

Arizona's Gallery in Glass

Collecting Picture Pharmacy Bottles From The Grand Canyon State

By Mike Miller

Several years ago I had the pleasure of traveling to Tucson to spend the day digging a privy with a friend Hillard Frey. I had previously dug in the same neighborhood and had hopes of repeating the luck of that dig which produced several Tucson pharmacy bottles including a scarce Bell's Pharmacy. The pick of another digger that day, the Bell's had always been high on my list of desired bottles.

Since that dig I had acquired one variant of the Bell's from Hillard in a trade, but the smaller and rarer, 1-ounce style was yet to be added to my collection. Arriving in Tucson with my wife Karen at about 9 a.m., we met Hillard at the dig site and proceeded to excavate. After several hours of training Karen how to dig and remove broken debris and digging several uninspiring bottles, our first real prize arrived in the form of a 16-ounce Arcadian Drug Store bottle. Soon to follow was a second Arcadian of the same size, a pumpkinseed flask from Gilroy, California and in a shovel full of discarded dirt the little Bell's Pharmacy I had been looking for. Wiping the bottle free of dirt, I inspected it for potential damage. Much to my pleasure the Bell's was mint with only a small amount of haze.

After the dig, we bid Hillard goodbye and headed back on the long drive to Phoenix hot, tired, dirty and smiling ear to ear knowing that this time the Bell's was included in my picks. I had acquired one more picture bottle for my Arizona gallery.

Arizona picture pharmacy bottles are, for the most part, fairly difficult to find.

Other than the Wolpe Drug Company bottle and a few of the Eschman variants, these picture bottles are rare and are in demand by collectors of Arizona pharmacy bottles. Presently, 23 different variants of picture bottles from 14 drug stores have been documented. The towns of Flagstaff, Jerome, Mesa, Nogales, Phoenix, Prescott, Tempe and Tucson all have representative picture pharmacies, and pictures include a measuring scale, moon and star, AMA symbol, bear with mortar and pestle, phoenix bird, eagle, mortar and pestle with or without a wreath, setting sun, cross, ribbon, branches and a bell. Some of these bottles also have small size equivalents with no picture.

John E. Ruffin utilized the **Pioneer Drug Store** bottle at the turn of the century. Ruffin had purchased the store in 1898 from Dr. Dennis J. Brannen who had founded the pharmacy in 1884. By the end of 1901, Ruffin closed the Pioneer Drug Store, but reopened it in 1903. Later in 1906, the business became known as the Ruffin Drug Company and in 1910, the Hunter Drug Co. upon its sale to W.Y. Hunter. Smaller variants of this bottle do not have the picture.

The **Boyd Drug Store** opened in 1899 in the mining town of Jerome. Lynn E. Boyd was the original proprietor but by 1903 he had added P. S. Boyd as a partner. By 1908, Lynn Boyd was again sole owner and in the following year E. C. Mitchell was added as manager so that Boyd could concentrate on his other concerns. Later that year, Boyd

sold his store to Mitchell and the business became the Mitchell Drug Company. Two of these very rare bottles were dug a couple of years ago but no small sizes have been found.

Mesa's **Crescent Drug Company** started in 1909 at 117 W. Main. Frank Cluff founded the company and operated the business until 1916. It was during the later portion of his tenure that the bottle was used. J.D. and Lorana Robertson purchased the store from Cluff in 1916 and in turn sold the store in the middle twenties. D.C. Henson became the new owner and in 1927 he transferred ownership to Ralph F. Palmer who modified the name to Crescent Drug Store Inc. Finally, in 1930, the pharmacy was bought by the Buy-Right Drug Store chain and became part of Arizona Drug Stores Incorporated. No small sizes of this bottle have been verified so it is unknown if they have a picture.

Holladay's Drug Store began in Mesa as the partnership of Holladay and Cooley. Originally an ice cream store, the business opened at 131 W. Main in 1905 and by 1907 had expanded into a drug store and roller rink. In 1908 Cooley left the partnership and Maroni P. Holladay continued as sole proprietor of the renamed Holladay's Drug store.

In 1916, Holladay briefly took a partner in J. Ed Strecker but by the following year the partnership was over. The store closed in late 1917 and by the early twenties Holladay owned a ranch in Gilbert. The bottle from this store is from the early to middle teens and no small sizes have been documented.

