

By David Kyle Rakes

There is a scarcity of early Florida soda water bottles which is almost demoralizing to antique bottle collectors who live in the Sunshine State. Only a handful of soda water manufacturers exist who utilized pony or squat-style bottles made of thick colored glass with sloping shoulders and blob tops designed to be closed by a cork and wire bail.

As a Florida resident and antique bottle collector, I've wondered why there so few so I decided to do a spot of research. I speculated that perhaps Florida's population did not expand until long after the squat soda era of 1840-1880, but perhaps there were other reasons. One of my sources was "More Pop," a book written by Californian Alan Schmeiser in 1970. I learned which cities had soda water manufacturers who used the squat sodas, went online to a site which listed the biggest cities by population from 1850-1900 and found the cities listed in "More Pop" were the same. The bigger the city, the more squat sodas.

My research also revealed that most of the cities with early soda water manufacturers were from states in the eastern half of the country being more populated than those in the west. Exceptions were Vermont, West Virginia and Florida where areas were mostly rural and cities much smaller. The bottles used by soda water manufacturers in larger cities were mostly produced by northern glass factories in brilliant colors such as cobalt blue or emerald green. Aquamarine was not a popular color in those businesses.

There were many factors that led to Florida's slow commercial development, not the least of which were hurricanes, year-around hot and humid weather (before air conditioning), plentiful pests

like mosquitoes and perhaps the ubiquitous alligator. The state's largest cities during the 19th century were St. Augustine and Key West. Jacksonville did not reach its status as the largest city until the late 19th century. While it became Florida's largest city by 1900, it did not make the Top 100 most populated cities in the country, but it did become the state's birthplace for soda water manufacturers.

Before it became a city in 1822, however, it was called Cowford by the British because of cattle being ferried across the St. John's River. It was named after Andrew Jackson, military governor of the Florida Territory who eventually became president of the United States. Even before Florida gained statehood in 1845, the city was developing commercially by exporting cotton, lumber and citrus and importing manufactured goods from the north and midwest.

The city quickly became a mecca for tourists who fled severe winter conditions for balmy Florida and hotels and other accommodations were quickly developed along the beaches to house the ever-increasing numbers of winter visitors. Among the new arrivals were two soda water manufacturers who planned to stay and set up shop.

George H. Emery emigrated from England, arriving in Jacksonville in the mid-1860s. He married Constancia M. Baya, daughter of wealthy farmer Joseph Baya of Jacksonville on Feb. 27, 1865. A year later, a city directory noted that Emery & Baya were selling cigars, sundries and soda water. History does not record which Baya was in business with Emery, but I like to think it





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(Above) George H. Emery's Magnolia Soda Water bottle (left) flanked by Antonio Solary's soda (Robin Lennon photo)

was his wife. The business was known as Magnolia Soda Water Works and her middle name began with an M, perhaps Magnolia.

The Emery soda water bottle is not easy to find. The ice blue-colored bottle stands seven inches high with a smooth base and a blob top. MAGNOLIA is embossed in an arch near the top followed by SODA WATER WORKS / JACKSONVILLE / FLORIDA. On the back of the bottle in arched letters is G.H. EMERY. It is unique. The business was in existence from 1866 to the middle or end of the 1870s.

The 1870 Florida Census says Emery was in the retail grocery business and father of 4-year-old son George W. Emery. The 1880 Census notes the fam-



(Right) A pair of Florida's earliest soda water bottles with appropriate background sold by Antonio Solary. (Corey Stock photo)




**ANTONIO SOLARY,**  
MANUFACTURER OF

**Soda Water, Sarsaparilla, Ginger Ale,**

IMPORTER AND WHOLESALE DEALER IN

*Bottled Ale, Porter and Lager Beer, Saratoga Water,  
Gettysburg Water, Vichy, Carlsbad & Kissongon Waters,  
Foreign & Domestic Mineral Waters  
of every description.*

SOLE AGENT FOR G. WEBBER'S  
**CINCINNATI LAGER BEER,**  
*Corner Bay and Pine Streets,  
JACKSONVILLE, FLA.*



**Antonio Solary's neat ad says it all**

ily moved to St. Augustine and Emery's occupation turned to auctioneer. He died July 30, 1880 and was buried in St. Augustine's Huguenot Cemetery.

The second earliest Jacksonville soda water manufacturer was Antonio Joseph Solary, an Italian from Genoa who emigrated to Boston and New York before he finally settled in Jacksonville sometime in the late 1860s. The 1870 Florida Census lists Solary as a retail liquor dealer and Jacksonville city directories list him as operating a soda water business from 1870-1901.

At least three different Solary soda bottles are known. Each is ice blue in color and have smooth bases and blob tops. One is embossed A. Solary & Co. / Jacksonville / Florida, another A. Solary (without the & Co.) / Jacksonville / Florida, and the third A. Solary / Jacksonville / Florida / A&DHC (embossed near the base). The latter letters probably stand for Alexander and David H. Chambers, who operated a glass works in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Solary's business was located at the corner of Bay and Pine streets. A few advertisements listed his products as soda water, sarsaparilla, ginger ale, bottled ale, porter, lager beer, Saratoga Water, Gettysburg Water, Vichy Water, Carlsbad Water and Kissengin waters.

