

# Monterey - An Enigma Bottle

By Harvey Teal

## Introduction

Some 35 years ago while researching the South Carolina Dispensary and its bottles, an 1893 letter from Florence, South Carolina to the governor of the state came to light [Figure 1].

The letterhead contains an image of a patent medicine bottle shaped somewhat like the head of a golf club. In the letter, David O'Reardon writes to find out if his patent medicine called Monterey would be considered an alcoholic beverage and therefore be in violation of the state's dispensary law.

The law was to take effect July 1, 1893. It created a statewide public monopoly of the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages, putting out of business anyone engaged in those businesses at the time. S.C. Dispensary bottles have become some of the most sought-after in this part of the country and prompted this author to write a book on the subject in 2005. (*The South Carolina Dispensary & Embossed S.C. Whiskey Bottles & Jugs*, 1865-1915, by Harvey S. Teal and Rita Foster Wallace. Available from the author for \$47.50, postage included, 2337 Terrace Way, Columbia, SC 29205).

O'Reardon explained he organized Monterey & Co., in July 1892 in Florence, S.C., well before the Dispensary law was considered, and had begun selling Monterey in February of 1893. Gov. Benjamin R. (Pitchfork Ben) Tillman offered him the opportunity to have the state chemist analyze his medicine and determine if it was in violation of the new law.

Shortly after discovery of this letter, the author located ads in 1893-94 local newspapers for the sale of Monterey and thereby confirmed O'Reardon got a favorable response from the chemist [Figure 2]. To help insure a favorable response, O'Reardon pointed out to the governor that John P. Coffin, his company's vice president who lived in Florence, was a political supporter of the governor. O'Reardon himself was not from South Carolina. To further ensure a favorable response, the company secretary, R.J. Burns, sent a bottle of Monterey to Mrs. Tillman with an offer to send her four more "if it was proven beneficial."


At this time in the early 1970s, the author had yet to see one of the bottles, but awaited with eager anticipation the emergence of one. When a digger located one in a dump in Orangeburg, S.C., a few years later, his anticipation was rewarded [Figure 3]. After the passage of some time, the author acquired this bottle through some "horse trading."

One or two more Monterey bottles turned up in a Florence, S.C., dump and also ultimately found their way into this author's collection. Over the years, about a dozen or so have shown up in Charleston and the Low Country. That they should show up in the latter region is not surprising since the F.W. Wagner & Co., in Charleston served as the state agent for Monterey & Co.

At this point, O'Reardon's letter, the newspaper ads and the bottles themselves provided all the information known about this bottle and patent medicine.

## MONTEREY.

1760. THE MONKS' REMEDY. 1845



**A TONIC, NERVINE, BLOOD PURIFIER.**

Like Cures Like.

The Poison of the Swamp has its Antidote in the Swamp.

For Malaria, Nervousness, Indigestion, Dysentery and Bowel Complaint, ask your dealer for MONTEREY. If he does not keep it, we will send you a large bottle, express prepaid, on receipt of \$1.00.

MONTEREY CO.,  
Florence, S. C., Props. and Mfrs.  
F. W. WAGNER & CO.,  
Charleston, State Agents.

Aug. 30-1y

Figure 2: Sept. 13, 1893 ad in Lexington (S.C.) Dispatch. (Author's collection.)

The bottles are all amber-colored with the usual variations in the shades of that color. There are two sizes [Figure 4]. The smaller bottle measures 3 1/2 inches long, 2 1/2 inches wide and 1 3/4 inches high, not including the neck, and may have been a sample bottle since only two examples have surfaced to date. The larger bottle measures 5 1/2 inches long, 3 inches wide and 3 1/4 inches tall, not including the neck.

The only embossing on these bottles is found on their base, the single word "Monterey." That word likely helped secure one of these bottles at the ridiculously low price of \$5 from a Charleston antique shop. Because of that word, the dealer remarked, "That bottle may be Mexican. I won't guarantee it to be U.S." It was purchased without any haggling. Since this bottle's neck still retained a cork sealed with wax,

