



The Potomac Pontil



The Potomac Bottle Collectors Serving the National Capital



June-July 2000

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June 27th Meeting

Elections: We will accept any additional nominations and vote on club officers. The current slate of candidates is president-Phil Godwin, vice president-Allan Einseln, treasurer-Ken Anderson, secretary-Jim Sears.

Program: To be announced

Refreshments: Ed Reisman

Show & Tell: If anyone has an amber Bridwell hutch, we would like to see it. Otherwise, bring in your recent acquisitions and items for sale or trade.



July 25th Meeting

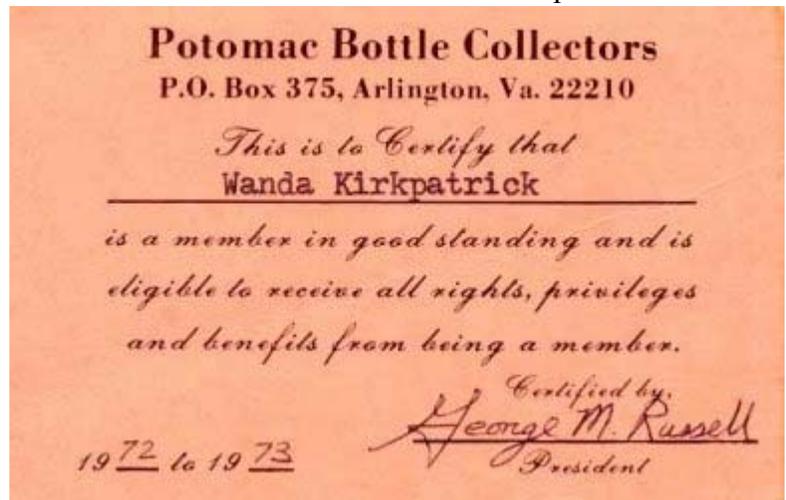
Program: Phil Godwin will explain the process of selling items on eBay. Phil says that photographing bottles for eBay is one area in which he has had little success. We would be grateful if one or more club other members would bring in cameras and demonstrate how to take decent bottle photos.

Refreshments: John Hunsaker

Show & Tell: Bring in your best bargains or worst lemons from eBay.

May Meeting:

John Krause showed soda and beer bottles that took a wide variety of internal closures. While most of us were already familiar with Codd bottles, we learned that there are many variations of closures involving marbles. **Show & Tell:** Members displayed an eclectic assortment of items including an SSS advertising poster and a labeled Christian Xander's Old Private Stock Hock Wine bottle. Life member **Wanda Kirkpatrick** sent in her original club membership card



(shown above) and also a box for viewing items under black light. The box was originally used for examining gems, but it works just as well for bottles. Everyone present was impressed with the black light box except possibly **Allan Einseln**, whose repaired Success to the Railroad flask was ogled in it.

Business Meeting Report

Lee Shipman hosted a business meeting on June 14, 2000 where we discussed the items below.

Meeting location: Our club is beginning to outgrow its current meeting room, and we may lose it to an office renovation this fall. Lee Shipman suggested her church basement as a possible alternative site for club meetings. The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer is located on MacArthur Boulevard near Glen Echo in Bethesda. Several club members are already familiar with this church from Lee's bottle sales at its strawberry festival earlier this month. Attendees of the business meeting visited the church basement and agreed that it would provide us plenty of space to meet and display bottles. We also found it reasonably accessible. If other club members feel that Bethesda would not be a convenient place to meet, they should notify the club officers and propose alternative meeting places. Even if we ultimately chose another site, we could use this church basement on an interim basis at a cost of \$10 per meeting.

Picnic: We would like to have the club picnic in September or late August. We believe that many club members have other plans for the Labor Day weekend, and we do not conflict with the Delmarva or Winchester bottle shows. Therefore, we propose Saturday, September 9th as a possible picnic date. Please check your calendars and report any potential conflicts with this date at the June meeting. The default picnic location is the Belle Haven Marina site of last year's picnic. We are also investigating the cost of the Potter Paines site used for previous club picnics.



Library Display: Allan Einseln intends to put together a display of bottles that can be used to promote the club at libraries and at any other locations that have public showcases available. One reason for this display would be to promote a new meeting location for the club. Allan is primarily seeking local bottles. He does not need permanent donations, but he does hope to keep bottles for an extended display period. If you give Allan a bottle for the display, you should also give him an index card providing information about it. The display items would likely be relatively low value bottles. However, if anyone wished to include rarer bottles, Allan would seek insurance for the display.

