

GHOST TOWN ECHO



January 2014

Washington Bottle & Collectors Association

Officers:

President – Niel Smith

VP – Pete Hendricks

Treasurer: Warren Lhotka

Secretary – Keith

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DECEMBER MEETING NOTES

Thanks to everyone who joined us for the annual WBCA holiday potluck. A nice turnout and great food. Next club meeting is Friday January 10th – the theme will be “Things Beginning with the Letter ‘J’” January is also time for Club Elections – now is your chance to get more involved in making WBCA a success!

DUES ARE DUE!

Reminder – January is time to renew your WBCA membership dues. Checks made payable to WBCA can be sent directly to club treasurer Warren Lhotka at: **905 24th Ave South, Seattle WA 98144**

KEEP UP TO DATE – GET WBCA NEWS DELIVERED TO YOUR EMAIL

Still getting a paper copy of the GTE? Why not send us a current email address for you to receive newsletters and other club news faster – Email us at wbcaweb@gmail.com if you'd like to start receiving the GTE in

It's NEVER too early to start planning the next show!

Join us in **May 16th & 17th 2014** at the Kent Commons

for the WBCA SPRING Antique Bottle, Insulator and Collectible Show.

Reminder: OBCA's February show is coming soon – Feb 21st & 22nd in Aurora Oregon

Got a story idea? Digging adventure to share?

Email us at wbcaweb@gmail.com

Spokane Falls Earliest Soda Bottling Works

By Tom Harman

My primary interest is collecting and researching the bottles and related business firms from the Coeur d'Alene mining district in northern Idaho.

While researching for an article on the Beebe & Taft bottling works in Colfax, W.T. and their branch operation in Wardner, I.T. I ran across the following article in the February 29, 1884 edition of the Palouse Gazette. "Soda Works—Mr. G.W. Eppler (sic) one of the proprietors of the Soda works at Spokane Falls, has purchased machinery for the manufacture of soda water, sarsaparilla, ginger ale, ect. at this place (Colfax). He expects to commence business sometime next month. As was stated a few weeks ago, Messrs. Beebe & Taft will engage in a similar enterprise."

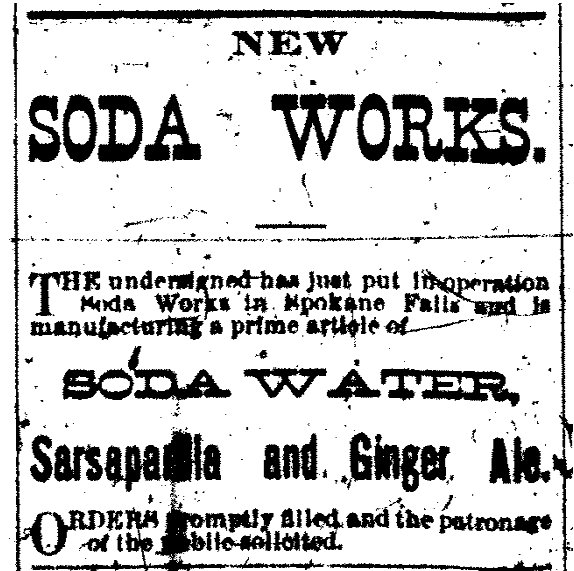


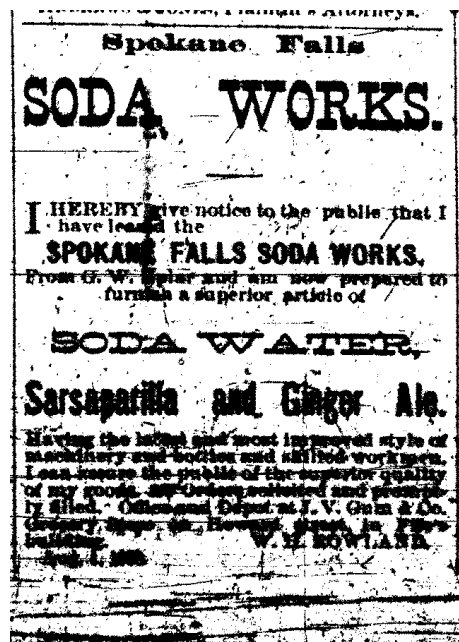
Figure 1

This article was interesting because I was aware that G.W. Eppler had operated a soda water bottling business in Salem, Oregon and in Walla Walla, Washington but not Spokane Falls, W.T. let alone Colfax, W.T. During my research efforts for Beebe & Taft, I reviewed the two Colfax newspapers, the Palouse Gazette and the Commoner, over the 1883 thru 1890 time period. During this review I found no evidence that Eppler operated a plant in Colfax. But, what about the Eppler Spokane Falls soda bottling operation?

An interesting and helpful research feature these days is that many newspapers from Washington and Oregon, and other states, have been digitized and are word searchable over the internet. So, utilizing this technology, I next did a word search of the Spokane Falls Review and the Willamette Farmer for G.W. Eppler but as is evident one has to be flexible with the spelling of the surname.

A little background, Haskins & Eppler (sic) opened a soda water works in Salem, Oregon in April, 1876.¹ George W. Epler operated the Salem Soda Works until 1881 and then the Walla Walla Soda Works in south eastern Washington from 1884 until 1892.^{2,3}

But, it turns out that on July 14, 1883 a G.W Epler, while living in Salem Oregon, announced his intention to come to Spokane Falls and engage in the manufacture of bottled soda water or pop as it is generally known, and sarsaparilla.⁴ An article, a week later reported that a G.M. Apler (sic) had arrived in the city and was favorably impressed with the Falls and a week later had the soda works in operation.^{5,6} The first advertisement appeared in the July 28, 1883 addition of the Spokane Falls Review, see figure 1 above. By August 4th George had dropped off a supply of his products, soda, sarsaparilla, and ginger ale at the news office and the boys had rated it as good, better and best and in addition, the paper managed to spell his name correctly. The paper also announced that a Dr. W.H. Rowland had bought out G.W. Epler's soda works and would continue the business right along. The block advertisements indicated that Rowland had leased the bottling plant from Eplar (sic). It was also reported that Mr. R. was about to put in new machinery which would give the works a capacity, when running full, of 1,000 dozen bottles per day. ⁷ See figure 2 at right for the next advertisement for the bottling works which includes W.H. Rowland, this advertisement continued to run in the Spokane Falls Review until March 29, 1884.



It does not appear that Rowland operated the bottling works in Spokane Falls during the summer of 1884 or thereafter. Perhaps Epler, after an unsuccessful startup in Spokane Falls, moved his machinery to Walla Walla after determining that the soda water bottling business in Colfax may be too complete with Zell Beebe and his brother-in-law Charles Taft entering the market. It is also interesting to note, that the Milwaukee Bottling Co. began their operation in Spokane Falls in 1884.⁸

No embossed Epler Spokane Falls soda bottles are known from this short lived bottling works.

¹ Willamette Farmer, April 28, 1876.

² Ron Fowler, Ice-Cold Soda Pop 5¢, An Illustrated History of Oregon Soda Pop Bottling, 1981

³ Ron Fowler, Washington Sodas, The Illustrated History of Washington's Soft Drink Industry, 1896.

⁴ Spokane Falls Review, July 14, 1883.

⁵ Spokane Falls Review, July 21, 1883.

⁶ Spokane Falls Review, July 28, 1883.

⁷ Spokane Falls Review, August 4, 1883.

⁸ Ron Fowler, Washington Sodas, The Illustrated History of Washington's Soft Drink Industry, 1896.