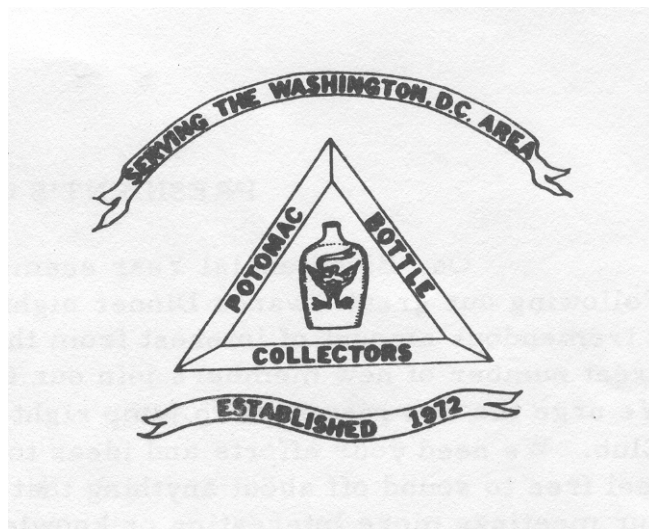


THE "POTOMAC PONTIL"



Official Newsletter of the Potomac Bottle Collectors

Volume - November - December 1976

Contents of this newsletter may be used by interested parties in the interest of bottle collecting if appropriate credits are given. THE POTOMAC PONTIL is published bi-monthly. Your comments are welcome. Newsletter correspondence should be mailed to Bob Hoag, 4820 Birch Lane, Alexandria, Virginia 22312.

The Potomac Bottle Collectors meet the first Monday of each month at 8 p. m. in the meeting room at the Coca Cola Bottling Plant on Seminary Road, Alexandria, Virginia, near Bailey's Crossroads. Visitors are welcome and membership is open to all collectors.

Officers - - 1975 - 1976

President	--Vern Bauckman	Vice President	--Tom Johnson
Treasurer	--Kaye Johnson	Secretary	--Bonnie Bauckman
Librarian/Archivist	--Randy Bates	Editor	--Bob Hoag
Directors	--Mike Russell and Bus Nusbaum		
Membership Chairman	--Anne Thomas		

NOTICE

I am sorry, but the Awards Dinner will NOT be held December 6, 1976 as planned, but will be held the regular meeting night next month (January 3, 1977). Make sure you sign up for the January Awards Dinner at the December 6, 1976 meeting -- it is important to us to know how many people are coming so we can prepare the food. Sign up with one of the following people--Wanda Kirkpatrick, Mary Lou McCalley, Pete Padgett, or Zane Shaffer --everybody sign up so we can make it a big night!

VERN

Make sure to attend the December 6 meeting--the slide program of the Charlie Gardner Collection is really something else -- don't miss it !

From "Latest Under The Dirt,' Historical Bottle Diggers of Virginia, 4/76

FIRE GRENADE BOTTLES

The first American patent for a bottle containing a specific liquid for extinguishing fire was issued to Alanson Crane of Virginia in 1863. These bottles contained carbon tetrachloride and were to be thrown at the fire and broken with the liquid putting out the fire. These were put up in all parts of the house so they were ready at a moment's notice.

Another inventor was given a patent for a type of bottle extinguisher and sold this patent to a famous company, Harden Hand Fire Extinguisher Company of Chicago. This patent was for a bottle about 6" tall and cobalt blue. They are embossed with the company's name and the date patented-- August 8, 1873-August 14, 1883. They also had two other grenades--one embossed Harden Hand Grenade Fire Extinguisher Star in a star design, and the other a three part bottle held together with wire, embossed the same with the wording Nest System Pat. Oct. 1889.

Hayward patented a fire grenade in 1871 and had two types --one which is embossed Hayward Hand Fire Grenade and came in amber, blue, green, and very light ambers; the other Hayward Hand Grenade Fire Extinguisher which came only in blue.

Other companies which manufactured fire grenades were American Electric Fire Extinguisher, using an amber bottle 1311 tall; Babcock, who had companies in Elmira, N. Y., and Chicago, and called their fire grenade the Babcock Hand Grenade Non-Freezing and was made in amber and green, about 7" tall. Some of the rarer fire grenade are California Fire Extinguisher which has a bear embossed on it, Harkness Fire Destroyer, which is blue glass and 611 tall, Hazelton High Pressure Chemical Fire Keg which is amber and shaped like a barrel. The Y-Burn Winner is an egg-shaped bottle in blue.

