

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

November 2007

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Meeting November 27

Please join us at 8 PM on Tuesday, November 27th at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Bethesda, Maryland. Visitors are always welcome, and we encourage everyone to bring antique bottles for show & tell.

Upcoming Meetings:

Our next meeting will be on **January 29, 2008**. We will not meet on Christmas day.

Scott Gordon holds a very unusual bottle at our October 30th meeting. Scott's new acquisition is free-blown and pontiled, and it features a long spout with a tiny opening. Our October 2000 newsletter describes a similar item that had been identified as a Spanish wine-drinking bottle. In a 1975 *Antique Bottle World* article, Bob Kauffman had warned future generations about reproductions of such bottles. We do not know the age of Scott's example, but this could be one that was causing concern back in 1975.



Discovering the Past in Cyberspace

by Jack Sullivan
Special to the Potomac Pontil

William Gibson, the well-known science fiction writer and the man who first coined the term “cyberspace,” is fascinated with eBay. In a recent interview with the *Washington Post*, Gibson said: “EBay is serving this very, very powerful function which no one ever intended for it. EBay in the hands of humanity is sorting every last Dick Tracy wrist radio cereal premium sticker that ever existed. It is like some sort of vast unconscious curatorial movement.”

The author goes on to say that eBay plus Google can allow an individual in some backwoods town to “become the world premier info-monster about some tiny obscure area of stuff.” Gibson is right. While the diggers among us unearth the past shovel by shovel, others of us drag it off the Internet.

For example, take the Crawford Shoe Company and the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) National Encampment held in Washington, D.C. in 1892. The two are united in the antique paperweight shown here (Fig. 1), issued that same year by the Crawford store located at 903 Pennsylvania Avenue (NW). This item, recently found on eBay, takes history in several directions.



Figure 1: Paperweight featuring G.A.R. Encampment

First, it sends us back to a hard luck but persistent and far-sighted entrepreneur named Harvey F. Crawford. Born in Maine, Crawford emigrated to Brockton, Mass., as a young man where he was determined to succeed in the shoe business. His picture shows him with a shock of black hair, a large walrus mustache, and piercing dark eyes. He created his first shoe manufacturing company with \$25. It failed. Undeterred Crawford began again. That factory burned down. He started a third time, but in 1886 was forced to declare bankruptcy when his bank failed taking his money with it. In 1887, with a new partner funding the enterprise, Crawford launched a fourth shoe company with an outlandish retailing idea. He would open proprietary shoe stores in good locations in large Eastern cities to merchandise the products of his Brockton factory. He also would sell cheap (all shoes for \$3.50) and advertise heavily in popular magazines of the day. (Fig. 2). Said a 1902 biography of

Crawford, “Many of his friends tried to dissuade him from what they deemed certain failure.”

FRANK LESLIE'S POPULAR MONTHLY.

The Crawford Shoe

For Men & Women, \$3.50

HOW YOU SAVE

When you buy the Crawford Shoe you get more in **Wear, Comfort and Good Looks** than is found in any other shoe at \$3.50 or anywhere near the price. Crawford methods and ideas have made this possible.

Improved machinery has reduced cost of manufacture—**Your saving begins.**

Large sales enable us to sell our shoes on a narrow margin—**Your saving continues.**

We use best materials obtainable and purchase in large quantities—**Further saving.**

Our perfect system has reduced cost of labor and expense of selling to the lowest notch—**Another saving.**

In fact you **save** in a dozen ways, or the difference between \$3.50 and every cent you pay beyond that price.

And last and most important, satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded.

Style 16.

“British Winter Boot”

A heavy grain Calf Shoe for winter wear. Has wide-toe and broad, comfortable tread. Made of Heavy Grain Box Calf, Heavy Sole, Crawford Lining, Blueber cut, Outside back-stay. Also of Heavy Black Calf Skin, Double Sole, Lace Style.

First-class dealers everywhere handle Crawford Shoes. If not sold in your vicinity, we can fit you through our Mail-Order Department, and you will be given as careful and courteous attention as you would receive at any of our stores. Price \$3.50 per pair, delivery charges prepaid.

FREE

Crawford Fashion Book illustrates 32 other styles and tells how to order by mail. Sent for the asking. Just drop postal.