In 1890 H. K. Chenoweth and Jasper B. Mix started the **International Drug Store** in Nogales. Located at 201 Morley Avenue, the pharmacy operated under this partnership until 1898 when Chenoweth left to operate a sanitarium in Mexico. In December of 1898, L.W. Mix took over ownership and the company name became L.W. Mix & Company. Sole proprietor of the International Drug Store until 1906, Mix took H.C. Fleishman as a partner for a time but by late 1907 Fleishman had left to return to Tucson. Mix continued to operate the store along with several different managers until 1917 when he sold it to L. Henry Scherb, who operated the International Drug Store for many years and was still there in the 1940s. L.W. Mix used the picture bottle from this pharmacy around 1903-1904. The smaller sizes do not have the picture.





The **Bear Drug Store** of Phoenix opened as the **Keystone Pharmacy** in 1897. Located at 118-120 E. Washington Street and originally operated by Mont P. Chubb, the pharmacy was sold to Ben L. Bear in 1898. The store was listed in 1903 as Bear's **Keystone Pharmacy** and in January of 1904 it became Bear's **Drug Store**. Joseph W. Wilson and Robert P. Roziene purchased the store from Ben L. Bear in February 1905. In May of that year, Roziene left the partnership and C.S. Clopton replaced him. The pharmacy was renamed **The Bear Drug Store** since the sale to Wilson and Roziene. In December 1905, Wilson left the store and Clopton became sole owner. A scandal involving allegations of fraudulent claims involving medicines ensued soon afterwards and in April of 1906, Clopton sold the store back to Ben L. Bear. The latter had been operating a pharmacy in Los Angeles for the past year and returned only long enough to resell the store in June to Robert Roziene and his new partner, E.W. Potter. In 1912, Potter left the partnership and Roziene continued alone. In 1923, the store was moved to 200 W. Washington and two years later Roziene sold the store to Henry B. Cate. By 1934, Vernon C. Anderson was owner of the **Bear Drug Store** and in 1936 changed the name to **Anderson Drug Store**. Bottles from this pharmacy are from the tenure of Wilson and Clopton who ran the store from May to December 1905, and smaller sizes do not have the picture.

Clarence Eschman had worked as a pharmacist for E.T. Kearny & Company in Tombstone from 1883 to 1884. In August 1884, Eschman moved to Phoenix and went to work for Robert B. Todd at the **Garden City Drug Store**. Todd's pharmacy had started as the **Osbourne & Company Drug**

Store in 1883. Locating his store in the **Goodrich Building** on Washington Street, R.T. Osbourne sold the pharmacy later that year to Sam M. Huston who changed the name to **Garden City Drug Store**. By August of 1884, Robert Todd had bought the store and Huston remained as manager until the following month when Eschman was hired for the position. Upon purchasing the store, Todd had modified the name to **Todd's Garden City Drug Store** and in 1886 renamed it **Todd's Pharmacy**. Eschman purchased the drugstore from Todd in March 1887 and the title reverted to the **Garden City Drug Store**. Operating under the company name of **C.L. Eschman & Company**, things remained constant until 1892 when briefly E.J. Bennitt was brought in as a partner. By the following year the partnership was over and Eschman continued until 1898 as sole proprietor. Towards the end of Eschman's ownership the store was moved to 2 W. Washington Street. In 1898, the pharmacy was sold to Herbert Goodman who changed its name to **Goodman's Pharmacy** in 1899. Five variants exist of the **Eschman & Co.** bottles with pictures on them. Four of these have phoenix birds rising from flames. The last has an eagle holding arrows and an olive branch. Small sizes of the variant base marked **W.T. & CO.** still retain the picture.

The plain-based phoenix bird variant has no verified small bottles. The others bottles do not have pictures on the smaller sizes. The phoenix bird bottles were utilized from 1892 to 1896. The eagle variant was used in 1897.

Opening in 1890 in the **Patten Opera House Building** on Center Street, the **Opera House Drug Store** was operated by

E.E. Prowell. Prowell had come to Phoenix from Portland, Oregon where he had also run a pharmacy. In October of the following year Prowell sold his store to J.D. Thorley who, in turn, sold out to Dr. George H. Keefer in 1892. Dr. Keefer continued operations from the **Opera House Building** until 1899 when he moved his store to 5-7 E. Washington Street and ran his business as **Keefer's Pharmacy**. Prowell's bottle was utilized in 1890 and holds the distinction of being the only territorial-marked picture bottle from Arizona.

The **Sun Drug Company** started operation in 1914 at 140 N. 1st Avenue in Phoenix. Owned by William F. Neail for the first seven years of operation, the pharmacy was sold to Fred W. Ritter in 1921. Upon his death in late 1936, Ritter's wife, Mrs. Grace Ritter, took over the operation. In 1940 Sam J. Reich bought the store and in 1942 took G. Melvin Reese as a partner. By the late 1940s, Reese was sole proprietor of the pharmacy, which was still in operation in the 1950's. Two variants of picture bottles exist from William Neail's time of ownership. These both retain the picture on all sizes.

