

Appendix A

The Hops Bitters Co., Rochester, New York

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As noted in the main study of the Rochester Glass Works, the glass house received a huge order for Hop Bitters bottles in 1885. John D. Doyle patented Hop Bitters in Rochester in 1872 and built a plant for its production. As T. Soule soon bought the operation and continued to manufacture the bitters until ca. 1890. But, the local glass house only made bottles during the second half of the life of the Hop Bitters Co.

Histories

Dates in the titles reflect the dates the firms were open, *not* when the product was bottled. Bottling of Doyle's Hop Bitters likely began in 1873, and bottling at the Hop Bitters Co. ended ca. 1890.

Doyle's Hop Bitters Co., Rochester, New York (1872-1873)

The *Rochester Times-Union* for October 2, 1872, advertised "500 Bales of Choice Hops for Sale" by John D. Doyle at "No. 10 Mills st." – Rochester, New York. The sale of hops suggests that Doyle was not yet producing Hop Bitters at that date, but may explain how the idea of the new product came into his consciousness. Many secondary sources, including Asa T. Soule's obituary in the January 18, 1890, *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*, made the incorrect claim that "in 1872 the deceased [i.e., Asa T. Soule] was offered an interest in the Hop Bitters Company, then situated at Canandaigua. He finally purchased a controlling share in the business and in 1873 the company removed to Rochester." The earliest history of Hop Bitters was printed in the *New Yorker* for April 23, 1922, and this error has been repeated in collectors' literature and online ever since.

While newspaper articles from the period tell a different story of beginning of the firm (see below), the story – like many – may have been based on reality and had become distorted with retelling. We know (see above) that John D. Doyle was in the hops business before he

patented his Hop Bitters formula, so he had to have been growing them somewhere. The “where” may well have been the vast crop lands around Canandaigua, New York, at the northern end of Canandaigua Lake, just 29 miles from the center of Rochester. Rochester, of course, would have been the selling center for his crops and the logical place for him to begin his Hop Bitters plant. The 1865 census placed John Doyle’s occupation as “Brewery” in Canandaigua – probably the Canandaigua Brewery operated by J&A McKechnie, and the *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle* for April 25, 1873, reported that Doyle’s patent resulted from “years of study and experiment.” All this indicates that Doyle had been in the hops/beer field for quite some time.

Doyle received Letters Patent No. 128,373 on June 25, 1872, and incorporated the Hop Bitters Co. that year with a capital of \$125,000 (Figure 1). Unfortunately, the patent document did not say when Doyle filed his application, but it is pretty certain that the manufacture of the bitters began in late 1872 or early 1873 (probably the latter). The latter date was pretty well confirmed when the *Democrat & Chronicle* reported that

“manufacture of this remedy has now begun on a large scale” on April 25, 1873. At this time, ads in the newspapers labeled the product “Doyle’s Hop Bitters” and the name did not change to “Hop Bitters” until Asa T. Soule purchased the firm (see below).

The 1873 Rochester city directory listed Doyle as “hop bitters manuf. 48 and 50 Mill.” The directory came out on July 1 of each year, so Doyle must have been in production by at least June, likely earlier. Early 1873 seems like a logical date. The following year (1874), the directory showed Asa T. Soule as “prest. [president] Hop Bitters Co. 50 Mill” and the directory ad now read “Hop Bitters” – minus “Doyle’s” but not adding the Soule name (Figure 2). Wilson Soule (Asa’s son) was secretary. This suggests that Doyle only had control of the bitters for about a year before Soule took over the factory.

