

# What led to the “BOSTON TEA PARTY” and the development of the HUTCHINSON BOTTLE STOPPER

By Cecil Munsey

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***Benjamin Franklin*** — “If you would not be forgotten, as soon as you are rotten, either write things worth reading, or do things worth the writing.”

## EARLY AMERICAN HUTCHINSONS

### Anne and William Hutchinson

**Anne** (Marbury) **Hutchinson** [Figure 1] was born in 1591 in Alford, Lincolnshire, England. She married a merchant, **William Hutchinson** (son of the first Edward Hutchinson) – [Figure 2] in 1612 in London. The William Hutchinsons came to America in 1634 with Reverend John Lothrop’s group and settled in Boston and ultimately had 15 children.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

The religious climate in the Massachusetts Bay Colony was oppressive for Anne who was a Quaker. She responded to the oppressing Puritans by gathering a group of like-minded people that would meet in her home and discuss issues of religion. The nature of Anne’s criticism of the church revolved around their idea of salvation by works or deeds. She believed in salvation by grace, and therefore that one could not prepare to be saved. Many influential men of the Massachusetts Bay colony listened to her and became followers.

Anne and her supporters began to be referred to as “Antinomians” by their detractors. That term meant “against law.”

Anne’s husband William, meanwhile, had been elected a judge in Massachusetts Bay in 1635 and a deputy in 1636.

The pace of Anne’s religious zeal accelerated. Ultimately, as the risk of the Massachusetts Bay colony splitting apart grew, there were accusations against Anne and her followers.

In November of 1637, Anne was put on trial, charged with “...traducing [*speak badly or tell lies about*] the ministers and their ministry.” Anne was convicted,

imprisoned and sentenced to banishment (March 22, 1638) from the colony along with a number of her supporters.

A committee of her followers (including her husband William) began a search for a site to which they could relocate and enjoy their form of religious freedom. The search included Long Island and Delaware.

They met with Roger Williams who had himself been banished from Massachusetts Bay in 1636, establishing a settlement at Providence, Rhode Island. With his help they bought Aquidneck Island from the Sachems of the Narragansett Indian tribe.

William Hutchinson was elected leader of the settlement. While he was respected, some thought of him as a simple mild-mannered man dominated by his wife. Still he was elected assistant to the Governor of Rhode Island Colony in 1640. He died in 1642.

Anne was afraid that the Massachusetts Bay authorities would try to gain control of their settlement. In 1643, therefore, she took the younger members of her family and moved to the Dutch Colony of New Netherlands (New York), settling at Pelham Bay (the Bronx today). Because the Dutch had antagonized nearby Native Americans (“Indians”) that year, the Indians rose up and attacked settlements beyond the walled protection of New Amsterdam (New York City). During the conflict they murdered Anne, who was 52 years of age at the time, and five of her children. The five killed were the youngest of her 15 children [Francis (1620-); Anne (1626-); Mary (1628-); Katherine (1630-) and William (1631-)].

The remaining children were: **Edward** (1613-1675); Susanna (1614-1630); Richard (1615-?); Faith (1617-1651); Bridget (1618-1698); Elizabeth (1622-1630); William (1623-1624); Samuel (1624-?); Susanna (1633-?); and Zuriel (1636-?).

It was **Edward** who would grow up and

be the great, great grandfather of Thomas Hutchinson, the future governor of the Massachusetts Bay colony.

### Thomas Hutchinson

Thomas Hutchinson (1711-1780), [Figure 3], of Boston, graduated from Harvard University in 1727 before his sixteenth birthday and began his successful business career in 1734. As his career advanced he became involved in the leadership of the colony, first as a



Figure 3

selectman in Boston. By 1737 he was elected to the general Assembly to represent Boston. He remained in the Assembly until 1749, serving as the Speaker after 1746.

He was appointed to the governor’s council in 1749, served as a judge in the superior court (1760-1769) and Lieutenant Governor (1758-1771). He also represented Massachusetts in the Albany Congress in 1754, which proposed a plan for the union of the British colonies.

