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with the wire hook protruding from the neck when the stopper was pulled up. The necks of these bottles were short and were packed up-side-down in the case.

"The city case carried two-dozen bottles, were full depth, with holes bored into a false bottom. These holes were just large enough for the neck of the bottle to pass through. The wooden cases, made of one inch dressed lumber, had no partitions. Prices at that time were seventy cents per case for bottled Coca-Cola and sixty cents per case for bottled soda water.

"A few years after I had been using the Hutchinson bottle Mr. Candler wrote and asked me if I had tried the new crown and cork bottle. Having already changed over to this, I sent him a case of Coca-Cola bottled with the crown-cork seals.

"I don't remember whether the Hutchinson bottles containing Coca-Cola had the trade-mark on them or not. I think they were just plain bottles with our name on them. However, when we abandoned the Hutchinson bottle and began to use the crown cork, the trade-mark appeared on the crown and was blown into the new bottle.

"I delivered my bottled Coca-Cola in a dray for the trade in and near Vicksburg. The town delivery was done in cases containing two dozen bottles each. Most of the out-of-town shipping in the early days was done by boat up and down the Mississippi River.

"Mr. Candler was a great believer in advertising. When his salesmen first began to call on me they would leave coupons, each good for a free drink of Coca-Cola at the fountain, and later this offer extended to my bottled Coca-Cola.

"After a couple of years I began to receive a lot of advertising material from Mr. Candler—the kind for display, point-of-purchase advertising, and outside pieces. This advertising applied to fountain Coca-Cola only,

but it also helped the sale of Coca-Cola in bottles. Bottling advertising did not come until later.

"When Mr. Candler saw that I was doing well with bottled Coca-Cola he gave me the State of Mississippi as my territory and wouldn't let anybody else come in. When Mr. Candler entered into the contract with the Thomas-Whitehead interests he left out of that contract the State of Mississippi. The other territories we own were purchased by us later. Our first branching away from Vicksburg was into the Monroe, Louisiana, territory; then we branched over and bought the Shreveport territory; then the Texarkana, Arkansas territory; then the Wichita Falls, the San Antonio and Temple, Texas territories."*

Joe Biedenharn was very proud of his family and rightfully so.

In 1888 he married Annie Schlottman. From this union were born four children, Henry Alvin, Malcolm Stout,** Emma Louise and Bernard William.

The three boys, upon reaching manhood, began actively to participate in the ever-expanding Biedenharn interests—the bottling of Coca-Cola and the wholesaling of confectionery products, while the daughter, Emma Louise, studied voice extensively here and abroad to become distinguished as a Wagnerian contralto on the concert stages of Europe and of the United States.

It was always a great occasion and

*In a letter to Frank Rowsey dated May 28, 1958. A. M. Biedenharn, President of the San Antonio Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Inc., of San Antonio, Texas, wrote:

"I always understood that Mr. Candler offered him the State of Mississippi, but as we were handicapped for the lack of capital at that time, my brother Joe told him that all he wanted was six or seven counties right around Vicksburg, that we were supplying with our products. It was also my understanding that when Mr. Candler entered into a contract with the Thomas-Whitehead interests he held out the six or seven counties that he gave my brother, Joe, the direct contract for."

**Malcolm (or Mike), Joe's son, who owned the Ouachita Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Inc., at Monroe, Louisiana, died April 23, 1950.

a remarkable sight when Joe and his six brothers, each of whom was over six feet in height got together and had what they liked to call a "house-warming."

These seven brothers and their children were all engaged in some operational phase of the Biedenharn holdings. The fraternal sextette which followed Joe into the bottling business included: William G., Harry, Lawrence C., Herman H., Ollie Lee and Albert M.

In 1940 the brothers celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the original Biedenharn confectionery firm. Today there are more than one hundred members of the immediate Biedenharn clan.

