

The Seven-Up Company and 7-Up Bottles – The Real Story

Chapter 1 – Seven-Up History

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During the last quarter of the 20th century, the Seven-Up Co. advertised its major product as “The Uncola” – and, indeed, Seven-Up was the *only* soft drink to hold one of the top three places in U.S. soda popularity that was *not* a cola. Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola, of course, have consistently held the first and second places, respectively. Originally offered by the Howdy Co. in 1929, Seven-Up had a rocky beginning in the early days of the Great Depression. But, the story of Seven-Up’s inventor, Charles Grigg, began much earlier.

Charles Grigg’s Early Life

The son of Charles Lewis Skidmore Grigg (1822-1883) and Mary Elizabeth Leiper Grigg (1839-1890), Charles Leiper Grigg was born on May 11, 1868, in Prices Branch, Missouri, Bear Creek Township. At the time of Grigg’s birth, the population of Prices Branch was 25 – not counting livestock. The couple had three children, Charles Lepier (1868-1940), Hamblett Clark (1872-1964), and Flavius T. (1876-1879), the latter of whom died in infancy. U.S. census records listed the senior Grigg as listed as a farmer in 1870 and as a township constable a decade later. Prices Branch (always written without an apostrophe) was named after Lemuel Price, who settled on a tributary of Bear creek in 1815, hence the name Prices Branch – the entire creek contained within the eastern part of Montgomery County, Missouri.

In a letter, Charles Grigg’s brother, Hamblett, described the house they grew up in as originally a log storeroom, with three additional rooms added over time. The brothers either walked or rode on horseback to a schoolhouse about a mile north of town. Although very little information has been published about Charles Grigg’s early years, the 1900 U.S. Census listed him as a merchant at Prices Branch, the proprietor of the general store (Figure 1).

When Grigg entered an essay contest, he won fourth place. The essay was published in the February 2, 1901, issue of the *Chicago Drygoods Reporter*. The introduction to the essay referred to him as “C.L. Grigg of Grigg Bros., Prices Branch.” Grigg Bros. was almost certainly the name of the general merchandise store, owned and operated by Charles and his younger brother, Hamblett.

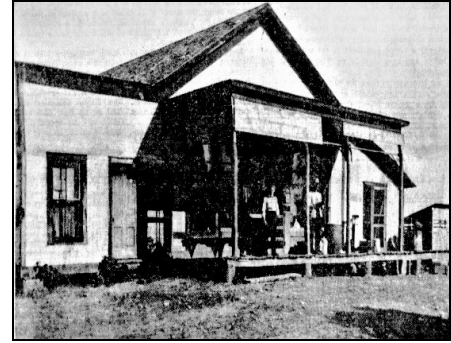


Figure 1 – Grigg Store, St. Louis (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 2/13/1966)

Grigg apparently arrived in St. Louis around 1904,



Figure 2 – Charles Leiper Grigg

when he was listed with an advertising agency and as a member of the St. Louis Men’s Advertising League – later becoming one of their officers (Figure 2). Between 1905 and 1918, Grigg remained in the advertising business, working for Ely-Walker Dry Goods, Rice-Stix Dry Goods, Sharpleigh Hardware, Copper-Clad Malleable Range Co., and the Fisher-Ruebel-Brown Advertising Agency. It was not until 1919 that the directories listed Grigg as an advertising manager for the Whistle Co., owned and operated by Sylvester “Vess” Jones. The 1920 St. Louis Census also place Grigg as Whistle’s advertising manager. But that position would soon change.

Vess Jones

Sylvester “Vess” Jones was born in Medlothan, Texas, on February 9, 1884. He suffered a heart attack at his ranch near Apache Creek, New Mexico, in 1936, and died at an Albuquerque hospital a couple of days later at the age of 52. His parents were Henry Jones (1855-1942) and Missouri Venezuela Victoria Jones (1858-1923), and he had one brother, Henry Noah Jones (1896-1949). It is not clear when or why Jones moved to St. Louis, but the earliest year we could find for him in that city is in 1914 when he was listed in directories and other accounts as the vice president for the newly formed Orange Julep Syrup Company.¹

¹ Among the incorporators of the “Orange Julep Syrup Co.” was C. Johnstone. One of their first products was a soft drink called “Johnstone’s Orange Julep,” also known as “JooJ” – “Johnstone’s Original Orange Julep.” C. Johnstone was previously employed by Howell’s Orange Julep, but he left that company, taking his orange syrup formula with him and, with Vess Jones, created the “Orange Julep Syrup Co.” located in St. Louis.

In 1916, Jones developed a soft drink called “Orange Whistle,” along with incorporating the Orange Whistle Co. (Figure 3). The company Applied for a trademark for “WHISTLE” on January 10, 1916, and received Registration No. 110,004 on April 25 of the same year, claiming a use since January 3. Around 1920, the same company introduced “Orange Smile,” originally a syrup concentrate that eventually developed into a carbonated soft drink. Jones designed and patented at least a dozen different soda bottles, all of which had a 1926 patent date (Figure 4). These included the bottles used for his products, such as the one of Whistle that looked like a thin version of the hobble-skirt bottles used by Coca-Cola – although the surface was covered with a diamond motif.



Figure 3 – Whistle bottle (eBay)

Although some writers have suggested that Grigg helped Jones create the formula for Whistle Orange, E.M. Wikes told the real story in 1922 (Wikes 1922:138):

Jones wasn't the first person to hit upon the orange as the nucleus of a palatable beverage, and he knew it, but his formula called for something different from anything he had ever tasted. He aimed to mix a beverage that would make the majority of persons imbibe several drinks at a single sitting."

Although not a chemist, Jones submitted his formula to other chemists, but they discouraged him, saying that the drink “won't hold.” But, Jones had faith in himself and “rented an old shack on North Main Street, St. Louis, where, with his savings of \$5,000, he began to manufacture his syrup.”

