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P. PULLIAM, ed.

MAKING A LIVING IN  
THE GOOD OLD DAYS

(1975)







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Edited By Peggy Pulliam

1975

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

George A. Clark, author of the article dealing with the Soft Drink Bottling Industry in Effingham County, was born near Yale, Jasper County, Illinois, October 13, 1916, a son of Luther R. and Elsie (Immel) Clark. He was educated in a one room country grade school, at the defunct Yale 2-year High School, and graduated from Casey Township High School, Class of 1934. He graduated from the University of Illinois College of Commerce in June 1938, and later did graduate and past graduate work at the University of Illinois. Prior to his service during World War II he was Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, Iowa City, Iowa, and Assistant Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. During World War II he served in the Army Finance Department and with the Corps of Engineers. He headed a group which purchased the Effingham Dr. Pepper Bottling Company on January 20, 1947, and managed the operation until forced out of business in December 1969.

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Paul Taylor spent his entire life in Effingham, Illinois, and served his community well. Born Mar. 9, 1890, he attended the old West Side School and graduated from Effingham High School. He worked intermittently for Judge R. C. Harrah as a general office boy and secretary and finally decided to study law. In addition to the valuable practical experience he received from the Judge, he took a course of study from the Chicago Correspondence School of Law. He passed the Illinois Bar exam in 1911. That same year, when he was only 21, Taylor was elected City Attorney.

That election began his long career as a lawyer and politician. He served four terms as States Attorney from 1920 through 1936 and was elected to the Illinois State Legislature in 1942 where he remained for 12 years. His position as a public servant was as mayor of Effingham from 1955 to 1959.

Paul Taylor and Ruby Adams were married in 1912. Their daughter, Mrs. Betty Baldwin, lives in New York; their other children, Paul Jr. and Mrs. Shirley Claar, reside in Effingham. After Ruby's death, he married Hazel Kerans, who lives in Effingham. Mr. Taylor died in 1964.

Always fond of history, Taylor wrote an extensive account of his life and times during his retirement. He gave many talks on the history of Effingham County on the Zona B. Davis radio program over WCRA during the late 1950's. His talks have been slightly edited for this publication; no attempt has been made to update his material.

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C. A. (Clem) Thoele was born in Effingham in 1879 and spent most of his 93 years here. For many years he operated a delivery service for local grocery stores and was also employed by the Illinois Highway Department. He became the City Clerk in 1947, a position he held for 13 years. He was active in civic affairs serving as secretary of the Effingham Chamber of Commerce from 1930 to 1947 and as president of the Effingham Community Park Board for many years.



Hoping to help the present generation to remember our local history, he wrote about 40 one page sketches entitled, "OLD TIMERS". He gave this material to the Helen Matthes Library in 1955. Some of it was printed in the book, *EFFINGHAM COUNTY ILLINOIS — PAST AND PRESENT* and in the *BIT OF ILLINOIS HISTORY* column in the *EFFINGHAM DAILY NEWS*. Eight of Mr. Thoele's "OLD TIMER'S" sketches about employment are used in this booklet.

## I. A HISTORY OF THE BOTTLING INDUSTRY IN EFFINGHAM COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Effingham's bottling works has been located in the same building or attached structures at the address now known as 111 North Merchant Street, except for a brief period of perhaps ten years between about 1916 and 1925, since "Pop" Steve Underriner first began it there sometime after the Civil War. This spans a period exceeding eighty-six years.

Around Perryville, Missouri, during the Civil War feelings were deeply aroused, and there was violence. Southern sympathizers raided and made forays into the areas and communities sympathetic to the northern cause. Here at the time lived Stephen Underriner, who decided that this community was no place for his family, so he moved to Sigel, Illinois, to be near a cousin. In Sigel he got a job in a distillery. Information is not available at the moment to determine just when he moved to Effingham, but come he did to open a saloon, and to start a bottling plant — Effingham's first — in the rear of the saloon.

