

Chapter 3

Colorless and Amber Seven-Up Bottles

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Although the Seven-Up Co. quickly settled into emerald green for its bottle colors, a few of the early bottlers strayed from the intended path, using amber bottles and even a few colorless ones. This chapter concentrates on the strays, beginning with colorless bottles, although we begin with a brief discussion of Applied Color Lettering (ACL).

Applied Color Lettering (ACL)

The Owens-Illinois Glass Co. used Applied Color Lettering as the trademarked name for a system that applied enameled colors to glass via a silkscreen process. Even though only one color could be applied at a time, as many as four colors were used on soda and milk bottles. However, because of the extra cost, one or two colors became the norm. Even though the various glass manufacturers used and trademarked other names (e.g. Lustrо Color from Liberty Glass Co. or Color Print from Glenshaw Glass Co.), soda bottle collectors have either used ACL or the incorrect term “painted labels” to identify the process on soda bottles, while dairy collectors selected “Pyroglazed” (the name used by the Thatcher Mfg. Co.) for milk bottles. For more information about the actual process, see Lockhart & Brown (2019).

Although silkscreening was an old process, applying the idea to the curved surfaces of a bottle required the invention of new machinery. Harry S. Brickell, of the Hazel-Atlas Glass Co., patented the first machine in 1933, followed rapidly by others. The first actual bottle produced with ACL came out that year – on the flat side of a prescription bottle, made by the Brockway Glass Co. Ironically, ACL never became popular on prescription bottles. Even though it was used on other bottle types (e.g., food bottles and jars), the process only became really popular on soda and milk bottles (Lockhart & Brown 2019).

Jumbo, the Super Cola, was the earliest ACL bottle we have discovered – in May of 1934 – but that opened the door (Lockhart & Brown 2020). Surprisingly, the brightly colored labels were slow to catch on – possibly because bottlers wanted to diminish their supplies of the older

Specialty bottles (also called Deco or Proprietary) before changing their designs – but ACL was dominating the market for soda and milk bottle labels by 1940. Although many bottlers initially added an ACL panel to their Specialty bottles, by 1950, embossed designs were much more limited, and the bottles had much more ACL information on the reverse sides. Even though paper and plastic have dominated both industries, ACL remains the dominant labeling style on glass soda bottles in the 21st century (Lockhart & Brown 2019).

Colorless¹ Seven-Up Bottles

Our searches only turned up three colorless Seven-Up bottles, and only one was truly one of the early Seven-Up bottles. This was a transition bottle from the Specialty (or Deco or Proprietary) bottles of the 1920s into the Applied Color Lettering (ACL) era (and paper-labeled bottles with embossed necks in between). The bottle was embossed with an orange-peel surface on the shoulder and four rings transitioning into the neck. Below was an unembossed area for the paper label then another orange-peel area with “7•UP BOTTLING CO. JOHNSON CITY, TENN.” around the heel (Figure 1).

The base was embossed “JOHNSON CITY, TENN.” in a circle around the outside and “12 FL. OZ. / ©” in the center (Figure 2). The paper label had the word “Slenderizing” across the legs of the Slenderizing Lady, marking the label as one of the first of the © 1935 standardized labels, although it had



Figure 1 – Colorless specialty bottle (eBay)



Figure 3 – Flavor bottle (eBay)



Figure 2 – Specialty label & base (eBay)

¹ Although the glass industry used the term “flint” and collectors lean toward “clear” to describe this colorless glass, we prefer the term “colorless” because it is a correct description. Almost all bottles are “clear” – meaning that you can see through them. The glass lacks color.

no visible copyright date, so it may have been a year or so earlier. Since the Chattanooga Glass Co. (user of the © logo) did not use date codes, we have dated the bottle ca. 1935.

The second colorless bottle was one of the stubby types that were usually amber in color. This one had no embossing on the body or neck, but the base was embossed “PROPERTY OF SEVEN UP RIO GRANDE INC.” in a circle around the outside and “Ball (cursive) / HARLINGEN, / TEXAS (all horizontal)” in the center (Figure 3). This bottle probably was intended for one of the flavored sodas sold by the company along with Seven-Up. The Harlingen franchise used stubby amber bottles with paper labels for Seven-Up in at least 1937 and 1938, so 1937-1938 is probably a good date for this bottle, too. As with the Chattanooga Glass Co. example above, the Ball Brothers did not use date codes that early.



Figure 4 – Mexican bottle (eBay)

The final example came from Mexico. The front ACL was almost identical to the U.S. 8-bubble Square Logo, except that the two sets of three bubbles were curved instead of straight up and down, and the wording



Figure 5 – Mexican label (eBay)

below was “•SEVEN OP• / MCA IND REG 37453 (the Mexican version of REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.)” The back label had “SABROSO / REFRESCANTE! (with heavy underlines) / ESTA BOTELLA NO SE / VENDE NI SE CANEJA / ES PARA EL EMBOTELLAMIENTO / EXCLUSIVO DE / 7up (three dimensional) / POR LA / EMBOTELLADORA 7up DE MEXICO SA / O SUS AGENTES ATORIZADOS / HECHO IN MEXICO” (Figures 4 & 5).

Translation: Tasty Refreshing! This bottle is not for sale or exchange. This is exclusively for bottling by 7up. 7up bottler of Mexico, Inc. or its authorized agents. Made in Mexico. We could not find a base photo. Except for the neck of the bottle – embossed “7op” – the bottle was identical to the final one discussed in the amber section below with a base date of 1942. Since the amber bottle had an ACL neck label, the colorless one was likely earlier – possibly ca. 1940.

Obviously, these colorless bottles had little influence in the path and destiny of Seven-Up, but they formed a footnote or trio of footnotes in this fascinating study.

