

Chapter 5

El Paso Prescription Bottles

20th Century



Bill Lockhart
2015

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Our look at El Paso prescription bottles continues with those used during the 20th century. Two major changes in embossing occurred early: volume markings and graduations. Volume embossing appeared in several formats, including the ounce symbol (Figure 5-1) followed or preceded by a number, usually in lower-case Roman numerals; Arabic numerals by themselves; or numerals in a circle, often with ornamentation. Graduations were tic marks along the edges or quarter-panels of one side – generally ounces on the left and cubic centimeters on the right.



Figure 5-1 – Ounce symbol

As the century progressed, personalized embossing phased out, until it was eliminated entirely by 1924. As machine-made bottles became more popular, they also became generic, with the store only identified by a paper label. The vast majority of the bottles in this section had paper labels. The ones I have found only make up a tiny fraction of all the labeled bottles that certainly existed in El Paso during this 100-year span.

El Paso Drug Stores and Their Bottles

This section is mostly comprised of bottles I have collected during the last two decades, although I have also added drugs store labels I have found from the period. In addition, one bottle came from the El Paso Coliseum Collection (now housed at the Centennial Museum, University of Texas at El Paso) and one measuring glass was found on eBay. As has been my practice with the rest of this book, this section is presented in alphabetical order.

Buchofsky's Drug Store (1914-1964)

Lee M. Butchofsky was first listed as “druggist” in 1906 with no place of business mentioned. However, he was the proprietor of the El Paso Pharmacy at 913 E. Second St. by

1907, although the 1908 city directory gave the address as 801 E Second St. (Figure 5-2).¹ In 1911, the pharmacy moved to 401 S. Ochoa, apparently to be closer to Butchofsky’s home at 407 Ochoa. He moved the store again in 1914 to 3006 Alameda and renamed the business Butchofsky’s Drug Store. A decade later (1924) he relocated the business down the street at 3016-18 Alameda and remained there for the rest of his life (EPCD 1908-1939).

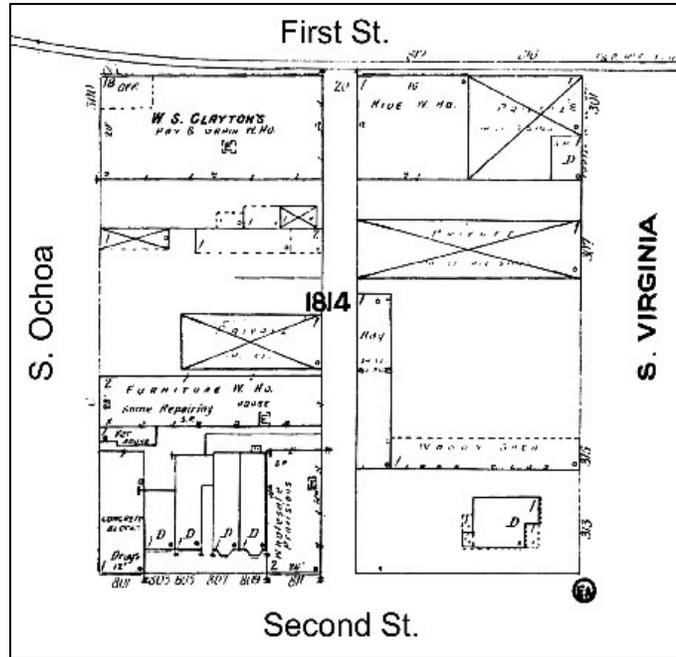


Figure 5-2 – El Paso Pharmacy location (Sanborn, 1908)

Although the manufacturing censuses are typically destroyed after five years, the government archives retained the ones for drug stores from 1929 – giving us a cameo look at the Butchofsky Drug Store (its name in the census). The owner’s name was L.M. Butchofsky, and the business address was 3016 Alameda Ave. – but he noted that there were two stores.² He had six employees most of the year and paid them a total of \$4,838.05 annually. Butchofsky’s expenses aside from salaries was \$2,516.08, and he had \$14,150 worth of merchandise in stock. Butchofsky died in early 1939, and his wife, Mary, ran the store briefly before enlisting Hidalgo Carillo as manager. Carillo advertised “prescription specialists and cut rate drugs” (EPCD 1939).

According to R.D. Butchofsky, Lee’s grandson, the elder Butchofsky sold the drug store in 1939, although the new owner retained the name (Butchofsky interview). That would mean Butchofsky sold out shortly before his death. The new owner was L.M. Rodarte, and he hired Raul Ruiz de Esparza as manager of the store. Two years later (1942), Rodarte replaced Ruiz de

¹ The address, however, is listed at 801 E Second St. the following two years, and a drug store built of concrete blocks, occupied that address on the 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. The 1905 map showed a grocery store at 913 E. Second. There is no way to be certain whether the pharmacy moved in 1908 or if the address was incorrect in the city directory in 1907.

² The second store may have been the older unit on Second St.

Esparza with Mrs. Esther D. Gonzalez and changed the name to Butchofsky's Pharmacy. From 1961, only Mrs. Gonzalez was listed in the city directory, and it appeared the last time in 1964. It was not listed in the February 1965 El Paso Telephone Directory (EPCD 1939-1964; Lockhart & Olszewski 1995).³

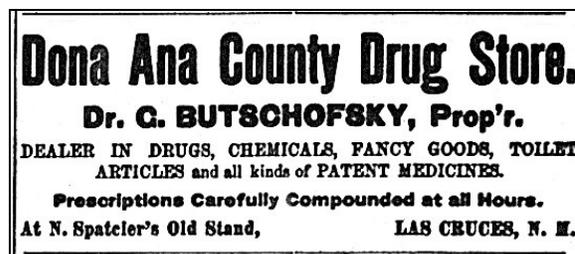


Figure 5-3 – Doña Ana County Drug Store ad (*Rio Grande Republican* 11/3/1883)

Although the names were spelled slightly differently, a Dr. G. Butchofsky advertised himself as the “Prop’r.” of the Doña Ana County Drug Store “At N. Spateler’s Old Stand,” Las Cruces, New Mexico. Butchofsky stated that he was a “Dealer in Drugs, Chemicals, Fancy Goods, Toilet Articles and all kinds of Patent Medicines. Prescriptions Carefully Compounded at all hours” (*Rio Grande Republican* 11/3/1883 – Figure 5-3). Butchofsky remained in business until at least 1884. It is possible that Butchofsky was the father of Butchofsky, and the latter Americanized the name – leaving out the first “s.”

Containers and Marks

I have only seen a single example of a Butchofsky bottle. The bottle was colorless, mouth blown, and had a reinforced prescription finish. Rectangular in shape with chamfered corners on one face, the bottle measured 14.9 cm. tall, 5.3 cm. wide, and 3.1 cm. thick. The base had no manufacturer’s mark. The front was embossed “BUTCHOFSKY'S DRUG STORE / 3006 Alameda Avenue / Phone 485 EAST EL PASO, TEXAS” with “iv” on the scalloped shoulder. The chamfered corners were embossed with graduations – ounces on the left side, cubic centimeters on the right (Figure 5-4).

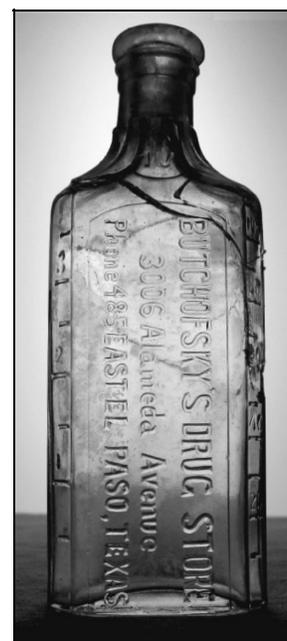


Figure 5-4 – Butchofsky Drug Store bottle (El Paso Coliseum collection)

³ The information left by the younger Butchofsky does not quite fit with the record left by the city directory, a common occurrence when dealing with family traditions. Since Mary was listed as Butchofsky’s widow in 1939, as well as owner of the drug store, she is probably the one who sold it.

The bottle style was called the Wizard Oval (Figure 5-5). These were first advertised by the Western Bottle Mfg. Co. in 1913 (N.A.R.D. 1913:987). By 1920, the bottle appeared in the Illinois Glass Co. catalog (Illinois Glass Co. 1920:19). The bottle was thus made prior to 1920. The lack of the Diamond-I manufacturer's mark indicates that the bottle was made by Western.

Butchofsky moved the store to 3006 Alameda Ave. in 1914 and changed the name to Butchofsky's Drug Store. He moved farther up the block a decade later (1924), setting a date range for the bottle of 1914-1920. However, bottles embossed with the drug store names were phased out in favor of generic bottles with paper labels by 1924. It is likely that Butchofsky purchased embossed bottles to celebrate the renaming, so they were likely used from 1914, until the supply was exhausted – probably a period of no more than 2-3 years.

