

Part I

The History of

the

Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co.

of

New Mexico and Arizona

by Bill Lockhart and Michael R. Miller



With its roots in El Paso, Texas, and its demise in Phoenix, Arizona, the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Company had its actual birth in Deming, New Mexico. The company was incredibly dynamic, sprouting out to extend its services to at least 11 towns and cities in New Mexico and Arizona. The company bloomed, grew, and withered in the short span of 12 years – with the exceptions of the Globe branch, a factory that survived for almost another decade, and the Phoenix plant which clung to life until 1947 or 1948.

### The Roots of the Corporation: Santa Fe and El Paso

The roots of the company go all the way back to A. L. Houck & Co. of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Houck, a successful hardware dealer in Wichita, Kansas, decide to expand westward. By June 1880, he had established A. L. Houck & Co., a liquor and beer distributorship along with a soda bottling works. Although the business burned to the ground in February of 1882, it planted the seed that would lead to the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. 35 years later (Lockhart 2000).

John Phillip Dieter, an old friend and business associate of Houck's, joined with him to form a branch of the A. L. Houck Co. in El Paso, Texas (Figure 1-1). This branch, named Houck



Figure 1-1 – Houck & Dieter, El Paso, Texas – ca. 1889-1903  
[Courtesy of the Dieter Family]

& Dieter for its founders, was the first soda bottling plant in El Paso, Texas. Founded on February 2, 1880, Houck & Dieter were primarily liquor dealers and beer distributors until the firm opened its soda bottling plant on April 1, 1881. The business flourished and grew, expanding to Douglas, Arizona, in late 1903 or early 1904. With Dieter's death in 1907, the Douglas warehouse closed, but the El Paso

business continued to thrive until Texas Prohibition closed the doors of all such establishments in 1919. The soda bottling operation merged with one of its competitors in 1912 (Lockhart 2000).

The stylized history of the bottles is as important as the documentary history of the company. Houck & Dieter's company life spanned the period between Hutchinson-style bottles (squat, very heavy bottles with internal stoppers) to the those using crown caps (a style still in use today). Houck & Dieter's changeover to crown caps probably occurred sometime between 1900 and 1906. Their first crown-capped bottle contained an embossed label almost identical to that found on their Hutchinson-style bottle. However, the chief contribution that Houck & Dieter made to the future Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. was the introduction of its final bottle style, a cylindrical, 6-panel bottle—the prototype of the most common container later used by Southwestern (Lockhart 1997a; 2000; 2003).

Lawrence Gardner was one of the earliest non-liquor dealers to challenge the supremacy of Houck & Dieter in the soda bottling business (Figure 1-2). He formed the Purity Bottling & Manufacturing Co. in El Paso in 1906 (Figure 1-3). An ambitious salesman, Gardner not only successfully competed in El Paso, he spread his sales as far as Phoenix, Arizona. Although the details of the deal are lost in history, Gardner merged with the bottling operation of Houck & Dieter in 1912 to form Empire Bottling Works (Figure 1-4) (Lockhart 1997b; 2000).

From Gardner's one-room, one-man, one-horse operation at Purity in 1906, Empire grew to encompass candy, produce, and supplies for bottlers and soda fountains. By the 1930s, Old Monk and Bronco, Empire's most popular brands, were selling all over the United States and as far away



Figure 1-3 – Building with Ad for Purity Bottling & Mfg. Co. [M. G. McKinny Collection]



Figure 1-2 – Lawrence Gardner, Founder of Empire Bottling Works and Southwestern [El Paso Chamber of Commerce, 1911]

Puerto Rico and Mexico City. Apparently, Gardner suffered from health problems sufficient to cause his retirement in 1944. When his wife, Nell, took over the business, she began to systematically reduce the scope of sales until, when she sold Empire to Richard C. Price of Grapette Bottling Company in 1956, only the actual soda bottling operation

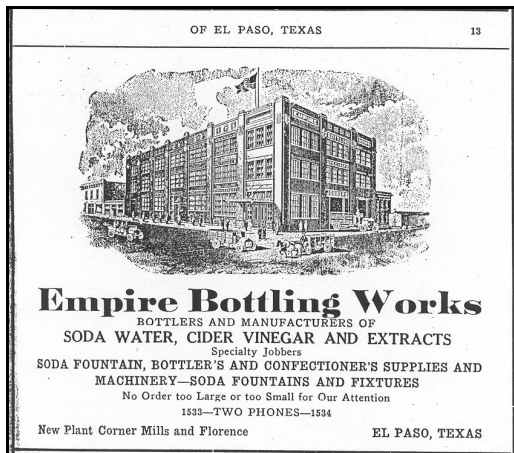


Figure 1-4 – Ad for Empire Bottling Works [El Paso City Directory, 1919]

still existed. Price, in turn, sold the company (then called Empire Bottling Co.) to Raymond A. Shapiro. Shapiro disbanded the company in 1969 because of the heavy competition from national brands and the popularity of canned soft drinks. Setting up a canning operation was cost-effective only for very high-volume operations. Like Southwestern, Empire continued to use the 6-panel bottle style pioneered by Houck & Dieter for its flavor drinks called Fruit Thrills. Although Empire also sold numerous nationally franchised brands (including Dr. Pepper, Dr. Wells, NuGrape, Orange Crush, and many others),

it also sold its Fruit Thrills in the 6-panel bottles until about 1929 (Lockhart 1997b; 2000).

### The Origin: Deming, New Mexico

#### Deming Coca-Cola Bottling Works (1916)

Why Gardner chose to open a plant in Deming will probably never be known. The decision may have been driven by his desire to expand and the discovery that the town's only soda bottler was in bad health. However, the new operation may have been caused by jealousy. In 1908, Hope Smith founded the Magnolia Bottling Co. in El Paso. Competing with Houck & Dieter (El Paso's oldest bottler), Henry Pfaff, Gardner's Purity Bottling & Manufacturing Co., and Woodlawn Bottling Co. may have driven Smith to obtain the Coca-Cola franchise for El Paso in 1911. It is clear that, after his initial difficulty convincing El Pasoans to drink a cola beverage, Magnolia's Coca-Cola rapidly became the number one choice in the city. The ambitious Gardner probably wanted to take advantage of this popular beverage in settings where it was unavailable (Lockhart 2001).

According to Coca-Cola company records, the first Coca-Cola franchise in Deming, New Mexico, was to the Deming Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in 1916 (Munsey 1972:305). In the same year, the New Mexico State Business Directory listed the Coca-Cola Bottling Works in Deming with Lawrence Gardner as proprietor. The *Deming Headlight* (1/14/1916) stated that "Mr. Gardener has the state rights for the sale of Coca-Cola in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, and he has already opened up a plant in El Paso to take care of the Texas trade."

The *Headlight* was incorrect when it stated that “Mr. Gardner will move to Deming shortly to make his home here.” Gardner, in fact, remained in El Paso for the rest of his life. It was also a bit inaccurate in placing Gardner in the Coca-Cola business. Hope M. Smith had obtained the Coca-Cola franchise for El Paso in 1911, and the company he founded, Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Co. continues to bottle the product today. The “plant in El Paso” must have referred to Gardner’s holdings in Empire Bottling Works that serviced “a territory from San Antonio to Phoenix” (*El Paso Herald* 7/14/1920). Similarly, there were other Coca-Cola franchises in New Mexico and Arizona. Gardner’s franchise likely only covered the southwestern section of New Mexico along with Albuquerque and parts of Arizona.