However, during the succeeding years, the following Biedenharn brothers have died: Herman H., August 20, 1944; William G., April 7, 1947; Ollie L., February 4, 1949; Harry, November 11, 1950; Lawrence C., January 15, 1954. The only surviving brother is Albert M. of The Coca-Cola Bottling Company at San Antonio, Texas.

Joseph Biedenharn, the patriarch of the vast enterprise which is the bottling of Coca-Cola throughout the world, looked with pride upon what had been an amazing growth during the past half-century and more. From five gallons of Coca-Cola syrup placed upon a counter by Sam Dobbs, the Coca-Cola bottling industry today bottles hundreds of thousands upon hundreds of thousands of gallons of syrup.

But Joe was far from smug about it. "I have heard it said that Coca-Cola sells itself, that there is no real need of advertising any more. This is not true. We've got to push Coca-Cola and keep on pushing it. There are always new markets to conquer.

"Coca-Cola must and will keep on growing. I don't see anything to keep it back, provided an aggressive policy is followed and the sales-building and the educational work is continued. If we do this, then the future of Coca-Cola is unlimited."

Joe Biedenharn is a monument to the future of Coca-Cola.

ten cases of bottled soda water each.

"Well, I telephoned the soda water plant in Vicksburg to send me thirty cases for the three customers. The manager informed me that he needed the soda water for his own customers and couldn't supply me. This provoked me no end," he said. "I gave my customers instead a box of lemons each, a sack of sugar and some coloring so they could make red lemonade for their farm hands.

"Since so many customers were asking me to sell them soda water and the soda water plant manager wouldn't accept the trade I offered him, I decided that I, too, could make a little money in soda water; so I wrote the Liquid Carbonic Company at St. Louis and bought an entire bottling outfit from them, second-hand,—cases, bottles, bottling machinery and all. And in less than thirty days I was putting up my own soda water in bottles. I bottled lemon, strawberry, and sarsaparilla. I did all right with my soda water."

SOME TIME during 1890, and not long after Joe and his father had occupied the Washington Street building, a Coca-Cola salesman paid them a visit.

The name of this salesman was Samuel Candler Dobbs. Young Dobbs placed a five-gallon keg of Coca-Cola syrup on the counter in Joe's store and explained what it was. Joe, for the first time, was introduced to the product which was later to alter the course of his entire business career.

Joe asked Sam Dobbs how the syrup was to be dispensed. He thought that he had to mix it with other ingredients before it could be served, but Dobbs assured him that it was to be dispensed with carbonated water "just like it is."

Joe agreed to try the five-gallons of syrup at his fountain. Years later his comment on this business transaction was: "That first five gallons of Coca-Cola syrup put me on the right track."

Sam Dobbs later recalled that first interview with Joe very well, primarily because he was received in such a friendly, hospitable manner which was quite contrary to the many experiences he had been having on the road.

