

South Carolina's Trademark of 1929-1934

In April 1928, Dr. Roe E. Remington, of the faculty of the University of Minnesota, was in Charleston, South Carolina, on a tour of the State, under the auspices of the recently created food analysis commission. He believed that a fact of great industrial and agricultural importance to the nation, and especially the southeastern part of the country, could be accomplished if vegetable products of this state were found to have sufficient iodine content to prevent or check simple goiter*, a common affliction over a wide area of the continent. (Iodine is a micronutrient required for thyroid hormone production.) Dr. Remington was recommended to the Food Analysis Commission as a desirable man to take charge of the work, and it was announced shortly thereafter he would accept the appointment, and he announced where he would establish his headquarters. **goiter – an abnormal enlargement of the thyroid gland that causes coughing, difficulty breathing, hoarseness, and difficulty swallowing.*

At the recent session of the legislature (in April 1928), a bill was passed creating this food products commission and appropriating the sum of \$15,000 for making the investigation. Dr. Remington was engaged by the commission to come to South Carolina and look the field over with the idea of directing the work. He has returned to Minnesota and will give his decision soon. "Of course," Dr. Remington said, "I had to get much of my information from men familiar with conditions. The prospects, as I see them, are most promising."

Once again, we see South Carolina taking a lead role and being a pioneer in such work, and her enterprise in making provision for this investigation of her food products is most commendable and is attracting attention over the country. Some universities have carried on such work just as they carry on other investigations, but South Carolina, as a State, is taking the lead in this important matter.

In October of 1928 we see Dr. Roe E. Remington, Laboratory Director of South Carolina Food Research Commission, addressing the Young Men's Business League, making analyses of various foods and food crops grown in the Orangeburg section of South Carolina. He's looking toward establishment of the fact that there's sufficient iodine content to prevent the formation of goiter and other glandular diseases.

These troubles are very prevalent in many parts of the United States and only a very small percent of the natives of this section are affected. It is thought that the reason for this is the presence of iodine in the foods grown here. Dr. Remington believes if this be true, there will be a great incentive for the finishing of food stuffs

grown in this section for sale in the goiter infested areas of the United States and may attract settlers here as well as food finishing industries.

January 1929 – The food analyses program in South Carolina has resulted in the discovery of a large content of iodine in the products of the state's soil. As a result, the program will be continued in 1929, according to the State Budget Commission's adoption, which will continue to be carried out by the General Assembly. The budget board met in the governor's office and voted to recommend the continuation of the appropriation for the food analyses work.

At a conference in Columbia, it was brought out that the surveys and analyses made so far by the commission disclose that the food products of this state possess large quantities of iodine. It was stated by Dr. Weston that South Carolina potatoes possess sufficient iodine to absolutely prevent goiter, if eaten daily. Other food products also have a high iodine content.

It was anticipated that the disclosure along this line would revolutionize the farming industry of this state in creating a nationwide demand for the products of the Palmetto state's soil. It is expected, especially in the goiter belt of the north, where eighty-odd per cent of the people have goiter, foods raised in South Carolina's iodine laden soil would be much in demand.

February 1929 – We see that the official "trademark" of South Carolina farm produce has been copyrighted and registered by R.F. Taylor, Chairman of the new Industry Commission. Specifications of design, "The outline shall be the exact geographical map of the state of South Carolina in black. In the middle of the state there is to be a palmetto tree in green. Printed in plain letters diagonally across the map of the state shall be 'Fruits and vegetables grown in South Carolina contain a sufficient amount of iodine in its natural state to prevent or cure goiter and other conditions due to a deficiency of iodine. There shall be arranged inside the boundaries of the map, in their natural colors, the following fruits and vegetables: peaches, plums, apricots, dewberries, raspberries, strawberries, purple and white grapes, cherries, tomatoes, cucumbers, asparagus, lettuce, cabbage, Irish potatoes, snap beans, green peas, turnips, carrots, corn, onions, squash, eggplant, radishes, and okra. On the trademark will also be a picture of a Jersey or Holstein cow, or both."