In January 1916, Gardner had made arrangements to use the storeroom of the Western Transfer Company’s building on N. Silver Ave. for the Deming Coca-Cola Bottling Works. As in El Paso, Gardner planned to start small, and J. J. Noonan, the proprietor of Western Transfer, was to be Gardner’s agent for the new venture in Deming. Machinery for the plant had been ordered and was expected to arrive before February, the month targeted for the beginning of production. Gardner’s operation was assured to be a success because Coca-Cola was already sold in local soda fountains “where it has by far the biggest sale of all other drinks” (*Deming Headlight* 1/14/1916). His high expectations were also shown since “\$2,000 worth of bottles with the name of the new firm lbownd (*sic*) on them have been ordered” (*Deming Graphic* 1/28/1916).

Although we may never know the reason, Gardner and Noonan had a falling out in June of 1916. Gardner posted a public notice stating that “Mr. J. J. Noonan is not nor has he ever been connected in a financial way with the Coca Cola Bottling Works of Deming, New Mexico, the undersigned being the sole and exclusive owner of the entire plant since its opening.”<sup>11</sup> The notice was signed by Gardner and his new manager, L. H. Phillips. Phillips would later be the superintendent of the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in Deming (*Deming Graphic* 6/16/1916).

#### Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. – the Foundation

By November, the new Coca-Cola bottling plant, located along the railroad tracks “fronting the Union Station Park,” was almost complete. The firm of Samuels & Son was in charge of masonry work; H. T. Foster was the primary carpenter; and one Nordhaus had the plumbing contract. The *Graphic* cooed that “the pretty building is 25 x 50 [feet] with a second story as a laboratory. Mr. Gardner has purchased the very latest automatic machinery for the

many beverages that have made his name famous in the Southwest and for the bottling of Coca-

Cola” (*Deming Graphic* 10/6/1916). The building was to be completed about November 1. Unfortunately, the *Graphic* had no comment about where Gardner had been bottling his “many beverages” since his altercation with Noonan nearly four months earlier.

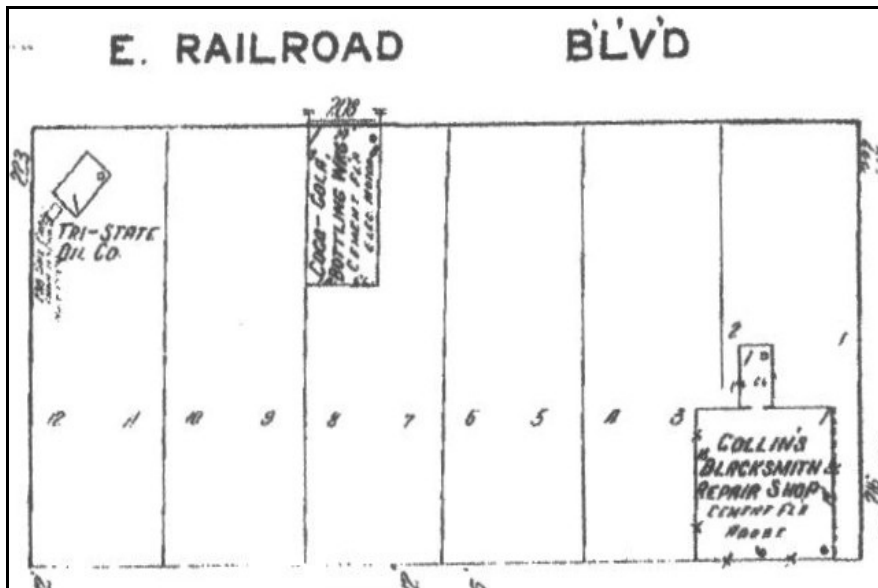


Figure 1-5 – Deming Coca-Cola Bottling Works [Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1917]

According to the 1917 Sanborn Insurance map (Figure 1-5), the new structure was rectangular with a cement floor and at least one electric motor. Just west of the center of the block along Railroad Blvd., the building was surrounded by vacant lots and only shared space with two other structures along the block: Tri-State Oil Co. on the western corner and Collins Blacksmith & Repair Shop along N. Platinum Ave. to the east.

Although we have yet to find solid documentary evidence, this new plant was almost certainly the beginning of the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Physical evidence consists of two different Southwestern bottles with date codes of 1916 (see Part II). The bottles were certainly ordered and probably put into use during this period.

#### Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. - The Incorporation

Southwestern was officially incorporated on January 16, 1917 with L. H. Phillips (manager of Gardner’s original Coca-Cola plant in Deming) as its agent and had its registered office in Deming, New Mexico. The avowed purpose of the corporation was “Manufacturers and Mercantile” with an authorized capital stock of \$100,000, half of which (\$50,000) was already subscribed (i.e., owned by the original incorporators). The list of incorporators contains some interesting names: Wheeler Shropshire, S. P. Shropshire, Nellie Gardner, R. G. Kemp, J. W.

Donahue, E. W. Ferguson, S. Aronstein, Herman Andreas, H. Eichwald, F. G. Lemley, W. L. Kolberg, and R. A. Nook, all from El Paso, Texas; Arturo Ducas, Juarez, Mexico; J. L. Andreas, El Paso, Texas; H. P. Wiley, Douglas, Arizona; and L. H. Phillips, Deming, New Mexico (Incorporation Records 1917). In 1917 the Deming branch of Southwestern was listed for the first time in the New Mexico State Business Directory.

Although Gardner's name is conspicuously absent from the list of initial incorporators, he soon became president of the new corporation; however, the third name on the list of incorporators is Nellie Gardner, his wife. Eichwald and Lemley had been officers of Houck & Dieter (the corporation involved in Gardner's first merger in 1912), and both Nooke and Eichwald had been officers in Empire Bottling Works. Others from El Paso were well-known business figures in the city, and Wiley was the first manager of Southwestern's Douglas, Arizona, plant. The El Paso Chamber of Commerce claimed that Gardner was the general manager and president of Southwestern and that Empire Bottling Works was the parent company of the corporation (Doña Ana County Miscellaneous Records 1921; El Paso Chamber of Commerce 1920).

#### Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of Deming (1917)

An interesting sideline remains to be explained. The *Graphic* noted that Hope M. Smith, the man who introduced Coca-Cola to El Paso, opened a Deming branch in November 1917 in the new plant that Gardner had built. E. H. Bulis, described as "a gentleman of large experience," was Smith's new manager. The *Graphic* stated that "yesterday the company received two carload (sic) of bottles to take care of their trade" and bragged that the new owner made "Deming water 100% pure by putting it through a sand and water filter[,] and the manner in which their bottles are sterilized and cleaned would make a microbe flee in terror" (*Deming Graphic* 9/28/1917). Since the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. incorporated in January of 1917, it is strange that Smith showed up in November. It may be that Smith became one of the stakeholders, and the newspaper reporter once again misinterpreted his information. The episode, however, remains a mystery, but Smith was soon out of the picture.

It is worthy of note that no bottles unique to this operation have ever been found by either collectors or archaeologists. It is possible that the bottles used only paper labels (unlikely since Magnolia in El Paso used distinctly embossed bottles), and the most parsimonious explanation is that the containers Smith ordered were the earliest-known Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Company embossed bottles. The style resembled the bottles used by Smith's Magnolia Coca-



Cola Bottling Co. in El Paso. This idea is further supported because, like Smith's tenure with Southwestern, the bottle was only used for a very short period of time. It is also possible, however, that the initial bottles were inspired by the ones used by the Deming Coca-Cola Bottling Works. These, too, had the open body space for paper labels with heel embossing to identify the company. We may never know the answer.

#### Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. (1916-1929)

As noted above, it is highly likely that Southwestern actually began prior to the actual incorporation, and its beginning can be set at November 1916. According to the New Mexico State Business Directory, L. H. Phillips (the manager of Gardner's Deming Coca-Cola Bottling Works in 1916) was superintendent of Southwestern in 1917 with Melvin Phillips as manager of the Deming plant at 208 E. Railroad Dr. (the former location of Gardner's plant). The Phillips combination apparently continued to run the operation until 1924 when Henry A. Voiers became manager (NMSBD 1917-1924). Voiers had been with the plant for quite a while as well as manager of Southwestern's short-lived Albuquerque operation in 1918. The *Deming Graphic* (7/22/1924) in 1924 noted that Voiers had been an employ "for the past eight years" (i.e., since 1916). Voiers remained as manager through 1927 when he went into the candy and tobacco business with his brother, Grover. Two years later, Voiers Brothers began bottling its own brand of sodas in competition with Henry's old employer. W. H. Greer took over as manager of Southwestern in 1927 and retained that position until the plant was sold in 1929 (NMSBD 1925-1930).

The *Graphic* (7/22/1924) provides an excellent description of the building and its workings:

The brick building in which the plant is located [208 E. Railroad Dr.] is one and one-half stories in height and about 25 feet wide by 75 feet long with a large lot on the east side for the storing of returned empty bottles and cases.

The first floor of the building is cemented, and on it is located an International water softener. From the softener the water is passed through two stone filters into a stone storage vessel; then it passes through ice cold coils just prior to being carbonated. All of the machinery for these several processes of preparing the water has been installed since the beginning of the present year.

The syrups are manufactured, in part, in a screened room upstairs which is sanitary in every respect. All of the bottles are thoroughly sterilized in a Miller hydro-washing machine, and then filled by machinery which does the work automatically. After being filled and stoppered the bottles go through a machine which rinses them on the outside, after which each bottle is inspected and they are then packed in cases of two dozen each.

The new building was 25 feet longer than Gardner’s original building. The Sanborn Insurance map of 1921 (Figure 1-6) also shows that the building as larger and with a little more company by this time. The Tri-State Oil Co. on the western corner (E. Railroad Blvd. & N. Silver Ave.) was now generically referred to as a gasoline station; the blacksmith shop along N. Platimnum Ave. had become Kealy & Sloss Machine & Repair Shop; and a new (unnamed) garage was built along the alley with a front on N. Silver Ave.

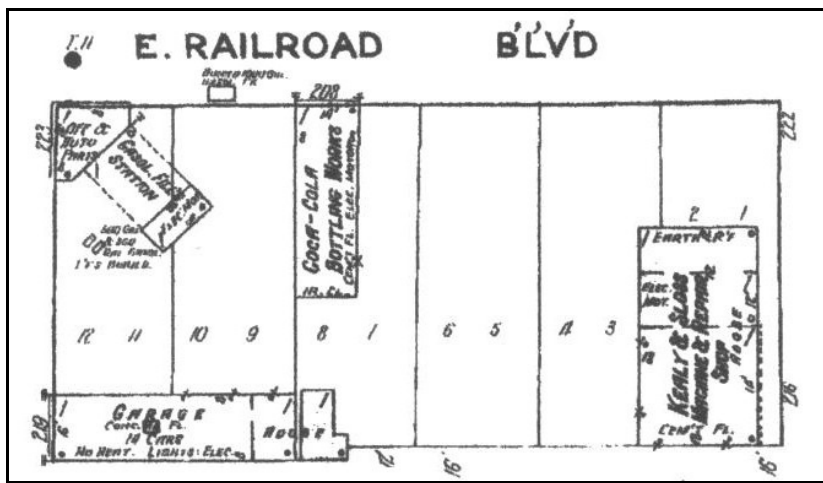


Figure 1-6 – Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. [Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1921]

While Coca-Cola syrup was shipped to the plant in barrels, other flavor syrup arrived in gallon containers packed in cases. The plant also wholesaled “candies of all kinds,” reminiscent of Gardner’s Empire Bottling Works in El Paso. The company employed eight men at Deming and used three delivery trucks. Its Silver City branch delivered its product in two trucks (*Deming Graphic* 7/22/1924). A year later, the *Graphic* (5/5/1925) announced “Free Drinks Wednesday” when Southwestern hosted an open house and invited everyone to “see for themselves just how these beverages are prepared and put up right in Deming.” In addition to the “free ice cold bottle,” Voiers offered a free “souvenir for every person who calls. The more the merrier. . .” It would be interesting to know what the souvenir was. The Deming plant survived until August 1929 (NMSBD 1917-1930).

Thanks to a receipt on file at the Luna County Historical Society (Deming, New Mexico), we have some insight into the early prices at Southwestern (Figure 1-7). Dated July 31, 1917, the receipt is to A. G. Raithel, an officer of the Bank of Deming and a former associate of John Corbett, Deming’s earliest soda bottler and bank official (Lockhart 2005). According to data on the receipt, Coca-Cola sold for \$1.10 per case, including a deposit of 30¢. The contents of the case of bottles, therefore, cost 80¢.

Just as the New Mexico branches arrived with little or no fanfare, their ending was even more quiet. Only a brief notice of the change of proprietor graced the pages of a single newspaper (*Las Cruces Citizen* 8/17/1929) as the New Mexico plants slipped quietly into the ownership of John A. Echols. Gardner’s grand concept was no more.

Southwestern New Mexico after Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co.

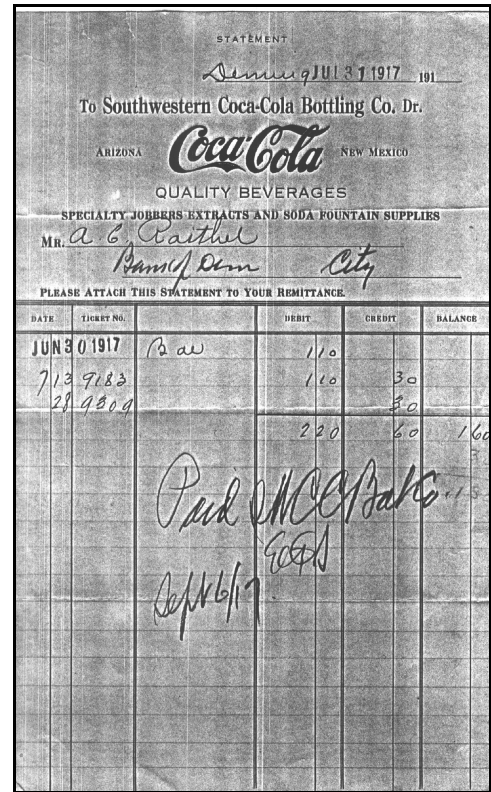


Figure 1-7 – 1917 Receipt [Courtesy of the Luna County Historical Society]



Figure 1-8 – Rare Photo of Deming Coca-Cola Bottling Co. – Post WWII [Courtesy of the Luna County Historical Society]

Southwestern’s replacement, the New Mexico Coca-Cola Bottling Co., still on Railroad Dr., was short-lived. The new owner was John A. Echols, and he was listed as manager of both the Deming and Las Cruces plants in 1930 and 1931 on S. Church St. in Las Cruces and E. Railroad Blvd. in Deming (NMSBD 1930-1931). The structure of the building in Deming had changed little, although the Sanborn Insurance map of 1930 shows that a shed had been added since 1921 (Figure 1-8).

Echols had moved from Albuquerque where he had been living for the past year after selling his bottling works in Corsicana, Texas. He closed the deal in late August of 1929 and took over the Southern New Mexico branches of Southwestern (*Las Cruces Citizen* 8/17/1929). Although the official name and management had changed, the business continued to be cross-listed as Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in the telephone directory (Deming-Lordsburg Telephone Directory, 1932-33). Although Echols shut down the Silver City plant, the town continued to be served from Deming. He remained in business in Las Cruces but sold the Deming branch to Paul Link, Sr. in 1934 (Link 1978:220). Sam Link continued to operate the company after his father's death, and his daughter, Barbara Schultz, took over the business in 1985. She still runs the company in 2005. The Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of Deming is one of the last in the nation that continues to sell Coke in returnable bottles.

