

Part I

Theodore L. Reber, the Johnny Appleseed of Soda Bottlers

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Accompanied by his wife, Rebecca, Theodore L. Reber was one of the most prolific salesmen of soda bottling equipment in the late 19th century. Although he also apparently sold outfits to people who wanted them, his most common method was to rent or build a structure, open a bottling works, become a success, then sell out and move on. Reber was especially attracted to railroad towns and mining districts – although almost any new, active town was fair game. If he could combine two or more of those, so much the better.



Figure 1-1 – Samuel and Mary Ann Reber (Courtesy of Cynthia Smith)

History

Theodore L. Reber was born in 1838 at Howard Township, Centre County, Pennsylvania. The son of Samuel Reber and Mary Ann Askey (Figure 1-1), Reber married Rebecca Ella Kunes sometime prior to 1860. The couple had two children: James O. Reber, born on April 1,



Figure 1-2 – Lena Reber (Courtesy of Cynthia Smith)

1860, and Lenna Kathryn Reber, born on October 23, 1862 (Figure 1-2). Rebecca died about four months after the second birth. Only about four months later, T.L. married another Rebecca – this time, Rebecca Jane Rogers – on July 9, 1863. The second union was apparently childless. This second Rebecca, remained his wife until at least 1900, possibly for the rest of his life (Rootsweb 2010).

Kansas

The couple was at Osage City, Kansas, in 1870, where T.L. listed his occupation on the census as “clerk in grocery.” His employer was actually the firm of Bothel & Ryus, dealers in general merchandise. Apparently, the couple had been in town since it was laid out in late 1869. He was “one of the oldest citizens” of the place and had superintended the building of the first structures in the town. The Rebers also owned a 160-acre farm that they, like many others, purchased from the federal government for \$1.25 per acre under the “Cash Act” of April 24, 1820. The Rebers apparently offered that land for sale in 1871 (*Leavenworth Bulletin* 7/19/1871).

The couple actually sold the property in two parcels, the western half to Thomas A. Bodine and Charles J. Bodine for \$1,000 on August 14, 1872, almost two months prior to receiving the title. The deed, however, was not recorded until October – when they actually had the title. They sold the eastern half to David Ramsey for \$1,500 on October 30, 1872 – this time ten days after they received the title (Osage County, Kansas, Deed Records, Book L, pp. 72, 426, and 534). Now unencumbered, the Rebers headed for Texas.

Denison, Texas

T.L. Reber was a dealer in newspapers, magazines, stationary, pens, pencils, ink, note paper, and other writing supplies at Denison, Texas, in 1873. By the next year, he had taken on a partner. The firm was now Reber & Putnam on Main St., below Austin. All was not well, however. A Waco newspaper, on December 14, 1875, reported that:

a man named Pope, in Denison, was rather too intimate with Mrs. Reber. Mr. R expressed dissent, and Pope shot him. It’s a queer country where a man can’t do as he pleases, pay attention, for instance, to another man’s wife, without the impertinent interference of the husband. It’s hard.

Obviously, Reber survived. By 1876, the business was called the City Book Store (*Denison Daily News* 8/27/1873; 1/29/1874). The *Denison Daily News* (10/22/1876) noted that:

Reber, at the City Book Store, has received a magnificent stock of stationary, including all the latest styles of note papers, put up in beautiful boxes. The designs are novel and are just such that will certainly please the young ladies. . . . Mr. Reber is a pleasant man to deal with, sells at small profit—the results he gets big trade.

According to the April 1877 issue of the *American Bookseller* (1877:197), “At Denison, Texas, Mr. T.L. Reber, of the firm of Reber & Armstrong, has sold his interest to Daniel Webster, and the business is continued by Webster & Armstrong.” It is apparent that Reber’s extreme wanderlust had not yet set in. He was in business in Denison from at least August 1873 to April 1877 – a total of three years and eight months. Considering his future propensity for short stays, this was a truly extended occupation!

Dakota Territory

Just two months later, on June 30, 1877, the *Black Hills Daily Times* announced that:

T.L. Reber & Co. have purchased the St. James Restaurant, located in Golden Gate, and have re-opened in good style, and reduced their rates for day board to \$7.00 per week, currency. T.L. Reber will also open in a few days a large stock of groceries, stationery, notions, etc. at Golden Gate.

Both T.L. Reber and “Reber and Co.” were on a list of people and businesses in Deadwood, Dakota, who wanted to keep the value of gold at \$18 per ounce on July 2, 1877, and Rebecca was “at the Recorder’s Office” on January 16, 1878 (Deadwood Genealogy Forum 2010). According to the 1878 Business Directory for Golden Gate, Dakota Territory, T.L. Reber was operating a saloon at the town.

On July 1, 1878, the *Black Hills Daily Times* listed Mrs. T.L. Reber as a passenger departing on the stage coach. She may have been joining T.L., who had possibly already moved to Dallas, Texas, or parts unknown.

The Empty Year – Dallas?

We have found no solid reference for the year between July 1878 and July 1879. The *New Mexican Herald* (7/2/1879) placed the Rebers at Dallas, Texas, at some point prior to July 1879. Although this reference could easily have been a confusion with Reber's almost four years at Denison, the Dallas period – if real – could only have been during this year.

Jerry Simmons (personal communication, 3/12/2010) added:

There is a rare mineral water bottle from the early town of Dallas that could fit into Reber's bag. The bottle is a brown pint saratoga type. No one seems to know much about the person(s) who had the bottle blown and distributed. Could our Mr. Reber be the donkey to pin the tail on?

The timing would be about right for the use of such a bottle. This was also too early for Reber to have used a Hutchinson bottle.

The New Mexico Years

Because we have discovered no information about the 1878-1879 period, we do not know when the Rebers first migrated to New Mexico. Aside from the Dallas possibility, speculation is virtually useless.

Las Vegas

Reber and his wife moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico, sometime prior to July 1879. Typical of his later pattern, Reber arrived before the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad. Reber opened up what was apparently his initial soda bottling plant at Las Vegas in late June or early July. The *New Mexican Herald* (7/2/1879) reported:

Another industry has been added to the many lately established here, and one which the friends of temperance will hail as a valuable auxiliary to their endeavors to lessen the use of intoxicating drinks. Mr. T.L. Reber, late of Dallas, Texas, is the humanitarian we speak of, and his business is the manufacture of evervescent

[sic] beverages, such as soda-pop, ginger-pop, lemon-pop, champagne, cider [should be champagne cider, a popular drink of the time], etc. Of the excellence of these compounds we can speak advisedly, and have no hesitancy in recommending them. Mr. Reber has new machinery throughout of capacity sufficient to supply any demand made upon him, and is already enjoying a good trade although established but a few days. Families can have these drinks left at their home by ordering by the box. Give them a trial.

When the railroad arrived, Reber was already well established and in a great position to make a sale at a profit. At some point, probably early in 1880, Reber had sold out, likely to the firm of Scherer & Wiegand. Although the bottling history of Las Vegas has yet to be written, Scherer & Wiegand advertised in the *Las Vegas Optic* from late March to December 1881 and used a Hutchinson bottle (Figure 1-3). Chris Wiegand apparently purchased Scherer's interest, probably during the 1882-1884 period, and continued in business. He seems to have taken G.A. Rothgeb on as a partner in the mid-1890s.¹

Silver City

By March 1880, however, the Rebers had moved to Silver City, where Reber listed himself as a carpenter in the census that year.

Founded in 1871, Silver City was a booming mining center by the time the Rebers arrived. With prosperous miners and even more hopefuls in the area, the location was perfect for the new bottling works (Williams 1986). Reber had a license to vend merchandise in the town from

March 11 to June 10, 1880. The *Daily Southwest* (5/14/1880) ran two comments for the week in the "Local News" section: "Everybody drinks Reber and Collier's ginger ale," and "Try Reber's soda water, ginger ale and sarsaparilla."



Figure 1-3 – Scherer & Wiegand bottle – Las Vegas (Lynn Loomis collection)

¹ The possible chronology for Las Vegas soda bottlers is based on embossed Hutchinson soda bottles and ads in the *Las Vegas Optic*.

This is slightly different from the Reber's later practice and is the only record we have found where Reber was apparently in partnership in the soda trade (possibly from bad partnership experiences in Denison). J.H. Collier listed his occupation as "Mill Supt." in the 1880 census, so he may have financed the soda business, while Reber did the work.

On March 22, however, Reber and L.P. Collier (likely the same person as J.H.) took out a mortgage from James Mullen for "One Hundred dollars and interest," due on May 21. The security for the mortgage was "One set soda apparatus and fixtures and materials Copper Generator Purified Bottling Bench and Table Bottles &c &c situated in Silver City Grant County, New Mexico." The record was marked "Original filed Cancelled James Mullen" in a marginal note (Chattel Mortgages, Book No. 1, p. 10). Reber & Collier had apparently paid off the note.

Reber had remained at Las Vegas for seven months, assuming he stayed at that location until he moved to Silver City. Although we have scant information about the bottling history of the town, it is likely that Reber began the pattern that would continue for the rest of his life. He could be called the Johnny Appleseed of soda bottlers, setting up his firm, then selling the entire business and moving on.

Since his stay at Silver City lasted only about three months, he likely found a buyer early. Although we have discovered no documentary evidence, there is a ginger ale bottle from Silver City embossed A.W. Dober (Figure 1-4). August Wilhelm Dober arrived at Silver City "in 1880 before the Southern Pacific Railroad had been completed" (Hill 1978:22).² He was thus in a perfect position to buy out Reber & Collier. Dober may have remained in business for as long as two years, probably selling to Jacob Reidlinger in late 1881 or 1882.



Figure 1-4 – A.W. Dober bottle – Silver City (Lynn Loomis collection)

² The Southern Pacific reached Lordsburg on October 18, 1880, and Deming on December 15. The Silver City spur, however, was not completed until May 12, 1883 (Myrick 1990:60; 193).

Mesilla

By this time, Reber was set in the wandering pattern that he would follow the rest of his life. On July 1, 1880, the *Mesilla News* noted that “F.S. [sic] Reber and wife are . . . illa. We learn Mr. Reber . . . start a soda water manufacture here. Abundent [sic] success is the wish of The News.” A search of both Mesilla newspapers published in 1880 and 1881, as well as the two in nearby Las Cruces, failed to disclose a single additional reference to Reber. However, he may have either remained at Mesilla until the first reference to him at El Paso, Texas, in March 1881, or moved to El Paso at some point during the July 1880-March 1881 period.

Reber may have missed the call on this one. The Santa Fe did not arrive at nearby Las Cruces until about April 1881. It bypassed Mesilla entirely. In the absence of the railroad, business may have been poor at Mesilla; there is no evidence that another soda bottler replaced Reber.

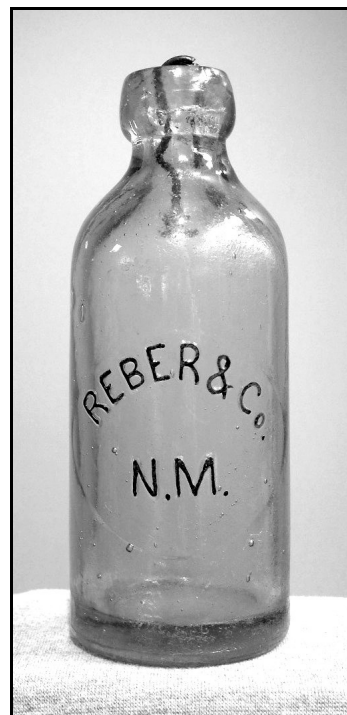


Figure 1-5 – Reber’s earliest known Hutchinson bottle (Lynn Loomis collection)

Reber probably used his first embossed bottle – an aqua-colored, Hutchinson-patented container with an internal stopper – at Mesilla. In a front plate, the bottle was embossed “REBER & Co. / N.M.” (Figure 1-5). These bottles are rare. Reber probably only ordered a minimum number of the bottle and used them until they were completely worn out, or they had been kept by his customers (see the Bottles and Bottling section for more information).

The First Socorro Business?

An October 1883 article (see below) had called Reber “an old resident of Socorro” who had “returned” to the city. Aside from the short period after Reber had left El Paso (see Deming or Socorro? below) and this period, we have an almost unbroken chronology for Reber from July 1879 to December 1883. The July 1879 article (see above) makes it clear that Reber was newly arrived in New Mexico, so it is unlikely that he was in Socorro prior to that time.

Reber was only listed at Mesilla on July 1, 1880, and at El Paso in May 1881. However, it is certain that he was in El Paso prior to May, probably at least a month sooner – possibly several months earlier. Thus, there is a gap in our knowledge of Reber that probably extends from August or September 1880 to early 1881. For Reber, this was certainly sufficient time to move to Socorro, set up business, sell out, and move on. The time was right. Socorro was already enjoying a mining boom, and the Santa Fe Railway arrived at the bustling town in August 1880, bringing a combination of supplies and new business to the town. It was a ripe moment for a new soda works.

As with many other Reber possibilities, the timing is intriguing. While our documentary evidence for early Socorro soda bottling is scarce, the historical sources combined with physical evidence (i.e., bottles) presents an interesting picture. William F. Johnson may have been the first soda bottler in town. Johnson listed his occupation as “Soda Water Mfg.” at Santa Fe, when he was enumerated in June for the 1880 census. When he migrated to Socorro is unknown, but he was certainly in town by February 1881, when he and John Corbett purchased land together for their soda bottling plant.

Why Johnson left Santa Fe is also worth considering. In June 1880, A.L. Houck opened a major soda bottling and beer agency at Santa Fe that may have forced other bottlers out of business. Newspapers at the time indicated that the business was massive. Johnson may have left to avoid the competition, not knowing that Houck would be out of business by early 1882, probably due to a fire at the plant in February (Lockhart 2012).

Prior to his association with Corbett, Johnson was apparently bottling on his own at some point during the June 1880-February



Figure 1-6 – W.F.J. bottle
(Lynn Loomis collection)

1881 period.³ A few examples have been found of a Hutchinson bottle embossed “W.F.J. / SOCORRO / N.M.” in a round plate, with “IGCo” on the reverse heel (Figure 1-6). The Illinois Glass Co. used the IGCo logo from ca. 1880 to ca. 1916, so the mark does not help set a time period. It does, however, strongly suggest that Johnson was in business alone at some point.

Johnson’s partner, John Corbett, also had a Hutchinson bottle of *his* own, embossed “J.C. / SOCORRO / N.M.” – although these are extremely rare. While this suggests that Corbett also had his own bottling works, Corbett’s story begins a year earlier. Corbett arrived in New Mexico in 1879 and settled at Las Vegas (Anderson 1907; Anonymous 1895; *Deming Headlight* 5/24/1918; *Deming Graphic* 5/24/1918). Harken back to our earliest discussion of Reber and bottling – at Las Vegas in 1879. While Las Vegas was a growing town in 1879, it was still small enough where Corbett could not have missed Reber – and may, indeed, have been an employee. Las Vegas may have been where Corbett first became interested in soda bottling.

The next soda bottler at Las Vegas was Scherer & Wiegand, and they almost certainly purchased Reber’s operation. Although this is pure speculation, Corbett may have continued to work for Scherer & Wiegand. Reber, meanwhile, set up businesses at Silver City and Mesilla. He may have arrived at Socorro before or at the same time as Johnson and may have wired Corbett that the town was ripe for a new business. Thus, Corbett may have moved to Socorro specifically to buy Reber’s business.

It is also possible that Reber supplied both competitors. In El Paso, he almost certainly had two sets of equipment, and he advertised two sets at Alamogordo. He may have carefully left town after he sold setups to each of them.

Johnson & Corbett certainly had merged by February 1881, and they used at least three minor variations of a distinctive



Figure 1-7 – Johnson & Corbett bottle (Lynn Loomis collection)

³ Unfortunately, we could only discover three extant Socorro newspapers for this period – and none of the soda bottlers were mentioned in any of them.

Hutchinson bottle embossed “JOHNSON & CORBETT / SOCORRO / N.M.” with one variation having “IGCo” on the heel (Figure 1-7). However, they may not have gotten along well. At some point in 1882, Corbett moved to Deming to set up a branch of the business and remained there for the rest of his life. Johnson, meanwhile, advertised both branches in the *Socorro Daily Sun* from January to December 1883. On January 26, 1884, the *Silver City Enterprise* noted that “Johnson & Corbett of Deming have the most complete soda water factory in the Southwest.” Johnson & Corbett sold the property to E.M. Pitcher and R.M. Tweed in March 1884, although they may have ceased operations a few months earlier (Lockhart 2005).

El Paso, Texas

In 1899, when Reber was at Alamogordo, he claimed that he “sold the first plant that was ever in El Paso, Texas, to Houck & Dieter” (*Sacramento Chief* 5/22/1899). Houck & Dieter, an El Paso liquor dealer, began soda bottling on May 1, 1881. The day after Houck & Dieter opened, the *El Paso Times* (5/2/1881) ran a short piece on Reber:

Reber & Co., have removed their business to the new store room on El Paso Street next to Palace Drug Store, where they will be glad to welcome their friends and former patrons. Their stock of Stationary, Periodicals, Sodawater, Sarsaparilla, etc., will be increased and their facilities for handling the same greatly added to. Call them and see.

These two references to Reber at El Paso imply three interesting ideas. First, Reber was almost certainly the first soda bottler at El Paso, and he probably arrived by at least early 1881, possibly sometime during the second half of 1880. Although Reber’s arrival was probably heralded by the press, no early copies have survived. He had to have been in town with sufficient time to set up his business, then convince John P. Dieter to expand the Houck & Dieter liquor business into the soda trade. Houck & Dieter, of course, used a Hutchinson bottle (Figure 1-8).

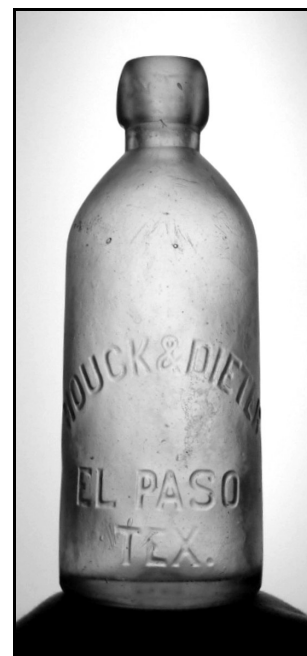


Figure 1-8 – Houck & Dieter bottle – El Paso

Second, Reber’s move to the “new store room on El Paso Street” suggests that Houck & Dieter not only bought Reber’s equipment, they occupied his former bottling location (Figure 1-9). The timing is right: Reber advertised on the day after Houck & Dieter began soda production, Thus, the location of Houck & Dieter near the intersection of San Francisco and Chihuahua streets on the 1881 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map was probably the original site of Reber’s business at El Paso (Figure 1-10).



