

Bottles on the Border:
The History and Bottles of the Soft Drink Industry
in El Paso, Texas, 1881-2000



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Chapter 8c

Chapter 8c Bottles of the Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Co.

Bottles and Artifacts

Numerous books, articles, and webpages have been written about the bottles, cans, and collectibles connected with Coca-Cola. As of this writing, the best general dating study for embossed, hobble-skirt Coke bottles that I know about is the one I developed in 2007 (Lockhart & Miller 2007, Part IV), and the best for ACL Coke bottles is McCoy (2009). See Table 3 near the end of the chapter for a hobble-skirt bottle chronology based on the recent database and studies by Bill Porter.

Straight-Sided Coca-Cola Bottles

When Magnolia first began bottling Coca-Cola in 1911, a standardized bottle format had not yet been instigated by the parent company. Each bottler was therefore authorized to provide his own design. These “straight sided” containers used the famous Coca-Cola script trademark, usually on both shoulders and the base (although flavor bottles were generally marked with “COCA-COLA” in block letters – see Chapter 8a). The earliest example I have found was mouth blown (Figure 8-64).

Method of Manufacture: Blown into mold

Color: Aqua

Size (in cm.): 18.5 (h); 5.9 (d)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed/Paper

Finish: Crown

Capacity: ca. 7 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical

Front Description

Shoulder: Embossed - Coca-Cola (script) / TRADE MARK REGISTERED

Body: Bare for paper label

Heel: Embossed - PROPERTY OF MAGNOLIA

Back Description

Shoulder: Same as front

Body: Bare

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

Base: Embossed - Coca-Cola script logo – including a double stamp of the logo

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: [1911-ca. 1914] Mouth-blown Coke bottles with no volume information may have been used as early as 1911 (although generic



Figure 8-64 – Mouth-blown, straight-sided Coke bottle from Magnolia

bottles with paper labels may have been used first). Since the Gould Act of 1913 required volume information to be present on bottles after September 1914, these bottles were almost certainly made prior to that date.

Collection(s): Rick Chaves collection; Robert Sproull collection; author’s collection.

Variations:

1. In contrast to the machine-made bottle (below), the mouth-blown bottle lacked volume information.
2. The only variation I have discovered measured 19.4 cm. in height and 5.9 cm. in diameter. The bottle had the same shoulder embossing as the mouth-blown one but had “CONTENTS 7 FL. OZ.” below “TRADE MARK REGISTERED” (Figure 8-65). The back heel was embossed “OP 37A” below “BOTTLING CO. EL PASO, TEX. – indicating that the bottle was made by the Graham Glass Co. at the Okmulgee plant, probably during 1914 or 1915 (Figure 8-66). Graham began using single-letter date codes in 1916.
3. It seems likely that there are two missing links. The first would have been the earliest Coca-Cola bottle, and this may have been generic – as noted above. The photo used on the business card is not distinct enough to show whether the bottles were generic or embossed. Of course, all early Coke bottles used paper labels.
4. The second “missing link” should have followed the bottles I have seen. Although Coca-Cola adopted the “hobble-skirt” bottle in



Figure 8-66 – OP 37A mark – Okmulgee, Oklahoma, plant, Graham Glass Co.

1916, none of the bottles were actually made until the following year, and all franchises had not implemented the new container until 1920. Even if Magnolia adopted the “hobble-skirt” bottle early (by 1917), there should still have been a 1916 or 1917 straight-sided bottle.

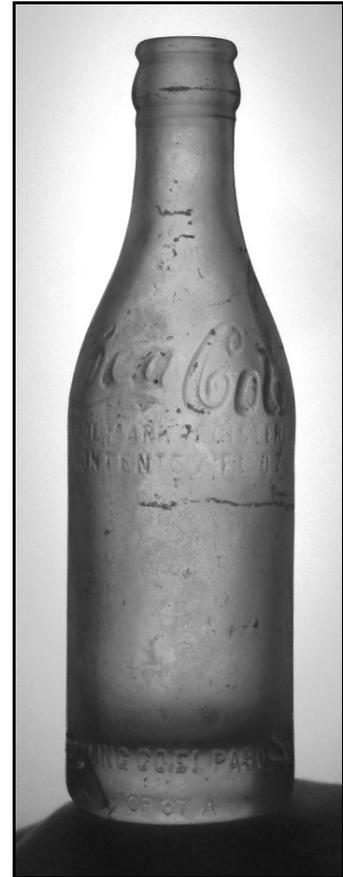


Figure 8-65 – Machine-made, straight-sided Coke bottle from Magnolia

Hobble-Skirt Coca-Cola Bottles

In 1915, Earl Dean designed a bottle that many claim was the first of the “specialty” or “proprietary” soda bottles that achieved great popularity in the ca. 1926-1938 period. Alex Samuelson of the Root Glass Co. patented the bottle on November 16, 1915 (Dean 2009:23-35; Munsey 1972:57). The original model was too wide in the center to be stable, so the design was modified before it was put into actual use (Figures 8-67 & 8-68).

Patented November 16, 1915

These bottles were embossed “PAT’D NOV. 16, 1915” in the shoulder labeling area (Figure 8-69). Kendall (1979:13) and Munsey (2002:22) suggest that the 1915 bottle was not actually used until 1917, and Bill Porter has confirmed that with empirical evidence (personal correspondence 6/11/2010). Kendall also points out that some companies did not use the 1915 bottle at all and only began using the hobble-skirt design with the 1923 bottle (although Magnolia certainly *did* use the 1915 bottle).

Use of the straight-sided Coke bottles could therefore extend as late as 1926. Although the parent company encouraged its subsidiaries to adopt the new packaging, it was not until 1920 that universal compliance was pretty well attained (Munsey 1972:57-59). Although minor changes have occurred, the distinctive Georgia Green bottles remained an identifier of Coca-Cola until plastic packaging necessitated a change in shape. These minor changes allow a relatively fine dating of Coca-Cola bottles after 1915.

