

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors Serving the National Capital



April 2004

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Meeting April 27

Please bring in examples of bottles made in altered molds for a open discussion of mold alterations.

Steve Charing and **Bob Ford** are pictured at the Baltimore show as are **David Hopkins'** sales items.

These photos were borrowed from the excellent selection at www.baltimorebottleclub.org/show.htm



Meetings: 8:00 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: Henry Fuchs 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)
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Remembering the Fredrick Dump by Henry Fuchs

Fredrick is my favorite dump of all time. I have dug better glass in other places, but I love Fredrick for the same reason that many enjoyed Catonsville and Easton: I *always* found something. The sheer number of finds kept me interested if not hopeful and anticipatory. Part of the joy of digging for me is just looking at stuff, even if it's common or broken. Karl Shipman instilled in me at an early age some of the finer and subtler aspects of the hobby, which did not depend on the monetary value of finds or even on bringing things home at all. Some of my favorite digging memories are of looking at rusty somethin-a-rother whatchamacallits with Mr. Shipman, turning them over and speculating about their uses and origins. "What is it?" "Heck if I know...."

When I first showed up at Fredrick in the late 1970s, the dump was dug enough to appear carpet bombed, but it had not been excavated meticulously or to any depth. I saw the infamous pile of broken amber Cokes (it looked like hundreds) as well as a similar pile of broken hutches. On my first visit I just ran around and picked up bottles on the surface. Boy, was I in heaven with all the Tivoli Brewing Companies, Mellin's Foods and Carrol Whiskies a kid could carry! But I soon found I was digging with the human back-hoe, Albert Fulk. When he said, "Get in that hole and dig!" he *really* meant it. We went down seven feet the first time, and I was in awe (and perhaps shock). I found my first Kilmer's Remedy that trip. I vaguely remember the drive home; I don't think I was ever so cold and tired, but I was hooked on Fredrick. My mother said I looked as though I had been in a coal mine. I think she dreaded Al coming for me – always on a Sunday before 6 A.M. I generally came home cold, hungry, and after dark. "Henry, what is wrong with you!?" she would ask me. "Aw, Mom, at least I'm not running the streets." Maybe she wished I was.

Sitting at the vital intersection of the Hagerstown Pike and the Washington/Baltimore/Philadelphia roads, Fredrick was a large town by 19th Century standards. Fredrick was well known for its leather goods, and it became major source of shoes for the Confederate army during 1863 attacks on the North. The town also had hundreds of merchants and generated plenty of trash. The Fredrick Town Dump originated in the 1880s with the demise of the old stone quarry just outside of town. The Fredrick Brick Works fronted the quarry and remains to this day. Trash continued to be dumped in the old quarry site through the early 1930s.



Henry Fuchs three feet deep in a one-man hole with only a single DC drug store bottle so far

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, active digging was confined to an area of the dump known as the hollow. This was a large wooded depression behind and to the left of the brick works. The hollow was separated from a cornfield by a dirt road that ended at a large fence. Al Fulk and I began digging the hollow systematically from front to back, being careful not to throw dirt on the un-dug areas. The surface of the dump was dark hard-pack, which gave way to soft ash about three feet down. Unfortunately, there were also pockets of bricks, cinders, and shells. The depth varied from six feet to thirty feet. We had many memorable digs in the hollow before Al had to quit when his health began to fail. When I was 13, I dug three picture beers from Baltimore (all Baltimore loop seals), a pontiled vial, and two teal Rumfords along with hundreds of other keepers all in the same hole. It took me three trips to carry them all out. Later, I was with Al when he dug an R.T. Rhodes bottle and a heavily debossed whiskey jug from Fredrick in excellent shape. I think one of the best bottles I ever saw emerge was a Dr. Petzolds German Bitters, dug by Al back by the fence. By our last dig together, Al and I had moved up next to the road, where I found a rare aqua Shipley whiskey flask. Al promptly divested me of it via bribery; I liked the flask, but I liked money pretty well too. While we were digging that area of the dump, we had several visitors, most notably the late John Mickelas, who was always after me for marbles and doll heads. He warned me not to dig with my shovel so much or I would break a good one. (SMASH! Thanks, John, God bless you.) I was buried up to my chest twice, which is not a pleasant experience, but Al was there to dig me out. I was able to return the favor by catching him one day as he began to fall backwards into a six-foot hole. It turned out that he had suffered a mild heart attack. Thank God, his wife Mary was present and drove us out that day.