He was acting governor in 1769 to 1771 after Governor Francis Bernard returned to England. Then he was made Governor, and was the last civilian governor of the Massachusetts colony. (General Thomas Gage followed him in office.) It was he who became colonial governor of Massachusetts from 1771-1774 and, in 1773, refused to let English tea-laden ships clear Boston Harbor and thus brought on the famous “**Boston Tea Party**.” He was a prominent Loyalist in the years before the American Revolutionary War.

While governor, Hutchinson was perhaps the most powerful man in the colony; he had political enemies among the radicals, notably Samuel Adams and Benjamin Franklin. Though Hutchinson considered the king’s Stamp Act and other

government measures unwise, he favored strict enforcement, and his unpopularity caused a mob to sack and burn his mansion. He lost expensive furnishings and an extensive wine collection. He also lost an extremely valuable library of historical documents dating to the earliest days of the Massachusetts settlement.

His unpopularity increased as he continued to favor strenuous measures against the growing discontent of the king. These views were exposed when letters he had written to English friends were made public.

Hutchinson spent his final years in England, serving unhappily as an advisor on North American matters to the king, and yearning to return to his homeland. He died in London on June 3, 1780.

**Benjamin Franklin**

The correspondence to friends in England from Governor Hutchinson, called the “Hutchinson Letters,” fell into his opponents’ hands in England and was turned over to Benjamin Franklin [Figure 4], who was then serving as an agent in London. Franklin sent the letters to radical leaders in the colony in return for a pledge of confidentiality. Despite that promise, Samuel Adams read the letters publicly.

Just a few weeks later, in what must have been one of the most painful moments of his life, Franklin was vilified and humiliated in front of the British Privy Council in London for his involvement in the so-called “Hutchinson Affair.”

Coupled with his wife’s death and his dismissal as Postmaster General, Franklin returned to the colonies in 1775 and was elected to the Continental Congress. Then, in July of 1776, he signed the Declaration of Independence and attended the Constitutional Convention [Figure 5].

The American Revolution got off to a poor start, and the Americans needed assistance. Ben Franklin went to France to persuade King Louis XVI to help them. Louis was reluctant at first, but when the War started to pick up, he decided to help. With French assistance, the American



Figure 4



Figure 5

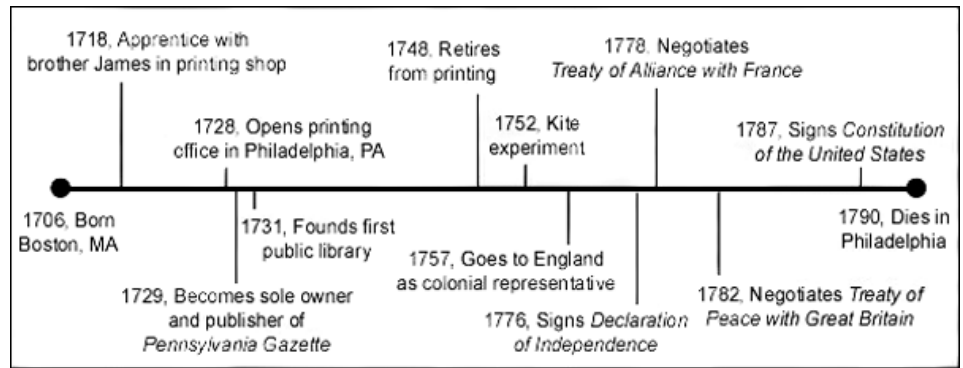


Figure 6

Revolution was victorious. Longing to return to Philadelphia, Franklin signed the Treaty of Paris and returned home, where he was elected president of Pennsylvania. He tried to take a stand against slavery, but, at the age of 84, was too ill to pursue it. He died on April 17, 1790 [Figure 6].

**William H. Hutchinson & Charles G. Hutchinson**

William H. Hutchinson, was a 19<sup>th</sup> century Chicago soda water bottler and equipment manufacturer. He was the father of Charles G. Hutchinson [Figure 7], the man who invented the Hutchinson bottle stopper [Figure 8] that was patented on April 8, 1879. His patents are as follows: Hutchinson bottle stopper (Patent No. 313,992); reissued on June 17, 1879 (Reissue No. 8,755); and improved on September 16, 1879 (No. 219,729).