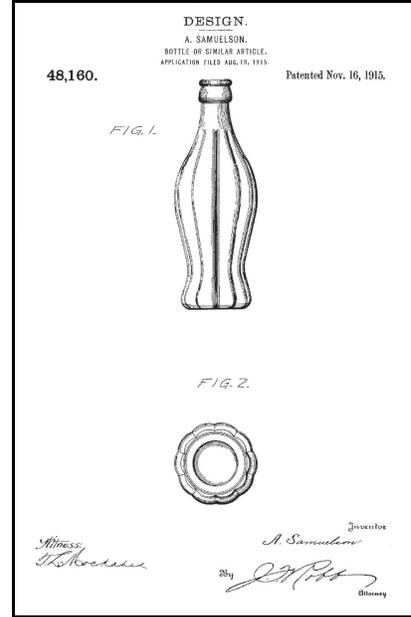


Figure 8-67 – Bottle drawing – 1916 patent document



Figure 8-68 – Copy of the prototype 1916 bottle – These were never used

Currently, we have no certain way to discern how early Magnolia adopted the hobble-skirt bottle. The date of hobble-skirt bottle adoption was probably dependent on the last year that Magnolia ordered the straight-sided bottles. There is virtually no question that Smith required his employees to get as much use out of bottles as possible. As noted above, straight-sided El Paso Coke bottles are rare. Since Magnolia bottled Cokes in those bottles from at least 1911 to 1917, that means the bottles were used until they wore out.

The date may also be predicated by how many paper labels Smith had on hand. His documented business practices almost certainly indicate that he made full use of all his resources. It would therefore be entirely in character for Smith to have delayed the adoption of the hobble-skirt bottles until the entire supply of embossed, straight-sided Coke



Figure 8-69 – Hobble-Skirt Coca-Cola bottle – BOTTLE PAT’D NOV. 15, 1916.

bottles were worn out *and* all or at least most of the paper labels had been applied to bottles – embossed or generic.

The earliest advertisement I have currently found with the drawing of a hobble-skirt bottles was from 1920 (*El Paso Herald* 6/9/1920). The ad advised: “Drink — Magnolia Soda Water Grape, Cherry, Lemon, Sarsaparilla, Creme Orangeade, Root Beer, Strawberry, etc. Magco Ginger Ale.” Then it added “And Best of All the Genuine Coca-Cola” (Figure 8-70).

Even better drawings appeared in the 1921 El Paso City Directory (Figure 8-71). Kendall (1979:13) placed the final manufacture of the 1915 hobble-skirt bottles at 1930, and, again, Porter’s empirical evidence supports that date, although Porter noted that only the Root Glass Co. continued to produce the 1915 bottles after 1927. All other glass factories ceased the manufacture of this earliest hobble-skirt style during 1927.

Method of Manufacture: Machine

Color: Georgia Green

Size (in cm.): 19.7 (h); 6.0 (d - at center)

Primary Labeling Style: Embossed

Finish: Crown

Capacity: 6 oz.

Overall Bottle Design: Cylindrical with “hobble-skirt” shape – bulge in center labeling area, narrowing below labeling area, flaring to base with vertical ribs above and below labeling area – both light aqua examples and the blue example I have seen all have cold mold marks (formerly known as “whittle marks.” The two aqua examples were especially crudely made with bubbles in the glass.

Front Description

Shoulder: Embossed vertical ribs

Body: Embossed - Coca-Cola (script) / TRADE MARK REGISTERED / BOTTLE PAT'D NOV. 16, 1915

Heel: Bare

Back Description

Back Description

Shoulder: See front

Body: Embossed - Coca-Cola (script) / TRADE MARK REGISTERED / MIN. CONTENTS 6-FL. OZS.

Heel: Bare

Base: Embossed - EL PASO (downward arch) / TEXAS (horizontal)



Figure 8-70 – Ad with 1915-patent Coke Bottles (*El Paso Herald* 6/9/1920)



Figure 8-71 – Ad with 1915-patent Coke Bottles (*El Paso City Directory* 1921)

Manufacturer: Unknown

Dating: (ca. 1918-ca. 1919 or later) Although there are (at least) four variations of the 1915-patent bottles, all are quite scarce. It is quite possible that Magnolia did not use the hobble-skirt bottles until 1919 (the only date-coded bottle I have found thus far), although the lack of other date codes suggests an earlier use (see discussion below). Since the Coca-Cola Co. did not require the use of city/state designations until May 1918, bottles with “EL PASO” basemarks were probably not made until after that point. The Coca-Cola main office requirement for manufacturer’s marks and date codes did not take effect until July 1919. Although there were exceptions (e.g., bottles with no city/state markings made long after 1918), these dates are probably reflected in the El Paso bottles. Thus, the bottles with no date codes or manufacturer’s logos were probably only made during 1918 and 1919. The next style (patented 1923) began use in 1926, and last of the 1915-patented bottles was made in 1930.

Collection(s): Arturo Senclair collection; El Paso Coliseum collection; author’s collection.

Variations:

1. See description above. In contrast with the light aqua and sky blue bottles described below, the Georgia Green bottles smaller “L” in “EL” (vs. an “L” of equal size – see next entry).
2. This variation is very light aqua, almost colorless. It is embossed “OP 5 S” on the heel and “EL PASO (arch) / 4 / TEXAS (horizontal in center)” on the base (Figure 8-72). The bottle was made at the Okmulgee plant of the Graham Glass Co., and the “S” is a date code for 1919 (19th letter of the alphabet).
3. This variation is also light aqua – almost colorless. However, there is no heelmark, and the base is embossed “EL PASO, (arch) / 1 / TEXAS. inverted arch.” Note that the “L” in “EL PASO” is the same size as the “E” – but the “ASO” is in smaller capitals than the “P” in “PASO.” Note also the punctuation (Figure 8-73).
4. The final variation that I have found is a sky blue color with no embossing on either heel. The base is very similar to Variation 3 (Figure 8-74), but there is no number in center, and it has larger “small” letters (e.g. the “o” in EL Paso is ca. 0.4 cm. tall in the light aqua variation 1 and is ca. 0.55 cm. tall in the blue variation). Bill Porter (personal communication 6/12/2010) noted that the period following “1915” on these bottles is somewhat distant from the last digit (5) compared to other 1915-patented bottles. He believes that these are early



Figure 8-72 – Base of 1915-patent bottle with horizontal “TEXAS” and “4”



Figure 8-73 – Base of 1915-patent bottle with “TEXAS” in inverted arch and “1”

bottles made by the Chattanooga Bottle & Glass Co. (during the ca. 1917-1919 period).¹ However, the base is very similar to the one in variation 3 above. 5. There are probably other variations of the 1915 bottle from El Paso. Bill Porter dates 1915 bottles with no date codes between 1917 and 1919. Assuming that is correct, all four of these bottles date within that range. If the first 1923 bottles were not made until 1926, that leaves a six-year gap with no known bottles – an unlikely time span.