Amber Seven-Up Bottles

Few studies have attempted to revise Munsey’s table addressing the amber bottles used by local Seven-Up bottlers in ten cities, so we attempted to find all of the variations of amber Seven-Up bottles on internet searches (Figure 6). We were unable to find any examples of five amber bottles that Munsey included on his list. While we are not suggesting that those do not

AMBER 7-UP Bottles (7-ounce)							
CITY/STATE	TYPE		LABELING		YEAR		
	Standard	Stubby	Applied Color	Paper Label**	1936	1937	1938
Charleston, SC		X		X			PL**
Dallas, TX	X		X	X			PL**ACL* PL**
Hartsgen, TX		X		X			PL**
Houston, TX		X	X				ACL*
Johnson, Cty. TN		X		X			PL**
Knoxville, TN		X	X	X			PL** ACL*
Nashville, TN		X	X	X			PL**ACL* ACL*
San Diego, CA	X		X	X			PL**ACL*
Shreveport, LA		X	X	X			ACL* PL**
New Orleans, LA		X	X				ACL*

* - Applied Color Label (ACL) ** - Paper label (PL)

Figure 6 – Munsey’s amber table (Munsey 2004)



Figure 7 – Neck variations (eBay)

exist, we were unable to find them.

But, Munsey’s study was limited to just a few variables – paper label, ACL, and bottle type (stubby or standard). An additional variable – neck logo – is far more complex and quite fascinating. Most of the amber bottles had one of two embossed neck logos – “7up” or

“u7p” – but some had no logos at all. All but two cities had “7up” embossed in a larger font; smaller for the other two (Figure 7). One bottle had an ACL neck label, and one of the standard bottles was embossed “SEVEN UP” around the neck (Figure 8).

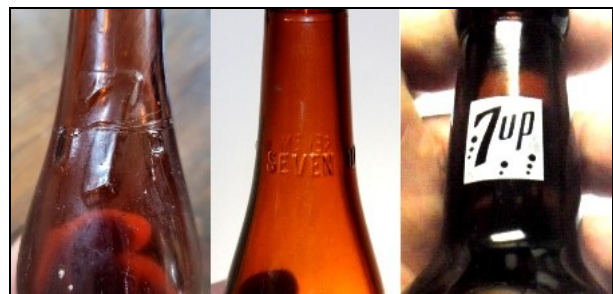


Figure 8 – Neck variations (eBay; Josh Snyder)



Figure 9 – Foot variations (eBay)

Our final variants were the feet and hands of the Slenderizing Lady. ACL ladies on bottles made in 1936 and 1937 had only one foot. The ladies on the 1938 bottles – as well as the Houston containers from

the 1940s – all had two feet (Figure 9). But, there were two interesting exceptions. A lady on a Houston 1943 bottle had only one foot as did the lady on the 1942 bottle from Mexico. The vast majority of paper labels had a single-footed lady, but, at least two had what appear to be two feet (see Chapter 2, Paper Labels for more information).

Table 1 – Neck Labels on amber Bottles

Neck Label	Embossed/ACL	Location	Date Range
	Embossed	Dallas, TX Harlingen, TX Houston, TX Knoxville, TN Nashville, TN	1937-1939 1937-1938 1936-1946 1937-1938 1937-1938
	Embossed	Charleston, SC Shreveport, LA	1937 1936
	Embossed	San Diego, CA	1936
	Embossed	San Diego, CA	1936
	ACL	Nashville, TN	1938

As noted in Chapter 2, the hands followed a similar pattern with palms turned inward on the early labels, showing only two digits on each. Soon, however, the hands turn outward, exposing three to four digits on each (Figure 10).

The patterns for amber bottle use in some cities makes no intuitive sense. For example, San Diego used ACL in 1936 (the first year for ACL on Seven-Up containers) followed by a paper label the next year – at least according to Munsey (2004). We would expect the opposite. Houston used paper labels on amber bottles for the first two years (1936 and 1937), but we find no examples from 1938 to 1941. However, Houston then had ACL on amber bottles until 1946 – *long* after all other bottlers had switched to emerald green containers. Most of these discrepancies are easy to explain. The missing bottles that we expect are just that – missing. Houston likely used paper labeled bottles during the missing years, possibly ones that had neither embossing *nor* ACL and/or used only green bottles. San Diego may have used both paper label and ACL in both 1936 and 1937. Either none have survived for the missing years, or we have not found them yet (although, see the section on San Diego below).



Figure 10 – Hand variations (eBay)

Although it is unclear *why* these few Seven-Up bottlers chose to ignore the trend toward emerald green bottles, there is no question *that* they did so. It is equally odd that Houston continued to order amber bottles for seven years after its fellows returned to the emerald green sheen that became the standard. This unusual situation for Houston (and some of the other atypical patterns) may have been caused by the historical situation. In 1929, the U.S. entered into the period known as the Great Depression, a financial slump that continued until the U.S. recovery at the end of World War II. It was a strange time for a new drink to catch hold in the country, but it happened.

It was a time when most bottlers reused their bottles for many more round trips than they did during happier times – affecting the survival rates of the bottles during the early period of this study. Bottles took another hit during World War II (1939-1945) when many of the nation's resources were rationed for civilian use in order to supply the military. It is amazing that the Houston franchise actually *had* all of its ACL bottles during the 1942-1946 period.

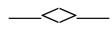
On the paper-labeled bottles, the city and often the bottler's name were embossed on the bases; but, ACL bottles had that information on the base or on the back label. But, back labels require a bit more explanation.