Joe sold the five gallons of Coca-Cola and

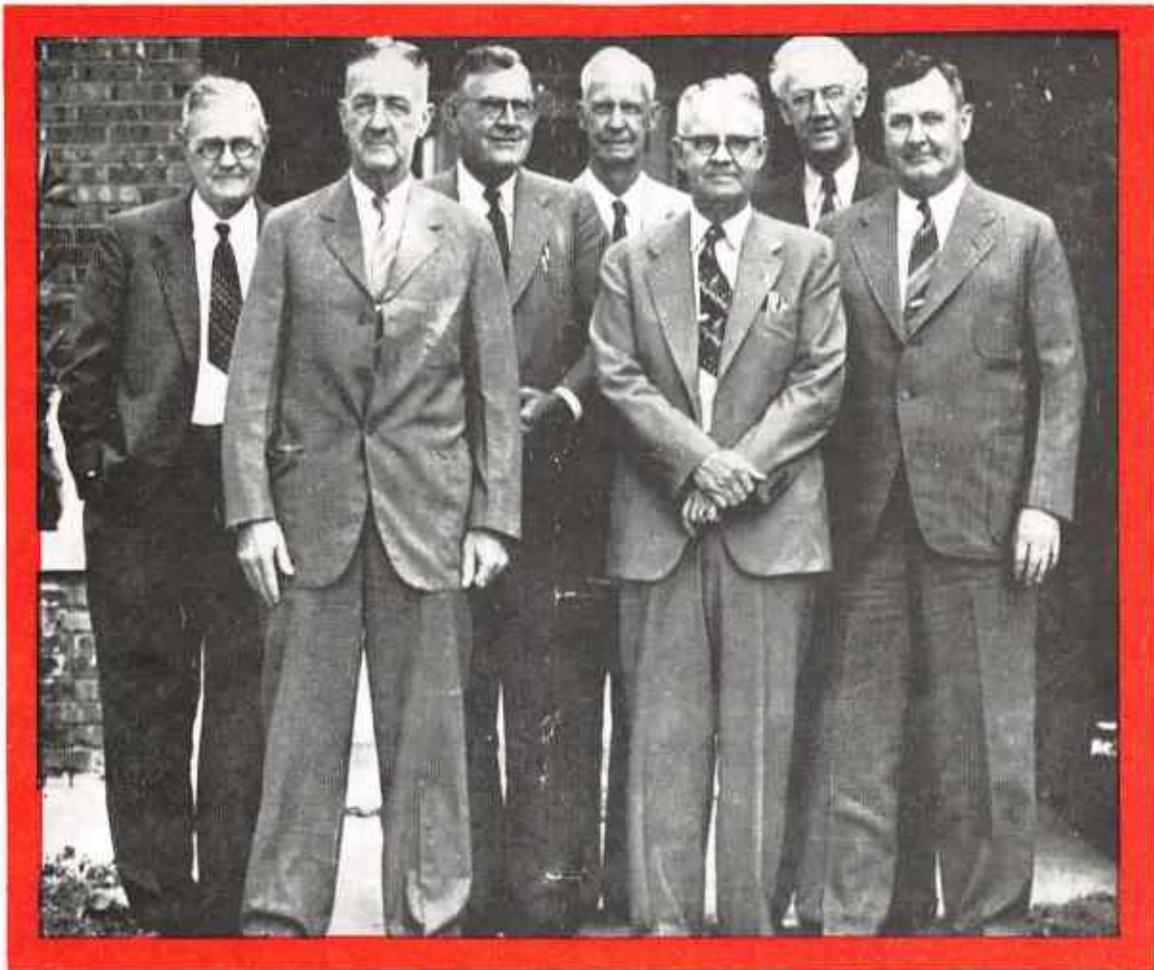
ordered more. About a year later Asa G. Candler, himself, called on Joe in Vicksburg. Candler asked him to job Coca-Cola and sell it to the fountain trade in and around Vicksburg. The agreement between them was that he would buy not less than 2,000 gallons of Coca-Cola syrup during a twelve-month period, subject to a twenty-five cent per gallon rebate at the end of the twelve-month period. Of course, as time passed, Joe sold more and more Coca-Cola and his orders under this agreement became proportionately larger.

Joe once commented in a reminiscent mood: "Mr. Candler and I got along fine. He was always awfully nice to me. I liked him from the start. Whenever he would come to town—he never made more than two or three visits to Vicksburg, each about a year apart—we would sit on boxes in my store and pass the time of day talking about Coca-Cola and other things. Mr. Candler always left a good taste in my mouth and I was glad to do business with him. I remember on one trip to Vicksburg I took him to see the National Cemetery in a delivery wagon. Later, when I went to see him in Atlanta, he had his son, Howard, take me for a buggy ride out into the countryside north on Peachtree Street."

Between 1890 and 1894 Joe Biedenharn jobbed more and more Coca-Cola to the fountain trade. It was proving to be quite profitable. He began by ordering five barrels, five ten-gallon kegs and five five-gallon kegs. Sometimes he would order two or three half-barrels. He sold more barrels and half-barrels than he did the others.