Upcoming Bottle Shows

June 24 (9AM to 3PM) Point Pleasant, West Virginia: West Virginia Bottle Club's 5th Annual Show & Sale at the National Guard Armory, Route 62, 3 miles north of Point Pleasant.

July 9 (9AM to 3PM) Muncie Indiana: Midwest Antique Fruit Jar and Bottle Club Summer Show & Sale at the Horizon Convention Center.

July 14 & 15 (Fri.- Sunrise to 5 PM, Sat.- Sunrise to 2 PM) York, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Bottle Collectors Bottle Festival 2000 at York Interstate Fairgrounds, York, PA.

August 13 (9 AM to 3PM) Washington, Pennsylvania: Washington County Antique Bottle Club's 26th annual show at the Alpine Star Lodge, 735 Jefferson Ave., (1/8 mile from I-70, Exit 6).

August 19 & 20 Denver (Fri. early buyers 1 PM, Sat. 9AM to 5PM, Sun. 9 AM to 3 PM), Colorado: FOHBC Expo 2000 at the National Western Complex.

September 10 (9 AM to 3 PM) Lewes, Delaware: Delmarva Antique Bottle Club 8th Annual Show & Sale at the Cape Henlopen School, 1520 Kings Highway (Rt. 9), two miles west of the Cape May/Lewes ferry terminal.

September 17 (9 AM to 3 PM, early buyers 7 AM) Winchester, Virginia: The Apple Valley Bottle Collectors Club 27th Annual Show & Sale at the National Guard Armory, U.S. Rt. 50 West (at I-81, U.S. 50 West, Exit 313).



Around the Swamp . . .

Bottles from our Nation's Capital

by Andy Goldfrank



The destruction of Washington's older downtown architecture, including hundreds of mid-nineteenth century row houses and stores, has continued unabated for almost thirty years in the name of "progress" for commercial development, federal government office buildings, and public projects such as the Convention Center, the MCI Center and Metro. During the last few years, the pace of "progress" by demolition appears to have dramatically increased with the demise of individual, or even entire blocks of, historic structures. Historic preservation efforts, led by the D.C. Preservation League, have started to make some inroads to maintain portions of the historic urban fabric of Washington by promoting the social, economic and urban design value of this architecture and thereby preventing wholesale devastation of this core downtown. (Take a look at the D.C. Preservation League's web site, www.dcpreservation.org, which discusses the organization's efforts, such as working with developers in designing preservation-compatible structures and encouraging the D.C. government to enforce preservation laws to prevent the unauthorized demolition of historic structures as occurred in Georgetown recently.). The increase in destruction of this older architecture has been a double-edged sword for bottle collectors in the Washington, D.C. area.

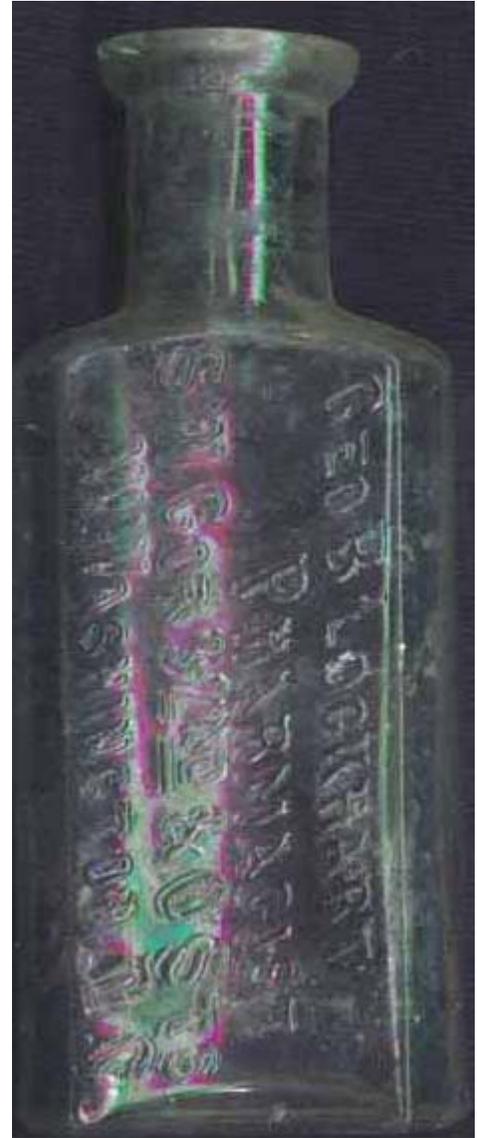
On one hand, the construction boom has created a plethora of locations where bottles can be salvaged before destruction -- and I certainly have taken advantage of these opportunities. On the other hand, the quantity of development sites combined with the accelerated rate of demolition, excavation, and construction impedes one's ability to gain access to these locations and to recover hidden treasures before they are carted-off as landfill to Suitland, Maryland. (I have followed the dump trucks from a number of sites, where I could not get permission to look for artifacts, without much success.). These are the gains and pains of digging in Washington, D.C.