Figure 1-9 – Houck & Dieter in 1881 (Courtesy of the Dieter descendants)

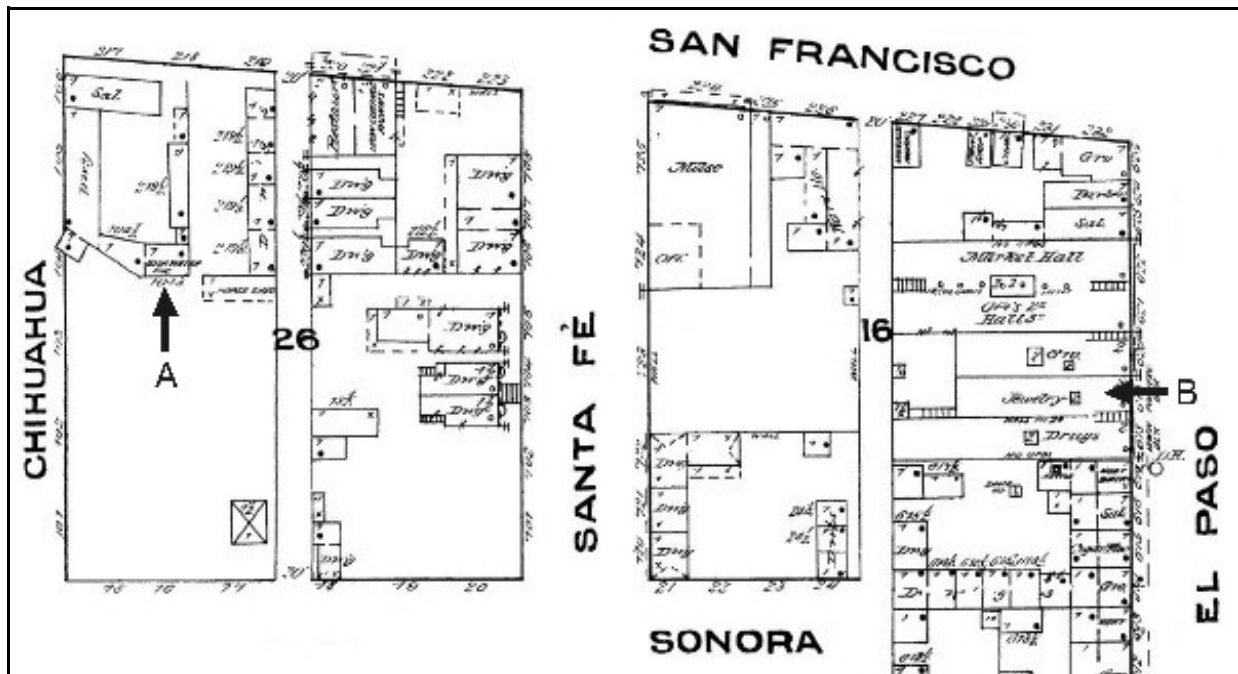


Figure 1-10 – Reber’s first “soda fac.” on Chihuahua and his later store on El Paso Street (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1883)

Finally, the *Times* blurb implies that Reber had another set of bottling equipment to increase his stock of “Sodawater, Sarsaparilla, etc.” Thus, Reber was in position to score another bottling outfit sale soon thereafter. In early June, Coffin & Co. advertised that it had “Just

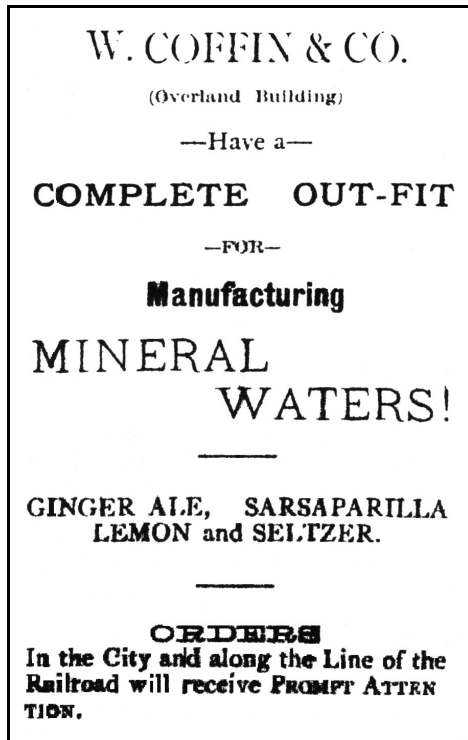


Figure 1-11 – Ad for Coffin & Co. (*El Paso Herald* 9/28/1881)

Received a Complete Outfit for Manufacturing Mineral Water, Seltzer, Ginger Ale, Lemon, Sarsaparilla Etc., Etc.” (Figure 1-11) and invited the public to try its drinks (*El Paso Times* 6/10/1881). The logical place for Coffin & Co. to have “just received” a bottling outfit was Reber.

The Coffin & Co. bottle used a stopper invented by Arthur Christin that was different from the typical Reber Hutchinson bottle. These also had internal stoppers, but they were not attached to the throat of



Figure 1-12 – Coffin & Co. bottle with Christin finish (Lockhart 2010)

the bottle (Figure 1-12). Reber may have experimented with a different bottle style – the Christin – using an unembossed bottle. When Coffin & Co. purchased the bottling apparatus, they obviously also bought new containers with their identification (see Bottles and Bottling section for more information).

El Paso is the almost certain location for the second marked Reber bottle. Although this bottle was colorless, it was virtually identical to the one that was probably used by Reber at Mesilla – except that the “N.M.” designation was missing (Figure 1-13). Reber likely had the factory drill out and plug the “N.M.” section so that the bottles would be usable at El Paso (see A Summary of Reber Bottles).

In late September, Reber was noted as carrying the “largest lot of blank books in the city, just received from the manufacturers in New York; also envelopes and paper. Must be sold in the next 30 days. Remember the place. Reber & Co.” (*El Paso Herald* 9/28/1881). Note that this reference does *not* include sodas – which fits if Reber had sold his last equipment to Coffin & Co. in June.

His last mention was on October 5, when J.A. Kammiss opened a watchmaker and jewelry store “located in the store with Reber & Co.” (*El Paso Herald* 10/5/1881). The 1883 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows a jewelry store on El Paso St., nine businesses north of Overland and immediately north of a drug and book store (see Figure 1-10). It is likely that Kammiss bought out Reber’s interest and continued in business at the same place. Thus, the jewelry store on the map was probably Reber’s 1881 location.

It is notable that neither of the last two blurbs mentioned sodas. It is very likely that Reber realized that the soda bottling outfit market was saturated, and the book and stationary business was rapidly becoming so. W.A. Irvin & Co., one of El Paso’s earliest and most successful drug stores also sold books and stationary, and another “paper” store was just opening. In addition, the October 5 issue of the *Herald* also carried the last ad for Coffin & Co. Coffin may have been pressuring Reber to return the “outfit for manufacturing mineral water” that it first advertised about June. With this combination of circumstances, Reber probably left, as the September write-up suggested, before the end of October 1881.

Deming or Socorro?

This leaves an empty spot from late October 1881 to late July 1882 – an eight-month period. We have two possible venues for this period – both supported by circumstantial evidence but no historically documented evidence of Reber’s presence. The first venue addressed in this study is Deming.

Deming

The Deming hypothesis is intriguing because it ties up two loose ends. If Reber was at Deming during *this* “empty” period, then he was almost certainly at Socorro in the 1880-1881 “empty” segment. Unfortunately, circumstantial evidence supports both places.

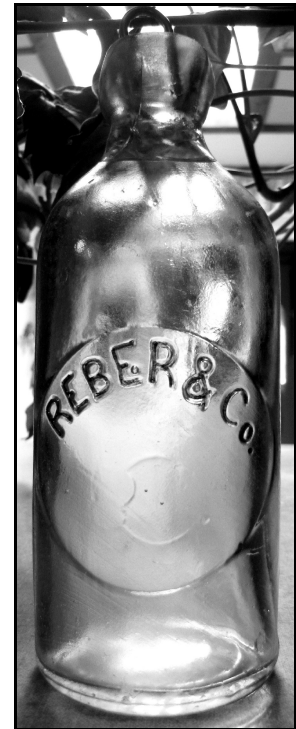


Figure 1-13 – Reber’s second bottle, probably used at El Paso (Lynn Loomis collection)

The only references we have for John Corbett's arrival at Deming in 1882 are an article in the *Deming Graphic* (5/24/1918) and two early histories of New Mexico (Anderson 1907; Anonymous 1895). Corbett's obituaries (*Deming Headlight* 5/24/1918; *Deming Graphic* 5/24/1918), however, place him at Deming in 1881 (see Lockhart 2009 for a more complete history of Corbett at Deming). These sources make it likely that Corbett moved to Deming during the "empty" Reber period – late October 1881 to late July 1882.

Although this is pure speculation, the timing was right – and Corbett used four variations of Hutchinson bottles, all embossed "JOHN CORBETT / DEMING / N.M." in round plates (Figure 1-14). The Southern Pacific Railway arrived at Deming in 1880, and the Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railway came to the town two years later. Since there was no soda bottler in a town that was booming, it was a perfect place to attract Reber. Couple this attraction with Reber's previous connection to Corbett (assuming – as this hypothesis does – that Reber was at Socorro during the period between September 1880 to early 1881), and the scene is set for another transaction. Indeed, Reber may have intentionally arrived at Deming about the same time as Corbett – just to help set up the Deming branch.

This may be the earliest period when Reber switched from being a soda water bottler to being an equipment salesman and/or manufacturer's representative. In several later cases, Reber seems to have arrived at a town (notably twice at Prescott, Arizona – in 1900 and 1904) just to sell bottling outfits or supplies. Since we discovered those instances by chance, there may have been dozens of undocumented sales made by Reber throughout his career – in addition to the times he set up business to make a living while waiting to sell out.

Thus, Reber may have established another business at Deming in late 1881 or early 1882, or he may have just come to assist Corbett in setting up and to sell another bottling unit. If the latter case is correct, there would be virtually no record of Reber's existence at Deming. A final detail is that Corbett continued to use Hutchinson bottles. Of course that may have no connection with Reber (at least this time); Johnson & Corbett used Hutchinson bottles at Socorro prior to Corbett's move.



Figure 1-14 – John Corbett's Deming bottle (Lynn Loomis collection)

Socorro

As noted above (see First Business at Socorro?), Reber was probably at Socorro during the 1880-1881 “empty” period. However, he may instead have been at the town during October 1881-July 1882, after he had left El Paso.

Although the evidence is scant, the late-1881 to late 1882 period fits well for family reasons. According to the marriage records at the Menaul Historical Library at Albuquerque, Mary (Rodgers) Fory – the sister of Rebecca (Rodgers) Reber – married William S. Pratt at Socorro on April 29, 1882. This gathering of a Pennsylvania family at Socorro, New Mexico, had to have a reason – and the residence of T.L. and Rebecca is the most logical one.

The Pratts remained at Socorro. In 1883, they purchased Lots 17 & 18, Block 8, of Henson’s Addition. The couple remained residents of Socorro until at least 1885, possibly considerably longer. The Pratts sold a lot at Socorro, probably the same one, in 1903. This may have been the draw that pulled Reber back to Socorro at least twice more.

However, this eight-month period – from the end of October 1881-July 1882 – does not fit so well into Socorro soda bottling history. In February 1881, Johnson and Corbett bought a parcel of land together at Socorro – almost certainly to be used for the bottling works (Lockhart 2005:7-8). Although it is possible that the partners waited to set up the actual operation, it is highly unlikely that they would have delayed until October – when Reber could have arrived – an eight-month wait. It is thus likely that the earlier 1880-1881 period was more likely.

Robinson and Hillsboro

Reber had certainly left Socorro (or some other location) by July 1882, when an article in the *Las Vegas Daily Gazette* (7/27/1882) reported the arrival of Mrs. Reber from Robinson in the Black Range. A February 1883 ad in the *Black Range* (2/12/1883) announced: “Reber & Co. Soda Water Manufactory makes sarsaparilla, ginger ale, and plain pop. Uses new patent stopper bottle and pure syrups, Robinson, N.M.” The ads ran from at least January 12 to August 31, and all had the same content (Figure 1-15). As noted above, this certainly fits the Reber modus operandi; the Black Range was in the middle of a mining boom.

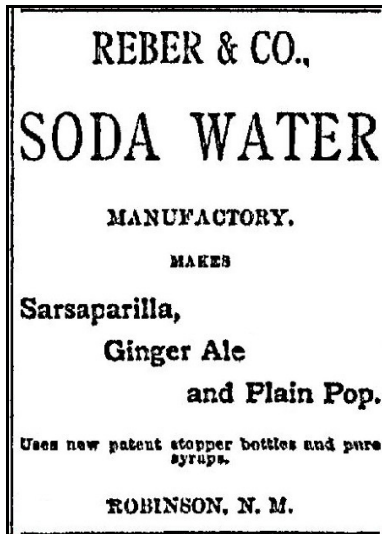


Figure 1-15 – Reber ad (*Black Range* 2/12/1883)



Figure 1-16 – T.L. and Rebecca Reber on a buckboard (Courtesy of Cynthia Smith)

Despite the ads beginning two months earlier, the *Black Range* (3/9/1883) reported that “Reber is pushing his residence and soda factory to completion, and when finished he will have things arranged in good shape for manufacturing soda. A driven well under cover will make the supply of water convenient.” The availability of good water was a problem, but Reber had “an abundance of water in his well at his ranch just east of Robinson” and may have used that well water for the production of his drinks (*Black Range* 4/27/1883).

Reber opened a branch at Hillsboro in 1883 (*Black Range* 3/2/1883), but he had apparently become discouraged with business at both locations (Figures 1-16 & 1-17). On April 6, he offered a “frame House, 20x30m 12 foot story, good floor and shingle roof; sold at a bargain. Reber & Co., Robinson” (*Black Range* 4/6/1883). Mrs. Reber left for parts unknown (at least to the newspaper) on June 29, but she returned on July 20. According to the *Black Range* (7/20/1883), Rebecca had “returned to the bosom of her family, and T.L. now wears his good coat” (i.e., Rebecca had come home, and Theodore was dressing and acting better because of her presence).

Although the name was not recorded, someone besides Reber must have operated the Hillsboro plant. When T.L. returned from a visit to Hillsboro in August 1883, he described the town as “equally as dull as the town here [i.e., Robinson]” (*Black Range* 8/24/1883). Although their departure was not recorded, the Rebers probably left the Black Range within the next month

or so. It was not until February 5, 1884, however, that the *Black Range* announced the sale of “the Reber Building” at Robinson by J.D. Perkins to H.N. Castle. Reber, of course, had already moved on to his next enterprise.

On November 14, 1883, James Ryan mortgaged a team of horses to the Rebers (now living at Socorro), almost certainly to buy the Reber bottling setup, probably the one at Hillsboro. Ryan remained in the soda business at Hillsboro (with a brief move to Lake Valley) until early 1887. On March 21, 1884, the

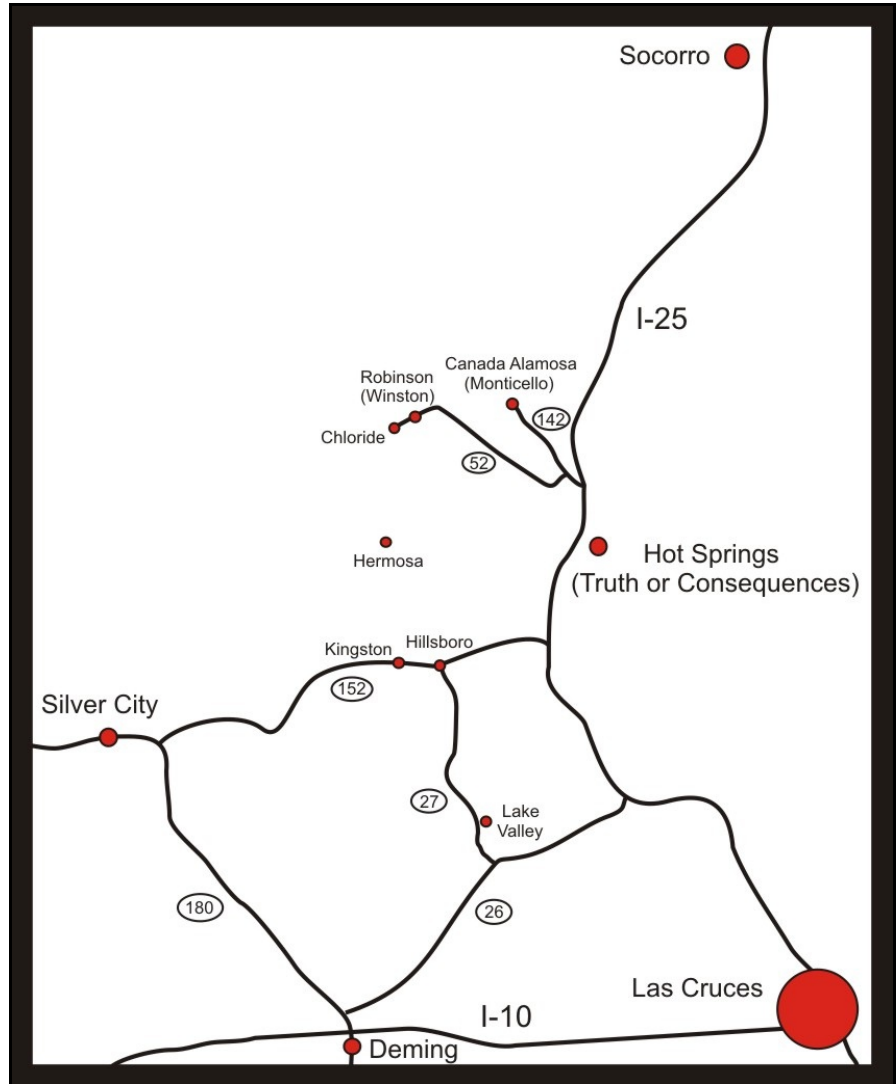


Figure 1-17 – Black Range

Black Range printed a brief but intriguing blurb: “L.P. Johnson is fixing up a building adjoining his residence [at Chloride] which he will occupy as a soda factory.” Since Chloride is very close to Robinson, Johnson probably bought Reber’s Robinson bottling apparatus. Unfortunately, we have found no other reference to Johnson’s bottling business.