After Al gave up digging, I continued at Fredrick with other companions. Tom Robusto and I virtually dug under the telephone company parking lot – 25 feet under! We broke into a pocket of black and gray ash one day, and Tom dug his first pontils: two paneled panacea type bottles and a dark green hinge mold medicine. He was so excited he was actually shaking.

The hollow was eventually dug out and later bulldozed. By 1987 other diggers were saying there was nothing left to find at Fredrick, but I thought it likely that the dump continued across the road under the cornfield. One very hot day, Steve Weaver and I went to the only barren patch in the field and chopped through hard-pack to hit ash two or three feet down. With corn on three sides of us, we dug all day. Steve found *another* Dr. Petzold's bitters just seconds after I jumped out of the hole (how lucky!), and I dug a black glass Johan Hoff – Berlin and a yellow-amber Dyottville Glassworks cylinder. We dug there nearly all summer until the farmer showed up and asked "Are you crazy!?" I guess I was (am) a little.

Some of my last visits to Fredrick were with Peter Rydquist and the late Allan Einseln. We must have dug eleven feet down one time without finding anything, and we had great difficulty getting out. When we got to the bottom of the trash layer, *somebody* broke the only bottle in the hole: a beautiful clear blown Pepsi, straight sided with a star pattern. Well, maybe it was already broken. That might have been the only way to split it three ways, anyway. I dug during the rain and ice storms of 1998-99 and did well. One hole that I turned over to Peter on a very rainy day produced at least twenty Hires Rootbeers. Upon walking up on me, Peter remarked, "Now there's a *dedicated* digger," or perhaps he said "*crazy*."

Now the hollow has been filled and the field plowed, and the other diggers say no un-dug areas remain, but I know better. Fredrick will never be dug out unless they pave the whole place – not for me, anyway. Perhaps the area is inaccessible now, but I continue to dream of one more dig at the Fredrick dump.

Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

MAY 16 – WASHINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA
Washington County Antique Bottle Club 30th Annual Show & Sale, (9 AM to 3 PM), at the Alpine Star Lodge, 735 Jefferson Ave., (I-70 exit 17), Washington, PA. Info: **RUSS CRUPE**, 52 Cherry Rd., Avella, PA 15312, PH: (724) 345-3653, email: heidirus@mlynk.com

JUNE 4,5 – LUMBERTON, NORTH CAROLINA

The Robeson Antique Bottle Club Annual Show & Sale, (Fri. 3 to 9 PM & Sat. 9 AM to 3 PM), at the Farmer's Market & Expo Center, Exit 14 off I-95, Lumberton, NC. Info: **RICHARD STEPHENS**, 1830 Riverside Blvd., Lumberton, NC. 28358. PH: (910) 738-6075, email: rhstep@nc.rr.com or **PAUL VALENTI**, PH: (910) 738-3074, email: cbaxley@nc.rr.com

JUNE 6 - MILLVILLE, NEW JERSEY

The Federation of Historical Bottle Collector's Annual Wheaton Village Antique Bottle Show (Sun. 10 AM – 4PM) at Wheaton Village, 1501 Glasstown Rd., Millville, New Jersey. INFO: **WHEATON VILLAGE**, 1501 Glasstown Rd., Millville, NJ 08332, PH: (856) 825-6800 ext. 2735.

JUNE 27 – CHEVERLY, MARYLAND

The Potomac Bottle Collectors Annual Show & Sale (Sunday 9 AM to 3 PM) at the American Legion Post 108, 3608 Legion Drive, Cheverly, MD 20785. Info: **JIM SEARS** 4211 N. 2nd Rd., Apt. 1, Arlington, VA 22203. PH: (703) 243-2409, email: searsjim@usa.net; **LEE SHIPMAN** PH: (301) 229-2005, email: plannerlee@earthlink.net; **ANDY GOLDFRANK** PH: (202) 258-2389 email: amg_sticky@yahoo.com

JULY 17-18 – ADAMSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Shupp's Grove 3rd Annual Bottle Festival (6 AM – dark Sat. & Sun.) at Shupp's Grove in Adamstown, Pennsylvania. Info: **STEVE GUION**, PH: (717) 560-9480 or **JERE HAMBLETON**, PH: (717) 393-5175, E-mail: affinityinsurance@jazzd.com

JULY 17 & 18 ADAMSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Shupp's Grove 3rd Annual Bottle Festival, (Sat. 6 AM to dark, Sun. 6 AM to dark), at Shupp's Grove in Adamstown, PA. Info: **STEVE GUION**, PH: (717) 560-9480, or **JERE HAMBLETON**, PH: (717) 393-5175, email: affinityinsurance@dejazzd.com