### Expansion to Las Cruces

Although we know that Southwestern expanded in several directions (including Arizona) in 1918, the most important second location within New Mexico was Las Cruces. Located between Deming and El Paso and having no Coca-Cola bottler, Las Cruces was the obvious choice for a new location. However, because of a paucity of surviving records, the beginnings of the Las Cruces plant are shrouded in mystery. Gardner may have even started another independent plant prior to the Southwestern branch.

#### Las Cruces Coca-Cola Bottling Co. (1917?)

According to Coca-Cola records, the first Coca-Cola franchise in town was the Las Cruces Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in 1917 (Munsey 1972:305). At this time, we have found no other references to this company, but it may have existed until it was absorbed by the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co., probably later in 1917. It is more probable that this was another name for Southwestern. Listings for Coca-Cola franchises under multiple names was common.

Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. (1917?-1921)

The Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. was officially incorporated on January 16, 1917, with L. H. Phillips as its agent and its registered office in Deming, New Mexico. Although the exact date is unsure, Southwestern probably opened its Las Cruces branch prior to May 1919, the date of its first surviving ad. The branch was listed in deed records as Southwestern *Coco*-Cola Bottling Co., an error which probably embarrassed Gardner for years.

Although Southwestern rarely advertised, on May 17, 1919 (*Las Cruces Citizen*), the company informed readers, “In reply to a great many inquiries we wish to announce to the public



Figure 1-9 – Early Southwestern Ad [*Las Cruces Citizen* February 19, 1919]

that we are paying the reveune [*sic*] tax on our products. The Dealer and Consumer [*sic*] do not pay tax on our goods. We pay it. You can still drink your favorite Coca-Cola in bottles for 5c everywhere. The Southwestern Bottling Co. of Las Cruces.” The ad also listed seven businesses (California Fruit & Confectionery Store, Y. Flores Bakery & Grocery, J. B. Padilla, Mims’ Grocery, Joe Terrazas, Sin Foon, and Doña Ana Drug Co.) that carried Southwestern products

(Figure 1-9). This may have been a response to inquiries by concerned customers after Southwestern’s predecessor went out of business or fueled by a thus-far-undiscovered statement by the city’s other bottling company, the Las Cruces Bottling Works.

On May 21, 1919, Southwestern bought land (presumably for the bottling works) in Mesquite, New Mexico, about nine miles south of Las Cruces. For “the sum of sixty (\$60.00) Dollars lawful money of the United States of America,” Brazito Development & Power Co. did “grant, bargain, sell, remise, convey, release and confirm” to the “Southwestern *Coco* (sic) Cola Bottling Co.” title to “Lot Number Ten (10) in Block Number Fifteen (15) of the town of Mesquite” (Doña County Deed Records, Book 58:40).

At some point, the company moved to the Amador Building on the corner of Amador St. and Main St. in Las Cruces and then sold out to Cruces Candy and Bottling Co. On June 24,

1921, a bill of sale was recorded “between Southwestern Coco-Cola Bottling Company [underscore in original], a corporation, organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of New Mexico” and the Cruces Candy & Bottling Co. Although the document failed to designate the exact price paid, it enumerated the specific items passed in the exchange:

- 1 Junior Automatic Bottling Machine,
- 2 Carbonators and Motors,
- 1 Miller Conveyor,
- 1 Foot Power Crowner
- 1 Electric Motor,
- 1 Goldman Soaker,
- 2 Ford Trucks,
- 1888 Two-Dozen Cases,
- 337 Four-Dozen Cases [i.e. steel cases for railroad shipment],
- 500 Gross Coco-Cola (*sic*) and soda water bottles.

Together with all of the quipment (*sic*) not mentioned and specified herein, consisting of empty jars, measuring vessels, filters, hangers, pulleys, and other equipment and personal property in and upon the premises occupied by the party of the first part in the Amador building, situate (*sic*) at the northwest corner of Main street and Amador street in the town of Las Cruces” (Doña Ana County Miscellaneous Records, Book 5:441).

Southwestern “covenant[ed] and agree[ed] that . . . it will not engage in the bottling business in the said county of Dona Ana . . . for the period of Ten (10) years from the date of the execution hereof” (Doña Ana County Miscellaneous Records, Book 5:441). Despite the agreement, Southwestern was back in business in Las Cruces in less than two years. The title showed that Southwestern had been making deliveries by truck rather than horse and wagon by at least 1921 and that it had moved from Mesquite, although it still owned the property there.

#### Cruces Candy & Bottling Co., Inc (1921-1923)

The Cruces Candy & Bottling Co. incorporated on June 3, 1921, with the avowed purpose “To Manufacture Candy and do a general merchandise business, etc.” The new corporation began with an authorization of \$25,000 worth of capital stock and an initial subscription for \$13,000 of it. E. T. Winters was the corporate agent, and the office was in Las Cruces. Initial

stockholders were E. T. Winters, F. B. Comunes (actually J. B. Comuñez ), and C. B. Bennett, all of Las Cruces (Incorporation Records #11074:93).

The new corporation included Winters Confectionery and the Double Circle Confectionery, formerly owned by Comuñez (*Las Cruces Citizen* 6/18/1921). The 1921 Sanborn Map (Figure 1-10) shows the Las Cruces Bottling Works & Candy Co. (actually, the Cruces Candy & Bottling Co.) occupying an adobe structure (the Amador Building) at the corner of W. Amador and S. Main. An auto repair shop nestled against the building on S. Main, and the plant’s nearest neighbor to the west was the Amador Hotel.

An ad in the June 25, 1921, *Citizen* (Figure 1-11) advised that “Cruces Candy & Bottling Co. have (*sic*) purchased the local plant of the Southwestern Coca[-]Cola Bottling Co. and will continue to bottle Coca[-]Cola, Orange Squeeze, Lemon Squeeze, Lime Squeeze, Cherry Blossoms and a full line of high grade

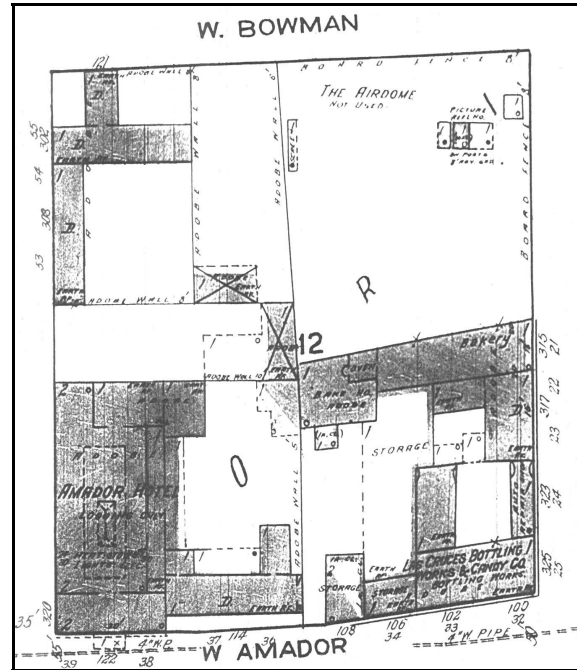


Figure 1-10 – Cruces Candy & Bottling Co. [Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1921]

