



Part II

There is one group of the Owl Drug bottles that has a real appeal for the eyes both by their color and shape. This group is referred to as the Owl Soda bottles.

I mentioned earlier finding my first at a store in Goldfield, Nevada over twenty years ago. I think there are at least nine different colors or shades. The early ones have a tooled, blob top; later ones are found in both a crown top and/or a pry-off version. Some ads listing them for sale have romantically stated they were filled over and over again as soft drink vessels.

Not so.

Actually they were filled with citrate of magnesia, a product which is still

available today for the relief of occasional constipation or irregularity. It is also used by some medical doctors in the preparation of patients for colorectal examinations; otherwise to cleanse the bowels. The 1869 Physiomedical Dispensatory by William Cook, M.D., has the following paragraph:

"Citrate of magnesia is a fashionable laxative at the present time. It is prepared by dissolving 450 grains of citric acid in four ounces of distilled water, and into this dissolving 120 grains of calcined magnesia.

"This solution is filtered and poured into a strong twelve ounce bottle with two fluid ounces of the sirup of citric acid. The bottle is nearly filled with water, forty grains of bicarbonate of potassa added, and the bottle quickly corked and the cork



tied down. It forms an effervescent solution of citrate magnesia and potassa, the excess of free carbonic acid remaining in the water.

"From half to the whole of the contents of this bottle are needed as a dose; the cathartic action is brisk and often griping; it is too much like epsom salts to be a commendable purge, and has nothing but its pleasantness to recommend it."