Patented December 25, 1923

Although the original design patent was good for 14 years, thus expiring in 1929, Chapman J. Root applied for a new patent in 1922. Root received Design Patent No. 63,657 on December 25, 1923 – a bottle forever after known as the “Christmas” Coke bottle (Figure 8-75).



Figure 8-74 – Base of 1915-patent bottle with “TEXAS” in inverted arch and no number – blue bottle

Aside from the change of patent information embossed at the labeling area, the bottle was very similar to the earlier one. One rather noticeable difference was on the two ribs that separate the labeling areas. On the 1915-patent bottle, the ribs extended unbroken from the heel to the base of the neck. The new bottle, however, had distinct indentations on the separating ribs at the tops and bottoms of the labeling area (Figure 8-76).

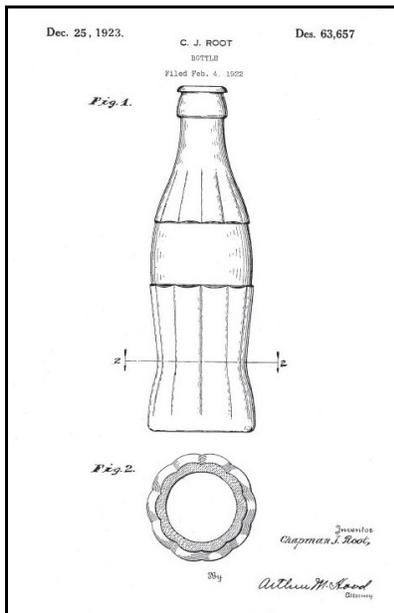


Figure 8-75 – Bottle drawing – 1923 patent document

Kendall (1979:13) suggested that 1926 was the first year that the “Christmas” Coke bottle was made and that the bottles continued to be produced until 1938. Data from Bill Porter’s database substantiates that date range, although bottles made during the last year (1938) are uncommon.

Unfortunately, my information about these bottles in El Paso is very



Figure 8-76 – Hobble-Skirt Coca-Cola bottle – BOTTLE PAT'D DEC. 25, 1923

¹ Although unpublished, Bill Porter has created a database of his vast collection of hobble-skirt Coca-Cola bottles that is an excellent research tool for the study of these highly variable containers.

limited, although we know that the bottles were in use by at least 1931 (possibly 1930) and continued to be used until at least 1937. My tiny sample consists of only three bottles, so I can make virtually no other inferences.

Variations:

1. What appears to be the earliest of the El Paso “Christmas” Coke bottles was produced in a mold made at the Evansville plant of the former Graham Glass Co. – after Owens-Illinois bought the company in 1930. Owens-Illinois always used up old molds, including those formerly used by glass houses that had become part of the huge Owens-Illinois conglomerate.

The heel of the bottle is embossed with the Owens-Illinois I-oval-and-diamond mark. To the right of the logo is “30E” – followed by “G899” about a quarter-turn of the bottle to the right. To the left of the Owens-Illinois logo is “31” embossed over a four-digit number that has been filled in. This embossing seems a bit strange at first glance. The “30E G899” is the old Graham code for the Evansville plant, the model number of the bottle, and a 1930 date code (Figure 8-77). Owens-Illinois used the Graham mold and added its logo and the 1931 date code, the year this bottle was made. This also *may* indicate that such bottles were made for the El Paso plant in 1930.

The base of the bottle was embossed “EL PASO (arch) / TEX. (horizontal) / 2” The “TEX.” was placed at the center of the base, almost enclosed within the arch formed by “EL PASO.” The “2” is very faint (see Figure 8-77). Even though the Owens-Illinois logo is present



Figure 8-78 – Base of later Owens-Illinois 1923-patent base



Figure 8-77 – Heelmarks on 1923-patent bottle with Owens-Illinois logo and Graham codes

on the bottle, it was made on a Graham machine and does not have the distinctive Owens machine scar on the base.

2. This was a second bottle, also made in 1931 and much more typical of the date and mark style found on “Christmas” Coke bottles. The codes were located on the “skirt” of the bottle at the constriction. The bottle was embossed “7 {Owens-Illinois logo} 31” – with “7” as the mold code and a date of 1931. The base was the same as example #1, absent the “2” – with a feathered Owens machine scar (Figure 8-78).

3. The skirt of another 1923-patent bottle was embossed “7 {Owens-Illinois logo} 37” on the heel. The “7” in “37” was embossed over a “6” – indicating that the bottle was made in 1937, but the mold had also been used in 1936. The base was the same as example #2.

Patented D-105529

The third and final patent was issued to Eugene Kelly of Toronto, Canada. Kelly received Design Patent No. 105,529 on August 3, 1937, and assigned it to the Coca-Cola Co. For the first time, the Coca-Cola Co. had actual control of the bottle that made it famous (Figure 8-79).



Figure 8-80 –
Hobble-Skirt Coca-
Cola bottle –
BOTTLE PAT. D-
105529

Although the bottle in the patent drawing was quite different, the actual container was very similar to the previous one. The only notable change, aside from the patent number replacing the patent date used previously, was that the rib separating the labeling areas became elliptic in form (Figure 8-80). Kendall (1978:7) stated that these bottles were actually used from 1938 to 1951. A Magnolia ad from 1940 (Figure 8-81) suggests that the bottles were adopted in El Paso at least that early (*Alamogordo News* 9/5/1940).

although it is *very* likely that the plant needed bottles several times per year by this point.

