

It won't come as a surprise to learn that a number of ACL soda bottles depict portraits of Americans such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln. But it may be surprising to find a bottle adorned with the likeness of **Spurgeon Douglas "Jinks" Hinkle** (1941-2012).



Jinks Hinkle attending the Nicholas County Fall Festival in 2010, two years before he passed away.

Well, putting a likeness of oneself on a bottle is a perk of owning a bottling company.

Jinks Hinkle, as he apparently was known to everybody, was born, raised, and spent his life in Nicholas County, West Virginia, a rural, sparsely populated county in the central part of the state. When he was nineteen years old, he was electrocuted in some sort of a work accident but survived after the amputation of both of his arms. According to his obituary, Jinks was "born with determination and a strong will-power" and was "admired for never considering himself disabled, and for continuing to provide for his family." Jinks Hinkle spent thirty years as the elected County Clerk and an elected County Commissioner of Nicholas County and also started and owned several businesses over the years, including Hinkle's Bottling Company of Summersville, West Virginia. The

Jinks Beverages ACL soda bottle from 1965.

company manufactured and bottled a flavored soda pop called Jinks Beverages, put up in an ACL bottle with the full-body portrait of its owner on the front, including one of the metal hooks he had in place of his arms. The bottle is dated 1965, and the brand apparently did not thrive in the geographically sprawling county with a population of just 22,550 souls in 1970. Nicholas County, West Virginia is more than half the size of the entire State of Rhode Island.

There's more to the story. A veteran soda bottle collector visited Jinks Hinkle in the mid-1980s, long after the brand had become defunct, looking to buy some of his bottles. He was directed from Summersville to the tiny town of Poe, West Virginia, where Jinks lived (population of about 25 people). Apparently, Jinks had made and bottled the soda in a converted chicken coop on his farm in Poe but, suspecting that folks might balk at buying soda bottled in such a facility, had the bottles labeled with Summers-

ville, the county seat, instead of Poe. Jinks became agitated and angry at the outsider inquiring about his busted company, ordering the collector off his property with a shotgun. Scuttlebutt in Poe was that Jinks, in a fit of anger after his soda bottling company went under, had crushed the remaining glass bottles with a bulldozer and buried the remnants on his farm.

Jinks Hinkle died on July 6, 2012 at the age of seventy-one, survived by his wife of 51 years, his son, and two granddaughters. The bottle is considered rare today, with perhaps 12-15 examples known.

Terry McGovern Carpenter (1900-1978) was another politician and businessman who put his portrait on ACL soda bottles.



Terry Carpenter, who once said, "Sure, I want to help out poor people. Because come the revolution, they'll go right for the biggest house in town and I happen to live there!"

Born in Iowa, Terry Carpenter lost his father at a young age and started working at seven years old to help his mom make ends meet. Terry hawked newspapers and candy on the streets and slept in the hallway of the house when his mom was able to rent his bedroom to a boarder. The family moved to Scottsbluff, Nebraska when Terry was 16. He had an intense work ethic and an equally intense desire to become wealthy, which he did.



Undated photo of Terry's Freshette store in Terrytown, Nebraska, selling Terry Carpenter's brands of soda pop and ice cream for a nickel apiece.



Terry's ACL soda bottle, made with an unusual and attractive textured and striped glass surface. Purchase required a refundable bottle deposit of three cents, in addition to the five cents charged for the product itself. Terry Carpenter told a reporter, "Politics is a dirty, double-crossing business, which is why I like it."

[Next Page] A campaign button from one of Terry Carpenter's many runs for federal, state and local political office. He ran unsuccessfully for Governor of Nebraska in 1934, 1940, 1950 and 1960 and for Lt. Governor in 1938 and 1974, but also served for twenty-two years as the Scottsbluff area's representative in the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature.



[Left] Undated photo of one of Terry Carpenter's "Terrible Terry's" gas stations.

[Below] A road map of Colorado issued by Terrible Terry's gasoline chain, which operated its own refinery and thereby allowed the chain to sell gas more cheaply than the national brands.



