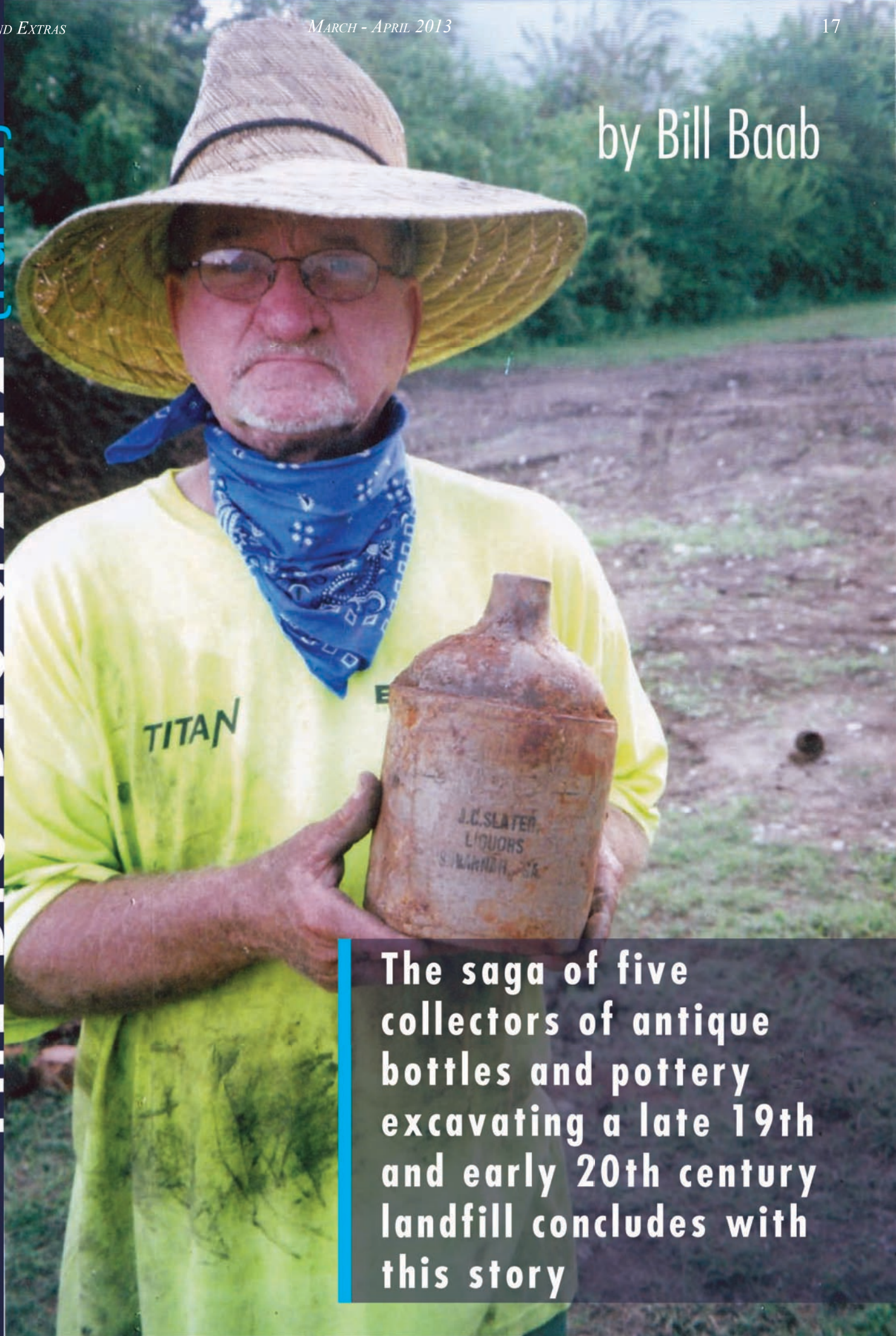


THE BIG DIG of 2012 {Part 2}

by Bill Baab



The saga of five collectors of antique bottles and pottery excavating a late 19th and early 20th century landfill concludes with this story

Pottery

finds dominated our first day back (May 20) after our picks on the

Big Dig of 2012, while bottle finds were sparse.

Our friend Walter Smith joined Mike Newman, Pat Oliver, Bob Riddick, Jerry Newton and I on a day when strong winds kept the 85-degree day comfortable.