Return to Socorro

By the first of November 1883, Reber had returned to Socorro. *The Bullion* (10/1/1883) discussed the move:

Mr. T.L. Reber, an old resident of Socorro, has returned to settle with his family in the gem city. We are indebted to him for two dozen bottles of carbonated water, and we are not extravagant when we say that it was of most excellent quality. We wish him success in his new departure.

In order to have presented sodas to the newspaper, Reber must have been in business prior to November 1, although we cannot be certain how long.

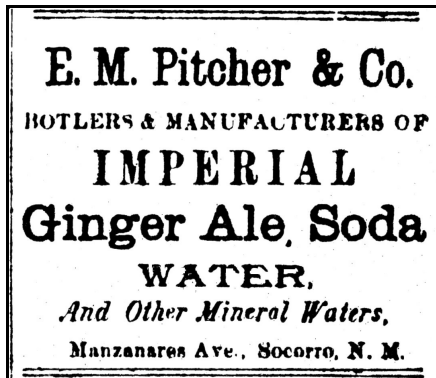


Figure 1-18 – E.M. Pitcher ad (*Socorro Chieftain* 5/29/1884)

Ten days after the first report, “Reber & Co. Manufacturers of Carbonated waters,” advertised that they “will supply every variety of mineral waters at reasonable prices. We have come to stay” (*The Bullion* 1/11/1883). Although Reber’s whereabouts after December are unknown for quite some time, his later history completely belies that they had “come to stay!”

In December, Reber “of Socorro” attended a bottlers’ convention in New York (*Black Range* 12/14/1883). This was the last reference we have found for Reber at Socorro – this time. However, once again, we can speculate a bit. As noted above (see *The First Socorro Business*), Johnson & Corbett began bottling by at least January 1883 (probably 1881). The pair advertised for the entire year – until late December. This span probably indicated that Johnson placed the ad for an entire year. It does *not* indicate how long the firm remained in business. Johnson and Corbett did not sell their land to Pitcher & Tweed until March 21, 1884. Again, however, the sale could have been well after the end of the business.

The timing is perfect. Reber is *reported* at Socorro during the period of October to December 1883, when we have no solid evidence for Johnson & Corbett still being in business. Pitcher & Tweed may have purchased the equipment from Reber, then acquired the property



Figure 1-19 – E.M. Pitcher & Co. bottle (Tino Romero collection)

from Johnson & Corbett (Figure 1-18). It is even *possible* that Reber rented the Johnson & Corbett building from October until some point around the first of the year – then sold the bottling apparatus to Pitcher & Tweed – and moved on. Pitcher, too, used a Hutchinson bottle (Figure 1-19).

Raton?

Raton began as the town of Willow Springs in 1877 and became Otero in 1879. The town was important because of its proximity to Raton Pass into Colorado. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad built its tracks across the pass and into the town in the spring of 1879, and the town adopted the name of the pass – Raton – and moved the town to remain on the tracks during the following year. The availability of water at Willow Springs (renamed Robinson) caused the railroad to set up a permanent division headquarters there – although the main settlement remained at Raton (Julyan 1998:286).

Although very little research has been conducted on Raton soda bottlers, Wood (1999:[50]) identified four Hutchinson bottles used by three Raton firms – Joe Haefner, G. Layer, and the Raton Beer, Ice & Bottling Co. (R.B.I.&B.Co.). The Lynn Loomis collection also has a bottle embossed “T.J. BURNS / RATON BOTTLING WKS (both arched) / REG. NO. 5 (inverted arch)” in a round plate on the front. Hutchbook (Fowler 2013) added two more – one just embossed “RATON BOTTLING WORKS / RATON, N.M.” – the other embossed “M&A / RATON / N.M.”

Although collectors have not found a bottle embossed with his name, Henry P. Scherer was probably the earliest bottler at Raton (with the possible exception of Reber, of course). Scherer advertised that he was a “Manufacturer and Dealer in Ginger Ale, Soda and Mineral Waters” in the 1884 *New Mexico Gazetteer*. Scherer advertised in the *Colfax County Stockman* until at least October 30, 1886. The name harkens us back to Reber’s time at Las Vegas. If Henry Scherer was the same man as the partner in Scherer & Wiegand, then we have a strong connection to Reber. Scherer & Wiegand was very likely the next bottler to follow Reber at Las Vegas. Scherer parted company with Chris Wiegand at some point after 1881, probably no later than 1884. He apparently moved northeast along the railroad to Raton, possibly at Reber’s invitation. Thus, Reber may have left Socorro in early 1884 to help Scherer set up business.

The Long Unknown Period – and The First Albuquerque Works

We have a long break in the record at this point. Assuming that Reber remained at Socorro long enough to sell to Pitcher & Tweed in early 1884, we have found no other sign of his activity – except the possible connection with Raton in early-to-mid-1884 – until he arrived at White Oaks in 1888 – a period of four-and-a-half years. As rapidly as Reber changed locations, he was very likely in business at least five places during that time. We even have very few hints about this period.

The *Albuquerque Morning Democrat* (10/1/1891) noted that Reber had established a plant at Albuquerque “for several years” that had to have been during this period. He may also have stayed for a few years at Socorro, although the probability of an earlier sale argues that he left by early 1884. However, this “empty” period lasted for four and one-half years – a long time for Reber to stay in one place – or even two places.

Although the period was “empty” of Reber evidence, there was plenty of activity at Albuquerque. Joseph DeMars and Isadore Mercier had opened the Albuquerque Bottling Works by May 7, 1883. By the following year, Joseph DeMars, Ferdinand Silva and Clement Stockbridge were operating the Southwestern Brewing Co. (Figure 1-20). In addition, Charles W. Kunz & Co. had



Figure 1-20 – Albuquerque brewery ad (*Albuquerque Democrat* 1/9/1887)

a bottling works near Union Depot – although Kunz probably did not last too long. By at least 1887, the bottling works and brewery had combined as the Albuquerque Brewery and Bottling Works – certainly daunting competition for anyone entering the bottling business in the city. By August, however, Mercier had split off from the Brewery and was offering Coyote Springs mineral water. The Albuquerque Brewery became the Southwestern Brewery, operated by Rankin & DeMars.

The presence of the Charles W. Kunz & Co. bottling works near Union Depot might be another Reber “signature” in the historic record. Although far from certain, it would have been

Reber's style to have started a second bottling works in town, sold out to Kunz, and left town again. This does not fit the "several years" reported by the *Albuquerque Morning Democrat* in October 1891, but the 1891 article would have been written from memory seven years after the fact. Memory errors are common in newspaper annals.

Alternatively, the Rebers may have been the "& Co." of the business. This would have been atypical in his soda bottling career, although Reber had partnered with others in many of his earliest venues. It was unusual for him not to have his name in the title, but Kunz may have put up all the capital for the venture – and insisted. Since Reber almost never placed paid ads in the newspapers, the business could have lasted "several years" or just another year or so – long enough for an editor to remember it as "several."

In addition, there were at least two other locations that fit Reber's profile. Both of these towns were booming during the mid-1880s, and both had soda bottlers who used Hutchinson bottles.

Carlisle?

Another interesting possibility is Carlisle, New Mexico, located in Grant County, just east of Duncan, Arizona (barely inside the New Mexico boundary). The area was explored by miners in the 1881-1883 period, locating the Carlisle mine. The town was named Carlisle from 1884 to 1896, when it was changed to Steeple Rock (Julyan 1998:341). While we have no documentary evidence for Reber at Carlisle, the mines were booming just at the point when Reber disappeared from the documentary records.

White Oaks

Reber opened a new plant at White Oaks – another mining community – by June 1888, and he was still there four months later (*Albuquerque Daily Citizen* 6/28/1888; *Albuquerque Morning Democrat* 7/3/1888). The *New Mexico Interpreter* (October 19, 1888) commented that "T.L. Reber is still on deck with his choice soda water, ales, etc." However, Reber had moved to Cerrillos by April of the following year (*Albuquerque Daily Citizen* 4/19/1889; *Santa Fe New Mexican* 5/23/1889). This leaves another six-month blank period in the Reber record.

Eddy?

Although we have no documentation to back this up, Reber *may* have initiated bottling at Eddy (later to become Carlsbad). Eddy was founded on September 15, 1888, and the city regulations forbade liquor sales within the community limits. This setup should have been irresistible to Reber – a new town, thirsty people, and no competition from the liquor dealers. The timing is perfect.

Unfortunately, none of the early Eddy newspapers have survived, nor other documentation to confirm Reber at Carlsbad -- nor have collectors reported a Hutchinson bottle with Eddy embossing. However, we have found few Reber bottles in *any* contexts. The earliest known bottle from the town was used by the firm of Matheson & Little (Figure 1-21). The bottle is light blue in color with a crown finish. The town name on the bottle is Carlsbad, and the name change did not occur until 1899. The style of the bottle, plate, and embossing was common in the first two decades of the 20th century, although only Hutchinson bottles are known to have been used by Reber.



Figure 1-21 – Matheson & Little bottle – Carlsbad (Lynn Loomis collection)

However, a surviving 1893 issue of the *Eddy County Citizen* provides a tantalizing glimpse of soda bottling during that period:

E.K. Miller, having purchased the J.F. Matheson soda water bottling outfit, went to Pecos Wednesday last where he will open a bottling works. He has been employed for some time at the W.L. Webster bottling works in Eddy and thoroughly understands the business and moreover is a young man of exceptionally good character.

This article suggests three things of interest in our Reber search. First, J.F Matheson owned a bottling outfit and was probably in soda bottling business prior to 1893. The timing is interesting. *If* Reber opened a works in late 1888 or early 1889 and sold out by the end of March, it would have been perfectly in keeping with his previous patterns. By 1893, Matheson would have only been in the bottling business for four years or less, when he sold the outfit to Miller.

Second, the article suggests that there were *two* soda bottlers in Eddy by 1893 – Matheson and W.L. Webster. *If* Reber initiated bottling at Carlsbad, either could have purchased Reber’s original outfit – or he may have sold equipment to *both* businesses. He apparently did something similar at El Paso in 1881, and he certainly had *two* bottling setups at Alamogordo in 1899.

Third, all of these bottlers almost certainly used containers with Hutchinson stoppers. The earliest use of crown-finished bottles found by Bob Brown was 1895 (personal communication 5/5/2011). All of the identified Reber bottles were of the Hutchinson style.

Gallup?

During this same late 1888 period, Reber could also have been at Gallup. Although the town did not officially receive a post office until 1882, the St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad had reached the end-of-track town by 1881 (Julyan 1998:144). Although Gallup would have been established for six years by 1888, it remained a major railroad yard. As such, it should have been quite attractive to Reber.

The earliest bottler currently known from the town was J. Reitz, proprietor of the Gallup Bottling Works, listed in the 1892 New Mexico Business Directory. Although we have not discovered when Reitz actually opened the business, Hutchinson bottles embossed “GALLUP / BOTTLING WORKS / GALLUP, N.M.” were probably made for the firm during the early years (Figure 1-22). While we have no direct connection to Reber, there are open spots during late 1888 and 1890, when he could have provided the equipment for Reitz.

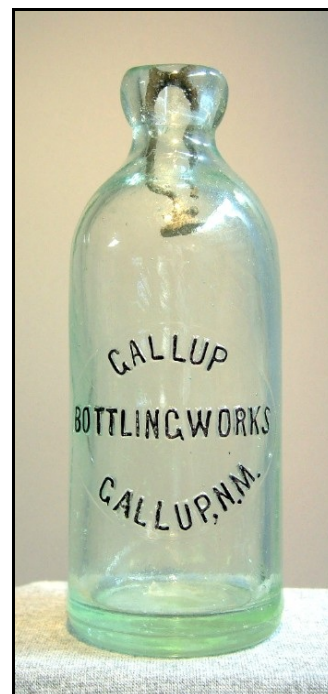


Figure 1-22 – Gallup Bottling Works Hutch (Lynn Loomis collection)

Cerrillos and San Pedro

The Rebers had arrived at Cerrillos – another mining center – by March 1889. The *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican* (4/22/1889) noted that “Mr Beber [*sic*] last Saturday bought lumber, hauled it to a lot on the upper end of Railroad avenue, built a house, and moved his family into it the following Monday evening. No drones in Cerrillos!”

Mrs. Reber was traveling pretty extensively during 1889 and 1890. She was reported at Socorro in June 1889 and Philadelphia in August. By June 1890, she was at Deming, probably to meet her step-mother and half-sister. T.L. was still in Cerrillos in July 1889, but was reported at San Pedro in October (*Albuquerque Daily Citizen* 6/11/1889, 10/2/1889, 6/9/1890; *Santa Fe New Mexican* 7/5/1889, 8/7/1889). Located 30 mile northeast of Albuquerque, San Pedro was in the midst of a gold and copper mining area from 1881 through ca. 1918 (Williams 1986). From October 1889 to the next Reber sighting in July 1890 is a ten-month period, certainly long enough for another business, possibly at San Pedro.

Collectors have discovered a single Hutchinson bottle from Cerrillos (Figure 1-23), embossed “CENCEL & KRICK (arch) / BOTTTLERS / CERRILLOS / N.M. (all horizontal)” in a plate on the front body with “I.G.Co.” on the back heel (Wood 1998). The I.G.Co. logo was used by the Illinois Glass Co. from ca. 1880 to ca. 1915. By ca. 1894, Illinois Glass frequently also embossed a two- to four-digit number to the right of the logo (Lockhart et al. 2005).



Figure 1-23 – Cencil & Krick bottle – Cerrillos (Lynn Loomis collection)

Although no direct evidence has yet been found, Andrew Cencil and John Krick very likely purchased Reber’s works in 1889. They apparently had a parting of the ways with Krick retaining the works, probably in 1890 or 1891. Although John was also involved in the Lemp’s distributorship and soda bottling operation with his brother, Henry, at Santa Fe, he severed that connection in April 1894 to concentrate his efforts at Cerrillos. He remained in business until 1899 or 1900 (*Santa Fe New Mexican* 4/23/1894).⁴

Lordsburg?

Although we have no documentary evidence for Reber’s presence at Lordsburg, the timing and opportunity both fit. The Rebers were reported at San Pedro in October 1889 and again at San Marcial in July 1890 – a span of nine months. Although the Southern Pacific had

⁴ Most of the information in this paragraph was provided by Bill Baxter.



Figure 1-24 – Charles App ad – Lordsburg
(*Western Liberal* 6/23/1893)

One major characteristic, however, does not fit well. App sold sodas to the soldiers at Fort Bowie (directly west along the Southern Pacific railway) and shipped his product to the fort via the railroad. Some 26-ounce export beer bottles found at the fort had paper labels identifying App as the bottler (Herskovitz 1978:5-6; Lockhart 2009:35-36). The use of such bottles (Figure 1-25) is inconsistent with Reber’s early *modus operandi*, where he apparently used Hutchinson bottles. It is certainly possible, however, that App used Hutchinson bottles with paper labels for his Lordsburg sales.



Figure 1-25 – Charles App Cherry Soda label on beer bottle (Fort Bowie collection)

However, Reber had changed his approach by at least 1893. On August 4, Reber advertised in the *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican* that he would pay “2 cents apiece for beer bottles and 3 cents for Manitou bottles.” He placed a similar ad in 1896 (see below). It is certainly possible that Reber was buying and using beer bottles two years earlier at Lordsburg.

Although we could find no entries for Reber in the 1889-1993 Lordsburg newspapers, we also found none for Charles App & Co. – except for the paid ads. It is easily possible that Reber was simply not mentioned in the newspapers – despite a very real presence. It is also possible that Reber was politically polarized from the newspaper editor. It was very common for editors at that time to ignore businesses that supported other political parties – unless they submitted paid ads. Members of the editors’ own parties, however, were often covered in “Around Here” columns and other blurbs – free.

San Marcial

The Rebers were in San Marcial at the European Hotel in July 1890 (*Albuquerque Daily Citizen* 7/11/1890). Whether the couple was just visiting San Marcial or was planning to set up yet another bottling works is unclear – although the timing for another business venture would have been tight. As usual, we have no report of Reber’s departure, but he was at Roswell *selling out* by late September. He almost had to have been at Roswell by at least September to set up the business prior to the sale – leaving less than two months for a San Marcial business.

The Santa Fe arrived at San Marcial in October 1880 and constructed workshops and switching yards. The town remained a railroad center until it was destroyed by a flood in 1929 (Williams 1986). While the Rebers arrival was long after the initial railroad initiative, the town remained a good bet for a soda plant.

Roswell

The *Albuquerque Morning Democrat* (10/1/1891) reported on October 1, 1891, that Reber had just moved back from Roswell, where he had been conducting a soda business for several months.” As noted just above, he had to have set the business up by at least early September. This time, Reber arrived well ahead of the railway. The Pecos Valley Railroad did not reach Roswell until 1894 (Williams 1986).

The timing was again ideal for a Reber sale. According to Shinkle (1964:183), Dave Scott began his soda bottling business at Roswell at some point during the early 1890s. Scott sold the business to George G. Gilmore on March 5, 1892, and Gilmore ran the business until ca. 1917. Gilmore also used Hutchinson bottles (Figure 1-26). If Reber left Roswell sometime during September 1891, he could certainly have sold his bottling apparatus to Scott. We know little about two other Hutchinson bottle users from Roswell: Gamble & Rascoe and J.S. Kirby, although Kirby was listed in the 1909 State Business Directory.

