

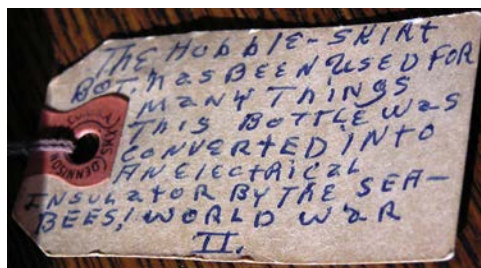
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Website Article: **No. 1298**

Date: April 2013  
Words: **577**  
Rights: First Serial  
Photos/Illus: **8**  
Price: Open  
Periodical: Open  
Category: History

## Coca-Cola “Hobble Skirt” Bottle As An Electrical Insulator



(Fig. 1 WWII Insulator)



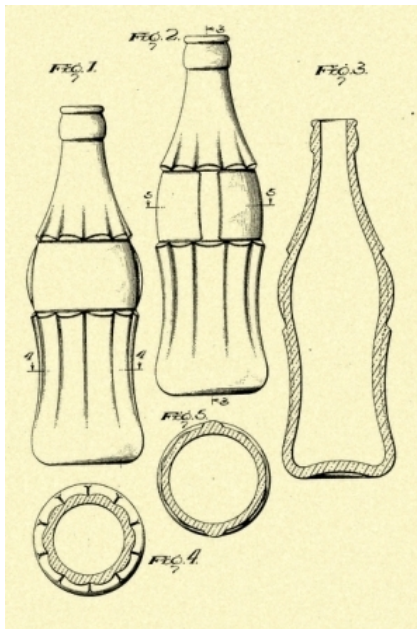
(Fig. 2 WWII insulator tab)

Researched, illuminated, and presented

By  
Cecil Munsey, PhD  
Cultural Historian

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As author of the 1972 best-selling book, *The Illustrated Guide to the Collectibles of Coca-Cola* (published by Hawthorn Books, Inc. of New York City), I get e-mail and phone calls almost daily from collectors, historians, et al asking questions about the world-famous beverage and especially about the world's most famous bottle, the "Hobble Skirt" (shaped) Coke bottle (Figs. 3 & 4).



(Fig. 3 Patent drawing of Coke bottle shape)



(Fig. 4 "Hobble Skirt" Coke bottle)



(Fig. 4a Hobble Skirt postcard)

Most of the time the people sending the e-mails or making the phone calls will ask about a specific item and ask what is its value ("price"). For a number of reasons I don't provide price information.

Recently, however, I was pleasantly surprised to receive the following email from Doug McCoy of Marietta, Georgia who did not ask for price information but rather something historical.



Doug McCoy e-mail:

***“Dear Dr. Munsey, I am looking for information about the use of Coca-Cola bottles modified to be used as [electrical] insulators during WWII. Attached are some photos of one [of the ‘insulators’] I found recently. Do you have any photos of Coca-Cola bottles being used as an insulator? Also, do you have any information about them?”***

***Thank you, Doug McCoy.”***



*My response to Doug was:*

***“Doug, I featured the insulator of which you wrote, on page 77 of my book, THE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO THE COLLECTIBLES OF COCA-COLA that was published by Hawthorn Books, Inc. of New York City in 1972.***

***The caption of the picture is: ‘the hobble skirt bottle has been used for many things other than to contain Coca-Cola. The bottle shown was jury-rigged into an electrical insulator by the Seabees during World War II.’***

***I have no further information on the Seabees’ created-by-necessity invention of the “insulator”.***

***The one pictured in my book I photographed in Atlanta at the Coca-Cola Archives where I spent the summer researching for the book.***

***By the way, I would be interested in the details of how you came to acquire the “insulator” you now have in your possession.***

***Sincerely, Cecil Munsey, Ph.D.”***



His reply to my request for further details was:

*“Thank you for your help. In answer to your question, I found the Coke bottle insulator at the “springtime in Atlanta” collectors’ show while room hopping. I am third generation Navy, I collect bottles and insulators AND work for a power company, so thought it was great item that included all three elements of my life.*

*Doug McCoy”*

## SEABEES

After receiving Doug’s last response (above) I went back to the Internet and did some further searching and stumbled upon the website of the national Seabees’ Museum in Rhode Island.

FYI: Seabees is a branch of the U.S. Navy’s Construction Battalion [CB] (Fig. 5)



(Fig. 5 Seabees Logo)

They built bases, bulldozing and paving thousands of miles of roadway and airstrips, and accomplishing a myriad of other construction projects in a wide variety of military theaters dating back to World War II (1942).

Regarding their WWII improvised invention of a Coke bottle electrical insulator their efforts in that arena were not limited to the Coke insulator featured in this article. Being as creative as they were I found that they also invented an **insulator tree**, if you will, featured here as (Fig. 6).



(Fig. 6 Coke bottles being used as insulators during WWII)

## HOW DID COCA-COLA BOTTLES BECOME SUCH A READILY AVAILABLE COMMODITY TO SEABEES IN WORLD WAR II?

General Dwight D. Eisenhower sent a telegram requesting ten Coca-Cola bottling plants to be built for the troops overseas on June 29, 1943.

At the beginning of the war, Robert W. Woodruff, president of the Coca-Cola Company, issued an order to **“see to it that every man in**

**uniform gets a bottle of Coca-Cola for five cents wherever he is and whatever it costs the Company.”**

At the close of the War, 64 bottling plants had been shipped abroad to be as close as possible to combat areas in both the Pacific and Europe (Fig. 7).

Military personnel consumed more than 5,000,000,000 bottles of Coke during WWII (Fig. 8).

Step right up, amigos... Have a Coke

...Yank friendliness comes back to Leyte

Naturally Filipinos smiled when their Yankee comrades-in-arms came back with them. For they took the place of him, but also they brought back the old sense of friendliness that America stands for. You find it quickly expressed in the simple phrase: *Have a Coke!* That's the warmest or warmest way to say Hello and to yourself! Remember the price that

offices with it! Coca-Cola has become a symbol of good will—an everyday example of how Yankee friendliness follows the flag around the globe.

Our fighting men meet up with Coca-Cola many places overseas, where it's helpful in the way Coca-Cola has been a jobmaster "where they had it!"

"I'd like to drink Coca-Cola," he says, "it's the only thing that does the job of making me feel like I'm home."

5¢

© 1945 THE Coca-Cola COMPANY

**(Fig. 7 Coke on the front line during WWII)**

"Coca-Cola goes along"

Drink Coca-Cola Delicious and Refreshing

It's the real thing

Ice-cold Coca-Cola gets a hearty welcome. It's the answer to thirst that adds refreshment. Coca-Cola has that extra something to do the job of complete refreshment. It has a taste that's uniquely satisfying—a quality that's unimitatable. That's why the only thing like Coca-Cola is Coca-Cola itself. Thirst asks nothing more.

5¢

© 1945 THE Coca-Cola COMPANY

**(Fig 8. Coca Cola)**

**Bibliography:**

**Munsey, Cecil. The Illustrated Guide to the Collectibles of Coca-Cola,  
Hawthorn Books, Inc., Publishers, New York City 1972, page 77.**

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**WEBSITE CONTACT INFORMATION**

<http://www.CecilMunsey.com>

**More than 1,000 free-to-copy well-researched articles  
And other materials of interest to bottle collectors and historians**

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