

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors Serving the National Capital



November 2000

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November 28th Meeting

Annual Contest: We will hold our annual bottle contest at the November meeting. Categories are collector, junior collector, digger, shard, and go-with. Entries may be anything acquired during the past year except that the digger of the year award is limited to bottles actually dug by club members. Note that shards may include "tear jerkers" broken during shipment, cleaning, or accident as well as the traditional dug shards. If someone brings a camera (hint, hint), we will have pictures of the entries in a future newsletter.

Meeting Location: We will meet in the basement of the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Bethesda. Please see the map below if you have not yet been to this location.

December Meeting

We need to select a date for our December meeting and holiday party. Tuesday, December 19th has been suggested as a possibility. Please check your calendars and be ready to help choose a convenient date during our November meeting.

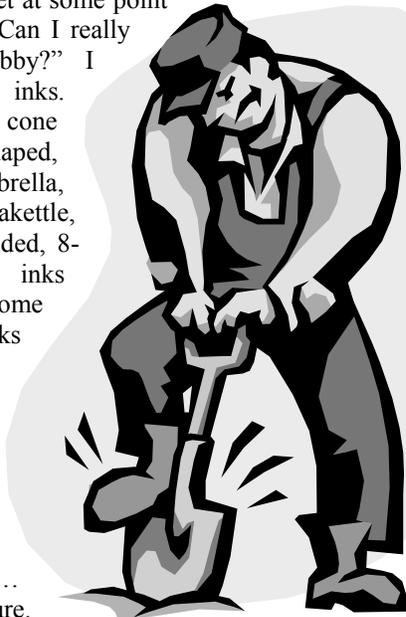
*We Now Have A New Meeting Place:
The Episcopal Church Of The Redeemer*



“They’re never just on top... you gotta dig for ‘em!”

by Hollie Walkley, reprinted from Baltimore Antique Bottle Collectors newsletter

If you are new to bottle collecting, like me, then I’m willing to bet at some point you’ve asked, “Can I really afford this hobby?” I collect small inks. There are cone shaped, cabin shaped, turtle, umbrella, square, teakettle, rectangular, 6-sided, 8-sided, 12-sided inks and more. Some have pontil marks on the bottom and some have been polished smooth. Inks were made in green glass, aqua, cobalt, clear, amber... you get the picture. I could go broke trying to buy just one example of each.



If you’ve listened in on some of the conversations at the bottle shows or the **Baltimore Antique Bottle Club** meetings, then you’ve probably also asked, “What’s this digging these guys are always talking about?” Well, I asked that question, and it turns out that digging is a very real solution to the dilemma of adding to your bottle collection without going broke in the process.

As a bottle-collecting novice, I wanted to learn more about digging so I did some research. **Jim Megura’s Official Price Guide to Bottles** 12th edition devotes three pages to digging including:

- Safety issues: “...never do it alone, since cave-ins are not uncommon.”
- Where to dig: “...behind stone walls in back of old houses...where old outhouses and privies stood...early dumps...river banks, stream beds.”
- Tools and safety equipment you’ll need: Band-Aids and hydrogen peroxide, a long-handled shovel, probe, trowel, rake, pitchfork, work boots, gloves and eye protection.

The Internet was a better source of information about digging. See **Reggie Lynch’s** website *Antique Bottle Collectors Haven* (www.antiquebottles.com) for information and photos of sites throughout the country. **Gary Nilson** of Wallingford, CT (<http://members.aol.com/GaryNKD1QD/tips.htm>) attempts to explain how to avoid breaking bottles while digging, where to dig, and discusses negotiating strategies for gaining property owner’s permission to dig. **Scott’s Privy Page** (www.geocities.com/~privymaster/index.html) is a great interactive Internet site devoted to digging.



I wasn’t satisfied just reading about digging. No offense to **Megura** and the various diggers with Internet sites, but I wanted to learn from the very best. So, I got up early one late summer

Saturday and joined fellow **Baltimore Antique Bottle Club** members, **Phil Edmonds**, **Chris Vaught**, and **Andy Goldfrank**, two diggers from Pittsburgh, PA, **Tim Tokosh** and **Luke Yaos**, and **Peter Rydquist** from Washington, DC. They good-naturedly let me tag along to get

a first-hand look at privy digging in Baltimore City.