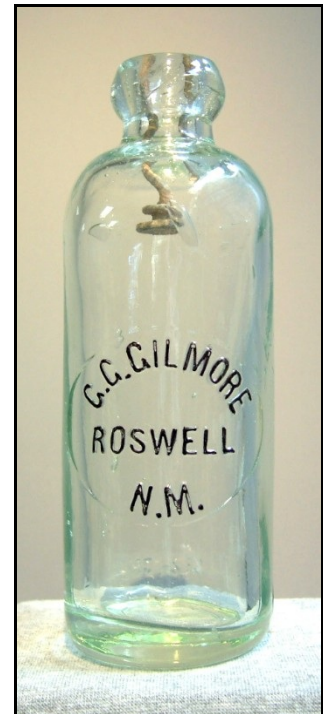


Figure 1-26 – G.G. Gilmore bottle – Roswell (Lynn Loomis collection)

Albuquerque – Again

The Rebers moved back to Albuquerque in late September 1891. The *Albuquerque Morning Democrat* (10/1/1891) called Reber “well known in Albuquerque” because he “conducted a soda water business here for several years.” At the time of the article, the couple had returned to start another bottling plant at “First street, northeast corner of Tijeras Road” and had begun to erect a “box building, large enough to accommodate his business and serve also as a dwelling.” The building was complete at the time, and the couple were sleeping in it, when someone shot at them while they were in bed on two separate occasions. Neither was hurt, although Rebecca Reber moved to a hotel for a few days.

Despite the gunfire, the Rebers completed their new enterprise and began selling sodas again. According to the *Albuquerque Morning Democrat* (12/22/1891):

The Santa Claus of the Reber bottling works got around ahead of Xmas yesterday and left a generous sample of his delicious drinks at the office. As the [staff] in the Democrat composing room confine themselves to such light beverages the case was emptied in short order and pronounced the best soda, ginger ale, [illeg.] wine, sarsaparilla and cl[illeg.] soda that was ever made or drank.

Although Reber was reported in Cerrillos in February 1892 (*Albuquerque Daily Citizen* 2/3/1892), that may have just been a visit. Since John Krick was still in business, there should not have been a need for a second soda works in the town. The 1892 *New Mexico Gazetteer and Business Directory* listed “Reber, T.L., Soda Factory, cor. Tijeras Rd. & S. First St.”⁵

Santa Fe

By July 1892, the Rebers were in Santa Fe (Figure 1-27 – Reber Bottling Works). The *New Mexican* (7/15/1892) bragged that

The Reber Bottling Works, Mrs. R.J. [Rebecca] Reber, proprietor, are doing a comfortable business in the manufacture of soda water, ginger ale, sarsaparilla and

⁵ There is no South First St. The directory may have meant north.

other healthful summer drinks, since they removed their plant from Albuquerque and located in Santa Fe. The waters from the famous McKinney mineral springs, in western Santa Fe County, are to be brought in quantities and bottled by the Reber works for the retail and family trade. It is said these waters are superior to those from any other mineral springs in New Mexico, not excepting the famous Coyote springs, and the Rebers propose to introduce it not only in Santa Fe, but elsewhere in the west.

The mineral water from Coyote Springs was well known and well liked in Santa Fe. It was bottled and sold locally (Figure 1-28).

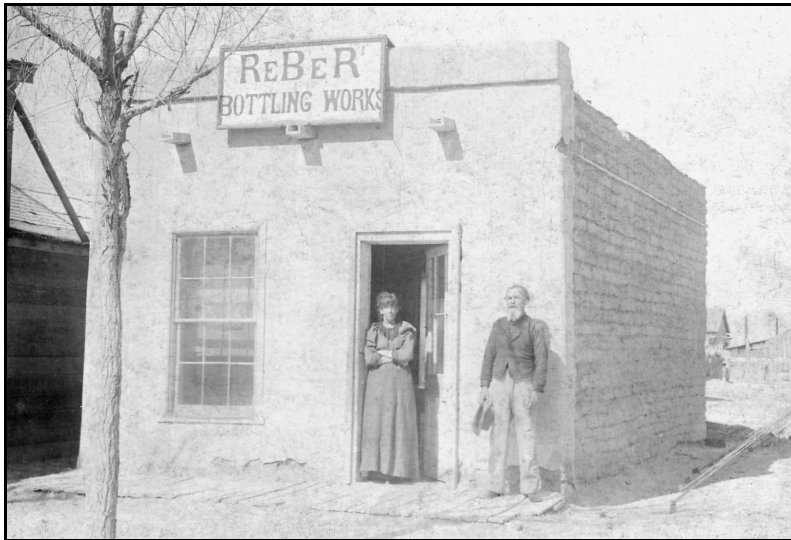


Figure 1-27 – Reber Bottling Works (Courtesy of Cynthia Smith)



Figure 1-28 – Coyote Springs water bottle (Lynn Loomis collection)

The same edition (*Santa Fe New Mexican* 7/15/1892) advertised “soda water, sarsaparilla, ginger ale, seltzer, and apollinaris water in seal stopper bottle, to the trade \$1 per case of twenty-four bottles, at Reber’s, opposite Lowitzki’s store.” *Real Apollinaris* water, however, was imported from Germany and was bottled in distinctive containers. By at least the middle of the nineteenth century, the water was already being imitated in the U.S., and bottles, identical to the ones from Germany, were produced in the U.S. by at least the 1870s.⁶

By August (1892), Reber had slightly changed his tune – and his price! The *New Mexican* (8/13/1892) bragged “It Is Healthful. All first-class places keep the best to be obtained. Ask for Reber’s soda And other drinks, as they are free from any sulphuric acid or marble dust, said to be so injurious to health.”⁷ Despite the new disclaimer, the price fell by 25¢ per case. The same article offered “Soda and sarsaparilla by the care (*sic*), 75c, at the Reber bottling works.”



Figure 1-29 – Reber Bottling Works, Santa Fe (Lynn Loomis collection)

This may have been the time when Reber used the only bottle yet discovered with both his name and a city designation on it. This was another Hutchinson bottle, and it was embossed “REBER BOTTLING WORKS / SANTA FE / N.M.” in a front plate, with “THIS BOTTLE / NOT TO BE SOLD” on the reverse heel and “IGCo” in an elongated diamond on the base (Figure 1-29). If this was, indeed, the time when Reber used this bottle, he must have really intended to settle down.

⁶ Apollinaris bottles were selected by Anheuser-Busch in 1872 as the first lager beer bottles. Although the export beer bottle was invented the following year, Anheuser-Busch used the Apollinaris bottles until the supply ran out. The brewery began integrating export bottles early in the 1870s, but some Apollinaris bottles were still being filled with beer at least into the early 1890s.

⁷ This comment referred to one of the methods used to make carbonated water. Many of the early “carbonic gas” generators, such as the one invented by Johann C.F. Meyer, mixed “sulfuric acid with powdered chalk or marble” in water to create the effervescence (Riley 1958:23).

On September 20, 1892, the *Santa Fe New Mexican* announced that “Reber, the soda water man to-day sold out his plant to Simon Davis, of Cerrillos. Henceforth, McKinney will take orders for the Acme mineral water, bringing it in casks direct from the spring.”⁸ This is one of the rare occasions when a newspaper actually recorded a Reber sale.

Around the time he purchased Reber’s Santa Fe works, Simon Davis operated a cattle spread east of Cerrillos, near the town of Galisteo. Cerrillos at the time was the second largest city in the region (after Santa Fe), and Davis had a meat market in Cerrillos that featured the products of his ranch. He may have had his cattle near Galisteo but there is good evidence that his wife, at least, lived in what was probably the family dwelling at Cerrillos. The New Mexico Business Directory listed Simon Davis’ saloon in Cerrillos in 1909. Clearly, Davis did not limit himself to just one line of work.

Duncan, Colorado, and Back to Santa Fe

The footloose Reber took off again in October 1892, this time for “the new gold camp of Duncan, forty miles from Alamosa,” Colorado. The newspaper called him “the rustling soda water manufacturer” upon his return to Santa Fe in December. Reber claimed that it was “20 degrees below zero at Alamosa on Saturday morning last and just a little too cool for a man who had once lived in New Mexico.” He added that “business is very dull at Alamosa and throughout the San Luis valley” (*Santa Fe New Mexican* 10/3/1892, 12/21/1892).

The reference to “The Reber Bottling Works, Mrs. R.J. [Rebecca] Reber, proprietor” in the July 15 *New Mexican* is intriguing. This is the only recorded episode when Rebecca was listed as the proprietor. Where was T.L.? While Rebecca took care of the Santa Fe plant, T.L. might have been exploring the possibility of a second branch or a new venue at Duncan.

Socorro Yet Again

Reber apparently “rustled” off to Socorro soon after his return from Colorado in December 1892. The *New Mexican* (5/4/1893) noted that he had come back from Socorro to Santa Fe in May of 1893 to work in the “mineral water department of the Santa Fe brewery.”

⁸ McKinney almost certainly ran one of the stores in town.

This would have put Reber in Socorro from about January to May of 1893. The last ad for soda bottler, J.M. Bahney & Co., was on September 20, 1887, leaving the town apparently dry (at least where soft drinks were concerned) for the next five years. This was a perfect opportunity for Reber to once again open a bottling plant, although he seems to have returned too late.

The Katzenstein family had moved into Socorro about 1887, and “E. Katzenstein” was listed as a “soda water mfr.” in the 1892 NM state directory – although the Katzenstein Brothers (Fidelius J. and Eugene H. Katzenstein) did not begin advertising sodas in Socorro until June 29, 1894 – about the time Alfred F. Katzenstein – the son of Fidelius – took over the business (Lockhart 2005:10-12). In addition to the Katzenstein family, the Illinois Brewing Co. – although primarily bottling beer – was also listed in the New Mexico Territorial Business Directory in 1892 under the “Bottling Works” heading. Like the others, the Katzenstein family originally used a Hutchinson bottle (Figure 1-30). This combined competition may have driven Reber back out of town.

Possibly Reber merely went to Socorro to sell a new outfit to either Illinois Brewing or the Katzensteins. Evidence at Reber’s next move supports this idea. He arrived at Santa Fe and went to work bottling mineral water at the Santa Fe Brewery. A month later, he had new equipment and opened up on his own again. The new setup suggests that he had sold his old one, The Katzensteins remained in business until 1910, and the Illinois Brewery began full-time soda bottling in 1918 to survive Prohibition. The firm remained a soda bottler until the 1960s (Lockhart 2005).

Back at Santa Fe

As noted above, Reber returned to Santa Fe in May of 1893, bottling mineral water at the Santa Fe Brewery. By mid-June, however, he was back on his own and had ordered a new set of bottling equipment. In July, the public was invited to “leave orders at Haefner & Miller’s for family supplies from the Reber bottling works. Sodas and other summer drinks perfectly pure



Figure 1-30 – FK & Son (Alfred F. Katzenstein) – Socorro (American Bottle Auction)

and healthful. \$1 per case.” An August ad offered “Soda, Sarsaparilla, ginger ale, and carbonated water at Reber bottling works, 60 cents per case of twenty-four bottles, to the dealer.” The going price was a dollar a case to the customers – at least at “Haeffner & Miller’s.” (*Santa Fe New Mexican* 6/1/1893, 7/28/1893; 8/4/1893; 8/5/1893).

By August, Reber had apparently changed some of his bottling habits. He advertised that the “Reber bottling works [will pay] 2 cents apiece for beer bottles and 3 cents for Manitou bottles” (*Santa Fe Daily New Mexican* 8/4/1893). By this time (and, of course, possibly earlier), he may have been bottling different types of sodas in different kinds of bottles. The works also offered “Reber’s lemon sour” – apparently a new drink (*Santa Fe Daily New Mexican* 8/5/1893).

Another Empty Period, then Bland

Reber disappeared from the record again for a full year after the August 1893 ad at Santa Fe. In August 1894, he was reported at Bland (*Santa Fe New Mexican* 8/7/1894; 8/8/1894). It is unclear whether this was a visit or a move. Unfortunately, few small-town newspapers have survived from the 19th century, and the only issue we could find from Bland said nothing about Reber. Again, however, the timing is most interesting. Bland was the main town of the Bland Canyon gold mining area, beginning in 1890. It was not until ca. 1894, however, that the town constructed an ore mill that operated 24-hours a day. It would have been a perfect setting for Reber (Luna Explorer 2011).

Raton Again?

As noted earlier, Henry P. Scherer was almost certainly the first soda bottler at Raton (probably supplied by Reber) in 1884.⁹ Although we have found little historical reference for “Joe Haefner,” he may have been next in the sequence (Figure 1-31). A colorless, mug-bottom Hutchinson soda bottle was embossed “JOE HAEFNER / RATON / N.M.” in a plate on the front, with “15” on the front heel, and the “buckle” on the base (Fowler 2013). The Western

⁹ We found no entries for Raton in the 1882 New Mexico Business Directory; the combined 1882 directory for California, Arizona, New Mexico, Southern Colorado, and Kansas; or the 1888 directory for California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Southern Colorado; or the 1892 New Mexico Gazetteer.

Glass Mfg. Co., of Denver, Colorado, used the “buckle” logo from 1900, when the firm succeeded the Western Flint Glass Co. until the company dissolved in 1909. Thus, Haefner *must* have been in business during that period.

However, it is possible that Haefner & Rossier succeeded Scherer during the late 1880s or early 1890s – although there may also have been a break in the sequence after Scherer. Wood (1999:[50]) noted that Joseph Haefner, Jr., replaced the firm of Haefner & Rossier in 1897, and the Albuquerque Daily Citizen stated on June 25, 1898, that “Joe Haefner Is one of the lively hoys of Las Vegas.” George Layer almost certainly succeeded Haefner in the early 1900s.

This brief look at Raton discloses a major gap in our knowledge from 1886 to ca. 1897. Scherer may have continued in business through much of this period, although neither he nor anyone else was enumerated in the 1888 or 1892 directories. Additionally, Joe Haefner may have been in business prior to 1897. However, we also have a significant gap in our knowledge of Reber from a mention in Bland in August 1894 to Prescott a year later in 1895 and Albuquerque another year later in August 1896.

In a serendipitous connection, Reber advertised in July 1893 that Haefner & Miller’s in Santa Fe was the headquarters “for family supplies from the Reber bottling works.” Assuming that this was the same Joe Haefner, who then moved from Santa Fe to Raton, his earlier dealings with Reber would almost certainly have caused him to contact T.L. and Rebecca when he wanted to set up a bottling operation.

Gone Again!

This time, we have lost Reber for almost exactly a year, from August 1894 to September 1895. Of course, he could have been virtually anywhere in New Mexico during this period.



Figure 1-31 – Joe Haefner bottle – Raton (Lynn Loomis collection)

Prescott, Arizona

The *Arizona Weekly Journal-Miner* noted on September 4, 1895, that “Frank Beavers takes a 3 year lease from M.E. Morin on the Prescott Bottling Works & consolidates works with one recently started by Mr. Bebers.” This could be no one but our wandering Reber, apparently making his debut in Arizona. Miscal E. Morin, however, was a well-established bottler in Prescott by this time. At some point prior to the late 1880s, he operated the Prescott Bottling Works (opened in 1882). Morin left Prescott after the sale to Frank Beavers (Miller 2008:100).

Beavers entered partnership with someone named Bunte shortly after the consolidation of the two bottling works, and the pair formed the firm of Beavers & Bunte, selling sawed wood, ice, and sodas. By 1899, Beavers was the sole owner and called the business the Arizona Soda Works (Figure 32). He remained in business until the great 1900 fire – described below (Miller 2008:94).

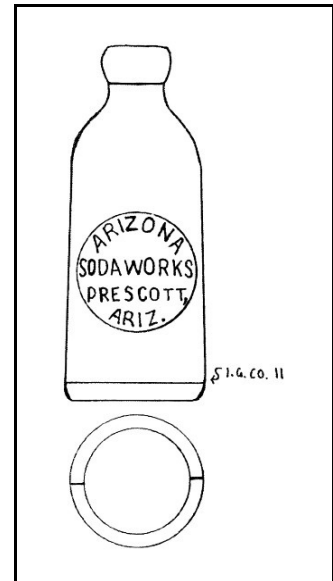


Figure 1-32 – Hutch bottle from the Arizona Soda Works (Miller 2008:95)

Reber Vanishes Again – and Reappears back at Santa Fe

We have again lost Reber – from September 1895 to August 1896, another full year. By then, the plant was located “next to Candelario’s second hand store” at Santa Fe – where Reber offered pepsin soda, sarsaparilla, wild cherry phosphate, and ginger ale. Once again, he was buying beer and soda bottles (*Santa Fe New Mexican* 8/11/1896, 8/12/1896; 8/15/1896, 8/17/1896, 8/21/1896; 8/29/1896).

Wilcox, Arizona

How long Reber remained in Santa Fe this time is currently unknown, but the great traveler was reported at Wilcox, Arizona, on July 21, 1897. We have found nothing about his time in town, but Miller (2008:136) reported that Kasper Hauser operated the Wilcox Bottling Works from 1898 to 1902. Since 1898 probably represents the first listing in the city directory, Reber may have set up a plant by August and sold it to Hauser by October.

Winslow, Arizona

Reber was on his way from Albuquerque to Winslow, Arizona, on November 16, 1897 (*Santa Fe New Mexican* 11/16/1897). He apparently wasted no time. Just 11 days after he left Santa Fe, the *Winslow Mail* (11/27/1897) reported that:

T.L. Reber has commenced the manufacture of Sarsaparilla and iron; ginger ale, cream, lemon, or any other flavored soda in Winslow. Encourage home industry by ordering direct from the manufacturer. Any of the above delivered to families at \$1.25 per box. Orders through the post office will receive prompt attention.

By the end of January, however, Reber was once again ready to move on. Under the heading of “Business for Sale,” he bragged, “Reber, the bottler, with a record of establishing bottling mineral plants, will sell a first-class plant on reasonable terms. Full instructions given the purchaser in the manufacture of goods. T.L. Reber (*Winslow Mail* 1/29/1898). The business still had not sold by the end of August. This time, Reber advertised “My Bottling plant. Sufficient material on hand to pay the price asked. Full instructions given to purchaser. Easy terms. Inquire of T.L. Reber (*Winslow Mail* 8/27/1898).

Reber’s timing for this ad was better. On January 10, 1898, Frank Hart, J.X. Woods, W.R. Campbell, U.Z. Rand, A.T. Cornish, and F.C. Demarest incorporated the Winslow Electric Light and Ice Mfg. Co. Part of the corporate charter was “to manufacture soda, mineral and other waters,” and that part of the business was under the auspices of A.T. Cornish (Miller 2008:140).

Cornish had opened the Flagstaff Bottling Works in 1889 and continued to operate it until late 1903. It is virtually certain that Cornish – on behalf of Winslow Electric Light – purchased Reber’s “Bottling plant” and opened the Winslow Bottling Works sometime after the end of August 1898. Although Cornish appears to have been successful at Flagstaff, he had closed or sold the Winslow business by 1899 (Miller 2008:40, 140).