The first jug to emerge was a blue-stenciled Allaire, Woodward & Co. / Pharmaceutical Chemists / Peoria, Ill. Walter collects pharmacy jugs and was drooling over this one-gallon beauty.

Two “buggy jugs” followed. These gallon jugs have wide bases and were designed to not tip over on the buggy seat, similar to so-called “captain’s bottles” (onion bottles) used aboard early sailing ships. The jugs were attributed to the Miles Mills Pottery in Aiken County, S.C.

A one-gallon William F. Hahn stacker jug with a beautiful alkaline glaze was found. It was not signed, but the glaze and style identified it for what it is. Hahn’s pottery was near present day Trenton, S.C., in Edgefield County. Eight one-gallon stackers attributed to W.F. Hahn’s son, Thomas, whose pottery was located on the banks of the Savannah River near present day North Augusta, S.C., were dug.

A wax sealer storage jar was spotted at the top of the dirt pile by Mike and a deft touch of the backhoe bucket by Jerry caused it to roll into Mike’s waiting hands. Also found was an intact cup with a design showing it came from the Albion Hotel in Augusta, managed by Bryan Lawrence. The hotel burned in 1921 in the second of two fires that devastated downtown Augusta.

Sodas found included two Augusta Chero-Colas, one embossed with the early old English-style script, the other in block lettering; 11 straight-sided Augusta Cokes; a scarce clear E. Sheehan / Bottler / Augusta, Ga., crown top; two straight-sided Augusta Pepsis; an aqua E. Sheehan / 1880 / Augusta, Ga., blobtop with a chipped top; three Dixie Carbonating Co., Augusta crown tops and a Baldowski Bottling Works crown top, also from Augusta.

Just five drug store bottles emerged, all clear: Cabaniss, LAND, C.T., Goetchius & Bro. (2) and Gardelle.

A tall amber (and rare) Augusta Brewing Co., in a slug plate blobtop was followed by an Augusta Brewing Co., pint crown, an Augusta Brewing Co., Hutchinson and a Savannah

Brewing Co., crown top.

Miscellaneous finds included a Top Flite golf ball (after all, Augusta is known for its golf, thanks to the Masters Tournament), a cobalt quart Stafford’s master ink and two AUGUSTA BLOCK paver bricks. The golf ball was orange, probably coming from a Putt-Putt course somewhere. Golfers who live in the snow zone sometimes use such things. While we do occasionally have snow, it usually doesn’t fall during golf season.

May 27, 2012: Finds are beginning to get sparse as our great adventure starts winding down. We may have another month or three of digging before it’s over.

Six straight-sided Augusta Cokes were joined by three Dixie Carbonating Co., crowns, two Chero-Colas and two Hires Root Beers. A straight-sided Augusta Pepsi, a Baldowski Bottling Works crown top, an E. Sheehan crown top and a 1915 Coke followed.

Only other things worth mentioning were seven stacker jugs attributed to Thomas Hahn, of North Augusta, S.C., and another signed in small block lettering, HAHN.

May 28, 2012: Our Memorial Day half-day dig was a washout, with an Athens, Ga., vertically embossed Blutwine the lone bottle of note. One good Hahn stacker and a couple of damaged others made up the finds.

June 10, 2012: Eight straight-sided Cokes, a straight-sided Pepsi and two Blutwines, all from Augusta, were the sodas found on a day of hit or miss



Top Image: Pat Oliver, dressed for late summer’s heat, shows off jug marked J.C. Slaton / Liquors / Savannah, Ga.

Right Image: Digging not just about having fun. Bob Riddick applies knife blade to layers of rust on a jug.



Top: Pitcher decorated with barn swallows emerged from deep in the dump

Bottom: Rebecca at the well teapot missing its spout, top. It was manufactured locally at the S.C. Pottery Co. Works (Photos by Bea Baab)



showers. Five local drug store bottles (Gardelle (2), Matheny, Tessier's, Goetchius & Bro., and a LAND came out of the ground.

An amber crown top from Orange (N.J.?) Brewery was the lone beer, unless you count a lone ceramic ginger beer stenciled with a capital A and "Double Brewed." The Robinson Pottery stamp on the bottle looks like Akron, Ohio, making it the first of its kind to be dug by us.

I contacted my friend, Bill Williams, an authority on ginger beer, and he indicated it was from the Salt City Bottling Works in Syracuse, N.Y.