How did he get started? Joe said: "I just went to work and bottled Coca-Cola there in the Washington Street store where all the soda water equipment was located. I did not say anything to Mr. Candler about it, but I did ship to him the first two-dozen case of Coca-Cola I bottled. Mr. Candler immediately wrote back that it was fine. He made no further comment at all that I remember. You know, to this day he has never returned my bottles!"

Joe went on: "I used the same equipment there for my soda water—a Liquid Carbonator and drum gas which I bought from Saratoga Springs. The first bottles for Coca-Cola were the old six-ounce Hutchinson stoppered bottles



The Biedenharn Brothers, left to right: William G. Biedenharn, Vicksburg, Miss.; Lawrence C. Biedenharn, Vicksburg; Harry Biedenharn, Vicksburg; Joseph A. Biedenharn, Monroe, La.; Ollie Lee Biedenharn, Shreveport, La.; Herman H. Biedenharn, Vicksburg, and Albert M. Biedenharn, San Antonio, Texas. This photograph was made at a family gathering in Monroe, La., September 30-October 1, 1938.

his father devoted his attention more and more to the shoe store which they were operating concurrently.

In 1890, he and his father built a two-story brick building at what was then 218-220 Washington Street, Vicksburg. It served as their joint place of business, the space being divided equally between the wholesale candy company and the shoe store. This building was later identified as 1107 Washington Street.

It was in this structure that Coca-Cola was first put out in bottles.

About this time, when Joe was in his early twenties, that an incident occurred which caused him to become a bottler of soda water.

"Being in the wholesale confectionery business, my customers came in to give me orders, both large and small," he said. "At one particular time—this must have been about the latter part of June, 1891—three customers came in and gave me their orders for a Fourth of July picnic which they were going to give their plantation hands. At the time they gave me their orders, they also asked me to get them

stinctively felt that he had made a good decision. And Joe was a determined one when he once made a decision.

He had been selling a lot of Coca-Cola syrup for Asa G. Candler in Atlanta to the soda fountains of Vicksburg, Miss., where he was operating a retail confectionery business.

Joe had been noticing how on hot summer days townspeople in search of refreshment had come to the various fountains and asked for Coca-Cola. In his practical mind he figured that if Coca-Cola was popular in town maybe the country folks would like it too, if they could only get it.

An idea hit Joe. Why not package Coca-Cola so that not only the country people around Vicksburg could have it, but everybody in the whole state of Mississippi as well!

So, he decided to put Coca-Cola in bottles. He was already bottling soda water, doing it as a sort of sideline to his regular business. It was easy. He was receiving shipments of Coca-Cola syrup which Mr. Candler had asked him to sell in the State of Mississippi. He had the bottling machinery, gas, bottles and crates.

Joe got busy.

No, Joe didn't realize the far-reaching significance of what he was doing when he poured the Coca-Cola syrup and shot the carbonated water into that first bottle. But he did know one thing: Coca-Cola would sell!

Joe Biedenharn bottled his first case of Coca-Cola in the summer of 1894. No one preceded him in the business though many have come after him and followed in his footsteps. He had the distinction of being the first man to bottle carbonated Coca-Cola.

Joseph A. Biedenharn enjoyed the last years of his life in the pleasant city of Monroe, Louisiana. On the Golden Anniversary of his bottling of Coca-Cola in 1944, he had entered upon the fifty-first year as a bottler. When he died on October 9, 1952, he had been a bottler for fifty-eight years.

Tall and lithe of stature, he held himself as straight as a ramrod. The years rested lightly upon his shoulders. His snow-white hair, bushy eyebrows, and blue-grey eyes, twinkling with good humor, were strongly reminiscent of Mark Twain.

He liked to talk about the old days when his bottling business was in its infancy.

"I know it is a fact," he said, "that I am the first bottler of Coca-Cola in the world, because when I began there wasn't anybody bottling at that time. The soda water bottlers didn't want to bother with it; besides, they said the price for Coca-Cola was too high. They were merely content to make soda water."