**CRUCES CANDY & BOTTLING CO.**  
 HAVE PURCHASED THE LOCAL PLANT OF THE  
**SOUTHWESTERN COCA COLA BOTTLING CO.,**  
 AND WILL CONTINUE TO BOTTLE  
**COCA COLA, ORANGE SQUEEZE, LEMON SQUEEZE, LIME SQUEEZE,  
 CHERRY BLOSSOMS AND A FULL LINE OF HIGH GRADE BEVERAGES**

PATRONIZE HOME INDUSTRY  
 PHONE 22 FOR A CASE TO BE DELIVERED TO YOUR HOME

**CRUCES CANDY & BOTTLING CO.**  
**RETAIL STORES**

DOUBLE CIRCLE CONFECTIONERY KING'S CHOCOLATES PHONE 330		WINTERS CONFECTIONERY LOWNEYS and CHOCOLATE SHOP CHOCOLATES PHONE 6
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SODA FOUNTAIN SERVICE UNEXCELLED

Figure 1-11 – Ad for the Cruces Candy & Bottling Co. [*Las Cruces Citizen* June 25, 1921]

beverages.” The ad noted their retail stores: Double Circle Confectionery and Winters Confectionery. The company also offered “Soda Fountain Service Unexcelled.” The phone number given was “22,” the former number of Southwestern. Under the headline of “Big Firm Now,” the same edition announced the purchase and commented that continuity would be maintained by “the able management of Mr. T. M. Phillips” (possibly L. H. Phillips

or Melvin Phillips, associated with Southwestern's Deming branch, or even a relative). The paper added that "this makes this company one of the largest of its kind in the southwest." C. O. Bennett was the president of the corporation, with J. B. Comuñez as secretary-treasurer and E. T. Winters (former owner of the confectionery and Las Cruces Bottling Works) as manager. The company retained "over a score of employees." A case of 24 bottles cost \$1.70, although the company promised a "50c rebate when case and all bottles are returned" (*Las Cruces Citizen* 7/20/1921). Although this price was a total of 60¢ higher than the cost of Southwestern's sodas in Deming three years later, the Las Cruces ad was almost certainly a retail quote, where the Deming receipt was for a wholesale sale. The Las Cruces deposit was also 20¢ more.

The company was listed as the Cruces Candy & Bottling Co., Inc., Manufacturing Confectioners and Bottlers, Owners Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in the 1922 telephone directory at 325 S. Main. An ad in the *Citizen* (1/20/1923) featured Orange Squeeze, "sold only in bottles, at fountains and all soft drink dispensers" and called the bottler "the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. owned and operated by the Cruces Candy and Bottling Company." The final ad ran on January 20, 1923, and the company was sold back to Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. sometime between that date and March 3, the date of an article noting Southwestern's new manager (*Las Cruces Citizen* 3/10/1923).

#### The Return of Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co. to Las Cruces (1923-1929)

Southwestern reopened its Las Cruces branch (buying out the Cruces Candy and Bottling Co.) in February or March 1923, although the circumstances for the takeover are unclear. The *Las Cruces Citizen* (3/10/1923) welcomed the new manager, J. B. Comuñez, the former secretary-treasurer for the Cruces Candy and Bottling Co. Unlike the typical bottling operation where managers come and go every few years, Comuñez remained manager for the entire life of the second Southwestern branch in Las Cruces.

The company began advertising in the *Las Cruces Citizen* on July 14, 1923 (Figure 1-12). The reader was advised to "patronize your home town." The company advertised "Bottled Drinks . . . made with pure filtered water in sterilized sanitary bottles." Along with Coca-Cola and a variety of flavors, the ad touted "seasonable candies," bragged that "our customers always come back for more," and promised "quality, service and courteous treatment."



On August 21, 1926, Southwestern finally disposed of its lot in Mesquite and moved to 118 S. Church St., an adobe building, labeled “bottling works” on the 1927 Sanborn Map. Gardner, still the president of the corporation, signed the deed, selling the Mesquite property for \$100 to E. B. O’Neal (Deed Records for Doña Ana County, Book 3:320). The firm continued to operate at the Church St. location until John A. Echols bought the Deming and Las Cruces branches of the company in 1929 (see Deming section above). Although Echols sold the Deming plant in 1934, he continued to run the Las Cruces operation until 1938 when he either sold to a corporation or himself became part of the incorporation process. He remained with the plant until at least 1940.

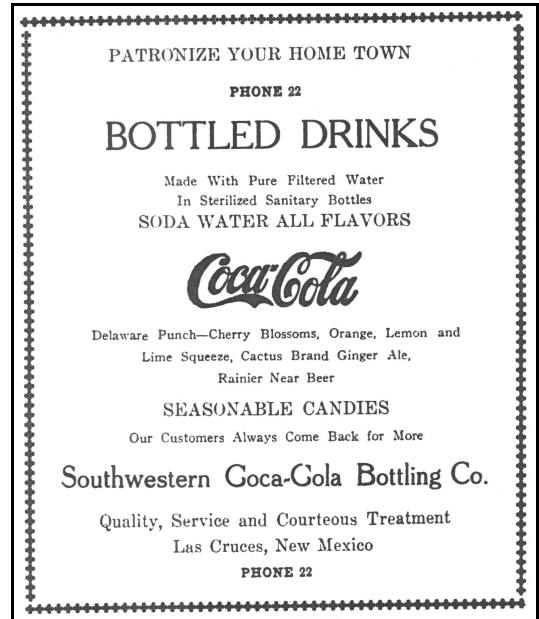


Figure 1-12 – Ad for Southwestern’s Second Incarnation in Las Cruces [*Las Cruces Citizen* July 14, 1923]

### Other Expansion in New Mexico

#### Albuquerque

Southwestern continued to grow in New Mexico but more slowly. In 1918, the corporation opened a branch in Albuquerque. The company was apparently the first to offer Coca-Cola in the city; no Coke dealer was listed in earlier city directories. The plant was located at 325 1<sup>st</sup> with H. A. Voiers (who later managed the Deming plant) as the local manager. Both the plant and Voiers continued to be listed in the New Mexico State Business Directory in 1919, but the listing was gone by 1920. However, the 1919 Albuquerque city directory fails to list Southwestern but, instead, notes the Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Inc. along the Santa Fe Railway at the corner of Fruit Ave. J. Korbur is listed as president of the corporation with Jerry Haggard as secretary, J. B. Herndon as treasurer, and T. S. Walker as manager. It is pretty certain that the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. replaced Southwestern during the latter part of 1919 because the new company retained the same phone number (289) that Southwestern listed in 1918 (ACD 1917-1919). Although it is unclear why Southwestern was so unsuccessful in Albuquerque, there is no question that the operation was short lived.

## Silver City

The Silver City plant began in 1924. Although it started later than the one in Albuquerque, it lasted longer. In typical fashion, the Southwestern Coca-Cola Bottling Co., advertised only once, placing a single ad in both Silver City newspapers. Under a heading that bragged, “Business is Good and Getting Better,” the ad noted:

Our Bottled Drinks have grown so popular during the past few years in Silver City and Bayard districts that it has become impossible to supply the heavy demand from our Deming plant. We, therefore ANNOUNCE THE OPENING OF OUR NEW SILVER CITY PLANT[,] thoroughly equipped with modern machinery and ready to supply you with all the best nationally known drinks. . . . Manuel Caballero, our Local Agent, whom you all know, is anxious to serve you. Give him a chance to deliver the goods (*Silver City Independent*, 4/15/1924; *Silver City Enterprise*, 4/18/1924).