On May 20, 1881, Effingham County Sheriff, Alfred H. Kelly, executed a sheriff's deed to Stephen Underriner for the property now known as 111 North Merchant Street. This building at the time apparently housed a tavern and a bottling works, and also served as a residence. On November 7, 1884, Stephen Underriner died and is buried in the local St. Anthony Cemetery. His will executed a few days before his death, lists "a stock of groceries, a soda water factory, a team of mules, one wagon, household and kitchen furniture with an estimated total value of \$1,500.00."

There exists today three known Hutchinson Bottle Stopper Bottles bearing the name of Underriner Bottling Works, Effingham, Illinois. The Hutchinson Bottle Stopper was invented in 1878 and went out of use between 1903 and 1913. The team of mules used to pull the wagon to deliver the "pop", was kept in a lot in the yard just south of the bottling works, grocery store, tavern, residence.

After the death of Stephen Underriner the bottling works and allied businesses were operated by his widow, Phillipina, and their son, Joseph Underriner. The widow died in 1901.

Prior to the effective date of Prohibition in 1920, the tavern was in and out of business a few times due to local option elections which were influenced by the work of Ada Kepley.

Joseph Underriner passed away in 1915, and after his death his widow, Maggie, tried to run the bottling works, and moved it to the basement of her home in the east part of Effingham. After her death on April 17, 1920, the remaining assests of the Underriner Bottling Works were sold to Joseph H. Buehnerkempe who moved it to Teutopolis. Many of these bottles are still in the area.

Joseph H. Buehnerkempe ran the bottling works for five to ten years until his death. In her turn, his widow ran the plant on the shares with a cigar maker, named Philip Vehling. According to my informant, Anton "Ruby" Broeringmeyer, who is to figure more prominently later in the local bottling industry, "Fred Gardewine was the last to run the old Joseph H. Buehnerkempe Bottling Works in Teutopolis. I learned the business under Gardewine, by putting my foot on the old foot crowner to crown the bottles. We washed the bottles in a tub. His carbonator went bad and he just quit, and I don't remember just when that was." Thus the last vestiges of the old Pop Underriner Bottling Works passed out of existence.

Overlapping the life of the Underriner-Buehnerkempe Bottling Works was the Whistle Bottling Company, sometimes referred to as the Faber Bottling Works. It was housed in a brick building at the corner of Washington Avenue and North Third Street, where now stands the Laue Motor Company. According to the memory of Mr. Broeringmeyer, it was first operated by Matt Faber. When Mr. Faber was elected sheriff of Effingham County the last time, in November of 1922, he was forced to vacate this site and the building was immediately torn down. The bottling business was sold to Boots Funk, and it was moved at once to the Ervin Building on what is now South Merchant Street. This site is now part of the Martin IGA parking lot.

After a brief career, Mr. Funk sold out to a partnership of Henry Krogman and Anton Broeringmeyer. In April of 1925 this partnership moved the Whistle Bottling Works-Effingham Bottling Works, back to 111 North Merchant Street, the original site of the Underriner Bottling Works. At one time, according to Mr. Broeringmeyer and a faded old wall sign, this partnership bottled a famous drink known as Boston Cooler, which like sarsaparilla has largely faded into the limbo of the past.

This partnership was sold on January 14, 1932, to August Vonderheide. He acquired the Sunerest Franchise and in 1938 acquired the Dr. Pepper Franchise. Under his management and during his period of ownership, the soft drink business in Effingham County enjoyed its greatest growth.

On January 20, 1947, August Vonderheide sold to a newly organized corporation, the Effingham dr. Pepper Bottling Company, one of the owners of which was George A. Clark, the present operator. For some three years the business continued to grow and prosper. Then it was trapped in a decade of economic change in the soft drink industry, in which it suffered the same pressures within this and certain other similar type manufacturing-distribution industries.

The strength of the small franchisee is no match for the overwhelming economic power of a ruthless franchisor. This seems to be true throughout the "franchise" world as well as in this industry. There have been rumblings and attempts in the national Congress to pass legislation restricting the oppressive tactics of franchisors against small franchisees.

On October 15, 1965 the local Dr. Pepper Franchise was cancelled, and the territory in due time was divided between a bottler at Mattoon on the north and one at Mt. Vernon to the south. The Mt. Vernon plant within a year was taken over by a still larger plant in Marion.

