

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors Serving the National Capital



May 2002

May 28th Meeting

Other Collectibles: Please bring in your favorite collectibles other than bottles and jars. Matt Knapp promises to bring in dug Civil War artifacts, and we hope to see what other unusual items club members have dug up or collected.

April Meeting

Dominica Knapp and associate (below) displayed **commercial scent bottles** circa 1880 to 1910. These attractive bottles held concentrated perfumes, less concentrated colognes, very diluted toilet waters, or powdered sachets.



Above: **Peter Rydquist** shows off a new acquisition at the April meeting.



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: Matt Knapp Vice President: Needed 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/potomacbt/bottle2.htm> Maintained by Peter Rydquist: pohnaug@aol.com

Mailbox Tales

by Andy Goldfrank

Over the course of a week into my electronic mailbox lands many a bottle- or digging-related question or story, requests for permission to use my articles, new ideas and research tools for locating sites, and most importantly plans for digging expeditions. These arrive courtesy of club members, folks I dig with, my patient newsletter editor, and complete strangers. This last group arises, in large part, from the fact that over the last few years my email address has been disseminated via business “digging” cards and through internet publication of our newsletter (and my articles) on the Potomac Bottle Collectors web page. The usual email from a stranger contains a question about the age, history, use and value of a bottle they have discovered and shares little else in terms of the history or provenance of the bottle. However, one email last week from a Floridian proved the exception and is worth sharing. As follows is the email, with the writer’s permission and with some minor editing for publication, that tells a great tale:

Andy,

I appreciated your account of finding a Warner's Safe bottle. I too found one after years of looking. Funny thing is, I wasn't looking for one when I found not just one but 7 intact Warner Safe Cure bottles at a Devon farmhouse in southwest England.

My cousin owns the farm and I was piddling around in his back yard last week and noted an old stone hedge [which are] Devon fences made of earth and stone. There was an amber blob top poking out of the dirt between the stones. I dug out an intact Warner's Safe Cure bottle with “London” embossed at the bottom. It is amber and nearly ten inches tall. I was surprised when I dug it out [because] I could see the side of another. After two hours, I located 7 intact Warner’s Safe Cure bottles all exactly alike; several had the remnants of the old cork stuck inside. There was only one broken or I would have had eight.

From old family letters, I know that [our] Farm as it is called has been in my family for about 150 years. My Great Aunt Carrie Warn lived there until her death in 1941. She was born in 1864 and lived all her life at the farm. She was a member of the local temperance society but she was also a hypochondriac as illustrated in many family letters to her brother that are in my possession. I highly suspect the bottles were hers and probably stashed in the back hedge. She wouldn't have wanted to be seen taking her “medicine.” I doubt that she knew Warner's was 98 percent rum. She probably considered it a normal medicine and a general “pick-me-up.”

At any rate, I have my own Warner's story. That is the beauty of these old bottles, the telling of how they are found. . . . How old do you figure it is?

all the best,

Larry Haley
Lake Park, Florida.



My response as to the age of the Warner's Safe Cure required a bit of history regarding the manufacturing of the bottles. The key appears to be the lips but there is evidence to suggest that there was overlap on the lip-making tools/techniques. In general, Warner's applied blob tops date from the mid-1880s through the early 1890s with tooled blob tops from after that period. Also, in general, double collared lips tend to be earlier on Warner's and tend to date from before 1885. My caveat to this analysis is that these dating guidelines may be limited to American manufactured Warner's. The technology abroad where Warner's bottles were made (e.g., United Kingdom, continental Europe, Australia, etc.) was markedly different from American manufacturing techniques, therefore, those same rules may not apply. In addition, Warner's survived to a greater extent in Europe and Australia after the American Warner's empire collapsed in 1893. Therefore, my best offer of age for Larry's bottles were that they are from the early 1890s through to the early 1900s. Please correct me if you think differently -- my feelings will not be hurt as I do not believe that I am an expert on Warner's and especially those from abroad.

In a follow-up email, Larry revealed to me that the letters he referred to are being published in a book about the Victorian era in Dartmoor. This sure sounds fascinating and I noted to Larry that another way to date those bottles might be to revisit the archives (i.e., the family's letter collection) and to pin down when his Great Aunt was ill or if she mentioned the "medicine" she was taking. Hopefully, we'll find out . . . I'll let you know what appears in my mailbox.



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 16 (10 AM to 4 PM) **Millville, New Jersey:** The Wheaton Village Antique Bottle Show & Sale at Wheaton Village, 1501 Glasstown Rd., Millville, New Jersey. INFO: **Wheaton Village**, PH: (856) 825-6800

June 30 (10 AM to 3PM) **Bethesda, Maryland:** Potomac Bottle Collector's Annual Show & Sale at the Washington Waldorf School, 4800 Langamore Rd. (off Massachusetts Ave. inside the Washington Beltway), Bethesda, Maryland. INFO: **Jim Sears**, PH: (703) 243-2409, email: searsjim@usa.net

July 19-21 (5 PM Thursday to whenever) **Adamstown, Pennsylvania:** Shupp's Grove Bottle Festival (formerly York Bottle Festival) at Shupp's Grove. INFO: **Steve Guion**, PH: (717) 560-9480, email: affinityinsurance@dejazzd.com or **Jere Hambleton**, PH: (717) 393-5175, email: jshdetector@wbtv.net

THE POTOMAC BOTTLE COLLECTORS

BEYOND THE WASHINGTON D.C. AREA

POTOMAC BOTTLE COLLECTORS

ESTABLISHED 1892

ANTIQUÉ BOTTLE SHOW AND SALE

SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 2002 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

WASHINGTON WALDORF SCHOOL
4800 SANGAMORE ROAD
BETHESDA, MD 20816

ADMISSION: \$2

Bottles, Jars, Insulators, Stoneware and Go-Withs

Free Appraisals

INFORMATION: Jim Sears
(703) 243-2409
searsjim@usa.net
<http://members.aol.com/potomacbt/bottle2.htm>

SHOW IS JUST INSIDE THE WASHINGTON BELTWAY (I-495)

Tables are still available for our June 30th show at \$20 per 6 foot table. Please contact **Jim Sears** for dealer information or show fliers.

Mike Fasano will be coordinating refreshments for the show. Mike cannot attend our May meeting, so please contact him at (301/624-4065 or fasano@afip.osd.mil) to help out.

Andy Goldfrank is advertising our show in several local publications. Please contact him (202/588-0543 or amg_sticky@yahoo.com) to help with show publicity or admissions.