



**The first Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Company
24th Avenue just north of the railroad, 1906-1916**



**Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Company Today
3701 25th Avenue, Gulfport, Mississippi**



**J.K. "John" Milner, Owner
Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Company
1908**

History

In 1906, Captain J.T. Jones and T.D. Tatum first began bottling Coca-Cola in Gulfport, Mississippi. During the first year of operation, 1,478 gallons of Coca-Cola syrup was shipped to Gulfport. Captain Jones, known as the "Grand Old Man of Gulfport," greatly invested financially into the development of the city.

Just two years later, J. K. "John" Milner, Sr. formed a partnership with W.D. Bellingrath to form Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Company located on 24th Avenue. Milner then became the manager of the bottling operations.

In 1912, J.K. Milner's wife, Rachel, having borrowed money from her brother-in-law, purchased Bellingrath's interest in Coast Coca-Cola Bottling Company making it a locally owned business.

Joseph W. Milner, son of J.K. Milner, succeeded his father in 1916 becoming manager of Coast Coca-Cola in addition to serving as mayor of the city of Gulfport for seven consecutive terms until his passing in 1948.

In 1979, E. Clifton "Tip" Milner, Jr., the fifth family member to manage the plant became vice president and general manager of Coast Coca-Cola.

In 1987, Coast Coca-Cola purchased rights to the Barq's Root Beer franchise and today enjoys the highest per capita sales of Barq's in America.

In 1991, concluding the 85 year Milner family ownership, Coast Coca-Cola joined Coca-Cola Bottling Company United, Inc., headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama. The operations today are managed by Dirk Barrient, Vice President of Sales.

Gulfport Coca-Cola and our 95 + employees are proud of our commitment to our customers and consumers and our support of many civic and charitable organizations serving our communities.