One my experiences illustrates these problems. A couple of months ago, I located a round brick-lined privy, approximately 6 feet across, behind an 1830s row house that was slated for demolition and excavated 18 feet of loose ash, dirt, and roofing debris. At that point, after sinking an 8-foot probe to the handle without a change in texture or content, our digging crew decided to hold off going deeper until the demolition was over and the mechanical excavator had reached that depth. We were also motivated to wait because the only bottles recovered were post-Prohibition screw top whiskeys plus the contractor had asked us not to enter the site while the wrecking crane was there because of potential building and site instability. I measured off the exact location of the privy and waited for construction to proceed. Every few days, for weeks, I checked the spot. Earlier this month, while on a break from

the office, I noticed the side of the privy had been exposed by the excavator -- hurriedly, I altered my plans for that evening in order to dig at the end of the construction crew's workday. When I went by six hours later, shovel in hand, it was with utter dismay that I discovered that the construction crew had not only finished exposing the rest of the privy but also had totally removed it and finished excavating the entire site!

There are also examples of rewards that have resulted from this construction boom. In a prior issue of *The Potomac Pontil* (April 2000), I wrote about a townhouse construction project, which was the site of an old landfill in Georgetown, that produced hundreds of pre-1900 bottles. It appears the landfill was completed by the mid-1890s, as upscale, middle-class homes were constructed on lots adjacent to the site between 1893 and 1898. The layers went back progressively to at least the 1870s, as the base revealed several pontiled bottles and early smooth-based colored sodas. One of the discoveries was a clear, rectangular, local drug store pharmaceutical, approximately 3 and 3/4 inches tall, with the following embossing on the front: "GEO B. LOCKHART/ PHARMACIST/ S.W. COR. 32ND & O STS/ W.WASHINGTON, D.C." The base has an embossed patent date of June 4, 1889. Neither the bottle nor the proprietor, George Lockhart, is listed in *Antique Bottles from the Washington, D.C. Area* (3rd ed. 1995). Baist Insurance Maps of Washington, D.C., from the 1930s, indicate in parenthesis that Wisconsin was formerly known as 32nd Street, and another insurance map from the late 1880s notes that 32nd Street was formerly called High Street. In addition, the Baist Insurance Maps into the 1940s referred to Georgetown as West Washington.

This isolated find of an unlisted clear drugstore normally would not be sufficient fodder for an article if it were not for a bottle that I recovered from a construction site six months later. A couple of days before a row of buildings was to be demolished in downtown Washington, D.C., I gained the right of entry from the construction foreman to look for bottles and other artifacts inside the structures. Armed with a flashlight and crowbar, I scoured the buildings (with a friend of mine for safety) from basement to attic and found a number of bottles from around 1910. Many of these bottles originally had labels, but the paper had long since rotted because of water damage. At the back of one 1870s commercial structure, I came to a closed door about 3 feet high, which upon closer inspection was actually nailed shut with old nails. After significant effort (and a cloud of dust), I pried open the door and entered a windowless, cold-storage space with a 5-foot ceiling, measuring 6 feet deep and 5 feet wide. The beam from my flashlight probed the dark space to reveal nothing on the floor but instead a wood wall that was about 4 feet high, with an 8 inch gap between the wood wall and the outer brick wall. Pulling down the wood wall, we discovered disintegrated newspapers, letters, and account books ranging back from the early 1900s to the 1870s. There were a number of blown local milks, food bottles, and even an amber pharmacy bottle from St. Paul, Minnesota. A Bitterquelle also came out with a label that was neat looking but rotted.