Figure 7



Figure 8

The company that was formed to manufacture and sell the new bottle stopper was W. H. Hutchinson & Son. By 1890 the firm claimed a customer list of over three thousand. They sold their stoppers for \$2 to \$2.50 a gross (144 stoppers).

**Hutchinson Spring Bottle Stopper**

From the Internet website of Ron Fowler’s Seattle History Company comes the following quotation that serves as an apt history of the development and demise

(1880-1912 according to author John J. Riley) of the most popular soda pop bottle closure of the time:

**Inventor of the Hutchinson Bottle Stopper:**

**Charles G. Hutchinson**, the son of William H. Hutchinson, a long-time Chicago soda bottler and equipment manufacturer, patented his “Hutchinson’s Patent Spring Stopper” April 8, 1879. His stopper quickly gained widespread popularity with both bottlers and consumers and revolutionized the soda bottling industry. Corks, gravitating stoppers, and other types of closures were soon rendered obsolete by Hutchinson’s inexpensive (\$2.50 per gross) stoppers. Charles Hutchinson came up with the right stopper at the right time. Only the development of the crown seal closure has had more of an impact on the soda bottling industry.

**How the closure worked:**

The key to Hutchinson’s success was his stopper’s simplicity. A rubber washer was inserted between two metallic disks. The bottom disk was usually slightly larger and debossed with Hutchinson’s various patent dates. The disks were connected to each other by a heavy wire that ran thru the disks and on up to form an open ended figure eight (see the accompanying illustration from an 1880s Hutchinson advertisement, **Figure 9**). Stoppers were inserted into empty bottles by use of wooden stopper injectors similar to hand corkers. Pushing the plunger forced the rubber gasket thru the bottle’s

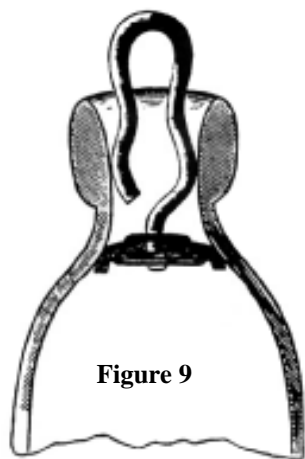


Figure 9

narrow neck, but only far enough that the upper loop of the figure eight was caught in the bottle's mouth.

### Filling:

During filling, most bottlers used bottling machines like the one illustrated [Figure 10] patented by Charles Hutchinson March 16, 1880. Here's how he described its operation: "The bottle to be filled is placed on the disk or bottle support E, the stopper being first depressed or pushed down to its open position...hook a is then inserted into the loop of the stem of the stopper, as indicated in Figures 1 and 3...I then depress the treadle, by which means the bottle will be held up firmly against the cushion I."

A pre-measured portion of syrup and carbonated water combined in the

syrup gauge and was pumped into the filling head. When lever L was pulled toward the operator, the liquid flowed into the bottle. "As soon as the bottle is filled," continued Hutchinson, "the lever L should be raised enough to draw the stopper to its closed position." This sealed the rubber washer against the inner neck of the bottle like a rubber, suction cup.

Once filled, Hutchinson bottles were immediately inverted and placed into wooden cases for shipment. The neck and top of each bottle fit neatly into holes drilled in the raised bases of the boxes. The soda water kept the rubber washer wet, ensuring a tight seal and preventing the carbonation from escaping. The entire process was simple, yet very effective. Charles G. Hutchinson was a clever man.

### Widespread popularity:

Although the Hutchinson firm briefly produced bottles specifically designed for their new stopper, they quickly went into heavy production of their very successful closure.

Alfred Lief, author of *A Close Up of Closures*, notes that – "simple to apply, the Hutchinson stopper was easily adapted to available bottles. There were three wire lengths to accommodate neck lengths; five washer sizes for neck diameters. It

captured the soft drink market. Business boomed for bottlers as they filled orders for 'white' (lemon), 'black' (sarsaparilla), 'brown' (vanilla), and 'red' (strawberry) soda waters."