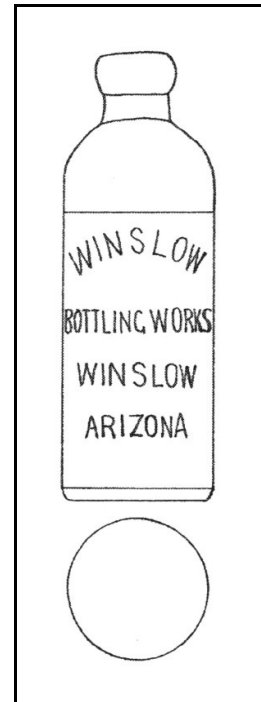


Figure 1-33 – Winslow Bottling Works, Winslow, Arizona (Miller 2008:140)

The Winslow Bottling Works only used one embossed Hutchinson bottle. According to Miller (2008:140), these are very rare – as befits a bottling works that only operated for about a year (Figure 1-33). However, the presence of these bottles strongly suggests that Reber was still using Hutchinson bottles and selling Hutchinson apparatus in 1898.

Alamogordo

Reber was noted as returning from Winslow and heading for Alamogordo in September 1898:

T.L. Reber, the perambulating soda water manufacturer, came in from Winslow last night and registered at the Sturges' European. Since leaving the Missouri state line, years ago, Mr. Reber has started and sold at least fifty soda water factories in that many cities and towns. He carried on business at Winslow for about a year; sold out the other day, and is now on his way to Alamo Gordo [*sic*] where he expects to have a new soda water factory in running order inside of three weeks (*Santa Fe New Mexican* 9/16/1898).

In a typical Reber pattern, Alamogordo was a railroad town – built to supply the trains with water. If Reber was on schedule, his works at Alamogordo would have been operational about October 7, 1898. He was certainly set up prior to February 15, 1899, when *Bookseller, Newsdealer and Stationer* (1899:631) announced that “T.L. Reber is adding a periodical business to his mineral water manufactory. Mr Reber was well known as a successful dealer in El Paso and Denison, Texas, and is now located in Alonwgordo, [*sic*] N.M.”

Unfortunately, the earliest surviving newspaper from Alamogordo was dated April 1899. However, Reber was still in town. The April 22 *Sacramento Chief* stated:

If you want to buy a soda water plant call on Reber. He sells them and teaches the buyer to make good soda. He sold the first plant that was ever in El Paso, Texas, to Houck & Dieter, and that makes that good soda for which the people of Alamogordo paid 10 cents per bottle, that they can now buy for 5 cents. I sell the same soda for 2¼ cents per bottle to the private families and dealers. [\$2.40, \$1.20 & 54 cents per case, respectively]

By this time, it is obvious that Reber was in the business of selling the apparatus to make and bottle sodas –and he may have had that as his primary goal for two decades (or more). On April 29, the *Chief* noted that Reber had “just received a new machine for making soda water. He now has two machines and supplies the best of soda water at the lowest prices. Mr. Reber has sold more soda water machines than any other agent in the United states [*sic*].”¹⁰

On May 20, 1899, the Rebers were listed for what was probably the final time in Alamogordo – when Mrs. Reber visited Phoenix, Arizona (*Sacramento Chief* 5/20/1899). The blurb may indicate that the Rebers left Alamogordo soon after, or they may just have not done anything newsworthy for awhile. The silence may also have had political overtones. The *Chief* was only in business briefly (April 15, 1899-May 25, 1899) and contained many local ads and local gossip.

It was replaced by the *Alamogordo News* on June 1, 1899, the paper still in print at Alamogordo. While the *News* continued with local ads and gossip, it was mostly about a different set of people than those featured in the *Chief*. The Rebers may have been in the out-group from the viewpoint of the editor of the *News*. Regardless of the reason, Reber had probably left Alamogordo by September and was certainly gone by January 1900 (see below).

From all evidence, Reber struck out on selling the Alamogordo business (also see the Bottles section). There is no record of anyone entering the soda bottling business again until George Weigele began bottling “Wiegele’s Pop” in 1907. It is unlikely that the newspaper would have remained completely silent on the subject for seven years (Figure 1-34). Perhaps the El Paso competition was too strong. Houck & Dieter, El Paso’s oldest soda bottler, was already advertising in the first extant edition of the *Sacramento Chief* in 1899, and Reber’s remarks in the paper indicate that Houck & Dieter sodas were sold at Alamogordo (Lockhart 2011).



Figure 1-34 – Ad for Weigele’s Pop (*Alamogordo News* 4/21/1910)

¹⁰ As unlikely as this statement seems, it may be correct. The *American Carbonator and Bottler* made a very similar statement in 1904 (see the section on Estancia).

Houck & Dieter stopped advertising in the April 30, 1904, issue, probably because Henry Pfaff had invested heavily in town. Pfaff, El Paso's only other soda bottler at that time, took over the management of Alamogordo's only saloon in early November 1899 and began advertising in the *Alamogordo News* on August 2, 1900. He advertised "to the family trade" soon thereafter and almost certainly cornered the soft drink market in the town until he sold out all his liquor, beer, and soda holdings in 1907. George Wiegele, Jr., opened up the Alamogordo Bottling Works in 1907 and had a continuous string of successors (Lockhart 1998; 2011).

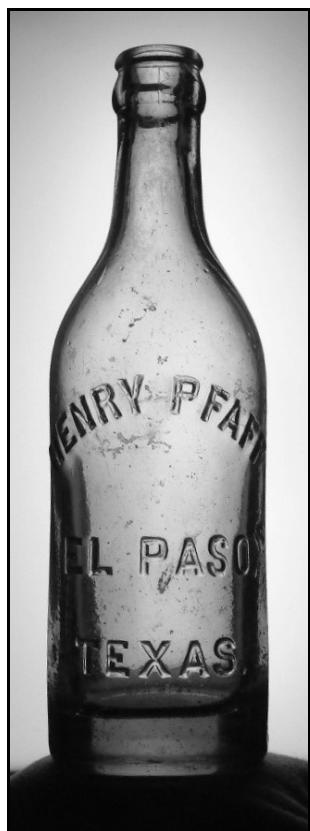


Figure 1-35 – Henry Pfaff crown-top bottle

It is important to explore *why* Reber apparently failed to sell out at Alamogordo. Reber very likely continued to use Hutchinson soda bottles at Alamogordo. At locations where no one else had introduced bottles or where Hutchinson bottles were the norm, Reber apparently had the edge because of the quality of his drinks. However, Henry Pfaff apparently began using crown-capped bottles by 1897, possibly slightly earlier. Even with the tradition favoring Hutchinson bottles, the ease of use of the crown may have either cost Reber his sale or was at least a contributing factor (Figure 1-35). When Wiegele used his first embossed bottle, likely in 1911, it had a crown finish (Figure 1-36).

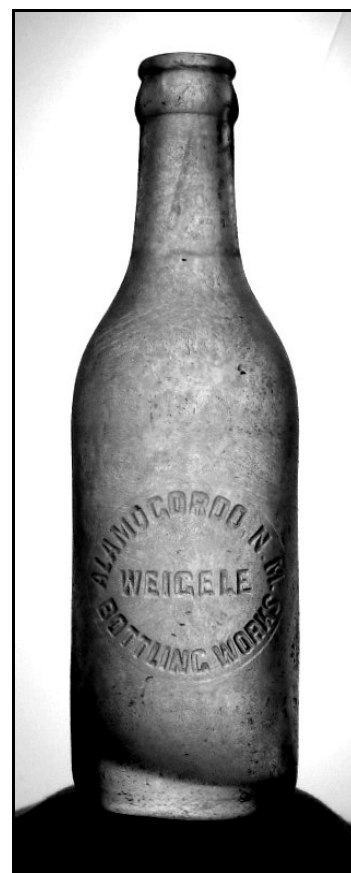


Figure 1-36 – Weigele bottle

The Alamogordo articles bring up a point that needs to be addressed. Reber claimed in Alamogordo to be the super salesman of soda bottling "plants" in the U.S. At this late point in his life, this finally explains his wandering. The chicken-or-egg question is: Did he become a wanderer because he was a salesman, or did he become a salesman because he was a wanderer? Either direction is certainly possible.

The Early 1900s – Santa Cruz, Bland, and San Pedro

In September 1899, Reber was reported at Santa Cruz (north of Santa Fe), but, again, we do not know whether that was to set up a business or just for a visit. Since the railroad went through nearby Española, there seems to be no logical reason for Reber to set up in town. T.L. and Rebecca moved to Bland ca. January 1900 to set up yet another bottling works. This one folded or sold by mid-June, and the Rebers left for San Pedro (Federal Census, 1900; *Santa Fe New Mexican* 9/27/1899, 6/23/1900).

Back to Prescott, Arizona

By October 17, 1900, Reber was in Prescott, Arizona. He signed a mortgage for Reber & Co. with Bishop & Babcock, a Chicago soda bottling supply firm, to purchase a set of soda bottling apparatus. He was to pay off the mortgage in ten payments, spread out over an equal number of months. The first nine notes were for \$25 each, with a final payment of \$34.93, all at 6% interest. The equipment included:

One #6 Carbonator, One Duplex Pump, One #12 S & P Regulator and Clamp; four sets of Connections, One 28 oz syphon Filler, One Push Cart, One Scale, Eight gross #5 Soda Bottles & Stoppers, 48 - two dozen Cases, One Slocum Syrup Gage, 50 28 oz. Syphon Bottles, said chattels being located in bottling shop in the town of Prescott, Ariz. (Yavapai Co., Arizona, Chattel Mortgages).

A bit of background information on Prescott soda bottling is necessary at this point. By 1900, there were two established soda bottlers at Prescott. At least as early as 1899, Frank Beavers operated the Arizona Soda Works at the town. The Prescott Bottling Works had also been in business – since 1882. On July 15, 1900, a fire began behind one of the bottling works (which one was not specified) and wiped out most of the business district – including both bottling operations (Miller 2008:94, 100).

By 1901, Frank Beavers had rebuilt the soda plant (name unknown) at 244 S. Montezuma but had taken Frank H. Heisler as a partner by 1902. The firm used a Hutchinson bottle with a round plate on the front embossed “ARIZONA / SODA WORKS / PRESCOTT, / ARIZ.” during the 1899-1900 period. The plant used two other Hutchinson bottles (and one



Figure 1-37 – Beavers & Heisler bottle – Prescott, Arizona (Miller 2008:94)

crown-topped bottle) after the fire, each embossed “BEAVERS & HEISLER / PRESCOTT, / ARIZ.” (Figure 1-37). The partners sold to George L. Merritt in 1906 (Miller 2008:94).

Misrael E. Morin also rebuilt the Prescott Bottling Works as Morin’s Soda Works at 120-122 N. McCormack. Although John Aiken owned the bottling plant, Morin was the operator. The Prescott Bottling Works used Hutchinson bottles prior to the fire but had adopted crown-capped containers during the post-fire period. The firm also used at least two different siphon bottles etched with the Prescott Bottling Works name (Miller 2008:100-102). Siphon bottles were one of the types ordered by Reber (Figure 1-38).

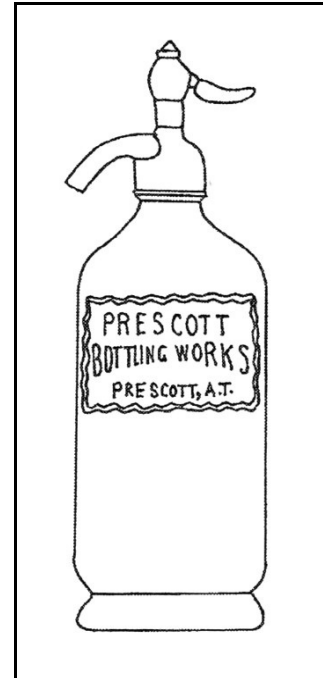


Figure 1-38 – Prescott Bottling Works siphon bottle (Miller 2008:102)

Since the Pratts (Reber’s relatives) lived at Prescott, they most likely telegraphed Reber (possibly still at Bland) about the fire. Reber was certainly an opportunist, and the possibilities created by the fire were probably irresistible. While Reber may have intended to establish yet another business, it seems more likely that he became the middleman, selling the equipment to one of the established bottlers, both of whom had decided to rebuild. By this point, Reber may have even become a factory representative for Bishop & Babcock. He certainly had enough experience.

The question, of course, is – which bottler? We know that Reber was involved with Hutchinson soda bottles, although we do not know whether he switched to crown-capped bottles, and, if so, when. Thus, the continuity of bottles between the two Prescott firms offers no clue. The mortgage data, however, may give us at least a hint, when it listed “50 28 oz. Siphon Bottles” and “One 28 oz syphon Filler.” The Prescott Bottling Works sold etched siphon bottles, but there is no indication that Beavers & Heisler used them. It was not until the 1906 sale to G.L.

Merrit that the other bottling firm in town was noted for siphon bottles. Thus, based on current evidence, Reber probably sold the equipment to Morin of the Prescott Bottling Works.

Alternatively, Reber may have supplied both firms. His typical *modus operandi* was to arrive at a town either with a set of bottling equipment in hand or to have one ordered. If Reber only had one set of apparatus when he hit town, then he discovered the need for two, he may not have had the ready cash for a second set. Thus, he would have mortgaged the second set of equipment and sold it immediately to the other Prescott bottler. Reber would thus have been ready to hit the road in search of his next conquest without having actually started a business this time.

Another important connection established by the Prescott mortgage is the probable relationship between Reber and the Bishop & Babcock Sales Co. With general offices at Cleveland, Ohio, Bishop & Babcock sold such items as Red Cross Soda Fountains, Eureka Carbonators, Bottle Filling Machinery, Hydraulic Water & Syrup Pumps, Bottlers Flavoring Extracts, and many other products. This was probably Reber's primary supply firm, and, as speculated above, Reber may have filled the dual role of customer and factory representative.

Tucumcari?

We have no documentary evidence for Reber at this location. However, Tucumcari had a bottler who used a Hutchinson bottle – a possible “signature” for Reber. The original name of the settlement was Douglas, when the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad (CRI&P) arrived at the spot in 1901. The town of Tucumcari incorporated in 1902 (Julyan 1998:362) – a period right in the middle of a “blank” spot in the Reber history.

The 1903 New Mexico Business Directory listed the Fowler Bottling Co. as doing business at Tucumcari. Fowler used a Hutchinson bottle embossed “FOWLER (arch) / BOTTLING CO. (horizontal) / TUCUMCARI, N.M. (inverted arch)” in a circular plate at the front body (Figure 1-39). The back heel was embossed “ISGCo 59.”



Figure 1-39 – Fowler Bottling Co. – Tucumcari (Lynn Loomis collection)

Collector Tom Neff reported to David Whitten that he had found bottle fragments with this mark at the site of the Interstate Glass Co., Kansas City, Missouri. An eBay seller looked for the firm in Kansas City directories and only found the glass house listed in 1902. After that, the property belonged to the Obear-Nester Glass Co. This suggests that the Fowler bottle was made in 1902.

Hutchinson bottles were used by Reber, and the timing is right. Reber typically moved into a town, set up, and sold out in a period of three to six months. He could easily have opened up in 1901 or 1902 and sold to Fowler in time for Fowler to be listed in the 1903 state directory.

Santa Rosa?

Another possibility during this period is the town of Santa Rosa. Although the community was established in 1865, it was not called Santa Rosa until 1873. The CRI&P Railroad arrived in 1901. Again, we have no documentary evidence, but the Lynn Loomis collection contains a Hutchinson bottle embossed “THOS. HEALY BOTTLING WORKS (arch) / SAN TA ROSA / N.M. (both horizontal)” in a round plate on the front body.¹¹ The front heel was embossed “40” – a model number used from 1900 to 1909 by the Western Glass Mfg. Co. of Denver – and the base is embossed with the “buckle” symbol, also used by Western Glass (Figure 1-40).

Although we have not yet discovered any historical evidence for the Thomas Healy Bottling Works, the “buckle” and “40” marks set the use period within the 1900-1909 period – a time when we have little information about Reber’s activities. Again, both the timing and the bottle style are right for Reber to have opened, sold out to Healy, and moved on.

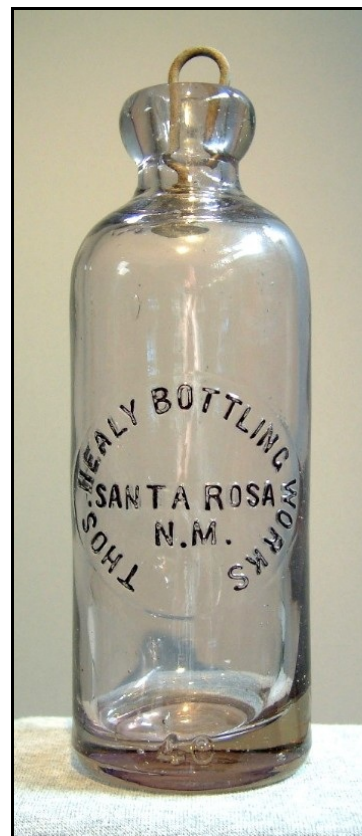


Figure 1-40 – Thos. Healy Bottling Works – Santa Rosa (Lynn Loomis collection)

¹¹ The Santa Rosa Hutchinson bottle actually has a space in the word “SAN TA.”

Benson, Arizona

Reber was already set up at Benson in January 1904. He kept up a correspondence with the *American Carbonator and Bottler* (1904a:82), leaving us a partial record of his progress:

T.L. Reber, of Benson Ariz., writes us that there has been a change at Douglas, Ariz., and Houck & Dieter have bought out the Improvement Company and that he heard Bishop of Bisbee, Ariz., had a gas drum explosion in his factory.



Figure 1-41 – T.L. and Rebecca Reber (Courtesy of Cynthia Smith)

Despite the new competition in nearby Douglas, Reber seemed happy in April:

T.L. Reber, the well known Southwestern bottler, is now running the Reber Bottling Works at Benson Arizona. He is also a dealer in books stationery and periodicals. He writes that he expects a fine bottling season (*American Carbonator and Bottler* (1904b:96).