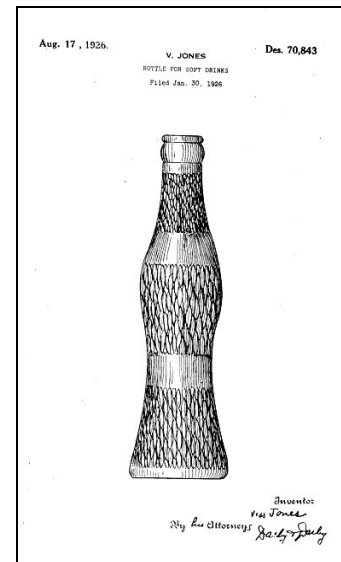


Figure 4 – Whistle patent – Vess Jones

The Orange Whistle Co. filed for bankruptcy in January of 1933, with Vess Jones retaining control of the syrup formula for Orange Whistle until it was finally settled in court a few years later. The end result was a compromise between the estate of Jones (who passed away

in 1936) and the newly formed Vess Beverages Co., headed by Leroy Schneeberger. The settlement allowed the estate to retain control of the Whistle trademark as well as the secret formula for Orange Whistle. In return, the Vess estate would receive royalties for an undetermined amount of time from the Vess Beverage Co. Penn Jones, son of Vess Jones, and two of Penn's younger siblings managed the estate. The estate continued to receive royalties for many years – although we were unable to determine exactly how long that arrangement continued.

Leroy Oscar Schneeberger (1898-1995), a former clerk for the Orange Whistle Co. as early as 1919, and Vice President of the company in 1928, bought the remaining interest in the Orange Whistle Co., and soon after reorganized it under the name of Vess Beverages. In early 1919, Charles Grigg and Leroy Schneeberger were both employed by Orange Whistle, Grigg in advertising and Schneeberger in bookkeeping. Schneeberger eventually bought the Bubble Up Co., originally established in 1921, and bottled Bubble Up as a Vess Beverage Co. product.

Ironically, in the 1960s, the Seven Up Co. sued the Bubble Up Co. for trademark infringement – but lost. The primary focus of the lawsuit was the use of the word “Up.” Bubble Up Co. claimed that its product was the very first lemon-lime soft drink to use the word. However, that turned out to be only the tip of the iceberg. Before long, there were literally dozens of other soft drinks that used the word “Up” – many sued by the Seven Up Co., winning some and losing others. Bubble Up remains available today.

Despite the numerous Online accounts that claim the Orange Whistle soft drink was invented and originally marketed by Charles Grigg in 1916, an extensive study of U.S. Census records, St. Louis city directories, and various newspaper articles and ads, revealed that Charles Grigg did not start working for Jones until sometime in late 1918 or early 1919. As mentioned earlier, Orange Whistle was invented by Vess Jones in 1916, and was already being bottled and marketed by the time Grigg started working for Jones between 1918 and 1919.

Howdy

Grigg worked for Jones about a year, and, by early 1920, was fully involved with his own soft drink called “Howdy” (Figures 5 & 6). Grigg filed for a “Howdy” trademark on March 24,

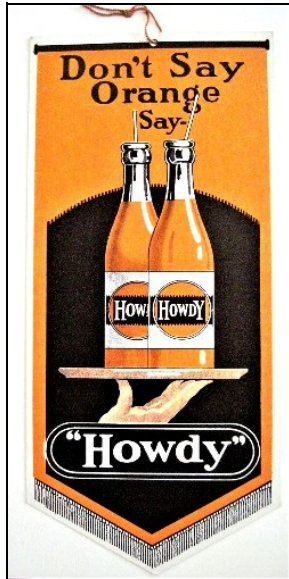


Figure 5 – Howdy Orange (eBay)

1920, and received Registration No. 136,021 on October 26 of that year, claiming March 17, 1920, as date the mark was first used. That year, Grigg and his associates incorporated the Howdy Co., with Charles Grigg as President, Frank Y. Gladney as Vice President, and Edmund G. Ridgway as Secretary and Treasurer.

Apparently, Gladney and Ridgway each contributed several thousand dollars each to help launch the new company. Grigg's main

contributions were his secret formula for Howdy Orange and his marketing skills. By the mid-1920s, Howdy expanded to nearly 400 franchised bottlers. Even though they did quite well with Howdy for a number of years, competitors like Orange Crush dominated the market at the time.

Around 1927, Grigg decided it was time to come up with a new soft drink that was not orange flavored. He approached a St. Louis based flavor and extract manufacturer called Warner-Jenkinson to assist the Howdy firm in developing a new flavor concentrate. His first contact at Warner-Jenkinson was Garret F. Meyer (1896-1983). Meyer was a clerk at the time, and would eventually become president of the company in 1952. In 1970, the Seven-Up Co. bought Warner-Jenkinson, and appointed Meyer as chairman of the board until his retirement in 1978. With assistance from Warner-Jenkinson, they decided on a new lemon flavored soda, so Grigg started experimenting with different formulas until he was satisfied with the results. Even though there were an estimated 600 different lemon flavored soft drinks at the time, none of them were considered major brands that were marketed nationally – and, those that were on the market differed from location to location, with no consistency in flavor.

Grigg was confident he could develop a new brand that would not only be uniform in flavor but would also be of the highest quality. There is a considerable amount of controversy as

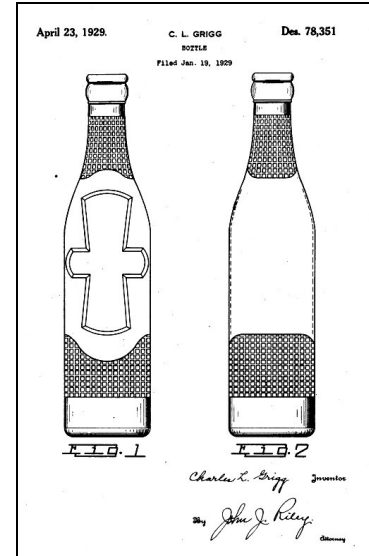


Figure 6 – Howdy Patent – C.L. Grigg

to how many different formulas Grigg experimented with, the majority of sources claiming it was eleven. But regardless of the number, Grigg finally settled on one that was unanimously agreed on by the Howdy bottlers that served as a test market, naming the drink Seven-Up by 1928. The Howdy Co. applied a trademark for “SEVEN UP” on October 4, 1928, receiving Registration No. 252,350 on February 5 of the following year. The firm claimed a first use on August , 1928.

