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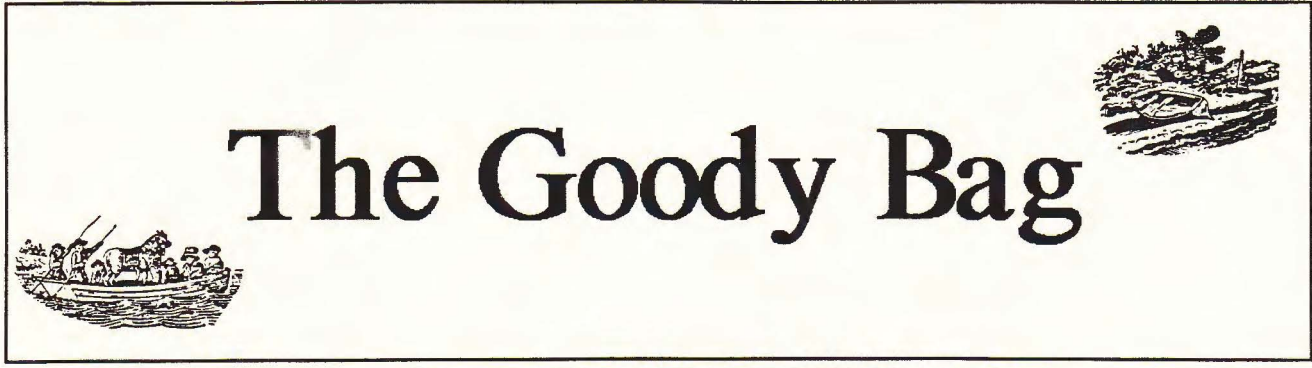
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These Bottles are Unique to South Carolina

by Carleton Allen Naylor

I can remember when I quit collecting shark's teeth — just plain lost interest in those fossilized incisors. It was the day I found my first South Carolina Dispensary bottle.

Perhaps it was the distinctive embossing on the bottle that grabbed my interest. Perhaps it was the knowledge that I had found an artifact that was unique to South Carolina. More likely, though, it was the fact that it was the first bottle I had ever found intact.

Since then, I have found other dispensary bottles and have learned that these bottles came in a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes.

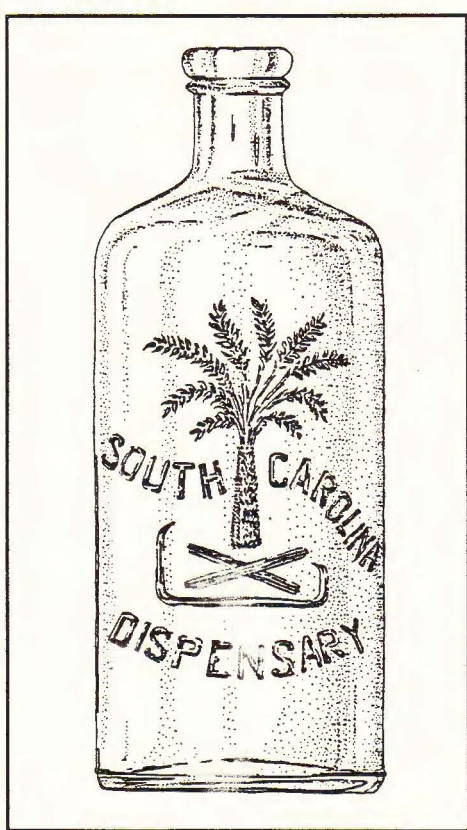
The four basic colors or hues of dispensary bottles are aqua (green) tint, bluish tint, amber and clear (clear being considered a color by glass-makers). The aqua tint is one of the most common colors of dispensary bottles and was the result of the presence of iron as an impurity in the sand used in the glassmaking. The blue tint is believed to be from variations in the amount of manganese added to the glass. (Manganese was added prior to 1915 to make the glass clear, and sometimes a purpling results when this glass is exposed to the ultraviolet rays in sunlight. This is not considered a true color, however, since it happens after the glass is manufactured. After 1915, selenium was used to make clear glass since manganese, obtained from Germany, was no longer available). The addition of iron oxide during the

making of glass produces the amber glass, the rarest of all colors in dispensary bottles.

Dispensary bottles were also made in four basic sizes: half pint, pint, quart and gallon. There are however thirteen distinct shapes of dispensary bottles from the common Jo-Jo flask with its rounded shoulders and base to the gallon demijohn which was covered in woven wickerwork. Some shapes came in various sizes, such as the Jo-Jo flask

that came in half pint and pint sizes, and some came in only one size. Added to size and shape, as if they weren't confusing enough, was the lip type. Eight different lip types were represented on dispensary bottles. These lips were fashioned to accept a cork closure. Once the bottle was filled and the cork inserted, lead foil was wrapped over the top and cork. One variety of flask was made with a screw top that would accept a soft metal screw-on cap with a cork in the top of the cap.

