “R” (Figure 8-27).

Graham used the letters P-S for 1916-1919 before changing to two-digit date codes in 1920 (Lockhart 2006b:20), so this reworked

“P” may indicate that a similar bottle was made in 1916. The heel embossing is virtually identical with the paper-label bottles made in 1914 (see above).

Collection(s): Author’s collection.

Variations:

1. The only example I have ever found is very roughly made and is very unusual for a bottle made so late in the spectrum. The side seam extends from the heel to mid-shoulder with another side seam offset counterclockwise (or to the right) ca. 2.1 cm. This seam begins at the lower shoulder (ca. 2.0 cm. below the termination of the lower side seam) and extends to 1.1 cm. below the base of the finish. At that point, the second side seam terminates and a third side seam begins that is offset 0.7 cm. clockwise (or to the left) of the second seam. The seam extends through the finish to the lip of the bottle (Figure 8-28). If this is

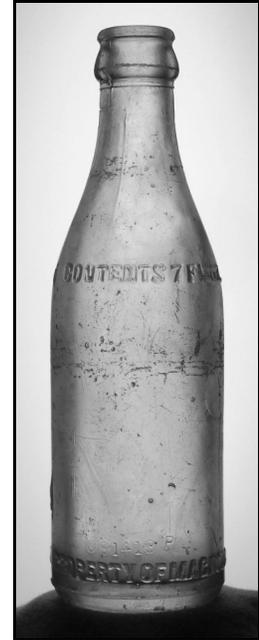


Figure 8-26 – Machine-made flavor bottle – CONTENTS 7 FL. OZ. Note: OS 1418 R above heel

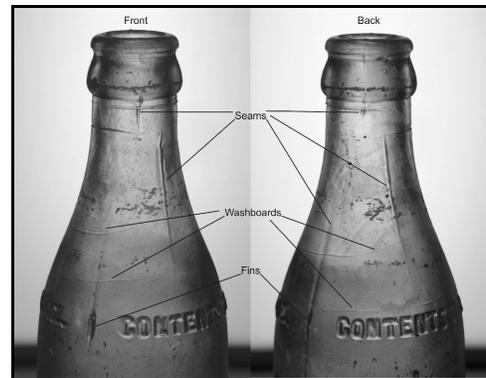


Figure 8-28 – Mold seams, fins, and washboards

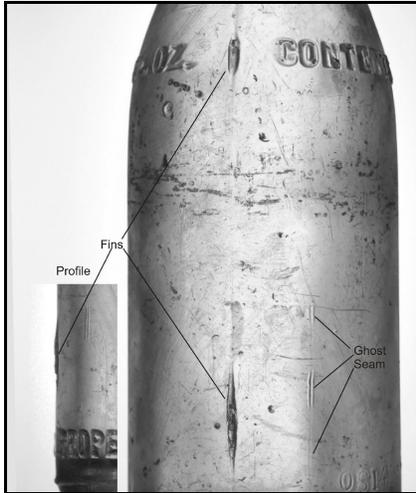


Figure 8-29 – Fins and ghost seams

not sufficient, there is also a ghost seam near the heel! All of this is viewed from the front of the bottle – directions are exactly reversed when viewed from the back (Figure 8-29).

The initial side seam has “fins” sticking out from the sides of the bottle because the two mold seams fit together so poorly (See Figure 8-29). The glass has a number of “washboards” (horizontal lines) from some form of poor molding technique (see Figure 8-27). Finally, the front mold half has been repaired, with a round circle where the mold was drilled out and a plug installed (Figure 8-30).

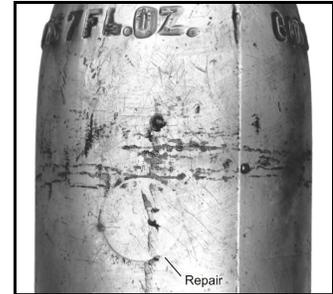


Figure 8-30 – Circular mold repair scar

This may actually indicate that one of the earlier (ca. 1914) molds was retooled to make a limited number of these bottles.

Paper Labels

As noted elsewhere in this work (e.g., see Chapter 7b), the period between ca. 1918 and the mid- to late 1920s (depending greatly on individual companies) was one marked by a lack of bottles found in the archaeological record or by collectors. The national trend during this time was toward generic bottles, where the brand and bottler were *only* noted on paper labels. It is highly likely that Magnolia joined in this trend beginning at some point between 1918 and 1920 and lasting until ca. 1924.