Second, Smith was certainly *not* tied to a single glass house. It is obvious that Magnolia used bottles from three glass houses – Chattanooga Glass Co., Laurens Glass Works, and Owens-Illinois Glass Co. – almost every year. It is equally clear that each of the glass houses involved used different basemarks on their bottles.

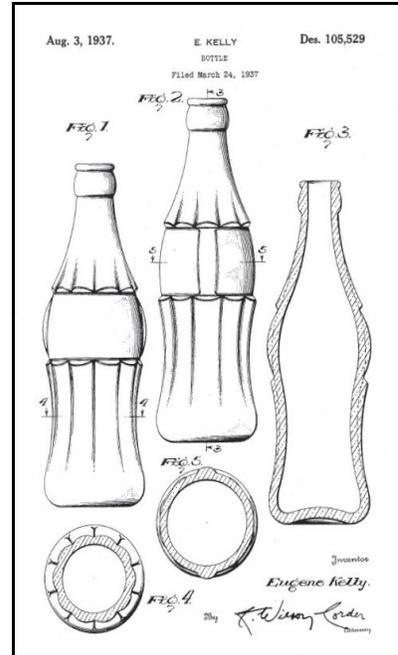


Figure 8-79 – Bottle drawing –
1937 (D-105529) patent
document

I have a larger sample of these bottles (although only 15) that indicates a specific set of patterns for basemarks based on manufacturer and date of production. Unfortunately, the earliest of the bottles in the sample was made in 1943. Table 1 provides data for several interesting observations. First, Magnolia had adopted the D-105529 bottles by at least 1941,

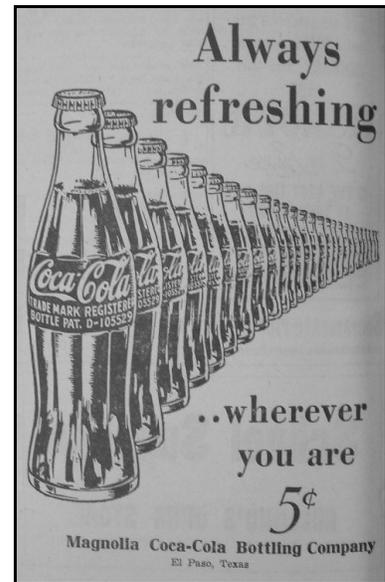


Figure 8-81 – D-105529 bottle
in 1940 ad (*Alamogordo
News* 9/5/1940)

Table 8-1 – Hobble-Skirt Bottles Embossed “PAT. D-105529”

Mark	Company	Date	Basemark*
28 © 41	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1941	“TEXAS” horizontal (at bottom)
36 © 43; 51 © 43	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1943	“TEXAS” horizontal (at bottom)
34 L 43	Laurens Glass Works	1943	“TEX.” horizontal (at bottom)
41 © 44	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1944	“TEXAS” horizontal (at bottom)
11 © 46	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1946	“TEXAS” horizontal (at bottom)
19 <0> 46	Owens-Illinois Glass Co.	1946	“TEX. / S” horizontal (at center)**
5 L 48	Laurens Glass Works	1948	“TEX.” horizontal (at bottom)
33 © 48; 38 © 48	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1948	“TEX” vertical (up from bottom)
61 © 50	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1950	“TEX” vertical (up from bottom)
10 L 50; 43 L 50	Laurens Glass Works	1950	“TEX.” horizontal (at bottom)
16 <0> 50	Owens-Illinois Glass Co.	1950	“TEX. / S” horizontal (at center)**
11 © 51	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1951	“TEX” vertical (up from bottom)

* All basemarks have “EL PASO” in an arch at the top. The variations concern both the placement and direction of the state designation.

** The “S” below the state designation on the Owens-Illinois bottle almost certainly identifies Plant No. 9 at Streator, Illinois.

Variations:

In this case, I will only discuss variations by manufacturer’s logo and basemarks.

1. With its Circle-C logo, the Chattanooga Glass Co. used two variations of basemarks during this period. The earliest, used by at least 1941, had an arched “EL PASO” at the top and a horizontal “TEXAS” at the bottom (Figure 8-82). The embossing is very bold and strong on the examples I have seen. This style of basal embossing probably continued until 1946.
2. By at least 1948, Chattanooga Glass had adopted a new basemark. The “EL PASO” was still arched at the top, but “TEX.” was now vertical, coming up from the bottom (Figure 8-83). Note also the skirt embossing for the bottle in Figure 8-80.



Figure 8-82 – D-patent base – Chattanooga Glass Co., 1941

According to D. Lyon, Chattanooga Glass began engraving bases by machine in 1946 (Bill Porter, personal communication, 6/20/2010), so that may have been the year of the design change also.



Figure 8-83 – D-patent base – Chattanooga Glass Co., 1948



Figure 8-84 – Skirt embossing from Laurens Glass Works, 1948



Figure 8-85 – D-patent base – Laurens Glass Works, 1948

3. When the position of the manufacturer’s marks migrated from the heels of the Coke bottles to the skirt position, in 1934, the Laurens Glass Works stopped using its traditional “LGW” logo and used a capital “L” – but only on Coke bottles. The “L” was noticeably larger than the surrounding numbers (Figure 8-84). The basemark on the D-105529 bottles included the arched “EL PASO” above “TEX.” centered at the bottom of the base (Figure 8-85). This remained through 1951.



Figure 8-87 – D-patent base – Owens-Illinois, Streator plant, 1950

4. During the entire D-105529 period, the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. continued to use its Oval-I and elongated diamond mark on the skirt (Figure 8-86). The base, however, used the typical arched “EL PASO” above “TEX.” – but the state designation was centered on the base (Figure 8-87). The glass house embossed an “S.” in very thin font, just below the state designation, beginning at least as early as 1946. These letter designations indicated the plant where the bottle was made – in this case, Plant No. 9, Streator, Illinois (Porter 1994:4).