Rest of the pottery finds included a plain brown and white one-gallon, machine-made jug; three Thomas Hahn stackers, a round-shouldered jug of undetermined origin and another attributed to Miles Mill in Aiken County, S.C. Two unmarked master inks were joined by another Albion Hotel creamer, sans handle.

Also uncovered were a number of bricks stamped STEVENS. The Stevens Pottery Co., operated outside Milledgeville, Georgia from just after the Civil War until the 1960s. They made utilitarian pottery like churns, whiskey jugs and even mini jugs, but that ended about 1900. Then they made fire bricks (I have one stamped STEVENS VOLCANO), tiles, sewer and water pipes and jardinières for garden use.

June 17, 2012: Three straight-sided Cokes and a Chero-Cola from Moultrie, Ga., made up the list of sodas found on a hot day with air temperatures in the upper 80s.

Just three drug store bottles (Cabaniss, LAND and Matheny) emerged from a section of the dump in which finds have been rather sparse. A whole Frog Pond Chill & Fever Cure joined two broken examples with a Globe Medicine Co., bottle from Spartanburg, S.C.

Miscellaneous bottles included an olive green example with an applied top embossed A & F Pears / London. Where did that come from? Remains of a Pepsi-Cola crate stencil were found (only the Cola and 5 (cents) remained. A shattered Augusta & Savannah John Ryan cobalt blobtop was found among a pile of broken straight-sided Cokes.

We've dug a number of porcelain creamers marked Genesta Hotel. A large fragment of a storage jar with the Genesta name also was found. I guess one could make a decent collection of hotel ware from early Augusta businesses. .

Five stackers including one stamped HAHN and another stamped R.B. joined the crowd stowed in a locked warehouse room. According to the Index of Southern Potters, Robert Boyles potted in Union County, S.C., during the late teens and early 20s. We've found at least one other of his Albany slip-glazed stackers on this dig. The HAHN was turned by Thomas Hahn of what is now North Augusta, S.C., during the 1890s

No digging was scheduled for June 24 because Mike was out of town.

July 1, 2012: Today's weather forecast calls for temperatures to soar above 100 degrees (Fahrenheit). So

we're meeting at 7 a.m., for a half-day dig, after which we'll head to our air-conditioned homes.

We dug in an area that hasn't been too productive as far as numbers go. Four stacker jugs made by Thomas Hahn quickly came out and then things slowed. Toward the end of the dig, an unmarked Hahn Pottery Works wax sealer emerged and then Bob Riddick spotted a Bristol-glazed merchant's jug. The one-gallon jug was stamped in blue, M.J. DOWNEY & CO. / WHOLESALE AND RETAIL / WINES AND LIQUORS / 916 BROADWAY / AUGUSTA, GA. Broadway was a high-falutin' name for Broad Street adopted by City Council in the late 1890s. It eventually reverted to its original name during the early 1900s. Jugs from a half-gallon to 5 gallons exist.

Keeper bottles were again sparse and included a straight-sided Augusta Pepsi, five straight-sided Augusta Cokes, an Augusta Bludwine and an E. (For Eugene) A. Fagan clear crown top. Three LANDs, a Gardelle and a T.G. Howard were the lone drug store bottles.

A cobalt Wyeth dose bottle was the only miscellaneous article found before the dig wound up about 12:30 p.m.

July 8, 2012: The Mother Lode of "As You Like It" horse radish jars – 39 in all – emerged from just a few feet down at the start of the dig. Nine ceramic tops for the Weir jars also were found. None of the jars were stenciled with that motto, leading us to believe they were later models that sported paper labels.

A double-collared ovoid jug dating to perhaps the 1850s-60s and probably manufactured by one of the Pottersville (present day Edgefield, S.C.) potters popped up when least expected. A ceramic master ink and a porcelain Albion Hotel creamer also were found.

Ceramic finds also included two sizes of jugs stenciled "The Greybeard Heather Dew" whiskey from the United Kingdom. Each had some damage.

Ten straight-sided Cokes from Augusta and another in clear glass with no city name were joined by drug store bottles from T.G. Howard, LAND and Goetchius & Bro.

A fancy Royal Pepsin Stomach Bitters – first of its kind to be dug here – joined Augusta Brewing Company quart crown and blob tops and an Augusta Brewing Co. Bottling Dept., bottle that probably contained some kind of soda.

An emerald Palmer perfume was the lone miscellaneous keeper.