The Next Step

With Warner-Jenkinson producing the concentrate, Grigg, Gladney, and Ridgway set their sights on getting their new lemon soda to the public. This was achieved by way of the Howdy franchise bottlers they had already established. One of their Howdy bottlers at the time was the Hygrade Water & Soda Co., located in St. Louis, which was owned and operated by Pearl F. Whitcraft (1881-1956). Hygrade Water & Soda had been bottling and distributing Howdy Orange in St. Louis for a number of years, and was the perfect local bottler to do the same with Grigg’s new lemon flavored soda.

One of Hygrade’s employees was Edward Lee Taylor (1900-1975). Although we were unable to determine exactly what transpired between Grigg and Taylor at the time, in 1928, Taylor began the operation of the Howdy Bottling Co. in St. Louis, and was listed in local directories as the president and treasurer of the newly formed firm. In the same directories, Taylor’s wife, Ruth, was listed as the company’s secretary. In an unpublished report by the Industrial Bureau of St. Louis, dated October 10, 1928, the Howdy Bottling Co. was listed as having been recently incorporated, with Edward L. Taylor as president, and was located at 831 South Eleventh St. The report also stated that the facility contained 2,500 square feet of space, with an initial investment of \$5,000, and had a total of three employees.

During the course of our research, we were unable to find any 7-Up bottles that were produced prior to the early 1930s. However, in 1978, the Seven Up Company produced a 16-ounce, 50th anniversary 7-Up bottle and bottle cap to commemorate Edward L. Taylor as

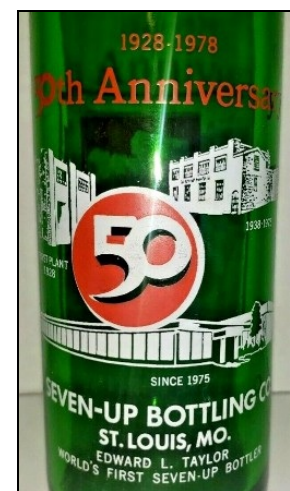


Figure 7 – 7-Up commemorative (Etsy)

America's first 7-Up bottler (Figure 7). The bottle depicted the images of three different bottling plants that Taylor managed in St. Louis, and had an Applied Color Label. The bottle is frequently available on eBay, and all of the examples we have found were produced by the Owens-Illinois Glass Co.

Test Markets and National Sales

On January 5, 1960, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* described the earliest testing of Seven-Up:

One formula after another was tried and discarded. Ten or twelve bottlers took part in these experiments, making up the drinks, distributing them in their territories, inviting criticism from dealers and consumers, then reporting the results to Mr. Grigg.

On the eleventh formula, Grigg got the unanimous verdict from the bottlers who had made the trial. The new drink was right—it was fresh, clean-tasting, distinct in flavor and quality. It was not “just another ‘pop.’” It was different. Mr. Grigg called it “Seven-Up.”

The *Post-Dispatch* article noted that Grigg had begun his search for a new formula “by 1928,” and that “7-Up was introduced to a few markets in 1929. Then 1930 became the first complete year for general distribution.” However, we know from the trademark that Seven-Up was named and the formula was almost certainly ready for use by August 7, 1928, but the development of sales strategies and other marketing issues were still in process. Despite the 1960 article, we could find no evidence that Seven-Up was bottled prior to 1929.

The *Beverage Journal* for 1929 named two other bottlers that were almost certainly part of the experimental bottlers – the American Bottling

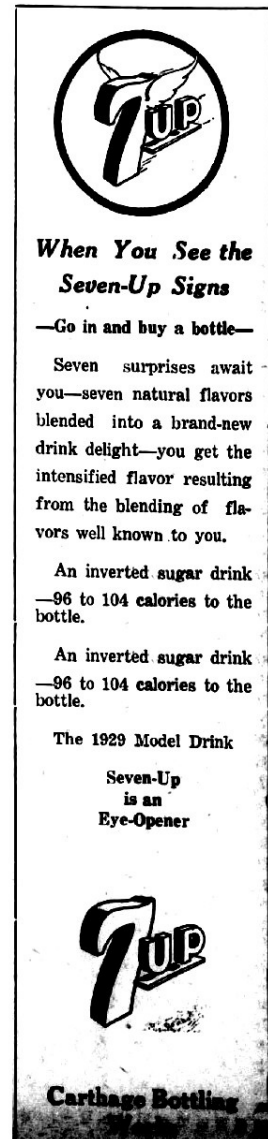


Figure 8 – First test market ad (*Carthage Evening Press* 3/22/1929)

Works of Gloverville, New York, and William Gamble of Batavia, New York. The Howdy Co. noted that “Seven-Up changes, but it is improved. It constantly grows better. This is a point that we ask bottlers to consider carefully.” This strongly suggests that the experimental process extended into 1929. Although we were able to search the *Beverage Journal* for 1929, the search would only give us small snippets, and we were unable to determine the month for any given snippet.

As noted above, the Seven-Up Co. commissioned a commemorative bottle naming Edward L. Taylor (owner of the Hygrade Water & Soda Co.) as the initial bottler of Seven-Up. However, we have been unable to discover any early advertising by either Taylor or the bottling firm, so we have no solid evidence for when (or even if) Hygrade Water & Soda ran its test market or markets. It is safe to assume that the test was run in the St. Louis area.

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, the Carthage Bottling Co. of Carthage, Missouri (ca. 275 miles southwest of St. Louis) operated the first test market we have discovered during March and April of 1929 (Figure 8). The same firm had apparently run the initial test market for Howdy Orange in 1920. Unfortunately, the product seems to have been bottled in containers marked only by the caps. See Chapter 2 for more information.