AUGUST 14 & 15 MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors Expo 2004, Sat. 9 AM to 4 PM & Sun. 9 AM to 3 PM, Early buyers Fri. 2 PM), at the Memphis Cook Convention Center, 255 N. Main St., Memphis, TN. Info: **GENE BRADBERRY**, PO Box 341062, Memphis, TN. 38184, PH: (901) 372-8428, email: expo2004@midssouth.rr.com



Tales of a Well Traveled Pontiled Medicine

by Andy Goldfrank

The island of Manhattan has been the scene of much construction since the 1620s when Dutch settlers started occupying the southerly tip that juts into New York's harbor. Fire, war, riots, urban renewal, decay and terrorism mixed with population explosions, industrial growth and commercial expansion have repeatedly transformed the architectural landscape and archaeological record of New York. In fact, it is said that in the 23 or so square miles of Manhattan there are less than a dozen buildings that predate the end of the American Revolution. This is a remarkably small number compared to other American cities such as Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore and Charleston where hundreds and, in some cases thousands, of colonial era structures survive to the present. Nonetheless, New York is an excellent place to recover bottles, stoneware and other artifacts of bygone days.

In October of 2003, one of our digging buddies, Adam Woodward, stumbled across a rapidly transforming site located near the intersection of Hudson, Laight and Varick Streets which also abutted a major access point into the Holland Tunnel. Located a little less than two miles from the tip of Manhattan, today this neighborhood is primarily composed of large late-nineteenth century masonry industrial buildings now being converted into high-end loft apartments, galleries, restaurants and offices. It is also is not a tranquil place due to its proximity to the Holland Tunnel that ties lower Manhattan to New Jersey and all points south. According to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the tunnel, over 33 million vehicles used the tubes under the Hudson River in 2003.

When Adam first waked into the site, after dodging the rushing cars bound for New Jersey, a burly construction foreman allowed him to survey the site for potential digging. The lot had been vacant for a number of years but clearly visible on the wall of an adjacent structure was the shadow of a two-story pitched roof building. Adam noticed the site was being excavated quickly and the crew was at the basement level of the buildings that previously occupied the spot. Initially, we were disappointed because it appeared that the neighboring structure, which is a massive late 1800s or early 1900s building, occupied (and, thus, destroyed) the former rear lots of the little houses whose privies we sought. But Adam persevered and returned later in the week to again check on the progress of excavation and to see if any privies or cisterns were exposed. (We were simultaneously digging a construction site across the

Hudson River in Jersey City, New Jersey.) One evening, as we were wrapping up a privy dig in the Jersey City, we received word from Adam that the construction crew had cracked open a pit of some sort and we had a limited opportunity to recover the contents before a trackhoe scooped it up and placed it into a truck bound for the dump.

Due to the small window of time allotted our recovery efforts, the privy digging crew (consisting of Adam along with Scott Jordan, and two other visiting digging companions from Colorado, Marty Homola and Mike Sandion) recovered the pit's relics in rapid succession while I watched our trucks. The mortared brick cistern was located directly below a concrete basement floor and was approximately six feet across and four feet in depth. After cleaning our artifacts, we discerned that the fill in the cistern dated from the 1850s-60s and was associated with use as a privy or a trash midden as evidenced by seed-laden nightsoil. In some respects, this conversion from a cistern to a privy or trash pit makes sense considering the transformation of this neighborhood from residential to industrial in a span of less than 25 years and the demands of commerce to utilize every inch of land. It is likely that during this time period, the yards were built upon and that new toilet or dumping facilities were need – what could be better than converting a cistern into a basement outhouse or dump. In addition, it was also at about this time that fresh water plumbing was being introduced via the Croton Aqueduct from reservoirs 45 mile north of Manhattan to business establishments and the middle class which would obviate the need for a cistern to collect water for future use. The relics we recovered in our dig were a time capsule that tells much about a small but significant period in the evolution of this block.