Specialty Bottles

By at least September 1924, Magnolia advertised Hope’s Lime, Orange, and Lemon flavors in distinctive square bottles (Figure 8-31). The ad showed the bottles bearing the word MAGNOLIA embossed on a design background at the shoulder-neck area and suggested, “Ask for and Get HOPE’S LIME IN SQUARE BOTTLES” (advertisement in the Richard Chavez collection from 9/9/1924). Other generic, square-



Figure 8-31 – 1934 ad for Hope’s flavors in square bottles (Courtesy of Rick Chavez)

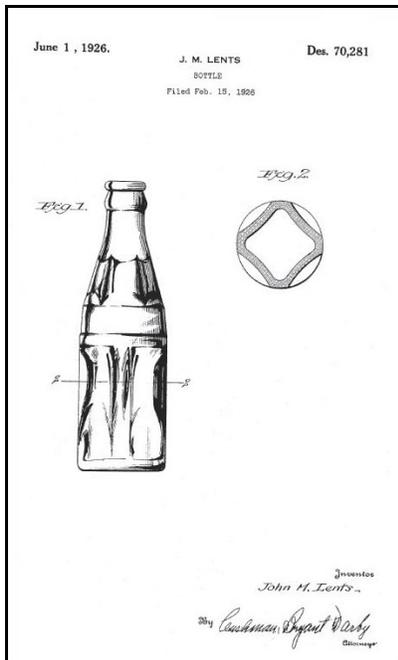


Figure 8-32 – Design Patent No. 70,281 to John M. Lents

bodied Coca-Cola Soda Water bottles, some with 1924 date code, have been found in the area, although they are not labeled with the Magnolia name.

The timing of the ad and the date codes on the bottles are a bit odd. It was not until February 15, 1926, that John M. Lents applied for a patent for a bottle with this distinctive square shape. Lents received Design Patent No. 70,281 for his “Design for a Bottle” on June 1, 1926 – 21 months after Magnolia advertised the bottles. It is virtually certain that Lents came up with the design by at least mid-1924 and gave it to the Graham Glass Co., the factory where he assigned the patent when he received it in 1926 (Figure 8-32).

Although Smith apparently used these bottles in late 1924, the earliest date codes I have found on bottles specifically embossed from Magnolia were from 1925 (Figure 8-33).

Magnolia used its own special bottle, but the plant also bottled Hope’s flavors in generic square bottles as well.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Georgia Green

Size (in cm.): 19.5 (h); 6.0 (d) shoulder & base; 5.0 (d) square body section

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 6 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical at base and shoulder with square body section and hexagonal neck/shoulder leading to rounded neck. Each of the hexagonal neck/shoulder panels was embossed with a magnolia blossom.

Front Description

Neck/Shoulder: Embossed - Magnolia blossoms (Figure 8-34) in six panels

Shoulder: Embossed - SODA WATER / MAGNOLIA



Figure 8-33 – Magnolia’s first square bottle

COCA-COLA

Body: Square

Heel: Embossed - 1865EG28

Back Description

Neck: See front

Shoulder: Embossed - MAGNOLIA / BOTTLING CO. CON. 6 FL. OZ.

Body: Square

Heel: Embossed - PATENTED JUNE 1, 1926

Base: Embossed - EL PASO / TEXAS (Figure 8-35)

Manufacturer: Graham Glass Co., Evansville, Illinois, plant.

Dating: [1924-1928] These elaborately designed “specialty” (or proprietary) bottles became



Figure 8-34 – Magnolia blossom on the shoulder

popular in the mid- 1920s and remained so until the early 1930s. Hope’s flavor bottles of this design may be dated from late 1924 to the second style of Hope’s square bottle in 1929. The 1924 ad in Rick Chaves’ collection is clipped from a newspaper and may be misdated, although the mold mark on one Hope’s bottle (1865EG25) suggests that the bottle was made in 1925 and one generic bottle (see below) was made in 1924. The bottle marked 1865EG28 establishes an end date for the style, as a bottle in the following design was dated 1929.



Figure 8-35 – Base of the square Magnolia bottle

Collection(s): Robert Sproull collection; El Paso Coliseum collection; Mike Morrison collection; author’s collection.

Variations:

1. Bottles with the 1928 date codes reflected at least the second order of square bottles, possibly even the third or fourth. The code “1865EG28” indicated that the bottle was made at the Evanville, Illinois, plant of the Graham Glass Co. in 1928.