May 1929 – An account of South Carolina's discovery of iodine content in fruits and vegetables grown in the state was presented by Dr. James A. Hayne, chairman of the State Board of Health, speaking to the conference of state and provisional health authorities in Washington, D.C.

The health officer urged other states to conduct similar surveys while speaking on “endemic goiters and its relation to iodine content of food.” “We know,” Dr. Hayne said, “that South Carolina fruits and vegetables contain sufficient iodine for nutritional purposes and if a person eats South Carolina fruits and vegetables they can reasonably expect not to have goiter. The survey has brought out so many new facts in regard to iodine content of foods that it should be brought to the attention of North America, with a view that they might make an investigation and study of these facts and provide that such food analysis be made in their own states.”

“The survey for goiter in South Carolina shows that we have a small amount of goiter, and one naturally says, if we have so much iodine in food, why do we have goiter at all? This is easily answered when we consider that all people do not eat South Carolina vegetables. A study of the situation seems to point that the vegetables used in the cities of South Carolina largely come from other states.”

Dr. Hayne pointed out that the iodine content of vegetables is greater in the mountainous regions of the state than in any sections, except on the immediate seacoast.

June 1929 – A large number of delegates from the South Carolina Research Commission traveled to Detroit’s national convention to deliver an address on iodine in the state and an exhibit shown along with literature that will bring directly to wide attention the value of this state’s high percentage of iodine foods.

August 1929 – Hugh L. Oliver, Director of the Georgetown County Resources Commission read a paper and elaborated on the history of the iodine movement and stated, “Someday, South Carolina may be known as ‘the Iodine State’ wherever English is spoken.”

Dr. Robert S. Bailey, a resident originally of Georgetown, now residing in St. Stephens, said that South Carolina has been suffering from sleeping sickness, and must be aroused. He pointed out the results accomplished by the iodine project.

In September of 1929, an interesting, surprising story of two young men from Conway, who took an old strip-down Ford, for which they paid \$25, and after one of the young men finished with it, it resembled a “crazy quilt” in appearance, painted the sign, “South Carolina – the Iodine State,” placarding the car body.

“That sign was our only worry,” said young Jordan, “All the stops on the trip to and from Montreal, Canada, everywhere we stopped, crowds gathered about us wanting to know what the sign meant. I can now say that they know where South

Carolina is and that it is the ‘Iodine State.’” With a total investment of \$25, these two young men stated that they made the entire trip to Montreal and returned with less than \$50 each and with only .15 cents motor repairs.

Another interesting story known about the Breeden Brothers Auto Company in Bennettsville, who painted the 125’ long roof of their company building with “Bennettsville, S.C.” and underneath, the slogan, “South Carolina, the Iodine State.” A light was placed on the water tank nearby so the inscription could be readily discernible at night, and during the day, is very visible by aviators over Bennettsville.

The massive public health screenings that accompanied the military draft during World War I had raised awareness about the problem of iodine deficiency in the United States, particularly in those areas of the mid-western prairie states where there were lower iodine concentrations in the soil. It made sense, therefore, for South Carolina to promote the high levels of iodine in the products produced in this state.

We now hear where, in October 1930, South Carolina automobile license plates, now being manufactured at the State Penitentiary in Columbia, will be put on sale in November. The 1931 plates will have green numerals and letters on a field of gray, and below the numerals are the words, “S.C. Iodine State 1931.” Orders for 217,000 licenses were placed from the prison by highway authorities at a cost of five cents each. The first plate was finished and delivered to Governor John G. Richards.

Incidentally, Lt. Peck, of the Southern Railway detective force, remembers when automobile numbers were purchased from the “ten-cent” store. He doesn’t remember if the numbers were required to be registered at the courthouse, “you just went to the ten-cent store, picked out the three-number combination you wanted, nailed them to a board, and hung the board on the back of your car. There was no such thing as ‘tags’ as we know them today. This was in (about) 1910.”