The *Enterprise* (4/18/1924) listed the “nationally known drinks” sold by the new plant: Coca-Cola, Orange, Lemon & Lime Crushes, Cherry Blossoms, Old Mission Ginger Ale, Old Monk Punch, and Rainier Beer. The plant was located at the corner of San Vicente and Arizona streets (208 San Vicente), and a Deming newspaper article that year noted that the Silver City operation used two delivery trucks (*Deming Graphic* 7/22/1924). By 1927, W. H. Greer was listed as manager, rather than agent. He remained manager until 1928 when an agent, L. E. Freeland, was also listed. Only Freeland was listed in 1929, the final year that the company was in business in New Mexico (NMSBD 1924-1929).

The plant location followed a pattern that is very familiar among New Mexico bottlers – the newcomer buys out the older plant and equipment. Until 1923, the San Vicente address was the locale inhabited by the Purity Bottling Works with P. J. Riedlinger as proprietor. After Southwestern closed its doors, the building must have been used for other purposes as no other bottlers are listed in that location after 1929 (NMSBD 1917-1930).

## The Arizona Plants: Shifting the Focus

Soon after incorporation and the beginning of operations in Deming, Southwestern began the task of expansion into new markets. Along with Las Cruces and Silver City in New Mexico, very early on these expansions included a move into Southern Arizona. Since Crystal Soda Works had acquired Southern Arizona's most lucrative market, Tucson, in 1906, the next best thing was to establish a plant in Douglas. This would begin a strategy of expansion that was both innovative and aggressive. Southwestern would soon begin pushing its way into any and all lucrative markets left untouched by earlier licensing agreements with Coca-Cola. Basically, if a town began to show promise, Southwestern soon would be there.

Prior to Southwestern's establishment in Arizona, the licensing for the sale of Coca-Cola had been granted to established bottling works in the towns of Tucson (Crystal Soda Works), Clifton (S & S Bottling Works), Phoenix (Coca-Cola Bottling Works) and Pirtleville (Arizona Bottling Works).

### Southwestern Coca-Cola of Douglas (1918-1928)

Boneto Lucero founded the Arizona Bottling Works in the town of Pirtleville in 1911. Though the town itself was quite small, it was located just a few miles from the much larger market of Douglas. At this time, many of the earlier soda works in Douglas had closed their doors. These included Houck & Dieter (closed 1907), Home Soda Works (closed 1907), and Insland & Son (closed 1908). With this loss of soda production, the time was ripe for a new company. The address given for the Pirtleville plant was P.O. Box 3, and listings from 1911 to 1913 were under Boneto Lucero's name (ASBD 1911-

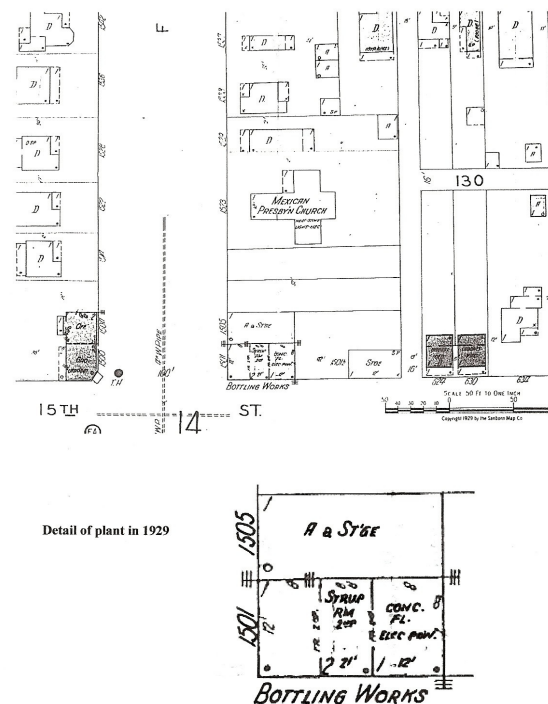


Figure 1-13 – Cochise Coca-Cola Plant (Former Douglas, Arizona, Plant of Southwestern [Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1929]

1913; Miller 2000). The name, Arizona Bottling Works, first appeared in the 1914 directories and continued until 1916. An ad in the 1916 State Business Directory lists Arizona Bottling Works as “exclusive Coca-Cola bottlers.” Although the reason is currently unknown, the company in Pirtleville ceased operation in 1917 and thus relinquished its right to bottle Coca-Cola in Southeastern Arizona.

Southwestern almost certainly filled in the gap left by the demise of Lucero’s Pirtleville operation and established its first Arizona works in Douglas sometime during 1917. Located at 1501 F Avenue, the bottling facility was managed by Henry P. Wiley (ASBD 1918). Wiley had been one of the original incorporators of Southwestern and was in charge of establishing the company's foothold in Southern Arizona. Around 1920, Wiley saw a new opportunity for Southwestern in the neighboring town of Bisbee and worked to obtain space in the Bisbee Pioneer Bottling Works. Wiley left Southwestern by 1922 and was replaced by Earl H. Reed, who remained manager of the Douglas plant until 1926 and was in turn replaced by Frank L. Nidever. Nidever had previously managed Southwestern's facility in Globe, Arizona, from 1920 to 1921. In 1928, Southwestern sold its Southern Arizona plants in Douglas and Bisbee/Lowell to the Cochise Coca-Cola Bottling Co. (Figure 1-13) (ASBD 1918-1928).

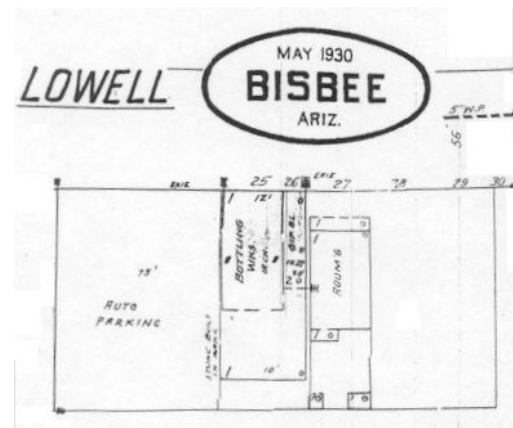


Figure 1-14 – Southwestern’s Lowell, Arizona, Plant [Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1930]

### Southwestern Coca-Cola of Bisbee/Lowell (1921-1928)

In 1921, Southwestern Coca-Cola began bottling at the Bisbee Pioneer Bottling Works in Bisbee with Joseph F. Wolff as manager. Located at 509 Tombstone Canyon, Pioneer was started in 1894 by Theopolis F. Metz and was the most successful early bottler in town. It is

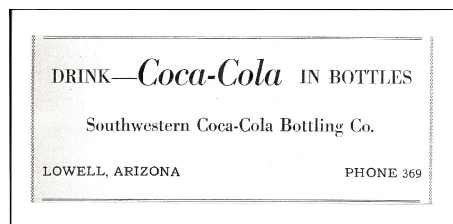


Figure 1-15 – Lowell Plant Ad [Bisbee-Lowell Directory, 1925]

unclear how Southwestern obtained its arrangement with this already established plant, but, by the following year, Southwestern had moved to a new location in the Johnson Addition of town. In 1924, the company further moved the plant to Main Street in Lowell (Figures 1-14 & 1-15), a newly established town built to house the ever-growing numbers of miners in Bisbee. Southwestern continued to take orders in

Bisbee via P.O. Box 548, a practice which continued until 1930, two years after the branch was sold. In 1928, Southwestern sold the Bisbee/Lowell branch, along with the Douglas operation, to the Cochise Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Joseph F. Wolff continued as manager throughout Southwestern's involvement in the towns. With the branch's sale, Wolff purchased the Bisbee Pioneer Bottling Works and shortened its name to Bisbee Bottling Works. He operated this plant at its original location until 1938, when he purchased Cochise Coca-Cola's facility in Lowell and brought Coca-Cola's greatest competitor, Pepsi Cola, to Bisbee in the form of the Cochise Pepsi Cola Co. (ASBD 1921-1938).