These initial test markets (St. Louis and Carthage) were apparently followed by more development of paper labels, bottles, caps, and advertising, extending into 1930. It was not until late 1930 that the Carthage firm apparently conducted a final test market, followed by the adoption of standardized paper labels by April of 1931. The new paper label included a descriptive secondary name (Lithiated Lemon Soda) and heralded the expansion of the drink to other bottlers, the beginning of national sales.

All in the Family

Hamblett Clark Grigg, the brother mentioned earlier as a partner in the general store located in Prices Branch, was also involved with his brother’s new company (Figure 9). In 1911 and 1912, he served one term in the Missouri State House of Representatives and was primarily

involved with the committee that oversaw various functions for the state, including banking accounts, roads and highways. According to various U.S. census records and St. Louis city directories, Hamblett Clark was employed by his brother as early as 1920 for the Howdy Company and later served as an accounting clerk for the Seven Up Co. until he retired in the 1950s. Born in 1872, he passed away in 1964 at the age of 72.



Figure 9 – Hamblett Clark Grigg (Official Manual, State of Missouri)

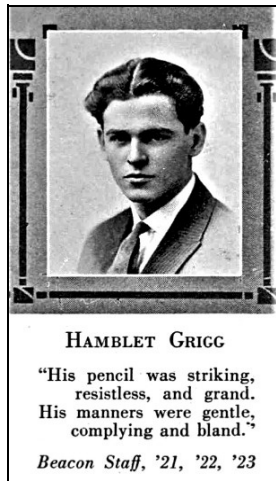


Figure 10 – Hamblett Charles Grigg (1923 Cleveland High School Yearbook)

Charles Grigg’s only son, Hamblett Charles Grigg, joined his father’s company in 1929 to continue promoting the new lemon soda (Figure 10). Known as “Ham” by family and friends, Hamblett was born in 1906 and was named after his uncle, Hamblett Clark Grigg. Born in St. Louis in 1905, Grigg died in 1977 at the age of 72 – ironically, the same age as his namesake uncle at the uncle’s death. Hamblett attended Cleveland High School in St. Louis and graduated in 1923. Yearbooks for the school list him as the treasurer for the Art Club, as well as treasurer for the Cartooning Club. According to the 1923 yearbook, the Cartooning Club was started that year as an extension of the Art Club.

After high school, he enrolled in Washington University in St. Louis where he majored in commercial art. We are not certain if he received a degree in college, but between 1927 and 1928, the St. Louis directories listed him as working for Painted Displays, Inc., a firm that specialized in advertising signs. In 1929, he finally started working for his father at the Howdy Co. Although he was a qualified commercial artist at the time, some of his earliest duties involved traveling the country for the Howdy Co. to help establish franchise bottlers for their new lemon soda. However, it was not long before Ham was allowed the opportunity to demonstrate his artistic talents.

The Founding of the Seven Up Co.

With the success of the test markets, things started gaining momentum, and by mid-1931, Grigg’s new lemon soda was being bottled by numerous Howdy franchises, as well as several

independent bottlers.² Part of Seven-Up's success was due to Hamblett Grigg's contributions under his father's leadership. That leadership included the senior Grigg's unwavering belief that if you produced a product that was consistent in both quality and flavor, the product would sell itself. The senior Grigg not only encouraged quality and consistency, he insisted on it and made sure that his franchise bottlers got the message by way of the large quantity of correspondence sent to them via Hamblett Grigg.

Charles and Hamblett Grigg, along with Edmund Ridgway and Frank Gladney, not only developed a great lemon flavored soft drink but developed into a winning team as well. They continued under the names Howdy Company, Howdy Bottling, and Howdy 7-Up Company for several years, and in October of 1936 officially changed the name to The Seven Up Company. This was also when Howdy Bottling in St. Louis, headed by Edward Taylor, became the Seven-Up Bottling Co., the first franchise specifically using the Seven-Up name. Eventually, other bottlers adopted the name, and by 1939, there were Seven-Up bottling plants located in every state in the country – some of which are still in operation today.

Upon the death of Charles Grigg in 1940, Hamblett Grigg became the Seven-Up president, a position he would maintain for several years. Other notable presidents over the years were Ben Wells, who joined the Seven-Up Co. in 1936 as an advertising agent, and William Winter, who began his tenure with Seven-Up in 1946. There were other notable executives and employees who contributed to the success of Seven-Up. However, because the primary focus of this study is on Seven-Up bottles, labels, and slogans, we relinquish the rest of the history to those accounts that have already been published on the Internet, and books such as the *Legend of Dr Pepper / 7-Up* written by Jeffrey Rodengen in 1995. The Keurig Dr Pepper Snapple Group, current owners of Seven-Up, purchased the firm on July 9, 2018, for \$18.7 billion – quite a success story for Charles Grigg, who began in the one-horse town of Prices Branch, Missouri. One of Seven-Up's earliest slogans – You Like It - It Likes You – seems to have been correct!

What's in a Name?

² According to most accounts, Seven-Up was officially launched two weeks before the Stock Market crash that occurred on October 29, 1929, that later became known as “Black Tuesday”; however, our research placed the actual national sales about a year and a half later.

The Great Bib Label Lithiated Lemon Lime Soda Delusion

What's in a name? Would Seven-Up by any other name taste as sweet? Everyone knows that the first form of Seven-Up had the virtually unpronounceable name of Bib Label Lithiated Lemon Lime Soda. So, our first question should be: *Why* does "everyone" know that? The answer is simple: More than 150 websites clearly announce that the first name was Bib Label Lithiated Lemon Lime Soda; it is all over the internet. It is easy to become overwhelmed by numbers and believe something merely because it has been repeated so often. If it has been repeated that often, it must be correct, right?

Not necessarily. The vast majority of these websites copied and pasted the *exact words* from other websites. None of them explained where they obtained the information, so it is virtually certain that all of these webpages *only* obtained their information from one source – and most had no idea where the source originated. The really important questions are: Where did this information come from, and how reliable is it? These are much more difficult to answer.