Here's what I learned:

- Privy digging isn't for the faint of heart – insects, rodents, weather, and curious on-lookers will all demand attention at some point throughout the day.
- It's a team effort. According to **Edmonds**, "A successful dig happens only through the collective effort of everyone on the dig."
- You will need to know your 18th and 19th century urban history – it isn't just intuition! Successful diggers possess an impressive and thorough understanding of early construction methods, sanitation, immigration, and life styles. They rely on personal collections of maps and books and help determine prime locations to dig.
- A hard hat, several pair of gloves, water, patience, and a sense of humor are equally important.
- Perseverance is an absolute necessity.



"A successful dig happens only through the collective effort of everyone on the dig."
--Phil Edmonds

lives of a household's former occupants, their health, wealth and professions as well as the presence and number of children.

I learned that it's easy to find clues about the health and addictions of people using a particular privy from the type and quantity of medicine bottles, opium bottles, and, of course, beer and other alcohol bottles, found during the dig. If a household included children, diggers may find porcelain doll heads, children's plates, and pieces of doll-sized china. Marbles – the only toys for little boys that seem to survive the years in a privy – are also a fairly frequent find.

During the course of the privy dig that I watched, we found pieces of lice combs, toys, pipes, eating utensils, plates, an intact salt-glaze crock, marbles, doll heads, and more.

I'm looking forward to the next privy dig and a chance to be a part of the team instead of being just an on-looker. Who knows, perhaps I'll find a nice, little ink!

The more time you spend digging the better your odds of finding bottles. **Edmonds, Vaught** and **Baltimore Antique Bottle Club** member, **Dave Matthews**, dug approximately 30 privies over the course of a year. The best finds of the year included an OP green umbrella ink, an IP C.A. Cole soda, an OP Mrs. Cox's Indian Decoction, a Wheeling, VA OP medicine bottle, and numerous blob beers, sodas, and medicines.

It isn't just finding whole bottles that's fun – meeting homeowners and curious passersby coupled with learning about history provide a welcome distraction from hours of physical labor. Diggers find all kinds of artifacts and they spend quite a bit of time speculating about the

Thanks to **Dave Matthews** for the title quote, BABC President, **Steve Charing**, for encouraging me and **Phil Edmonds** for patiently answering countless questions. Thanks also to **Scott O'Neal** (Scott's Privy Page) for allowing us to use a privy photo from his website.



Heinz 57

by Ed Faulkner, reprinted from Richmond Area Bottle Collectors Association newsletter

We have all seen the familiar Heinz bottles easily recognizable by shape. A lot of them have a patent date on them as patented by the Heinz Company. Most of us have heard the term or seen advertising for Heinz 57. But do you know the story of the Heinz Company? The following information is from a booklet put out by the Heinz Company in 1930 giving a history of the company and the original 57 varieties as well as the Heinz Company web site.



Company founder Henry J. Heinz (pictured seated left) started out at about eight years of age delivering vegetables he grew in his own garden to neighbors in Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania. His parents taught him thrift and honesty, which stayed with him in all the years of his business dealings. By the time he was twelve, he needed a horse and wagon to deliver. By sixteen, he had helpers as he was selling to supply a market of Pittsburgh grocers.

Mr. Heinz was very ambitious and knew that if he wanted to get ahead, he needed a specialized product that would appeal to mass marketing. He noticed that people had to buy their horse radish in the form of roots and grind it themselves, not a pleasant task. He decided that this would be a good product to start with, as horse radish was very popular. He went into business with a friend and the Heinz & Noble Company was born in 1869. He devoted about three-fourths of an acre to growing the roots, and the gratings, bottling, warehousing, and selling was done from the basement of a Sharpsburg, PA house. An overabundance of vegetables in 1875 led to the company's bankruptcy. But Henry plunged back in, eventually building a model factory complex along the Allegheny River. He started out on a small scale so he could learn all he needed to know before enlarging the venture. Henry's persistence paid off. By 1896, at age 52, the pickle king had become a millionaire and celebrity. So that he would never forget his beginnings, in 1904, he had the original house put on a barge and floated five miles down the Allegheny River from Sharpsburg to place before his office window in front of the large factory in Pittsburgh.

