

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

June-July 2007

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Meeting June 26 at 8:00 PM

This will be our last meeting before the summer break. We are not meeting in July or August. Please watch for an August newsletter announcing the date of our club picnic.



Andy Goldfrank displays marbles at the May meeting. Andy finds a few marbles in most of the privies he digs, but most only come to light when he sifts the soil.



The rare Henke & Maack torpedo shown at left is listed in our club book at \$2000 to \$2500, but this example recently brought \$6500 plus a 12 percent buyer's premium at a Glass Works Auction.

Breweriana web site: The Capitol City Chapter of Brewery Collectables of America is now online at www.capitolcitychapter.com. The site provides a copy of the club's monthly newsletter and a listing of Christian Heurich beer cans.

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: Andy Goldfrank Vice President: Al Miller Secretary: Jim Sears Treasurer: Lee Shipman
Pontil: Jim Sears (email: searsjim@usa.net, PH: 301/588-2174) & Andy Goldfrank (email: amg_sticky@yahoo.com, PH: 202/588-0543)
Web Site: www.potomacbottlecollectors.org Maintained by Peter Rydquist: pehraug@aol.com

Phil. G. Kelly: Value in the Name

by Jack Sullivan
Special to the Potomac Pontil

In the never-ending guessing game over what gives an item value, it must be conceded that a name is an important factor. Among collectors of whiskiana in Pennsylvania, for example, the name "Foust" on a bottle or jug may double its normal value. Similarly, whiskey containers bearing the Casper brand in North Carolina, regardless of how homely they may be, fetch a good price. In Virginia, a clear favorite son is Richmond's Phil. G. Kelly Co.

For example, a fairly ordinary looking miniature pinch bottle of Kelly's Bankers Rye (**Fig. 1**) sold on Ebay in October 2006 for \$357. More recently, a Kelly advertising hand mirror, two inches in diameter, with pictures of birthstones on the back brought \$103.50 (**Fig. 2**). A Kelly giveaway thimble, probably costing a few cents to make, sold for more than \$20. The firm's bottles and jugs regularly sell for hundreds of dollars. The only explanation for such advanced prices is competition among Virginia collectors for Kelly products.

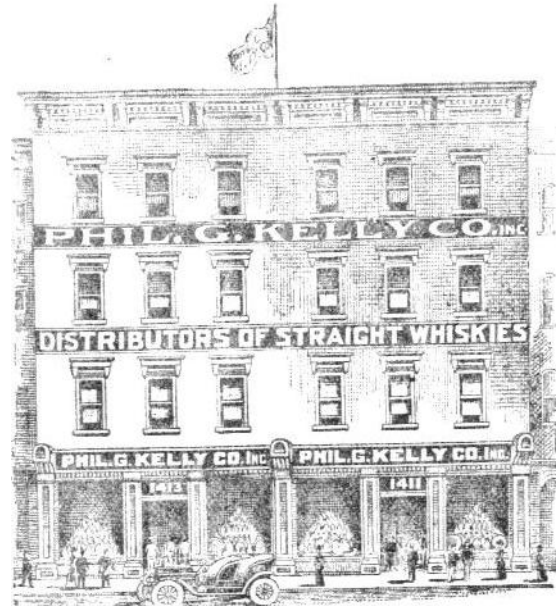


Fig. 1: Banker's Rye Miniature



Fig. 2: Miss Tempting Pocket Mirror

The company first appears in Richmond directories around 1905, located at the corner of 17th Street and Franklin Streets. A 1909 ad gives its next address as "1413 East Main St." and shows a three story building with the slogan "The House that Treats You Right." (**Fig. 3**). The same ad claims the Kelly enterprise as "importers, distillers and distributors of fine liquors." It is doubtful that the firm actually was a distiller. More likely it was a "rectifier," that is, a company that bought raw liquor from distillers, mixed and bottled it, slapped on a label, and sold it to the public.



"The House That Treats You Right."

Fig. 3: The Kelly Co. Building

The sign on the Kelly building claimed "distributors of straight whiskies." The company also claimed that it handled only "straight goods...the pure food kind." That too may have been disingenuous. Real distillers were seeking to have the government enforce the Pure Food and Drug Act against rectifiers on the grounds that they made only "artificial" whiskey.