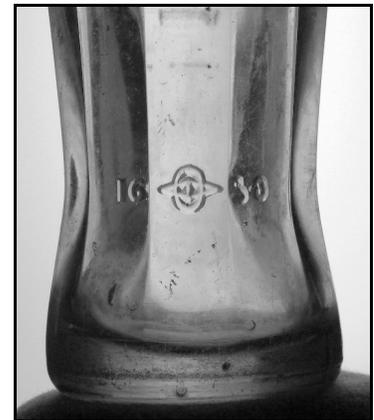


Figure 8-86 – Skirt embossing from Owens-Illinois, 1950

IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

On August 3, 1951, the D-105529 patent expired, and the Coca-Cola Co. required bottle makers to change the embossing from “BOTTLE PAT. D-105529” to “IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE.” The entire embossing on that side now read: “Coca-Cola (script) / TRADE MARK REGISTERED / IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE” (Figure 8-88) This was an entirely new message. The three earlier variations of the hobble-skirt bottle had included “TRADE MARK REGISTERED” below the script logo, but the third line had indicated how the *bottle* was protected. All three lines now described *only* the logo. The bottle had no specific legal protection (Lockhart & Porter 2010:58).

Although that status changed again on April 12, 1960, when Coca-Cola was able to secure a trade mark for the shape of the bottle, the container, itself, had lacked legal protection for almost nine years. When the trade mark was registered in 1960, however, there was no change made to the bottle.

Variations:

Table 2 shows the variations I have cataloged thus far. As above, I will discuss these by both manufacturer’s logo and basemarks. Along with the change to “IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE,” Coca-Cola added two other requirements. First, manufacturer’s marks migrated to the bases of the bottles. Second, the date code shifted from being the last two digits (e.g., “11 © 51”) to the first two digits (e.g., “52-13”) on the skirt. By 1953, the basemarks also changed from individual formats – variations used by different glass houses – to a standardized format, with “EL PASO” in an arch at the top; “TEX.” (with or without a period) in an inverted arch at the bottom, and two arched line spacers in between. These marks used *much* smaller letters, and the manufacturer’s marks occupied the center of each base.

1. To deal with the sudden change mandated by Coca-Cola and still use up the old molds, the glass houses engraved their logos on the baseplates for the first runs of the new bottles. The Chattanooga Glass Co. added the Circle-C to its baseplate just above the vertical “TEX.” (Figure 8-89). I have not discovered how long the altered baseplates were used, but I suspect it was only during the first year of the change. The 1952 bottle was altered, but, by 1954 (the next example I have seen), the line spacer baseplates were in use.



Figure 8-88 –
Hobble-Skirt Coca-Cola bottle – IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE



Figure 8-99 – IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE transitional base – Chattanooga Glass Co.

2. A 1952 Laurens Glass Works bottle was similarly altered, using its older baseplate with the addition of a large “L” in the center (Figure 8-90). It otherwise fit the same characteristics of all “IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE” bottles. At that point, Magnolia may have stopped buying bottles from Laurens. This is the last example I have found from that firm.

3. In 1952, Magnolia shifted its purchases to Owens-Illinois, and that may have continued until 1957 – although it is possible that I have just not found bottles made by others during that period. A 1957 Owens-Illinois bottle has the I, O, and elongated diamond mark in the center of the line spacer base format (Figure 8-91). A “W” is embossed above the logo, indicating a manufacture at Plant No. 15, Waco, Texas. The state designation “TEX.” included a period.



Figure 8-90 – IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE transitional base – Laurens Glass Works



Figure 8-91 – IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE base with line spacers – Owens-Illinois (old logo)



Figure 8-92 – IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE base with line spacers – Owens-Illinois (new logo)



Figure 8-93 – IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE base with line spacers – Chattanooga Glass, Chattanooga plant

4. In 1954, Owens-Illinois formally adopted a new, simplified logo – and “I” within an “O” – although old marks continued to be used sporadically until at least 1960 (Figure 8-92). Again, I have not discovered when the shift occurred with El Paso Coke bottles, but the new logo was in place by the time Magnolia ordered its 1956 bottles. The only difference with the 1956 bottle is the logo change; it was still made at Waco. Note that both logos were being used during the 1956-1957 period.

5. By 1954, Magnolia was once again buying bottles from the Chattanooga



Figure 8-94 – IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE base with line spacers – Chattanooga Glass, Corsicana plant

Glass Co. Both 1954 and 1957 bases had the line spacer baseplate and the Circle-C logo in the center (Figure 8-93). Unlike the Owens-Illinois marks, Chattanooga did *not* place a period after the “TEX” abbreviation.

6. The final variation on these bases appeared in 1958. This was the typical Chattanooga baseplate, except that the Circle-C was preceded by a “2” (Figure 8-94) This reflects the plant at Corsicana, Texas, opened in 1958.

Table 8-2 – Hobble-Skirt Bottles Embossed “IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE”

Mark	Company	Date	Basemark*
52-13	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1952	© / “TEX” vertical (up from bottom)
52-20; 52-37	Laurens Glass Works	1952	L / “TEX.” horizontal (at bottom)
53-02	Owens-Illinois Glass Co.	1953	W / <0> / “TEX.” (line spacers)**
54-37	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1954	© / “TEX” (line spacers)**
56-05	Owens-Illinois Glass Co.	1956	W / (I) / “TEX.” (line spacers)**
57-05	Owens-Illinois Glass Co.	1957	W / (I) / “TEX.” (line spacers)**
57-44	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1957	© / “TEX” (line spacers)**
58-04	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1958	© / “TEX” (line spacers)**
58-01; 58-04†	Chattanooga Glass Co.	1958	2© / “TEX” (line spacers)**
59-02†	Owens-Illinois Glass Co.	1959	W (I) / “TEX.” (line spacers)**

* All basemarks have “EL PASO” in an arch at the top. The variations concern both the placement and direction of the state designation.

** The term “line spacers” indicates that the stat designation is in the form of an inverted arch with curved line spacers extending upward on both sides of the state designation to meet the city embossing above.