Reber was known as far away as Tucson – but just barely (Figure 1-41). The *Tucson Daily Citizen* commented on March 21 that “F.J. Berber of Benson . . . the soda works man of that town” was visiting Tucson. Apparently, however, Reber had stayed his limit by July. According to the *American Carbonator and Bottler* (1904c:90):

T.L. Reber, the famous pioneer bottler, has sold out his bottling works at Benson, Ariz., to W.W. McElroy. Bro. Reber expects to go to New Mexico and start a new factory which will be about the thirtieth he has successfully started and sold out.¹²

Miller (2008:6) noted that “another early bottler [at Benson] was the American Soda Bottling Works operated by Mrs. W.W. McElroy from 1905 to 1906. Since Reber reported selling to “W.W. McElroy” in July of 1904, *Mr.* McElroy was apparently alive and able to take charge of the bottling works. He must have died or become disabled by 1905, when his wife assumed control of the operation.

Prescott Once Again

Reber was back at Prescott on June 15, 1904, to pick up “3 bbls [barrels] empty bottles” shipped to him by Bishop & Babcock & Co, Chicago, at a cost of \$23.58. A week later, he received “1 box castings” – for \$2.70 – from the same firm (*Weekly Arizona Miner* 6/15/1904; 6/22/1904). Although the *American Carbonator and Bottler* (1904c:90) did not report Reber’s closure at Benson until July 1904, the blurb noted that Reber had already sold out by that time and was again heading for New Mexico. The Benson business was probably closed by early June.

The timing of this entry is a bit odd. Given the continuity of bottlers known to have been in operating at Prescott, it appears to have been an unlikely place for Reber to have set up business. As noted in the first Prescott discussion (above), at least two soda bottlers were already in business, and both were still operating in 1904 and well into the future (Miller 2008:94-102). It is also an odd place for him to have picked up any supplies for a New Mexico venture. He may have only been acting as a factory representative to one of the local bottlers.

According to William Pratt’s obituary (*Prescott Journal Miner* 8/26/1911), the Pratts resided at Prescott from 1896 until William’s death on August 25, 1911. However, the Pratts

¹² Benson made 19 bottling plants that we can document. We have noted ten other probable locations and speculated on five possible ones. Although 30 sounds like an exaggeration, it was probably correct.

were absent from Prescott during 1904 – when they were at Salt Lake City, probably in connection with the marriage of their daughter, Wilhelmina Pratt, in Utah on July 15, 1904. Pratt had married Mary Rogers, Rebecca (Rogers) Reber’s sister, on April 29, 1882.

Although it is unclear whether there was any connection between the presence and/or absence of the Pratt family and Reber’s shipments during June 1904, the Rebers may have been in town to meet the Pratts before they left for Utah. The Rebers were known for their strong ties to Rebecca’s family. The Pratt obituary did not mention what part of 1904 the family spent in Utah or the duration of their stay. All of this may or may not be relevant to Reber’s shipment.

Estancia

The *American Carbonator and Bottler* (1904e:42) reported that the Rebers were next heading to Estancia, east and a bit south of Albuquerque, in early December 1904:

THE SANTA FE, N.M. NEW MEXICAN of the 8th ult.¹³ says T.L. Reber of this city will leave Thursday or Friday for Estancia where he will establish a bottling works and manufacture soda and other mineral waters He also will conduct a paper in the English and Spanish languages to be published every two weeks and to be called the Estancia Communicator.

Reber was a bit too late to start the newspaper. The *Estancia News* (11/18/1904) announced that “T.L. Reber is building a house preparatory to putting in a bottling works. He has purchased the lot adjoining the hotel.” Unfortunately, the paper included no further entries for Reber. Estancia was far too small for two newspapers, and there is no record of the one Reber planned (Grove et al. 1975:551-557). In addition, there was no entry in the *News* for another bottler between 1904 and 1907, so Reber may have also failed to sell his plant.

According to the *American Carbonator and Bottler* (1904d:92), “T.L. Reber, who has fitted up and sold more bottling plants than any other five men in the United States, writes us that

¹³ Although the *Carbonator* did not print the story until December, it is virtually certain that “4th ult.” (i.e., 4th day of the month) refers to November 8, 1904. Reber was certainly at Estancia before November 18.

he has fitted up entirely new the Estancia Bottling Works, Estancia, N.M., with everything complete from a cork puller to a Ferry Carbonator, and has the establishment in fine running order.” The success did not come cheaply, however. On December 20, the Dunlavy Mercantile Co. placed a lien on improvements to Reber’s property at Estancia (Valencia County Deed Records, 1904).¹⁴

One of Reber’s most enchanting bottles may have been used during this period – based on manufacturing characteristics. It is also possible, however, that the bottle was used at Albuquerque in 1899. Another Hutchinson bottle, this one was embossed in a front plate with “REBER” horizontally intersected at the “B” with “REBER” vertically to form a cross of the two words. The letter “N” was in the lower left quadrant of the plate, with “M” in the lower right quadrant (Figure 1-42). See A Summary of Reber Bottles for more discussion.



Figure 1-42 – Reber “cross” bottle (Lynn Loomis collection)

A Bottling Sale at Springer?

Anderson (1907:701) discussed the area around Springer, New Mexico. He stated that:

In February 1905, [George Gratton King] entered into a partnership with J.C. Taylor of Taylor Springs, New Mexico, and incorporated the Aztec Mineral Water Co. The Aztec mineral water is obtained from the Aztec Spring located six miles east of Springer in Colfax County, and the business, although a new one, promises to be successful.

¹⁴ The order of the Estancia sources does not fit together correctly. The December 15, 1904 issue of the *American Carbonator and Bottler* discussed Reber’s intent to move to Estancia, but the previous issue – in *November* 15 of the same year claimed he was fully set up in business. Meanwhile, the local newspaper reported that he was still building on November 28. Although the order is unclear, the *facts* show that Reber was, indeed, bottling at Estancia by the end of 1904.

Wood (1999:[82]) was aware of a Hutchinson bottle used by Taylor, although he had never seen one. According to Hutchbook (Fowler 2013), the Hutchinson bottle was embossed “J.C. TAYLOR / SPRINGER, N.M.” on an aqua bottle with “A.B.G.M.Co.” embossed on the front heel. The Adolphus Busch Glass Mfg. Co. used the A.B.G.M.Co. logo from 1891 to 1905 (Lockhart et al. 2010). The Taylor bottle must have been made in late 1904 or early 1905, just at the beginning of the firm.

Although Springer is located northwest of Estancia, it was certainly not far compared to many of the distances Reber had traveled. This was certainly not a soda plant that Reber had set up and then sold. It would have been perfectly in character, however, for Reber to have traveled to Springer to help Taylor and King set up their bottling outfit at the Springs. He may have stayed as long as a couple of months.

Clovis, Vaughn, and Belen

Reber’s tracks become more and more ephemeral between 1905 and early 1910. Unfortunately for us, the later newspapers were much less likely to track a perambulating soda bottler. Since Reber would have been 68 years old in 1905, Estancia may have been his last bottling experience. However, there may have been a bit more action.

Although it was known as Riley’s Switch in 1906, Clovis achieved its final name in 1907, when a new town was formed along the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) (Julyan 1998:88). It seems that a brand new town with major railroad yard should have been irresistible to Reber, but we have no historical evidence to link Reber to that location. There is, however, one possible link. At least one crown-topped bottle from Clovis was probably made during the early 20th century. The mug-based bottle had solarized to an amethyst color and was embossed “HOWARD AND BARNARD / BOTTLERS / CLOVIS, N.M.” Unfortunately, there was no other embossing on the container to help with dating, and we have been unable to discover any information about the firm.

Vaughn was the next place along the line to the west. Vaughn also came into being in 1907 at the junction of the Southern Pacific Railway (SP) and AT&SF (Julyan 1998:371). Being at a strategic railroad crossing would seem to be another major draw for Reber, but, again, we have no evidence, historical or circumstantial. As with Clovis, no bottles tie Reber to Vaughn.

The next stop west was Belen, also a major railroad yard and intersection of the SP and the AT&SF. Although Belen was an older community (founded in 1740), the Belen cut off on the AT&SF in 1907 made the city such a railway center that the town was known as “Hub City” (Julyan 1998:34). This time, however, we *know* Reber was present. On May 18, 1910, the census enumerator found Theodore Reber at Belen, listing his occupation as a carpenter – *not* a soda bottler. He may have founded one last bottling works then retired at Belen. Unfortunately, there are no embossed soda bottles from Belen to provide corroborating evidence.

The End of the Story

On December 3, 1912, the *Albuquerque Journal* (12/3/1912) reported the death of Theodore N. [*sic*] Reber. The great traveler breathed his last at Santa Fe on December 1 due to a brain hemorrhage. He was seventy-five years old (*Bellefonte Republican* 12/12/1912). Although the 1898 report of fifty sets of soda bottling equipment may have been an exaggeration, this incredible traveler had set up at least 20 completely separate bottling works, probably as many as a dozen others, and had been in at least 25 locations since 1879. A fitting epitaph was coined by the *American Carbonator and Bottler* in 1904, when it said that T.L. Reber “has fitted up and sold more bottling plants than any other five men in the United States.”

Postscript

One unfortunate loose end concerns Rebecca Reber. The last mention we have discovered for Rebecca was when the couple was at Bland in 1900. She was never again mentioned in any source we have found, and the genealogical sources only mention that she died sometime after 1900. We have seen no obituary. It is sad that we cannot provide a final epitaph for Rebecca – the helpmate and business partner for T.L. for 37 years.

Bottles and Bottling

Reber's story would be woefully incomplete without a discussion of the bottles that he used for soft drink production during the period.

Soda Bottling

Essentially, bottling could be done with a minimum of initial outlay. Soft drinks consist of three major ingredients: syrup, water, and carbonation – and, of course, someplace to put the finished product – like a bottle, for example. The syrup could be created in almost any type of container where sugar and flavoring could be mixed. The quality and flavor of the finished drink depended on the exact mixture that made up the syrup. Water could be poured into the mixture and stirred with a paddle. The uncarbonated mixture could then be placed on a second floor or as high as possible above the filler to allow gravity to do most of the work.

By 1880, various carbonators were on the market, using sodium bicarbonate to create the carbonation. The carbonator was probably the most expensive single hardware investment that Reber faced. Because of the expense and remote conditions where he usually operated, the carbonator was almost certainly a hand-operated model (Figure 1-43). This used a wheel with a handle as a crank. As carbon dioxide was created, it was stored in a tank.

The water source and carbonator mixed the syrup with the carbonated water and transferred the final product plus the syrup to a filler via a rubber hose. This filling apparatus deposited a measured amount of soda (often measured only by eye) to each bottle, almost always controlled by either a foot or knee valve. The stopper was then applied with the same apparatus by the use of a hand press.

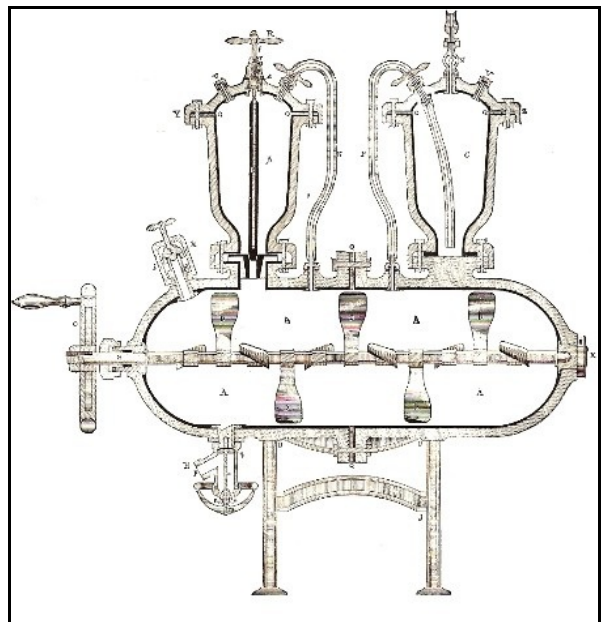


Figure 1-43 – Tufts carbonator – cutaway drawing (Fowler 2013)

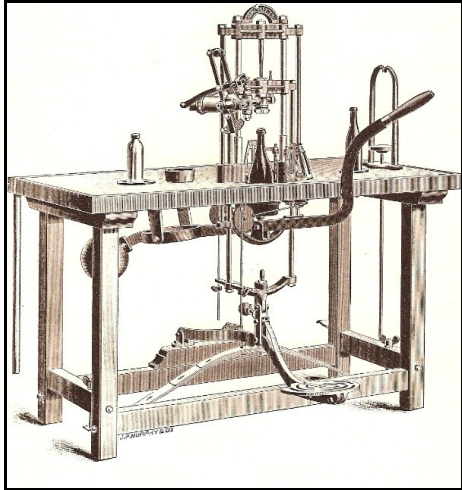


Figure 1-44 – Tufts filling/capping table – 1888 (Fowler 2013)

Although this entire process seems cumbersome, it *could* be very compact. Small carbonators were probably the most bulky item of hardware – aside from bottles and cases. Syrup could be mixed in vats or in stoneware (ceramic) crocks that took up little space. Each flavor could be mixed in the same crock (after cleaning, of course). Fillers were made as part of a table, where bottles

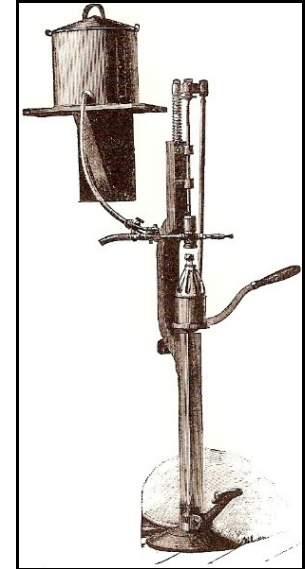


Figure 1-45 – Tufts upright filler/capper (Fowler 2013)

could be transferred from one side of the actual filler to the other (Figure 1-44), although a filler could be a stand-alone apparatus that took up little space (Figure 1-45). For a highly mobile operations (like those of the Rebers), a stand-alone filler was a good answer. Tables could be found or built anywhere – especially by someone like Reber whose other occupation was carpentry.

Reber's Process

Of course, we only have occasional hints about how Reber dealt with closing down his businesses. It is pretty certain that he had two separate plans. In some cases, he apparently owned property and preferred to sell out his entire holdings. He then started over when he moved away. For example, he had a ranch “just east of Robinson” in 1883, and his former business was called “the Reber building” in early 1884. In 1891, he and Rebecca were building a house and business in Albuquerque, which suggests – but does not guarantee – ownership. If Reber owned real estate in all or some of these towns, he would certainly have wanted to sell his holdings prior to leaving.

Further evidence for the selling out is that when the couple moved to Santa Fe, in 1893, Reber ordered a new set of bottling equipment – almost certainly to replace the old set he had sold when he left Socorro. Similarly, the Rebers almost certainly sold his businesses at Las Vegas in 1879, Cerrillos in 1889, Roswell in 1891, Wilcox, Arizona, in 1897, Benson, Arizona,

in 1904, and likely other places. We have good evidence for sales at El Paso in 1881, Robinson and Hillsboro in 1883, and Santa Fe in 1892.

The second pattern, again almost certainly followed by Reber, was to pack up all the equipment and move it. While this is more difficult to document, there were times when we find no evidence that the Rebers had found a buyer – especially at Alamogordo. The only option at that point was to abandon everything – or pack up and leave town. As noted above, Reber could have transported most of his equipment on the buckboard shown in Figure 1-16. His biggest problem would have been transporting large quantities of bottles and cases to remote locations. Often, the towns he chose were along the railroad, where transportation was much easier.

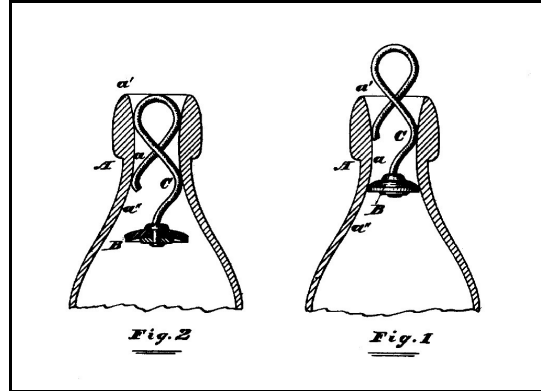


Figure 1-46 – Drawings from Hutchinson’s April 9, 1878 patent

Of course, it is clear that the Rebers ran a two-person operation. They may have kept a very small inventory. The lack of town designations on most of the known bottles is easy to explain – constant movement requires pretty generic bottles! Still, even a small outfit required quite a few bottles and cases to maintain a sufficient inventory to supply mining camps and desert towns. Unfortunately, soda bottler histories have not been written about most of the towns Reber inhabited, so it is difficult to demonstrate other examples.

Hutchinson Bottles¹⁵

Charles G. Hutchinson, of Chicago, Illinois, applied for a patent for an “Improvement in Bottle-Stoppers” on October 28, 1878. He received Patent No. 213, 992 on April 8, 1879 (Figure 46). The stopper was a “disk of rubber” attached to a “laterally-yielding spring” in the shape of a figure-8, open at the bottom, where the stopper attached. When the top of the wire spring was pulled upward, the stopper sealed the bottle. To open the bottle, the spring was forced downward (Figure 1-47).

¹⁵ Parts of this section were also used in Lockhart (2013).

Upon receiving the patent, however, Hutchinson either noticed or was informed that his description was not very conclusive. On April 28, 1879, just 20 days after receiving the initial patent, Hutchinson reapplied and received Reissue No. 8,755 for the same invention. The patent drawings are identical (except for a couple of added letters), but the description is more than twice as lengthy. The reissue may have been to cover any possible future patent infringement.

Hutchinson applied for another patent on June 25, 1879, again for slight variations to the same stopper. This time, he received Patent No. 219,729 for an “Improvement in Bottle Stoppers” on September 16. The patent drawings primarily showed variations in the pull wire.

On December 8, 1879, Hutchinson filed for another improvement. He received Patent No. 225,476 for a “Bottle-Stopper” on March 16, 1880 (Figure 1-48). The major improvement was in the wire spring. It was more sturdy, hooking to the stopper with two ends instead of one and was longer to create a larger opening inside the bottle. This may never have been used; we have not seen stoppers that look like the second patent.

HUTCHINSON'S
PATENT SPRING STOPPER.

Cheapest, Most Durable, Best and Simplest in Use.

OUR REFERENCES ARE 2000 BOTTLERS

Of the United States who use them. Our claims for them are Economy, Durability, Cleanliness, Ease with which they can be Used and Opened, and the General Satisfaction which they give to Customers.

