

# Augusta Museum of History Celebrates Bill & Bea Baab's Donation of Bottles

by Bill Baab

Photos courtesy of Lauren Virgo, Augusta Museum of History

**AUGUSTA, GA.** - Many examples of a collection of 531 bottles from a brewery, patent medicine men, mineral water and soda water bottlers, mostly from Augusta, were placed in public view last November 12 at the Augusta Museum of History.

They joined 81 Augusta pharmacy bottles dating from 1830 through the early 20th century, plus merchants' whiskey jugs manufactured by master potters in nearby North Augusta (across the Savannah River) and Trenton, South Carolina.

The massive collection was donated to the museum by Bill and Bea Baab, who wanted to leave a legacy to their adopted hometown that future generations could enjoy. He was born in Glenside, Pennsylvania, she in Bangor, Maine. The collection was started in 1969.

The bottles, pottery including vessels from Chinese immigrants, and Goofus glass pickle jars were placed on glass shelving in a state-of-the-art display case. It was lighted by non heat-producing lamps top and bottom. Rectangular patent medicines like large and small sizes of the River Swamp Chill & Fever Cure and Barry's Malarial Antidote were stood on their ends and anchored by wire collars whose ends were placed in a special wax. The rows of such bottles will not tip over in a domino-like effect should the case be jarred.

Mineral water bottles from Georgia and South Carolina were joined by a massive pottery churn from a Georgia pottery and whiskey jugs from the Thomas Hahn Pottery in North Augusta and the William F. Hahn Pottery in Trenton, South Carolina. He was Thomas's father.

Bill Baab is a longtime member of the Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors. In 2011, he was inducted to its Hall of Fame.

## The Baabs' Bottles The Bill and Bea Bottle Collection

Augusta Museum of History



This extraordinary collection of bottles and other forms of containers has been amassed over forty years which began as a hobby but turned into a passionate avocation. Baab purchased some bottles but often crawled under buildings, sifted through Augusta Canal mud, and searched through dumps, to possess that special, often one-of-kind bottle. He has been dubbed and referred to as the "Bottle Man of Augusta."

### Mr. Bill Baab, Jr.

Born Jan. 29, 1935 in Pennsylvania, Mr. Bill Baab has lived in Augusta since 1940. On January 8, 1966 Baab married his best friend and life-long companion Beatrice (Bea) Ruth Sudrabin. They were not blessed by children, but owned five dogs during their first 45 years of marriage.



In 1955, Mr. Baab joined The Augusta Chronicle as a copyboy. Two years later he was named to the staff after forging his journalistic career by helping out on the sports desk and writing book reviews. Baab began writing a column, "Boating with Bill Baab," in 1957. In June of 1964, he became The Chronicle's outdoor editor. Mr. Baab retired from The Chronicle in January 2000. After retiring, he continued to edit the newspaper's Fishing Page.

Mr. Baab has been collecting antique bottles and antique and contemporary pottery since 1969. He has written hobby-related feature stories for magazines. He served as Southern Region editor for "Bottles & Extras," the publication of the Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors, until June 2011. He was given the federation President's Award in 2004 and 2006 for his contributions. In 2011, Mr. Baab was inducted into the federation's Hall of Fame.

In 2007, he and his wife self-published a book about Augusta bottles called "Augusta on Glass." Supplements featuring Augusta area dairies and their bottles (2011) and Augusta drug stores of the 19th and early 20th centuries (2010) were also published. His wife, Bea, did the printing, collating and binding by herself. They had lots of technical help from Mrs. Kathy Hopson-Sathe.

In the spring of 2014, the Baabs decided to donate their 531-bottle collection, along with a few local merchants' jugs, to the Augusta Museum of History. They also have donated more than 3,500 other Augusta-related artifacts.

Flanking display case information panels

As proud as can be.  
Bill and Bea Baab



Baab Preview Event