Kelly Co. clearly was retaliating by claiming its whiskeys were "straight" and the pure food kind. The company featured more than a dozen brands, of which only one -- its flagship label, Westover Rye -- was registered with a federal trademark (1905). Among other Kelly whiskeys, in addition to Banker's Rye, were Kelly's Maryland Belle, Miss Tempting Rye (seen on the Fig. 2 hand mirror), Huron River, Old Tiverton Rye, Kelly's Special Reserve, Virginia Queen Corn, and El Maize Corn.

Early in the 1900's the company bought out a competing whiskey merchandiser, the E.A. Saunder's Sons Co. of Richmond, which had been in the liquor business since 1885, Saunder's Sons thereafter concentrated on the "fancy and heavy" grocery trade. In buying out their whiskey business Kelly added Saunder's brands to its own. They included Casey's Malt Whiskey, Old Bob Burton Rye, Old Fulcher Va. Mt. Rye, Old Bumgardner Va. Mt. Rye, and Possum Hollow Corn.

It apparently required a large and fancy catalogue to tout all these brands. Strong in the mail order business, Kelly Co. asked customers not to tear out pages or otherwise mutilate the catalogue in ordering their favorite liquor: "...It may prove of use to you in the future." The company also promised to send its goods in neat, plain packages "with no marks to indicate contents." Kelly's Special Reserve, for example, shipped in one, two or three gallon glass jugs packed inside a wooden case. That jug, its ad claimed, is the "the safest and most up-to-date package. It's a beauty and you will say so when you see it." Another Kelly slogan was: "The Prompt Mail Order House."

By 1915 the firm had moved to 427-431 N. 18th St. It disappears from Richmond directories after that year. Virginia officially went "dry" in 1916 and we may assume Phil. G. Kelly Co. shortly thereafter closed its doors. It would appear, therefore, that all Kelly items were created within a single decade (1905-1915).

Part of the Kelly mystique may be the prominence of its name on its whiskey containers. The firm embossed many of its glass bottles prominently with its name and often added decoration (Fig. 4,5). My own preference has been for Kelly jugs and an early addition to my collection was a quart ceramic with a flat shoulder and strong black lettering. (Fig. 6). That is only one among perhaps a dozen variations of Kelly jugs. They range from very crude (Fig. 7) to very sleek (Fig. 8), with a number of variations in between (Figs. 9-11).



Fig. 4: Kelly Pint Bottle



Fig. 5: Kelly Flask



Fig. 6: Kelly Quart#1 Jug



Fig. 7: Kelly Rough Jug

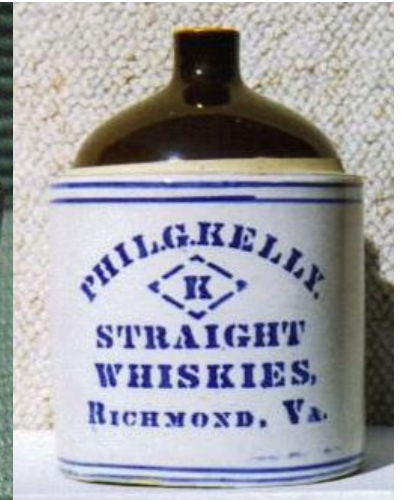


Fig. 8: Kelly Blue Stencil

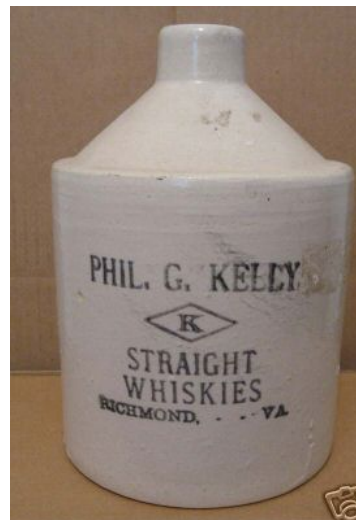


Fig. 9: Kelly Quart#2 Jug (at left)

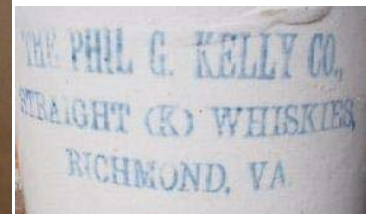


Fig. 10: Kelly Gallon#1 Jug (above)

Fig. 11: Kelly Gallon#2 Jug (below)

Deep in the heart of Virginia, I believe there are a few privileged collectors who regularly revel in the Phil. G. Kelly bottles, jugs and go-withs that adorn their shelves and walls. And then there are others -- more than a few -- who would like to emulate them. As a result, the prices for Phil. G. Kelly Co. whiskiana go ever higher.



