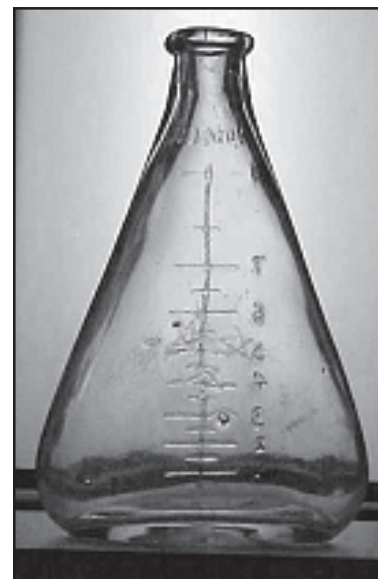


The 3-Star Nurser

by Charles S. Harris, Ooltewah, TN 37363



When I first saw a photo of one of these 3-Star Nursers, I could have sworn that it was nothing more than an old Chemistry Flask that had been modified or just adapted for use as a baby feeding bottle like has been done with many different bottles. The good old adage of Necessity is the Mother of Invention was thought to have come into play here.

Then when my wife and I saw our first 3-Star Nursers at one of the ACIF conventions we realized that our impression was badly mistaken. It was a beautiful bottle indeed and we knew that we needed one for our collection as a definite type variety. Have you ever had that feeling before — I just have to have one of those!

Well, at our next two ACIF conventions we saw a couple for sale on banquet night, but the bidding numbers were too high to enable us to acquire one for our collection. So until the 2003 convention we were 3-Starless! Finally at the 2003 ACIF convention our luck changed and we had our first, the one with the 3 open stars in a weak seal on the front, scratched but now owned and treasured by us.

During the following year things happened. A 3-Star Nurser showed up on each of two eBay auctions the same week. Primarily we were looking for a better non-scratched example. Also we were hoping to find one that would have the 3 stars in a horizontal line with "THREE STAR NURSER" spelled out around them, but both of them only had the 3 stars in a triangle inside a seal. On Tuesday night Teresa realized that she had forgotten to put in a bid — fifteen minutes after the auction was over. Boy, talking about a

forlorn face till I reminded her that there was another one scheduled to come off the next day. Peace was returned to the Harris family and a bid was immediately entered — the winning bid at that and for less than the first one had gone for.

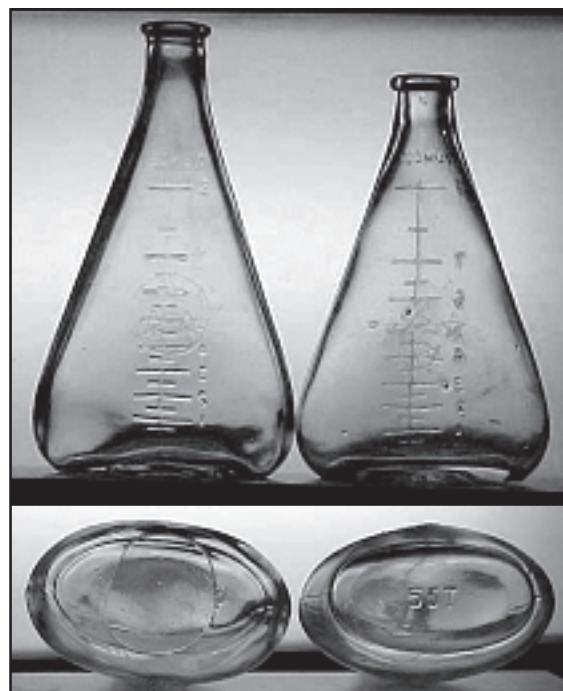
That 3-Star nurser resided in Canada. After correspondence I sent the seller a check for the purchase. Now don't ask me why I did what I did, but for some reason I wrote the check for \$50.00 more than the purchase price. Maybe it was premonition, a supernatural happening, or some such thing — however you look at it, it was nothing but stupid, but, none-the-less, I had done it.

A few days later the seller called me and told me of my fauxpax. What did we want to do about it? On the other phone, taking matters into hand, Teresa asked him if he had any more good bottles. Yes, he did — two more 3-Star Nursers, a Pyrex (a rarity that we didn't happen to have), and a couple more unmentionables and he wanted to get rid of them all. If we would we send him another \$35.00, he would mail all of them to us.

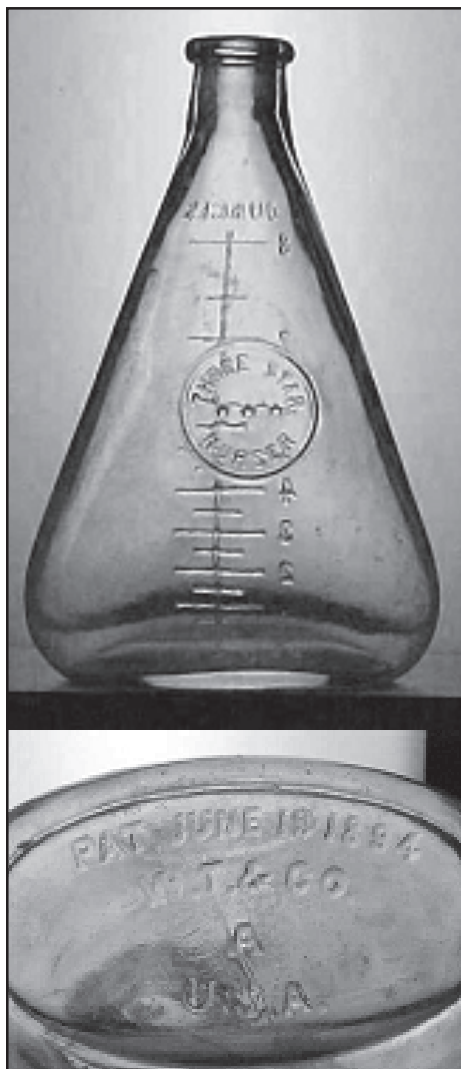
We bought them all. Hopefully, one of them was going to be one of the marked Canadian manufactured bottles, but no such luck even though these three came from Canada. The Canadian ones are marked "CANUCK 3 STAR BFGCO. T" on the base and they have the 3 stars in a triangular configuration in a seal on the front side. The 1 1/8 inch seal has

