

Collecting Bottles by State, The Ioway

Part 5 - Hutchinson Soda Bottles

by Michael Burggraaf

This is the fifth article in the "Collecting Bottles by State, The Ioway" series. The previous issue of the *Bottles and Extras* magazine detailed many of the various blob-top soda bottles known from Iowa. The soda bottles featured in this article will be those that employed the closure device patented by Charles G. Hutchinson in 1879.

The 1870s and the 1880s saw extreme variations in ways that soda and mineral water bottles could be sealed. While many of these closure devices failed to become popular with the majority of the bottlers, the ingenious, but yet simple, stopper developed by C. G. Hutchinson would soon dominate the soda bottling industry from the 1880s to the turn of the twentieth century.

A brief review of the Hutchinson firm reveals William H. Hutchinson as a prominent bottler in the Chicago area. It was William's son Charles that saw the need for a superior stopper and he eventually patented an unusual closure device that evolved into the most prominent bottle stopper on the market.

A closeup view is shown of the hairpin shaped device which usually has a rubber gasket attached to one open end. Due to the simplicity of the design, the stopper was easily mass produced and the bottles required little in the way of special bottle mold alterations or special lip finishes. The bottle was designed to have a fairly uniform lip with a rather short neck. In fact, the stopper was so universal that many bottlers in the early 1880s converted their older blob top style bottles over to the Hutchinson stopper. They found that by ordering the longer version of the stopper that they could still make use of their now out-of-date blob top bottles, but were still be able to use this new and improved stopper.

With the Hutchinson firm being located in Chicago, the Midwest soon took advantage of this newly patented stopper and bottlers across the nation eventually switched over to the Hutchinson style bottle. Iowa's bottlers, being in close proximity to Chicago, used the Hutchinson bottle almost exclusively from 1880 to 1905. The result has produced a large number of examples to collect from our state with many interesting variations and just a few in color to keep things challenging.

Collecting Hutchinson-style bottles sparks the interest of many collectors and there are a number of ways that this style bottle is pursued. There are many national collectors, especially those desiring to acquire an example from each of the 50 states. Assembling a 50 state Hutchinson collection is quite a feat and fortunately gaining an Iowa example poses a relatively easy challenge.

Other national collectors collect only the "quart" size Hutchinson bottles as the quarts are usually much more difficult to locate.

One of the more interesting aspects of the national market is to collect "picture" Hutchinsons, that is



Hutchinson stopper.

Hutchinson soda bottles that are embossed with some type of pictorial device: animal, building, trade mark or any fancy embossing in addition to the normal block lettering found on most Hutchinson sodas.

Another national pursuit of Hutchinson bottles is to amass examples that are colored, such as those made in various shades of green, amber and of course cobalt blue.

There are other specific categories in which to collect Hutchinson bottles but perhaps the most common version is to collect them geographically. In this case, any and all examples from one state or perhaps even one town. One of my first pursuits of Iowa bottles were the Hutchinsons as they were readily available with a wide variety of examples. Eventually the list of known Iowa Hutchinson bottles reached 230, which includes all embossing, size and color variations. At this point in time, few new examples have surfaced to be added to the list.

Some of the Iowa bottling works that used the Hutchinson bottle were in business over a twenty year span while others were only operational for a few years or less. One of Iowa's rarest Hutchinsons comes from the small northwest Iowa town of Ida Grove. This bottling works was in business for only a few months during 1893 before moving to Wall Lake, Iowa. Other small town bottlers in Iowa that are popular are those from coal mining towns such as Beacon, Harvey and What Cheer.

Collecting the so-called quart-size Hutchinson sodas from Iowa presents a fairly tough challenge. While many Iowa bottlers may have used this size bottle, only two towns in Iowa have surviving examples to pursue.

Clinton had two different bottling firms that used this size bottle. THE IOWA BOTTLING CO. and the firm of ARLEN & INGWERSSEN. The Arlen & Ingwersen soda company has two distinct embossing variants so there are actually three varieties from that town. The only other quart Hutchinson from Iowa is embossed ENTERPRISE BOTTLING WORKS, DES MOINES, IA. and is currently the only known example. There is rumor of another quart Hutchinson from McGregor but until this is verified, Iowa collectors can only dream. All of the known quarts are various shades of aqua and appear to date to the early and mid 1890s. A Clinton example is pictured next to a regular size Hutchinson soda for comparison.

If you try to collect picture Hutchinsons from Iowa, the examples to collect are very limited. Picture Hutchinsons from Iowa include the following bottles:

- EAGLE BOTTLING WKS, DAVEN-PORT, IOWA, J & L, embossed spread eagle, 2 varieties
- HUB BOTTLING WORKS, MASON CITY, IOWA, embossed hands shaking
- SIMON FURSTENBURG, WHAT CHEER,



Cobalt Hutch from
C. R. Wigert,
Burlington, Iowa.



Three off color Hutchies. Apple green from Council Bluffs, light pink from Sioux City, deep bluish aqua from Oskaloosa.