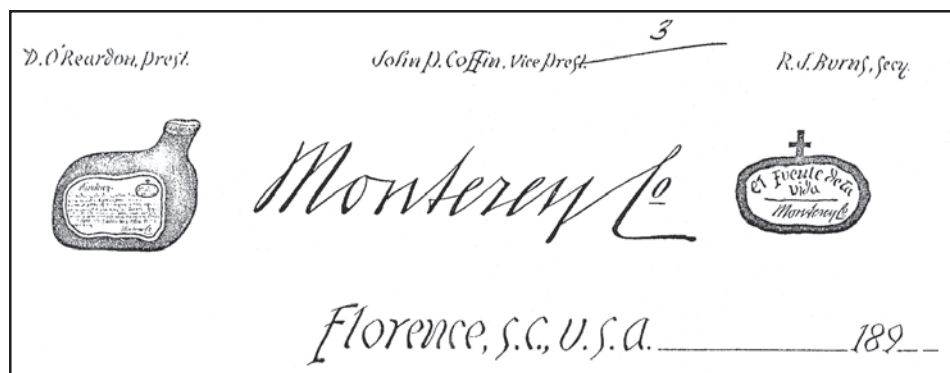


Figure 1: Letterhead showing Monterey bottle and Latin phrase meaning "the source of life." (Author's collection)



**Figure 3:** First Monterey bottle acquired by author. (*Bea Baab photo*)

all of them likely were so sealed.

Some additional information about Monterey came to light when a bottle with three labels in varying degrees of completeness turned up and was acquired by the author. On front of the bottle underneath the neck is a label in the form of a cross with most of the top of the cross missing. [Figure 5] The remaining wording on this label reads "Monterey & Co., Florence, South Carolina, U.S.A., Dysentery, Wasting Sicknesses, Female Weaknesses, Excesses in Drink or Narcotics, Doze 1 Oz. Bottle protected by Let(ter) & Patent Tr(ade) Mark." No patent or trade mark research has been attempted.

One of the labels on the side is partially present with the other side label containing only a few pieces. The words and phrases

that could be deciphered from the partially complete label are "Fathers of California," "It regulates the bowels, purifies the blood. "A purely vegetable extract," "Indigestion, biliousness, nervous affliction." [Figure 6]

After reading the labels' information, the newspaper ads and O'Reardon's letter, it appeared the medicine was a "cure-all," but was especially good for bowel and stomach complaints. A light suddenly dawned. The shape of the bottle was that of a stomach! When first examining the bottle, its wavy sides gave the appearance of having been burned in a fire. Closer examination, however, proved the bottle was actually blown in a mold with wavy and uneven sides, suggesting a stomach. What else could the shape be?

A western theme emerged from the



**Figure 5:** Rare, nearly complete label offered contents information.

(*Bea Baab photo*)



**Figure 6:** More information yielded by back label. (*Bea Baab photo*)

collected information, the name "Monterey" a prominent California city.

California history indicates Franciscan monks moved into what was to become a state in the 1700s and early 1800s to bring Christianity to the Indian tribes. Spanish and later Mexican military authorities set up forts of presidios there. Monterey had both these institutions. The cross-shaped label and the cross on the oval image in the letterhead tie in with monks and monasteries. In fact, the letterhead oval with the cross atop and the inside wording, "El fuente de la vida" (the source of life) has the feel and style of a stylized adobe monastery.

Wording on the label, "Fathers of California," ties in with the wording in the newspaper ad, "1760, The Monks' Remedy, 1845." In the latter year, the famous western explorer, John C. Fremont, reached Monterey and was given permission to

**Continued on page 60.**



**Figure 4:** Two sizes of Monterey bottles known to exist. (*Bea Baab photo*)



*Magazine*, March 1976, pg. 16 and *Complete Directory of Glass Factories and Potteries of the United States and Canada*, Commoner Publishing Co., Box 555, Pittsburg, Pa., 1903, pg. 18. Oddly, the first two references from above listed the Perfection Manufacturing Company as a glass manufacturer and bottle manufacturer, respectively.

<sup>10</sup> *R. L. Polk & Co.'s Washington Directory 1903-04*, R. L. Polk & Co. Publishers, Pittsburg, Penna., pgs. 274 and 318 and *Complete Directory of Glass Factories and Potteries of the United States and Canada*, Commoner Publishing Co., Box 555, Pittsburg, Pa., 1903, pg. 18. The following source also puts the Perfection Manufacturing Company on the same plots of land as the Sterling Glass Works. *Fruit Jar News Clearing House*, Dick Roller, *Old Bottle Magazine*, March 1976, pg. 16.