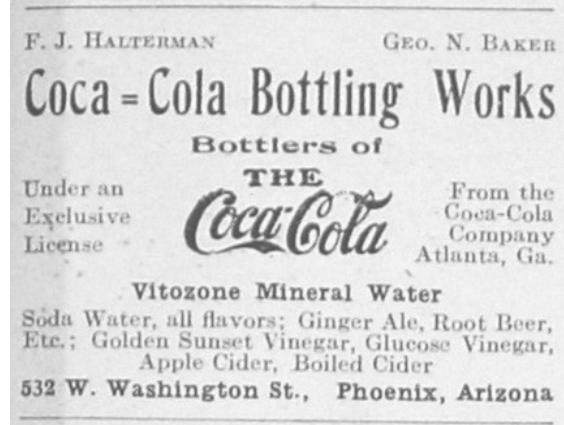


Figure 1-16 – Phoenix Coca-Cola Ad [unknown newspaper 1912]

Coca-Cola Bottling Works - Phoenix (1905-1918)

The early introduction of the Coca-Cola product in the Arizona Territory began in 1904 in the town of Clifton (Munsey 1972:297), established by an existing bottler (S & S Bottling Works). Coca-Cola soon (1905) awarded a franchise to the very first exclusive Coke plant in the territory: The Coca-Cola Bottling Works, founded in Phoenix at 526 W. Washington Street. Ferguson J. Halterman and George N. Baker were listed as the original proprietors and remained as such until 1914. In 1911, the business was expanded, and the address changed to 532 W. Washington (Figure 1-16). The plant was relocated to 547 W. Jefferson St. in 1915 (Figure 1-17) and sold to William L. Missimore and Lewis O. McPherson. Baker returned in 1917 with C.B. Missimore as partner. In 1918, Baker became sole owner and joined Southwestern (ASBD 1905-1918).

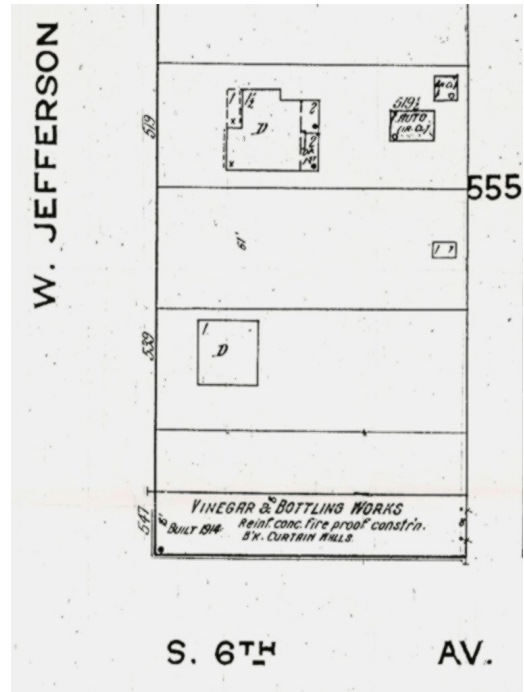


Figure 1-17 – Future location of Southwestern's Phoenix Plant, still a vinegar plant [Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1915]

## The Expansion in Central and Northern Arizona

With its inclusion in the Southwestern family, the Phoenix branch soon became the major hub for further expansion throughout Central Arizona and became the launching pad for the aborted effort to move Southwestern into the northern part of the state. The first move was to establish, in 1918, a bottling facility in the mining town of Globe. Located about 80 miles east of Phoenix, Globe would act as a secondary hub for expansion into other mining towns in the area (Figure 1-18). By 1919, Southwestern had established plants in Superior and Ray, and the company's northernmost plant had begun operation in Jerome in 1920 (ASBD 1918-1919).

**SOUTHWESTERN COCA - COLA  
BOTTLING CO,** R L Crossland  
mgr, "Quality Always", mfrs  
of carbonated beverages, Coca-  
Cola, Old Monk Punch, Arizona  
Dry Ginger Ale, Orange, Lemon,  
Lime and Chocolate Crush,  
wholesale candies, 440 N Broad

Figure 1-18 – Globe Plant Ad  
[Arizona State Directory, 1927]

The Ray branch was managed by H. A. Voorhees but was short-lived. Closing its doors in 1920, the plant's manager would later surface as manager of the Globe branch in 1922. A possible explanation for this facility's closure, and subsequent closures of other plants, was its proximity to the Superior branch. Perhaps it was more cost effective to ship the product along the rail lines to Ray than to run a separate plant. Henry Vieteiez functioned as manager of the Superior branch throughout its association with Southwestern, from 1919 to 1923, and continued in that capacity for the Superior Coca-Cola plant from 1923 to 1928, after Southwestern sold its plant (ASBD 1919-1928).

Southwestern also attempted to establish Coca-Cola facilities north of Phoenix. By 1920, J. H. Harding was managing a plant in the mining town of Jerome, but further expansion north was thwarted by the formation, in 1920, of Skylight City Bottling Works in Flagstaff. F. E. Brooks had been in the groceries and hardware business prior to this bottling endeavor. By the middle twenties, Skylight had opened a branch in Holbrook and controlled the entire Coca-Cola market in far Northern Arizona. The Jerome branch of Southwestern closed by 1921, and Silas Gibson took over Jerome's Coca-Cola Bottling. Gibson had been bottling in Jerome since 1918 and had been in partnership with Charles Johnson as a saloon owner in 1912. In 1927, the Coca-Cola franchise for Jerome was awarded to Edward Rucker to form Jerome Coca-Cola Bottling Works. Rucker also owned the Verde Valley Bottling Works in the nearby town of Cottonwood (ASBD 1920-1927).

### Southwestern Coca-Cola of Globe (1918-ca. 1932)

Globe was the third Arizona branch of Southwestern and was opened in the basement of the Muriel Hotel building at 1060 N. Broad in 1918 (Globe Business Directory, 1918.). E. E. Garrett originally managed the works, but, by 1920, Frank L. Nidever had taken the management post. In 1922, with the closing of the Ray branch, H.A. Voorhees replaced Nidever. In 1925, the business moved to a new location at 440 N. Broad Street. Management continued to change with O. P. Gimbert (1924-1926), Robert L. Crossland (1926-1928) and Rudolf S. Chlarson (1930) acting as managers. Ads in 1927 noted that the plant was “selling Coca-Cola, Old Monk Punch (originated at Gardner’s Empire Bottling Works in El Paso), Arizona Dry Ginger Ale, Orange, Lemon, Lime & Chocolate Crush” (Globe City Directory, 1927).

In 1931, the plant moved to its final location at 1060 N. Broad Street. H. James Watson occupied the manager's position in 1931 and 1932. Due to missing directories, the date when the Globe branch closed its doors is currently unknown. It is certain that the plant was no longer functioning in 1936, and, by the following year, Safford Coca-Cola Bottling Works had established a branch in town. However, empirical evidence suggests that the Globe factory was not open long after its 1932 listing. The last bottle known to have been ordered for the plant was manufactured in 1931 (see Section II, Bottles).

### Phoenix: Closing the Doors

### Southwestern Coca-Cola of Phoenix (1918-1947)

George N. Baker and his Coca-Cola Bottling Works in Phoenix came aboard Southwestern in 1918. The bottling works was located at 547 W. Jefferson Street and was managed by Baker for an additional eight years after the merger. In 1925, the company advertised itself as “Bottlers of Quality Beverages and Jobbers of Fancy Candies” but by 1930 had dropped the candy reference from its ads. In 1927, Frank Lansing replaced Baker as manager, but, by the following year, Robert H. Payne had supplanted him and would remain as manager for the remainder of Southwestern's involvement with the plant. A final move occurred in 1936 to 1301 S. Central Avenue (Figure 1-19) (PCD 1918-1936).