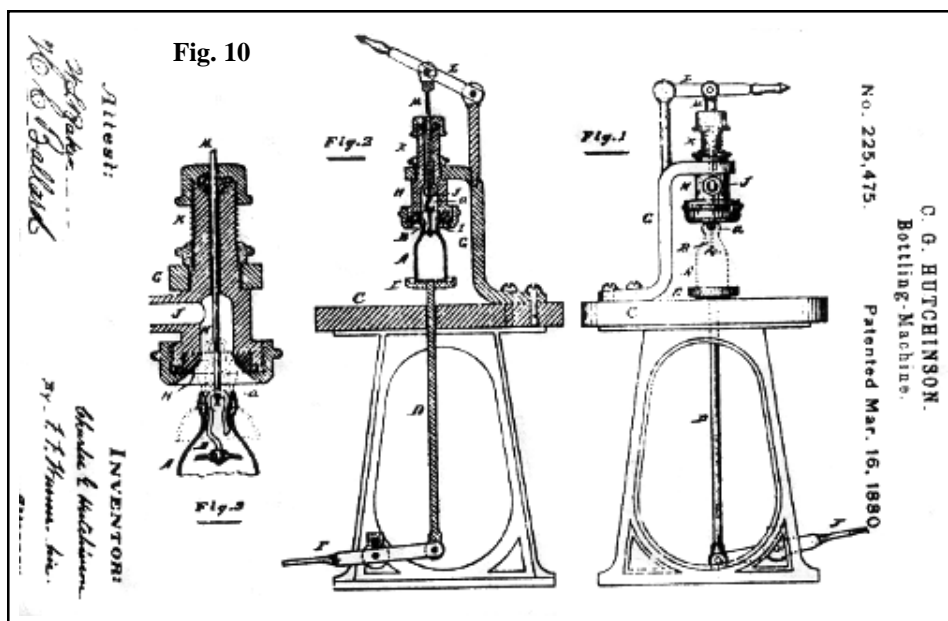
### Hutchinson imitators:

Unwilling to sit idly by and watch Hutchinson reap all the profits, others jumped into the market by patenting slightly different versions of the Hutchinson stopper. Some of these included: the August 17, 1880 John Klee stopper; the December 11, 1883 Amos F. Parkhurst Patent Stopper; the April 23, 1889 H. & H. H. stopper ("the neatest, cleanest and most handy Bottle Stopper in existence"); J. A. Stukey's Patent Perfect Spring Bottle Stopper ("the finest soda bottle stopper in the world"); and the Cyclone Soda Stopper registered June 29, 1897 ("guaranteed superior to any other make"). With such bold advertising claims, it was probably difficult for bottlers to decide from whom to order stoppers. In spite of the imitators, Hutchinson's stopper was by far the most popular internal stopper used in North America.

### Demise of the Hutchinson:

A number of factors brought about the end for Hutchinson stoppers.

Cleanliness was a major challenge. Bottlers worked on a small profit margin, and rapid refilling of their bottles was one key to success. Hutchinson soda bottles had to make numerous trips to and from consumers before the bottlers recovered their investment, let alone made a profit. Not all bottlers paid careful attention to removing old stoppers, cleaning the bottles, and inserting new stoppers. Usually returned with the stoppers still in the necks, it was easier to just push the stoppers into the bottles, wash them out, and use a stopper puller to pull the semi clean stoppers back into place. A quick refilling and the bottles were once again on their way to customers,



complete with unhealthy stoppers that affected product quality.

The patenting of the crown seal closure in 1892, development of Owens' Automatic Bottle Machine in 1903, passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, and economic reality finally forced the bottlers' shift to crown seal bottling equipment. Crown caps were sanitary, easily applied, and significantly less expensive at only 25¢ per gross. By WWI [sic], most bottlers had converted to crown top bottles.

### Collecting Hutchinsons:

Today's soda collectors commonly refer to the bottles that used Hutchinson stoppers as "Hutchinsons," or "Hutchs" for short (historical records indicate bottlers used this same terminology). An important reason for the collecting popularity of these bottles is the variety of areas in which to specialize. Most collectors concentrate on a particular geographical area, e.g. city, county, state, territory, or province. Attempting to put together 50 state collections has enjoyed favor for many years, with some collectors striving to also acquire Hutchinsons from all state capitols, U.S. territories, Canadian provinces, and foreign countries. Hutchinsons featuring pictures have long been a popular category. Some only collect specific sizes or styles.