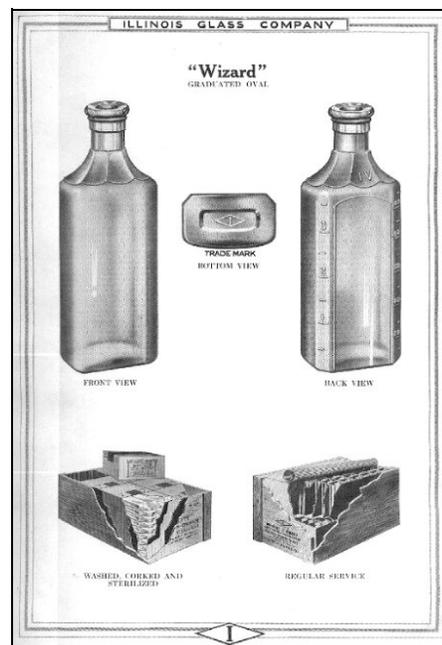


Figure 5-5 – Wizard Oval (Illinois Glass Co. 1920:19)

Economical Drug Co. (1915-1930)

Although the Economical Drug Co. opened on February 2, 1914, the business was first listed in the 1915 El Paso city directory at 305 S. Stanton, advertising drugs and toilet articles. The principals of the business were Luis Rubio, Domitilio Rodarte, and R.W. Knoblauch. Knoblauch was missing from the next list (1916), but, by 1918, Knoblauch had his own place – Knoblauch Drug Store – at 206 Mills (see Chapter 6 – drug store photographs). Rodarte, too, was gone by the 1920 listing, and he had also opened his own business, the Rodarte Drug Store at 401 S. Stanton, by the 1921 listing. In 1925, F.A. Ruiz had acquired the business, advertising “prescriptions a specialty.” Anita A. Ruiz (probably a daughter of F.A.) was the manager in 1929. Anita may have only operated the store long enough to sell it. The business was last listed in 1930, still at its original location (EPCD 1915-1930).

The Census of Distribution gives us a cameo view of the store in 1929. Located at 305 S. Stanton St., the business was a partnership consisting of Mrs. R.C. Ruiz, Miss A.A. Ruiz, and

Joseph A. Ruiz. The store had opened on February 2, 1914, and the present ownership had begun on February 2, 1924. This was a one-woman store, and she was only paid \$260 per year. The business only carried \$6,700 worth of stock and had a total sale for the year of \$6,654. Miss Anita A. Ruiz signed the form (Figure 5-6).



Figure 5-6 – Anita Ruiz signature (Census of Distribution 1929)

Containers and Marks

Despite the relatively short life of the Economical Drug Co., at least three bottles have survived, all from the Luis Rubio period, 1915-1925. Probably the earliest was a Wizard Oval, similar to the one described above (Figure 5-7). The bottle was mouth blown, with scalloped shoulders – embossed “iii” – and an Illinois Glass Co. style reinforced finish (Figure 5-8). The flat face of the bottle was embossed “Economical Drug Co. (cursive) / L. RUBIO, MANAGER (in underlining scroll sweeping back from “Co.”) / EL PASO, TEX.” with ounce graduations on the left quarter panel and cubic centimeters on the right (Figure 5-9).

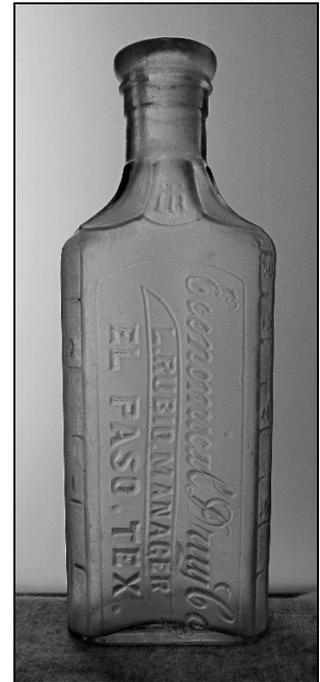


Figure 5-7 – Economical Drug – Wizard Oval

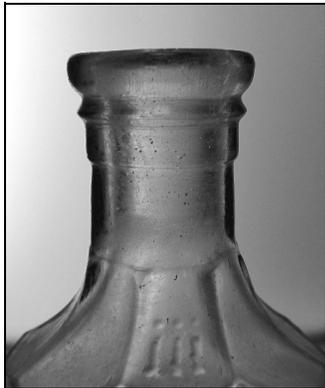


Figure 5-8 – Illinois Glass Co. reinforced finish

The bottle measured 13.8 cm. in height, 4.7 cm. in width, and 2.7 cm. in depth. It held three ounces (the “iii” on the shoulder) and had no markings on the base. The container was colorless with a slight tint of amethyst from exposure to the sun. The bottle cannot precede the 1915 opening of the store, and the Wizard Oval’s appearance in the 1920 Illinois Glass Co. catalog sets a terminal date (Illinois Glass Co. bottles were embossed with the Diamond-I basemark). Therefore, the bottle was probably used during the earliest three or four years the firm was in business.



Figure 5-9 – Graduations on quarter panels

“ECONOMICAL DRUG CO. / L. RUBIO, MANAGER / EL PASO, TEX.” – in a much simpler format than the earlier bottles – with graduations on the left and right (Figure 5-11).

The base was embossed “usona” in lower-case, back-slanted letters (Figure 5-12). Griffenhagen and Bogard (1999:44, 103, 129) attributed the usona mark to the Obear-Nester Glass Co. The Usona oval was patented by Henry Forest on August 12, 1902 (Design Patent No. 36,001). Obear-Nester registered the trademark on August 5, 1902, and claimed a usage since May of the same year.



Figure 5-12 – usona basemark

Griffenhagen and Bogard set a use range from 1902 to 1920. This range is in keeping with other data known about the bottles. The term *may* stand for United States of North America, once considered as an alternative name for the U.S. The reason for the use of lower-case letters is unknown.

The second bottle was also colorless, embossed, and mouth blown. This one held

four ounces, measuring 14.6 cm. tall, 5.2 cm. wide, and 3.3 cm. thick. The bottle was oval in cross-section with one flat face and a two-part reinforced prescription finish (Figure 5-10). The front was embossed

“ECONOMICAL DRUG CO. / L. RUBIO, MANAGER / EL PASO,



Figure 5-10 – Reinforced finish Second Economical Drug bottle



Figure 5-11 – Second Economical Drug bottle

The final bottle was generic with a paper label. This colorless bottle was short (4.5 cm. tall) and round in cross-section (3.1 cm. in diameter). It had a wide mouth, with a one-part “ring” finish, and my example was about a third full of white powder, sealed with the original cork. The front had a horizontal rectangular white paper label with blue ink; the sides and bottom were outlined with double blue lines – “CIMICIFUGA (U. S. P?) (their parentheses – typed; last letter illegible) / Economical Drug Co. (blue-lined background with floral accents) / L. RUBIO, MANAGER / 305 S. Stanton St. Phone 2948 EL PASO, TEXAS.” The label was made for a larger bottle and was cut along the top to fit the smaller container (Figure 5-13).

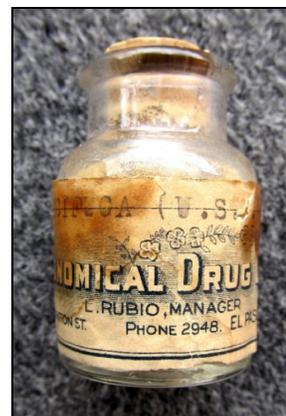


Figure 5-13 – Paper-label Economical Drug bottle

The base was embossed “H.W.&D. (in an elongated hexagon) / 7” (Figure 5-14). See the story of Hynson, Westcott & Dunning in the Farmacia Rio Gande section below. The firm made Mercurio-Chrome and other drugs; it was not a glass house. The bottle could have been used anytime during the Rubio years – 1915-1925. Cimicifuga racemosa was also known as Black Cohosh – a popular drug during the early 20th century – still sold in health-food stores. The white powder was most likely White Cohosh – Cimicifuga Alba (*Actaea alba*).



Figure 5-14 – H.W.&D. basemark

Cimicifuga has currently been transferred to the genus *Actaea*. U.S.P. is United States Pharmacopia.

Farmacia Rio Grande (1910-1977)

Charles L. McDowell was born in Illinois and migrated to Mexico at an early age. He became a successful cattleman and remained in Mexico at least as late as 1914. His oldest child, Charles G. McDow grew up in El Paso and attended public school there. He then attended the New Orleans College of Pharmacy until his junior year and transferred to the University of Illinois. He attained his pharmacy degree in 1906 and returned to El Paso, where he worked for Kelly & Pollard until 1910 (Johnson 1914; see Chapter 4 for the history of Kelly & Pollard).

An ad in the December 9, 1968, *El Paso Herald-Post* claimed that the Rio Grande Pharmacy was established 1910. While the date was probably correct, the name was first listed in the 1912 El Paso city directory as C.L. McDow & Son (Charles L. McDow and his son, Charles G. McDowell) at 419 S. Stanton (southeast corner of Stanton and Third St.).⁴ The listing continued to use that name through 1914.

Charles G. McDow opened the Farmacia Rio Grande in 1910, possibly under that name and possibly as C.L. McDow & Son. Johnson (1914) noted that McDow “established a business” even though he only had “a small amount of capital.” The name of the business suggests that the capital derived from his father’s ranch, giving the senior McDow top billing. McDow married Marguerite Rodriguez on June 10, 1909. On December 22, 1914, the *El Paso Morning Times* advertised Farmacia Rio Grande as successors. Although the ad did not identify the old name, it could only have been C.L. McDow & Son. The firm offered “Medicina francesa y productos de Mexico” (French medicine and products of Mexico) at the corner of Stanton and Tercera (Stanton and Third St.). The telephone number was 709.

