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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF DETROIT

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FAYGO POP

In 1907, **Ben and Perry Feigenson** started bottling lager beer, mineral water and soda water. Recent Russian immigrants to Detroit, the brothers were trained as bakers. While packaging their soda water, they began playing around with the idea of creating soft drinks based on their frosting flavors.

Their carbonated soda "pop" – nicknamed because of the sound it made when the lid popped off – was bottled in a small plant on Benton Street. The initial flavors were fruit punch, strawberry and grape, which they sold fresh from a horse-drawn wagon the day after it was made.

The brothers formed the Feigenson Brothers Bottling Works, and in 1920 changed the name to Feigenson Brothers Company. In a clever marketing move, "Faygo" was adopted as the brand name in 1921. They moved their growing bottle works to Gratiot Avenue in 1935, where Faygo pop is still created today.

The brothers ran the company until the mid-1940s, when they ceded control to their sons. In the 1950s Faygo was sold only in Detroit and Michigan because it had a limited shelf life. At that time, chemists determined that impurities in the water prevented the pop from staying carbonated. A new water filtration system was installed, improving shelf life to more than a year.

Faygo became popular outside of Michigan in the late 1960s when the company began advertising during televised Detroit Tigers games. Ads featuring the "Faygo Kid" and heartwarming jingles became instantly recognizable and very popular.

In 1985, the Feigenson family sold the Faygo Beverage Inc. to National Beverage Company, based in Florida. National Beverage, which also owns the Shasta soda pop brand, still operates the Detroit bottling works. Many of the employees have worked for Faygo for over 30 years. Today, Faygo comes in over 30 flavors and is sold in many states east of the Mississippi River. The most popular Faygo flavor remains one of the Feigenson brothers' earliest creations: Redpop.