ACL Back Label Variations on Amber Bottles

Our study discovered three back label variations used on amber Seven-Up bottles. The first three almost certainly only were used during 1936 (and only in San Diego), the next from 1937 to at least 1938. Style 3 was used later, from 1942 to 1946 (and only on Houston bottles). Because our sample of amber bottles is so small, these dates probably are not fully representative of the term for each back label, and we will cover all Seven-Up back labels (up to 1956) much more accurately in Chapter 4 – emerald green bottles. Letter and number designations come from the back label study in Chapter 4.

Back Label A (1936)

“A COOLER OFF
A FRESHER UP
KEEPS YOU
ALKALINE
SETTLES THE STOMACH



MIN. CONTENTS 7 FL. OZS. (Figure 11).

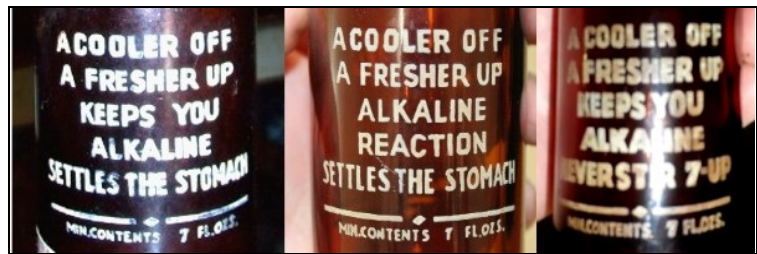
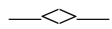


Figure 11 – Back Labels A, B & C (eBay)

Back Label B (1936)

A COOLER OFF
A FRESHER UP
ALKALINE
REACTION
SETTLES THE STOMACH



MIN. CONTENTS 7 FL. OZS.” (see Figure 11)

Back Label C (1936?)

A COOLER OFF
A FRESHER UP
ALKALINE
REACTION
NEVER STIR 7-UP



MIN. CONTENTS 7 FL. OZS.” (see Figure 11)

Back Label No. 4 (1937-1938)

A FRESH UP
DRINK
FOR THE STOMACH'S SAKE
DO NOT STIR OR SHAKE
YOU LIKE IT
IT LIKES YOU



CONTENTS 7 FL. OZS.
CARRYING THE 7-UP TRADEMARK
THIS BOTTLE MUST
NOT BE USED FOR
ANY OTHER DRINK (Figure 12)



Figure 12 – Back Label No. 4 (eBay)

Back Label No. 7 (1942-1946)

THE “Fresh Up” DRINK
CONTAINS CARBONATED WATER
SUGAR, CITRIC ACID, LITHIA AND
SODA CITRATES FLAVOR DERIVED
FROM LEMON AND LIME OILS.
YOU LIKE IT
IT LIKES YOU



Figure 13 – Back Label No. 7 (eBay)

CONTENTS 7 FL. OZS.
THIS TRADEMARKED BOTTLE MUST NOT
BE USED FOR ANY OTHER DRINK (Figure 13)

Bottles from Individual Cities

Each of the cities below used at least one variation of an amber bottle, and we have addressed each of the variables discussed above in greater detail for each place. Here, we present the variations of amber Seven-Up bottles that we have discovered, ordered alphabetically by the city of the bottler.

Charleston, South Carolina – 1937

Only a single amber bottle is recorded from South Carolina – stubby in shape and with a paper label. Charleston was one of only two cities to use the smaller lettered (and numbered) “7up” embossed on an amber bottle neck (Figure 14). The base was embossed



Figure 15 – Charleston base (eBay)

“SEVEN UP BOTTLING CO. (arch) / 6
<(I)> 7 (horizontal) / 7 up (upwardly
slanted – note: underlined ‘up’) / 8. /

CHARLESTON, S.C. (inverted arch)” (Figure 15). The <(I)> represents the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. symbol, I in an O superimposed over a diamond. The “6” represents Plant No. 6, Charleston, West Virginia (1929-1964), and the “7” indicates the year 1937. This bottle appeared in Munsey’s 2004 table, and we have recorded an example as well.



Figure 14 – Charleston (eBay)

Dallas, Texas – 1937-1939

We have recorded four amber bottles from Dallas (all stubby), two with paper labels, two more with ACL – from 1937 and 1938. Munsey (2004) also included a paper labeled bottle from 1939; although we have not seen an example – but there is no reason to doubt that Munsey had

seen an actual bottle. All of the bottles had the larger of the two sizes of the embossed “7up” neck labels (Figure 16). Each of the paper-labeled bottles had a base embossed “SEVEN UP DALLAS CO. INC. (arch) / 9 <(I)> 7 / DALLAS / TEXAS (all horizontal)” – “8” on the 1938 base (Figure 17). Presumably, Munsey’s 1939 base was also identical except for the date code. As with the entry above, the <(I)> symbol indicated the Owens-Illinois logo, Factory No. 9 at Streator, Illinois, and date codes for 1937 and 1938.

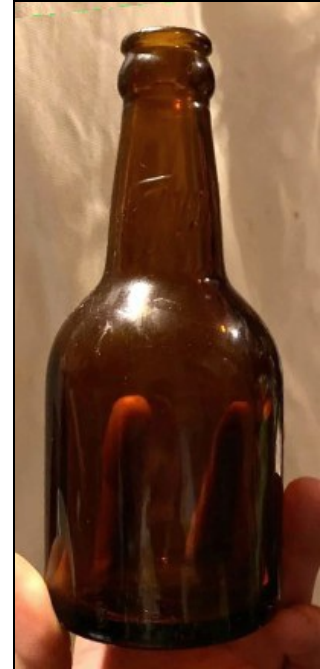


Figure 16 – Dallas paper (eBay)

The ACL front was a simplified version of the paper labels with the red “Square” logo in the center (with 8 bubbles), “REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.” in the white background, and the Slenderizing Lady to the



Figure 17 – Dallas paper base (eBay)

left – with a swimsuit (unlike the female figure silhouette on the paper labels) and 8 bubbles above her. Each bottle had an identical back label (Back Label No. 4): “A FRESH UP / DRINK / FOR THE STOMACH’S SAKE / DO NOT STIR OR SHAKE / YOU LIKE IT / IT LIKES YOU / — ◊ — / CONTENTS 7 FL. OZS. / CARRYING THE 7-UP TRADEMARK / THIS BOTTLE MUST / NOT BE

USED FOR / ANY OTHER DRINK (all horizontal)” with two offset dots after the word “DRINK” like the duce on a die (Figure 18).