<sup>11</sup> *R. L. Polk & Co.'s Washington Directory 1903-04*, R. L. Polk & Co. Publishers, Pittsburg, Penna., pgs. 274, 292 and 333; *Fruit Jar News Clearing House*, Dick Roller, *Old Bottle Magazine*, March 1976, pg. 16 and *Complete Directory of Glass Factories and Potteries of the United States and Canada*, Commoner Publishing Co., Box 555, Pittsburg, Pa., 1903, pg. 18. The last reference had Mr. Fenn listed as W. P. Fenn instead of W. B. Fenn. I believe the letter "P" was a typesetter's error.

<sup>12</sup> *Perfection Glass Company, One of Many Glass Houses in Washington, Pennsylvania*, Barry L. Bernas, 239 Ridge Avenue, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325, 2005, pgs. 5-9.

<sup>13</sup> *NEW COLLEGE EDITION THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE*, William Morris, Editor, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Massachusetts (and other cities within the United States), 1976, pg. 1158.

<sup>14</sup> *Commoner and Glassworker*, February 14, 1903, pg. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Docket 2339, District Court of the United States, for the Western District of

Pennsylvania, December 1903. The reference indicated Mr. Fenn filed some type of a patent request on January 26, 1903. However, the exact nature of the innovation wasn't recorded. Either the Patent Office denied his request or the approval paperwork wasn't recorded. Since the filing time corresponded to the introductory period for the scalloped flange tumbler, a slight circumstantial case can be made for the argument that William B. Fenn attempted to gain a patent for this unique piece of glassware.

<sup>16</sup> *Crockery and Glass Journal*, April 30, 1903, pg. 27.

<sup>17</sup> The No. 253 style of tumbler may have a pattern debossed on its base. I say this because all other examples of separating ware with the pressed Colonial outward design that I've seen have the same distinctive insignia on their underneath side. When an example or two of this style of glass are found, I'll be able to determine whether my hunch is valid.

<sup>18</sup> The phrase – PAT APD FOR – could have: 1) a period after each abbreviation or word; 2) a period only after the abbreviations PAT and APD or 3) no periods after any abbreviation or word.

<sup>19</sup> In my experience, the presence of the phrase – PAT APD FOR – normally precedes or directly follows the submission of paperwork to patent the applicable innovation. In addition to this abbreviation on the base of clear Sterling-Perfection scalloped flange tumblers, the use of the word – PATENT – in Perfection Manufacturing ads suggested that the patent process was either in progress or was completed with approval to follow. Of course, the word – PATENT – could also carry the alternative definition "plain" or "of high quality."

<sup>20</sup> The exception to this rule may be the No. 253 or Colonial patterned flange-less tumbler. It could have had a design on its base from the start. We'll have to wait until one turns up to know for sure.

## Monterey — An Enigma Bottle

By Harvey Teal

Continued from page 44.

explore, but authorities soon revoked it. In 1856, Fremont ran for the U.S. presidency. No connection for the 1760 date in the ad and Monterey is known.

The enigma is this: why should a patent medicine with a western name and a western advertising theme have been produced and sold in South Carolina? O'Reardon states in his letter, "The stuff from which we manufacture grows abundantly in this state and no where nearer the great centers of population." However, he never identifies by name the plant or herb. The newspaper ad suggests by the following phrase that the plant or herb being used grew in a swamp: "The poison of the swamp has its antidote in the swamp." One label said Monterey was a vegetable extract.

O'Reardon does not reveal any real specifics about Monterey's contents. It likely was somewhat like the group of "cure-alls" known as bitters which usually contained an abundant portion of alcohol, some laxative and perhaps some plant or herb with limited medicinal value.

Other questions abound. Was Monterey a nationally distributed medicine? The newspaper ad states O'Reardon and Wagner & Co., were state agents for Monterey. Was Monterey a franchised operation? One or more of these bottles have shown up in western auctions. Has any western or other collector seen or know of a "Monk's Remedy" bottle?

Preliminary contacts did not answer any of these questions about Monterey.

Although only having the shape of a stomach and not having the glamour of some figural bottles like Indian queens, ears of corn, log cabins or flasks with eagles and famous Americans, Monterey is a 19<sup>th</sup> Century South Carolina colored figural medicine and, as such, is quite desirable and collectible. In fact, it is the only colored figural medicine known from the state.

The author would like to hear from others having information about Monterey, or owning one of the bottles. Please write to him at 2337 Terrace Way, Columbia, SC 29205.

Barry L. Bernas  
239 Ridge Avenue  
Gettysburg, PA 17325  
(717) 338-9539  
barryb6110@aol.com