

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors Serving the National Capital



May 2001

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May 29th Meeting

John Krouse will speak about closures that attach to the outsides of soda and beer bottles. Last year John showed us a wide variety of internal closures such as Codd stoppers and Hutchinsons, and we have been looking forward to hearing the rest of the story on bottle closures.

Show & Tell: Please bring in soda and beer bottles with unusual external closures.

Club Officers: Nominations for club officers will be accepted. Please let current officers know if you would be willing to accept a position. We will be voting on President, Vice President, and Treasurer at the June meeting.

Show Volunteers: **Mike Fasano** is organizing refreshments for our June 23 show. He needs volunteers to help bring refreshments. If you are not able to sign up at the meeting, please call Mike at (301) 624-4065 or email him at fasano@afip.osd.mil. **Andy Goldfrank** is organizing admissions and appraisals at the show. Please contact Jim Sears or Andy Goldfrank if you can help with these activities. Volunteers must agree NOT to buy the items they appraise.



Bottles shown at right are from the London trip that Andy Goldfrank wrote about in the April Newsletter.



Meetings: 7:30 PM on the last Tuesday of each month in the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 6201 Dunrobbin Dr., Bethesda, MD 20816.

President: Phil Godwin

Vice President: Allan Einsein

Secretary: Jim Sears

Treasurer: Ken Anderson

Pontil: Jim Sears (email: searsjim@usa.net, PH: 703/243-2409) & Andy Goldfrank (email: amg_sticky@yahoo.com, PH: 202/588-0543)

Web Site <http://members.aol.com/potomacbtl/bottle2.htm>

Maintained by Peter Rydquist: pehraug@aol.com

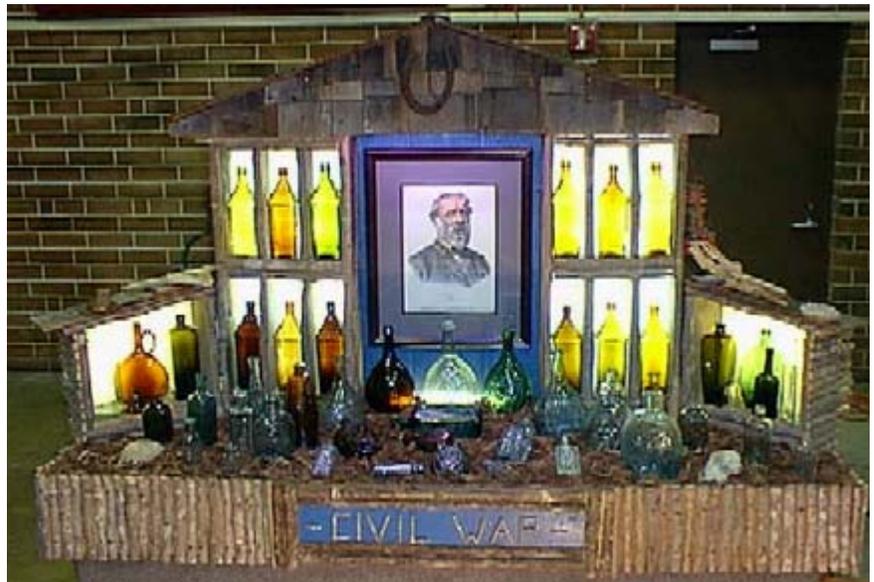
Bottle Show Report – Raleigh, NC

At a time when many antique bottle clubs around the country are declining, the new Raleigh Bottle Club appears to be thriving. Much of the credit goes to Reggie Lynch, who organized the Raleigh Bottle Club's first annual show as well as editing the club newsletter and creating an excellent club web page (www.antiquebottles.com/raleigh/). Reggie writes that his club's objective was to present a show that was affordable (inexpensive tables and admission), comfortable (spacious aisles), and enjoyable to dealers and collectors. This goal was attained on Saturday April 28, when 65 dealers filled 101 tables at the North Carolina Military Center with a large selection of antique glass.