We might speculate on why Dallas continued to carry paper labels, especially in the final year, over the clearly superior ACL. The probable reason was a surplus of paper labels that the franchise wanted to use up. As discussed earlier, paper labels often washed off in the machines of the day that used ice water to cool the



Figure 18 – Dallas ACL (eBay)

drinks. To make their system more effective, the Dallas bottler may have offered bottles with paper labels to customers buying in grocery stores while maintaining machine sales with the ACL bottles.

Harlingen, Texas – 1937-1938 (possibly to 1942)

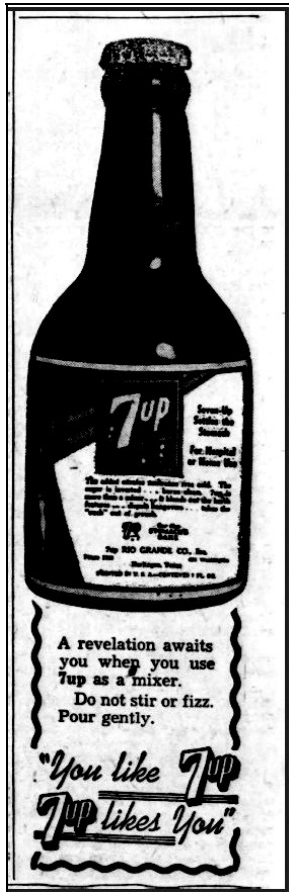


Figure 21 – Ad (*Valley Morning Star* 11/11/1937)

Like Charleston, Harlingen, Texas, near the Mexican border, only used a paper-labeled bottle for a single year – 1937 – according to Munsey (2004). Like the majority, the stubby bottle had “7up” embossed in the larger letters (Figure 19). The base was embossed “PROPERTY OF SEVEN UP RIO GRANDE CO. (arch) / 5. / HARLINGEN / TEXAS / 9 <(I)> 7 (all horizontal)” (Figure 20). As above, Plant No. 9 was the Streator, Illinois, factory with “7” and a date code for 1937. The Harlingen bottle also had a heel code of “G5266” – the model number for the stubby mold (see Figure 20).



Figure 19 – Harlingen bottle (eBay)



Figure 20 – Harlingen base (eBay)

Although Munsey only listed a single bottle – from 1937 – we have found another from 1938, identical, paper labeled; only the date code was different. Newspaper reports about the bottler were even more revealing. An ad in Harlingen’s *Valley Morning Star* for November 11, 1937, illustrated the amber bottle with the © 1935 paper label – with “Slenderizing” across the lady’s legs (Figure 21).

On December 22, 1941, the *Valley Morning Star*’s Weekly Business Digest included photos of the bottling line of the Harlingen plant (Figure 22). The photos showed stubby amber bottles going through the filling process, and the accompanying text mentioned the “automatic

labeling machine” used to affix the labels to the bottles. Since ACL was applied by the *glass house* not the local bottler, this could *only* refer to paper labels. Therefore, the Haltingen franchise continued to use stubby amber bottles with paper labels until at least 1941, and the first ad we could find for the green bottles was from 1943. Although it is possible that none of the 1939-1942 bottles survived, it is even more likely that the Harlingen franchise used generic bottles (no Seven-Up embossing) during the “missing” years.



Figure 22 – Ad (*Valley Morning Star* 12/22/1941)

Houston, Texas – 1936-1946

As with most of the others in this study, the Houston franchise used stubby bottles with large-lettered, embossed “7up” neck labels for both paper-labeled and ACL variations. We have only found paper-labeled examples from 1937, although Munsey (2004) included an ACL bottle from 1936 – probably misreading a “6.” date code (1946) (Figure 23). Bases on paper-labeled, amber bottles were embossed: “PROPERTY OF SEVEN UP BOTTLING CO. (in a circle around the outside of the base) / 9 <(I)> 7 / HOUSTON / TEXAS / 2 (all horizontal)” (Figure 24).



Figure 23 – Houston paper label (eBay)

The amber ACL bottles – used between 1942 and 1946 – had the same front label as the one described on the Dallas bottles. The back labels, however, were all Back Label No. 7: “THE ‘Fresh Up’



Figure 24 – Houston base (eBay)

DRINK / CONTAINS CARBONATED WATER, . SUGAR, CITRIC ACID, LITHIA AND / SODA CITRATES. FLAVOR DERIVED / FROM LEMON AND LIME OILS. / YOU LIKE IT / IT LIKES YOU / CONTENTS 7 FL. OZS. / THIS TRADEMARKED BOTTLE MUST NOT / BE USED FOR ANY OTHER DRINK / 7-UP TEXAS CORP., / HOUSTON, TEXAS” (Figure 25). In this case the “deuce” dots were between the “Fresh Up” and “CARBONATED WATER” lines. These later bottles lacked the

bottler information embossed on the bases, *only* carrying the manufacturer’s marks and codes – e.g., “9 <(I)> 2.” (Plant No. 9, Streator, Illinois, 1942 – Owens-Illinois) or date codes for 1943-1946 (Figure 26).