† “CONTENTS 6 ½ FL. OZS.” – all older bottles are embossed “MIN. CONTENTS 6 FL. OZS.”

Volume Change

Up to this point, the volume information on hobble-skirt Coke bottles was embossed as “MIN. CONTENTS 6 FL. OZS.” below “TRADE MARK REGISTERED” on the side opposite the one with patent information. In 1957, apparently in response to a new mandate from the State of New York, the Coca-Cola Co. changed the embossing to read “CONTENTS 6½ FL. OZS.” Bottles with the old designation continued to be made into 1958; both variations appeared during that year.

Embossed bottles with the “6½ FL. OZS.” designation continued to be manufactured until 1967. However, the new Applied Color Lettering (ACL) bottles were first produced in 1955 and increasingly dominated the market. The embossed bottles continued in use at El Paso until at least 1958, although my sample of post-1958 Coca-Cola bottles is very limited.

Variations:

1. My only example is, of course, embossed “IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE” on the side opposite the “CONTENTS 6½ FL. OZS.” information. The skirt is embossed “58-01” – indicating a manufacture in 1958. The base is embossed “EL PASO (arch) / 2 © (horizontal) / TEX. (inverted arch)” with line spacers between the top and bottom designations. The letters in this individual bottle are much larger than the typical line spacer letter size.

Line space bottles from El Paso come with three different sizes of letters – small, medium, and large (Figure 8-95). The first two of these appear to vary by manufacturer, but the later bottles all tend toward the smaller letters. The size may have become standardized at some point, although I have no documentary evidence of that.



Figure 8-95 – Comparison of three letter sizes on line spacer bases

ACL Transition Bottle

When Coca-Cola first introduced ACL labels in 1955, it only used the white lettering for the “Coca-Cola” logo on both sides of the bottle. The rest of the labeling area was embossed with the typical “IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE” wording. In 1958, “Coke / TRADE MARK ®” was applied in white ACL to the necks of some bottles, and that became universal in 1961, the last year that the transition bottles were made (McCoy 2009:44-47).

Bill Porter has one of these bottles – used in El Paso – in his collection. The bottle has the typical line-spacer basemark (with no period after “TEX” and an “L” in the center. The bottle was made by the Laurens Glass Works, and is embossed “60-38” on the skirt. The “60” (1960) date code is stamped over “59” – indicating that the mold was used in 1959. Since the embossed bottle was still used until at least 1958, these may only have been ordered in El Paso during the ca. 1959-1961 period.

Random Baseplate Bottles

Porter (1996:8) discussed the Random Baseplate Bottles issued by Coca-Cola after 1965. From that point on, the city/state designations on the bases of all hobble-skirt bottles bear no relationship to the plant where the bottles were originally filled. As the term suggests, the locations are randomly distributed among all franchises.

Another way to recognize a Random Baseplate Bottle is by an addition to the basemark. A typical mark from 1965 or later reads “EL PASO (arch) / BOTTLE TRADE MARK ® (in a circle around the manufacturer’s mark) / TEX (inverted arch with line spacers connecting TEX to EL PASO)” (Figure 8-96). The words “BOTTLE TRADE MARK” refer to the 1960 trademarking of the bottle discussed in the section on the “IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE” variation above (Porter [2009]:[2]).



Figure 8-96 – Original Random Baseplate format – central embossing refers to the *bottle* trademark

Later ACL Bottles

According to McCoy (2009:48-86), the ACL bottles went through five major changes after the transition bottle. The first, used from 1961 to 1963, is notable because the side embossing was replaced by “TRADE MARK ®” on one side and “CONTENTS 6½ FL. OZS.” on the other – both in small white ACL. Both sides are marked with the “Coca-Cola” script logo (McCoy 2009:48-51). I have not seen El Paso examples of these, but most bottles of this type lacked any city/state basal embossing.

From 1963 to 1965, the neck mark disappeared. “Coca-Cola / TRADE MARK ® 6 ½ FL. OZ.” was in the central panel on one side, with “Coke / TRADE MARK ®” on the other. The city/state designation had returned to the base, but I have not seen an El Paso example (McCoy 2009:52-55). It is likely, however, that Magnolia ordered bottles during that period.

The 1965-1968 bottle was almost identical except that volume was included on both front and back and the word “TRADE” was above the word “MARK” – also on both sides. By this point, Coca-Cola had entered the Random Baseplate period, so the city/state designation was irrelevant (McCoy 2009:56-59). However, these exist with the El Paso basemarks.

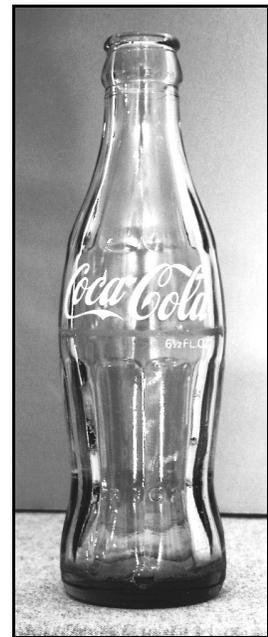


Figure 8-97 – ACL hobble-skirt bottle with case wear

From 1968 to the 1990s, the side markings remain similar but neck markings may include “return / for / deposit,” “money / back / bottle,” and/or “return for refund” – all in white, lower-case letters (McCoy 2009:60-68). At least some El Paso bottles lack any neck ACL. Since these bottles tended to rub together in the case, parts of the ACL tended to wear off (Figure 8-97).

Table 8-3 – Dates of Manufacture of Hobble-Skirt Bottle Characteristics

Characteristic	Dates
PAT'D NOV. 16, 1915	1917-1930
Manufacturer's mark and date code on heel	1919 (1917) -1934
PAT'D DEC. 25, 1923	1928-1938
Manufacturer's mark moved from heel to skirt	1932?-1951
Two numbers to right of logo – date code	1932?-1951
PAT. D-105523	1938-1951
IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE	1951-1967 (embossed bottles)
MIN. CONTENTS 6 FL. OZS.	1917-1958
CONTENTS 6 ½ FL. OZS	1957-end of 6½ oz.
Manufacturer's mark moved to base	1952-present
Two numbers to left of dash – date code	1952-present
Line spacers on base embossing	1952-present
Applied Color Lettering	1955-present
BOTTLE TRADE MARK ® (base)	1962 (1964 on 6½ oz.)-?