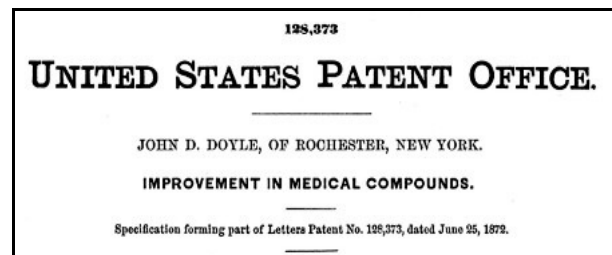


Figure 1 – Doyle 1872 patent

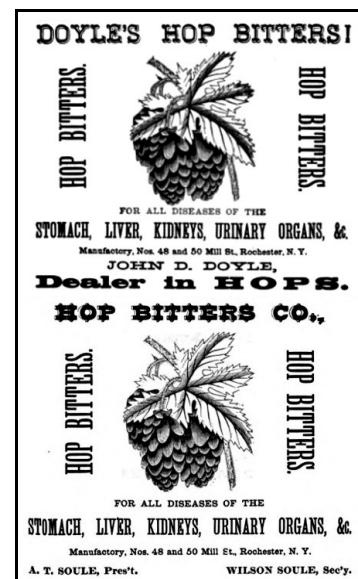


Figure 2 – Hop Bitter ads (City Directories, 1873 & 1874)

Both the 1873 city directory and the two ads from April 25 and May 6 – both 1873 – (*Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*) stated that Doyle was a “manuf” of “Doyle’s Hop Bitters Manufactory” – making it clear that Doyle was actually producing the bitters prior to the purchase of the brand by Soule (unlike the claim in several secondary sources that Soule actually first bottled Hop Bitters – see above). The latest date we have for Doyle was from a letterhead dated November 26, 1873: “John D. Doyle, proprietor and manufacturer of Doyle’s Hop Bitters, Nos 48 and 50 Mill Street, Rochester, N.Y.” (Ring & Hamm 1998:32).

If the letterhead noted above provides a valid date, John D. Doyle remained at “Doyle’s Hop Bitters Manufactory, 48 and 50 Mill street” until late 1873. Our first confirmation of Asa T. Soule was a plea for the return of a lost wallet on August 17, 1874 – “A.T. Soule, Prest., Hop Bitters Mfg. Co.” (*Rochester Times-Union*) – although the city directory was published on July 1, so Soule was in control by at least June of 1874. This leaves the period between November 26, 1873, and June 1874 – about seven months of uncertainty as to who owned the plant. Secondary sources (e.g., Sole Society 2007) claim 1873 as the year of transfer – a year too early.

To simplify the above discussion into its basic components, John D. Doyle patented Doyle’s Hop Bitters in 1872, creating the firm to market it the same year. He began production at some point in 1873 (probably very early) but sold the factory and the product to Asa T. Soule in late 1873 or early 1874 – probably the latter. The 1880 census listed Doyle as a “Hop Dealer” – so he continued in the business, possibly even selling hops to Soule.

Hop Bitters Co., Rochester, New York (1873-1892)

Asa T. Soule purchased Doyle’s Hop Bitters Co. from John D. Doyle in late 1872 or early 1873, probably the latter (Figure 3). In any event, actual production of the renamed Hop Bitters (formerly Doyle’s Hop Bitters) likely did not begin until 1873. See the above history of Doyle’s Hop Bitters for a discussion about the probable date of the purchase.

Although Soule continued to vend the bitters, he eventually moved to Ingalls, Kansas, where he became involved in some

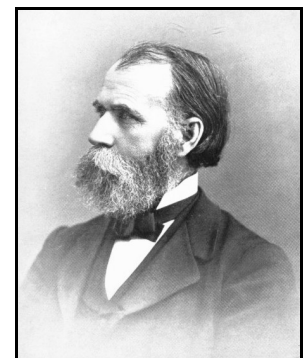


Figure 3 – Asa T. Soule
(Hubbard 1882)

questionable politics, hired gunfighters (including the noted Bat Masterson) and fostered a gun battle in Cimarron. When his attempted takeover of the county documents failed, Soule returned to Rochester in 1889. He died barely a year later on January 17, 1890 (Soul Society 2007).

Meanwhile, the firm opened branches to produce Hop Bitters in Canada, Europe, and Australia, in 1880 and 1881. The *Medicine Hat Times* (Alberta, Canada) reported on November 19, 1885 that

The Hop Bitters Company now have . . . manufactories at Toronto, Canada; London, Eng.; Paris, France; Antwerp, Belgium; Breda, Holland; and Melbourne, Australia. Their Sales in Europe are very satisfactory indeed . . . but Australia seems to be an Eldorado for them. . . . one dollar spent there brings them as much returns as \$5 spent in this country.