Glassmakers marks are another feature of dispensary bottles worth mentioning. Most dispensary bottles were made out of state. Two common makers' marks were "E.P.Jr.&Co." and "P.Bros." which stood for E. Packham, Jr. and Company, and for Packham Brothers Glass Company of Baltimore, Maryland. "C.L.F.G.Co." was the mark for C.L. Flaccus Glass Company of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. "Olean" is an uncommon mark and stands for the Olean Glass Company of Olean, N.Y. "IGCO" enclosed in a diamond denotes the Illinois Glass Company of Alton, Illinois. This company subsequently merged with Owens-Corning, who still use the triangle on their bottles. Dispensary bottles were also made by the Williamston Flint Glass Company of Williamston, N.Y., but carry no identifying mark. "Dixie" is another glassmaker's mark seen on



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dispensary bottles, however, no information has been found to identify it.

In 1902 a bottle-making company was formed in Columbia. This was the Carolina Glass Company and its mark, "C.G.Co." is seen on many dispensary bottles.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of many dispensary bottles was the embossing identifying them as dispensary bottles. Of course many dispensary bottles had no embossings at all but carried paper labels. These, however, are seldom by divers — at least underwater. The two basic types of embossing were the SCD monogram and the palmetto tree. Both also contain the lettering "S C Dispensary." The monogram embossing is on the half pint, and pint Jo-Jo flask and the cylindrical quart bottles. The palmetto tree is on the half-pint and pint Jo-Jo flask, the half-pint and pint Union flask, and the half-pint, pint and quart cylindrical bottles. There are literally dozens of subtle variation of each type of embossing, enough so that a collector could spend many years searching for all the variations. For instance, there are 13 variations of the monogram and 17 versions of the palmetto tree on the half-pint Jo-Jo flask alone. These variations are described in detail in Phillip Kenneth Huggin's book *The South Carolina Dispensary*.

All in all, the various features found on South Carolina Dispensary bottles not only tell much about the bottles themselves but also much about the bottling industry

of the time in general. For instance, it is known that a machine to make bottles without the need for a glassmaker to blow each bottle into a mold was put on the market in 1903. While the Automatic Bottle-Making Machine (ABM), revolutionized the bottle-making industry, there has been some discussion as to when the bottle manufacturers switched over to this technology. We know from the South Carolina Dispensary bottles, all blown into a mold, that many bottle manufacturers, at least the ones making dispensary bottles, waited until after 1907 (the last year of the dispensary) to introduce the new machine into their bottle making process.

Also, from the variety and abundance of embossed dispensary bottles we can induce that, although automatic labelling machines were introduced about 1870, embossing bottles was still a popular way to identify its contents. It should be remembered that since the dispensary system was a monopoly there was no need for fancy embossing to advertise or promote the product. Perhaps embossed bottles were simply cheaper to produce than plain bottles with labels.

And, considering the number of dispensary bottles I've seen in museums, antique stores, private collections, and flea markets I would say that they are far more abundant than other bottles from the same period. This could be due to the strength of the bottle itself, but I suspect their large numbers are due more to the popularity of the bottle's contents.

In any event, South Carolina Dispensary bottles are a fine addition to any diver's collection and to many of us more interesting than a bunch of old shark's teeth.

BRIEFS

ASSC Banquet

On Saturday, March 28 all participants of last year's Waccamaw Project are invited to attend the Archaeological Society of South Carolina meeting and banquet in Columbia when certificates will be awarded. For more information contact Lynn "How Did We Miss That Timber?" Harris at 881-8536.

License Checks To Continue

Institute personnel are gearing up for even more intensive weekend license checks this year. These checks are not intended to harass divers out for a pleasurable time collecting treasures from our river bottoms but to bring home the message that the information supplied by divers in their quarterly reports allows us to do our job better in protecting these resources so that they may be enjoyed by all divers. Besides, the University wouldn't approve our request to mount a machine gun on the bow of our boat. Remember, we can confiscate artifacts from divers who do not have a current license.

Public Education

Several hobby divers are giving talks on archaeology and showing artifact and fossil finds to public and school groups. Keep up the good work: Sally Robinson (Charleston), Jimmy Moss and Emory Vaughn (Abbeville), Miller Ingram (Cheraw). Are there any more hobby divers out there who have been involved in activities like this? We often have requests from schools for talk and show sessions. Maybe we could provide a list of hobby divers to contact who would be interested in volunteering for this public service. The SCIAA Underwater Archaeology Division staff also recently gave talks and set up an exhibit at Oakbrook Elementary School in Ladson. It was well received and fun.

Oops

Those of you who do not have anything better to do than read the fine print may have noticed that the September 1991 *The Goody Bag* was listed as being Volume One, No. 5 and the December issue was listed as being Volume Two, No. 4. No, you did not miss a bunch of issues in between. Due to an oversight which can only be attributed to something like nitrogen narcosis, the volume number had not been changed at the beginning of 1991 and the December issue was labeled such as it was to correct this.