By the mid 1930s, the Phoenix plant was all that remained of a Southwestern empire that had included, at various times, plants in eight Arizona cities and towns and four additional location in New Mexico. Southwestern had seen an amazing expansion from 1918 to 1923 but had ceased opening plants in new towns at that time (the Lowell plant in 1924 was a relocation rather than an expansion). Furthermore, although the closure of some plants such as Ray may have been cost-effective, it is obvious that, beginning in 1923, Southwestern was, territorially speaking, in decline. When Superior Coca-Cola Co. replaced the Southwestern branch in Superior, a new trend had begun which continued as competitor's works replaced plant after plant in the Southwestern web. With the intrusion of the Safford Coca-Cola Bottling Co. into Globe by 1937, all that remained of Southwestern's territories was Phoenix. Even the Phoenix suburb of Mesa had been carved from Southwestern's territory, from 1929 to 1939, by a similarly named but non-related, Southwest Coca-Cola Bottling Co. This contraction of Southwestern Coca-Cola finally ended with the renaming of the Phoenix plant in late 1947 or early 1948. Now called the Phoenix Coca-Cola Bottling Co., the plant continued under the management of Robert Payne (PCD 1937-1948).

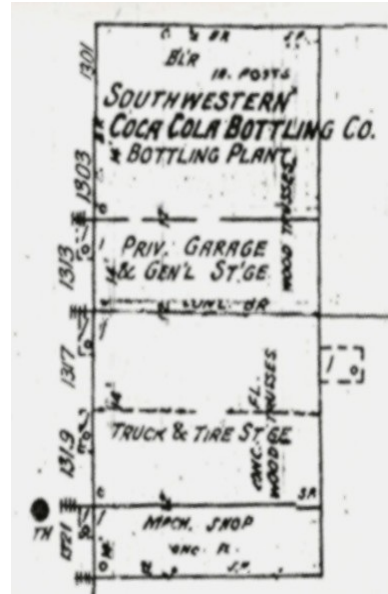


Figure 1-19 – Southwestern's Final Plant, Phoenix, Arizona [Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1941]

### Conclusion

It is clear that Lawrence Gardner was a supremely ambitious man and a successful one. From his beginning as a one-room, one-man, one-horse operation, he finessed a merger with the most powerful soft drink and liquor dealer in El Paso to form the Empire Bottling Works. Not only did the operation expand in scope to include candy, bottling equipment, soda fountain equipment, and, briefly, produce (fruits and vegetables), it also expanded in sales area to include virtually all the United States, Mexico City, and Puerto Rico. Dissatisfied with that accomplishment, Gardner went after the best selling soft drink franchise in the U. S. (Coca-Cola) and engineered his corporation into a bi-state, multi-county conglomerate. Although his strategy for the Southwestern Coca-Cola Company was ultimately unsuccessful, he anticipated the national trend toward consolidation of territory by about 40 years! The national trend toward integrating the competition did not enter its major impetus until the 1960s (see Lockhart 2000).



Table 1-1 - Dates of Operation for Southwestern Branches

City	Hub	Beginning Date	Ending Date
Deming	Deming	1917	1929
Douglas	Deming	1918	1928
Phoenix	Phoenix	1918	1947
Globe	Phoenix	1918	1932*
Las Cruces	Deming	1918	1929**
Albuquerque	Deming	1918	1919
Ray	Phoenix	1919	1920
Superior	Phoenix	1919	1923
Jerome	Phoenix	1920	1921
Bisbee/Lowell	Deming	1921	1928†
Silver City	Deming	1924	1929

\* Because of a gap in Arizona business directories, the date is approximate. The last listing is 1932, and the company no longer appeared in the 1936 edition.

\*\* Las Cruces is unique. Southwestern sold out to Cruces Candy and Bottling Co. in 1921 but bought the franchise back in 1923.

† The Bisbee plant moved to Lowell in 1924.

Southwestern showed an interesting pattern of growth and decline (see Table 1-1). Its initial growth was explosive. The most important expansion was into Douglas in Southern Arizona and the opening of its second hub in Phoenix. Other growth appeared to move from these two centers. During its second year, Southwestern expanded to include five new cities. The company mostly grew during its first five years (1917-1921), but, even while it grew, Southwestern was also declining. It began closing plants in 1919. By the time the Deming hub expanded to its final branch (Silver City, 1924), the Phoenix hub had closed three plants (Ray, Jerome, and Superior), and the Deming hub, itself, had sold the Albuquerque plant. The Silver City branch is a slight anomaly. Not only was it Southwestern's final bid for expansion, it

apparently indicated an increase in branch business where other hubs had been less successful. The Deming Hub (including Southern Arizona) sold as two units with Douglas branch selling to the Cochise Coca-Cola Bottling Co., and a single buyer, John A. Echols, purchasing the remaining New Mexico business. The two surviving segments of the Phoenix hub, Globe and Phoenix, persisted the longest.

Southwestern was also ahead of its time as a multi-cultural concern with a multi-national component. Although the bulk of its original stockholders were Anglo, one was Arturo Ducas of Juarez, Mexico, and two other initial stockholders with Hispanic surnames were J. L. and Herman Andreas, both of El Paso, Texas. In Las Cruces, J. B. Comuñez, a successful businessman in his own right, became the manager of the second incarnation of Southwestern in that city and retained his position for the remaining years of the corporation's existence.

Counting the El Paso corporations (Empire Bottling Works, Empire-Link Enterprises, and Empire Products Corporation), Gardner's operations were tri-state in scope. Although we have found no records of expansion into the rest of Texas, there is no question that all three Empire companies were major business interests in El Paso. The New Mexico branches of Southwestern showed a pattern of mixed success. The Albuquerque business was very ephemeral, and the Silver City plant was somewhat short-lived. The Las Cruces branch followed a unique path as the only town where Southwestern was in operation twice. The second business, however, survived to the point where its descendants evolved into the present Coca-Cola Bottling Company located on South Valley Drive. The Deming plant was uniformly successful and was ancestral to today's Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Deming.

Arizona branches also had a mixed success pattern. The Southern Arizona units, beginning with the Douglas plant opened in 1918, were almost certainly most connected with the Deming operation. H. P. Wiley, one of the original stockholders, was probably responsible for branching out to Bisbee in 1921 and Lowell in 1924. The Southern Arizona branches seem to have collapsed in 1928, just before the Douglas plant joined the New Mexico branches in terminating operations in 1929.

It is tempting to tie the demise of all but the Phoenix/Globe branches to the stock market crash of 1929, and it is almost certain that the Globe plant was a victim of the Great Depression that followed. Without the dates that the branches collapsed, we cannot state with any certainty that the end of Southwestern was in any way connected to the crash. At a minimum, the timing is certainly interesting.

The central Arizona hub originated in Phoenix in 1918. The Globe branch likely opened later that year, followed by Superior, Jerome, and Ray during the next two years. All the central

branches were short lived, except for Globe which outlasted the New Mexico branches by about six years. The Phoenix hub was the most successful of all, maintaining a life span from 1918 to 1947 – almost 30 years!!

### Epilog

We could find no record for the dissolution of the corporation, even though the New Mexico section ceased operation in 1929. New Mexico corporations are chartered for 50 years, so the charter did not run out until 1967, long after all branches of Southwestern had closed down or sold out. Apparently, the charter was allowed to run its course, and this may explain why some of the branches (e.g. Deming) continued to advertise under both their own and the Southwestern name into the 1940s.

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