

# Favorite Boyhood Soda

## Mohr Brothers Beverages

by Mike Elling

**M**ohr Brothers Beverages: I was raised a poor country boy in rural northwest Ohio, between two railroad villages of Swanton and Whitehouse. After federal sugar rationing put into place during World War II was lifted in January 1948, every corner grocery store contained a drink cooler full of exotic and colorful soft drinks from all the bottlers nearby.

Bottled in Toledo, Ohio, was my favorite: Mohr Brothers Cream Soda! It was a clear soda with a blue cap. Sweet soda water laden with cane sugar from Cuba. Our family dentist was delighted, though in reality he threatened me with extinction once every year. I reasoned after reviving from the Novocain afterward that if I was really going to die, I would just as soon hurry up and do it. The cream soda would make it worth the while!

One of my boyhood tasks was to deliver fresh eggs in the wire basket of my J.C. Higgins bicycle. They were

in special paper cartons that could take the shock of all the gravel roads that I lived on. I broke the eggs only when my bike overturned from a sliding miscalculation! We charged 50 cents for

home delivery whenever I could arrive without incident. Of that half-dollar I got to keep 10 cents.

With one dime, I could buy two cream sodas at Tommy Adams' Grocery Store up the old toll road called the Chicago Pike.

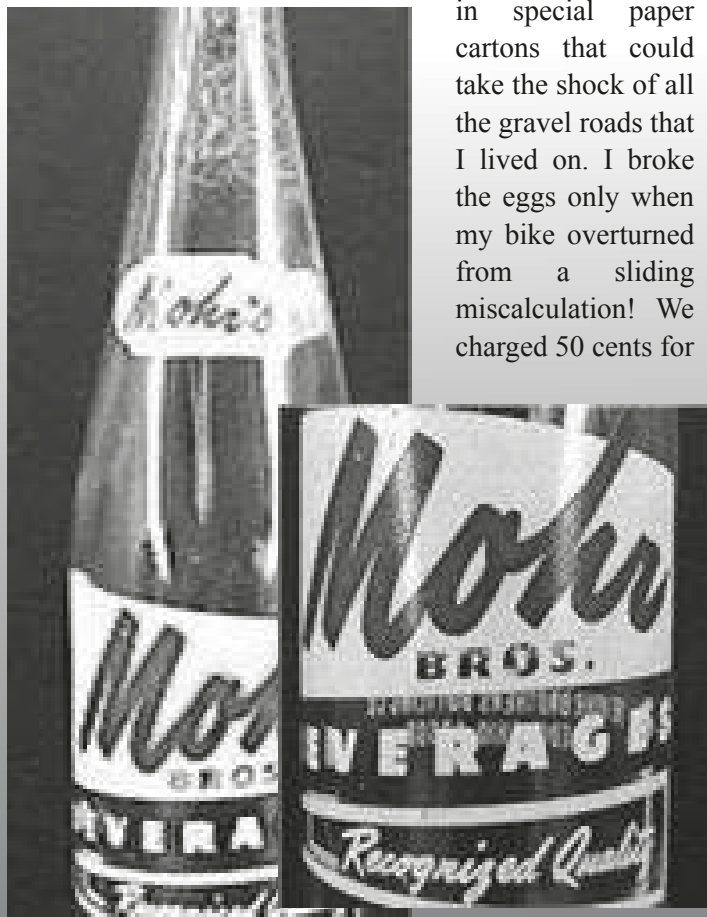
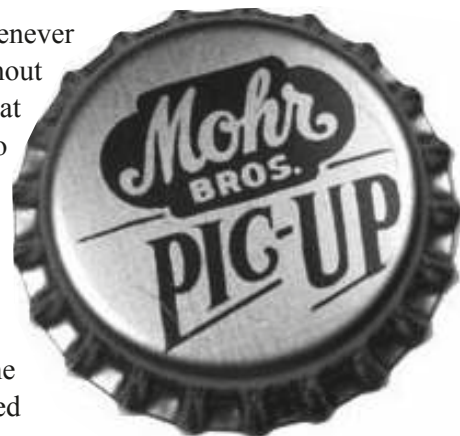
Originally a **Typical Mohr Brothers Crown Cap. Double Entendres or Environmental Responsibility?** from Toledo **(Coutesy of Retro Planet.Co.)**

to Chicago built of planks,

by the 1940s it was a main concrete thoroughfare. One dime, that is, if I already had the two returnable deposit 7-ounce bottles. During those days, Americans were already preparing to be a throw-away society.

I often found two or three soda bottles discarded along the roads I was biking. There were hundreds of beer bottles lying everywhere, too, or so it seemed, but I was prohibited from picking those up and turning them in by my mother, a fierce prohibitionist whose own mother had founded a chapter of the Temperance Society. She promised to kill me if I ever entered any of the honky-tonk beer joints. "Dark dens of sin," she promised me. Stores gave you 2 cents for the soda bottles, but the joints only gave 1 cent for the beers anyway, so it was no big loss, I figured. I left the beers to be picked up by all the DPs.

Today, I still make it a habit to drink cream soda from returnable bottles. I use CLEMs bottled today by Excel Bottling Company in Breese, Illinois. It's pretty good, but I still think old Mohr Brothers was better, especially back in the 1940s. My dentist today no longer threatens extinction, I keep him too busy to do so!



Mohr Brothers Family Soda During ACL Golden Age (Coutesy of eBay)