Notes: The material here was gathered from a number of sources, including the "www. pre-pro" Internet site of Robin Preston. The jug shown in Fig. 8 is from the collection of Karen Gray.

Working for the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum

By Richard Lilienthal

You may already know that two club members – Richard Lilienthal and Jack Sullivan – do volunteer work for the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum in Alexandria, VA. Currently, they are cataloguing bottles, tins, and everything else left behind when the apothecary closed its doors in 1933.

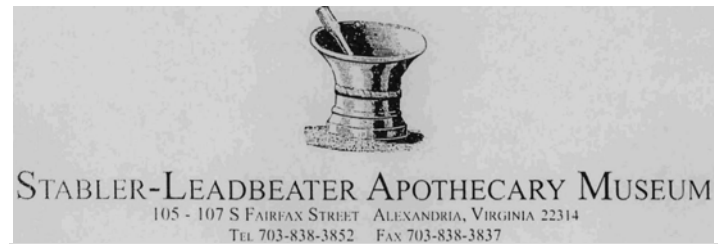
Figure 1 shows Jack concentrating so deeply that he didn't realize his picture was being taken. This means his picture is being used without his permission. Glad I'm not the Pontil editor who will be legally liable after publishing this. Not shown, is Jack sniffing the bottle's powdery contents to determine their chemical composition. You may wonder about the amber whiskey bottle - why is a whisky sitting among all the pharmacy bottles? Did Jack bring it? Why can't he carry a normal half-pint flask like the rest of us? Take note of Jack inputting data using state of the art automation tools.



Figure 2 shows Jack taking measurements using a carefully calibrated scientific instrument. He subtracts 2 inches from every reading for his "bi-focal" correction.



Figure 3 is a historical timeline of the apothecary shop. Most of the bottles we have worked on so far are label-under-glass, which date to the 1850s. Some have the Wm Stabler & Bro label which fits the timeframe.



Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum Corporate Timeline and Name

The shop remained in the Stabler-Leadbeater family throughout its history, but used many different names. These names appear on documents associated with the business, and some of the names also appear on embossed glass bottles made for the apothecary shop.

| | |
|-------|------------------------------|
| 1792: | Edward Stabler |
| 1819: | Edward Stabler & Son |
| 1831: | William Stabler |
| 1840: | William Stabler & Co. |
| 1844: | Wm. Stabler & Bro. |
| 1852: | John Leadbeater |
| 1857: | J. Leadbeater & Son |
| 1860: | Leadbeater & Co. |
| 1865: | E.S. Leadbeater & Co. |
| 1869: | E.S. Leadbeater & Bro. |
| 1892: | E.S. Leadbeater & Sons |
| 1903: | E.S. Leadbeater & Sons, Inc. |
| 1916: | Leadbeater Drug Corp. |

After we catalogue the items, they are photographed, and everything is entered into a data base. Unfortunately, the data base is not available on the museum's web site. Perhaps we can convince the city, which supplies the automation support, to make the data publicly available.



Richard Lilienthal displayed a variety of newly-acquired DC bottles at the May meeting

Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

JULY 21-22 - ADAMSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

The 6th Annual Shupp's Grove Bottle Festival (Sat. & Sun. 6 AM to dark, Fri. Dealer Set-up 3 PM followed by Early Buyers 5 PM) at Shupp's Grove in Adamstown, Pennsylvania. INFO: **STEVE GUION**, E-mail: sguion124@comcast.net or **JERE HAMBLETON**, E-mail: jshdetector@webtv.net or PH: (717) 393-5175.



AUGUST 26 - MOOREFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA

Potomac Highlands Antique Bottle Club's 9th Annual Show and Sale (9 AM - 3 PM) at the Moorefield Fire Co. Auxiliary Bldg (along the RR on Jefferson St.), Moorefield, West Virginia. INFO: **RODNEY FUNKHOUSER**, 1968 Brants Teets Rd, Baker, WV 26801. PH: (304) 897-6910, E-mail: rffmfg@hardynet.com.