The store was listed as the Rio Grande Pharmacy from 1915 to 1918, then addressed by the same name in Spanish – Farmacia Rio Grande – in 1919. C.L. McDow & Son operated the business that sold drugs, toilet articles, stationery, and cigars at 500 S. Stanton.⁵ The phone number remained 709, although they added 1498 the following year. The phone numbers became Main 709 and Main 1498 in 1924. The firm was listed at 419-21 S. Stanton in 1927 and remained at that location.

By 1932, Charles G. McDow had become listed as the manager, possibly reflecting the death or retirement of his father (who would have been 72). Phone numbers by 1939 were M 708 & 709. On June 30, 1937, the Rio Grande Pharmacy, along with three other major drug stores, advertised Van-Tage in the *El Paso Times*. Van-Tage was a product promising relief

⁴ Although both the newspapers and city directories alternate between “Son” and “Sons,” only one son, Charles G. McDow, was ever listed with the business.

⁵ The 500 S. Stanton address may have been incorrect. The firm was listed at 419 S. Stanton in 1912 and again 1927. If these addresses were all correct, McDow moved from the northwest corner of S. Stanton and Third St. across the intersection to the southeast corner in 1919 and back again in 1927.

from problems with bowels, stomach, kidneys, liver, and rheumatic pain. A four-day sale promised a “Trial Bottle” of Van-Tage for 25¢ so that consumers could try the product before buying a regular bottle at \$1.25. Although the city directories continued to use the name Farmacia Rio Grande, the newspapers called the store the Rio Grande Pharmacy. It is virtually certain that both names were used from this point on – and they may have always been used concurrently.

Beginning in 1938, the city directories also listed the firm as C.L. McDow & Son – Wholesale Druggists – at the same address as Farmacia Rio Grande. McDow updated the name to C.G. McDow & Son (Charles G. McDow and his son, Ishmael M. McDow) in 1942. Born at El Paso ca. 1921, Ishmael apparently followed in his father’s footsteps. The firm was still listed in the directories at least as late as 1991.

On Saturday, December 21, 1946, the *Las Cruces Sun-News* announced the opening of the McDow Pharmacy at Mesilla Park, New Mexico – although the last listing I have found was in the October 8, 1951, issue of the *Sun-News*. Another McDow Pharmacy advertised in the *El Paso Herald-Post* on April 30, 1949, at 4536 Montana with a telephone number of 5-2002. On December 10, 1949, the store moved to 4800 Montana and held a grand opening – with Charles G. and Ishmael McDow as the principals. The ad offered free motorcycle delivery (*El Paso Herald-Post* 12/9/1949). An ad for a clerk in the August 12, 1952, edition of the *Herald-Post* is the last mention I have found.

The firm became a corporation on July 15, 1959. On May 1, 1961, Charles G. McDow died suddenly in his home at age 74. His widow, Mrs. Margarita McDow and Ishmael McDow operated the firm. According to the *El Paso Herald-Post*, the Rio Grande Pharmacy became part of the Thrifty Pharmacy chain on December 9, 1968, as branch No. 5. The family apparently continued the wholesale business.

Bottles, Labels, and Other Items

At least three bottles, one salve box, and two labels have survived for this company.

Labels

Our sample includes labels that were affixed to bottles and unused labels.

Affixed Labels

With one exception, all of the affixed labels (including the salve box) are identical except in shape (the salve box label is round). Each label was white with blue ink and had an upper “header” that was complex. This header had a mortar and pestle with a sprig of herbs on the left, with two scrolls extending from the right side of the mortar. The upper scroll had “FARMACIA” stenciled into it, with “RIO GRANDE” in the lower scroll. To the right of the upper scroll was “TEL. / M 708 / M. 709.” Below that was “C.G. McDOW, Prop. / 419-421 S. Stanton St., El Paso, Texas.”

Each of the labels that was affixed to bottles also had “No.” and “Dr.” just below the header, although this was missing on both unattached labels. The identification of the contents was added to each affixed label via typewriter. These were obviously intended for use on prescription bottles, although at least one in the sample was for almond oil, probably an on-the-shelf item. Charles G. McDow operated the store upon the death or retirement of his father ca. 1932. All of these bottles therefore postdate 1932, and were probably used later than that. Most businesses continued to use old labels until the supply was exhausted.

Unused, Unattached Labels

Both unattached labels had the contents printed as an integral part of the composition, suggesting that they were not prescription items. One of these lacked the header but said “ACEITE ROSADO (Rose oil) / Farmacia Rio Grande / 419-421 S. Stanton St., El Paso, Texas” (Figure 5-15). The second had “H.W.&D. / MERCURO-CHROME / SOLUTION 2%” above the “header” previously described – with two changes: 1) the firm was called “C.L. McDOW & SON, PROPS.”; and 2) the telephone numbers were replaced by a more complex but illegible



Figure 5-15 – Farmacia Rio Grande
– Aceite Rosado lable

series of letters (Figure 5-16). Both of these labels were used during the C.L. McDow & Son period (1910-1932), but the first was probably used earliest.

Merbromin was marketed as Mercurome (generally without the hyphen added by the firm that supplied McDow) throughout the U.S. from ca. 1918 to 1998, when the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) removed the product from the “generally recognized as safe” category and inserted it into the “untested” classification (Wikipedia 2014).⁶ The product remains available throughout most of the world (Germany and France joined the U.S. ban) because of its low cost. The firm Hynson, Westcott & Dunning used the “H.W.&D.” initials on its products, notably Mercurio-Chrome. Dr. H.A.B. Dunning was one of the founders (Catotti 2014). I have found no other relevant historical information, although the firm appears to still be in business in 2014.



Figure 5-16 – Farmacia Rio Grande – H.W.&D. Mercurio-Chrome label

Salve Box

A small, round salve tin box measured 1.6 cm. in height and 4.0 cm. in diameter. The lid fit snugly against the body of the box, held in place by friction. The round label was as described above, with “POMADA / ALCANFORADA” in typed blue ink and “15” (the price in cents) written with a grease pencil (the forerunner of today’s Sharpie). My example is apparently full of salve (judging by the weight) (Figure 5-17). I can only date this box after 1932, when Charles G. McDow succeeded his father as proprietor.



Figure 5-17 – Farmacia Rio Grande salve tin

Bottles

As noted above, I have three bottles from Farmacia Rio Grande in my collection. All were apparently intended for prescription use.

⁶ The author’s family used Mercurochrome extensively during the 1940s and 1950s, leaving bright red stains across every cut finger.

Bottle #1

Possibly the earliest in this group of bottles from Farmacia Rio Grande was a small, colorless bottle that was square in cross-section, with no basemark (Figure 5-18). The mouth-blown container measured 6.4 cm. in height and 3.6 on both sides, holding ca. two ounces. The glass stopper was 3.1 cm. tall and 2.6 cm. in diameter at top (Figure 5-19). The stopper end was ground to make a rough surface with a similar surface on the inside of the throat of the bottle.

A paper label was identical to the ones on the other bottles, except that typed in black ink was “CRESATIN S.D.” (see Figure 18). S.D. was an abbreviation for “single dose,” indicating that it should only be used once in a 24-hour period. Cresatin (metacresyl acetate)

was primarily used to treat ear infections.

Manufactured by Merck, it was dropped from the market because studies showed the drug was ineffective. Sales at the time of its withdrawal were only around 30 gallons nationwide (personal communication, Jen Viegas). The U.S. Patent date for Cresatin was



Figure 5-19 – Ground stopper

1912 (Patent No. 1,031,971). It was still listed in the Merck Index (6th edition) for 1952 for medical and veterinary use (personal contact from Allen Vegotsky).

Bottle #2

Another colorless bottle was rectangular with chamfered corners on one face and rounded corners on the other (Figure 5-20). It had a continuous-thread finish and a knurled, black-plastic lid. The machine-made container was 20.4 cm. tall, 7.8



Figure 5-18 – Square Farmacia Rio Grande bottle



Figure 5-20 – Farmacia Rio Grande Bottle

cm. wide, and 5.2 cm. deep with graduations on both sides in the chamfered corners (ounces to the left, cubic centimeters to the right). My example was ca. two-thirds full of oil. The typical paper label had “ACEITE ALMENDRAS (almond oil) typed in red ink below the header (Figure 5-21).



Figure 5-21 – Aceite Almendras label

The base was embossed “W / T-in-an-inverted-triangle (with dots just outside both upper corners / 9 (or six on its side) 8 (on its side) / U.S.A.” – all enclosed in a machine scar. The logo was used by the Whitall Tatum Co. from ca. 1922 to 1969 (Lockhart et al. 2006). Unfortunately, Whitall Tatum used no date codes that we can decipher, so the date range must extend from ca. 1922 to ca. 1932, when Charles G. McDow assumed control and revised the labels to use his name instead of C.L. McDow & Son.

Bottle #3

The final bottle was an Owens Oval (Figure 5-22). This style of bottle was used by the Owens Bottle Co. until 1929, then offered by the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. Under Owens-Illinois, the bottles went through several distinct phases, which allow us to date this bottle closely (see below).