But, the prosperity was not to continue. The *Rochester Post Express* for July 14, 1892, reported that the Hop Bitters Mfg. Co. had dissolved “this noon.” Members of the Soule family “applied for a voluntary dissolution of the corporation” because assets were “not more than \$2,000, and liabilities about \$40,000” although the indebtedness was “entirely held by the Soule family.” The article explained that “the sales of Hop Bitters had fallen off so that it did not pay to run the concern. The manufacture of bitters has been discontinued for some time.” Unfortunately, “for some time” is not very informative. Our guess is ca. 1890. Herbert C. Soule (Asa’s son) was appointed receiver.

On July 22, 1893, the *Rochester Times-Union* reported the final outcome. That morning, Wilson Soule (Asa’s son) was the only bidder for the defunct company’s property. He “became proprietor of the business” and “will continue at the old stand.” Despite his intent to “continue,” there is no evidence that Hop Bitters resumed production – although he may have tried to sell the remaining product. The list of “effects which were sold” included “125 gross bottles” and “95 cases hop bitters.” It would be nice to know what happened to the bottles and the 95 cases. Wilson Soule died July 25, 1894 – almost exactly one year after he purchased the defunct Hop Bitters Co. Undoubtedly, the last gasp of Hop Bitters died with him.

Containers and Marks

Although there were slight variations in the embossed picture of a five-pointed hops leaf above two pendant hops berries, we found only two significant variations in the Hop Bitters bottles. The shoulder of each bottle was divided into four trapezoidal panels, each with a different embossed word or number. Three were consistent: “HOP”; “BITTERS”; and “1872” (the year Doyle received his patent) – but the

other was either “DOYLES” or “Dr SOULES” (Figures 4 & 5). Each bottle was square in cross-section and had a panel on each side of the body; the hops leaf and berry embossing was always under the “1872” panel. Ring & Ham (2002) illustrated 21 variations of the leaf-and-berry motif (Figure 6).



Figure 5 – Hop Bitters shoulder embossing (eBay)



Figure 4 – Hop Bitters bottle (Corning Museum)

DOYLES (1881-ca. 1890)

The earliest Hop Bitters bottles were embossed “DOYLES” on one shoulder panel. These were sold exclusively in the U.S. until Soule incorporated a branch in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in 1880, opening the factory the

following year. At that point, some of these bottles also may have been used in Canada. Hop Bitters sold in Europe and Australia in 1881 were embossed “Dr SOULE” (see the next section below). We have not found any

variation in the “DOYLES” embossing except for a single example where the entire name was reversed (Figure 7).



Figure 7 – Doyle variations (eBay)

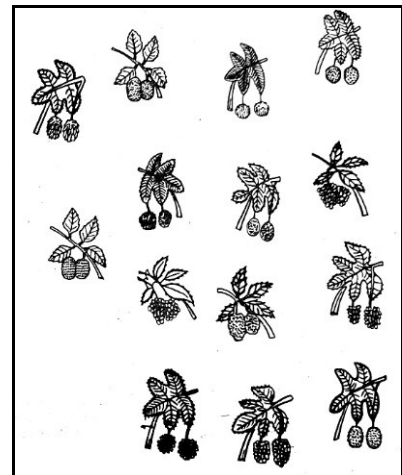


Figure 6 – Hops variations (Ring & Ham 2002)

We only found three basemarks on Doyle's bottles: "C&Co," "E," or "R" (Figure 8) The "C&Co" logo has been well documented as the initials of both Cunningham & Co. and Cunninghams & Co., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, during the 1878-ca. 1886 period. The *Rochester*



Figure 8 – Doyle base marks (eBay)

Journal & Post Express for June 2, 1874, discussed "the manufacture of 'Doyle's Hop Bitters'" using "glass from Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Honesdale manufactories." The Pittsburgh factory almost certainly was Cunninghams & Co. Many of the bottles we have found in our online searches had numbers, dots, or no embossing, so some of these were likely made by one of the Baltimore glass houses and the Honesdale Glass Co.