The first readily available source for the information was almost certainly Jeffery Rodengen's 1995 history of Seven-Up (Rodengen 1995). Rodengen's comprehensive work was well researched and included information from the archives at Seven-Up. He referenced an unpublished manuscript by Daniel J. Forrestal, Director of Public Relations at the Monsanto Chemical Co. The manuscript was intended to be part of the Seven-Up 50th anniversary in 1979. However, the Phillip Morris Co. acquired Seven-Up in 1978 and declined the manuscript before it was complete.

The first place we have been able to find a reference to Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Carbonated Soda was in an interview with Ben Wells.

Wells joined the Seven-Up Co. in 1938 as an advertising agent and married Frank Gladney's daughter, Katherine. Gladney was one of the original founders of Whistle, Howdy, and

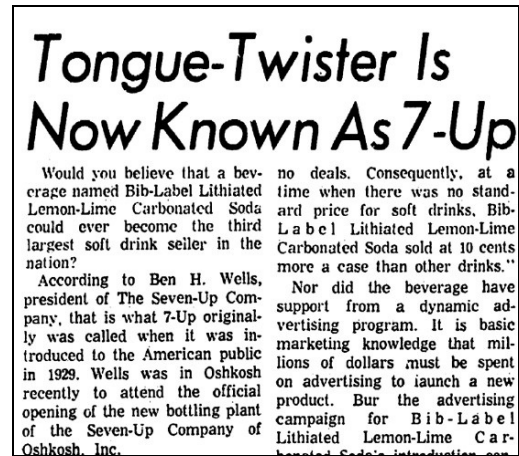


Figure 11 – Bib-Label? (*Oshkosh Daily Northwestern* 5/27/1967)

Seven-Up, going all the way back to around 1919. He became vice president of Seven-Up in 1943 and president in 1965 – apparently until he retired.

The *Oshkosh Northwestern* quoted Wells on May 27, 1967, when, as president of Seven-up, he attended the opening of a new Seven-Up plant at Oshkosh. Wells noted that the original name of the famous drink was “Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Carbonated Soda” in 1929 (Figure 11). He further stated that “the advertising campaign for Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Carbonated Soda’s introduction consisted of only small black-and-white placards that hung from light cords in grocery stores. The placards featured the benefits of the product in counteracting gastric acidity and other internal complaints.” He added that it may have been “the small size of the placards that prompted the name change.” Notice in the earliest sources “bib-label” and “lemon-lime” are hyphenated.

We need to examine his statements carefully. First, the name, Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Carbonated Soda, was even more complex than later reports due to the additional word “carbonated.” Second, was the reference to advertising only by “small black-and-white placards that hung from light cords in grocery stores.”

The term “Bib-Label” was, indeed, used by the Howdy Co. The firm applied for a trademark (Serial No. 291,337) for “BIB-LABEL” on October 21, 1929, claiming that the term was first used on July 29 of that year (Figure 12). The trademark was “For Carbonated, Nonalcoholic, Noncereal, Maltless Beverages, Sold as Soft Drinks and for Syrups, Extracts, and Concentrates Used in Making the Same.” This gives us a broad scope for the use of a bib-label, but it does little to actually describe one.

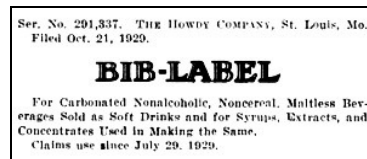


Figure 12 – Bib-Label trademark

But, we have never found an actual trademark document for this term – because it does not exist. Once a person or firm applies for a trademark, that application is published in the *Official Gazette* of the U.S. Patent Office so that anyone can contest the mark as infringing on his or her own trademark. Although we have occasionally found one, these infringement proceedings are rare, so we almost never discover *why* a trademark was refused, but this one clearly was denied. The serial number – the only number we have for Bib-Label – was a temporary place holder – not the final Registration number.

There are two ways to interpret the information from the *Official Gazette*. First, the wording after “For” suggests that this was a trademarked name for a brand of soda: Bib-Label. Possibly, for a short period of time, Grigg and his associates planned a line of drinks: Bib-Label Grape, Bib-Label Orange, etc. This interpretation of the trademark application’s terminology is supported by a short blurb in the *New Era in Food Distribution* (1930:56). Under the heading of Soft Drinks, Syrups, Extracts, the writeup announced “The Howdy Company, St. Louis, Missouri. Claims use since July 29, 1929. Beverages sold as Soft Drinks.”

Assuming that “Bib-Label” was intended as a soft drink brand name, the idea died almost at its birth. The trademark and the short blurb from the *New Era* are the only two primary references we have found for the term “Bib-Label.” Since the trademark was refused, the name could not legally continue in use for the Howdy Company’s drinks. And, the term most assuredly was *not* used in connection with the Seven-Up name.

However, “For Carbonated . . . Beverages” could also mean *connected with* – a type of label to be used *on* or *with* a beverage. Using this interpretation gives us two strong clues. First, the time period of mid-1929 falls after the known test period of March and April of that year but before the second test market time and prior to national sales. Second, both words in the name are helpfully descriptive. This was a label – a *label*, not the description of a beverage. And how was it used? – like a bib. We place a bib on a baby, draping the strap over the baby’s head so that the bib is held in place above the baby’s chest. Therefore, a “Bib-Label” would hang over the top of a bottle as a form of advertising.

In his history of Seven-Up, Rodengen (1995:93) noted that “Grigg intended to use paper labels, which could be dropped over the necks of otherwise unlabeled bottles like bibs to identify the new soft drink.” This fits well with Wells’ cryptic description of “small black-and-white placards that hung from light cords in grocery stores.” The term “light cords” may be confusing, especially to anyone born after 1960. Prior to that year, lights in lesser used rooms consisted of a single bare incandescent light bulb on a ceiling, turned on and off with a tough, tightly woven string called a “light cord” that dangled down below the light



Figure 13 – Bib-Label (eBay)

fixture. When Wells used the term in connection with Bib-Labels, he did not mean that the placards hung from the ceiling like pendulums. The term “light cord” indicated the *type* of string used to hang the bib-label over the neck of a bottle (see the cord in Figure 13).