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Per Gross.



Hutchinson's
BOTTLERS'
SUPPLIES

Give Them a Trial

Standard Ginger Ale Extract,	Lemon Extract,
Imperial Champagne Cider,	Vanilla "
Pear Cider Extract,	Tonic Beer Extract,
Apple Cider Extract,	Birch "
Mead Extract,	Essel "
Cream Soda Extract,	Milk Honey "
Club "	Spruce Beer "
Strawberry "	California Pop Extract,
Raspberry "	Strawberry Coloring,
Pineapple "	Sugar Coloring,
Sarsaparilla "	Silver Foam,
Soluble Lemon Extract,	Lime Juice.

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Essential Oils and Acids used by the trade.
New York Marble Dust.
Ginger Ale Caps, Seltzer Caps, Tin Foil, Wire Cork Fasteners, etc.
Ginger Ale Loops and everything else.
Mineral Water Salts used by the trade.

Figure 1-47 – 1886 Hutchinson ad (Paul & Parmalee 1973:16)

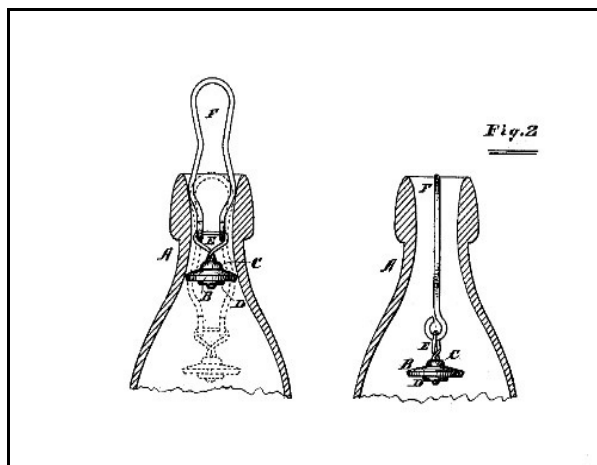


Figure 1-48 – Hutchinson’s March 16, 1880 patent

Hutchinson's final patent was for a unique variation in the pull wire, and it, too, may never have been used. He applied for the patent for a "Bottle-Stopper" on March 8, 1881, but did not receive Patent No. 285,488 until September 25, 1883. The design this time looked like an inverted harp and would have been more difficult to manufacture.

Nothing is sacred in a capitalistic society, however, and other inventors attempted to copy the Hutchinson stopper – with just enough changes to be legally different. One such inventor was Amos F. Parkhurst of Keewanee, Illinois. Parkhurst applied for a patent for a "Bottle-Stopper" on August 17, 1883, and received Patent No. 289,928 on December 11, 1883 (Figure 1-49). He assigned the patent to Edward H. Everett, a glass manufacturer at Newark, Ohio (and the eventual founder of the American Bottle Co.).

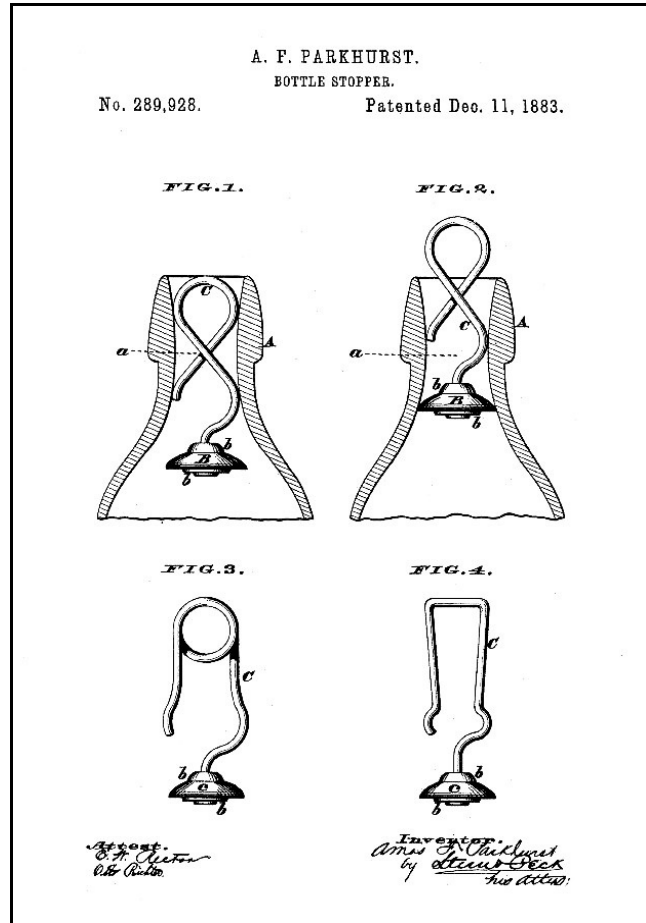


Figure 1-49 – Parkhurst 1883 patent

Parkhurst copied Hutchinson's drawings (including using the same letters to describe parts), then added two alternatives for the shape of the wire. He stressed the constriction of the neck of the bottle and shape of the wire, but he stated that his invention was not limited to those – a straight neck and other wire shapes could be used. What made his invention unique, he said, was "a bail attached rigidly to the stopper by one end only and with the other end free." This, however, could also describe Hutchinson's original stopper. An Everett advertisement noted that Parkhurst had invented his stopper "prior to 1878" (Paul & Parmalee 1973:17). Hutchinson took Everett to court and won, although some Parkhurst stoppers were sold prior to the injunction.

The bottles, themselves, were totally unique in shape. The shoulders could be gently sloped or almost squared, but the neck of the bottle was always short. The finish also varied,

from very short to fairly long, and came in several slight variations in shape. Some of these finish shapes may be datable as per Elliott & Gould (1988:35-36). The main division is by manufacturing technique. Applied finishes were made from 1879 to ca. 1885, with tooled finishes from 1886 on. What they call the “standard” shape, while used earlier, was by far the most common after 1890, although funnel-shaped finishes were also in use from the early 1890s and were most common after 1900 (Figure 1-50).



Figure 1-50 – Finish of Hutchinson bottle

Elliott & Gould (1988:35-36) also classified Hutchinson finishes into Type A and Type B. Type B finishes were rounded and evolved into the “standard” finish, while Type A appears to be all other early shapes. Type A finishes were almost certainly phased out by ca. 1890. Fowler (2013), however, disagreed, stating that all these shapes were much less diagnostic and were used for longer periods.

Fowler (2011a) posted the only somewhat similar discussion – addressing “transitional” Hutchinson bottles – those made for use with both corks and Hutchinson stoppers. Fowler quoted W.H. Hutchinson & Co.:

Your bottles can be made to use either the Hutchinson Patent Stoppers or corks and fasteners equally well, so that it would be advisable for all Bottlers to order their new bottles with necks for our Patent Stopper, then if they desire to use the Patent Stopper they can do so, or they can use corks and fasteners, knowing that they can change to stoppers at any time if they wish.

These transitional bottles may have been some of the styles called Type A by Elliott & Gould (Figure 1-51). Drawings in the 1906 Illinois Glass Co. catalog (1906:237-249) show different shapes for some stoppers on Hutchinson bottles. The catalog also noted that some of the bottles with distinct Hutchinson shapes were available with finishes for “Hutchinson Stopper, or Baltimore Seal, or Cork and Wire” (Illinois Glass Co. 1906:237).



Figure 1-51 – Hutchinson finish, possibly for cork and wire

In the United States, crown finishes gradually replaced Hutchinson finishes, corresponding to a major change in bottle

shape. The crown was typically mounted on a cylindrical bottle with gradually sloping shoulders and a much longer neck. On June 18, 1890, William Painter applied for a patent for a “Bottle-Sealing Device” and received Patent No. 468,258 on February 2, 1892 (Figure 1-52). Because of the panic (depression) of 1893 and strong tradition built on the Hutchinson finishes, crown caps did not become popular until ca. 1897 (Riley 1958), although our own research suggests adding at least three years or more before crowns were widely used.

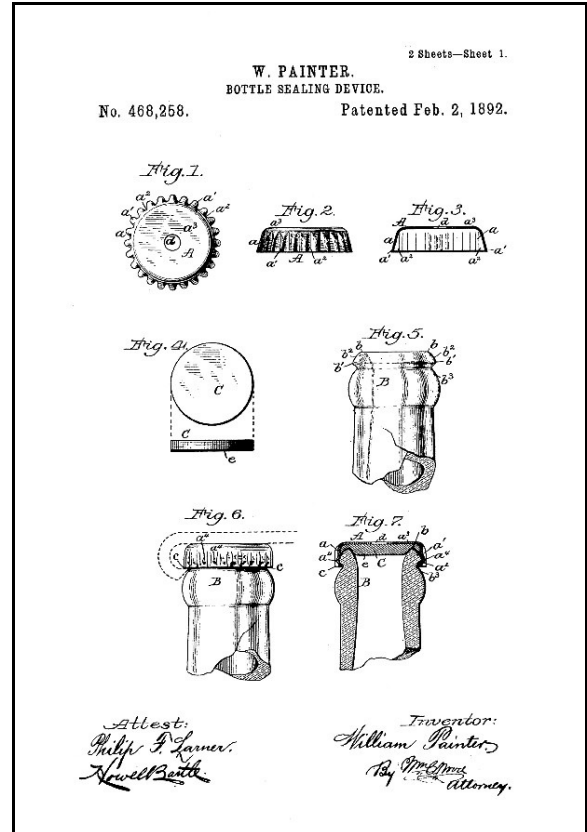


Figure 1-52 – Painter 1892 patent

The decline in the popularity of Hutchinson finishes was based on the success of the crown finishes. In the early 20th century, some soda bottlers made the transition slowly, offering bottles with identical embossed lettering in both Hutchinson and crown styles. By ca. 1912, the crown was king, and Hutchinson stoppers were rarely used, although W.H. Hutchinson & Son probably continued making replacement stoppers until ca. 1920, and at least some Hutchinson-style bottles were made as late as 1929 (Lindsey 2011; Lockhart et al. 2011).

Hutchinson Cases

The filled Hutchinson bottles were packed 24 to a case in wooden boxes. Some of these had hinged lids and hasps for locks. These were intended to be shipped by train to distant destinations. Other cases were open at the top for local distribution. In both types, the bottles

were inserted face down, often into round holes bored into the bottom plate of the case for that purpose (Figure 1-53). This kept the rubber gaskets wet and helped retain the seal to prevent leakage. Many Hutchinson bottles were embossed on the base with the initials of the owner or company (or the firm’s name, if short) for easy recognition of “foreign” bottles – when the empty bottles were returned.

A Summary of Reber Bottles¹⁶

A summary of the bottles used by Reber is appropriate at this point. To date, collectors have discovered only four different bottles embossed with Reber’s name (Figure 54). It is highly likely that Reber used generic bottles with paper labels through most of his bottling career – especially once he realized he would be selling out and moving on – often! By matching up manufacturing techniques and Reber’s history, we have created a probable chronology of Reber’s bottles. It is possible, of course, that previously unknown variations will eventually appear.

Reber’s probably used some kind of cork-sealed bottles at Las Vegas in 1879. There is a slight possibility that Reber may have

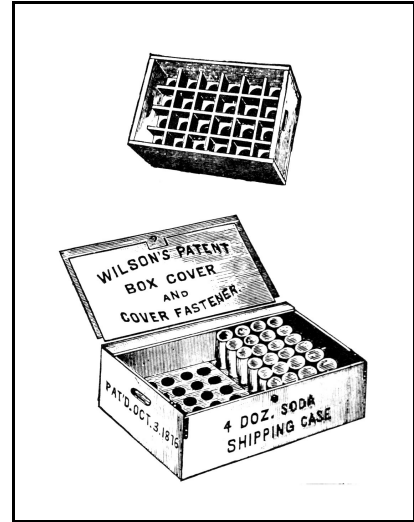


Figure 1-53 – George Wilson & Sons 1885 catalog (Paul & Parmalee 1973:65)



Figure 1-54 – The four known Reber bottles (Lynn Loomis collection)

¹⁶ A great deal of this section and the Discussion and Conclusions section were originally published in Lockhart (2013).

used a Hutchinson bottle, but it is *very* unlikely. Charles G. Hutchinson applied for his initial patent on October 28, 1878, but he did not receive it until April 8 of the following year. Fowler (2013) made no mention of any sales of the bottle prior to April 8, 1879, so it is unlikely that the stopper was produced prior to the receipt of the actual patent.

The Hutchinson stopper would have come into use about the time Reber moved to Silver City in March of 1880, and he may have initiated the use of Hutchinson bottles in New Mexico, when he arrived in the town – although a bottle embossed “REBER & Co.” does not seem to fit with a firm called Reber & Collier. Hutchinson bottles were almost certainly his container of choice by the time he arrived at Mesilla by the middle of the same year, and these were likely Reber’s first embossed bottles. See Table 1-1 for a probable chronology of Reber’s early bottles.

REBER & Co. / N.M.

Only four to six of these are known, and this information is based on the one in the Lynn Loomis collection. The bottle was a relatively typical Hutchinson container, with a thick body, rounded shoulder, and short neck. The finish of the bottle was applied and fits into the Elliott & Gould classification as a Type A finish. While it is important to note that Elliott & Gould were *only* dealing with bottles used in Hawaii, the information may be helpful in identifying some characteristics of New Mexico bottles used by Reber. If the observations of Elliott & Gould are correct, this bottle was likely used prior to 1885.

The only embossing is on the front of the bottle – “REBER & Co. (arch) / N.M. (horizontal)” in a circular plate (also called a plate mold or slug plate). These plates are actually slightly oval to make them appear round when viewed from the front. Wood (1998:[53]) noted that these bottles were aqua to bluish aqua in color and were “thought to be from Socorro, now determined to be from Robinson, N.M.”¹⁷

Subsequent investigations suggest that the bottle was probably used at Mesilla, although there is a period from ca. September 1880 to May 1881, when we have no trace of Reber’s movements. Reber was also at Silver City in early 1880, but the firm name there was Reber &

¹⁷ Larry Jones also recalled that the Reber & Co. N.M. Hutch from the former Keith Austin collection was dug at Socorro.

Collier. A bottle embossed “REBER & Co.” would not likely have been used in that setting. Since collectors’ tradition notes that this bottle was originally dug at Socorro, Reber may have been in Socorro during those “empty” months. The timing would have been right for him to have started the first soda bottling plant at Socorro during that period. In any event, 1880-1881 is the likely time frame for the use of this bottle.

REBER & Co.

Aside from lacking “N.M.” in the plate, this bottle is virtually identical in shape, size, and embossing to the one described above. However, this bottle is colorless. What is most interesting about this container is the lack of a New Mexico designator – present on all other known Reber bottles.

A close look at the plate will disclose three circles in the area below the company name. These circles require a bit of background information. Aside from labor, the single most expensive segment of bottle production was the mold. Because of this, bottle makers used molds until they completely wore out, and repaired them as long as possible. Virtually anything was cheaper than having a new mold made.

Plates were originally designed to save money on engraving. Typically, the bottler paid for engraving on a mold – then owned the mold, although it was stored at the glass house. The invention of the plate allowed a bottler to select a generic bottle style and only pay for the engraving on the plate, itself – which the bottler then paid for and owned instead of the entire mold. However, engraving required skilled labor and patience; repair typically needed less of both.

Three methods were used during the late 19th and early 20th centuries to correct errors in engraving. First, a new letter or number was simply stamped or engraved directly over the old one. Engravers generally only used this method on very small letters or numbers. Second, the old digits were peened flat, and the new ones were engraved, often leaving “ghost” marks. – evidence of the peening process.

Finally, and most important to this discussion, major errors were drilled out and filled in with machined plugs. Initially, these were hardly noticeable because the plugs were ground flush

with the molds. However, the molds were made of iron, but the plugs were steel dowels or rods. Since steel is harder than cast iron, the repairs showed up increasingly as the molds wore down.

The three circles on this second bottle's plate look exactly like repair or change-of-embossing plugs we have seen on other bottles. The reason for the use of three drilled plugs – instead of just one – is probably because the largest drill (or the largest rod) they had was insufficient to cover the necessary area. Clearly, there was a specific area to be covered.

The reasons for the drilled-and-plugged area becomes obvious with a look at Figure 1-55. The circles are in the exact position that covers the letters “N.M.” as they were embossed on the earlier bottle. Note that the embossing “REBER & CO.” is exactly the same on both bottles. Because Loomis painted the letters on his bottles for better display, there are apparent slight



Figure 1-55 – Comparison of Reber's first two bottles

differences that are not real. For example, the period following the “M” appears to be in a slightly different position on each bottle. A careful look at the photo will show that the *apparent* difference is caused by the application of the paint – not the actual embossing.

If this explains the “what” – the next step is the “why.” We have found no evidence that Reber was successful in selling out at Mesilla in 1880. Aside from the brief blurb on Reber, we have discovered no other reference to a bottler at Mesilla. In fact, the immediate area seems to have been one of the least bottler-friendly places in New Mexico. The first bottler in Las Cruces was Fred Katzenstein in 1910 – although there was a steady progression of bottlers from then on.

Reber had probably intended to remain in New Mexico and figured that leaving the city or town name off of his bottles would be a safe bet. However, his next location was El Paso, Texas, and he apparently intended to settle down. His bottles, embossed with “N.M.” no longer fit. Once he had the plate adjusted and re-embossed, however, he was generically ready to go; the Reber bottles would fit anywhere.

It is virtually certain that Reber used Hutchinson bottles at El Paso. The equipment used with Hutchinson bottles was different from the set up for earlier corked bottles. When Houck & Dieter acquired Reber's works, they not only purchased the machinery – they also took over his location. The early Houck & Dieter bottles were Hutchinsons; therefore, Reber's bottles must have been Hutchinsons.

It is even possible that Reber still had some of the older "N.M." bottles left when he returned to New Mexico in late 1881 or early 1882 and set up business at Robinson in the Black Range. Either of the two bottle types (with or without "N.M.") would have worked at that location. A series of 1883 Reber ads in the *Black Range* noted the "new patent stopper bottle" being used by Reber. This was a typical reference used during that period to describe what we know as Hutchinson bottles.

However, Reber had apparently learned a lesson. Only two other bottle styles (discussed below) are known with his name. Once his proclivity for perambulating was clearly established, he probably stuck with generic bottles. He may have used paper labels after he left El Paso, or he may have just used the bottles, alone. At most of his locations, Reber was the first and only bottler. His drinks were hardly likely to be confused with those of anyone else.