Men's Stores	Crawford Shoe Makers	Women's Stores
93-95 Nassau St., New York. 25 West 23d St., New York. 120 West 23rd St., New York. 85 Broadway, New York. 415 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 180 Broadway, Brooklyn. 292 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington. 201 East Baltimore St., Baltimore. 150 Tremont St., Boston. 160 Summer St., Boston. 1220 Chestnut St., Philadelphia.	Mail-Order Dept., Room 33 140 Duane St., New York City, U. S. A. Factories NEW YORK CITY BROCKTON, MASS.	127 Fulton Street, New York. 54 West 23d St., New York. 82 Broadway, New York. 190 West 124th St., New York. 415 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 180 Broadway, Brooklyn. 292 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington. 201 East Baltimore St., Baltimore. 150 Tremont St., Boston. 160 Summer St., Boston. 1220 Chestnut St., Philadelphia.

When writing to advertisers please mention FRANK LESLIE'S POPULAR MONTHLY.

Figure 2: 1902 Crawford Shoes Ad

As it turned out, Harvey was the Sam Walton of his day. He opened stores in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington. Their success allowed Crawford to open a second shoe factory in New York City. Another Crawford idea was customer giveaways. Paperweights were particularly popular. Shown here are examples from Crawford’s



Figure 3: Paperweight featuring a shoe

Philadelphia stores, depicting a fashionable shoe style of the time (Fig. 3) and from D.C., a view of the Washington Monument (Fig. 4).



Figure 4: Paperweight featuring the Washington Monument

Crawford's prosperity did not last long. Creative but not particularly good at managing a business, he was forced to sell out to other interests after 1902. The firm eventually was owned by Charles A. Eaton, who raised prices and tried for a classier shoe image by featuring a huntsman with his dog (Fig. 5). This theme was repeated in Crawford shoe items sold recently on eBay: a postcard (Fig. 6) and a plaster statue (Fig. 7).

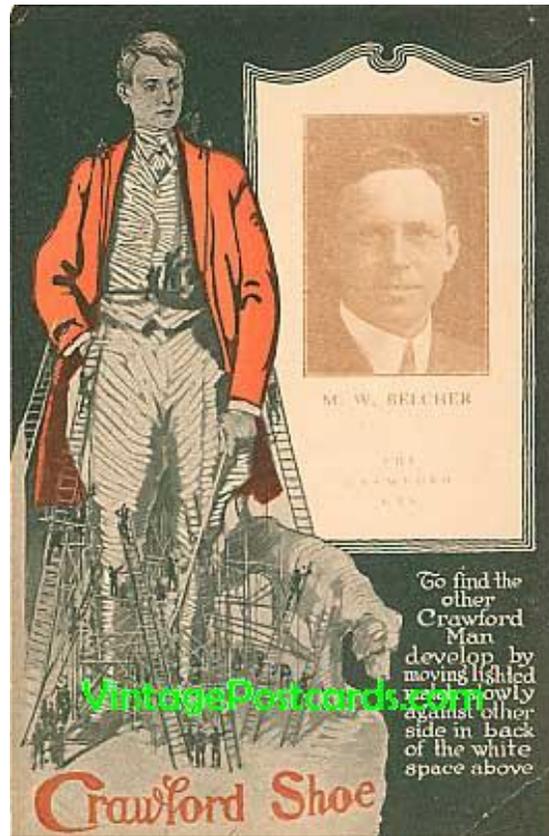


Figure 6: Crawford Shoe postcard

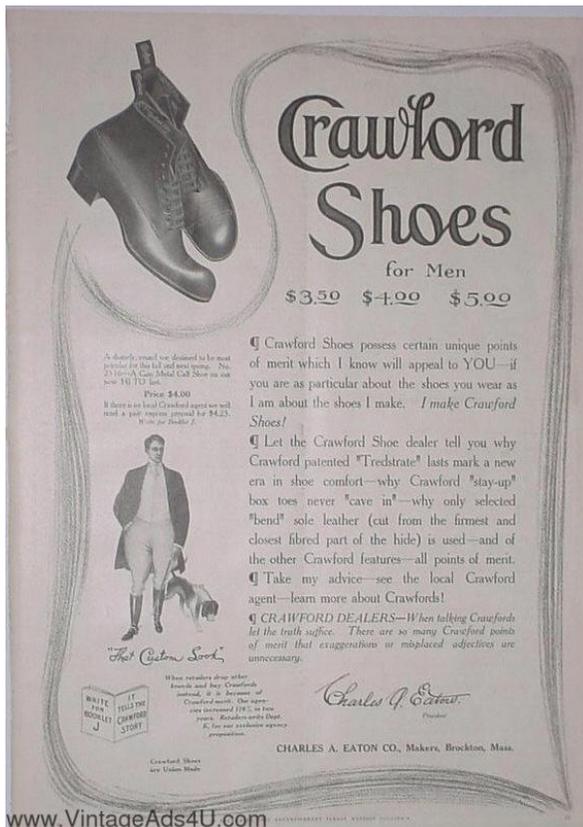


Figure 5: 1908 Crawford ad with hunt theme



Figure 7: Crawford Shoe statue

Back to the G.A.R. Encampment of 1892: A thriving veterans' organization of former Northern soldiers and sailors, the organization was a highly potent political force during the post-Civil War era. Its national conventions featured commemorative medals sold to participants. Examples from the 1892 Washington Encampment recently have shown up on eBay. One marked "Souvenir" depicts an eagle and a star (Fig. 8). A second shows a bust of General Philip Sheridan on the front and an elaborate patriotic frieze on the back (Figs. 9).

