

Dr. Price's Delicious Flavoring Extracts

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Dr. Vincent C. Price experimented with baking powder as early as 1852 and began production of his powder in 1863. Charles R. Steele became Price's partner in Steele & Price in 1874, but Price purchased Steele's share in 1884 to form the Price Baking Powder Co. In 1891, Price sold the baking powder business to form and concentrated on the Price Flavoring Extract Co. He added the Pan Confection Co. the following year, although that firm merged with several others to form the National Candy Co. in 1902. Price's final company was the Tryabita Food Co., opened the year National Candy was formed but renamed as the Dr. Price Cereal Food Co. a year later. Although the cereal business closed between 1907 and 1909, the Flavoring Extract business lasted until at least 1938, long after Price's death in 1914.

Histories

Dr. Price opened a variety of companies, although only two of them made the flavoring extracts.

Steele & Price, Chicago (1874-1884)

Price Baking Powder Co., Chicago (1884-1891)

Dr. Vincent Clarence Price began his experiments with baking powder in 1852 and became one of the pioneers of its use. After he moved to Chicago in 1861, he established a baking powder plant at Waukeegan. In 1863 (possibly 1869), he built a factory on Lake St. at Chicago, later moving the plant to East Lake St., where it was destroyed during the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Price rebuilt the factory at 47-49 Lake St. but moved to 107-109 Randolph St. two years later. In 1874, Price partnered with Charles R. Steele, a banker, probably naming the firm Steele & Price. After buying out Steele's share of the business in February 1884, Price incorporated the Price Baking Powder Co., with a capital of \$500,000 and a plant at the corner of Dearborn Ave. and Michigan St. Along with Dr. Price's Baking Powder, the firm made other products including flavoring extracts (Curry, n.d.:337; Familypedia 2020; GG Archives 2020; Zumwalt 1980:340).

Price Flavoring Extract Co., Chicago (1891-ca. 1938)

In 1891, Price sold the baking powder business for \$1,500,000 and organized the Price Flavoring Extract Co. with Price as president, his son, R.C. Price, as vice president, and A.C. Fischer as secretary. The plant was located at the southwest corner of Illinois and Cass Streets. Although Price died on July 12, 1914, his firm moved the plant to 237-239 E. Superior St., still at Chicago, in 1916 (*American Food Journal* 1916:64; GG Archives 2020; Lambrecht 2015; Zumwalt 1980:340). Surprisingly, none of the online histories mentioned when the firm ceased operations. The latest date I have found was the Price Flavoring Extract Company v. Horace G. Lindheimer, County Collector, on April 15, 1938.

Pan Confection Co., Chicago (1892-1902)

Price opened the Pan Confection Co. in 1892 with his son, V.L. Price. In 1902, Price joined with a group of other candy makers to form the National Candy Co., with a capital of nine million dollars. National Candy dissolved in the 1940s.

Dr. Price Cereal Food Co., Chicago (1902-1909)

Price also opened the Tryabita Food Co. in 1902 but renamed the firm as the Dr. Price Cereal Food Co. the following year at Yorkville – south end of Gull Lake. The factory made Try-A-Bita – pepsin-celery flavored wheat flakes – and another cereal called Algrain. Although the company may have actually closed in 1907, the firm officially dissolved in 1909 (Cook



Figure 1 – Price's Cereal Food Co. (Willard Historical Images)

County IL GenWeb 2014; Corporations of New Jersey n.d.; Curry n.d.:338; *Detroit Free Press* 9/11/1902; Familypedia 2020; Stoltz 1992:12-13) (Figure 1).

Containers and Marks

At this point, I have only discovered four variations of the Dr. Price's Extract bottles – one with two subvariations.

1. Steele & Price (1874-1884)



Figure 3 – Steele & Price bottle (eBay)

The earliest container was a sunken panel bottle embossed “DR. PRICE’S / SPECIAL / FLAVORING / EXTRACTS” with the “EX” and TS” in

“EXTRAC TS” curved upward. The colorless bottle was mouth blown with “Steele & PRICE” embossed on each side panel (Figures 2, 3, & 4). The base was not shown in the only photo I have found. Although I have not discovered when the firm began making flavoring extracts, Steele and Price were partners in the baking powder business for a decade – from 1874 to 1884.