REBER BOTTLING WORKS / SANTA FE / N.M.

An aqua bottle with a round front plate was embossed "REBER BOTTLING WORKS (arch) / SANTA FE / N.M. (both horizontal)." The reverse heel was embossed "THIS BOTTLE / NOT TO BE SOLD" – with "IGCo" in an elongated diamond embossed on the base. The finish appears to be what Elliott & Gould (1988:36-37) called a "fat top"; their only example was made ca. 1902. The manufacturer's mark was used by the Illinois Glass Co. between ca. 1897 and ca. 1916, possibly a few years earlier (Lockhart et al. 2005:55). The closest match in the Illinois Glass Catalog for 1903 and 1906 (p. 237) is model No. 33, which was available with finishes for "Hutchinson Stopper Baltimore Seal or Cork and Wire." Although the photo (see Figure 1-29 or 1-54) shows a Hutchinson wire in the bottle, the rounded finish may have been made for a cork and wire closure.

In all of the early references, Reber is either addressed by name or his business is referred to as "Reber & Co." ("Co." almost certainly referring to Rebecca). Our searching has only

turned up references to the “Reber Bottling Works” in Albuquerque (December 22, 1891); Santa Fe (July & August 1892); again at Santa Fe (June-August 1893); and Benson, Arizona (April 1904). Reber was at Santa Fe:

Jul 15, 1892-Oct 3, 1892

May 4, 1893-Aug 5, 1893

Aug 11, 1896-1897?

Dec 1, 1912 (his date of death)

It is possible that the photo in Figure 1-27 was taken of the 1892 or 1893 business. However, Reber was only at Santa Fe for short periods during those two years. It is unlikely that he would have bought embossed bottles.

The next period is a bit strange. Reber was at Bland in August of 1894, but our next sighting is in August 1896, when Reber was at Santa Fe. By July 1897, the great traveler was at Wilcox, Arizona. We thus have a period, possibly more than two years, when Reber may have settled down. It is also possible that Reber returned to Santa Fe for an extended period during two other “empty” times: 1901-1903 or 1905-1910.

R
E
REBER – the Reber “Cross” Bottle
N E M
R

This bottle is aqua, with a round front plate embossed with “REBER” horizontally intersected at the “B” with “REBER” vertically to form a cross of the two words. Although this is pure speculation, the cross may have represented two Rebers – T.L. and Rebecca. The letter “N” is in the lower left quadrant of the plate, with “M” in the lower right quadrant. This appears to have what Elliott & Gould (1988:36) called a “funnel top” or “full funnel.” They stated that this finish was “apparently developed around 1905.” Unfortunately, Lynn Loomis had this bottle repaired, where the finish had been broken. It is impossible to determine how much of the current finish is original.

According to Loomis, his example of this bottle was dug at a construction site at Albuquerque. While this does not guarantee that Albuquerque was the location where the bottle was used, that is the most logical hypothesis. Reber probably operated a works at Albuquerque sometime during the 1884-1889 period. He certainly established a plant in the city during 1891-1892, and he operated in the Albuquerque/Santa Fe area in 1899.

Another possibility is Socorro in late 1883. Reber announced in the *Bullion* (1/11/1883), “We have come to stay.” Although the family moved again at some point, Reber may really have intended to remain at Socorro. That would have been a perfect time to buy embossed bottles. Still, he hedged his bets and only used the state abbreviation – not including a city.

A final possibility applies if the finish of the bottle is still representative and if the dating scheme developed by Elliott & Gould remains consistent in the continental U.S. If both of those assumptions are valid, then this was one of Reber’s last bottles, used at Estancia or during the currently unknown period between 1905 and Reber’s death in 1912. Estancia is about 50 miles southeast of Albuquerque.

Table 1-1 – Speculative Chronology for Early Reber Bottles

Place	Date	Bottle Type [Embossing]	Company Name
Las Vegas	1879	blob-top	unknown
Silver City	1880	blob-top (possibly Hutchinson)	Reber & Collier
Mesilla	1880	Hutchinson [REBER & CO. / N.M.]	unknown
El Paso	1881	Hutchinson [REBER & CO.]	Reber & Co.
Robinson	1882	Hutchinson “new patent stopper bottle”	Reber & Co.

Christin-Patent Bottles

Arthur Christin received Patent No. 161,863 for an “Improvement in Bottle Stoppers” on April 13, 1875 (Figure 1-56). At least six soda bottles with these unusual stoppers were made by the Alexander & David H. Chambers plant, all embossed with the A&DHC mark. At least two

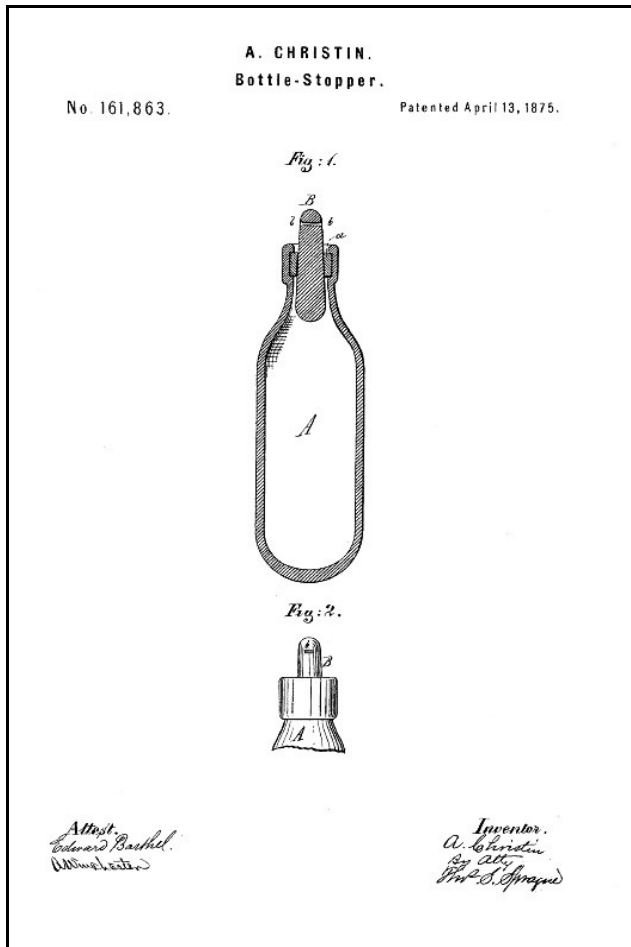


Figure 1-56 – Christin 1878 patent

itself, consisted of a hard rubber cone with two grooves near the top (Figure 1-57). The stopper was inserted into the bottle, then the grommet was installed. After the bottle was filled with soda, a wire tool was inserted into the bottle to grasp the grooves in the stopper and pull it upward until it seated against the grommet at the top of the bottle (Figures 1-58). Like the Hutchinson stopper, it was held in place by the force of the pressure created by the carbonation, and the bottle was opened by striking the top of the stopper downward, driving it into the bottle.

other Christin bottles were made by D.O. Cunningham and Cunningham & Co. (Fowler 2013), but it is likely that the Chambers' factory made most of the Christin bottles.



Figure 1-57 – Christin stopper (Farnsworth & Walthall 2011:218)

Bottles for the Christin stopper had a wide groove debossed inside the throat of the bottle for a soft, rubber grommet. The stopper,



Figure 1-58 – Christin finish (Lockhart 2010)

The El Paso bottle was embossed “COFFIN & Co. (arch) / EL PASO / TEXAS (both horizontal)” on the front body, with “ARTHUR CHRISTIN” on the front heel and “A&D.H.C. / PAT. APR. 13TH 1875” on the reverse heel (see Figure 1-12). As noted in the history section, Coffin & Co. was only in business in 1881 and probably purchased its equipment from T.L. Reber. Although the identification of Reber with Coffin & Co. is far from absolute, the timing is interesting at the very least.

Just as Reber stopped including sodas in his ads, Coffin & Co. began advertising in the El Paso newspapers. In another well-timed incident, Coffin & Co. ran its last ad just as Reber apparently left town. Assuming that the connection is valid, it demonstrates a change in Reber’s habits. As noted above, Reber almost certainly used bottles with cork finishes (blob-top) at Las Vegas in 1879. He almost certainly adopted the Hutchinson style by 1880. However, the use of Hutchinson bottles would still have been in the experimental stages by 1881, when Reber sold what was pretty definitely a Hutchinson setup to Houck & Dieter. It would have been in keeping with this phase of Reber’s development to have tested the Christin stopper. Like the vast majority of soda bottlers during the last two decades of the 19th century, Reber returned to Hutchinson containers.

Discussion and Conclusions

Although the story of T.L. and Rebecca Reber is interesting and valuable in its own right, it has wider implications for the study of soda bottles and bottling in New Mexico and eastern Arizona. Archaeologists and collectors had previously assumed that soda bottling sprang up independently at most locations in New Mexico. Since Reber rarely advertised and only appeared sporadically in the newspapers (usually as a one- or two-sentence blurb in sections like “About Town”), he was missed by virtually all earlier researchers. When noted (e.g., Wood 1998), he was assumed to have been a local phenomenon rather than attached to the state as a whole.

As noted in the history section, our research ties succeeding soda bottlers in with Reber's departures from many locations. For example, the timing is just right for what used to be thought as the initial bottlers of Las Vegas, Cerrillos, Silver City, El Paso (Texas), Robinson, Hillsboro, and Roswell to have purchased Reber's former works. In addition, many locations, such as Lordsburg, Eddy (Carlsbad), Tucumcari, Santa Rosa, and other towns have bottles and/or timing and opportunities that fit Reber perfectly. For example, Eddy was established in 1888 as an alcohol-free town – a perfect location for a soda bottler – during a period when we have no evidence for Reber's whereabouts.

These examples, along with Reber's repeated businesses in the larger cities of Santa Fe and Albuquerque, suggest that we rethink the direction of soda bottle production in New Mexico – as well as eastern Arizona. By our current count, Reber established plants at 25 locations – not counting returns to at least Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Bland, San Pedro, and Socorro. There are also major gaps in our records that could include literally a dozen or more locations.

Reber should therefore be considered as a possible influence in any historical context in New Mexico and eastern Arizona, possibly in western Texas and southern Colorado, between 1879 and 1910. We currently know of tenuous, reasonable, and solid connections between Reber and other soda bottlers at numerous locations, and there are certainly more that we have not discovered. Reber arrived at – and left – many small towns before a newspaper was established – leaving little trace of his presence.

A final tag about Hutchinson bottles is appropriate before we close this section. The 1903 Illinois Glass Co. catalog featured 34 Hutchinson-style soda bottles. Most of the bottles were available in "Hutchinson stopper, Baltimore Seal, or Cork and Wire." The Baltimore Seal was invented by William Painter. Painter applied for a patent for a "Bottle-Stopper" on June 5, 1885, and received Patent No. 327,099 on September 29 of that year (Figure 1-59). The device was composed of a rubber disk that was inserted into a groove inside the bottle's neck.

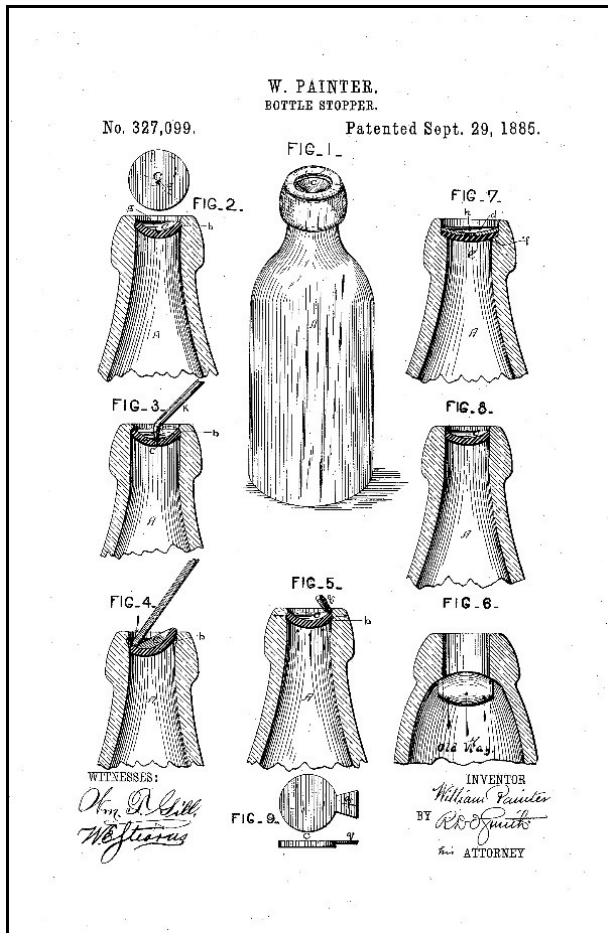


Figure 1-59 – Painter’s 1885 patent

The other two possibilities, unfortunately, were not as distinct, and the catalog did not illustrate examples of each finish. As noted elsewhere in this study, several different finishes were made for Hutchinson bottles. Because the earlier soda bottle style – generally called a blob-top – was used for wired-down cork closures, it is logical that the Illinois Glass Co. finishes would be similar. Two types of finishes found on Hutchinson bottles seem to fit this pattern (Figure 1-60). One was notably taller than most. The other – what Elliott & Gould (1988:36-37) called a “fat top” – was wider and rounder than most. It is possible that *both* types were intended for wired-down corks. They could have been manufactured by different glass houses.

Reber’s story is far from over. The group that is currently researching this “perambulating soda water manufacturer” (the authors of this piece, those in the Acknowledgment section, and others) will continue to do so. The chase remains exciting! Reber truly deserves the title of the Johnny Appleseed of soda bottlers.



Figure 1-60 – Three styles of Hutchinson finishes

Acknowledgments

We want to thank Lynn Loomis for information and for the use of his collection as our photo source. Another very important person in this research is Pat Brown. When Ginny Bergey walked into the Casa Grande Trading Post, Turquoise Mining Museum & Petting Zoo (operated by Pat and her husband, Todd, at Cerrillos, New Mexico), looking for information on her relative, T.L. Reber, Pat is the one who enlisted the other researchers. Thanks also to Bill Baxter for historical information and being part of the ongoing research team and to Mike Miller for filling in one of the gaps. Finally, our thanks to Cynthia Smith, granddaughter of Lenna Reber and great granddaughter of T.L. Reber, for the photos of T.L., Rebecca, and Lenna Reber.

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Addendum – T.L. Reber

Historical research never ends. However, we need to draw the line at some point. Once we had passed the point of no return on the Reber section of this book, Mike Miller discovered *another* Reber location.

The November 7, 1896, edition of the *Arizona Weekly Citizen* (Tucson) noted:

The Reber Bottling Works is well under way, and starts business with flattering promise of a most successful and satisfactory patronage. T.L. Reber, of the firm, left a box of his soda at the Citizen office yesterday, and it is most highly appreciated, because of its excellence. Fully up to the standard in every regard, this product alone will draw many customers among those who enjoy a delightful, refreshing beverage.

We know that Reber was bottling soda at Santa Fe from August 11 to August 29, 1896. He may have remained at Santa Fe until October. Even with Reber's obvious skill and experience, he needed some setup time to produce a case of soda for the *Citizen*, so he had to have been in Tucson by at least the first of November, probably sometime in October. Although we have no way of determining how long Reber stayed at Tucson, he may have remained in southern Arizona for awhile. Our next confirmed sighting was at Wilcox, Arizona, on July 21, 1897, and Reber appears to have inhabited the eastern part of the state for the rest of the year.

As usual, Reber's timing is interesting. George Tichnor had opened the Tucson Soda Works ca. 1886 and sold to J.W. Whally in 1892. According to Miller 2009:133), "Whally had the monopoly on soda water in Tucson for close to two years, but in 1894 competition finally arrived in the firm Smith & Smyly." Whally sold to Florenz F. Winters in 1895, and B.H. Kroeger purchased the plant in 1897 (Figure Ad1). He finally closed in 1900.

The Pioneer Soda Works began in 1880 but had ceased operations by 1886. A second Pioneer Soda Works operated by Smith & Smyly (William Smith and Paul Smyly) opened in 1894, although Smyly left in 1896. The business closed by 1910 (Miller 2009:125-126). Meanwhile, Peter and M.A. Ziegler opened the Ziegler Brothers Candy Kitchen in 1897. According to Miller (2009:134) Ziegler expanded the business to include soda water in 1899.

Thus, in November 1896, Reber opened at Tucson in competition with two existing bottlers – the Tucson Soda Works and the Pioneer Soda Works. Since Reber had moved to Wilcox by July 1897, he must have divested himself of the Tucson business by at least that time. Since the existing two bottlers were already in place, it is unlikely that Reber sold to either of them, although it is possible that B.H. Kroeger bought Reber's equipment, when he purchased the Tucson Soda Works in 1897.

The wild card in this deck was the Ziegler Brothers, who opened their confectionery right on time – in 1897. Even though the Zieglers did not advertise their own sodas until 1899, they may have purchased Reber's equipment and operated on a small scale from the confectionery. We know that Reber usually began as a small plant, run by himself alone or with Rebecca's help. This size of operation would have worked well even without advertising.

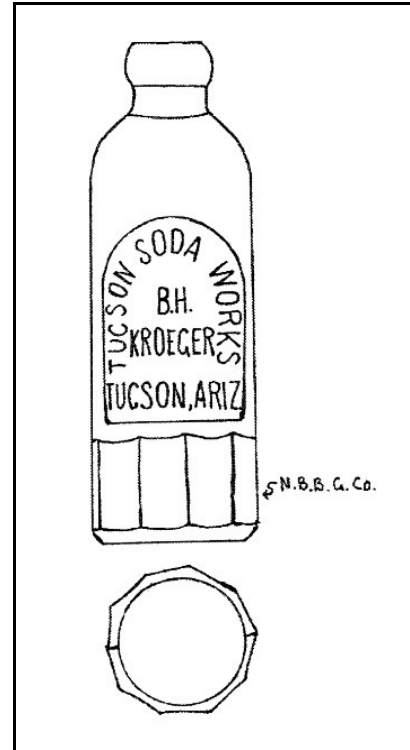


Figure Ad1 – Tucson Soda Works Hutchinson bottle (Miller 2009:133)