We have several early examples of these bib-labels. One of our favorites was a card with a white border and a bright orange background (Figure 13). At the base in a black background was “TAKES THE ‘OUCH’ / OUT OF GROUCH.” To the right, the drink was identified as “ANTI / ACID / LEMON / SODA.” Two small holes had been punched at the top, and the card still included a string through the holes used to hang the card from a Seven-Up bottle. However, the placard was 8½ by 5¼ inches in size – too large to fit over an individual bottle without possibly toppling it – but, it could have been draped over a single bottle within a case – the typical form of packaging at the time. The six-pack was an idea for the fairly near future but not yet in use.

Regardless of which interpretation of Bib-Lable is correct, one point is clear: the term Bib-Label was *not* used in connection with the Seven-Up name. The term “Seven-Up” was coined almost a year earlier than “Bib-Label.” As noted above, the Howdy Co. applied for the “Seven-Up” trademark on October 4, 1928, claiming a first use on August 7 of that year – clearly a use earlier than “Bib-Label.” Oddly, the Seven-Up Co. did not apply for the familiar 7up logo (No. 331,345) until September 24, 1935, although that firm, too, claimed a first use of August 7, 1928 – almost certainly taking that date from the original “SEVEN-UP” trademark’s first use date (Figure 14).

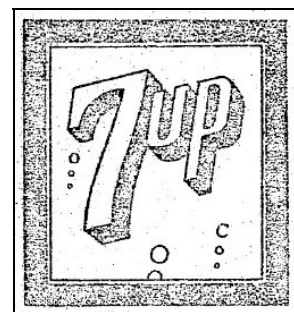


Figure 14 – 7up trademark

Why do we find *no* evidence of any kind for this long-winded name? The obvious answer is that it *never* existed. An article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for February 13, 1960 – seven years earlier than the long-winded name proposed by Wells in 1967 – never mentioned “Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Carbonated Soda” nor any other lengthy moniker. After telling the story of several different trial runs, the article noted that “the new drink was right. . . . It was not ‘just another pop.’ It was different. Mr. Grigg called it “Seven-Up.” Although the article failed to name its source, it clearly had inside information, obviously coming from the Seven-Up Co.

The earliest evidence we have for Seven-Up is the use of the name in block letters on the 1928 trademark and a 1928 letter. Neither of these sources include *any* of the words “Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Carbonated Soda.” Although “Lime” was one of the components of the drink and was printed on labels that included ingredients, it was never an actual part of the name. The exact same may be said for “Carbonated.”

We need to be clear on one point. The name of the drink from its beginning was Seven-Up. Not only was that the name on the 1928 trademark, it was also the *only* name for the drink on our earliest advertising from the Carthage Bottling Works – March 22, 1929 (see Figure 8). Another ad, from the July 23, 1932, edition of the *Woodland Daily Democrat*, called the drink “7 UP The New Lithiated Lemon Soda With an Exhilarating Tang.” Along with the word “New,” the ad claimed that the beverage “Knocks Hangovers” and had a “positive alkaline reaction that neutralizes acidity.”

It was not until sometime in early to mid-1931 that the term “Lithiated Lemon Soda” began appearing in ads – currently our earliest from the *Salt Lake Tribune* for June 4, 1931. Lithiated Lemon Soda also appeared on the earliest actual paper label we could find, used during the 1931-1935 period. Our study of Seven-Up paper labels revealed that Lithiated Lemon Soda appeared on the earliest labels with © 1935, but the three words were missing on the majority of them. The term was probably *only* used during the four-year period between 1931 and 1935 (Figure 15). To repeat, the name was Seven-Up from the beginning.

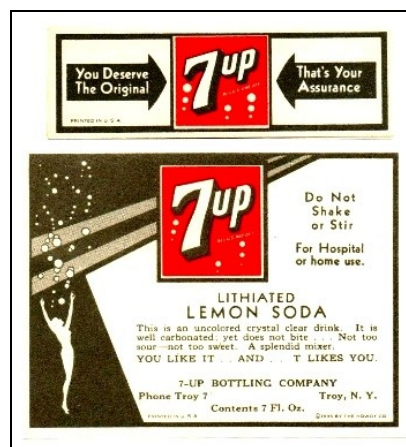


Figure 15 – Lithiated Lemon Soda (eBay)

So, where could Wells have come up with this long-winded name? Remember that Wells joined the firm in 1938 – seven years *after* the first ad we have discovered for Lithiated Lemon Soda. In other words, Wells was *not* there when the Gregg named the drink. Someone *told* Wells this story – and it is a great *story*. Also remember that Wells passed this story on to a reporter in 1967 – 35 years after the first ad and almost 30 years after Wells joined the company. Psychologists have solid evidence that stories grow with the telling – and the name certainly seems to have grown over the 35-year period. In addition, we do not even have this story in

Wells' own words. The story was written by a reporter who may – or may not – have carefully taken down the exact words. This has all the earmarks of an urban legend.

Rodengen's citation for the information was equally suspect, and we know even less about that and no clue about where Forrestal gleaned his information or when it originated. It is possible that the Forrestal manuscript was the source for Wells as well. In addition, Rodengen seems to have found no physical evidence for the "Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Soda." His book only showed a sign for Lithiated Lemon Soda. Note that Rodengen left out "Carbonated" in his name for the drink. Our evidence clearly debunks this urban legend.

The Name Seven-Up

Having debunked the unbelievably long Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Carbonated Soda, we still need to address the correct name – Seven-Up. A number of explanations have been proposed by collectors, all centered around the word "Seven" – and we have pretty much reduced those to two. The first was proposed by Walter "Talky" Rigdon in his column "Inklings" for the March 31, 1938, issue of the *Jefferson County Press* (Crystal City, Missouri):

Seven-Up, that popular carbonated beverage that takes the "ouch out of grouch," has a playing card on the label. It got its name from an old card game that also went by the name of all fours, and old sludge. And everyone knows that an alkaline chaser like Seven-Up keeps a lot of fellows in the game who wouldn't have been able to make it otherwise.

