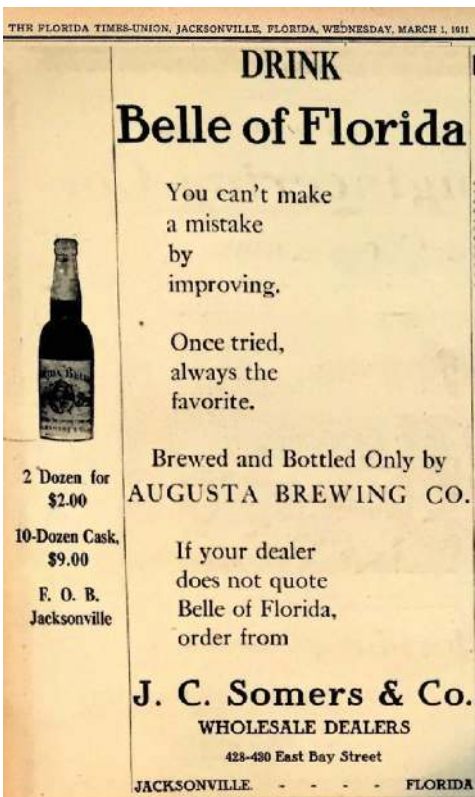


Augusta Brewing Company's Flagship Beers: Belles of Georgia, Carolina, Florida

By Bill Baab

A chance observation on eBay led J. Douglas Herman Sr., to the discovery of a previously unknown variety of an Augusta Brewing Company Export Beer. Herman, who lives in Martinez near Augusta, is the great grandson of E.W. Herman, who founded the brewery in 1888.



He was amazed to see a 1911 Belle of Florida advertisement in the *Florida Times-Union*, the Jacksonville daily newspaper, offered for sale. The advertisement included an illustration of a crown top beer bottle with a Belle of Florida label. Herman knew the brewery's flagship beer in Augusta was the Belle of Georgia. He also knew the company advertised an "Export Beer" called Belle of Carolina, sold in North and South Carolina.

The South Carolina Dispensary system from 1891 to 1907 sold Belle of Carolina Export Beer throughout the Palmetto State. David Tingen, of Raleigh, N.C., documented the sales of Belle of Carolina in North Carolina in his 2015 book, "*North Carolina Brewers and Bottlers, 1774-1908.*" Neither Herman nor his friend, historian and author Bill Baab, who documented the brewery history in his privately published book, "*Augusta on Glass.*" had ever heard of the Florida variety. That's not all.

On Oct. 27, 1899, *The Augusta Chronicle* carried this story: "The Augusta Brewing Company made another large shipment, 150 casks, of their celebrated bottled beer to Cuba yesterday, The Augusta Brewing Company's export beer is becoming a favorite on the island, their frequent shipments demonstrating this fact." On Oct. 30, 1899, a news article in *The Chronicle* noted ". . . the Augusta Brewery's product has an extensive sale today in Geor-



Belle of Georgia beer label, bottled by Augusta Brewing Company, Augusta, Georgia

gia, Alabama, Florida, North and South Carolina, and since the Spanish war, it has developed a considerable trade in Cuba that is growing with every new shipment to the island."

Now to find out more information on the "Belle of Alabama." And does a "Belle of Havana" exist as well? The author wrote to Havana's main library asking if it had information pertaining to the Augusta Brewing Company sales in Cuba. That letter was sent three months ago and there has been no response. He also contacted some Jacksonville bottle collectors to see if anyone had found the labeled Belle of Florida. So far, there has been no reply.



Augusta Brewing Company postal advertising card for Belle of Georgia.



Augusta Brewing Company mugs and shot glass - Mike Newman



Meanwhile, Herman purchased the newspaper to add to his immense collection of Augusta Brewing Company memorabilia and much of it will be on display during the 2019 FOHBC 50th Anniversary Augusta National Antique Bottle Convention.