IOWA, embossed 6-pointed star

- STAR SODA WATER CO., DUBUQUE, IOWA, embossed 5-pointed star
- C. MAGNUS, CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA, embossed barrel w/ eagle & man tapping barrel

There are a few examples of Iowa picture Hutchinson sodas that have the pictorial embossing on the base. The Star Bottling Company and the M & M Star Bottling Company of Oskaloosa have an embossed five-pointed star on the base. There are variants

of the Magnus bottles from Cedar Rapids that are base embossed with the same logo as the frontal embossed bottles. The Magnus beer bottles also have the same elaborate embossing as the Hutchinson sodas.

Another interesting category are the Iowa Hutchinsons embossed with more than one town. The soda bottle from New Hampton not only boasts two different cities but also two different states. The T. F. C. initials on the New Hampton bottle stood for Thomas F. Cummings. Examples of the multi-town embossing include:

- L. ROSENFELD, COUNCIL BLUFFS & RED OAK, IOWA
- F. W. LANE, SIOUX CITY, IA., COLFAX, IA.
- T. F. C. on base, AUSTIN, MINN. AND NEW HAMPTON, IOWA on front

Perhaps the most popular category on the national level is to collect Hutchinson sodas in color such as amber, cobalt blue and darker greens other than just aqua. There are a handful of colored Hutchinsons from Iowa but they are few and far between.

The cobalt blue examples from the Wigert family in Burlington are most likely the most desirable as they come in a range of blues from deep cobalt to a light peacock blue. Carl R. Wigert was a prominent druggist in Burlington from 1874 to 1884 but is best known for his early 1880s cobalt soda bottles embossed C. R. WIGERT, BURLINGTON, IOWA. Most of C. R. Wigert's bottles are medium to dark cobalt blue. When Carl retired at the end of 1884, his son Henry L. Wigert assumed management of the bottling works. Hutch sodas embossed H. L. WIGERT, BURLINGTON, IOWA exist in medium cobalt blue to a light peacock blue and also in aqua.

Other colored Hutchinson sodas from Iowa are most likely off color batches of aqua glass as there are light-green and apple-green examples from Muscatine and Council Bluffs. There are also some very deep aqua examples that make for a nice variance from



the normal pale aqua color found so often in Hutch soda bottles. No amber or true green examples are known that I am aware of. The light green Hutch from Muscatine is about as close to a true green as Iowa collectors could hope for but I still am confident that it was an off color glass batch and not intentionally made to be that color.

Other additions to a Hutchinson bottle collection may include examples with original labels and/or contents. The example from Buffalo, Iowa still has about 75% of the original contents. Another example shown here is embossed WATERLOO BOTTLING WORKS, WATERLOO, IOWA but has a label on the opposite side marked from the Marshalltown Syrup & Sugar Co. It seems that using competitors bottles was quite a problem prior to 1910. The bottling works operated on a small profit margin and ordering bottles was a substantial part of the investment. The bottles would have to be returned and reused numerous times to clear a profit. To understand the dilemma of the "bottle bandits" of the turn of the century, read the following excerpts from the Waterloo, Iowa *Courier* dated August 1, 1902:

Wm. Ewald of Waterloo Bottling Works Suffers Loss-

For some time Wm Ewald, proprietor of the Waterloo Bottling Works, has suspected that his bottles were being used for another's soft drink product in this city. Mr. Ewald had a warrant sworn out for the search of the Cornell building used by the Waterloo Cider Co. A number of his bottles were found there to contain the product of the Waterloo Cider Co., and as this is a clear violation of the law, an offense punishable with a fine of \$100 or thirty days in jail. The proprietors of the Waterloo Cider Co. appeared and pleaded guilty. It being the first offense, they were let off with the payments of costs.

Twelve Hundred Pop Bottles Uncovered at Waverly-

Mr. Ewald was at Waverly, Iowa yesterday where he had Sheriff Parrott served a search warrant on Chris. Fosselman, proprietor of the Waverly Bottling Works. The search revealed 1,200 pop bottles, a number of syphon bottles, quart bottles and

cases belonging to the Waterloo Bottling Works. The hearing will be held later in the week.

Mr. Ewald says that he has lost about a car load of bottles during the past year. As their value is from \$1,200 to \$1,500 he thought it high time to make a search for the missing property. Other bottling establishments can use these bottles and not one retail dealer in ten might pay attention to what label the bottles bear. In this way the bottles can be used indiscriminately. It has always been Mr. Ewald's custom when he received bottles not his own, to send them to the rightful owners at once.

I hope this article has shed some light on the various Hutchinson sodas available from Iowa along with a little bit of history. Next time we'll discuss the beer bottles used by Iowa breweries and brewer's agents. Remember to keep the fun in the hobby and continue to develop the personal contacts and friends along the way. Good luck collecting!

References:

- The Antique Bottles of Iowa, 1846-1915,* by Burggraaf & Southard, 1998.
- An Introduction To Collecting Soda Pop Bottles,* by Ron Fowler, 1984.
- Waterloo Courier,* August 1, 1902. Original article found by Mike Magee.

Photos:

Previous page, bottom (L to R): 1. Buffalo, Iowa Hutch with original soda. 2. Waterloo Hutch with Marshalltown, Iowa label. 3. Picture Hutch - Star Water Co. from Dubuque. 4. New Hampton, Iowa & Austin, Minn Hutch.

This page, (L to R): 1. Quart Hutch from Iowa Bottling Co., Clinton next to a regular size Hutch for comparison. 2. Picture Hutch - Magnus Brewing Co. from Cedar Rapids.

