

NEW MEXICO Hutchinson Soda Bottles



Zang Wood and Bill Lockhart

New Mexico Hutchinsons not just another bottle book

By Bill Baab

From the mid 19th century onward, one of America's ever-growing industries was soda water manufacturing. Each of the entrepreneurs in the business thought that his orange-, lemon- or strawberry-flavored beverages tasted better than his competitors' drinks.

As far as the public was concerned, if it tasted good, they'd drink it.

The early flavored drinks were sold in what became known as "blob top" soda bottles, so named because of the tops' shapes and the fact that glass blowers made them separately from the rest of the bottles, applying the tops before the whole containers were placed in annealing ovens to cool.

Along came Charles G. Hutchinson of Chicago. On April 8, 1879, he patented his invention of an internal stopper system as well as its specially shaped bottle which later became known to the trade and (later) the bottle collectors as "Hutchinsons" or "Hutches" or "Hutch" in the singular.

While hundreds of blob top sodas (and later beers and ales) became favorites among collectors of antique bottles, early researchers keying on Hutchinsons discovered there was a seemingly unlimited supply. In fact, Hutchinson "Guru" Ron Fowler has documented nearly 20,000 different Hutches. Check out HutchBook.com.

And, as Fowler had discovered, Hutches contained only soda water and not beer because the latter didn't have enough "fizz" to keep the stoppers in place. In other words, beer is not carbonated, but soda is.

As interest increased, the goal of many collectors was to put together a 50-state collection of Hutches and many succeeded. There were Hutches from Alaska and Hawaii as well as from each of the Lower 48 states.

Still others, like Zang Wood, of Farmington, New Mexico, began studying not only the bottles from their home states, but the bottlers themselves. Who were those guys?

So in 1998, Wood authored a book whose subjects were New Mexico Hutchinsons as well as blob tops and ceramic jugs. Back in that day, there was no Internet to make the research as easy as it has since become.

Then Wood heard of fellow New Mexico collector and researcher Bill Lockhart and the two met. They often discussed updating Wood's book because of newly discovered Hutchinsons and more information on the bottlers.

So the two collaborated and the revised version of New Mexico Hutchinson Soda Bottles containing a veritable wealth of information of value to collectors and researchers is now on the market. A listing of the state's mineral water bottles and whiskey jugs is also included in the well-illustrated, 130-page softbound book.

Zang Wood (left) & Bill Lockhart



The book can be ordered from Zang Wood, 1612 Camino Rio, Farmington, New Mexico 87401. Cost is \$30 including media mail postage and books can be personalized for buyers and signed by the co-authors.