Obviously, Houston discontinued the embossed, paper-labeled bottles early (1937), but what happened to the bottles between 1938 and 1942? There could be



Figure 26 – Houston base (eBay)

three explanations, possibly both. First, the firm could have continued paper labels on unembossed, stubby,

amber bottles. Second, it could have switched to the green bottles in 1938 then back to amber bottles in 1942, although this second explanation defies intuitive sense. Finally, and this one makes the best sense, the 1936(?) and 1937 paper-labeled bottles were from a

test market that failed.

Johnson City, Tennessee – 1936

Although we have found examples of Johnson City’s lone stubby bottle online, we have not seen a base photo, so we cannot add that information. Munsey, however, placed the date at 1936 on bottles with paper labels. The photos did not show any embossed neck label (Figure 27).



Figure 27 – Johnson City (eBay)

Knoxville, Tennessee – 1937-1938

In 1937, Knoxville used an amber stubby bottle with a paper label and a large-letter, embossed “7up” neck label (Figure 28). The base was embossed: “7UP BOTTLING CO. OF KNOXVILLE, INC.,” (arch) / 6 <(I)> 7 / 8 / KNOXVILLE / TENN. (all horizontal). As noted earlier, the “6” identified Plant No. 6 (Charleston, West Virginia) of Owens-Illinois, “7” for



Figure 25 – Houston ACL (eBay)



Figure 29 – Knoxville base (eBay)

1937 (Figure 29). Unfortunately, we have not been able to find an example of the ACL bottle listed by Munsey (2004) for 1938. As above, this does not mean that we claim there is no example at all – but we could not find one.



Figure 28 – Knoxville bottle (eBay)

Nashville, Tennessee – 1937-1938



Figure 30 – Nashville paper label (eBay)

The Nashville, Tennessee, franchise used three different stubby, amber bottles during 1937 and 1938 – one paper label and two ACLs. The bottle with a paper label was used in 1937 and had the larger “7up” embossed on the neck (Figure 30). The base was embossed “7 UP BOTTLING CO. OF NASHVILLE, INC. (in a circle around the perimeter of the base) / 9 <(I)> 7 / NASHVILLE / TENN. / 2 (all horizontal)” (Figure 31). As noted above, Plant No. 9 was in Streator, Illinois. Interestingly, all of the paper labels on bottles that we found did *not* have the



Figure 31 – Paper label base (eBay)

bottler information on the labels – possibly because of the basal embossing. However, a November 23, 1937, ad in the *Nashville Banner* illustrated a stubby, amber bottle with a paper label that *included* the Nashville franchise information (Figure 32).



Figure 32 – Ad (*Nashville Banner* 11/23/1937)

Nashville shifted to ACL during 1937, using the same front label as the other ACL bottles discussed above, the same embossed, large-letter “7up” neck label, and a Back Label No. 4



Figure 33 – Nashville ACL (eBay)

(Figure 33). The base had the same embossing as the paper-labeled version (see Figure 31). The 1938 base was identical except that the manufacturer was Plant No. 6, Charlottesville, West Virginia, and the date code was “8.” The *major* difference, however, was an ACL neck label for 1938 that featured the “Square” logo with 8 bubbles (Figure 34).

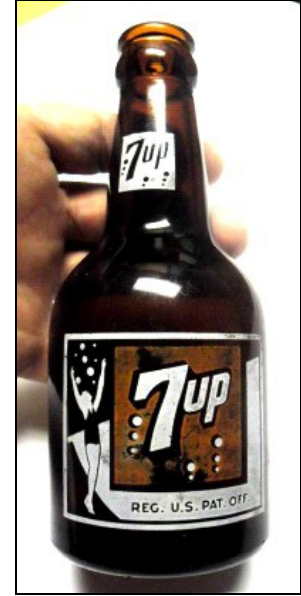


Figure 34 – ACL neck (eBay)

New Orleans, Louisiana – 1937

Munsey (2004) listed a stubby ACL bottle for New Orleans, Louisiana, for 1937, but we have been unable to locate an example. Interestingly, Munsey placed the New Orleans bottle at the bottom of his table – out of order – almost as if it were an afterthought. The only Seven-Up bottler that we could find at New Orleans during that time period was from the Zetz Bottling Co. Zetz used plenty of emerald green bottles, but Munsey’s listing is the only reference we can find for an amber one. The United Beverage Co. listed “Zetz Botg Co., Inc. (formerly Dr Pepper Botg Co.)” for 1937 but only Dr Pepper the year before.

San Diego, California – 1936

Munsey’s 2004 table included both a paper-labeled bottle and an ACL bottle for 1936 in what he called the “standard” bottle style rather than the stubby used for all other amber Seven-Up bottles. Although we have been unable to find an example of the bottle with a paper label, an ad in the *Imperial Valley Press* (El Centro, California) for November 29, 1936, illustrated what was clearly an amber “standard” bottle with a paper label, strongly suggesting that such a bottle existed (Figure 35).



Figure 35 – Ad (*Imperial Valley Press* 11/29/1936)

But San Diego was unique with its three ACL bottles, all dated 1936. Each was what Munsey (2004) called the “standard” bottle, cylindrical with a gently sloped shoulder tapering into the finish. Both also had the typical front label with the 8-bubble “square” central logo and the swimsuited Slenderizing Lady, and each base was embossed “STAR BEVERAGE CO. (arch) / 4206G / 7 UP / 21 <(I)> 6 / (all horizontal) / SAN DIEGO (inverted arch)” (Figure 36). Owens-Illinois Factory No. 21 was in Los Angeles, California, and the “G” number was a model number for the “standard” bottle in 7-ounce size. The date code, of course, indicated 1936.



Figure 36 – San Diego base (Josh Snyder)



Figure 37 – San Diego 12 (Josh Snyder)

replaced by “ALKALINE / REACTION” (see Figure 38).