Pictures taken from Raleigh Bottle Club web site

Most of the dealers in Raleigh were local club members offering modestly priced items, but dealers from as far away as Florida brought high quality bottles. One popular part of the Raleigh show was a complimentary program featuring advertisements and articles as well as a list of the dealers. The paid advertisements in the program were critical in allowing the club to make a small profit on the show. Finally, the show featured six displays, including Sonny Howell's award-winning group of Civil War bottles, which is pictured at right



While no first show goes perfectly, the only noticeable problem in Raleigh occurred when the show room was not unlocked as early as expected, leaving dealers little time to prepare before early buyers entered at 7 AM. The Raleigh club is considering changing next year's show schedule to allow dealers to begin putting bottles on their tables at 6 AM (with early buyers at 7 AM and regular admission at 9 AM). Collectors can look forward to a repeat of this show next year. The Raleigh Bottle Club has already decided to hold a show in the same location on Saturday, April 27, 2002. This date was chosen to coincide with the antique market at Liberty, North Carolina.

Editor's Note: Fortunately, there is still plenty of time for the Raleigh club members to come to their senses and realize that 6 AM is way too early to start the April 27, 2002 show.

Around the Swamp . . .

Bottles from our Nation's Capital

by Andy Goldfrank



Last month, yet another work week away from home was ending on a sunny Friday afternoon with my airplane touching down on the runway at National Airport and me gazing out the window at the dozens of construction cranes that dot the D.C. horizon. As the plane jostled me about, a few goals for the weekend bounced around in my head. In short order, I planned to surprise my wife at the office and then head for home to catch up on some sleep (after working through the previous night) with the hopes of starting off the weekend on a fresh note. Over the next two days, plenty was lined up on our social calendar because of my extended absences away from home, but it looked like I might find a little room for digging in the hopes of finding a rare bottle.

After a short visit with my wife, I picked up our car and headed for home. My normal route up 15th Street was immediately diverted because of street paving and building construction so over to 13th Street I went. Traffic on this alternate route was at a crawl so I eventually (and randomly) picked a small side street to get back over to 15th beyond the construction. Living and working in the District, I often venture down side streets to examine the mix of industrial buildings, empty lots, and the residential rowhouses that are ubiquitous in my part of town (Logan Circle, Dupont Circle, and the “U” Street Corridor). On this particular street, the exposed side wall of a circa 1910-1920 industrial loft revealed the “shadow” of a shorter, 2-story brick rowhouse that was once connected but long-since demolished. Further down the same street, hidden in the midst of taller industrial buildings were a couple pairs of brick 1870s working-class rowhouses identical in shape and size to the missing “shadow” building along the industrial loft, which no doubt was a former mate on a residential row that once spanned the entire block.

The remaining rowhouses were two small rooms deep, perhaps 22 feet into the lot, with a flat sloping roof. It became evident that a small wooden shed or outbuilding had been attached to the rear of these structures. On other similar lots, digging efforts (and subsequent research at the Library of Congress' historical photo collection) have revealed that these sheds or outbuildings were often privies. But, as my countless hours of probing and test-holing have proven, these outhouses (and those on the back lot line of the yards) are worthless from a bottledigger's perspective. The reason for the paucity of bottles is that apparently after 1870, the District of Columbia vigorously enforced an ordinance that privies must be shallow (less than 2 feet deep) or with catchboxes so as to allow for regular cleaning. This practice of enforcement may stem back even further, because outhouses I excavated in Georgetown dating back to the 1830s were likewise shallow or built so that they could be gravity flushed with water (which must have left quite a stench on these hills or in the C&O Canal). Nonetheless, even though I was exhausted and in desperate need of sleep, my eyes wandered over to the “shadow.” Not until then did I notice that the empty lot next to the industrial loft was filled with construction workers and dirt-moving equipment. I immediately pulled over to the side of the road, jumped out, and introduced myself to the foreman. I then talked with the crew and quickly realized that this lot was the exception to the D.C. rule (that bottles are not to be found in newer D.C. privies). The crew had retrieved an assortment of bottles and they described the finds as coming from what would have been directly under the shadow's shed or outbuilding. I was frustrated that I hadn't arrived earlier while bottles were still being excavated, but I settled for finding out the dump site where the excavated dirt was being taken. As I turned to leave and go home and get some rest, the backhoe operator honked his horn, signaled for me to wait a second, and then drove to the far corner of the lot. He tossed a bag into the front-loader and came back across the lot to where I was standing. He happily handed me a bag loaded with bottles and said the magic words: “Take whatever you want.”