July 15, 2012: Mike Newman was very persuasive. "Let's dig here. It's shallower and we'll find a bunch more stuff." I'd wanted to dig where it was deeper, but I went along.

So Jerry Newton cranked up his backhoe and we started to dig Mike's Honey Hole. Well, the hole developed, but the "honey" was scarce. Still, it wasn't a bad day.

Fifteen straight-sided Cokes from Augusta, a pair of aqua Sheehan Hutchinsons, two Dixie Carbonating Co., crown tops and a like number of Augusta Chero-Colas were the sodas found.

Two LANDs (those names are always in capital letters), a C.T. Goetchius & Bro., and a scarce Videtto made up the pharmacy finds. Two aqua Augusta Brewing Company Hutchinsons and an aqua crown top from the company emerged..

Mineral waters were represented by the aqua ten pin-shaped bottle embossed with Schultz's Central Park Mineral Springs (C-P M-S) 1868 and New York. Inks were a small cobalt Stafford's and an aqua Carter's without the pour spout.

A beautiful alkaline-glazed Miles Mill (present day Aiken County, S.C.) round-shouldered jug rolled out of the bank. It was in near-perfect condition. Two Thomas Hahn stackers and a broken creamer stenciled "The Savoy" were found.

July 22, 2012: Sixteen straight-sided Augusta Coca-Cola bottles – one made at the Dixie Glass Co., in Tallapoosa, Ga. – and a Nov. 16, 1915 hobbleskirt embossed VIENNA, GA on the base came out of the ground. They were joined by an aqua Augusta Bludwine, aqua Augusta Chero-Cola and a clear Dixie Carbonating Co., from Augusta.

Lone drug store bottle was embossed Perrin & Land. Lone patent medicine was a scarce Frog Pond Chill & Fever Tonic, a machine-made bottle produced after the Pure Food & Drug Act was



Bob Riddick displays double-collared, Edgefield District whiskey jug from late 19th century.

passed by Congress in 1906. Unfortunately, it was cracked.

Beers found were a clear Augusta Brewing Co., Hutchinson and an aqua Robert Portner Brewing Co., blobtop. Miscellaneous bottles included a clear Garretson's Manufacturer of Pharmacy from Flushing, Long Island and a small, pontiled puff.

A lone Thomas Hahn stacker jug and a quart unmarked ink were the lone ceramic items found.

Crier was the embossed panel of a River Swamp Chill & Fever Cure (alligator), but the rest of the bottle was nowhere to be found.

Aug. 5, 2012: Highlight of a slow dig was a brown-topped, white-sided gallon jug stenciled in black J.C. Slater / Liquors / Savannah, Ga.

Three straight-sided Augusta Cokes were joined by two Augusta Ice & Beverage Co., aqua crown tops. That was the Augusta Brewing Co., name changed in 1916 after Prohibition. The former brewers tried to survive by selling soft drinks, ice, ice cream, near beer and half-pints of Imperial chocolate milk, but it was no go. The company filed for bankruptcy on March 5, 1921.

Jerry Newton's backhoe did not want to work. Mike Newman tried to help him get it restarted, but burned an ear, seconds later an arm and within a minute a hand on the scorching-hot parts of the machine. He was not pleased, but he earned the coveted first annual Backhoe Bites Back Award, a special plaque on which a container of burn salve was mounted with appropriate wording.

Aug. 26, 2012: Backhoe owner-operator Jerry Newton was called away by business, so Keith Deas came aboard for this dig, bringing his own machine.

The Big Dig is winding down and we're hitting parts of the dump in which finds have been sparse. Today's dig was no exception.

When all was said and done, five unmarked stacker jugs (attributed to various Augusta area potters) were excavated. Straight-sided Cokes from Macon, Ga., and Augusta, an amber quart Wright & Taylor pre-Prohibition whiskey from Louisville, Ky., and a Williamston, S.C. Hutchinson were the only keepers found. Unfortunately, the rare Hutch turned out to be cracked, as has been the case of many of the out-of-town bottles.

Sept. 23, 2012: It's been amazing to us the wide variety of non Augusta bottles that this dump has produced. An example is the aqua blobtop embossed C.T. BROWN / DANVILLE, VA., unearthed on this day.

It joined four straight-sided Augusta Cokes and an Augusta Chero-Cola during the dig, which resulted in rather sparse finds. One LAND drug store bottle (small, clear) joined a Bobbitt-Wynne Drug Co., bottle from Raleigh, N.C., and a Wyeth dose bottle (sans top).