The cancellation to the leading franchise and the economics within the industry quickly halted the operation of route delivery trucks. The facility is presently being operated as a drive-in cash and carry retail soft drink business.

Since 1970, five years after the cancellation of the local plant's leading franchise, consolidation and mergers within the soft drink industry are continuing at an accelerated pace.

It is predicted that within ten years all soft drinks produced in the United States will be bottled in from three hundred fifty to one thousand production plants, only — once there were over eight thousand active plants supplying a much smaller population. These huge plants will produce up to one thousand two hundred bottles per minute per bottling line and up to two thousand cans per minute per canning line. Four of these bottling lines are already in production. The canning lines are still on the drawing boards.

The nation's leading cola franchise house is said to project that within ten years its total number of domestic bottlers will be reduced from the present nine hundred seventy five to a number in the area of seventy five, and that these seventy five will be owned and controlled by fifteen corporate entities. This same company is presently trade testing a one-way plastic bottle in three markets in the New England states. Its leading competitor is trade testing a similar bottle in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In the antique bottle collection at the plant, there are bottles bearing the names of plants which once existed in the nearby Illinois communities of Pana, Windsor, Tuscola, Mattoon, Charleston, Paris, Marshall, Casey, Teutopolis, Altamont, Vandalia, Greenville, Salem, Olney, Robinson, and Oblong. Of unusual interest is one Hutchison Bottle Stopper bottle bearing the name of J. Fife & Co., Mattoon, Illinois.



## II. SOURCES OF EMPLOYMENT

### PART A

I shall discuss some of the industries or sources of employment for our people in Effingham, at my earliest recollection some 60 years ago, and also some of those which did not last long.

There are only two industries, which were in Effingham in my boyhood, and are still with us — the Feuerborn Mfg. Co., and Boos and Co., which we commonly call the Block Factory. The Feuerborn Mfg. Co. was just a small cabinet or furniture shop run by old Conrad Feuerborn, and, I believe, a brother of his. A little later his sons Charles and Lawrence grew up in it, and over the years it has grown and expanded, both in its building and equipment and in its number of employees. The Block Factory has also grown considerably. Both these industries were begun, built up and owned by local people. Both have been successful; both ship their products almost all over the world and are well known in their respective lines. While they do not have as large a number of employees as our larger industries like Norge, they have each contributed very substantially to the growth and welfare of our community. (Feuerborn Mfg. Co., well known makers of fine church furniture, is no longer in business.)

The railroads were the greatest industries, if we use the term in a broad sense, and the largest employers of our community. Effingham was then a "railroad town."

The old Vandalia Railroad, now the Pennsylvania, had their shops and division here. Effingham was the home of their train crews and shop workers. I do not know the exact number of their employees here, but it was something like four or five hundred; many of them received what was, for that day, large salaries. The Illinois Central then ran several local trains out of Effingham, and their train crews lived here. They also had their engine hostlers, car repair crews and at times a local with the engine with its crew here and had in all 50 or more employees. The branch line, then the Illinois and Indiana Southern, was an independent railroad line. This being the terminus of their division, they had several train crews here. The Wabash then ran into Effingham and had a train crew with their station agent, section crew, etc. So, in that early day, the railroads had probably 600 employees here; they with their families formed almost a majority of the population of Effingham. Thus the railroads were the town's principal source of income and employment.

When I was just a boy, the Vandalia was bought by the Penna. Railroad, and the shops and division headquarters were moved to Terre Haute. Several hundred families left Effingham, and almost a death blow was struck to this town. The Penna. Railroad continued considerable employment here. There were still two local passenger trains run out of here — one to Terre Haute and back daily and one to St. Louis and back daily — we used to call these trains the "Bob." They continued to use the railroad yards and kept three switch engine crews here, a yard office with several employees, a car repair gang, and a blacksmith shop down at the old roundhouse building. The I. C. for several years continued a couple of train crews here, as did the old I. and I. S. Branch and the Wabash.