2. At least one bottle of this style was embossed “1865EG25” on the front heel. This bottle and others with date codes prior to the patent were not embossed with the patent date on the back heel. This particular bottle is also of interest because the “E” in the code was superimposed on an “O” – indicating that the original mold was made at Okmulgee, then shipped to Evansville (Figure 8-36). This revising of which plant made

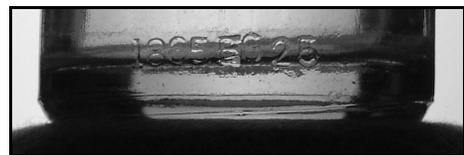


Figure 8-36 – 1865EG25 code on Magnolia square bottle

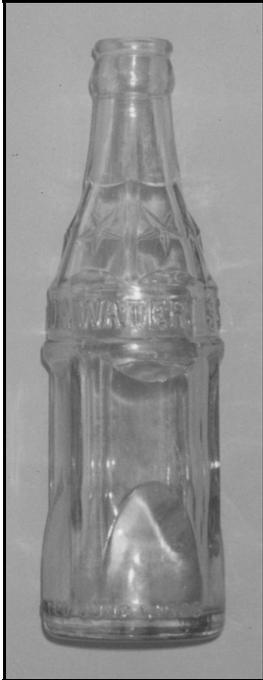


Figure 8-37 – Generic square bottle

what product was fairly common at Graham Glass. At least one of these bottles has been reported with an “1865OG25” heelmark (from Okmulgee).

3. Although generic square bottles are found in El Paso excavations (e.g., Lockhart & Olszewski 1995:76-77), they were probably bottles that arrived at Magnolia by accident (people returning other bottles), or, possibly, Smith needed bottles in a hurry at some point and did not have time to wait for a special order. These generic bottles were made in both colorless and aqua glass, and each shoulder panel was embossed with a single star in place of the magnolia blossom (Figure 8-37). The front panel was embossed “SODA WATER / PROPERTY OF COCA-COLA” with “SODA WATER / BOTTLING CO. CON. 6 FL. OZ.” on the back panel. I have personally observed Graham codes of “1188OG24” and “1865EG28” embossed on the front heels, plus “PATENTED JUNE 1, 1926” on the later bottle.

It seems likely that the original bottles were made at Okmulgee in 1924 with some also made there the following year. However, at some point during 1925, the molds appear to have been shipped to Evansville, and the square bottles were made at the new location thereafter.

Another square bottle was probably the last in the line of Hope’s flavors. On this bottle, two of the six panels at the shoulder were combined in both front and back to allow “Hope’s” to be embossed in script (Figures 8-38 and 8-39). The same “Hope’s” in script was on a sign in front of the Magnolia plant (see Chapter 5b).

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Georgia Green

Size (in cm.): 19.5 (h); 6.0 (d) shoulder & base; 5.0 (d) square body section

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 6 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical at base and



Figure 8-38 – Hope’s square bottle

shoulder with square body section and hexagonal neck/shoulder (i.e. six panels) leading to rounded neck. The word, Hope's (script) was embossed across two of the panels in the front and back of the neck/shoulder.

Front Description

Neck/Shoulder: Embossed - Hope's (script)

Shoulder: Embossed - SODA WATER / MAGNOLIA COCA-COLA

Body: Square

Heel: Embossed - 1063E

Back Description

Neck: See front

Shoulder: Embossed - SODA WATER / BOTTLING CO. CON. 6 FL. OZ.

Body: Square

Heel: Embossed - G29

Base: Embossed - EL PASO (arch) / TEXAS (inverted arch)

Manufacturer: Graham Glass Co., Evansville, Illinois, plant.

Dating: [1929-1930] The bottle style was apparently discontinued when the Graham plant lost its individual identity in 1930 (see below).

Collection(s): Jerry Strickland collection; author's collection.



Figure 8-39 – Close-up of Hope's shoulder panel

Variations:

1. Apparently, 1929 was the last year that Graham embossed date and plant codes on the heels of the bottles.
2. The second variation only had two changes, both minor – but important. First, the front heelmark used a different model number “G11439” (Figure 8-40),



Figure 8-41 – Base of Hope's bottle



Figure 8-40 – Heelmark on Hope's bottle

probably reflecting the change in the neck/shoulder area. Second, the date and plant codes “30E” migrated to the base of the bottle (Figure 8-41) between “TEXAS” and “EL PASO.” This was apparently the last Hope's flavor bottle ordered by Magnolia. The ca. 1935 end date for Hope's flavors was supplied from memory by Tom Lucky

in 1996. It is probable that Smith decided to phase out the Hope's flavor line (as requested by the Coca-Cola home office) when square bottles were no longer available. It is likely that the process took about five years.

The Owens Bottle Co. purchased the entire Graham Glass Co. in 1916, but the plants continued to operate under the Graham name. By the time Owens merged with the Illinois Glass Co. to form the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. in 1929, only the Evansville plant remained in operation. It apparently continued to use the Graham name and codes for another year, either to fill existing orders or to wear out old molds (or both). The last date code I have found on a Graham bottle was 1930, and the migration of the plant and date codes to the base was almost certainly an Owens-Illinois requirement. Production of the square bottles apparently ceased at the same time.