Figure 5-22 – Farmacia Rio Grande Bottle

The machine-made bottle was oval in cross-section, with one flat face and six scallops extending from shoulder to finish. The bottle had a continuous-thread finish topped by a black-plastic knurled cap. It measured 13.0 cm. tall, 5.8 cm. wide, and 3.5 cm. thick and was ca. One-third full of syrup. The curved side was embossed with the ounce symbol (see Figure 5-1) followed by “iv” –



Figure 5-23 – Duraglas

Roman numerals indicating a four-ounce capacity. The heel was embossed “Duraglas” in cursive, the glass formula used between 1940 and 1964 (Figure 5-23). The front label was typed “Jarabe de

Digital F.M.” in black ink below the header. Jarabe is the Spanish word for syrup, and Digital is an herb used to treat the heart. F.M. is a pharmacy term meaning a mixture. Two side panels on the reverse side were embossed with graduations: ounces to the right and cubic centimeters to the left.

The base was embossed “OWENS / 4 (with two dots) 6” surrounded by an Owens machine scar (Figure 5-24). The term “OWENS” indicated the Owens Oval, the top-selling prescription bottle from the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. The firm used that base marking from ca. 1931 to 1949. The left number did *not* indicate the factory on prescription bottles (as it did in many bottle types), although the right number remained as the date code. Unfortunately, Owens-Illinois only used single-digit date codes on these bottles until the late 1940s. Since this bottle also had “Duraglas” on the back heel, it could not have been made prior to 1940. The “6” date code, therefore, indicates 1946. For a detailed chronology of the Owens ovals, see the section on Owens-Illinois.



Figure 5-24 – Owens-Illinois basemark

C.L. McDow & Son Labels

Periodically, a series of unused labels from C.L. McDow & Son, Wholesale Druggists at Stanton and Third St., have been offered on eBay (Figure 5-25). Five of those were for Oxalic Acid, Formaldehyde, Permanganate Potash, Sodium Bicarbonate, and Rochelle Salt. These examples included at least two separate orders; although the labels are otherwise printed in the same styles, one had a slightly different font with a notably different ampersand. Although typical labels used blue ink, poison labels were printed in red ink and had the skull-and-crossed-bones symbol in the upper left corner. These could only have been printed during the period between 1938, when the wholesale business opened and 1942, when McDow renamed the business C.G. McDow & Son.



Figure 5-25 – C.L. McDow labels

I.P. Freely (1933?)

I have been unable to find any El Paso pharmacist by the name of I.P. Freely. The label may be a prank played by some El Paso druggist, possibly filled with some yellow liquid and presented as joke birthday present. The name has certainly been used in humor, such as the supposed book title the *Yellow River* by I.P. Freely. If there really was such an El Paso druggist, the only bottle suggests that he operated in the early 1930s.

I.P. Freely Bottle

I have discovered a single bottle from I.P. Freely, an El Paso pharmacist. Like the final Farmacia Rio Grande bottle, this was a machine-made Owens Oval that measured 12.5 cm. in height, 5.2 cm. wide, and 3.2 cm. thick. The colorless bottle was embossed on the reverse shoulder with the apothecary ounce symbol, followed by Roman numerals “iii” and had graduations on both quarter panels. The finish had continuous threads, following the 1930s pattern (Figure 5-26), topped by a knurled black-plastic cap.



Figure 5-26 – I.P. Freely finish

The bottle had a paper label that was probably originally white but has yellowed with age – printed in black ink. The central portion discussed the medication:

PAIN KILLER / Relief for Pains, Rheumatism, Neuralgia / Gramp, Colic,
Headaches, Poison Bites / or Stings, Stiffness, on Joints and Lamé / Backs, Cuts
Sores and Kidney Troubles / MATA DOLOR / Para aliviar Dolores de
Reumatisno / Neuralgia, Calambres, Cólicos, Dolor de / Cabeza, Mordeduras,
Poñonozas, Co / yunturas Rígidias, Dolores de Espalda, / Cortaduras, Llagas,
Comezones y En- / fermedades, de los Riñones. / Price 50c

The left side of the label instructed “FOR EXTERNAL USE ONLY / DIRECTIONS / APPLY TO AFFECTED PARTS / RUB FREELY,” and the right side stated that the concoction was “PREPARED BY / I.P. FREELY / El Paso, Texas” (Figure 5-27). Between the name – I.P. Freely!!! – and the double entendre “Rub *Freely*,” I suspect that this was a joke.



Figure 5-27 – I.P. Freely bottle during the early 1930s, possibly 1933.

The base was embossed “OWENS (arch) / <0> 15 or 13 (sideways)” with the number partly obliterated by the Owens scar (Figure 5-



Figure 5-28 – I.P. Freely base

28). Both the 1930s style finish and the lack of “Duraglas” on heel suggest that the bottle was made during the 1930s. In addition, the only other example we have recorded with an arched “OWENS” had a date code for 1933. The bottle was thus likely made

Gunning-Casteel Drug Co. (1913-1974)

In October 1913, Wylie E. Casteel and Thomas C. Gunning incorporated the Gunning & Casteel Drug Co., with Casteel as president and Gunning as secretary and treasurer. The Alta Vista location at 3600 Hueco – unpaved at that time – was the first store. The city directory first listed the store the following year (*El Paso Times* 8/9/1935). The firm opened the second store at 3332 Fort Blvd. in 1916. Because that part of town was undeveloped at that time and on the outskirts of the city, the store was burglarized 13 times in one year.

Because of the 1929 Census of Distribution (see Butchofsky section above for details), we have a cameo look at the first four stores. Store No. 1 was at 907 N. Piedras, and there were three other branches. Note that these were numbered in the order of their importance in 1929 – *not* in the order in which they were opened. The No. 1 store had opened in March 1921 and employed 11 men and one woman. Stock on hand was valued at \$15,197, and the store had net sales of \$82,558. The sales breakdown was instructive:

Prescriptions	\$ 4,125
Drugs	\$16,511
Soda Fountain Sales	\$24,767

Toilet Articles	\$12,382
Tobacco Products	\$20,640
Other Items	\$ 4,130

The soda fountain was the most productive unit of the store, carrying 30.0% of the business. Prescriptions, on the other hand, only brought in 5.0%. Even adding drugs to the prescriptions, the medicinal side of the store on contributed 25.0% of the sales. Tobacco sales accounted for one quarter of all revenue (25.0%) – exactly even with medicine sales.

Store No. 2 was the original building at 3600 Hueco, opened in October 1913. This unit employed nine people (all male) in 1929 and kept \$7,950 worth of merchandise in stock. Total sales at this branch was \$60,023. The breakdown here was:

Prescriptions	\$ 3,001
Drugs	\$12,004
Soda Fountain Sales	\$18,000
Toilet Articles	\$ 9,003
Tobacco Products	\$15,015
Other Items	\$ 3,001

The soda fountain was still the money maker at 30.0%, with prescriptions at 5.0% and total medicinal products at 25.0%. Tobacco accounted for 25.0%. Although the percentages were somewhat different when carried to three or more decimal points, the virtually identical percentages between Store No. 1 and No. 2 is remarkable.

The unit at 3332 Fort Boulevard was No. 3. Opened in October 1915, the store employed eight males in 1929. The total stock on hand was \$7,810, but this unit was not broken down by types of sales.

The No. 4 store was located at 2100 No. Piedras. It was the newest branch, opened in March 1920. The store employed ten people – again all male and had an inventory of \$9,850 and total sales of \$70,640. The breakdown was:

Prescriptions	\$ 3,532
Drugs	\$14,128
Soda Fountain Sales	\$21,192
Toilet Articles	\$10,596
Tobacco Products	\$17,660
Other Items	\$ 3,532

The soda fountain here accounted for 30.0%, with 5.0% again in prescriptions and a total of 35% in medicines. Tobacco again brought in exactly 25% of the sales. If I were a government accountant, I would be *very* suspicious of these figures! The signature on all four forms was Charles F.B. Major – almost certainly the firm’s accountant. As president, W.E. Casteel signed all the forms (Figure 5-29).

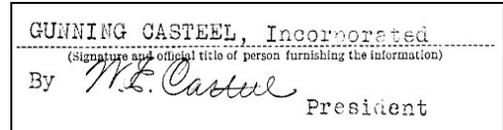


Figure 5-29 – W.E. Casteel signature (Census of Distribution 1929)

The unit at 2100 N. Piedras St. was called the Manhattan store. By 1935, this location provided 24-hour service. The Five Points store at 907 N. Piedras St. was No. 4, and this became the main office and warehouse by 1935 (*El Paso Times* 8/9/1935). Store No. 5 (Montana store) opened at 806 Montana Ave. on August 2, 1935, intended to serve Kern Place and El Paso’s West Side. A week later, the firm unveiled the completely refurbished Alta Vista store with its new “[soda] fountain and lunch counter, a gift and toy department, electrical appliances counter and open view prescription department.” (*El Paso Times* 8/9/1935). An August 3 ad for the Montana store offered “Something New? FROZEN MALT 10c” (Figure 5-30). Store No. 6 was called Camp Grande – as shown on a Christmas card (Figure 5-31). The store was first listed in the 1938 city directory at 3709 Alameda Ave.

Figure 5-30 – Gunning-Casteel ad (*El Paso Times* 8-3-1935)

By 1961, Gunning-Casteel had 14 branches throughout the city. The last listing for Gunning-Casteel was in 1979 city directory. In 1977, Gunning-Casteel opened its 26th location

at Pebble Hills. Ads continued in the *Herald-Post* until December 1977, but they stopped abruptly in before January 1, 1978. The ads sounded enthusiastic throughout the year and gave no hint of impending doom. The reason for the sudden demise of the firm remains a mystery.