Most Hutchinsons were made of pale aqua glass (the least expensive) or flint (clear) glass. Rare and highly desirable colored Hutchinson bottles of cobalt blue, emerald green, and amber make a beautiful and valuable collection.

Hutchinsons are a special category of soda bottle collecting. They are survivors with a character unique from any of their soda bottle cousins. Although their story is over 125 years old, it's really just begun.

**"Soda Pop:"**

Blasting along the coast highway, I spied the magic words "OLD BOTTLES" handwritten as an afterthought on a weather worn "ROCK SHOP" sign. My tires squealed as I screeched to a halt and did a quick u-turn to park in front of an aging antiques store.

An elderly man nodded "hello" as I entered his cluttered shop. I wound my way thru piles of rocks and assorted junk, and sure enough, he had several shelves of bottles. At first I was sorry for bothering to stop, but then I spotted a Hutchinson soda peeking its head up from the back of a shelf. I gently picked it up, hoping for some great rarity. Alas, the bottle was unembossed and the bottom was missing. The shop owner was quick to inform me "*that's a real rare bottle you're holdin' there; that's the bottle that gave soda pop its name.*" He then proceeded to relate the tired story about how the term "pop" was derived from the "popping" sound made when opening a Hutchinson bottle by pushing the stopper down with the palm of one's hand. Although it makes for a good story, this yarn about the origin of the word "pop" just doesn't hold, shall we say, carbonated water.

Cecil Munsey addressed this subject in *The Illustrated Guide To Collecting Bottles*, when he cited English poet Robert Southey's 1812 description of ginger ale as "a nectar, between soda water and ginger beer, and called pop, because pop goes the cork when it is drawn." The U.S. Census cited 123 plants bottling "Mineral Waters and Pop" in 1859. Widespread use of internal closures didn't occur until the 1880s, yet there are confirmed references to use of the word pop over 60 years earlier! In my opinion, "pop" is most likely derived from the sound made when an externally stoppered bottle was opened, i.e. as the cork was released.

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**D. W. Hutchinson  
&**

### **W. H. Hutchinson & Son**

The company (W. H. Hutchinson & Son) that was started and built by Charles G. Hutchinson with his father William H. Hutchinson, was operated by Charles' son D. W. Hutchinson from 1906 – the year Charles G. died. The Hutchinson Stopper was manufactured and sold for 33 years and was discontinued in 1912.

William Painter (1838-1906) invented the "Crown Cork" which eventually became the world's most successful bottle closure and is still used today. He patented it in 1892. According to author John J. Riley:

"During the seventeen-years life of the Painter patents on the crown closure and machines for its use, there was almost complete absence of competitive equipment. It was a period of some uncertainty and many bottling plants continued to use the old-style bottling tables and closures, such as the popular "Hutchinson" internal stopper. *By 1912, however, conversion to the crown type of closure had been completed to the extent that the "Hutchinson" and similar closures disappeared from the trade, and the crown became the standard.* No doubt this was hastened by the fact that Painter's patents had expired, and new machines were coming into the field."

D. W. Hutchinson was last found in the literature, during this research, as one of the founders of the National Manufacturers of Soda Water Flavors in 1905 [**Figure 11 – lower left**].

From the Baker Library Historical Collections – Lehman Brothers Inc., Collection comes the most recent reference to W. H. Hutchinson & Son:

"...the International Silver Company continued diversifying through acquisitions in the 1960s. In 1960 it bought the Eastwood-Nealley Corporation of Belleville, New Jersey, producers of fourdrinier wire for the paper industry, and Drycor Felt Company of Staffordville, Connecticut. It acquired the Church Metalware division of Benziger Brothers of New York in December 1961, *and in August 1962 for \$9 million it added W. H. Hutchinson & Son of*

*Chicago, a maker of bottle caps [undoubtedly crown caps] for the soft drink and beer industry. These acquisitions helped lift revenue for International Silver to \$89 million in 1963."*