However, in years following, the railroad activities were gradually dropped. The local trains out of Effingham were discontinued; the switching crews taken off; the car repair gang discontinued; the passenger service on the old I. and I. S. eliminated, and the Wabash branch into Effingham abandoned. So that now, while we are glad we have a few railroad employees in our community, their number has become negligible. Today all we have left are a few employees around the depot and baggage room, some section men, and a few employees at each freight house — I don't know just how many in all, but probably about 25 or 30. But fortunately, the decrease was gradual and other means of employment came in.

But to compensate to some extent, for the loss of the Vandalia shops and division, we had some good fortune. At about this time the Austin family here received an inheritance of a million dollars or more from an uncle in Pa. In those days it was a fabulous sum, especially for Effingham, which had few well-to-do people, and when just a few thousand dollars was considered a fortune.

The Austins were local people in just ordinary financial circumstances at that time. They proceeded to spend a large part of their inheritance in Effingham, in projects that helped build up our town and provide employment.

Edward Austin Sr., the grandfather of our present T. Edward Austin, built a home, almost a castle, on several hundred acres of land he had purchased just west of town. It was a show place for that day, not only here, but for almost any community. Many of our older residents remember it. It burned one night about twenty years ago.

Calvin, brother of Edward, also built a palatial home, which later became a part of Bissell's College, and is now the apartment house located on South Fourth Street, just southeast of Bliss Park. Adjacent to it was his stable and carriage house, a large two story building of the same type of architecture, more elegant and stately than any other home in Effingham at that time. It was torn down some years ago.

Edward Austin had nine children - seven boys and two girls and he built a project for each of his children to manage.

The Austins built the first electric light plant here and owned and managed it until it was sold to the local C. I. P. S. Co. about 45 years ago.

They built a canning factory, canning principally tomatoes, out in east end, where the box factory later operated. They managed and operated it for some time, later selling it to Libby McNeil & Libby, who operated it several years longer until it was discontinued.

They built a planing mill down in the southwest part of the city, which they operated until it burned about 40 years ago.

The Austin family built and operated a large flour mill in the northwest part of the city, on what was then Railroad Avenue., but now St. Anthony Avenuc. After a few years' operation, it was closed.

They principally financed Austin College, which was one of the leading educational institutions in our part of the state until it closed due to financial difficulties.

They built and operated the Austin Opera House, being in the business, which was in the block where the Federated Stores are now located. In its day it had plays about twice a week. On its stage trod many outstanding actors of that day, and it showed many plays. As the only method of travel was then by railroad and Effingham a principal transfer point between larger cities due to the crossing here of the I. C. and Pa. Railroads, many companies booked here for a one night stand, who would otherwise not have played a city as small as ours.

The Austins also built a number of dwelling houses and contributed to other projects for the welfare of the community. No doubt many of our present citizens do not know the great help rendered to our town by the Austin family.

## PART B

A number of local industries have come and gone, flourished and died; most of them were brought in by money raised and donated by our local Chamber of Commerce and businessmen. Some were of help to the community; others, after getting our money, proved to be "flops".

The first of these, as I remember, was the Wheeler Tanks Works, designed to manufacture water tanks, located down in the old buildings previously used for the railroad shops. It was promoted by people from outside the community, who induced our people to believe it would develop into a great industry. A considerable amount of money was raised locally to bring them here.

I remember the large sign, "Wheeler Tanks Works" which they put on top of the building. They brought in some machinery and equipment and started to operate, but never got very far. The industry and equipment soon disappeared, and with it our people's money.

Then the Van Camp Milk Co. opened a milk plant here down at the same location in the east end of town where the Pevely Dairy building, a milk shipping station, still stands. They manufactured and canned condensed milk, powdered milk, and similar products, besides collecting milk and shipping it to the St. Louis market. For a number of years they had some 30 or 40 employees; they were a help to our community, particularly to our farmers, in sending their representatives here to educate the farm people as to the value of obtaining good dairy stock and developing the dairy industry locally. But finally they closed the local plant, and a number of the better paid employees moved to other plants of the Van Camp Milk Co. The plant was used afterwards only as a milk shipping station with only a few employees left.

Years ago the Cleaver Glove Co. opened their factory here, in a building built for them by local donations out on what was then West Center, now West Jefferson St. For a time they operated with quite a few employees, but within two or three years their business went broke financially and was ended.