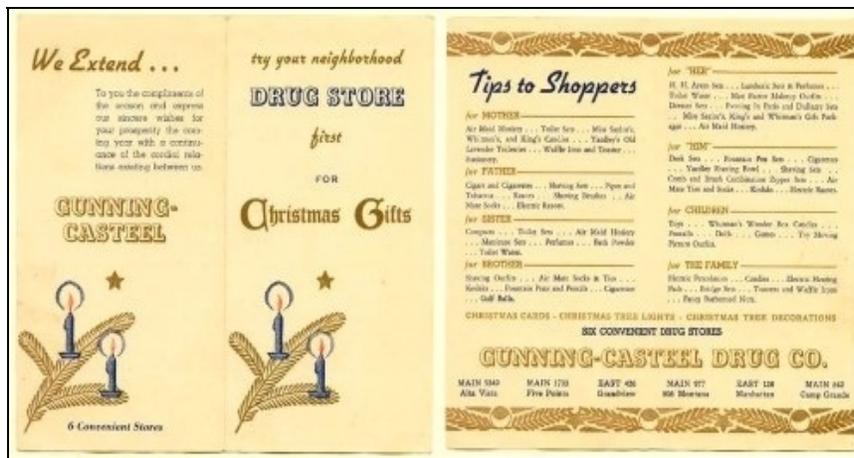


Figure 5-31 – Gunning-Casteel Christmas card (eBay)

Gunning-Casteel Bottle

Although Gunning-Casteel was a store with multiple units, I have only seen a single embossed bottle from the firm. It is likely that the company used generic bottles with paper labels throughout most of its tenure of operation. The bottle was embossed “GUNNING&CASTEEL DRUG CO. / 3600 HUECO ST. / EL



Figure 5-32 – Gunning-Casteel bottle

PASO, TEX.” on the front (Figure 5-32) and had graduations embossed on both quarter panels – ounces to the left, cubic centimeters to the right. The neck-shoulder had three flutes on each side, extending from shoulder to finish, with “iii” (indicating three ounces) in the center flute on the front. The reinforced prescription finish is reminiscent of the style used by the Illinois Glass Co. in its Lyric line. However, the Lyric bottles had six flutes on front and back. The base of the bottle was unembossed.

Since the bottle was embossed with the Hueco St. address of the Alta Vista store – the first of the series – this bottle was almost certainly embossed as a commemoration of the opening in 1913. It is highly likely that Gunning-Casteel used these embossed bottles *only* at that location and used them until the supply was exhausted. When the second store opened three

years later, few of these bottles would have been left, and the firm almost certainly shifted to the much cheaper generic pharmacy bottles with paper labels. Thus, these jars should be dated 1913 to ca. 1916.

The Prescription Shop (1939-1959)

The Prescription Shop opened in late 1938 or early 1939 at 106 Sheldon Ct. According to labels on the Shop's bottles, the address was the lobby of the 1st National Bank Building. Don Cunningham was the manager between at least April 1943 and February 1952. On May 3, 1956, the *El Paso Herald-Post* announced that the store was now the Gunning-Casteel Prescription Shop, with G.P. Angeli as manager and G.J. Glenn as his assistant. Glenn became manager by 1956. The Shop was no longer listed in 1960, nor was the address included in the Gunning-Casteel section (14 locations). Thus, the store must have been closed in late 1959 or early 1960 (EPCD 1939-1960; *El Paso Herald-Post* 4/10/1943; 5/3/1956; 11/21/1957).

Containers and Marks

By this point in U.S. history, the embossed bottle with identification and message of a specific store had vanished. Like virtually all prescription bottles, the ones from the Prescription Shop were generic with paper labels. Similarly, the mouth-blown bottle was also a relic of the past. At least two machine-made Prescription Shop bottles have survived.



Figure 5-33 – R globe

One of these was round in cross section, topped with a continuous-thread finish and black-plastic screw cap, and was green in color. The wide-mouth bottle held ca. 1.5 ounces and measured 5.9 cm. in height and 2.7 cm. in diameter. The front had a paper label (black ink on white paper with green border and green and red R globes in both upper corners) - "PHONES 2-4121 & 3-5522 (red) / THE PRESCRIPTION SHOP (white letters on a green, oval background) / A PROFESSIONAL PHARMACY (red) / C.D. CUNNINGHAM / No. (green) 235903 Dr Puckett / Rev. H.H. Yelton / One every 3 hours if in / pain. (all black) / LOBBY 1ST NAT'L BANK BLDG. El Paso, Texas (white on green background)" (Figures 5-33 & 5-34). The base was embossed "3 <0> 2 / 2." with stippling over the entire base and an Owens scar.



Figure 5-34 – Prescription Shop bottle

The other was similar, round in cross-section and green, but more squat in configuration. The jar measured 6.8 cm. in height and 4.6 cm. in diameter, with a rolled-steel cap on a continuous-thread finish. The front had a paper label (black ink on white paper with green border and green and red \mathcal{R} globes in both upper corners) with “PHONES 2-4121 & 3-5522 (red) / THE PRESCRIPTION SHOP (white letters on a green, oval background) / A PROFESSIONAL PHARMACY (red) / C.D.

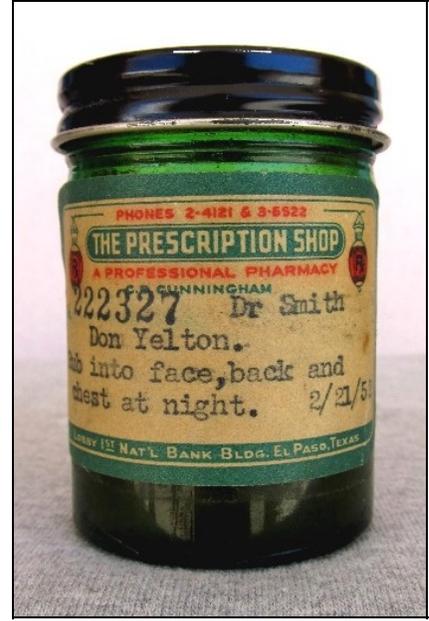


Figure 5-35 – Prescription Shop jar

CUNNINGHAM / No. (green) 222327 Dr Smith / Don Yelton. / Rub into face, back and / chest at night. 2/21/52 (all black) / LOBBY 1ST NAT’L BANK BLDG. El Paso, Texas (white on green background)” (Figure 5-35). The base was embossed “2OZ. / Duraglas (script) / 7 <0> 1 (superimposed over another 1) / 1–” with stippling and an Owens scar (Figure 5-36). Bottles and jars of this type were used during the Don Cunningham period, covering at least the 1940s to 1956. Both of these specific jars were used during 1952.



Figure 5-36 – Base of jar

A.E. Ryan, the Owl Drug Co., and the El Paso Drug Co. (1909-1918)

The *Alamogordo News* noted on September 1, 1906, that “A.E. Ryan who has been with W.E. Warren & Bro. for some time has resigned his position to accept a similar position with the El Paso Drug Company and left for that place Monday. Ryan has many friends here who wish him well.” Although there is no way to determine how long “some time” may have been, W.E. Warren opened the first drug store in Alamogordo in 1898. Ryan, therefore, could not have been employed with Warren for more than eight years.

The El Paso Drug Co. was first listed in the city directories at 113 S. El Paso in 1904. The store remained at that location until Ryan purchased it in May 1909 and relocated to 212 San Antonio St. as A.E. Ryan & Co. Ryan's 1910 city directory ad noted that the store was "Open All Night[;] Drugs, Toilet Articles and Stationery Prescriptions a Specialty. The business had three telephones – SW (Bell) 608 629 Auto 1068. By early 20th century, the Bell patents had expired, and numerous local and cooperative exchanges sprang up. One such exchange arose in El Paso ca. 1907 and survived until 1913 – listed only as "Auto." Drug stores often offered their customers free telephone service, so three lines were not uncommon (EPCD 1909-1910; Bryson 1973:47-48).

The firm experienced rapid growth during its first two years, quadrupling the volume of its business to an aggregate of sales of \$50,000. Ryan employed eight men in 1911 with an annual payroll of \$7,200. The store serviced an area that included El Paso County along with parts of Chihuahua, New Mexico, and Arizona. The store had "a frontage of 35 feet on San Antonio street, and a depth of 120 feet" along with a basement. Ryan carried "all kinds of drugs, chemicals, perfumes and toilet articles, and a select line of stationery and fancy goods." It was one of the few businesses in El Paso that remained open all night (El Paso Chamber of Commerce 1911:75).

Ryan stayed open all night from at least 1911 to the opening of Ryan's Owl Drug (cf. *El Paso Times* 7/17/1911). According to the *Times* (7/18/1914), the firm offered "prescriptions filled and delivered at any time—day or night[.] Mail orders filled promptly." Although most 19th century drug stores (and early 20th century ones) would usually fill prescriptions after closing, it was because at least one druggist lived either above or behind the store. Ryan actually kept his store open (Figure 5-37).



Figure 5-37 – A.R. Ryan's store 1915 (*Southern Pharmacy Journal* 1915:557)

Ryan advertised the Owl Drug Co. in the *El Paso Times* in 1917 (EPT 6/17/1917). The ad noted that two stores were available: Owl No. 1 at 212 San Antonio St. and Owl No. 2 at Montana and Piedras streets. A.E. Ryan was the proprietor of both stores. The ad intimated that Owl No. 2 was a fairly recent acquisition when it said that “the people who live in the eastern part of town are learning that for real service and the best goods they cannot beat Owl No. 2 It’s handy and convenient and carries the same high grade merchandise as our Owl No. 1.”