Then we discover that in the year 1917, the State Highway Department was founded; this being the year of the first ever issued license plates. They featured black letters on a white background and were six inches wide. These pioneer plates’ lengths varied up to 14¼ inches, long enough for all sorts of superfluous wording.

A States Dinner in Boston – it’s October 1930 – an outstanding social event of the National American Legion Convention, consisting of places for 1,140 Legion and distinguished guests will be at the state dinner. With each state having a separate table, South Carolina’s will be decorated with baskets of blue and white flowers carrying out the state colors, a lovely silk state flag, and there will be fruits,

vegetables, and other products of the “Wonderful Iodine State” on their table; each place setting marked with a miniature state flag, and small market baskets of jellies and fruits will be given as favors.

During October of 1930, we see that new industry began moving into upstate South Carolina with the express purpose of providing more of “our superior vegetables over those of sister states.”

Then we hear in November 1930 Columbia’s radio station “WIS” is producing radio talk shows whose guests have been invited to the White House by President Hoover, and Mrs. W.C. Catheart, Director of Children’s Bureau of South Carolina, who will be making a presentation about the “wonderful Iodine state” for our dependent children. (We learn the “WIS” call letters stand for *Wonderful Iodine State*. Pretty neat!)

June 1931 – Despite a lot of bickering back and forth from auto owners, various advertisers, and organizations, for and against the state’s slogan the “Iodine State”, the South Carolina Highway Department once again approved the iodine slogan contested by many . . . among whom was our Natural Resources Commission. 200,000 license plates have been ordered from the State Penitentiary for 1932.

June 1932 – Bickering over the state’s slogan continues, though the slogan on South Carolina license plates has changed, slightly, for 1933, a change to the “Iodine Products State.” Many are questioning why there’s no advertising on the products themselves in grocery stores which state “contains iodine.” Good question!

June 1933 – One tells the story of the moonshiner who labeled his corn liquor with a memory of South Carolina’s self-advertisement as the Iodine State: “*Calhoun County Corn, from the heart of the iodine belt. Not a goiter in a gallon.*”

August 1933 – Chief Highway Commissioner Ben Sawyer announced today that the “Iodine State” slogan has been omitted from license plates, “The Legislature has changed the license law, requiring the expiration date of the license plate to be added, eliminating space available for the slogan.” He says, “I regret very much that the words ‘Iodine Products State’ do not appear on the plates in 1934.”

In the United States, iodized salt first became available on grocery shelves in Michigan on May 1, 1924 (surprising to me!). The region had largely been severely iodine deficient, and Hartsock, in 1926, described an outbreak of thyrotoxicosis in adults who took iodized salt living in the Great Lakes region of the goiter belt. Salt was initially fortified with iodine at 100 mg/kg, resulting in an estimated average

intake of 500 µg iodine daily. However, many individuals in other states continued to resist efforts to make iodized salt freely available for the next several decades. Although a bill by the U.S. Endemic Goiter Committee in 1948 proposing the mandatory introduction of iodized salt in all states was defeated, the proportion of U.S. households which use only iodized salt has remained stable at 70%–76% since the 1950s. Estimates are that the proportion of U.S. households with access to iodized salt now exceeds 90%.

The State's historical markers erected from 1929-1936 had the official state-shaped trademark as a header that read "All Rich In Iodine" (described earlier), but by 1936, the markers no longer carried the slogan; it was replaced by a palmetto tree flanked by an "S C". It's important that the marker program was briefly part of the larger campaign to promote South Carolina's agricultural production. Put the project, program, trademark, slogan, and all the State's efforts together, South Carolina seems to have made all its people, as well as many of our United States' people, much healthier. For that, I give them a big "thumbs up"!

And finally, a brag for Berkeley County, as far as is known, there are only two of these oldest historical markers, with the state trademark "Rich In Iodine" still in existence in the state . . . and they are both in Pineville!

Keith Gourdin

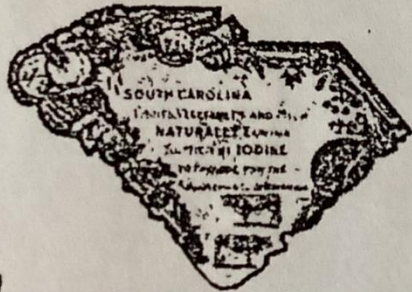
References/Resources: News and Courier, Charleston newspaper; collections from library of Keith Gourdin.