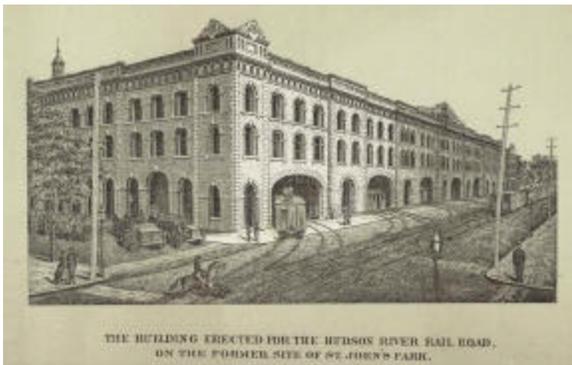
The present day arteries adjacent to the site that feed into the Holland Tunnel are located where the private park called Hudson Square or St. John's Park once spread out between Hudson, Laight, Varick, and Beach Streets. As early as 1827, Frances Trollope, while visiting the United States from England, noted in her international bestseller entitled *Domestic Manners of the Americans* that "Hudson Square and its neighbourhood is, I believe, the most fashionable part of the town." It should be noted that Ms. Trollope was none too pleased with the new world and her book is filled with discussions of Americans' crudity, incessant tobacco chewing and spitting, boastfulness, and lawlessness; however, in New York, alone of all American cities, she found much to praise.

In 1803, Trinity Church laid out St. John's Park also known as Hudson Square on property it held. Initially, the area was slow to develop (the church

first tried unsuccessfully to lease the house lots), but by the 1820s, the northward push of the city made Hudson Square a desirable place to live and the Trinity parish granted use of the open land to the owners of the 64 surrounding housing lots, and they fenced in this private oasis. It soon became an elegant open space surrounded by red brick Federal row houses and anchored by St. John's Chapel, an outpost of Trinity Church. A fence, however, could not keep out the sounds, congestion and crime from the encroaching warehouse district, the traffic from the nearby waterfront, and the Hudson River Railroad's tracks built along Hudson Street in 1851. By 1866, the upscale quality of this neighborhood was long gone and the Trinity parish sold the park for four hundred thousand dollars (others suggest the sum was one million dollars) to Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, who promptly felled the trees and built a freight depot on it for the Hudson River Railroad.



This lithograph of St. John's Park shows rowhouses behind the trees.



Hudson River Railroad Building circa 1870

The next century likewise heralded in significant changes for this neighborhood. At its commercial core, the Holland Tunnel was constructed. Completed in 1927, this was the first Hudson River vehicular tunnel and was named after its chief engineer, Clifford M. Holland. Linking Canal Street in Manhattan with Jersey City, New Jersey it was considered a triumph of engineering (and designated

a National Historic Civil and Mechanical Engineering Landmark in 1984). Among Holland's achievements was the design of the ventilation system, which included four ventilation towers in New Jersey and two in New York, housing immense fans which changed the air in the tunnel every 90 seconds.

Juxtaposed to this testament to industry and technology was our small construction site that yielded an assortment of pontiled and smooth based bottles. The brick lined feature was packed almost exclusively with discarded bottles and few other artifacts. This is rather atypical of most residential or commercial outhouses and trash middens in the New York area that typically have large amounts of ceramics. We speculated that our finds had been discarded over an extremely short period of time predating the mid-1860s (and perhaps with a cutoff date of 1860 or 1861 as indicated by the newest bottles in the lot including a dated soda). There was a nice variety of colored sodas and unusual shaped sodas along with some quality embossed medicines – all of which would have been redeemable or recyclable for cash. The bottles recovered were primarily from Brooklyn and Manhattan (both now boroughs of New York City and originally separate cities until 1898) but there were also bottles from Albany, New York (on the Hudson River about 170 miles north of the New York City) and Picton, Ontario in Canada.



It is now easy to write about the origin of the aqua open-pontiled medicine embossed “C. Haight/ Druggist & c. / Picton. C.W” but when we discovered and cleaned this bottle, none of the digging crew had any clue about where it was from or its history. In fact, while we were putting out all the bottles for our final picks after the last day of digging there were a lot of guesses about the Haight bottle and where Picton, C.W. was located. The solution was to cruise the internet at which time we learned about C.W. from an article by Scott Jordan (of Canada and not New York) titled “Stand and Be Counted - a Census of Early Canadian Medicine Bottles” published in *Canadian Bottle And Stoneware Collector* magazine (No. 19: Jan/Feb/Mar 1997).



Haight bottle from Picton, Canada West

This article informed us that prior to 1867, Ontario was known as Canada West; obviously, we already knew our find was from the 1850s since it was pontiled but it was a delight to find a Canadian bottle so far from home. We also discovered that Picton, Ontario is located on a bay that feeds into Lake Ontario. As we divided up our finds, we could only imagine that some river or canal worker had stopped in the town of Picton for some medicine before venturing almost 500 miles along the Oswego and Erie Canals and the Hudson River southward on his journey to the urbanity of New York at the mouth of the Hudson. Another possibility is that Canniff Haight himself traveled to New York (which by the 1850s was the largest port in the Americas) in search of quality products and goods for his burgeoning pharmaceutical practice. We shall never know how our bottle came to rest in New York, however, we will always enjoy recollecting about our discovery of the Haight bottle so far from home.