About 40 years ago, at the period of World War I, a factory known as the French Clay Bending Factory was built and operated at a location near the present Norge factory. It was opened by wealthy people in Pittsburgh,

interested in the steel industry. Clay of a certain type was shipped in from Arkansas, processed in some manner in the factory, and then shipped out to be used in the steel industry. It brought in several families and had quite a few employees until production ceased.

About the same time the Chester Knitting Mill came into Effingham. Again we raised thousands of dollars to induce them to locate and built a building for them, being the building where the Illinois Glove Co. is now located. They operated for ten years or more, with from 100 to 200 employees. Probably we got our money's worth from them, until they finally closed their plant here and moved away.

Then to fill that vacancy in employment, we got the Imperial Clock Co. to locate here in the same building. They moved in and started operations, with quite a few employees, they didn't last long and went bankrupt in about a year. At the time they closed, they had on hand about a hundred very nice, large grandfather clocks. In some way the local people who had donated a lot of money to get them started, managed to get hold of these clocks and divided them up. At that time almost every business and professional man in Effingham had one of these clocks. I got one, which was all I had to show for about \$500 I had donated. I still have it; it is a very elegant piece of furniture; but it never would run and keep time, and I expect I spent more over the years trying to get it fixed, than it was worth. Following the Imperial Clock Co., the present Illinois Glove Co. took over the building for their factory. They have proved, up to date, to be a very successful and helpful industry. (The Illinois Glove Co. is presently using the old Feuerborn building for office space. Editor)

Later, something like 25 or 30 years ago, the Vulcan Last Co. located their factory here. The community raised about half a million dollars to induce them to locate here and built their factory, now occupied with some additions by the Norge Co. Burkes Addition, named after the president of the Vulcan Last Co., was then farm land; it was laid out in town lots, which are practically all built up now. Part of the money was raised by sale of these lots to local people at \$300 apiece; many of them were then considered worth about \$25 each, and the purchase of the lot was considered a donation. Now, of course, they are worth much more, but now few of the original donors still have the lots. Vulcan operated here for a number of years with several hundred employees and fulfilled their obligation to the community. Some years ago due to changing business conditions, they eliminated part of their products and moved their factory over to Teutopolis. It has since been closed there. Norge came in and took it over and is now our largest industry with more than a thousand employees when working full time, it has been a wonderful help to our community.

Then a little over 20 years ago the oil boom, or the oil industry, came to Effingham. Spurred by the discovery of oil in several nearby counties, people connected with the oil industry flowed into Effingham. Lease scouts, royalty buyers, seismograph crews and drilling crews came here to locate, for a time at least. The Kingwood Oil Co. moved their offices here in the old college of Photography building. They had a hundred or more employees and were here for several years. While we have no exact figure as to the numbers, I believe there were, at the height of the boom, at least

five or six hundred additional people living in Effingham. Rental homes were at a premium; anyone who had an attic or a chicken house at all fit to be occupied, converted it into an apartment. For a time living quarters were difficult to obtain. These conditions brought quite a lot of business and money into this town.

The oil boom gradually "petered out". While good oil fields were opened in many of our adjacent counties, no oil in paying quantities was developed near Effingham, though we have a few small fields around the edges of the county. The oil people began to leave, until we have now only a very few with us who came here during the oil development. To counter-balance that, we had quite a few Effingham people who obtained employment with the various oil companies and left when they did, taking jobs with them at other localities.

Quite a number of other smaller industries have come and gone in the past 50 years — the Effingham Creamery; the old Alt, later Melzer, Flour Mill; the Austin Flour Mill; the Jansen Wagon Shop and the Luno Wagon Shop, whose days of usefulness ended when the automobile came in. The Stallings Plier Mfg. Co. started to manufacture a particular kind of pliers which had been invented by one of our old residents, Joseph Stallings.

When we remember how many industries have come, perhaps flourished for a time and died over the past 60 years, we must remind ourselves that nothing in this world is permanent. In order to progress, we must constantly seek new industries and means of employment for our community.