In the far corner, I noticed the silhouette of another food bottle, which I eventually extracted. This bottle had two labels -- one plastered on top of the other. The bottom label, as the picture shows, states "PURE/TO . . . UP/ F. WOLFF/ NEW YORK." This tomato catsup bottle evidently was recycled (or the tomatoes had gone really bad) for the second label states: "GEO. B. LOCKHART/ PHARMACIST/ TURPENTINE/ Cor. High & 2nd Sts. Georgetown, D.C." This bottle, based upon the sequence of street addresses for what is now known as Wisconsin Avenue, clearly predates the embossed pharmaceutical discussed above and is from before 1890. Old maps from the 1880s also indicate that today's O Street was formerly known as 2nd Street.

Either of these Lockhart bottles alone is no spectacular find, however, together these bottles reveal the history of Wisconsin Avenue. As the wrecking crews continue to descend on Washington, D.C., not only are we losing historic sites but also the time capsules hidden within the walls and soil.



Hope you enjoyed this column. Any comments, suggestions, or questions, please let me know either by calling me at 202/588-0543 or by emailing me at amg_sticky@yahoo.com. Good luck searching, Andy.

Show Reports

Kutztown, Pennsylvania: The Coal Cracker Bottle Club's second show took place on May 27th at Renninger's Antique Market. Although the club had a covered site for its dealers, rainy weather limited the show's success. Approximately two dozen dealers were present, and they managed to sell some nice pieces of stoneware as well as several jars and bottles.

Millville, New Jersey: Wheaton Village hosted a bottle show of about 60 tables on June 18th. The admission fee of \$7 (\$6 for those who bothered to pick up a coupon) may have kept away much of the general public, but plenty of serious collectors showed up. One prominent dealer described the situation as a bunch of circling sharks and not much chum. Still, the admission price was worthwhile for collectors who had never before visited Wheaton. A glassblower demonstrated the incredibly difficult task of creating a gemel flask, which is a two-chambered bottle sometimes used for storing oil and vinegar. Cure collectors got a special treat when Carl Sturm gave a tour of the special cure bottle exhibit currently on display in the Wheaton Village museum.



D.C. Hutch Brings Record Price on eBay !

On May 21, 2000 a medium honey amber L.T. Bridwell hutch sold for \$1725. This is likely the highest price ever paid for a Washington, D.C. hutch and may be the most paid for any D.C. bottle. Our club's bottle book values the aqua version of this bottle at \$85 to \$100, but we do not even have a listing for this hutch in amber. The seller has recently offered a good variety of local bottles under the eBay name whitebirches. Before he began his eBay sales, this man claimed to own 6000 Washington, D.C bottles, which means that local collectors should continue watching his sales for years to come.

The winning bidder buys bottles on Ebay under the name st.jobotl.coltr, while the under-bidder is known as rbrown4134@aol.com. Both of these collectors now own examples of the amber Bridwell hutch. On June 18th rbrown4134 won a bruised specimen with a \$1200 eBay bid. We cannot expect to see many more amber Bridwells for sale because the seller of this second hutch notes that only three are known.



Below is the unedited description of the bottle taken from eBay....

You are bidding on the Rarest Hutchinson bottle that Washington D.C. has to offer. The bottle states in arch L. T. BRIDWELL 615 7th ST. S.W. WASHINGTON D.C. Registered. There has only been a few known, one was 25 years ago sold in Fredricksburg, Virginia, and this one that I'm holding. I found this bottle 30 years ago. This is a very large hutchinson, the height is 8 inches tall, and 2 3/4 inches wide. The bottle is medium honey amber and is whittled with applied neck, B.I.M. The bottle is in near mint condition. There are a few light scratches on the bottle and a few light scratches on the left shoulder top. The bottle has bubbles throughout, there are 3 micro flea bites on the top left shoulder. There is a very light possible stain on first 2 inches inside bottle near top shoulder. This bottle is the rarest bottle I have in hutchinson's and there hasn't been any for sale ever except one in Fredricksburg and this one. I was offered \$300.00 for the bottle 26 years ago because none existed. My reserve will be high. Shipping, handling, priority mail and insurance will be \$12.00. Payment due within 7 days of auction ending. Money orders only. U.S. sales only. Email response within 3 days of auction ending. Prompt shipment made when payment is received. Good Luck Bidding on this Rare Hutchinson.