The third bottle type was only represented by a single, poor-quality photo of the back label. Unfortunately, we have lost the provenience for the photo, so we have no way of discovering the embossing on the base or the embossed(?) neck logo. While it seems logical that this represented a third bottle from San Diego, there is no way of being certain unless we can

The neck labels on the three ACL bottles were unique among the amber containers. Two had the embossed, split neck label (u7p – Back Labels A and C), while the other was embossed with the words “SEVEN UP” around the neck (Figures 37 & 38). Back Label A, one of the split-neck-label bottles, had – “A COOLER OFF / A FRESHER UP / KEEPS YOU / ALKALINE / SETTLES THE STOMACH / —◇— MIN. CONTENTS 7 FL. OZS.” (see Figure 37). The Back Label B, from the bottle with the “SEVEN UP” neck label, was almost identical, but “KEEPS YOU / ALKALINE” was



Figure 38 – San Diego 2 (eBay)

find an example. We are guessing that the front label and base were the same as the two described above. The Back Label C, however, was identical to the first one except that “NEVER STIR 7-UP” replaced “SETTLES THE STOMACH” (see Figure 11).

Shreveport, Louisiana – 1936

Like most, the Shreveport franchise adopted a stubby amber bottle in 1936. Munsey (2004) listed an ACL bottle for 1936 and one with a paper label for 1937. This order is counterintuitive, and we could not find examples of either bottle. What we *did* find was a paper-label bottle made in 1936 with the smaller of the two “7up” embossed neck logos (Figure 39). The base was embossed: “SHREVEPORT SEVEN UP BOTTLING CO. INC. (in a circle around the perimeter of the base) / 9 <(I)> 6 / SHREVEPORT / LA. / 6 (all horizontal)”



Figure 40 – Shreveport base (eBay)

(Figure 40). As noted above, Plant No. 9 was at Streator, Illinois. Like the bottle from Harlingen, Texas, this one from Shreveport had the “G5266” model number embossed on the heel. The *Shreveport Times* for December 21, 1936, illustrated an amber, stubby bottle with a paper label, but the one for July 19 of the following year (1937) showed the typical “standard” bottles, apparently in the green color (Figures 41 & 42). Munsey may have been in error about this one

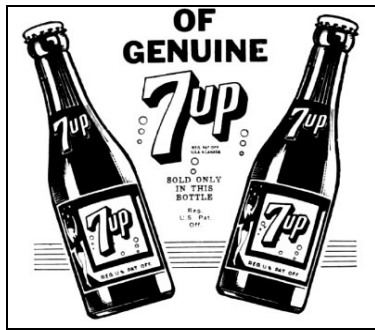


Figure 42 – Ad (*Shreveport Times* 7/19/1937)



Figure 39 – Shreveport bottle (eBay)



Figure 41 – Ad (*Shreveport Times* 12/21/1936)

Table 2 – Amber Variations

City/State	Type	Front Label	Neck	Back*	Date Range
Charleston, SC	Stubby	Paper	Small 7up		1937
Dallas, TX	Stubby	Paper	Large 7up		1937-1939**
Dallas, TX	Stubby	ACL	Large 7up	4	1937-1938
Harlingen, TX	Stubby	Paper	Large 7up		1937-1938
Houston, TX	Stubby	Paper	Large 7up		1937
Houston, TX	Stubby	ACL	Large 7up	7	1942-1946
Johnson City, TN	Stubby	Paper	None		1936
Knoxville, TN	Stubby	Paper	Large 7up		1937
Knoxville, TN	Stubby	ACL	Large 7up	Unkn	1938**
Nashville, TN	Stubby	Paper	Large 7up		1937
Nashville, TN	Stubby	ACL	Large 7up	4	1937
Nashville, TN	Stubby	ACL	ACL	4	1938
New Orleans, LA	Stubby	ACL	Large 7up	Unkn	1938**
San Diego, CA	Standard	ACL	u7p	A	1936
San Diego, CA	Standard	ACL	u7p	B	1936
San Diego, CA	Standard	ACL	SEVEN UP	C	1936
Shreveport, LA	Stubby	ACL	Unkn	Unkn	1936**
Shreveport, LA	Stubby	Paper	Small 7up		1936-1937**

* See text for back labels corresponding to the numbers or letters.

** Listed in Munsey (2004), but we could not find an example (only 1939 from Dallas).

Table 3 – Amber Bottle Dates (Munsey 2004)

AMBER 7-UP Bottles (7-ounce)						
CITY/STATE	TYPE		LABELING		YEAR	
	Standard	Stubby	Applied Color	Paper Label**	1936	1937 1938 1939
Charleston, SC		X		X		PL**
Dallas, TX		X	X	X		PL**ACL* PL**
Harlingen, TX		X		X		PL**
Houston, TX		X	X		ACL*	
Johnson, City, TN		X		X	PL**	
Knoxville, TN		X	X	X		PL** ACL*
Nashville, TN		X	X	X		PL**ACL* ACL*
San Diego, CA	X		X	X	PL**ACL*	
Shreveport, LA		X	X	X	ACL*	PL**
New Orleans, LA		X	X			ACL*

* = Applied Color Label (ACL) ** = Paper label (PL)

Table 4 – Updated Amber Bottle Dates (After Munsey 2004)*

City/State	Type	Label	1936	1937	1938	1939	1942-1946
Charleston, SC	Stubby	Paper		P			
Dallas, TX	Stubby	Paper, ACL		P, A	P, A	P**	
Harlingen, TX	Stubby	Paper		P	P		
Houston, TX	Stubby	Paper, ACL		P			A
Johnson City, TN	Stubby	Paper	P				
Knoxville, TN	Stubby	Paper, ACL		P	A**		
Nashville, TN	Stubby	Paper, ACL		P, A	A		
New Orleans, LA	Stubby	ACL			A**		
San Diego, CA	Standard	ACL	A				
Shreveport, LA	Stubby	Paper, ACL	P, A**	P**			

