

Casting my eyes over the showroom, I landed a fishy-looking bottle

By Bill Baab



Catch of the day! (Edward Moody photo)

Many of my bottle collecting friends, especially those in the Augusta, Georgia area, know one of my many pastimes is sport fishing.

Since becoming a fisherman about the age of 10, I parlayed that interest into a career as an outdoor editor, joining *The Augusta Chronicle* as a copy boy in 1955 and working my way onto the staff by 1957.

An oldtimer who had covered state news and farm news since the 1930s learned of my interest in the outdoors and encouraged me to write a Sunday column. "Boating with Bill Baab" soon made its debut and eventually evolved into columns with a general outdoors themes.

But fishing was my first love and I soon "graduated" from cane poles, worms and crickets to rods and reels and lures and tackle boxes, enough to fill a small store.

After enjoying thousands of bites from several species of fish, in 1969 I also was bitten by the bottle collecting bug.

My main collecting interest dealt with local bottles of the 19th and early 20th century and I soon had enough to fill a small antiques store.

Augusta and Georgia had their first FOHBC National Show and Convention in early August and when I found time during the early buyer session, the first thing my eyes lit upon on one of 168 dealers tables was a fish bottle.

Had I known in 1969 what I now know about antique bottles, I

might have started a sideline of "critter" bottles, including pigs and fish. I also know of Hutchinson bottles featuring an elephant and a camel and an early California, soda with an embossed bear. But I digress.

My "catch" from the show is dark amber and is the complete fish with eyes, a mouth, gills and scales. My only regret is that it didn't put up much of a fight, costing only \$18. The bottle was made by the Dominion Glass Works of Montreal, Canada (est. 1913)



Here is another version of the fish sent in by a friend. The bottle appears as if it is half clear and half amber. The bottle was made right in the middle of the glass batch, from amber to clear or vice versa. He said the bottles were made for the Eli Lilly company out of Indianapolis and most generally held Cod Liver oil. Rumer has it that Colonel Lilly's wife loved the Fish Bitters bottle. The bottle comes in a variety of colors and there are 4 sizes