### III. OLD-TIMERS

#### I

Do you remember when Jim Parks had a milk route in Effingham? He lived and kept his cows at 1008 South Fourth Street. He would milk the cows, put the milk in ten-gallon cans and set the cans in ice water to cool. In the morning he would set two ten-gallon cans in his panel wagon pulled by two ponies (weighing about six hundred pounds each.) In those milk cans he had long-handled dippers, one pint sized, the other quart sized. If you were one of his customers he would stop and ring a bell. You would have to go out with a container to his wagon and he would dip you out the amount you wanted . That is the way milk was handled in those days.

#### II

Do you remember when there were two bakeries in Effingham? C. D. Miller lived on the northeast corner of Temple Avenue and North Merchant Street. His bakery was located one hundred feet north of his residence. He had a confectionary and a retail store on the northeast corner of West Jefferson and Front Street. The other bakery was owned by Mart Jakle. He was located at 123 East Jefferson. He had his bakery and retail store in that building.

#### III

Do you remember when there were two cigar factories in Effingham? They made cigars by hand. One was Merz Bros., run by Joe and Henry Merz, located where the Loan Company is now. They would employ three to four men besides themselves. The other was Mrs. Willenborg's factory located where Jack Ealy has his real estate office. She employed one cigar maker. Both factories had the "Wooden Indian" in front of their places of business. The Indian had a roll of cigars in his hand and was an old trade mark for cigar makers. There were four cigar makers that worked for the above that made Effingham their home. I can name all four.

#### IV

Do you remember when there were two brick yards in Effingham? The bricks were made out of clay and the bricks were of the kind that our old houses were made of. John Nosbisch ran a brick yard on East Jefferson, east of Long Street. That area was vacant for about 400 feet - from the two-story brick east and from Jefferson to Fayette Avenue. That is where he had his brick yard. Fred Hurst ran a brick yard at the east end of Fayette Avenue, where Fayette Avenue terminated at Oak Ridge Drive. That is the short street leading from Fayette Avenue to Jefferson Avenud. It was very interesting to watch them make brick.

## V

Do you remember when the John Boos Block Factory was located on the west side of South Cherry Street, just before you got to the Wabash Railroad tracks? This was a metal building. At that time they made one-piece blocks. They would buy large logs and cut them into about 2½ foot lengths in a machine that would turn them around. As the piece was turning they had a tool they held against the log to cut off the bark and to make it smooth. Then they would drill three holes in the bottom of this piece of log. Then they placed wooden legs about 2½ feet long in the holes. When they moved to a new location, a horse buyer by the name of John Sliger rented the old building for a horse barn.

## VI

Do you remember when Mr. Whilming and Mr. Green did most of the draying in Effingham with a heavy two-wheeled wagon? Mr. Whilming's wagon was horse-drawn. Mr. Green had a mule. All the freight at that time came in wooden boxes about four feet by eight feet in size. They would roll the boxes onto this platform and make their deliveries to the stores.

## VII

Do you remember when Moore Bros. ran a Livery Barn at 303 South Banker where Clay Brackett is now located. John Ulmer ran a Livery Barn in the south half of the H. L. Dust & Son building on Banker Street. North of that was the Dave Anderson Blacksmith Shop. These two frame buildings were set back about fifteen feet west of the sidewalk. The next building was located at the sidewalk line and Theodore Lang ran a tailor shop there. The building occupied by Vogt Bros. has been there for a long time and has been in the Vogt family since being built. Now, north of the Vogt building, and south half of the Parker building was a frame building, which was rented to a moving picture house and called a "Nickelodium". They showed silent Western pictures for a nickel that ran one hour and a half.

## VIII

Do you remember when there were two wagon shops in Effingham where they bought the lumber and iron and built an entire farm wagon? The Jansen Wagon Shop was located on the west side of South Fourth Street, just before you got to the Pennsylvania Railroad - now an apartment house. The other was the Luno Wagon and Blacksmith Shop located on West Jefferson Avenue, west of the location of the IGA parking lot. Their shop was a long frame building set about 25 feet south of the sidewalk, running east and west. John Stroebel was the blacksmith.





Front cover designed by Effingham High School Student,  
Alan Mitchell







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