In the end, when we split up our finds, I selected the Caniff Haight bottle (although I usually do not pick aqua bottles pontiled or not) because of the mystery surrounding its discovery in New York. I continued to do internet research and finally decided to email Scott Jordan of Canada to ask him about the Haight bottle. We struck up quite a dialogue about Caniff Haight and agreed to write an article together for an upcoming issue of *Canadian Bottle And Stoneware Collector*. Scott told me that Caniff Haight in "about 1850 went into business in Picton as a druggist, among other



Scott and Adam at "the pick"

things. His business was listed as chemist and druggist, books and general store from 1851 to 1865[,] and then listed as 'Canniff Haight & Co.' [as a] drugs and general store, from 1865 to 1868." Scott also informed me that "[n]ot much is known of Canniff Haight's drug business, and his bottles are rare. The man's mark on history, though, is not his experience as a druggist or store owner, but as an author." It turns out that Canniff Haight wrote five books on Canadian history. Ultimately, these are the sort of connections to the past that inspire me to continue collecting bottles and digging for relics of bygone eras.

Postscript: Ironically, a few weeks ago, my digging partner Scott Jordan (of New York) called and told me that he excavated another Canadian aqua pontiled medicine. This came out of a privy in the Williamsburg, Brooklyn part of New York City. (See *The Potomac Pontil*, "Brooklyn, New York: The 'Just Us' Dig" Sept. 2003). The cylindrical bottle is embossed "Winer's Canadian Vermifuge." First turning to Digger Odell's *Pontil Medicine Encyclopedia*, I learned that John Winer apparently had an office in Manhattan at 83 Maiden Lane by the mid to late 1840s. A little internet research brought me back to Scott Jordan (of Canada), who wrote an article on John Winer for *Canadian Bottle and Stoneware Collector* in July, 1994 (No. 9). This article is available on the web (at <http://www.cyberus.ca/~sjordan/winer.htm>) and talks extensively about the development of John Winer's patent medicine practice. Apparently, the Canadian Vermifuge product was first advertised in 1848 and was produced in both Canada and the United States. In regards to both the Haight and the Winer bottles, I have certainly relished the opportunity to learn a bit more about Canada, its patent medicines, and the twist of having two Scott Jordan's involved in these adventures.

List of Intact Bottles from the Cistern

"Price, May & Co. / 486 Hudson Street" (IP) cobalt tapered soda w/ vertical embossing
 "Philadelphia XXX Porter & Ale" (IP) green porter;
 "W.T. & Co. / 49 / Green St. / Extra Plain / Soda" aqua torpedo
 "W.T. / 57 Downing Street" (SB) aqua squat
 2 "W. Eagle / Vestry, Varick & Canal Sts / Premium Soda Water" (IP) green & aqua squats
 "G.Cassidy / New York // 1861" (SB) aqua squat
 "W. & C. Morange / N.Y." (SB) aqua squat
 "W. Eagle / Canal St. New York/ W.E./1860" (SB) aqua squat
 "F. Knebel / 1860 / Brooklyn / K" (SB) aqua squat
 "R.B. Webster/ No. 63 W. 39th Street/ N.Y." (SB) aqua cream soda
 "Meyer & Rottman / New York" (IP) aqua squat
 "Dixon & Carson / 41 / Walker St. / N.Y." (SB) blue-green squat
 "R. K. & Co. / 130 W. 18th St. N.Y. / Philadelphia / XX / Porter & Ale" (SB) green porter
 "Kinsella / Albany" (SB) tapered squat
 "Mrs. S.A. Allen's Hair Restorer" (SB) purple medicine
 "Barry's Tricopherous for the Skin and Hair" (OP) aqua medicine
 "Pond's Extract" (OP) aqua medicine
 "Osgood's / India Cholagogue / New York" (OP) aqua medicine
 "C. Haight/ Druggist & c. / Picton. C.W" (OP) aqua medicine
 "D.L. Ormsby" clay bottle
 amber umbrella ink (OP)
 2 pontiled black ales
 sandchip pontil dipmold medicine
 20 unembossed puffs & pontils