

Wyoming

Hutchinson Bottles

by Warren Borton

Over twenty years have passed since the 50 state Hutchinson soda craze of the 1970s.

The Hutch collecting fever was at its peak as people struggled to complete a 50-state collection for our Nation's birthday in 1976.

The competition was hot and the prices were high. Many bottles brought previously unheard of prices.

Since that time several state collections have been broken up and dispersed. High priced bottles have lost value due to the declining market and an increased supply.

Hutch sodas, such as those from Boise, Idaho, have been discovered in such numbers to cause a drastic fall in their value. Most collectibles go through a cycle of highs and lows. Perhaps this is the perfect time to start a collection.

My interest in Hutchinson sodas has always centered on my home state of Wyoming. I have collected Wyoming bottles for nearly twenty-five years.

In years of digging for bottles I have found very few Hutch sodas. Due to each bottle having a return deposit, not many were discarded down privy holes, where I do most of my digging.

Since my last article on Wyoming Hutches in 1984, there have been very few new discoveries.

The Hutchinson soda bottle was used in Lander, Evanston, Sheridan, Rawlins, Kemmerer, Diamondville, Laramie and Cheyenne.

Only three other towns had bottlers which could have used the Hutchinson soda bottle.

Buffalo had a bottler for over thirty years, and I did uncover a broken Hutch there. Unfortunately I only found the top and shoulders of the bottle.

Saratoga had a bottler for several years, making it a good candidate also. Rock springs too had a bottler during the Hutch soda era.

An old-time collector swore to me that he had seen a Rock Springs Hutch.

But I was never able to prove the existence of the bottle.

The Hutchinson bottle was first used in Wyoming by Laramie bottler, Nels C. Peterson, in 1881. Peterson's first bottles were applied-top, produced by Illinois Glass Company.

His later Hutches were embossed Laramie City or just Laramie. They were produced commonly in blue-aqua or green-aqua and rarely in clear.

The Cheyenne Bottle Club put out a book in which they listed a quart-sized Peterson Hutch soda. I have tried without success to locate this bottle for over twenty years. Then, this past month I traded for one. Within days I located a second example; needless to say this is an extremely rare bottle.

To my knowledge there are only three quart Hutchinsons from the West. In addition to the Laramie bottle, both Colorado and Dakota each have an example. Quart hutches are common to the East, but extremely rare in the West.

In 1887, the Hofman Brothers produced the only other applied-top Hutch from Wyoming. Known primarily as liquor

merchants, the brothers added soda to the products for a brief period.

Since Wyoming became a state in 1890, all examples are marked W.T. for Wyoming Territory. This is the only territorial marked Hutchinson from Wyoming.

The most common hutches are from Cheyenne. M.O. Bennett was listed as a bottler in the 1890's. There are four Bennett bottles with the earliest variant base-marked C.C.C.Co. which is a Colorado Glass Works.

This variant is extremely rare.

Next is an oval slug-plate, found both in aqua and clear. The rarer tombstone plate bottle comes only in aqua.

Lyman Astley was the proprietor of the Cheyenne Bottling Works by 1901. When he died his widow sold out to Herman Aman in 1904.

The H. Aman and M.O. Bennett bottles are the most common Hutches from Wyoming. Outside a couple variant bottles, all Cheyenne Hutches are pretty common.

The Lander Bottling Works began in 1894. The earliest bottle carries this date. All known examples of this rare soda were found in the Fort Washakie dump.

Apparently soldiers discarded their empties along the river below the fort. Since Lander was ten miles away it was too much trouble to return them.

The later bottle is a paneled base bottle found in a deep sun-colored purple. Although more common than the 1894 variant, it is still a very rare bottle. I do not know of a Lander Hutch being found in over twenty years of digging.

Diamondville was established in 1894 as a coal mining camp. Both bottlers were listed as groceries rather than bottlers. Silfvast and Kangas is the more common bottle. The Hendrickson Bros. bottle is rarer. Both bottles are found only in aqua.

Kemmerer was a sister city of Diamondville and home of the first J.C. Penny store. F.D. Fagnant was first listed as a cobbler. Later he was listed as Kemmerers' only bottler.

Jacob Waeckerlin operated a bakery and confectionary store in Rawlins in the 1890's. His bottle is often found with the Denver Glass Works emblem embossed on the base. This glass company operated from 1901





until 1908 when it burned down. His bottle is found only in clear or sun-colored examples.

His competitor, Charles Seier, was in business in Greeley, Colorado as well as in Ogden, Utah. During my digging in Rawlins, I uncovered both the Rawlins and the Greeley Hutches in the same hole. It is clear that Seier moved to Rawlins from Colorado and then to Utah.

Although George Forbes was listed as a bottler in Kemmerer, there are no known bottles from his business. Speculation would lead one to believe he sold out early to either F.D. Fagnant or the partnership of Silfvast and Kangas.

His primary soda works operated in Evanston, starting sometime in the early 1890's. In the beginning, his partner in business was Harry Bodine, who later is found listed as a hotel manager.

His first bottle is a tombstone plate hutch embossed George Forbes / Soda / Bottling / Works / Evanston, Wyo. I have the only known whole example of this bottle, as well as another broken specimen. Both specimens are poorly embossed.

The last bottle in the set is a paneled base style marked George Forbes/ Bottling / Works. There are no known whole examples.

Sheridan Hutchinson sodas were extremely rare when my

first article was written. The J.J. Yager bottle is still very scarce. But as a few more bottles have shown up during the past decade, it has become the most common of the Sheridan sodas.

The Compton Bros. bottle is the only picture Hutch from Wyoming. And the only Wyoming hutch to have the state spelled out on the bottle.

These bottles remain extremely rare and difficult to acquire. In 1912, the last year of the Hutchinson soda bottle, Yager was joined by a partner.

Last year my long-time digging companion, Darrel Meyer, and I made an incredible discovery. While digging an ash pit in Sheridan, I uncovered a previously unknown Hutch soda, embossed Yager & Waldo, Sheridan, Wyo.!

The enormity of this discovery lies in the fact that this is the first unknown Hutch soda found in over twenty years! These types of events occur rarely in the life of a digger.

I have collected Wyoming bottles for over twenty-five years. In that time I have been fortunate enough to have dug up a great number of Wyoming bottles. And I have acquired a few with the silver pick from other collectors and the



wondrous EBay.

But there is no greater thrill than to pull a rare bottle from the earth, where it has been entombed for a hundred years. To think that it has not felt the touch of a human hand in a century.

I wonder about the person who tossed the bottle away. How astonished would he be that a person would go through so much effort to recover his discarded trash? There is little doubt that he would be amazed at our crazy endeavors.

And what of the bottler, druggist, or whiskey merchant if he could see the incredible prices paid for his old containers. I can see them both shaking their heads in disbelief.

I often wonder about myself as the crazy digger wasting all my time with old trash. But I remind myself constantly that there is so little time and so much to dig.

Who knows what I'll find next time! I can hardly wait to go digging again!



To contact Warren Borton:
8269 S. Hayes Street
Midvale, UT 84047.
Or by E-mail:
wcborton@email.msn.com