Figure 8: Encampment Medal #1



Crawford's Shoe Store) to great crowd applause (Fig. 11).

"Nothing of the sort could have been better than the demonstration on Fifteenth Street – Treasury on one side, Riggs House on the other.... It was enough to stir the blood of the coldest and the oldest," Hayes recorded in his daily journal.



Figure 10: Portrait of Rutherford B. Hayes



Figure 11: G.A.R. marching on Penna. Ave. in 1892

We began with a shoe manufacturer and end with the reminiscences of an ex-President. In between we have viewed antique paperweights, vintage magazine ads, Victorian shoe styles, an old post card, a plaster advertising statue, and G.A.R. souvenir medals – each of them a piece of memorabilia tossed up through the mechanism of an Internet auction.

This array – suggested by a single Washington, D.C., glass paperweight – could be assembled only because of the vast riches of image and information available through eBay, Google, and other web sources. Less than 25 years ago such a collection, drawn out of cyberspace, might have been considered science fiction – perhaps a product of William Gibson's imaginative pen.

Notes: As emphasized above, the material for this article originated through variety of Internet sources. The information on Harvey Crawford is from a 1902 book entitled *Massachusetts of Today: A Memorial*. It has been digitalized and appears on the Google Books site. The *Washington Post* story on William Gibson appeared September 6, page 1C. It is available as well on the Post website.



Figure 9: Encampment Medal #2 – front and back

Among the dignitaries attending the encampment was Rutherford B. Hayes (Fig. 10), a former president of the United States (1877-1881) and himself a Union army officer during the Civil War. From Hayes we have one of the most complete narratives of what happen in Washington during the G.A.R. national event. The former President marched shoulder to shoulder with the rank and file as the "great parade" of veterans surged down Pennsylvania Avenue (no doubt passing by

Washington DC Mini Jugs at Shupps Grove

by Richard Lilienthal

These seven photos were taken by Roland Longerbeam at the Shupps Grove, PA bottle show on July 21, 2007. A single dealer had all 7 Washington DC mini jugs for sale. Four are unlisted (i.e., Zimmerman, Renshaw, Freeman, Dement & Padgett). The dealer said that he bought them all from one collector in the mid-West. We did not buy any because he wanted about \$600 apiece. While our book may be a little conservative (it lists mini jugs in the \$130-150 range), that price seemed a bit inflated.

We now know of 21 mini jugs from the DC-Alexandria area plus several scratch jugs.



Dug Bottles at the October 30th Meeting

by Mike Cianciosi

A member of another group that meets at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer came over as a guest to our October 30th club meeting. He brought along the six bottles pictured here. All were circa 1870 including a squat, 4 short blobs and a gravitating stopper. He told a story about a backhoe opening a hole and revealing a bunch of bottles, and said he got a lot more than just the 6 he brought in. It sure sounded like an easy dig. All his bottles were in pretty rough shape though – many chips and a lot of dirt and opalescence.



I bought one of the bottles from him: a SAML C PALMER WASHINGTON DC short blob. It's the 3rd bottle from the left in figure 1. I gave it a good cleaning with a brush and some lime-a-way, but it was still pretty sick, so I cleaned it in my tumbler. The picture at right shows the before and after the tumble – it came out pretty good. There were a few scratches and some chips around the lip, but overall I'm pretty happy with it. I hope that guy joins the club and comes to more meetings in the future.



Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

NOVEMBER 25 - BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA

The Forks of the Delaware
Bottle Collectors Assoc.
34th Annual Show & Sale
(9 AM - 3 PM, Early
Buyers 7:30 AM) at the
Bethlehem Catholic High
School, Madison &
Dewberry Avenues,
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.
INFO: **BILL HEGEDUS**,
20 Cambridge Place,
Catasauqua, PA 18032,
PH: (610) 264-5945.H.



MARCH 2 - BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

The Baltimore Antique Bottle Club's 28th Annual Show & Sale (8 AM - 3 PM) at the Physical Education Center, CCBS-Essex, 7201 Rossville Blvd, Essex, Maryland. INFO: **BOB FORD**, PH: (410) 531-9459, E-mail: bottles@comcast.net.