The "E" basemark came in two variations: a block-E in typical size and a larger, outlined "E." Each block-E was



Figure 9 – E variations (eBay)

accompanied by a number from 1-4 placed below the letter, and many had double stamps (Figure 9). The large outlined E sometimes was accompanied by a number placed to the right (always 3 in our sample), again often with double stamps. In our study of double stamps, the typical dating on bottles was ca. 1894-ca. 1914 – too late to have fit with Hop Bitters production. However, the Adolphus Busch Glass Mfg. Co. used the technique that created the double stamp on beer bottles by at least 1882, so late 1870s-early 1880s is not unreasonable. Prior to this study, the Busch plant was the earliest we knew about for bottles, but Ellensburg Glass may have pioneered the technique. However, the technique was also used earlier on fruit jars. The *Poughkeepsie Eagle-News* for May 10, 1881, reported that the "Ellenville Glass Factory has a large order for Hop Bitters bottles" – clearly the ones with "E" basemarks.¹

¹ We had not discovered this connection by the time we revised the "E" section, so it does not appear in the Ellensburg Glass Works study.

The final basemark was an “R” – and the most obvious candidate for this logo was the Rochester Glass Works located in the same city as the Hop Bitters Co. We know, for example, that Hop Bitters used the local firm at least as early as 1885. The *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* for February 21, 1885, explained:

A world-famed Hop Bitters Manufacturing company, of this city, have just placed their order with Rochester Glass-works for 5,760,000 Hop Bitters bottles. This is the largest bonafide contract ever made for glass bottles, and speaks for itself for the success of and work turned out by our home factory, established here a few years since by Mssrs. Kelly & Co. In a statement concluding the deal, Mr. A.T. Soule . . . frankly says that in an experience of eleven years of manufacturing their bitters in England, France, Belgium, Holland, Australia, Canada, and in this city, they have obtained no ware produced in any of these countries which have proved as satisfactory or entailing so small a loss by breakage.

Two items in this report require explanations. First, Kelly & Co. did *not* “establish” the Rochester Glass Works. The factory had been in operation under a number of firms – albeit sporadically – since 1862. Second, when Soule said “eleven years” that would mean 1874 or so – the entire life of the firm under his control rather than meaning the bottles had been made overseas during that period. Hop Bitters bottles only had been made outside the U.S. since 1881. He also ignored at least five other U.S. producers he had used. The “R” was the only basemark used on both “DOYLES” and “Dr SOULES” bottles.

Some of the unmarked bottles were made by the Whitney Brothers of Glassboro, New Jersey. According to the *Rochester Times-Union* for February 23, 1885, John P. Whitney and T.W. Synott of Glassboro, New Jersey [i.e., Whitney Brothers], sued the Hop Bitters Co., summons to Asa T. Soule for \$24,557.41 for “glass bottles and glassware manufactured and sold and delivered by plaintiffs to defendant between August 7, 1883, and August 30, 1884.” A later article noted that the Whitney Brothers won their suit.

Dr. Soules (1881-ca. 1890)

As noted above, the second type of bottles differed from the first only in the substitution

of “Dr SOULES” for “DOYLES” on one shoulder panel. However, Dr Soules bottles came in three major variations:

D^R SOULE’S (in some, underline is well below superscript “R” – in line with the other letters)

Dr SOULE (with or without period after “Dr.”)

Dr SOULE (reversed S) (Figure 10)



Figure 10 – Dr Soules variations (eBay)

Dr. Soule bases were embossed with letters “A”; “O”; or “R” (Figure 11). The letters “A” and “O” on “Dr. Soule’s” bottles probably



Figure 11 – Dr Soules basemarks (eBay)

indicated glass houses in England or Australia, and finding those are beyond the scope of this study. As noted above, the “R” identified the Rochester Glass Works.