But, was Rigdon's claim that the drink was based on the Seven Up card game a guess, or did it come from true knowledge? Rigdon was close to St. Louis, and he certainly *could* have known Grigg – but did he? We may never know – and this claim *was* nine years after the beverage had its test market. In at least partial support of Rigdon's idea, card games were more important to many families in the days before TV, computers, and cell phones, so Seven Up may have been a normal game played in the Grigg household.



Figure 16 – Ad for cards (*St. Louis Journal* 3/28/1941)

However, it was not until March 28, 1941, that the *St. Joseph Journal* published an ad asking “Do You Have Your Deck of 7-Up Playing Cards? 16 Coupons Attached to the 6-Bottle Carton Entitle You to a Handsome Deck of Playing Cards.” The red backs of the deck of cards had the 8-bubble Seven-Up “square” with “LIKES YOU” below it with “MORNING NOON AND NIGHT” above (Figures 16 & 17). It seems that if the Seven-Up name had been borrowed from the card game, the idea of a 7-Up deck of cards would have surfaced sooner.

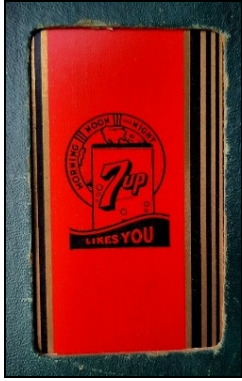


Figure 17 – 7-Up deck (eBay)

The second possibility was based on the earliest Seven-Up ad we have found – March 22, 1929, in the *Carthage Evening Press* (Carthage, Missouri) – that had the invitation: “Seven surprises await you—seven natural flavors blended into a brand-new drink delight.” “SEVEN NATURAL FLAVORS” also appeared on what seems to be the earliest bottle cap. But, what about “Up?” Although we have not found a specific saying that we can pin to the word, “up” generally expresses a positive direction: step up, brace up, set up, keep up, move up, pep up, and many more. In addition, the word “up” in the early logos (as well as later ones) was slanted in – you guessed it – an upward direction. So, seven natural flavors lift you up.

Early Logos & Slogans

Before addressing the various 7-Up logos, it should be noted that according to numerous sources, including one from Dictionary.com, the definition of a logo is “a graphic representation or symbol of a company name, trademark, abbreviation, etc., often uniquely designed for ready recognition.” The same source defines a trademark as, “Any name, symbol, letter, word, or mark adopted and used by a manufacturer or merchant in order to designate specific goods and to distinguish them from those manufactured or sold to others. A trademark is proprietary and is usually registered with the Patent and Trademark Office to assure its exclusive use by its owner or licensee.” Logo, however, is a casual term, where the trademark is registered with the U.S. Patent Office and may only receive the blessings of that organization *after* it has been in used for a period of time. For a more detailed explanation, see Appendix C – Seven-Up Trademark Registrations.

The earliest 7-Up logo we have found, is generally referred to as the “winged” 7-Up. It depicted a large “7” with two wings near the top, along with the word “up” underlined (see Figure 8). This style was only used in advertising during the 1929 Carthage Bottling Co. test market (*Carthage Evening Press* 3/22/1929), although the logo has been illustrated on the Internet (e.g., *Print* 2012; Jace D. 2020) and in the Rodengen (1995). Rodengen cited an unpublished manuscript by Daniel Forrestal that we have been unable to locate.

Another aspect of the winged 7-Up logo is the slogan often associated with it – “A glorified drink in bottles only. Seven natural flavors blended into a savory drink with a real wallop” – a statement originally advertised in the *Carthage Evening Press* on April 26, 1929. We were surprised to discover that Howdy Orange used similar wording as early as 1920. For example, a July 19, 1920, article from the Little Rock *Arkansas Democrat* stated that “HOWDY is a thrift drink, a pepful drink, a tasteful drink, a flavory, savory drink.” Perhaps Grigg intentionally reused some of those early Howdy slogans when he introduced 7-Up in 1929.

In addition, the winged 7-Up logo in Rodengen was captioned at the bottom with, “Seven Natural Flavors Blended.” This brings us to bottle caps. The bottle cap in Figure 18 was marked “7 SEVEN-UP Natural Flavor & Color” – a possible variation of “Seven Natural Flavors Blended.” Probably, this was the first bottle cap used by 7-Up. Unfortunately, we were unable to find a single example of that particular bottle cap used for advertising purposes. Since that particular bottle cap often sells for \$150 or more at online auctions, we can deduce that it is scarce or rare – a condition we would expect from an early example. As noted above, we can even speculate that “Seven Natural Flavors” may have been the inspiration for the 7-Up name.



Figure 18 – Bottle cap (eBay)

The words “SEVEN UP” without the wings was used as early as 1928. On January 7, 1936, the Howdy Co. filed for a trademark for the 7-Up logo, and on September 24, 1936, it was granted, and the company received registration No. 331,345 – claiming a first use on August 7, 1928. The firm filed a similar application for the trademark “Seven Up” on October 4, 1928, and received it on February 5, 1928, under Registration No. 252,350 – also claiming a first use of August 7, 1928.

A second early logo we have called the “tilted up” because the “up” in “7up” had an upward tilt with a curved underline and overline. This mark was advertised in late 1930 by the Carthage Bottling Works (e.g., *Carthage Evening Press* 11/4/1930), once again an almost certain test market (Figure 19). As with the earlier slogan, the Howdy Co. almost certainly used the “titled up” logo in a test market with its unlabeled bottles only marked by the caps. See Chapter 2 for a more extensive discussion.

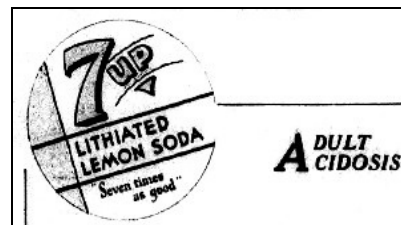


Figure 19 – Tilted “up” logo (*Carthage Evening Press* 11/4/1930)

Of particular interest about the “winged” 7-Up logo is the fact that the word “up” was underlined. During the course of our research, we discovered that the underlined “up” only appeared in ads between 1931 and 1935 (aside from the 1929 test market) – first appearing in (you guessed it) the *Carthage Evening Press* on June 6, 1931. The underlined “up” was also used on some of the early paper labels. As far as we know that feature has never been addressed and could serve as a valuable clue in approximately dating some of the earliest paper labels. It should also be noted that the image associated with the 1936 trademark application did not illustrate an underlined “up” nor did it appear in any of the © 1935 paper labels although “REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.” – in the same tilted position – served as an underline for several years. The typical 7-Up logo (without the underline) would remain unchanged in advertising and on bottles until the mid 1950s.