A. J. Heinz started out with the idea to make foods the best he could, regardless of cost, and then to charge a reasonable price for his services. For over fifty years, he clung to this belief. His high ideals ultimately led him to pioneer for the adoption of pure food and drug laws throughout the world. His son, Howard, continued this philosophy when he took over the company.

Henry led through his maxims. "Heart power is better than horse power," he said, and he motivated people by treating them well. Heinz working conditions surpassed many employees' living conditions. Henry also asserted, "Quality is to a product what character is to a man." His ketchup (first sold in 1876), pickles, jams, jellies, and condiments were made of the finest ingredients – picked fresh, sorted for quality and packed in factories so clean he invented the public factory tour.





“It’s not so much what you say,” said Henry, a promotional wizard, “but how, when, and where.” It was Henry who dreamt up the slogan “57 Varieties,” invented the legendary “pickle pin,” and plastered the Heinz name on billboards, magazines, newspapers, and hillsides. “Our field is the world,” he declared in 1886, after making the company’s first sale abroad. By 1900, salesmen traveled to every inhabited continent – Africa, the Orient, Australia, Europe, and South America – to sell more than 200 Heinz products.

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When this booklet was printed in 1930, his business had grown from one tiny house basement to a plant that covered more than fifteen blocks in Pittsburgh as well as many branch factories. His small garden had grown to 200,000 acres of vegetables. Spices and other products he needed but couldn’t grow were imported to give his products the flavor he wanted. From two women and a boy, the employment roll had grown to over eleven thousand. In 1930, he had 25 factories, 86 sales branches, and 250 receiving stations in the U.S. and abroad.

The Heinz Company was a pioneer in giving employees the many benefits that most others hadn’t considered at the time. He inaugurated the idea of clean uniforms, dining rooms for employees, locker and dressing rooms. He instituted a first aid station, rest breaks, and recreation rooms. Employees were provided with a trained nurse and doctor as well as a dental hygienist. Many other benefits were added for both men and women employees. All this was done because he believed in making his factories a desirable place to work. He believed if employees were happy, they would be better workers and have more pride in the work. He even later built an auditorium for the employees for lectures, plays, and musical performances, and later motion pictures. Howard Heinz continued his father’s visionary ideas.

This was a capsule history from the Heinz point of view. But it was not always easy as the other information from other sources attest. He went bankrupt in the depression of 1875 and reestablished in 1876, and it was uphill from there. He used much advertising to promote his products including ads, trade cards, and the Heinz pickle. The term 57 varieties was chosen for its advertising effect, even though there were more than 57 varieties available at that time.



Bottle Show Reports

Shortly before 9 o'clock on the morning of November fifth, about 100 bottle collectors waited to enter the Singerly Fire Hall in Elkton, Maryland. Additional buyers crowded into the **Tri-State Bottle Collectors and Diggers Club Show** all morning, and by 1 PM paid attendance had passed the 500 mark. The dealers we spoke with seemed quite happy about how briskly their glass and stoneware was selling in the well-lit fire hall. Many of the customers were also delighted with their purchases, but others noted that their didn't seem to be quite enough good glass to go around.



The November 19 **Great Mid-Atlantic Bottle Show & Sale** was far smaller than the Baltimore club's spring show, but sales seemed particularly good. One dealer, who was offering a nice selection of historical flasks and other early American bottles, remarked that he sold five times as much at this Timonium, MD show as he had at Keene. The best bottle we saw changing hands was a gray fish bitters for \$1450. While this the show did seem successful, it would likely have been larger if it had taken place a week earlier. For the second year in a row, the Mid-Atlantic show coincided with the Pittsburgh, PA show. We hope the organizers will coordinate with regional bottle clubs when developing future Timonium shows.

Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

November 26 (9 AM to 3 PM) Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: Forks of the Delaware Bottle Collectors Association 27th Annual Show & Sale at Bethlehem Catholic High School, Madison & Dewberry Ave.