On May 22, 1872, he married Lavina Rohr. He was of the Catholic faith and Father John Macy Bertazzi officiated at the wedding. The couple became parents of four children: Antonio Joseph Solary II, Edward J. Solary, Amelia L. Solary and John Jacob Solary. Tragically, 26-year-old Lavina died after giving birth to John.

In 1900-01, Antonio II joined his father as a business partner, but his father passed away in 1901, ending a 31-year-old business. He was buried next to his wife in the Old St. Joseph Cemetery in Jacksonville. The next comers in the early Florida soda water business were Lewis F. Hoefer of Sanford, Fla., John Wedding, Jacob H. Kornahrens and John Lewis Kornahrens, all of Jacksonville, and D.T. Sweeny of Key



Lavina and Antonio Solary with one of their four children



**J. L. KORNAHRENS,**  
**MANUFACTURER OF**  
**SODA WATER**  
**GINGER ALE, &c.**  
**NO. 105 W. MONROE, COR. JULIA,**  
**JACKSONVILLE, FLA.**

John Lewis Kornahrens' 19th century newspaper ad

West. German immigrant Hoefer had an aqua pony bottle made for his drinks. During the 1870s and '80s, he also was a baker and hotel keeper. He later took his bakery business to Miami where he later died.

Wedding was a partner with Jacob H. Kornahrens from 1887-88. The store was located at 105 West Monroe Street, the residence and business address of John Lewis Konahrens, likely Jacob's brother. However, in 1889, Wedding and Jacob separated, Wedding moving to 146 West Beaver and Jacob to Julia Street. Wedding bottled beer in blob top bottles and Jacob's bottles were Hutchinsons.

John Lewis Kornahrens bottled from 1876 to 1895 when he was joined by Jacob and started the Star Bottling Works. The pair was bottling soda water in mostly Hutchinson bottles. John Lewis was on his own again after the partnership ended in 1897 and the bottling works stayed in business until 1916 when he retired, ending a business after 40 years, a longer time than those bottlers who had preceded him. He died Aug. 29, 1921 and was buried in the Old Jacksonville City Cemetery.

D.T. Sweeny was a bottler in Georgia and New York before establishing his soda water works in Key West. Douglas T. Sweeny was born March 31, 1838 in New York City and died September 26, 1890 in Key West. In 1860, he was employed as a soda water bottler by John Ryan at the latter's Excelsior Bottling Works in Savannah. After moving to Key West, Sweeny owned and operated two businesses: D.T. Sweeny Saloon and Billiard Parlor and D.T. Sweeny Bottler of Mineral Water and Lager Beer. He used four different bottles; however, two of his cobalt blue pony bottles are said to be from his New York operation at 33 Norfolk Street.

When Charles G. Hutchinson of Chicago patented his spring

stopper in 1879, it eventually led to the end of the squat-type bottle. In fact, more than 17,000 differently embossed Hutchinson sodas were manufactured during the middle of the 1880s to about 1910. Development in the 1890s of the cork-lined crown top soon made Hutchinson bottles extinct

SOURCES: Soda and Beer Bottle Closures, by David Gracy, 2003. More Pop, by Alan Schmeiser, Michalan Press, Dixon, Calif., 1970. 1870 Jacksonville, Fla. Census: George Emery listed as a grocer. 1880 St. Augustine, Fla. Census: George Emery listed as an auctioneer. 1860 Jacksonville Census: Joseph Baya listed as a farmer and father of Constancia M. Baya. Florida Marriage Records, 1861-72: George H. Emery married to Constancia M. Baya, Feb. 27, 1865, in Jacksonville. 1866 Jacksonville Retail Directory: partners Emery and Baya. Find A Grave: George H. Emery, b. 1840, d. July 390, 1880, buried in Huguenot Cemetery, a.k.a. Protestants' Cemetery, St. Augustine, St. John's County, Fla. 1870-80 Jacksonville Census: Antonio Solary. Florida Marriage Records, 1832-1974, RF Book 3, Page 228: Antonio Solary to Lavina Rohr, in Jacksonville. Webb's Jacksonville City Directories for the years 1876-77, 1876-79, 1878-79, 1882, 1885, 1891: Antonio Solary listed. Thanks to Corey Stock, Jacksonville, for the research and copies of ads. Find A Grave Memorial by Cousins by the Dozens online site: Antonio Solary grave and headstone found. 1880 Orange County, Fla. Census: Lewis F. Hoefer, baker; 1885 Orange County Census: L.F. Hoefer, hotel keeper; 1900 Miami, Fla. Census: Louis F. Hoefer, baker. Find A Grave: Louis Hoefer, b. Nov. 13, 1850, d. Nov. 12, 1908, buried in Miami City Cemetery. 1900 Jacksonville Census: John L. Kornahrens, manufacturer of soda water; 1910 Jacksonville Census: John L. Kornahrens, age 75, probably retired. Jacksonville City Directories for years 1876-77, 1878-79, 1882, 1879-87, 1893, 1895, 1897, 1899-1903, 1904-05, 1916, 1918: John L. Kornahrens, soda water manufacturer, 105 West Monroe, Jacksonville. 1887-99 Jacksonville City Directories: John Wedding and Jacob H. Kornahren, partners in soda water manufacturing. Certificate of Deathm State of Florida: John Lewis Kornahrens, d. Aug. 29, 1921, b urred in Old Jacksonville City Cemetery.