Isidor Francis Wolpe opened the **Wolpe Drug Company** in 1916 after closing his previous business, the **Arizona Mercantile Company**. With locations at 46 N. Central Avenue and the corner of 3rd Avenue and Indian School Road, these pharmacies were short-lived. By 1918, the Central Avenue location had become the **Corner Drug Store** when George P. Batchelder purchased it. Louis S. Chambers purchased the other store in 1917. Bottles date from 1916-1917 and variants may be found with and without the words *quality purity* embossed on the



back. The smallest size of both variants omits the picture.

The **Mountain City Drug Store** started in 1887 as a pharmacy on Montezuma Street owned by Dr. R.K. Robinson. In 1890, Dr. Robinson took Harry Brisley as a partner and the Mountain City name came in to use. By 1893, Brisley became sole owner and in 1895 moved the store into the Hotel Burke Building. From 1895 to 1897 the store's name was changed to the Hotel Burke Pharmacy but in late 1897, Brisley started to use the Mountain City name in ads again. By late 1898, Brisley was arranging to purchase a new store at the corner of Cortez and Gurley Streets. In February of 1899, the move occurred and Brisley sold the Mountain City Drug Store to John M. Hay. Brisley's new store, the Corner Drug Store and the Mountain City Drug store, both burned in the citywide fire of July 15th, 1900. Harry Brisley rebuilt his pharmacy and called it the Brisley Drug

Company, which he operated until 1925. The Mountain City Drug Store was rebuilt as Hildreth's Drug Store and opened in 1901. Several variants exist of the Mountain City Drug Store bottles. The first has the initials R & B in the center of the ribbon and was utilized by Robinson & Brisley from 1890 to 1892. The second is the same style bottle with the monogram HB in the center of the ribbon and was used in 1893. The third variant has no base markings and was utilized around 1899. All of these variants have no picture on the smaller sizes.

Dr. Benjamin B. Moeur moved to Tempe via Tombstone and Bisbee in 1897. Initially starting his medical practice, Moeur took Noah Broadway as a partner in a pharmacy in 1899. The partnership of **Broadway & Moeur** lasted until 1901 when Broadway left. Moeur continued with both of his businesses for another year, but the demands of being a doctor in a small western town forced the pharmacy to close by late 1902. Benjamin Moeur continued his medical practice in Tempe until the late 1920s. By that time he had become an important political figure in the area and in 1933 he became governor of Arizona. The Broadway & Moeur bottle dates from 1899 to 1901 and no small bottles have been documented.

Laird & Dines Drug Company opened in 1898 under the partnership of Hilary E. Laird and Dr. James A. Dines. Laird, who had come to Arizona on a cattle drive from Cotulla, Texas in 1888, had purchased the pharmacy at 431 Mill Avenue from T.F. Hudson who had operated it since 1893 and was leaving Tempe to concentrate on his other drugstore in the nearby town of

Phoenix. The store was moved to larger quarters at 501 Mill Avenue in 1900. Hilary's son, William E. Laird, was added as a partner in 1915 and the three men ran the operation together until 1930 when Dines departed. The store remained as Laird & Dines until the early 1950s when it became Laird Pharmacy. It was still in operation in the 1960s. Two picture bottle variants exist for this pharmacy. The first was used just after the turn of the century and has no graduated markings. Smaller sizes of this bottle have no picture. The second has graduated markings and was utilized in the middle teens. One-ounce sizes of this bottle retain the picture but lose the embossing in the circle. I have seen no 1/2-ounce bottles. It is also interesting to note that a third variant of this bottle exists but so far only one broken non-pictured smaller bottle has surfaced. Since no bottles of 2-ounce or larger have been found, it cannot be determined if they were pictured.

And this brings us back to that **Bell's Pharmacy** first mentioned at the beginning of this article. Charles E. and Mrs. S.D. Bell opened their pharmacy in 1900 at 22 N. Church Street in Tucson. 1906 moved the drugstore to 52 W. Alameda and in 1909 the store was moved again to 74 Stone Avenue. Bell hired J.C. Caperton in 1911 to manage the store and by the middle of 1910 he sold out to J.B. Ryland. Bell's Pharmacy was no longer operating by 1920. The two variants of the Bell's Pharmacy bottles were used from 1900 to 1902. They are all picture bottles and there are no reported smaller sizes of the non-based marked variant, and the other has only been found in 1-ounce size.