He went on: "It was just that I saw the demand for Coca-Cola in town, and I thought it would be profitable in the country if I could only get it there. I found that the more Coca-Cola I was able to sell, the more I made out of it. This is why I began to push Coca-Cola and I pushed it as much as Asa Candler did.

"I believed then, and I still believe," he said, "in bringing the product to the customer. I wanted to bring Coca-Cola to the country people outside the limits of the fountain. Even in the cities the fountains were limited in number and scattered here and there. I could see that many town folks wanted Coca-Cola, but it was not easily available."

Joe continued: "When the country people would come in to see me I would ask them to have a Coca-Cola. I always urged them to try a Coca-Cola at my fountain in the candy store if they were not already acquainted with it. This was before and even after I began to bottle.

JOE BIEDENHARN, the eldest of eight sons and four daughters, was born December 13, 1866, at Vicksburg, Miss. His father, Herman Henry Biedenharn, and mother, Louisa Hansen Biedenharn, had come to Vicksburg some time previously. There he founded a retail confectionery business which he and his brother, Henry, operated jointly. The firm was known as Biedenharn & Brother.

Joe grew up in Vicksburg where he received a public school education. In his early teens he began working for his father in the candy business. They handled wholesale specialties such as fruits, raisins, and nuts, in addition to a wide variety of confectionery products.

Gradually, Joe began to take over the operation of the candy business which had now become the Biedenharn Candy Company, while

COCA-COLA BOTTLING COMPANY



Coca-Cola

PLANTS AT
MONROE, LOUISIANA
TULLULAH, LOUISIANA

MONROE, LOUISIANA

September 11, 1939



Mr. Harrison Jones, Vice President
The Coca-Cola Company
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Harrison:

Replying to the inquiry in your recent letter, beg to advise that I think it was in the summer of 1894 that we first bottled Coca-Cola at what was then 218-220 Washington Street, Vicksburg, Mississippi. These street numbers have been changed and the address is now 1107 Washington Street, Vicksburg, Mississippi.

It was through Mr. A. G. Candler's suggestion to me upon one of his business trips to Vicksburg that finally led up to our bottling Coca-Cola. He suggested to me that we stock and job Coca-Cola syrup to supply the fountain dispensing trade in and around Vicksburg. The agreement between us was that we were to buy not less than two thousand gallons of Coca-Cola syrup during a twelve month's period, subject to a twenty-five cent per gallon rebate at the end of the twelve month's period.

We were operating a wholesale and retail confectionary business and were dispensing Coca-Cola through our soda fountain, so this proposal fell right into line with our jobbing business.