Collecting fire grenades can create quite an unusual collection because of the variety of shapes, sizes, and colors. Because they had to be broken to be used, they are found complete and mint, which adds to the collection.

ANNUAL SHOW AND SALE

All Contracts are out for sales tables and displays with a fantastic response already. Looks like the big show is shaping up fast.

The auction for the Bottle Show (3/19/77) is going to be a good one, so get your auction bottles lined up. We feel it will be a new twist to bottle shows. Great interest is being shown already.

It is important to sign up as soon as possible for the Show banquet because it looks like it will be a sellout - support your Club and be there! Sign up with Wand, Pete or Zane!

A FANTASTIC DAY, By Bill Elder, Ohio Bottle Club

Send articles. Get involved. Heck, I don't know any articles that you haven't already heard. You know the one about Fearless Durzo and the guy that padlocks his wallet and throws the key away before going to a bottle show. Well, I've been out with Durzo several times and all experiences to date are repeats. You see some bunnys and pheasants and some wild animal tracks. Freeze to death. Buy his breakfast. Get arrested and come home tired and empty-handed. Seriously though, "Fearless" is one of our more enthusiastic diggers. ..when someone plants him in a dump; but as a scout, he stinks. He travels through a prospective area about ten steps to anyone else's two. He looks like a rabbit going through an area, but the problem is he is just seeing how fast he can go and walks over the bottles without seeing them. The times I've been out with Big Huge Bedore wasn't much better. Freezing; poison ivy; and digging in dug dumps and worrying about snakes and dogs, and being buried alive, and coming home again tired and empty-handed.

Well, I've been discouraged by all of this and when my Dad asked me if I wanted to go with him to an old antique shop where he used to buy some of his bottles, I was more than willing as this is my way of collecting. Well, the shop is located on a rural road around Nashville, Ohio, that used to be heavily traveled by antiquers and those interested in nice scenery. However, the new super highways have detoured the traffic, and the area now sees only an Amish buggy now and then. Upon arrival the sign on the porch was so weather-beaten, you could only make out A---qu-- of the original "Antiques. " A knock on the door produced an old man just as weather beaten as the sign. After a brief conversation, he recalled the days my Dad used to frequent his shop. Over a cup of coffee, he told us that he had closed up shop in 1955 for a lack of business because of the new road, and went into brokering furs from local trappers for a livelihood. When asked about bottles, he said he had some in the shed out back that if we wanted the lot he would give us a good price. Otherwise, if we just wanted one or two, he'd have to get a couple bucks over the prices on them due to inflation.

Well, there on cobweb shelves were no less than 50 historical flasks, aquas, ambers, olives, 15 Zanesville Swirls; bitters, barrels, cabins, etc., in all colors, pontiled medicines; cobalt sodas from Barberton, Mantua and Ravenna; 6 gray pottery bottles from the Burkhard Brewery with cobalt stars and eagles on the back, four panels, and a cobalt horse-drawn beer wagon on the front four; a set of Warner's Safe Cures in olive, cobalt, honey amber, puce, deep amber and one open pontiled in emerald green. The price for the whole shot was \$800.00. The most expensive single bottle was \$22.00, for inflation was \$2.00. I whipped out the checkbook. Needless to say, however, I was politely told that in over 65 years, he had never handled a check and would not start now!

Between Dad and myself, we had only \$30.00 cash money with which I got two Zanesville Swirls and a Mantua Cobalt Soda. Being Sunday, banks were closed and there was no place near where we could get a check cashed. I said I'd take off work on Monday and would be back, but he said he was leaving for his first plane trip to California at 11 p. m. Sunday night to visit a sister for a couple of months, but he would call me when he got back.

That night at home I was watching the 11:30 p.m. news and had my newly acquired bottles on the coffee table when the announcement of the plane crash caused me to faint, knocking the coffee table over and breaking the bottles. When I came to, I was on the basement floor. My wife said the pipe wrench must have slipped while I was working on the water line, and knocked me out.

Well, it might not work for all of you, but now when I come back from digging, discouraged and caked with dirt and mud, I hit myself on the head with a pipe wrench and I feel a whole lot better.

This story by Bill Elder of the Ohio Bottle Club won him a 14" trophy at their annual show banquet. The trophy had a figure of a man standing on a base with his hands extended well above his head. In his hands he clutched a large...golden...bull!