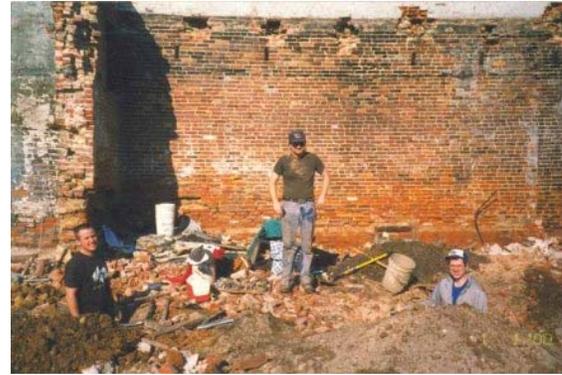
Whitebirches

Thank go to Peter Rydquist for letting us know about this rare bottle.

The Y2K Dig

by Peter Rydquist

The hole on the far left turned out to be the privy. →



The Y2K dig occurred on January 2, 2000. The site was a part of a vacant city lot that had once contained a block of 1860s row houses. The remaining buildings had recently been razed and any asphalt or concrete in the lot had been removed. It would be easy to find a few privies, or so we thought. The four of us arrived on early on Sunday morning for the first dig of the new millennium. After several hours of probing and digging multiple test holes through hard packed rubble, we had nothing to show other than an 1880s Indian head penny. It was found lying on top of the ground! Many spots in the lot were impossible to probe, too much rubble in the ground to probe through. Late in the morning I found a spot that I could probe into and we started another test hole. This hole had some shards and glass from about 1840 in a thin trash layer, but we didn't find anything whole. We found only one brick wall, but couldn't find any others, to indicate it was really a privy. Phil had also found a spot that was probable, and with much effort removing bricks and rocks, and other rubble started to pick up a brick wall about 3 feet down.



The top of the privy ; look at that **black dirt!**

The privy was a 3 1/2' square mortared brick-liner about 6' deep. It didn't take long before we start hitting shards. It appeared that we had fortunate to find a privy that hadn't been dipped and was filled in the 1840s. We hit shards, glass all the way down with the main trash layer about 1 foot from the bottom. Unfortunately, we also hit water and had to bail buckets of water.



Chris has just dug a stoneware crock beer from New York. It's got a crack in the back, but it's still a nice bottle.



Baltimore sheaf of wheat flask just dug by Chris and being held by Phil.

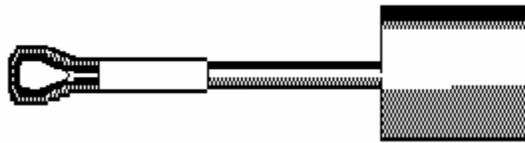


What a big pile of shards came out of this hole. Only a few bottles were found, but overall a very fun and interesting dig.

- stoneware crock beer
- black glass bottle
- 3 small puffs
- Just to left everyone know, the sheaf of wheat flask had the back broken out.

Bottle Digging in the Washington, D.C. Area

The Potomac Bottle Collectors are looking for articles, photos, lists of finds, and other information about bottle digging in the Washington, D.C area. We welcome entries from both club members and non-members, and we hope to publish information on the web and in this newsletter. Exact digging locations and diggers' names need not be disclosed. Peter Rydquist wrote the preceding article, and he will be posting digging stories on our club web site at members.aol.com/potomacbtl/bottle.htm. Contact him at pehraub@aol.com for more info if you would like to contribute.



Odds & Ends

Karl Shipman is currently staying at the Layhil center while he recuperates from a deep thrombosis procedure on his right leg. He will remain at Layhil for therapy through at least the end of June.

Congratulations to Mike Fesano who was married on April 8th in Annapolis. Mike apparently survived his honeymoon, and we were glad to see him at the May meeting.

Mike and Betty Jordan's new address is 310 S.W. 35th St., Ocala, FL 34474. Mike is planning a three-room bottle museum in his new home.

Kathy Roth writes that she has a large collection of milk, soda, liquor, and White House vinegar bottles for sale. Anyone who is interested can write her at 4807 Clemons Ct, Annandale, VA 22003.

Baltimore bottle club members should mark the August 12th on their calendars for the Baltimore club crab feast picnic and confirm their attendance with jimchoplick@hotmail.com (410/308-3416). Many of our members also belong to the Baltimore club, but Baltimore does not send picnic reminders to those of us living outside Maryland. If anyone who is not a Baltimore member wants to start joining in the fun, the Baltimore dues are \$8 for an individual and \$12 per family. For more information email Steve Charing at scharing@home.com or write the Baltimore Antique Bottle Club, Inc., P.O. Box 36061, Baltimore, MD 21286-3606.