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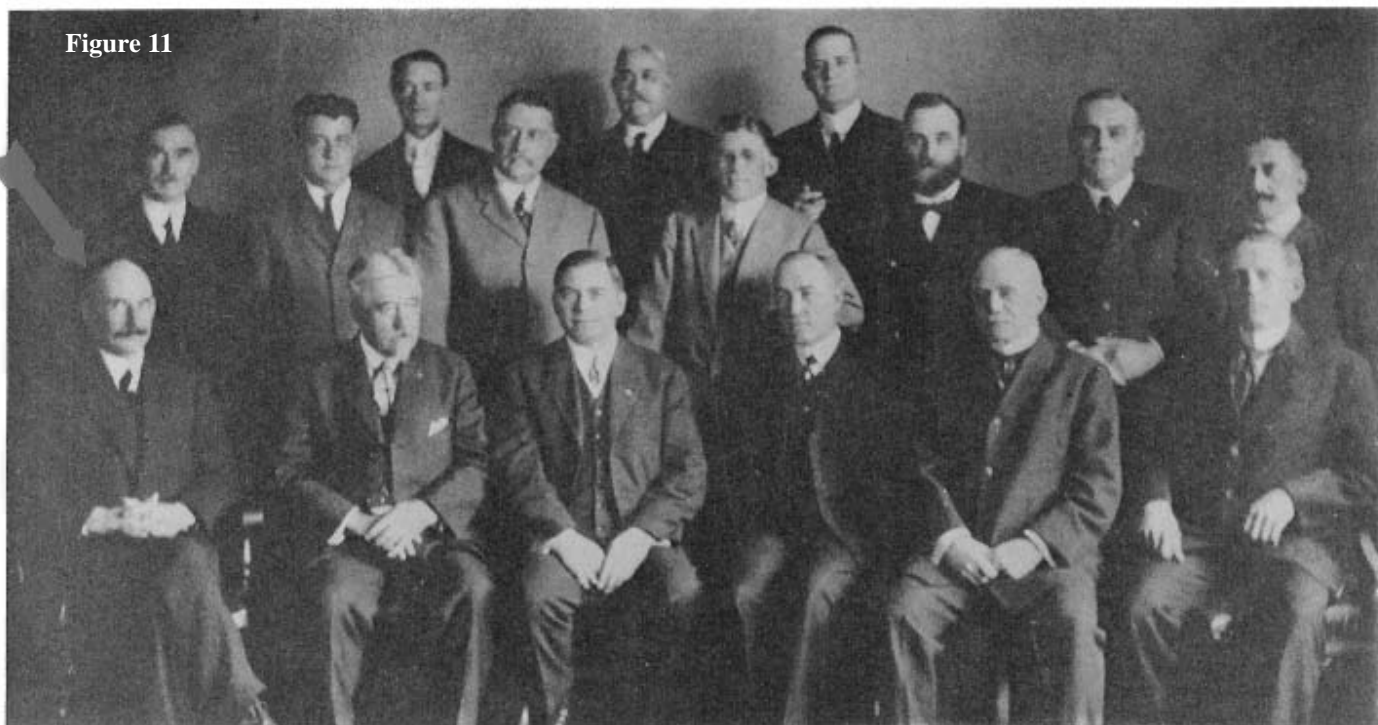
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Figure 11



#### FOUNDERS OF NATIONAL MANUFACTURERS OF SODA WATER FLAVORS—1905

Top: Edwin Forrest (Eastern Extract Co.), S. LaBue (Standard Bottling & Extract Co.), J. W. Humphreys (Blue Seal Supply Co.). Middle: Samuel Mutch (Whittle & Mutch), W. A. Washburn (Clicquot Club Co.), Robt. L. Woods (American Extract & Supply Co.), C. B. Hall (Lennox Chemical Co.), E. P. Wakefield (Murray Co.), G. A. Stickles (Eastern Extract Co.), H. C. Schranck (Schrank Co.). Front: D. W. Hutchinson (W. H. Hutchinson & Son), O. A. Atkins (Standard Bottling & Extract Co.), C. O. Sethness (Sethness Co.), Thos. E. Lannon (Ass'n Counsel), Selden Twitchell (S. Twitchell Co.), Edward Post (Armstrong Cork Co.).