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# PDF Cincinnati a Theory

by Mark C. Wiseman



PDF Cincinnati



Interior Spread - The Post Civil War Bottlers of Des Moines- Bottles and Extras, 2015

In my recently published article, “The Post Civil War Bottlers of Des Moines”, “Bottles and Extras, Vol. 26 No. 1, January-February 2015.” I describe the “Gehring & Br. Des Moines, PDF Cincinnati” bottle. The back side “PDF Cincinnati” I postulate to be “(presumably the glass house that made the bottles).”

Mr. Jerry Stehlin, a collector of Cincinnati soda and mineral water bottles, kindly sent along photos of his two PDF Cincinnati bottles. One a “PDF Cincinnati” in dark aqua/ green, with a very early tapered top, the second a “PDF,” (ghost letters behind) “A Mexican Off With His Head”, and “Ferguson’s Carbonated Water,” also with the early tapered top, maybe even cruder. Mr. Stehlin indicated PDF was for Peter D. Ferguson. I was truly excited there were at least two other “PDF” bottles, and wanted to know more about them. The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County just happens to have downloadable City Directories for Cincinnati from 1818-1941, (Yes they are PDF’s, amazing!), a very nice web site. So I began to search for Peter D. Ferguson, first around 1865, the age of my “Gehring & Br. Des Moines” bottles, with no matches under Ferguson or under mineral water manufacturers. I realized that the tapered lip was very early, The Mexican War was in 1848, so I jumped back to 1849 and there he was.

**Ferguson Peter D. mineral water manuf. s. s.  
Pearl, b. Vine and Race, h. Pearl, b. Elm  
and Race**

1849-1850 Williams Cincinnati City Directory

I could not find Mr. Ferguson in earlier directories, he was listed in the 1850-1851 Williams City Directory: "Peter Ferguson, s.s. Pearl b. Race and Elm", and or "Peter Ferguson, n.s. 5th b. Main and Sycamore", However Mr. Ferguson was not listed under Mineral Water Manufactures, a different name was at his former address: "Henry Alwes, s.s. Pearl b. Vine and Race"

Apparently Mr. Alwes ran this Mineral water Manufacturing business for many years after Peter Ferguson gave it up, because in 1864 "H & J Alwes 127 w 2d" is still listed, but no Peter Ferguson is listed in Cincinnati after 1851. So how do

*Mineral Water Factories.*—The manufacture of soda-water, a very refreshing beverage during the heats of summer, has been carried on in this city for some years quite extensively, and the consumption of it at home and abroad, is increasingly great.

Soda-water is made by impregnating water with carbonic acid gas, in the proportion of five parts in bulk of one, to twelve of the other; the gas in a fountain of any given capacity, being condensed into a volume of one-twelfth its natural space.

It is the expansion of that gas, when discharged, which creates effervescence, and the pungency of the soda-water, when taken at a draught.

The following is the process of manufacture. The gas is generated in a strong leaden vessel by the action of diluted sulphuric acid, on marble dust—carbonate of lime. It is passed into a gasometer, and thence forced by steam-power, acting on air pumps, into a fountain or the bottles, compressing fifty gallons of carbonic acid gas into the space of seven gallons in an inconceivably short space of time. The safety valve on the machine indicates a pressure of eighty-five pounds to the square inch.

There are eight of these factories here, employing sixty-four hands; value of product, one hundred and five thousand dollars. Four-fifths of this value is contributed by labor alone. The operations at one of these factories are propelled by a miniature steam-engine, so small that it might be packed in an ordinary coffin, and yet so powerful, the force being derived from its shortness of stroke and strength of steam, as to be equal to a four-horse power. It is capable of making four hundred and eighty revolutions in a minute.

"Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1851, by Charles Cist", that described the Cincinnati bottling works of 1851.

these 1865 and 1849-1850 bottles match Up? A puzzle. I found an interesting article in another book available at the Cincinnati Library's web site. In "Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1851, by Charles Cist", that described the Cincinnati bottling works of 1851.

Then, by chance as I was scouring other years directories and books of the same age for clues I came upon the following

Here are the front and back views of these bottles from Mr. Jerry Stehl, "PDF", (Ghost letters behind) "A Mexican Off With His Head", and on back "Ferguson's Carbonated Water", also with the early tapered top, maybe even more crude, the second a "PDF Cincinnati" in dark aqua/ green, with a very early tapered top.



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#### 1869 Boyd's Handbook of Cincinnati

advertisement in the "1869 Boyd's Handbook of Cincinnati"

"Hemingray" meant mostly insulators to me, so I checked the other earlier Cincinnati directories to see if they were in business back into the 1850's. Besides, my "Gehring & Br. Des Moines" bottle and one of Jerry Stehlin's bottles were a dark aqua/green in color maybe a "green", Hemingray type color.

The 1864 City Directory listed: "Hemingray Brothers & Co., (Robert H., Samuel J. H., R. Evans, and James L. Foley) manufacturers of Flint and Green Glass: Warehouse 20 E.2d"  
The 1857 City Directory listed: "Gray, Hemingray & Bros. (R. G., Robert H., Samm. H., & A Gray) manufacturers of Flint Glass Ware, 14 Main. The 1850-1851 City Directory listed: "Robt. Hemingray (Gray H & Bro) res Covington" "Samuel

Gray & Hemingray, glass manuf. Hammond street  
Gray Ralph (G. & Hemingray), w. s. Sycamore, b. 3d and 4th  
Gray Anthony. bds. Ralph Gray

1849-1850 Cincinnati City Directory

Hemingray (Gray H & Bro) res Covington" "Gray A. Hemingray & Bros, res Covington"

I've not found any proofs but it is reasonable to guess that possibly Mr. Peter D. Ferguson in 1849 contracted the Gray & Hemingray glass company in Cincinnati to make some soda bottles for his use. Then it could be possible that Chas Gehring in 1865, from Des Moines contacted the Hemingray & Brothers Glass Company in Cincinnati, to make him some soda bottles. Then it could be possible that the Hemingray Glass company had an old soda bottle mold laying around, with "PDF Cincinnati" on one side but nothing on the other side, so to save time and money cut "Gehring & Br. Des Moines" on the other side and made him some bottles. (Besides, Mr. Peter D. Ferguson was long gone from Cincinnati, why should he care, or likely ever know?)

It's only a theory, what do you think?



Another view of the two Cincinnati PDF bottles