On April 17, 1918, the El Paso Drug Co., Inc., announced that it had formerly been Ryan’s Owl Drug Store and listed the former Owl No. 1 address – 212 San Antonio. Like its predecessor, it remained open at all hours, suggesting, “Phone Us Day or Night[.] Our prescription department appeals to everyone in pursuit of health and physical upbuilding—to the individual, to hospitals, to doctors, to nurses, to sanitariums. Our large patronage is due to the accuracy in which we follow your doctor’s orders, to reasonable prices and prompt service. If you need anything in the drug line or sundry line, we have it” (*El Paso Times* 4/17/1918). The El Paso Drug Store was last listed in 1931 (EPCD 1918-1931).

Containers and Marks

I have only discovered a single bottle from the A.R. Ryan & Co. period. The colorless container was rectangular in cross-section and measured 15.8 cm. tall, 6.0 cm. wide, and 3.6 cm. in depth. The bottle was mouth blown with a one-piece prescription finish, and held seven ounces of liquid. It was embossed with the ounce symbol and “vi” on the shoulder and “A.E. RYAN & CO. / ”OPEN ALL NIGHT” (upward slant) / DRUGGISTS / EL PASO, TEXAS.” on the front (Figure 5-38). The base was embossed “W . . . CO.” – probably indicating the “W.B.M.CO.” logo of the Western Bottle Manufacturing Co. of Chicago – in business from 1901 to at least 1931. Another bottle in our possession had the first and last two initials in exactly the same location, with a very faint impression of the middle two letters. Although the bottle could have been used at any point during the 1909-1918 period when Ryan was open, it was likely a commemoration for the opening of the store in 1909. Ryan, like almost all drug stores of



Figure 5-38 – A.E. Ryan bottle

the period, probably switched to generic pharmacy bottles with paper labels after the initial order was exhausted.

The Owl Drug Co. was one of first drug store chains, opening at 1128 Market Street, San Francisco, on March 24, 1892. Founded as a “cut-rate” store, the firm was so successful that it branched out to many other states. In 1917, it had 23 stores on the West Coast and branches in Chicago, Milwaukee, and other cities far removed from the West. In January 1930, the Louis K Liggett Co. absorbed Owl Drug. In 1934, Owl became a subsidiary of United Drug, which became United-Rexall in 1946 and Rexall Drug, Inc. in 1947 (Praetzellis, Mary and Adrian Praetzellis 1990:320-323). Owl Drug used its own bottles, apparently throughout the chain. The example I have chosen is meant to be representative only. I have not discovered any Owl Drug bottles that were excavated in El Paso, so the one in Figure 39 is probably not representative of the local store. All Owl Drug bottles were embossed with an owl and usually had the Owl Drug name prominently included.



Figure 5-39 – An Owl Drug example

San Ignatius Drug Store (1920-1921)

This virtually unknown drug store was only listed in the 1920 and 1921 city directories. The *El Paso Herald-Post* noted on July 20, 1936, that “Ft. Hancock won its fourth game in as many Sundays yesterday defeating the San Ignatius Druggists of El Paso.” Since many businesses sponsored baseball teams during the 1920s-1940s, this could indicate that the drug store remained open until at least 1936. However, it could also just mean that the name survived for the team – long after the demise of the drug store.

San Ignatius Bottle

I have found a single oil bottle from this store. The colorless bottle was oval in cross-section with a tall, round neck topped by an “oil” finish. My example is filled with green liquid and sealed with what appears to be the original cork. The bottle measured 14.2 cm. tall, 3.4 wide at the shoulder, 3.5 cm. wide at the heel, and 2.1 cm. thick – tapering up slightly from heel

to shoulder. The paper label had “Bal[samo] [T]ranquilo / _____ / SAN [IGNATIUS] DRUG STORE / [Telephone: M]ain 1936 / [Corner ?? &] Third Streets / EL PAS[O] TEXAS” in black ink (Figure 5-40). The base was embossed with the Diamond-I logo of the Illinois Glass Co. and an



Figure 5-41 – San Ignatius base

Owens machine scar (Figure 5-41). The Illinois Glass Co. used the mark from ca. 1915 to 1929 (Lockhart et al. 2005). The bottle, of course, could only have been used during the two or so years the firm was in business.



Figure 5-40 – San Ignatius bottle

San Pedro Drug Stores (1920-present)

Cecilio A. Arredondo emigrated to the U.S. from Mexico as a 14-year-old boy and was 16, when he began working at a pharmacy. Arredondo married the former Concepcion Trejo in 1911, and he became the pharmacy manager four years later. The couple had ten children. Arredondo studied under a local pharmacist and passed the New Mexico Board of Pharmacy exam on May 30, 1918. He opened the Botica de San Pedro at 3700 Alameda on December 15 of that year. Arredondo found a photo of Saint Peter on the ground of the lot he had purchased for the store and named the store for the saint. His sign was the symbol for the saint – the key to Heaven’s gate (Figure 5-42). The 1919 listing called the store Botica San Pedro (note dropping of “de”) and pronounced the new address as 3712 Alameda in 1920 (EPCD 1918-1931; *El Paso Herald-Post* 1/11/1969; Moreno 1994).



Figure 5-42 – San Pedro Drug Store Sign (Flickr)

San Pedro Drug Store No. 2 was first listed in the city directories in 1921 at 2236 Magoffin. The address changed to 2900 Magoffin in 1926 and again to 3000 Magoffin in 1929, possibly indicating expansion. No. 2 was listed as Farmacia de San Pedro in 1931.

The Census of Distribution presented a cameo view of the first three stores in 1929 – including some information at odds with data from other sources. C.A. Arredondo owned the original store at 3712 Alameda Ave. The founding was noted as January 1919, a month later than the Moreno article (see above). The store had three male employees in 1929 and one female. Stock on hand was worth \$5,960, and total sales reached \$32,004. The sales were not broken down into categories. C.A. Arredondo signed the form (Figure 5-43).



Figure 5-43 – C.A. Arredondo’s signature (Census of Distribution 1929)

M.A. Arredondo was listed as the owner of San Pedro Drug Store No. 2 at 3000 Magoffin Ave. Each of the three stores was listed as being individually owned, and the “date of original establishment of this business” was January 1928 – despite a listing for the store in 1921. The 1928 date may have referred to the period when M.A. Arredondo acquired control, or it may indicate the date of the move to 3000 Magoffin. Only two men and one woman worked at the store. Stock on hand was valued at \$5,000, and total sales reached \$16,355. As with the first store, Arredondo’s accountant did not break down the merchandise into categories. The same accountant served both units, but M.A. Arredondo signed for this one (Figure 5-44).

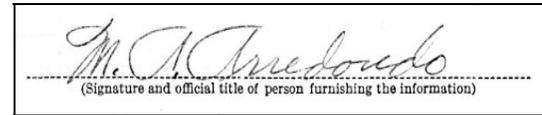


Figure 5-44 – M.A. Arredondo’s signature (Census of Distribution 1929)

Store No. 3 was located at 5203 Florence St., and the owner was F.A. Hernandez. The branch was opened on March 1, 1928. With only two male employees, this was the smallest unit, and it only kept \$1,500 worth of merchandise on hand. Total sales reached \$14,600. Max Hernandez signed the form along with the same accountant as the other two branches (Figure 5-45). “Max” may have been a nickname for F.A. Hernandez.

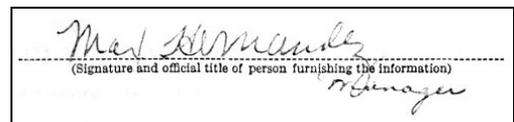


Figure 5-45 – Signature of Max Hernandez (Census of Distribution 1929)

San Pedro Drug Store No. 3, 4626 Alameda, and No. 4, at 8205 S. St. Vrain, were first listed in the 1931 city directories (even though No. 3 obviously opened in 1928). In 1936, San Pedro Pharmacy No. 5 appeared at 2031 Myrtle Ave. Note that the stores were interchangeably

listed as “Drug Store” and “Pharmacy.” No. 4 was missing from the 1942 directory, and No. 5 had vanished by 1948. By at least 1946, the pharmacy slogan was “the Key to Health” – of course playing on the St. Peter Key to Heaven (Figure 5-46). By September 29, 1961, Arredondo had renamed the business the San Pedro Thrifty Pharmacy (EPCD 1921-1950; *El Paso Herald-Post*).