Larger Sizes

In 1955, Coca-Cola expanded the size constraints of its products to 10-, 12-, 16-, and 26-ounce bottles. Magnolia introduced at least the 10-ounce size in 1955, although Smith was reluctant to break with the traditional smaller packaging (Munsey 1972:60; EPT 6/28/1977 G13:1). Nor was Smith alone in his resistance. Many bottlers were concerned with the major investment required for equipment to handle the larger bottles. Ed Forio, for example, noted that “bringing out another bottle was like being unfaithful to your wife” (Pendergrast 1993:263).

In 1959, the local plant added the twelve-ounce size., although Magnolia only advertised 6½-, 10- and 16-ounce sizes by 1964 – still in embossed bottles (Figure 8-98). I have found a



Figure 8-98 – Magnolia ad for 6½-, 10- and 16-ounce sizes (El Paso City Directory, 1964)



Figure 8-99 – 12-ounce ACL bottle



Figure 8-100 – 26-ounce ACL bottle

12-ounce bottle embossed with the El Paso designation and a 1970 date code (Figure 8-99). Because of the Random Baseplate, the El Paso name is completely irrelevant and does not even mean that the El Paso plant even carried bottles of this size. I also have a 26-ounce bottle similarly marked (Figure 8-100).

An outside push was required before management would install the required machinery for some of the larger sizes. The push came from the Navarro brothers who introduced Three V Cola and Vess flavors in 16-ounce bottles in 1962. Three V followed a trend set by the Double Cola Co. who pioneered the idea by opening a 16-ounce container to national use in 1957. The Nehi Co. adopted the new size in 1959 (Elling 2002:21). The sixteen-ounce container “sold like crazy.” Thomas C. Lucky advocated the larger packaging and eventually convinced the plant manager to join him in a covert visit to a local Circle K convenience store where the two men observed the high-volume sales of Vess and 3V in sixteen-ounce sizes. Shortly afterward, Magnolia introduced Coca-Cola’s sixteen-ounce container (Lucky interview).

However, the new packaging was not without its problems. Aside from the introduction of new machinery to bottle the product, the new containers were heavy. Even some of the experienced, long-term route salesmen developed back trouble. Although the switch to sixteen-ounce bottles returned Magnolia’s sales volume to its original level, it caused a great deal of extra work (Lucky interview).

Other Flavors

The parent company again broke tradition in 1960 with the introduction of Fanta (Figure 8-101) and Sprite (Figure 8-102), followed by the diet drink, Tab (for a good description about how Tab was developed, see Diehl & Schier 2000). In 1966 Fresca (Figure 8-103) was added to the line. By this time, franchise concurrence was almost instantaneous with parent company development, so Magnolia added the new products to their line during the early 1960s. Mr. Pibb, a competitor to Dr Pepper, was initiated in 1972, and a thirty-two ounce returnable bottle was added to the product line in 1973 (Munsey 1972:60). Magnolia added Dr. Pepper and the additional flavors of Big Red, Lipton Tea, and Dad's Root Beer with the purchase of the Dr. Pepper Bottling Co. of El Paso in May 1980 (EPT 5/1/1980 B1:1 – also see Figure 8-63).

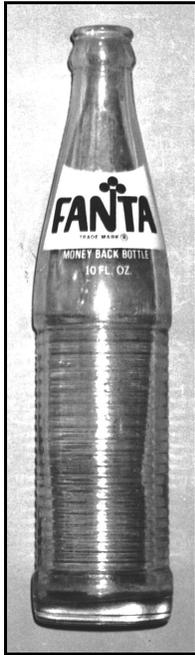


Figure 8-101 –
Fanta bottle



Figure 8-102 – Ad for Sprite
(*Alamogordo News*
12/31/1973)



Figure 8-103 –
Fresca bottle

More Recent Coca-Cola Bottles

Although of little use to current archaeologists, three recent issues of Coca-Cola bottles may be helpful in the future. In 1971, Owens-Illinois reproduced 5,000 replicas of the original hobble-skirt bottle designed by the Root Glass Co. These are identical to the prototype bottle except for an embossment of 1915-1965 on the base (Hopson 2004;7). In 1999, the Coca-Cola Co. commissioned an even larger number of the reproduction of the original design. These are clearly embossed “© 1999” on the bases (see Figure 8-68).

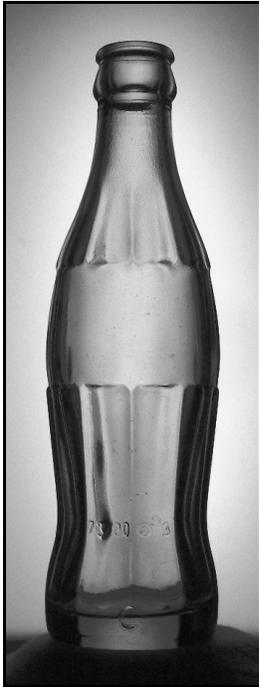


Figure 8-104 – 1973 bottle with ACL missing; note lack of ribs at center labeling area

Very little has appeared in the literature about non-returnable bottles. According to Dean (2010:149), Coca-Cola produced straight-sided, non-returnable glass bottles in 1961 and test marketed re-sealable plastic contour bottles in 1970. The plastic bottles entered the regular market in 1975. In 1992, however, Coke introduced an eight-ounce, non-returnable, green-glass contour bottle, and other types followed. The ribs separating the front and back labeling areas were removed to allow the insertion of refund instructions and bar codes. An unusual bottle with an El Paso (random) base somehow missed the ACL but clearly shows the lack of ribs separating the labeling areas (Figure 8-104).



