

The Man Who First Brought Coca-Cola to San Diego



Emil W. Schnepf

In 1904, Emil Schnepf and his brother Albert went to work at San Diego Soda Works. Albert a bottler, and Emil a mixer, they learned their trade well. In 1907 they left the employ of Gustav Gaedke and his San Diego Soda Works, and opened their own bottling plant which they named, The Silver Gate Soda Works. Located at 372 Main St near downtown San Diego, soda water and Lemon Crush were their first products. Emil would eventually employ 15 workers and have a fleet of nine delivery trucks.

In 1910, Emil purchased 50 gallons of syrup from the Coca-Cola Company of Atlanta, Georgia. Until the familiar Hobble Skirt Coke bottle we all know today was made the standard Coke bottle in 1915, bottlers used bottles of different styles, colors and sizes.

Between 1910 and 1915, San Diego's Coke bottles featured a white triangular paper label on an un-embossed plain bottle. In 1918 Silver Gate Soda Works which up to that time was an independent bottler, received the first sub-bottler contract from Coca-Cola. On January 1, 1919 Silver Gate Soda Works became the Coca-Cola Bottling Works. In 1923 the business was sold to John Jones and moved to a reconverted horse barn at 2445 Imperial Ave. In 1930 the plant was moved to 3650 El Cajon Blvd. and moved again in 1964 to it's present location at Highway 94 and 47th St. Emil, San Diego thanks you!



Silver Gate Soda Works 1907—1918