

## “Colby Bottling Works was a popular factory years ago”

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It was reported in the April 19,1906, *Colby Free Press* that Joe Westermeier “has leased the old furniture store building at the corner of 3rd and Franklin and is putting in a Pop factory.”

The pop factory (present location of American Family Insurance - 290 N. Franklin) proved to be a thriving business for several years and a number of people were employed by Westermeier.

His brother, Al, traveled over the territory and took orders for pop. There were two girls in the office, Elmer Lewallen was shop foreman, several men were hired to mix and bottle the pop, and a number of boys washed bottles at three cents a case, often making as much or more than the adults. One worker boasted that besides his salary he got his pop at cost.

The pop was sold in the small towns all up and down the railroad as well as Colby. The drug stores, restaurants and all places of entertainment bought and sold the popular soft drink. George Cork with his delivery wagon was kept busy hauling the full cases and the empties to the places of business and the railroads and back, and one of the girls called at the local stores daily taking orders.

As a sideline, Westermeier manufactured and packed in jars a hand cream which he called Westies Vanishing Cream. This was a very fine product and the local Drug Stores and places in other towns stocked it.

Research to date has not resulted in a date when the factory was shut down but it is known through phone directories that the Fairmont Creamery was at this address in 1928.

The pictured pop bottle is on display in the Prairie Museum of Art and History’s Glorious Glass exhibit. It is a green color with COLBY BOTTLING WORKS, J.A. Westermeier, Colby, Ks. on it.

Who manufactured the bottles for Westermeier is uncertain. However, cleanliness was highly regarded at the factory. An advertisement of the day noted: It has been said that Dr. S.J. Crumbine, Secretary of the State Board of Health is crazy on the subject of cleanliness. We admit being slightly

whiskey or eaten too much or troubled with indigestion, drink a bottle of Colby Pop before breakfast and it will help to put your stomach in shape so you can eat a good square meal.

And for those who do not know, we want to say that Colby Pop does not contain alcohol. Better have a case sent to your home.