* In the Date columns, P = Paper Label, A = Applied Color Label (ACL)

** Listed in Munsey (2004), but we could not find an example.

Mexico City, Mexico – 1942

Although not fully appropriate for a study of U.S. Seven-Up bottles, we discovered an amber, ACL bottle used in Mexico City. The front ACL had the typical 8-bubble “square” label

with the Slenderizing Lady in her swim suit and 8 bubbles above her. Below was “• SEVEN-OP • / MCA. IND. REG. 37453 (the Mexican version of REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.)” The back label had “SABROSO / REFRESCANTE! (with heavy underlines) / ESTA BOTELLA NO SE / VENDE NI SE CANEJA / ES PARA EL EMBOTELLAMIENTO / EXCLUSIVO DE / 7up (three dimensional) / POR LA / EMBOTELLADORA 7up DE MEXICO SA / O SUS AGENTES ATORIZADOS / HECHO IN MEXICO” (Figure 43).



Figure 43 – Mexican bottle (eBay)

Translation: Tasty Refreshing! This bottle is not for sale or exchange. This is exclusively for bottling by 7up. 7up bottler of Mexico, Inc. or its authorized agents. Made in Mexico. The neck was embossed “7up” – with V over M in a Triangle / 42 on the base (Figure 44). This triangular manufacturer’s mark was used by Vidriera Mexico, Mexico City, from ca. 1936 to ca. 1985, and the bottle was made in 1942.



Figure 44 – Mexican base (eBay)

Possible Others?

An amber bottle used by Tom Joyce, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana, raises yet another question. The bottle was a typical 7-ounce amber container with gently sloped shoulders but no neck label or plant information on the base. The base was only embossed “9 <(I)> 3 / 62” – Owens-Illinois Factory No. 9, Streator, Illinois – with a date code for 1933. The paper label, however, had “Slenderizing” across the legs of the lady and the wording used on the © 1935 labels – although the copyright information was missing from the label (Figures 45 & 46). As noted in the paper label section, this specific label, minus the copyright date, could have been used a couple of years earlier, so this may have been the original bottle instead of one that had made several round trips.



Figure 45 – Generic amber (eBay)

Joyce participated in one of the earliest test marketing of green Seven-Up bottles in 1936 (see Chapter 4). He apparently began bottling in 1935.



Figure 47 – Generic amber (Josh Snyder)

Another 7-ounce generic amber example probably was used by the San Diego bottler. It had the Style A back label only used (as far as we can tell) by the San Diego franchise and only in 1936. On this bottle, however, the base had only an embossed “2” (Figure 47).

This may actually belong in the Yet Another Mystery section below – an older bottle with ACL added later. Our final example was a large bottle (1 pint 8 ounces) with a paper label carrying a 1939 copyright (Figure 48). This label, too, was used by the San Diego franchise. With the scarcity of surviving paper labels, this opens up a new realm of possibilities.

Were paper labeled, generic amber bottles used frequently by Seven-Up bottlers during the ca. 1935 to 1940 period? Was their use limited (or mostly limited) to franchises that used embossed amber bottles? Or was this just the opportunistic use of any available bottles during the final years of the Great depression?



Figure 46 – Generic base (eBay)



Figure 48 – Large amber (eBay)

The latter possibility is supported by our studies of various other soda bottlers and glass houses during this period (e.g., Lockhart et al. 2007; 2021). Typically, the Great Depression did not strike the soda bottling industry until about 1933 or 1934. At that point, it became visible in the archaeological record in two ways. First, the highly embossed Specialty bottles (Proprietary or Deco) began to be used longer and less new ones purchased. Highly worn bottles from 1934 to ca. 1937 became the norm. Second, generic

bottles with paper labels returned to popularity because ANY bottle the right size could be used and they showed much less wear than the Specialty bottles. So, more generic amber bottles with Seven-Up paper labels are likely to appear in collections.

And Yet Another Mystery

Two amber ACL Seven-Up bottles, both “standard” shaped, provide another delicious mystery. One had the typical 8-bubble Square Logo on the front with the Slenderizing Lady and the Style 1 back label – only used during 1936 (Figure 49). Our example had no photo of the base, but the heel was embossed “29S6” – a code that means the bottle was made in 1929 by the Streator, Illinois, factory of the American Bottle Co. A date code that late is VERY unusual. In fact, any date after a 23 code is unusual.



Figure 49 – 26S (eBay)

Even stranger, a similar amber ACL bottle with an 8-bubble front label (although the back label was worn away) had a base embossed “ABCo / 27 (or 14).” What makes these bottle so unusual is that they were mouth-blown by the American



Figure 50 – ABCo base (eBay)

Bottle Co. no later than ca.

1914 (Figure 50). The Streator plant used the “ABCo” logo from 1905 to ca. 1914, although date coded bottles were unusual later than 1909. Since American Bottle captured the Owens Automatic Machine license for the exclusive manufacture of soda and beer bottles, the firm began to move away from mouth-blown production, completely eliminating the older method ca. 1914. In an agreement with the other glass houses, American Bottle shipped its entire machine production to Mexico until 1916, when the Owens Bottle Co. obtained the majority stock, and began selling machine-made soda and beer bottles in the U.S. with heel marks of “16Sx” or “16Nx” – using that system until 1929 when the entire group became the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. (Lockhart et al. 2007, 2021).