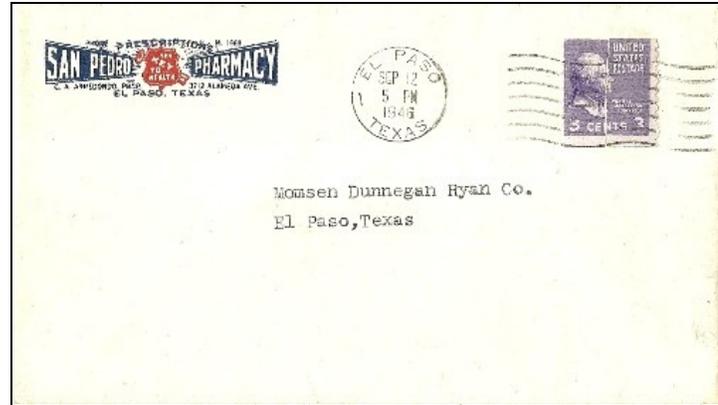


Figure 5-46 – San Pedro post card

The El Paso Pharmaceutical Assn. selected Arredondo as the El Paso Pharmacist of the year in 1954. Arredondo received the Outstanding Pharmacy Family of the Year Award in 1971 – at the age of 76. Shortly after, his son, Hector, took over the business. As late as 1994, the San Pedro Pharmacy still maintained an old-fashioned soda fountain as an integral part of the store. Moreno (1994) described the operation:

The soda fountain is on one wall. The stainless steel and Formica covered counter gleams, along with the revolving vinyl covered bar stools which provide a place to sit and relax.

The pharmacy serves delicious ice cream sundaes, floats, banana splits and malts prepared from old-fashioned ice cream. Arredondo still makes his own flavored fountain syrups using concentrated mixes and his own simple syrup made from sugar and water. A soft drink and ice cream cone used to cost a nickel each. Today’s prices are substantially higher, but a customer is buying a taste of history along with the soda.

No. 3 was still open in 1982, although San Pedro had been dropped from the city directories by then (*El Paso Herald-Post*), although the store was probably close shortly thereafter. The original store remains in business as San Pedro Thrifty Pharmacy in 2014.

San Pedro Labels

Although I have never seen a San Pedro bottle, a fairly large number of labels have become available on eBay. All but one of these were from San Pedro Drug Store No.2 and had the name of M.A. Arredondo – one of Cecilio Arredondo’s ten children (Figures 5-47 & 5-48). The single exception – probably older – was from the original store and bears the name “Botica San Pedro” (Figure 5-49).



Figure 5-47 – San Pedro No. 2 labels



Figure 5-48 – San Pedro No. 2 labels



Figure 5-49 – San Pedro label

Ward’s Pharmacy (ca. 1905-ca. 1925)

The earliest source that I have found for Ward’s Pharmacy was a mention that the store was located at the Bronson Block in 1905. The store probably opened early that year, possible in late 1904 (*Railroad Trainman’s Journal* 1905:910). The first listing in the city directory (1906) placed the store at 109 San Antonio (Figure 5-50). Recall from Chapter 4 that this was the address of Albers Palace Pharmacy from 1888 to 1903. Albers sold to Braun & Fergusson at that



Figure 5-50 – Inside Ward’s Pharmacy (Oscar C. Bernard collection, University of Texas at El Paso library)

time. When Braun & Fergusson became a wholesale drug firm the next year (1904), the business moved to 307-309 St. Louis, leaving 109 San Antonio free for Ward – who probably moved in at that time. The store appeared on the 1905 Sanborn Map (Figure 5-51). By 1913, Ward’s had moved to 600 N. Stanton, although the firm again moved slightly to 706 N. Stanton by 1918. Ward’s was last listed in the 1925 city directory.

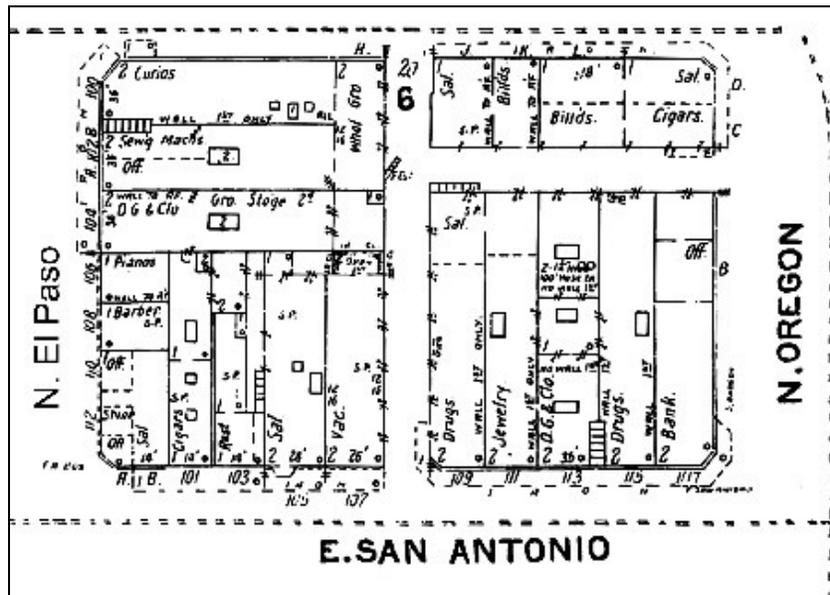


Figure 5-51 – Ward’s Pharmacy (Sanford Fire Insurance Map, 1905)

Ward's Measuring Glass

An eBay auction offered a colorless measuring glass that was conical in shape with graduations in both ounces (left) and teaspoons (right). The glass was flared upward from the footed base to the rim. The base was embossed “WARD’S PHARMACY EL PASO, TEX.” to be read



Figure 5-52 – Ward’s measuring beaker (eBay)

counterclockwise in a circle (Figure 5-52). There is no way to date this except by the dates of the pharmacy.

The Warner Drug Co. (1902-1963)

Milton Warner was not above playing practical jokes. Although history is unclear about the initiator, about 1908, someone established a pond containing alligators in San Jacinto Plaza in downtown El Paso. The alligators were a tourist attraction as well as drawing attention from local citizens. At some point, someone gave Warner a baby alligator, and he quietly slipped the animal into the pond at San Jacinto Plaza with the adults. When he read the newspaper the next day, he was startled to find an article claiming that “a mother alligator had just given birth to a baby, which was already cavorting around the Plaza pool.” Apparently, Warner only divulged his part in the incident years later (Bryson 1973:47-48). The alligators were removed in the mid-1960s.

The Warner Drug Co. opened in 1902, although the firm was not listed in the city directory until 1916, when the Warner Drug Co. was located in the Hotel Orndorff (300 Mesa Ave.), “One Block East of [the] Postoffice.” Unfortunately, the 1905 Sanborn Map did not show a drug store in the hotel

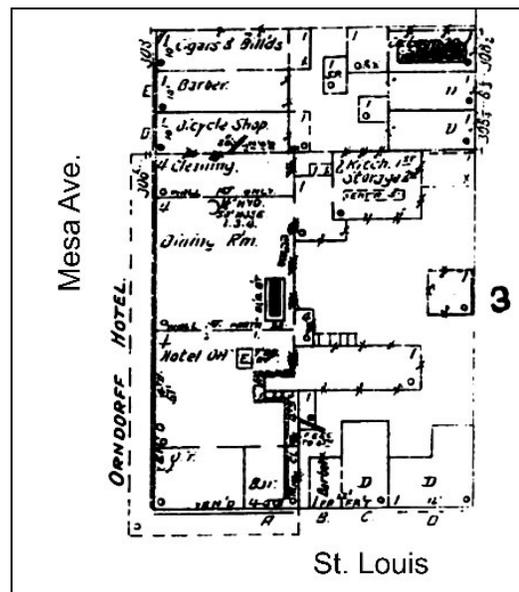


Figure 5-53 – Hotel Orndorff (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1905)

(Figure 5-53). The drug store may have moved into the hotel after 1905, or it may simply not have been included in the already busy diagram.

At this point, Warner advertised on matchbook covers (Figure 5-54). In an *El Paso Times* ad (6/30/1916), Warner targeted the servicemen who had been sent to the border to pursue Pancho Villa. The ad noted that Warner had

been making camp life easy for the regulars in Mexico and along the border with his UNPARALLELED SHOPPING SERVICE. You boys who are coming here from the big cities of the East are not going to be as far away from city comforts as you probably have imagined.

Not only did Warner promise to deliver to regular soldiers and National Guardsmen anywhere along the border, he also offered the “Warner Shopping Service” that provided “expert shoppers to fill orders of any kind” at no extra charge. He even offered “rapid motorcycle delivery” to any troops stationed at Fort Bliss, although other areas had to rely on the post office. Some of the items Warner suggested for the soldiers were “Desert Water Bags,” “Icy Hot Water Bottles,” “Safety and Plain Razors of all makes,” “Goggles and Sun Glasses,” “Metal Soap Boxes,” and “Everything that is need for the field.” He bragged that

Warner’s is the “Soldier’s Store;” we take particular pride in supplying the wants of the boys in khaki. Every day we receive scores of letters from men in Mexico and along the border complementing this store on the efficient manner in which we have taken care of their requirements (*El Paso Times* 6/30/1916).

Warner also aimed for trade across the border. In a July 4, 1917, ad in the Spanish edition of the *El Paso Times*, the company offered “A los Medicos Practicates en Mexico: Tenemos un gran surtido de Jeringas Hipodérmicos ‘Luer’, Termómetros Clínicos, tex. Y damos en seguida una lista de los artículos más comunmente usados [To medical practitioners in Mexico: We have a large assortment of Hypodermic Syringes, clinical thermometers, etc. and we

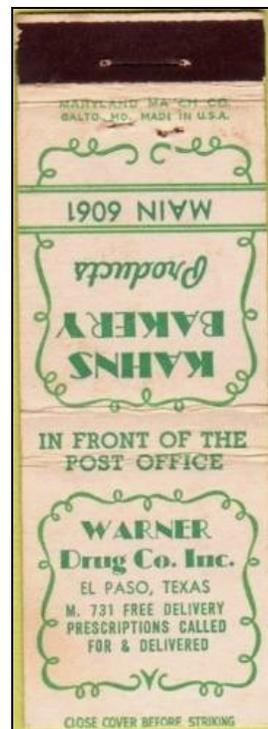


Figure 5-54 – Warner Drug Co. matchbox (eBay)

offer the following list of the articles most commonly used –“Luer” is probably a brand name].” The ad then listed various syringes and thermometers with prices.