He started an incredible array of businesses in Scottsbluff, including a grocery store, creamery, restaurant, gasoline refinery (Nebraska's first), coal store, liquor store (the first to sell drinks by the glass), brick factory, gravel mine, and a regional chain of gasoline stations called "Terrible Terry's" which undercut the major gasoline brands and had a loyal following.

During World War II, Terry Carpenter enlisted in the Army Air Corps, served honorably, and left the service with the rank of Major, immediately resuming building his capitalist empire. Terry developed a reputation as a tough character with a soft spot for the underdog. As his wife put it, "Terry came from the wrong side of the tracks and didn't want to go back, and he tried to help people so that they didn't have to go back, either."



Terry Carpenter became a politician, switching political parties back and forth from Democrat to Republican five times! He lost several elections but was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1932, serving one term before running for mayor of Scottsbluff. He won that election, too, but was forced to resign after a year when allegations arose of a conflict of interest between his mayoral duties and his many business interests. Undeterred, Terry simply incorporated a new city near Scottsbluff, which he named "Terrytown," which still exists today, with a population of about 1,200 people. In 1952, Terry was elected to the Nebraska Legislature (the only unicameral legislature in the country) and represented the Scottsbluff area for the next twenty-two years.

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One of Terry's businesses that interests us collectors today is the manufacture and bottling of carbonated, flavored soda water put up in ACL bottles. Dated 1949 and named Terry's, the bottles depicted the bespectacled likeness of (who else?) Terry Carpenter. The back of the bottle perhaps reflects Terry's business acumen. It proclaims, "Try our delicious creamery products, including Terry's Senator Ice Cream, Butter, and Homogenized Milk. Inspect our creamery, [which is] modern, clean and new. Compare creameries and their products, and your judgment will be ours."

Interestingly, the ACL states that the product was made in "Terrytown, Scottsbluff, Nebraska," thus neatly avoiding any rivalry between the two adjoining municipalities and their respective soda-buying consumers. Although never elected to the United States Senate, having lost elections to that body in 1936, 1942, 1948, 1954, and 1972, Terry nonetheless called his dairy products "Terry's Senator Ice Cream," etc. He once said, "Even when I lose in politics, it helps me in business."

Terry Carpenter died in 1978 at the age of 78, leaving behind his third wife, Hazeldeane, and three adult children, a small fortune, and a thriving little city bearing his name but with no hard feelings in Scottsbluff, which named a park in his honor. The bottles are rare today, with perhaps 20-30 known in the regular 12-ounce size and only two or three quart-sized bottles.

I want to add a final word about rarity, desirability, and prices. At the end of the day, the price of a particular ACL soda bottle, like any collectible, simply reflects supply and demand. Although objectively hard to find (with a very limited supply), both the Jinks and Terry's bottles do not command huge prices since the demand for these bottles is not great. A nice example of either may be acquired for \$200 to \$400. Other ACL soda bottles with a far greater supply also have a far greater demand and thus bring greater prices than these two. ACLs depicting bikini-clad beauties will always have an obvious attraction and bring good prices even though they are relatively available. However, few bottles have more interesting stories than the Jinks and Terry's.



[Above] A bumper sticker from one of Terry Carpenter's five failed attempts to win election as U.S. Senator. Terry had an unconventional political platform, promising equal pay to men and women for equal work, to immediately halt all American foreign aid, and to outlaw the Communist Party.

CREDITS:

1. Photo of the Jinks Beverages bottle by Chris Weide ©2022
2. Obituary, Spurgeon Douglas "Spinks" Hinkle, West Virginia Memorial Gardens, Calvin, WV, 2012, www.findagrave.com
3. Sweeney, Rick, *Collecting Applied Color Label Soda Bottles* (3d ed. 2002, PSBCA)
4. Wikipedia, Terry Carpenter
5. Lawrence, Tom, *Terrytown Celebrates 60th Anniversary*, *Gering Courier* (Nebraska), June 25, 2009