South Carolina

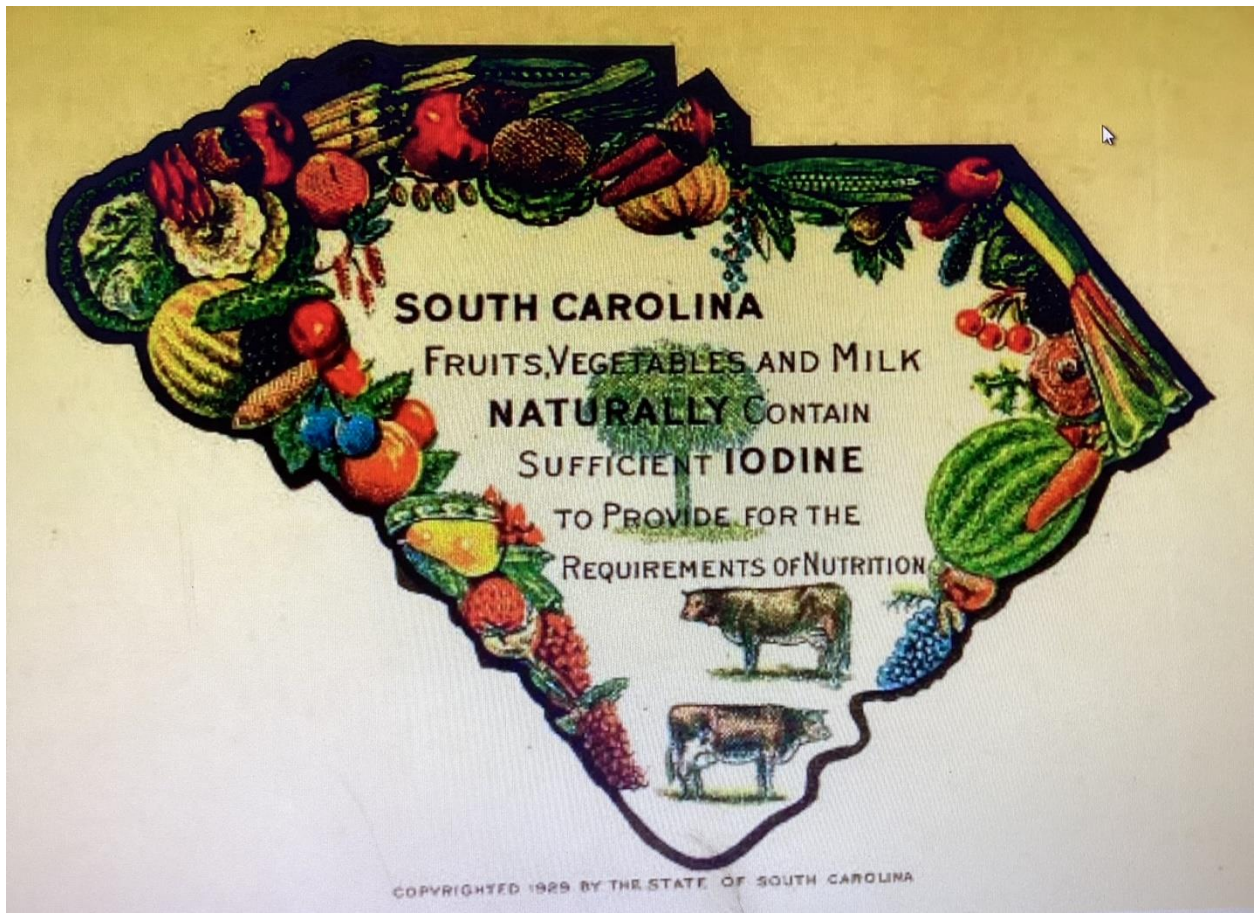
(Iodine State)

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