This month’s podcast answers the question “How does soda water connect with CRW”?

For centuries, the healing and calming properties of warm mineral springs have defined wellness, a tradition that flourishes in the ancient English city of Bath. During the late 17th century, drinking the enriched water was recommended, and even today you can sample the spa water from Bath’s drinking fountain.

In the US., Mineral water resorts popped up in the Nineteenth- and early 20th-century as health-seekers drank and bathed in mineral water both hot and cold. Fortified with a variety of minerals and elements, the medicinal bubbly was prescribed for wide-ranging ailments, like backaches, cancer and diabetes. Medical opinions on the healing springs sometimes diverged. But many doctors—both classically trained and “alternative” healers—believed in the waters’ efficacy.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, resorts were created for paying patrons to have access to these springs. As a side note- Beth, your usual host, was born in one of the communities that hosted a mineral water resort in Bath County, Virginia. Many of these resorts have impacted the development of rural America. Small communities worked at and lived in proximity to these “grand resorts” for years, sometimes never experiencing the water, as access was reserved for paying customers. Inventors saw an opportunity during the industrial age to replicate natural mineral water and its carbonation. The person who started it all was Samuel Fahnestock when he was granted a patent for the first soda fountain on April 23, 1819.

His “mineral water apparatus”, (US Patent No. X3,096), utilized a pump and spigot to deliver carbonated water. The barrel-shaped body of his device was designed so it could be concealed and hidden under a counter.  With its medicinal properties, it makes sense that originally most soda fountains were found inside drug stores as there were no laws governing the use of drugs and medication in beverages. Ingredients such as caffeine, and even cocaine, were regularly added to the soda, along with other flavorings to make them taste better.  Over time, the businesses and companies that had soda fountains became legal community gathering spots during prohibition, and were a location for sit-ins during the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

The invention of the soda fountain started an industry that created a place for people to convene- unfortunately, it has pretty much faded from use and been replaced by bottled and canned soda today.

So…How *does* soda water connect to CRW?

CRW produces water for both residential and commercial customers. We supply water to bottling companies that create carbonated mineral water for mass consumption. For the general consumer market, purchasing CRW’s municipal water and infusing it with carbonation and then bottling or canning the product costs less than purchasing naturally occurring carbonated water that is bottled at, and imported from, its source. Thus, the appeal.

Besides bottled water derivatives, some of CRW’s commercial customers supply other retail beverage operations in our community. As the American Water Works Association says “No Water No Beer”, “No water no Coffee”, and “No Water No Hygiene”.

For people in the Portland Metro Area , those three things are definitely a paragon of existence. We love our Beer, our coffee, and our sanitation. I hope that this month you will take a moment to think about the ways in which water supports your lifestyle, both directly and indirectly. Chances are, CRW is a part of that story.

Thanks for listening and see you in June!