SEPTEMBER 9 - LEWES, DELAWARE

The Delmarva Antique Bottle Club's 15th Annual Show & Sale (Sun. 9 AM - 3 PM, Early Buyers 7:30 AM) at the Cape Henlopen High School, Lewes, Delaware. INFO: **PETER BEAMAN**, 28947 Lewes Georgetown Hwy., Lewes, DE 19958; PH: (302) 684-5055 or E-mail: oldngnu@comcast.net.

SEPTEMBER 16 - WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA

Apple Valley Bottle Collectors Club, Inc.'s 33rd Annual Show & Sale (Sun. 9 AM - 3 PM, Adm. \$3, 65+ free, Early Adm. 7:30 AM, \$10) at the Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Family Life Center, 1300 Opequon Ave. (just off Pleasant Valley Rd.), Winchester, Virginia. Over 40 dealers in antique bottles, milks, Coca-Cola, White House vinegar, postcards, table top collectibles, etc. INFO: **RICHARD M. VENSKOSKE**, 4496 Martinsburg Pike, Clear Brook, VA 22624, PH: (540) 247-4429.

SEPTEMBER 30 - BATSTO VILLAGE, NEW JERSEY

South Jersey's Antique Bottle & Glass Club 24th Annual Batsto Village Show & Sale (9 AM - 4 PM) at the Historic Batsto Village, Hammonton, New Jersey. INFO: **PAUL A DELGUERCIO**, 548 Spring Road, Hammonton, NJ 08037, PH: (609) 352-7104, E-mail: paulhavoc@comcast.net.

OCTOBER 6 - RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

The Richmond Area Bottle Collectors Association's 36th Annual Show & Sale (9 AM - 3 PM, Early Buyers 7:30 AM) at the Showplace Annex, 3002 Mechanicsville Tpk, Richmond, Virginia. INFO: **MARVIN CROKER**, PH: (804) 275-1101 or **ED FAULKNER**, PH: (804) 739-2951 or E-mail: faulkner@antiquebottles.com.

OCTOBER 14 - BEDFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

Bedford County Antique Bottle Club 30th Annual Show & Sale (9 AM - 1 PM, Early Buyers 7 AM) at the Bedford County Fairgrounds 4H Building, Bedford, Pennsylvania. INFO: **LEO McKENZIE**, PH: (814) 695-0128 or **CHARLES HAZLETT**, PH: (814) 695-0128.

NOVEMBER 4 - ELKTON, MARYLAND

Tri-State Bottle Collectors and Diggers Club, 35th Annual Show & Sale (9 AM - 3 PM) at the Singerly Fire Hall, Routes 279 & 213, Elkton, Maryland. INFO: **DAVE BROWN**, PH: (302) 738-9960.

NOVEMBER 11 - PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

The Pittsburgh Antique Bottle Club's Annual Show & Sale (9 AM - 2 PM, Early Buyers 7 AM) at The Ice Garden, Rostraver Twp (Exit 46B off I-70 to Rt. 51 North, 4.1 miles), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. INFO: **BOB DeCROO**, PH: (714) 326-8741 or **JAY HAWKINS**, PH: (724) 872-6013, E-mail: lhawkins63@msn.com

NOVEMBER 18 - GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Southeast Bottle Club 6th Annual Antique Bottle & Collectibles Show & Sale (9 AM - 3 PM, Early Buyers 7:30 AM) at the Greensboro Farmer's Curb Market, Greensboro, North Carolina. INFO: **REGGIE LYNCH**, PH: (704) 221-6489, www.antiquebottles.com/greensboro

Identities of Shard from May Pontil



Shard 1: **THE INDIAN**, #158 in the "Spirits & Wines" section of the club book.

Shard 2: **NORTHWESTERN BOTTLING CO, J.H. SCHLUETER**, #359 in the "Beer & Sodas" section of the club book.



Shard-3: **ARLINGTON BOTTLING CO, A.B.Co**, #39 in the "Beer & Sodas" section of the club book.

Shard-4: **MTB (i.e. Moses T. Bridwell)** 351 M ST SW, # 89 in the "Beer & Sodas" section of the club book.