I was born and raised in rural Marion County in South Pittsburg, Tenn. Between my childhood and teenage years, I always had a collection of something: old coins, postage stamps or Indian relics.

At age 15, I got hooked in the antique bottle collecting hobby when I found a cork-stoppered iodine bottle while walking across a pasture. Back then as now, when I changed my collecting field, I’d always delve into the historical side since I’ve always had a keen interest in history.

Many of those people who shared their knowledge to help me have passed on, but I’ll never forget their kindness and useful advice.

In June of 1982, I dug my first Koca Nola bottle in South Pittsburg. It was from the Keen Bottling Company. However, it was 17 years later that I became a serious Koca Nola collector when my good friend and mentor, Tom Lines of Birmingham, Ala., sold me my first Koca Nola Hutchinson — from the Florida Koca Nola Bottling Company.

Since then, I’ve been “diggin’” into the Koca Nola Company’s past and collecting its bottles and go-withs. They have become my top priority, even though I collect other bottles.

I have been fortunate to put together a rather nice collection of Koca Nola items, but I’m always looking to add to it.

I have been planning a book (tentatively called A Head’s Up on Koca Nola). If readers are aware of other Koca Nola bottles not listed with this article, or know the history of any of the franchises, I’ll be grateful if they’d contact me at the address listed. Any contributions they make to the material in my book will be acknowledged.

I’d also enjoy corresponding with other Koca Nola collectors so we can share information, or even start a Koca Nola Bottling Club.

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**Head’s up on Charles David Head**

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Charles D. Head and his teenaged daughter, Jessica.
Koca Nola value guide

CODE: ABM (automatic bottle machine). BIMAL (blown in mold, applied lip (or top).


KN3: “JE” monogram on shoulder. J. ESPOSITO / KOCA NOLA / 7 FLUID OZ. / PHILA., PA. Bimal oval slug plate, teal crown top. Rare. Value $50 to $75.


KN8: J. ESPOSITO / KOCA NOLA (in script) / 312 & 314 WASHINGTON AVE. / PHILA., PA. / REGISTERED 7-1/2 FLUID OZ. ABM clear crown top. Rare. Value $40 to $65.


KN17: PENNSACOLA BOTTLING WORKS / KOCA NOLA (in script) / PENNSACOLA, FLA. BIMAL round slug plate teal crown top. Scarce. Value $80 to $125.


KN22: FLORIDA BOTTLING CO. / KOCA NOLA (in script). BIMAL round slug plate clear crown top. May be one of a kind. Rare: Value $60 to $125.

KN24: FARMERS’ ICE AND OIL CO. / KOCA NOLA (in script) / CAMDEN, ALA. BIMAL oval slug plate, clear crown top. May be one of a kind. Very rare. Value $5125 to $175.


KN35: NEW LONDON BOTTLING WORKS / KOCA NOLA (in script)/NEW LONDON, N.C. BIMAL round slug plate clear crown top. May be one of a kind. Value $125 to $175.

KN38: KOCA NOLA (in script) / FAIRFAX, S.C. BIMAL round slug plate clear crown top. May be one of a kind. Value $125 to $175.

KN41: ASHBURN BOTTLING WORKS / KOCA NOLA (in script) / ASHBURN, GA. BIMAL round slug plate clear crown top. Rare. Value $75 to $125.


KN43: DONALDSONVILLE BOTTLING WORKS / KACONOLA / DONALDSONVILLE, GA. BIMAL round slug plate clear crown top. Very rare. Value $125 to $175.

KN47: MACON BOTTLING WORKS / KOCA NOLA (in script) / MACON, GA. Round slug plate, mug base, clear Hutchinson. Rare. Value $500 to $650.


KN57: KOCA NOLA CO. / KOCA NOLA (in script) / ATLANTA, GA. BIMAL round slug plate clear crown top (tall variant of KN56). Scarce. Value $30 to $60.


KN71: KOCA NOLA CALENDAR. Very rare. Value (in fine condition or better) $1,200 to $2,000.

KN72: BOTTLE LABEL. Common. DELICIOUS / DOPELESS / KOCA NOLA / THE GREAT TONIC DRINK. (Beware of reproductions). Value (if genuine and in fine or better condition) $30 to $60.

KN73: COMPLIMENTS OF THE KOCA NOLA CO., ATLANTA, GA. WOODEN THERMOMETER. Very rare. Value $1,000 to $1,500.

KN74: COMPLIMENTS OF THE KOCA NOLA CO., ATLANTA, GA. CELLULOID WATCH FOB. Very rare. Value in fine or better condition $600 to $750.

KN75: COMPLIMENTS OF THE KOCA NOLA CO., ATLANTA, GA. CELLULOID MATCH SAFE. Very rare. Value in fine or better condition $600 to $750.

KN76: COMPLIMENTS OF THE KOCA NOLA CO., ATLANTA, GA. LADIES’ POWDER BOX. May be one of a kind. Value $700 to $850.

MISCELLANEOUS PAPER ITEMS (letterheads, billheads, advertisements). Value $5 to $50.
References:

Unpublished research by Bill Baab, Augusta, Ga.
Woodruff & Coca-Cola prosecuting copycat competition: http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~slaterj/dissertation5.htm (Dr. Jan Slater)
Research by Irene Baker, Scott County Historical Society, P.O. Box 7, Huntsville, Tenn. 37756.
Research by Ron Fowler, Seattle History Co., 4518 35th Ave., N.E., Seattle, Wash. 98105.
Research by Reggie Lynch, P.O. Box 13736, Durham, N.C., 27709.
South Pittsburg Hustler, May 17, 1907, and June 3, 1982.
The Bristol Herald-Courier, April 6, 1907.

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Photos on right: Top: Koca Nola mirror; bottom: Koca Nola matchesafe, closed.