Dave Lindsay

BOTTLE PUZZLE

by:Randy Bates

A Z N R E T S E W H T R O N F T E
 K G C O V X W H Q A E T D F P D L
 E Y C H E V Y C H A S E J F W J T
 E A P R S M L I O E C D H A S O P
 R S Y J F H E R R M A N R R V C R
 C K M R A A F U S W L D E K Q O E
 K Y C R K R G E G T J I S I U N M
 C I P B S P D H E Q T K V P L N A
 O E Q Y T E M T U U D H R A A E R
 R P A D N S U I A E G Q S L L L K
 X G Y L B X N G G F M D M M O L S
 L L E E C N C Y G E R U U E C K E
 N Q D I O Q Z A C C E I H R A M L
 N R H F P S T B O D M M O U K N R
 A B N E R D R U R Y E O F W A L A
 M G F K A R J T N P A M E O T D H
 R L D A H A U I W C R O C H E W C
 R G R W T F X S E Z K D V N X L Y
 E S S O B W S M L Q A H K E B A B
 H H C B I F L Y L Q Z K T P O Z S
 F K W A R D S R T K N O E K C M N
 J D O M E A R A O N J E E N W T V

NAMES TO FIND(ALL LOCAL BOTTLES)

C.GAUTIERS
 ROCHE
 BOSSE
 McKEON
 JF HERRMANN
 ABNER DRURY
 HEURICH
 JD OMEARA
 PALMER
 ROCK CREEK
 TAKA COLA
 NORTHWESTERN
 HARPER
 BABEK
 FK WARDS
 CHEVY CHASE
 WAKEFIELD
 EDWARD J QUINN
 GG CORNWELL
 DJ OCONELL
 KRAEMER
 HUME
 THARP

12717 Gordon Blvd.
Apt. #115
Woodbridge VA 22192

November 15, 1976

The Honorable
Jimmy Carter
President-elect
Plains, Georgia 31780

Dear Mr. President-elect:

As President of the Potomac Bottle Collectors, serving the Washington, D.C. area, I would like to extend from our Club a warm welcome to you and your family. We wish you tremendous success in your new and huge job ahead. We found out that you are not only going to be a neighbor, but we have another thing in common--bottle collecting.

As President of Potomac Bottle Collectors, I would like to extend to you an honorary membership in our Club. We hope you will accept and, possibly, after you get settled in your new home, you might be able to make some of our meetings. I think you will find them educational and fun. Meetings are held at the Hospitality Room, Coca Cola Bottling Company, Seminary Road. Alexandria, Virginia, the first Monday in every month at 8 p.m. Enclosed is your membership card and Club patch... I'm sure the hundreds of thousands of collectors all over the United States will be glad to hear you are a member of a super active bottle Club.

Will you please let us know if you will accept. It's nice to know you're down to earth like the rest of us bottle diggers.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Vern Bauckman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "V".

VERNON A. BAUCKMAN
President



THIS IS NO FISH STORY

Randy Hauman, San Francisco bottle digger extraordinaire, his pretty wife, and his vivacious mother accepted our invitation to attend our bottle show on the 10th and 11th of last month. Little did he or we realize that Randy's digging in Oregon would be more exciting than what he had previously done in the "City of fabulous digging". The Hauman's motored into the State via one route, and intended to leave by another, enabling them to see as much of our beautiful state as they could in a long weekend's time.

After a day on the road they stopped to have lunch the Southeastern part of our State, at what appeared to be an abandoned homestead. Randy is never one to pass up a digging opportunity, so he looked around while the others ate. He discovered a coffin shaped depression in the ground behind what was once a barn. In probing he hit glass, so using his hands in the soft volcanic sand (as he had left his digging tools at home) he found the remains of a wooden box about eight inches down.

Using a small knife and a screw driver he managed to break through the soft pine wood and there in the box was a sight to behold. It was a coffin full of old bottles! Included in this strange burial were an amber Canton lady's leg bitters, an AQUA BooneKamps Sternsdorft bitters, a green and an aqua Twitchell blob top soda from Philadelphia, an unlisted GOLDEN AMBER Vichie Water, a blue Lancaster pontiled soda, a Sloper and Frost Blob top soda from Conn., a green blob top V & ID Clinton Woodridge soda, a green blob Dyottsville soda, a green blob Sumitt Mineral Water from Sacramento, an unlisted greenish blue blob soda with your editor's son's name on it (J. Day & Co.) and countless other bottles of lesser value, including a broken Danial J. Fry's Family Medicine from Salem, Oregon.

Randy, his wife, and his mother spent that night and the next morning washing bottles in their motel room in Salem. He said the motel manager was more than curious about his boxes full of old bottles which he packed to and from his pick-up. Little did Randy know that in Salem, the day before his arrival, a motel was seriously damaged by a man who took a cardboard box to his room and then left it to explode.