Figure 4 – Steele & Price bottle (eBay)



Figure 2 – Steele & Price bottle (eBay)

2. Dr. Price's Delicious Flavoring Extracts – Mouth Blown (1884-ca. 1912)

Once the partnership with Steele dissolved, Price used a similar colorless sunken panel bottle embossed “DR. PRICE’S / DELICIOUS / FLAVORING EXTRACTS” on one side. At least one of these was embossed with a “3” on the base; another with “02” (Figure 5). The manufacturer of the bottles is currently unknown, but they were probably used from 1884 to ca. 1912, when machine-made bottles became available.



Figure 5 – Price's bottle (eBay)

3. Dr. Price's Delicious Flavoring Extracts – Machine Made (ca. 1912-mid-1920s)

Price continued to use identical bottles once they were available in machine format. These were also embossed “DR. PRICE’S / DELICIOUS / FLAVORING EXTRACTS” on one side and the I-in-an-elongated-diamond logo of the Illinois Glass Co. and an Owens machine scar on the base. Illinois Glass received an Owens license for medicinal bottles (the catalog classification for the types of bottles used by Price) in 1912, setting an approximate beginning date for the Diamond-I variation (Figure 6).



Figure 6 – Price’s bottle (eBay)

At least some of these were further identified with a paper label: “DR. PRICE’S / DELICIOUS / FLAVORING / EXTRACT / REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. / OF TRUE / VANILLA.” A drawing below showed a young boy in an obvious Mexican outfit with “Price’s / ‘Tropikid’” to



Figure 8 – 1922 ad (Old Main)

the right and “REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.” between the boy’s feet. Below that was “NET CONTENTS / 1½ FLUID OUNCES / For Culinary Purposes / NATURAL FRUIT FLAVOR / 40 PER CENT ALCOHOL / From the Finest Vanilla Beans” and more information mostly destroyed when the label was torn (Figure 7). The Tropikid was in place by at least 1922, when Price advertised the boy (Figure 8).



Figure 7 – Paper label (eBay)

4. Amber Bottle with Continuous-Thread Finish (mid-1920s-1930s)

The final bottle was oval in cross-section and amber in color, also made by machine. The shoulders sloped up gently into a continuous-thread finish, and the sides lacked the sunken panels of the earlier bottles. These were embossed “DR. PRICE’S / DELICIOUS / FLAVORING EXTRACTS / DES. PAT 128402” on one side and “7 Diamond OI symbol 4 / 4” on the base – the logo of the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. (Figure 9). The “7” was the plant code for the factory at Streator, Illinois, and the “4” was a date code, most likely for 1934 – since the last evidence for the firm was 1938.



Figure 9 – Amber bottle (Joann’s Junque)

Discussion and Conclusions

At this point, the evidence in this study should be considered tentative. A more definitive study will require a larger sample of Dr. Price’s bottles excavated in dated contexts. It is possible, for example, that Steele & Price used paper labels on generic bottles during part of the 1874-1884 period, and I have not found *any* evidence to place the first sales of the flavoring extracts at any year – although the development of the extracts almost certainly occurred during that era.

Bottles embossed “DR. PRICE’S / DELICIOUS / FLAVORING EXTRACTS” were used for a long period of time, probably from 1884 to the mid-1930s. However, my current sample of mouth-blown bottles only consists of two. Considering that the machine-made bottles were not available until 1912 – a manufacturing span of almost 30 years – available bottles on eBay should be more numerous. It is possible that Price used generic bottles with paper labels during a large many others will eventually surface.

Although my sample of colorless, machine-made bottles is larger, it only contains manufacturer’s marks for the Illinois Glass Co., restricting the initial possible production to 1912, the year the glass house received the Owens machine license. All the bottles with base

photos had the Diamond-I logo and Owens machine scars. Although these could have been replaced by bottles with continuous-thread finishes, the only ones I have discovered with continuous threads so far were amber in color with manufacturer's marks from the Owens-Illinois Glass Co. Once again, the colorless bottles with continuous threads *could* have been made as early as the mid-1920s, although the ones from Owens-Illinois could not predate 1929.

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