A canteen-shaped bottle decorated with a basket weave and a one-gallon, alkaline-glazed jug attributed to the Landrum family of South Carolina potters, were among

ceramic objects unearthed.

Sept. 30, 2012: When digging for antique bottles you should expect the unexpected.

Like an 8-1/2-foot alligator!

We unlocked the main gate and drove into the parking area. Stretched out on the warm asphalt was a surly saurian. Turns out he (it was a male) was there all night. Property owner Mark Branum had been called to the business about 12:30 a.m. He called the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, but the professional gator getters didn't get there until 11 a.m. the next day.

John Gillis, of Dearing, Ga., about 30 miles from Augusta, is a nuisance alligator trapper licensed by the state. He and his wife, Denise, who sported a pink cell phone shaped like a bunny (cotton tail and ears, too), arrived on the scene.

It didn't take him long to snag the gator with a noose and haul him out into the open from a bunch of bushes where he had been hiding. The Gillises wrapped the Gator's jaws shut with Georgia Bulldog tape, hogtied both sets of legs, taped a towel over its eyes (to help calm him) and, with the help of bottle digger Bob Riddick, of Lexington, S.C., loaded the critter into their pickup truck.

Gillis said the gator was destined for a nearby private pond whose owner wanted to lower the turtle population. A gator's diet includes turtles and anything else that comes its way.

Meanwhile, back in the dump, four Augusta straight-sided Cokes were joined by an amber example from Nashville, Tenn. Four C.T. Gotchius & Bro., drug store bottles from Augusta and a pair of Augusta Brewing Company mug-base Hutches – one clear, one aqua – were found.

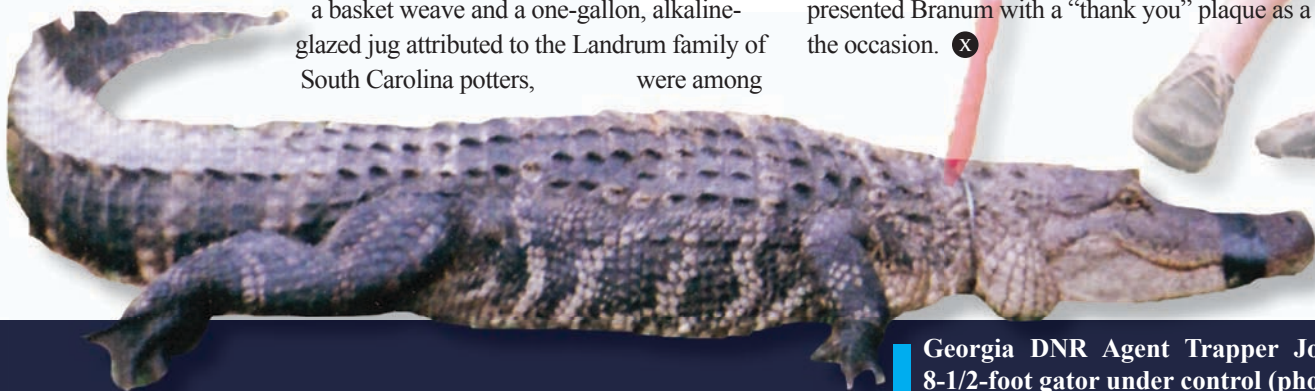
A black glass Four Roses whiskey embossed NEW PROTECTIVE BOTTLE ADOPTED JULY 1914 / PAUL JONES CO. / LOUISVILLE, KY., joined another dug back on March 25. It's a great-looking bottle.

A Harris Lithia Springs, Harris Springs, S.C., bottle (in Laurens County about 60 miles from Augusta) was joined by an Abbott's Bitters from Baltimore.

Pottery finds included two Thomas Hahn stacker jugs and an alkaline-glazed, round-shouldered jug, the latter a beautiful sight for sore eyes.

So our dig of a lifetime ended with this one. Next, we've restored a part of the land by bringing in several tons of dirt which will be spread over the area. Before that, we picked up broken bricks, broken bottles and bottle parts and any other solid material.

Not only did property owner Mark Branum get an 8x10 color photo (as did the other dig members) of the alligator, the group presented Branum with a "thank you" plaque as a memento marking the occasion. X



Georgia DNR Agent Trapper John Gillis has 8-1/2-foot gator under control (photo by Bill Baab)