Figure 8-105 – Red label Coke bottle

Another variation was used during the 1972-1990s period. These are distinctive with “Coca-Cola” in white ACL on a white-outlined, red rectangular background (Figure 8-105). The opposite side is similar but the word is “Coke.” Both had “TRADE MARK” in white ACL below the rectangle. The city/state designation only appears on some 16-ounce bottles (McCoy 2009:69-76). However, the typical, white-letter ACL bottles remained on the market as well.

Coca-Cola marketed a new formula on April 23, 1985, that caused a near rebellion. Response from consumers was so negative that the company re-introduced the old formula in new bottles in July of the same year. These bottles differed with the inclusion of the word “CLASSIC” below the logo and under the word “Coke” on the neck. Again, the basal designations are random and irrelevant (McCoy 2009:14-16, 69-86).

For Christmas, in 1988 and 1989, Coca-Cola brought back reproductions of the 1923-style bottle. Both the front and back labeling areas are identical with the older bottles. The most notable difference between these and the older 1923-patent bottles is smaller-letter city/state embossing on the base with line spacers between the city and the state. These also include the two-letter state abbreviations with no punctuation. Some of the 1989 bottles are embossed “EL PASO / TX” on the base, but there were no El Paso designations made in 1988 (McCoy 2009:32-35).

The skirts of these repro bottles are embossed with a series of two or three numbers, followed by a manufacturer’s mark. The 1988 bottles only have an “8” in the first position. Bottles made by U.S. glass houses used a two-digit number (89) in 1989, but those made in

Mexico still used a single-digit system (9), although it was also in the first position (i.e., on the far left of the code series). The 1988 bottles are embossed “NO REFILL” on one heel, “PLEASE RECYCLE” on the other, and they are lighter than the original “Christmas” Coke bottles (McCoy 2009:32-33).

The final interesting phenomenon is the intentional issue of “collectable” bottles by Coca-Cola and other major soft drink bottlers. These are generally polychrome ACL bottles commemorating virtually anything including Christmas, anniversaries of Coca-Cola bottlers, airlines, businesses, and especially sporting events. The list is virtually endless. Coca-Cola apparently began the trend in 1983 with the release of 20 commemorative bottles, followed by 34 in 1984. The numbers have since multiplied (cf. Mix 2004:10 or Matthews 2004b:11).

Siphon Bottles

At some point, probably fairly soon after the adoption of Coca-Cola, Magnolia began selling siphon bottles filled with sparkling water (seltzer). These were made of colorless glass with twelve flat panels. The front of the bottle was etched “PROPERTY OF / COCA-COLA (both slight arches) / BOTTLING CO / EL PASO, TEX (both horizontal).” This bottle was probably made during the 1911-1915 period when the El Paso plant was listed under two different names (Magnolia and Coca-Cola). The words “COCA-COLA” are etched in block letters – rather than the script trademark (Figure 8-106). Unfortunately, I have only seen these at auction on eBay, so I have found no details about manufacturers.



Figure 8-106 – Magnolia Coca-Cola siphon bottle (eBay)

Other Artifacts

The variety of additional promotional objects offered by the Coca-Cola Co. is endless. This includes trays, pens, pencils, calendars, toys, and a huge number of other items. While Magnolia was less prolific in its extras, the local firm created various items through the years

Openers

Magnolia probably offered a series of openers over the years, but most probably only had the generic Coca-Cola name on them. One type of opener was made from a thick wire that was flattened on one end to create a letter opener/bottle opener and was bent into an oval on the other end to form a different type of bottle opener. The center section was flattened and embossed “MAGNOLIA Coca-Cola (script) BOTTLING CO. / EL PASO, TEXAS” on one side and “DRINK Coca-Cola (script) IN STERILIZED / BOTTLES” on the other (Figure 8-107). Magnolia emphasized the “sterilized bottles” aspect from the early teens to at least the mid-1920s.

Boxes, Cases, and Shells

The Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Co. existed through several interesting transition periods. The bottle-related transitions have been discussed above and in Chapter 8a, but there was also a major transition period in the wooden boxes or crates used to transport the bottles from one location to another.

The development of cases, of course, parallels the development of bottles. The older, Hutchinson-style bottles were transported in cases made to hold the bottles with the finishes down to keep the leather or rubber gaskets wet and provide a good seal. The bases of the bottles were therefore at the top and visible to easy inspection.



Figure 8-107 – Magnolia bottle opener (eBay)

When the crown cap was invented, the need for the inverted carrying style was eliminated, and the bottles were packed in high-sided wooden boxes with no separation between the bottles. These were replaced during the early teens with “half-depth” cases with wooden separations between the bottles. These separators created a wooden section for each bottle and prevented the previous damage to heels and sides caused by the lack of padding in the earlier cases. These came to be called “shells” in the bottling industry.

Figure 8-45 shows three different types of cases in use at the Myrtle St. Coca-Cola plant. On the right side of the photo are two stacks of the older, full-sided cases. Stacked on top of those and in the space behind them are the “half-depth” shells. As the older cases wore out, they were discarded.

A final type of case, shown stacked against the left wall of the photo in Figure 8-45 was only used for railway transport. These were entirely enclosed and had a hasp for a lock that connected the hinged lid with the front of the box. Although cases were entirely exposed on trucks (see Figure 8-49), thereby open to theft, the probability of pilfering was much higher during rail transport. As the quality of roads and trucks improved during the 1930s and 1940s, Magnolia, like most soda bottlers, phased out rail delivery.

Wooden Cooler

An eBay auction featured a very unusual wooden chest type cooler. Although the seller believed it was used during the depression to transport cokes from the bottler to the distributor, it was more likely the precursor of the aluminum cooler that was later developed. The box is 26" wide, 13" high, and 13 3/4" deep. The paint is a mustard yellow with red letters. The front of the chest is marked "Drink Coca-Cola" with "When empty return to Coca-Cola" stenciled on the back. The bottom is stenciled in black "Coca-Cola Bottling Co, 321 Myrtle Ave., El Paso, Texas" (Figure 8-108) The inside is lined with tin for insulation, and an opener is mounted on the top right corner.



Figure 8-108 – Wooden Coca-Cola cooler (eBay)