The last of the logos that deserves a brief mention is the “Slenderizing” lady, typically shown as a silhouette on paper labels and early ads, usually in a swim suit on the left side of ACL labels (Figure 20). Even though she was not specifically trademarked by name, the drawing appeared in advertising at least as early as 1931 and as late as the 1950s. We will introduce the lady and her story in the Labels section.



Figure 20 – Slenderizing Lady (eBay)

Hamblet “Ham” Grigg and the Hangover Cure

Our study would be incomplete without a brief mention of Hamblet Grigg and his contribution to the advertising of Seven-Up’s “medicinal” qualities. According to the *Holland*

Evening Sentinel of August 14, 1969, Hamlet C. “Ham” Grigg, son of Charles Grigg and a commercial artist with years of experience in advertising, used a cartoon style influenced by the then-popular John Held to illustrate Seven-Up ads – even placing the cartoons on the panels of Seven-Up delivery trucks. Upon his father’s death in 1940, Ham became the president of Seven-Up and held that position until his retirement in April of 1965.

According to the February 13, 1966, edition of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Ham Grigg drew the cartoons for Seven-Up’s first major promotion, the “Cure for the Seven Hangovers.” The 1931 ads included:

- Hang-over No. 1 – Over-Eating
- Hang-over No. 2 – Over-Drinking
- Hang-over No. 3 – Under-Drinking (Figure 21)
- Hang-over No. 4 – Over-Worry
- Hang-over No. 5 – Over-Working
- Hang-over No. 6 – Over-Smoking (Figure 22)
- Hang-over No. 7 – Mental Lassitude

A single example from the *Morning Chronicle*, Manhattan, Kansas, for December 27, 1931, should provide an idea of how the ads worked – this one from the over-smoking copy:

Whether pipe, cigars, cigarette, over-smoking stupifies, takes the edge off your wits, makes you woozy. Your breath is bad . . . you get no pleasure from your smoke. Then you turn to Seven-Up Lithiated Lemon . . . sip a glass slowly—maybe a second. Seven-Up not only corrects the breath and taste, but clears up your mental faculties and the morning Hang-over does not occur.

By the time of the 1926 agreement with the federal government to stop using claims that



Figure 21 – Over-Smoking (*Morning Chronicle* Manhattan, KS 12/27/1931)

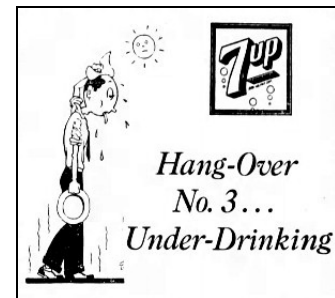


Figure 22 – Under-Drinking (*Morning Chronicle* Manhattan, KS 12/12/1931)

the drink could not possibly fulfill (see Chapter 2 – Paper Labels), the hang-over ads were pretty well worn out anyway, and another chapter of the Seven-Up saga was closed.³

Slogans

Both the Howdy Co. and the Seven-Up Co. used a variety of slogans to advertise the new drink. Some of these were used in advertisements, some in on paper labels, some on the later ACL bottles, and some on all three media. Only a few became actual trademarks. Table 1 shows the dominant slogans.

Table 1 – Slogans

Date	Slogan	Ads	Paper Label	ACL	Trade mark
1931	Alkaline Reaction	√	√	√	
1931	Anti-Acid	√	√	√	
1931	Seven Hangovers	√			
1932	Takes the Ouch out of Grouch	√	√	√	
1932	Marvelously Slenderizing – Sylph-Like	√			
1932	Drink After Eating – Before Retiring – On Arising			√	
1932	A Sparkling Mixer	√			
1933	Seven-Up Slenderizes	√			
1934	Tames Liquor	√			
1934	Glorifies Gin	√			
1934	Sparkles Wine	√			
1934	7-Up is Slenderizing	√			
1935	For the Stomach’s Sake Don’t Stir or Shake	√	√	√	
1935	Fresh up with 7-Up	√	√	√	
1935	Alkaline Reaction – The Gas Purifies	√	√	√	

³ The changes in the ads and labels actually were not made until the following year.

1936	For Hospital or Home Use	√	√	√	
1936	A Cooler Off – a Fresher Up	√	√	√	
1937	You Like 7-Up – 7-Up Likes You You Like It – It Likes You	√	√	√	1939
1939	You Proudly Serve 7-Up	√	√	√	1939
1945	Fresh Up with 7-Up	√	√	√	
1948	The Fresh Up Family Drink	√			
1955	Nothing Does It Like 7-Up	√			
1963	7-Up Your Thirst Away	√			
1966	Wet & Wild	√			1968
1968	The Uncola	√		√	1970

Discussion and Conclusion – History Section

Despite a humble start in a general store in Prices Branch, Missouri, Charles Lepier Grigg rose to success in advertising, becoming involved with Vess Jones in the Orange Whistle Co. When Grigg broke away from Whistle, he began experimenting with his own orange soda, forming the Howdy Co. in 1920 to vend his Howdy Orange. In less than a decade, he had developed his lemon soda, Seven-Up.

With a beginning at the start of the Great Depression in 1929, it is a wonder that Seven-Up survived at all. The combination of test markets and tweaking advertising took more than a year, so national sales did not begin until the mid-1931. Although changes and market testing continued – especially between 1936 and 1940, as the firm experimented with the best way to showcase Seven-Up in the new ACL – sales skyrocketed and remained high.

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Salt Lake Tribune (Salt Lake City, UT)

St. Joseph Journal (St. Joseph, MO)

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, MO)

Woodland Daily Democrat (Woodland, CA)