Most of the bottles were broken or damaged D.C. hutchinsons, blobs, and blown crown-tops along with some flasks. Picking through the pile of glass, I explained the different types of bottles and eventually chose a few bottles that seemed interesting and in better condition (despite being coated with dirt). Although it was apparent that the bottles were mine for the taking, I gave the backhoe operator a few dollars in the hopes of encouraging him to continue to retrieve any loose bottles he might find on future jobs. He thanked me profusely and we both were happy. Included in the bottles I acquired was a Mazinger hutch dated 1898, a blown Heurich crown top embossed with an image of the Washington Monument, and a clear 1/4 pint strap-sided flask.

I cleaned the bottles when I arrived home and it was soon apparent that the flask was the most interesting of the bunch. Less than 5.5 inches tall, the 1/4 pint strap-sided flask is embossed in the slug area with "THE PALACE CAR / BABY / CUTTER WHISKEY," and the base is embossed "PACKHAM BROTHERS / BALTIMORE." The bottle is in excellent condition except for a few minor hazing marks and a few scratches. Flipping open my Antique Bottles from the Washington, D.C. Area (3rd ed. 1995), I found no listing of this bottle. I later called a friend of mine to see if the flask was listed in the Baltimore Bottle Book (1998) but it was not. My guess is that this was a gift bottle containing Cutter Whiskey in honor of the birth of a newborn that was to be given to friends, colleagues, and family. At the time, it was also my thought that perhaps "The Palace Car" was a particular brand of Cutter Whiskey and, because Cutter Whiskey was not produced in this area, that finding such a flask in a D.C. construction site was mere coincidence. This line of thinking was bolstered in that there is only one known embossed local 1/4 pint strap-sided flask is "M. LYONS / 906 PA. AVE. N.W. / WASHINGTON D.C." and a single extant paper label 1/4 pint produced for Steinberger's Buffet located at Pennsylvania Avenue and 11th Street. Antique Bottles from the Washington, D.C. Area (Spirits/Nos. 133 & 208).



My basic theory that the discovery piece was not a local bottle was dispelled less than a week later when a second Palace Car strap-sided flask dropped into the hands of digger Peter Rydquist at an old Washington, D.C., hotel dump some 30 miles away. This related second flask is a clear 1/2 pint slugplate embossed "THE PALACE CAR / M. BARNETT / CONDUCTOR / 1110 E St. N.W." The base is also embossed "PACKHAM BROS / BALTIMORE." This flask, proprietor, and establishment are all unlisted in Antique Bottles from the Washington, D.C. Area. It was evident from these two bottles that "The Palace Car" was not a particular brand of Cutter Whiskey but rather a local establishment that apparently packaged various types of liquors including Cutter Whiskey. The remarkable coincidence of finding these two discoveries, which lead to the piecing together of another bit of Washinton, D.C. history, in such a short span of time has not escaped me. The plethora of construction and the increase in local bottle digging has inevitably brought new bottles to light. This makes me wonder as to what else lies buried in the ground or cloistered in some attic that has tantalizing clues about the past and is waiting to be discovered. We shall see . . . after all, it is my goal to try answering that question and I did not even tell you yet what other bottles I dug over that weekend.

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.

Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

June 2 & 3 (Sun: 9 AM to 3 PM, early buyers Sat. 6 PM) Kutztown, PA: Coal Crackers Bottle Club's 3rd Annual Bottle Show and Sale at the Renningers Antique Market. Info: Rod Walch, PH:(610) 377-1484 or Jody Farra, PH:(570) 462-1942.

June 17 (10 AM to 5 PM) Millville, NJ: F.O.H.B.C / Wheaton Village Museum, 4th Annual Antique Bottle Show & Sale at the Wheaton Village, Exit 26, Rt. 55, 1501 Glasstown Rd. Info: (800) 998-4552

June 23 (9 AM to 3 PM) Bethesda, MD: **Our Show is Back!!** Potomac Bottle Collectors Antique Bottle Show and Sale at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, 6201 Dunrobbin Drive, Bethesda, MD 20816, near Glen Echo and the Clara Barton National Historic Site. Info: Jim Sears, (703) 243-2409, email: searsjm@usa.net