So, our question is: Why did 1936 ACL markings appear on bottles made in 1929 and earlier than 1914? There are two possible explanations. First, the bottler (San Diego? Tom Joyce?) collected 7-oz. generic bottles and returned them to Owens-Illinois to have the ACL applied. This service certainly happened with milk bottles, although we have no previous evidence for the phenomenon occurring in soda or beer bottles. This year – 1936 – WAS the peak of the Great Depression’s effect on soda bottles, so bottlers were becoming more creative. We discovered similar bottles – with ABCo basemarks and ACL – used for Moxie (unpublished study).

Alternately, Glass houses were becoming more creative, too, including Owens-Illinois’s offering dairies the option to have ACL added to old bottles. Remember that these amber 7-oz. bottles were VERY common in the period from ca. 1910 to the early 1920s, phasing out more and more until the amber bottles virtually disappeared in the late 1920s or shortly thereafter. In addition, glass houses made and stored HUGE quantities of generic bottles so that they could just ship out the completed bottles when an order arrived. This strategy occasionally backfired, when trends changed, and a factory had these large quantities of completed bottles – and NO buyers.

These bottles could have been from such overruns. Someone at the American Bottle Co. erroneously may have thought that the generic 7-oz. amber bottles would make a comeback, but they did not. When Owens-Illinois fully took over the Streator plant in 1930, all those bottles were still there. An order for 7-oz. bottles in amber color during the Depression was a Godsend. Streator could have sent the older bottles through the ACL, selling them to Tom Joyce (or whomever) at a discounted price, and everyone came out a winner.

Amber Seven-Up Bottle Conclusions – A Test Marketing Scheme Gone Wrong

In 1936, Seven-Up went all out to make a change in its bottles. The spur for the timing was the invention of the Applied Color Label process by the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. and its application to milk and soda bottles beginning in 1934. After only two years of ACL, Seven-Up began its test marketing in 1936. But, the test markets were not only for ACL, they also included color and bottle shape – specifically the amber color in addition to the more traditional emerald green and stubby containers along with the typical crown-finished soda bottle shape.

Although the 1936 emerald green ACL bottles will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 4 (Green Seven-Up Bottles), they were pretty obviously accepted after a fairly brief test market in Ohio. The main test for the typically-shaped ACL soda bottles in amber, however, appeared to be in San Diego, California. There, three variations of back labels and at least two different neck styles (embossed “u7p” and “SEVEN UP”) were all tried on bottles dated 1936. Since these never reappeared, the amber bottles obviously failed the test.

The unusual test market, however, was for the stubby bottle shape, but, before we look at the pattern of the test markets, we need to address why the Seven-Up Co. selected this stubby shape and why it chose the amber color. Traditionally, light, bubbly lemon (or lemon-lime) drinks had been bottled in green bottles; only root beer and some orange drinks used amber containers (and beer, of course). The choice of color was likely associated with the stubby bottles. Traditionally, the stubby bottle shape had been used for malt beverages in the early 20th century as well as for some whiskeys and liqueurs – in amber color. There seems to be no intuitive reason for the transition from malt beverage use to that of a lemon drink – unless the style of container had more to do with early Seven-Up marketing. Initially, Grigg advertised Seven-Up as a hangover cure, a general analgesic, and a mixer. The stubby containers and amber color may have been intended to attract drinkers (amber was the traditional beer bottle color – and some whiskeys) and steer away from the typical soft drink bottle. Unless a document from one of the amber bottle users surfaces (unlikely), we probably will never know the actual reason.

Seven-Up tested stubby amber bottles in two formats, first with paper labels in 1936 then using ACL a year later. The paper-label test began with Houston, Texas, Johnson City and Knoxville (both Tennessee), and Shreveport, Louisiana – all in 1936. The Tennessee locations apparently dropped the test by the end of the year, but Houston had bottles date coded 1937, and Shreveport may have continued as well. Even though we could not find an example dated 1937, Munsey (2004) listed one. In 1937, however, Charleston, South Carolina, Dallas, Houston, and Harlingen, Texas, plus Nashville, Tennessee, operated their own test markets, although only Dallas continued into 1938, possibly even into 1939 (Munsey’s listing again). In all, bottlers in nine cities tested the market for paper-labeled, amber, stubby bottles for about two years before dropping that style forever.

But, Seven-Up was not finished with stubby, amber bottles. In 1937, Dallas and Nashville ran test markets for amber stubby bottles with ACL identification, both extending into 1938. Munsey (2004) included Knoxville and New Orleans, Louisiana, as well, but we could not find examples. Munsey also claimed Shreveport and Houston for ACL bottles in 1936, but the Houston example was probably a misreading of the date code for 1946 (see below), and we could not find an example from Shreveport. So, bottlers tested the ACL bottles at least during 1937 and 1938. Once again, the style obviously proved unpopular with the public; the bottles were dropped from production.

Also be aware that having a listing in a year does *not* mean that the Seven-Up amber bottles were sold *all* year by that bottler. A test may have run for as short a period as one month. A two-year listing could be almost as short. For example, Dallas may have only sold its ACL ambers during December of 1937 and January of 1938 – although the embossed date codes for two years *did* indicate the purchase of two sets of bottles. Of course, tests may have run longer. It seems obvious that *someone* at Seven-Up really wanted the stubby, amber bottles to be successful.

A final question is why Houston revived the amber bottles in 1942 and ran such a long test – until at least 1946 – and we have no answer at all for that one. As we noted in the paper-label section, the Howdy Co. agreed to the Federal Drug folks to stop using slogans, words, and sayings that the drink could not back up – like Takes the Ouch out of Grouch, slenderizes, alkalizes, dispels hangovers, etc. Therefore, the reasons we listed as possibilities for the bottles in the 1936-1938 period could no longer have been valid in 1942. As mentioned above, someone at Seven-Up must have *really* wanted the amber stubbies to succeed.

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