The most incredible part of Randy's story is still a mystery. Who, or what and when did someone bury a coffin full of old bottles. And why were there so many different bottles from so many different parts of the country in this unusual place. Did, Oregon indians do it as a religious rite in their victory over this lonely homestead? No one knows, and perhaps never will; however, their exhumation was accomplished and in so doing it made at least one little boy (Jimmy Day) very happy.

We look forward to seeing Randy at our next show and sale and is there any doubt he will come!

BITTERS BOTTLES

For centuries people associated pain with a visit to a practitioner, either medical or magical, and expected to be given a bitter tasting medicine. The patient was given a dose and sent home. Finally England began to manufacture these bitter remedies which were fondly called "bitters" and later began exporting them to America. Someone finally noted the alcoholic content, also noting that it looked, tasted, and felt like whiskey and declared "It is whiskey." Americans began to manufacture its own brands, some of which were 75% alcohol while whiskey got by on 4

The bitters business flourished for two reasons. One--it was famed to be a cure-all in a time when people were concerned about their well being and doctors were few and often ill-educated themselves. These remedies contained herbs, extracts, roots, flavoring and much alcohol. They were proclaimed to cure a number of ills including gout, rheumatism, ulcers, ring worms, jaundice, sore throat, indigestion, and headaches--not to mention premature old age and spring fever. The manufacturer even invented new ailments to keep the public interest.

The second reason for Bitters popularity was that they allowed for drinking of alcohol legally during Prohibition. By adding herbs and bitters to alcohol, it became a medicine and thus was legal. Often the alcoholic content was higher than the wine and beer of that day.

Business boomed and brought success to a number of American industries such as the manufacture of bottles and paper labels, advertising, etc. , and caused the formation of new businesses such as national advertising and the first outdoor billboards. These were seen on barns, fences, rocks, and along railroads. Signs were posted in Yellowstone Park, Atlantic City, Niagara Falls and in Pennsylvania, men were hired to chop down an entire mountain forest to put up a sign with letters 4001 high to advertise Plantation Bitters. Advertising also eventually included testimonials from happy users.

Bitters were in their heyday during Prohibition for obvious reasons. As Prohibition died out, the demand for bitters died also. The Pure Food and Drug Act in the 1920s brought the bitter s industry to a close because of the uncertain contents of the product, the narcotics and stimulating drugs they included and especially because they were frequently being used by children and babies.

Most bitters originally sold in plain bottles, usually Hostetter in amber color with a paper label. As they became more popular and more people were manufacturing virtually the same product, advertising was required, and embossing was adopted to individualize each product. Later as this method became commonplace, a gimmick was needed and the figural was born. The more unusual and interesting the shape, the more appealing the product.

Bitters are most commonly found in amber, but also appear in cobalt, clear, green, yellow, etc. Shapes are numerous. There are well over 1,000 different specimens, some being the same brand name and manufacturer but a variation of the mold commonly seen. Prices range from \$2.00 to \$16,000 recently paid by a collector for a puce specimen.

Perhaps the best and most complete book on Bitters bottles is by Richard Watson and is called Bitters Bottles. There is also a supplement to this book, and another being prepared at present.

From "Middle Tennessee's Notes From a Bottle Bug"

Gives a few words to the wise. Bottle Collectors Bill and Donna Witsell, while scrounging through litter in an abandoned country store, uncovered a half-gallon pharmaceutical bottle, still corked and filled with a liquid. After cleaning a label was revealed, identifying the contents as Tincture of Opium, manufactured by Sperlock & Neal, Nashville druggists before the turn of the century. After phoning local druggists to get estimates of the bottle's age and value, they received several offers for the bottle, but were advised to destroy the contents. Bill Witsell then called the Nashville FBI Office to report his find and its disposition. Just before hanging up the phone, Bill asked the FBI agent what the contents would have been worth. "If you still had it in your possession, that opium would be worth about two years" was the chilly reply.

Submitted by Randy Bates

WASHINGTON'S TOP TEN

The following is from the "PONTIL".

"Clubs in all 50 states were originally approached with the idea of compiling a list of their favorite bottles with an offer from "BOTTLE NEWS" to pay a fee for the report to the club treasury. Iowa has come through. What about the rest of the Clubs in the other 49 states?...Editor,Bottle News,6/76"

What happens is you find out the 10 best bottles native to your state and give any info you have on them(age,price,history) ...As I see it our club can go two ways ---(1)We could do the top 10 of Virginia and have a joint project with the other Virginia clubs or (2)We could do the top ten of Washington,DC.

How about it? Write the best 20 bottles respectively, native to the Washington DC area.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 20. _____ |