the 3 stars in the triangular pattern with the single star either up or down (the seal probably rotates in the mold some while in use). There are also some variations in the style of the stars, and in the weight and orientation of the stars. "BFG" stands for Beaver Flint Glass Company. We are still looking for one of those.

Other variations are <D> (Dominion) and an unmarked variation. Two of the ones that we received are the unmarked base type — one just unmarked and the other one with a mold number on it "956". I then realized that the first one that we had acquired was also a Canadian one with only a mold number "557". These Canadian



Tall and short varieties of the Canadian 3-Star Nursers with blank and numbered bases.



The American made THREE STAR NURSER with the three stars in the horizontal line in a seal. Also shown is the American bottom mark.

bottles are 5 5/8 inches tall and are BIMAL. There is also an ABM variation that is 6 1/8 inches tall, with the additional height being in the longer neck. Don LaFonte, founder of the ACIF in 1973 confirmed that the three stars in the triangle is the Canadian version of the American patent with the 3 stars in a line and annotated.

Evidently, we still did not have one of the American made ones.

The American made ones are bottom marked "PAT. JUNE 19 1894 / W.T. & CO. / A / U.S.A." They are a tapered oval shape and stand 5 5/8 inches tall, 3 1/2 inches wide and 2 1/8 inches thick. The 3 stars are in a horizontal line with "THREE STAR NURSER" around the periphery of the 1 1/4 inch seal. All specimens (American and Canadian) have "Ounces" atop an 8-ounce scale with 1/2-ounce slashes on the back side. This short variety of the American bottle is also BIMAL.

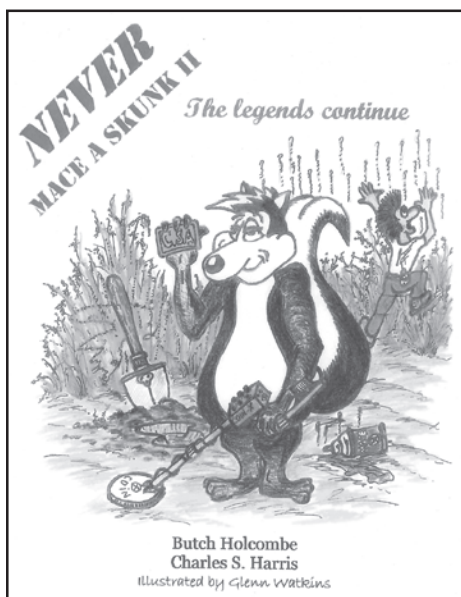
Recently I have heard that there have been some of the 3 stars in a triangle in a seal found that seem to be American made. The 3 stars are on the upper breast of the bottle instead of in the center of the front side. The bottom is also said to be pontiled, which seems unusual for a bottle that was not made until the 1890s.

The bottle was advertised in the 1897 and 1910 Whitall Tatum Company catalogues as "Oval with sloping sides. No shoulder and no corners, consequently easy to clean. Having a broad base, the bottle is not readily overturned." No wonder that a straight on photo makes it look like a chemistry flask.

P.S.: We finally found one of the American made THREE STAR NURSERS at the National Bottle Show held in Memphis, Tenn., in August of 2004. It was in Barbara Higbee's estate that her son, Mike, was selling off at the show. She is one of the old time baby bottle collectors.

On that first day, his table strongly resembled a Shark Feeding Frenzy. Baby Bottle collectors were helping him unwrap bottles and immediately setting aside items that they wanted. Newspaper and bubble wrap were flying in all directions and hands and arms were reaching and grabbing anything available just as it reached the table — table manners were definitely not being observed. Even some of the old-timers who have everything were having a ball in Baby Bottle Heaven.

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Never Mace A Skunk II by Butch Holcombe and Charles S. Harris. Softbound. 218 pp. Illustrated by Glenn Watkins. Authorhouse, 1663 Liberty Drive, Suite 200, Bloomington, IN 47403. \$22.50. Using metal detectors to discover and unearth Civil War and other relics has become a popular pastime next to probing for and unearthing antique bottles.

Each trip to battlefield sites or privy holes is an adventure. Sometimes the unexpected happens, sometimes hilariously, sometimes not.

Native Georgian Butch Holcombe and Tennessean Charles Harris are admittedly addicted to relic hunting. Not only have they formed outstanding collections, but also compiled a number of their adventures (or misadventures) into this book.

The volume is a sequel to Holcombe's "Never Mace A Skunk."

A word of warning: Bottles are few in this book, which has to do with Civil War bayonets, buttons, belt buckles and other goodies. Oh, one chapter mentions broken U.S.A. Hospital bottles, but that's about as close as it comes to what most readers of this magazine collect.

Still, bottle diggers can relate to many of the problems encountered by this dynamic duo, such as poison ivy, dogs and irate landowners. Oh, did I mention electric fences and sewage overflows?

If you're in the mood for laughing at other peoples' predicaments, or if you're wondering what to give someone who has everything for his or her birthday, wedding anniversary or Christmas gift, then this book is for you. — **BILL BAAB**