The business had three telephones, only likely for the store and two for the customers. As noted above, drug stores frequently added free flat-rate telephones to attract customers. By 1924, Warner had incorporated, with Milton A. Warner as president, Mrs. M.A. Warner as vice president, and C.M. Taylor as secretary and treasurer. The 1926 entry called the treasurer C.F. Taylor, and Mrs. Warner was now listed as J.B. (Jennie B.). Rakocy (1980:236) showed a photo of Warner’s Drugs on N. Stanton and Mills in 1927 (see Chapter 6). D.M. Poe was secretary and treasurer by 1928. In 1933, Sam Soloman was listed as manager.

The 1929 Census of Distribution provided a cameo view of the store. The name was Warner Drug Co, Inc. at 212 Mills St. The date of original establishment was 1902. The business employed 20 men and 10 women. Stock on hand was worth \$46,290, and total sales for the year had been \$229,121. Broken down by category, these were:

Prescriptions	\$ 11,500
Drugs	\$ 6,500
Soda Fountain Sales	\$ 27,770
Confectionery	\$ 2,456
Bottled Beverages	\$ 1,800
Toilet Articles	\$ 8,550
Tobacco Products	\$ 37,333
Other Items	\$123,212

The category termed “other items” had the greatest income at 53.8% of the total. Soda fountain sales were next at 12.1%, with prescriptions and drugs only totaling 7.9%. Tobacco products sold 16.3% of the total. Even though the Pancho Villa raids – that spawned the 1916 sales to soldiers – was long over, the “other items” may have continued to be supplies for the “Soldier’s Store” for Fort Bliss personnel. M.A. Warner signed the form as manager (Figure 5-55).

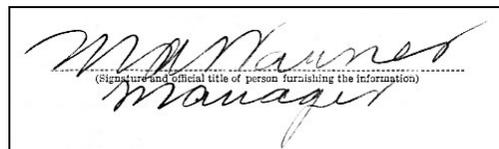


Figure 5-55 – Milton Warner’s signature (Census of Distribution 1929)

On June 30, 1937, the Warner Drug Store, along with three other major drug stores, advertised Van-Tage in the *El Paso Times*. Van-Tage was a product promising relief from problems with bowels, stomach, kidneys, liver, and rheumatic pain. A four-day sale promised a “Trial Bottle” of Van-Tage for 25¢ so that consumers could try the product before buying a regular bottle at \$1.25.

The store moved to 210-12 Mills in 1939 and now had four telephones. In 1941, Jennie Warner was listed as president, suggesting that Milton had died or been incapacitated. The following year, the store became “The Rexall Store,” with M. Aguirre as general manager and C.O. Albright as merchandise manager. Harris Warner replaced his mother as president in 1943, and W.S. Warnoch was listed as vice president in 1945. An ad in the 1948 City Directory was for “Warners Your Rexall Store in front of the Post Office Over 25,000 different items on sale at DEEP CUT PRICES every day. Week End Special prices advertised in Thursday and Friday El Paso papers. Fast Free Delivery on Prescriptions.”

M. Aguirre became president and treasurer in 1955, and the firm opened a new branch at 7792 Franklin Rd. in Tigua the following year. The store opened another new branch at 5000 Alameda Ave. in 1959. In 1962, the president and treasurer was Clara G. Aguirre, possibly the widow of M. Aguirre. The last listing for the concern was in 1963, when Clara Aguirre remained as president, James Ikard was vice president, and Eva R. Hernandez was secretary (EPCD 1955-1963).

Warner Bottle and Label

The only Warner Drug bottle I have found was amber in color, square in cross section, and machine made. It had a continuous thread finish, topped by a plastic screw cap (knurled sides) with 6.0 cm. x 0.3 cm. glass rod applicator attached (with 0.4 cm. ball on end of rod). The bottle held 1.5 ounces (by measurement – not on the label or bottle) and measured 7.8 cm. in height and 3.0 cm. on both sides.

A paper label with blue printing and red typing was affixed to the bottle. The label was outlined in double blue lines and divided in half by a single line, Typed in red in the upper section was: Tinc. Merthiolate. The left side of the lower half contained a logo with a blue

circle enclosing a white W that was surrounded by a white circle with “THE UP TO DATE (downward arch) / DRUG STORE (upward arch).” A wreath surrounded the lower part and both sides, and the logo was topped by a mortar and pestle. The center and left of the label was printed (in a light blue shadowed background): “The Warner / Drug Co. / OPPOSITE / POST OFFICE / PHONES 731-732. EL PASO, TEX.” (Figure 5-56).



Figure 5-56 – Warner’s Drug bottle

The base was embossed “<0> / 7 6 / 6” – all surrounded by an Owens scar. The “6”

indicates that the bottle was made by the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. in either 1936 or 1946. The left numeral (7) specified the Alton, Illinois, plant. This bottle provides a minor mystery. The bottle is newer than the label. The label was almost certainly pre-1908. The Pure Food & Drug Act of 1906 required ingredients to be posted on labels, with a grace period of several months to comply – and this label has none. The bottle, however, was made at least two decades later. This was probably a case where old labels were discovered and used by the drug store – despite the lack of conformation to the law.



Figure 5-57 – Warner’s label

I also found a single Warner Drug Co. label. The label was for “BLUE LABEL / ISOPROPYL ALCOHOL / RUBBING COMPOUND.” The label is apparently newer than the one on the bottle described above. It calls the company Warner Drug Co., Inc. (Figure 5-57).

William Beaumont Army Medical Center (1972-present)

When the military arrived in the El Paso area in the 1850s, it brought its medical personnel, creating the background for the eventual hospital. When Fort Bliss eventually settled at Lanoria Mesa, the medical staff moved into the first hospital, Building 8. The hospital moved

to Building 1 in 1916. Named for Capt. William Beaumont, and Army surgeon, construction began on William Beaumont General Hospital on June 20, 1920 – northeast of that main body of the fort. The Army completed the new hospital – renamed the William Beaumont Army Medical Center – on July 2, 1972. The hospital added new facilities as needed, including what would become one of El Paso’s largest buildings in 1995 (Figure 5-58). The facility still serves Fort Bliss in 2014 (U.S. Army Medical Dept. 2012).



Figure 5-58 – William Beaumont AMC (U.S. Army Medical Dept. 2012)

William Beaumont Bottle

One bottle from the center was probably made during the 1960s, possibly 1970s. The bottle was oval in cross-section and measured 10.2 cm. in height, 5.0 cm. in width, and 2.6 cm. thick. The continuous-thread finish was concealed by a knurled, black-plastic cap.

The paper label was white with blue lettering. A mortar and pestle enclosing a prescription symbol (℞) adorned the upper left corner with a caduceus in the upper right. Between the two were the words “PHARMACY SERVICES / WILLIAM BEAUMONT / ARMY MEDICAL CENTER / EL PASO, TEXAS 79920.” Below that was “DRY HEAT STERILIZED GLYCERIN USP / 2 OZ. / This bottle is for one time / application only. / KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.” (Figure 5-59). The price has long worn off of the price sticker on the back.



Figure 5-59 – William Beaumont bottle

The stippled base was embossed “7 2 OZ. 8” surrounded by a machine scar. The “8” showed clear evidence that it had been drilled out, plugged, and restamped (Figure 5-60). This almost certainly indicates that the “8” was a date code and that the mold had therefore been used

at least one year previously. Unfortunately, a single-digit date code could mean several decades, although we can narrow it a bit. Since the five-digit zip code system began in 1961, the label (and likely the bottle) could not have been used prior to that year. Even closer, the facility was renamed the William Beaumont Army Medical Center in 1972, eliminating the 1960s. By 1980, almost all glass houses had adopted the two-digit date code system, so the bottle was very likely made in 1978 – although a 1988 cannot be entirely eliminated. The lack of a manufacturer’s mark on the base may indicate that the bottle was made especially for the military.



Figure 5-60 – William Beaumont bottle base

Discussion and Conclusions

These bottles and the druggists who used them spaned a period from 1900 to ca. 1976. What is probably the most remarkable is how *little* prescription bottles changed during that period. Embossed bottles were already a minority by the turn of the century, and they were soon phased out, but the paper label on generic bottles – usually with graduations on the sides – persisted to mid-century. Although the graduations disappeared, the paper labels persisted. Another trend was the shift to continuous-thread finishes and screw caps – first rolled steel, then plastic – in the mid- to late 1920s. But the bottle shapes remained remarkably consistent.

The shift from small, family-owned drug stores to locally owned chains to national chains also increased throughout the century. However, the family-owned business never entirely vanished, and at least one store continued to operate a soda fountain into the 1990s! The 1929 Census of Distribution also showed that the soda fountain was the highest income producer for most druggists in the first half of the century – followed, unfortunately, by tobacco products. Still, the modern drug store has actually changed little. The stores still sell a huge variety of products – many the same as in 1900 – as well as filling prescriptions. Gone, however, is the soda fountain.

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