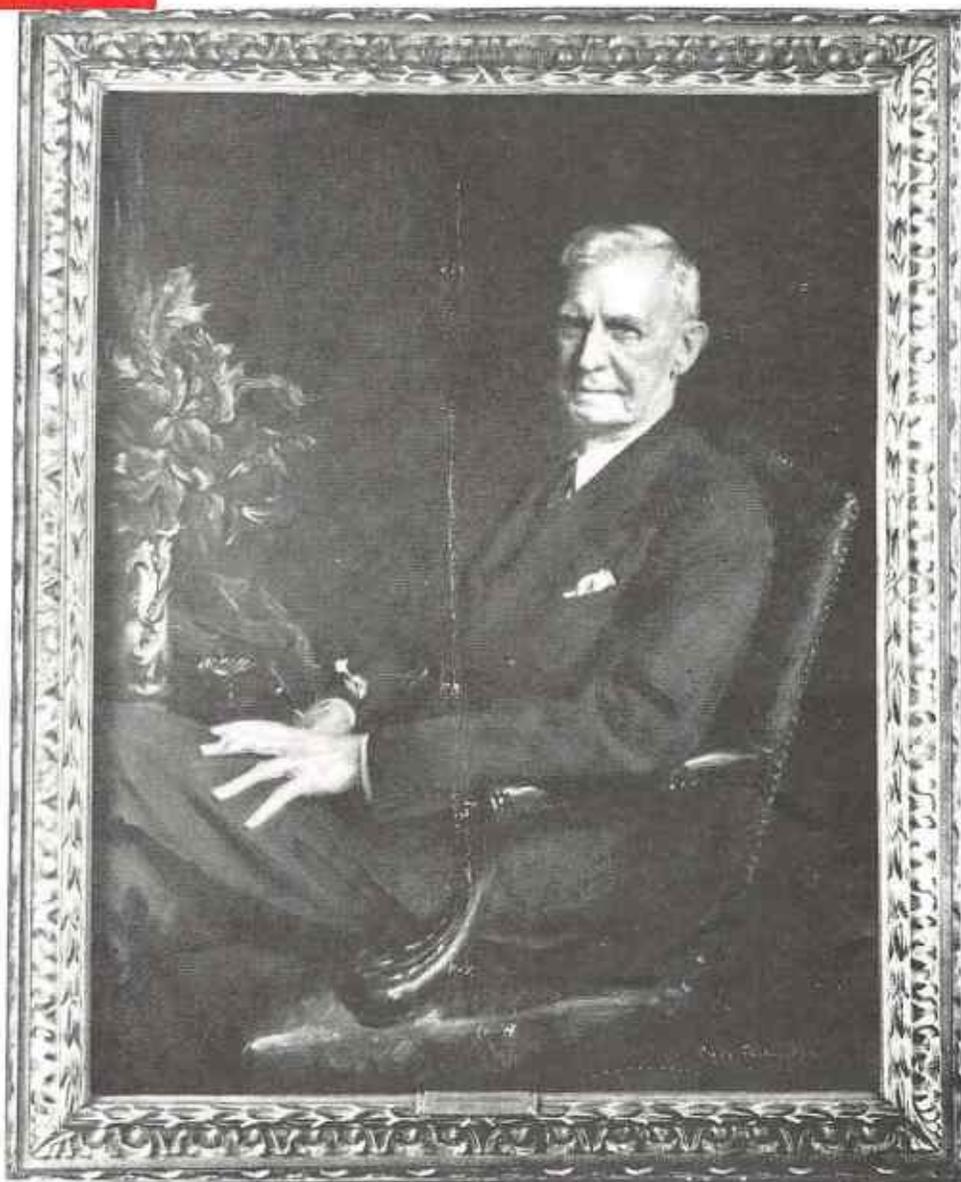
Consumer demand had increased and was increasing rapidly, and as Coca-Cola could only be had in the cities where fountains were dispensing it, the thought struck one day--why not bottle it for our country trade? We were in the soda water bottling game and it was easy to start it going. We sent one of our first cases of bottled Coca-Cola to Mr. Candler, and he wrote back that it was fine. Prices at that time were seventy cents per case on Coca-Cola and sixty cents per case on bottled soda-water. This started us off on the right track and I have seen Coca-Cola grow with us from a five gallon keg the first year to what it is today.

Trust this is the information you wish, and if I can be of any further service to you, just let me know.

Sincerely yours,


J. A. Biedenharn

THE FIRST BOTTLER



Joseph A. Biedenbarn

by WILBUR G. KURTZ, JR.

THE STORY OF Joseph August Biedenbarn is the story of a young man with vision and faith—a vision that became a reality and a faith that was justified. An original idea plus seven remarkable brothers brought fame and fortune to the Biedenbarn family of Vicksburg, Miss., and laid the cornerstone for a business

enterprise that today has spread to the four corners of the earth.

We will call him Joe, for that is how we have always affectionately referred to him.

Young Joe Biedenbarn, in the summer of 1894, did not realize fully the tremendous import of what he had decided to do, but he in-

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1976

Joseph A. Biedenharn

First Bottler of Coca-Cola

JOSEPH A. BIEDENHARN

1866-1952



A B I O G R A P H I C A L P R O F I L E

COCA