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## South Carolina Receives *H.L. Hunley* Custody

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# Flotsam and Jetsam

## **SOUTH CAROLINA RECEIVES H.L. HUNLEY CUSTODY**

**By Christopher F. Amer**

The U.S. Navy and the South Carolina *Hunley* Commission signed a Programmatic Agreement on August 6, 1996, which spells out the respective roles of the state and federal government in the management of the Confederate Submarine *H.L. Hunley*. The agreement states that the United States will retain title to the *Hunley* while the state of South Carolina will have custody, in perpetuity. The navy and the commission agreed to cooperate on a number of issues regarding the vessel's future treatment

including site protection, archaeological investigation, conservation, and eventual display.

*A Hunley Oversight*

*Committee* was

also established to guide the agencies in the management of the vessel. The agreement clears the way for South Carolina and the navy to begin planning the archaeological excavation, raising, and conservation of the *Hunley*. The formal signing ceremony in North Charleston, South Carolina, included Senator Strom Thurmond, State Senator Glen McConnell (Chairman of the *Hunley* Commission), Dr. William Dudley of the Naval Historical Center, myself, and a host of commission members and other officials, all of whom spoke about the importance of the agreement and the remarkable cooperation between the state and federal government. In his remarks afterward, Dr. Dudley stressed that it would cost several millions of dollars to do it right, but that it would be worth it. After the ceremony, Jonathan Leader of SCIAA and I presented to the commission the preliminary findings of the joint National Park Service-SCIAA Assessment Project which was conducted in May of this year.



The *Hunley* Commission.

## **Blob Tops and Soda Water**

**By George Pledger, Hobby License #218**

One of the pleasures of diving in South Carolina is the diversity of artifacts found in the area's rivers and streams. Many fellow divers have had their dives "made" by being presented with a fine example of an early soda water bottle in their collection bag.

Soda water bottles are often called "blob tops" by divers due to the sturdy construction of the tops of these bottles. It should be noted that there were many different methods of fashioning tops of bottles, but between 1840, and the advent of a reliable crown top around 1892, the blob top was the preferred method. The heavy construction of these bottles was required to handle the high pressures associated with soda water manufacture. The earliest of these bottles were blown into simple cup molds. Later, they were blown into more sophisticated two-piece molds. However, all can be classified as "blown in mold, applied lip," or BIMAL, which is a term used to distinguish this method from "free blown" or made in "automatic bottling machines," or ABM.

The soda water manufacturers required that bottles be returnable and reusable. The sealing method progressed from a pressed-in cork stopper found between 1840 and 1882-5. These were oversized stoppers and were pressed into the bottle with a lever and then wired down. Being under considerable pressure when the wire was removed, the bottles went "pop." Hence the name. Since these "pop bottles" did not travel very well until the invention of the crown top, the term was not common outside the coastal counties.

In 1882, the reusable, prewired "lightning stopper" was patented and appeared in local papers around 1885. This was truly a



This "CKL" bottle from 1870-80, when the Kornahrens company was being run by Carl L. Kornahrens, shows the typical "blob top." (Photo by George Pledger)

reusable stopper and was designed so the currently used blob tops could be back fitted. This kept the