Sorting Out the Timing

Bottles embossed with “DOYLES” are far too common to have been used only during the 1872-1874 period when Doyle controlled the firm; therefore, Soule continued to use them after he acquired the company – possibly making an agreement with Doyle to continue his name on the bottles in the U.S. Most surviving paper labels on Hop Bitters bottles embossed “Doyles” included Rochester, Toronto, and London. A single example in our sample only had Rochester (Figure 12). We have evidence that the Toronto plant incorporated in 1880, likely opening in 1881 along with operations in London and Melbourne, Australia. So, Doyle’s bottles were in use at least that late – long into the Soule period.



Figure 12 – Paper labels (eBay)

By at least April 20, 1882, *The Journal* (Newcastle upon Tyne, England) warned “to buy nothing but Genuine American Hop Bitters, which are put up in very large square, panelled, amber-coloured bottles, with Dr. Soule’s name blown into the glass.” The article also listed the Hop Bitters plant at Antwerp, Belgium, our first mention of that location. On March 1, 1883, the *Daily Advertiser* (Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Australia) carried a similar warning for residents of that island/continent. These warnings suggest two things. First, and most obvious, imitations had sprung up soon after the bitters were introduced to the British sphere. Second, the only bottles sold in Australia and England were embossed with the Dr. Soule’s name.

The above information leads us to our hypothesis based on the relative quantity of surviving bottles. Our online searches revealed ca. 800 Doyles bottles but only ca. 200 Dr Soule’s bottles a ratio of 80:20 – but the number of bottles with “R” bases was about equal for both bottle types. As noted in the main text, Soule made a huge order of bottles from the Rochester Glass Works in 1885, stating that bottles made overseas were not as good. This clearly demonstrates that some Hops Bitters bottles *were* made in Europe and/or Australia.

Our hypothesis states that bottles embossed with the Doyles name were made and used in the United States during the entire time that the Hop Bitters company was in business – 1873-ca. 1890. Bottles carrying the Dr Soules name were used in Europe and Australia, although some of them were made in the U.S. (with “R” basemarks) possibly for use in Canada. Being adjacent to the U.S., a mix of both bottle types may have found their way to Canada – certainly those made in the U.S. The time span for the U.S would be 17 years of use versus 9 years in Europe and Australia.

One remaining issue: With the Rochester Glass Works located in the same city, why did Hop Bitters deal with so many other U.S. glass house? And, why do we not find any references for Hop Bitters using Rochester Glass Works bottles prior to 1885? The answer to both of these questions rests with the early history of the Rochester Glass Works.

The Rochester Glass Works was basically unstable from its opening until Henry T. Kelly and the blowers from Clyde, New York, took over the operation in 1881. C.B. Woodworth originated the glass house to produce bottles for his perfume business in 1862, and the glass house was in operation sporadically – including the two-year lease to Thomas A. Evans, the return of Woodworth for two years (mostly closed), and the aborted lease of N.B. Gatchell & Co.

terminating in 1877. Because of this instability, the Hop Bitters Co., also located in Rochester, purchased its bottles (as we already know) from Cunninghams & Co., the Ellenville Glass Works, the Whitney Brothers, and at least two other glass houses that did not use marks.

Although the Hop Bitters Co. almost certainly tried bottles from the local Rochester Glass Works during its early years, the glass plant was closed for at least three periods (ca. 1866-1868; 1872-1874; 1877-1881), a total of nine years out of 19 (1862-1881). And, there may have been shorter spells that we have not discovered. Clearly the local glass factory was unreliable causing the Hop Bitters Co. to seek bottles in Pittsburgh and other areas. In addition, the earliest operating companies, C.B. Woodworth (1862-1867) and C.B. Woodworth & Son (1867-1870) primarily made bottles for their perfume and chemical firms, leaving little time for other venues. The early bottles from Rochester most likely had no manufacturer's marks.

It is thus likely that the Hops Bitter Co. rarely used the local glass house until the Kelly & Co. period beginning in 1881. The new quality controls by the long-experienced Clyde glassblowers led to the huge Hop Bitters bottle order of 1885. In all likelihood, the Rochester Glass Works continued to produce the Hop Bitters bottles made in the U.S. (also for Canada) until the Soule firm ceased production of the bitters ca. 1890. This also explains why bottles with the "R" basemark are the *only* ones with both Doyles (U.S.) and Soules (Canada) manufacturer's logos.

Sources

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