

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

February 2009

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Meeting February 24th at Bannockburn Clubhouse

Because this is Shrove Tuesday, we will meet at the Bannockburn Clubhouse rather than the church. The map at right shows the Bannockburn Clubhouse. Note that the Church of the Redeemer is at the lower left of the map, while the clubhouse is roughly in the center.

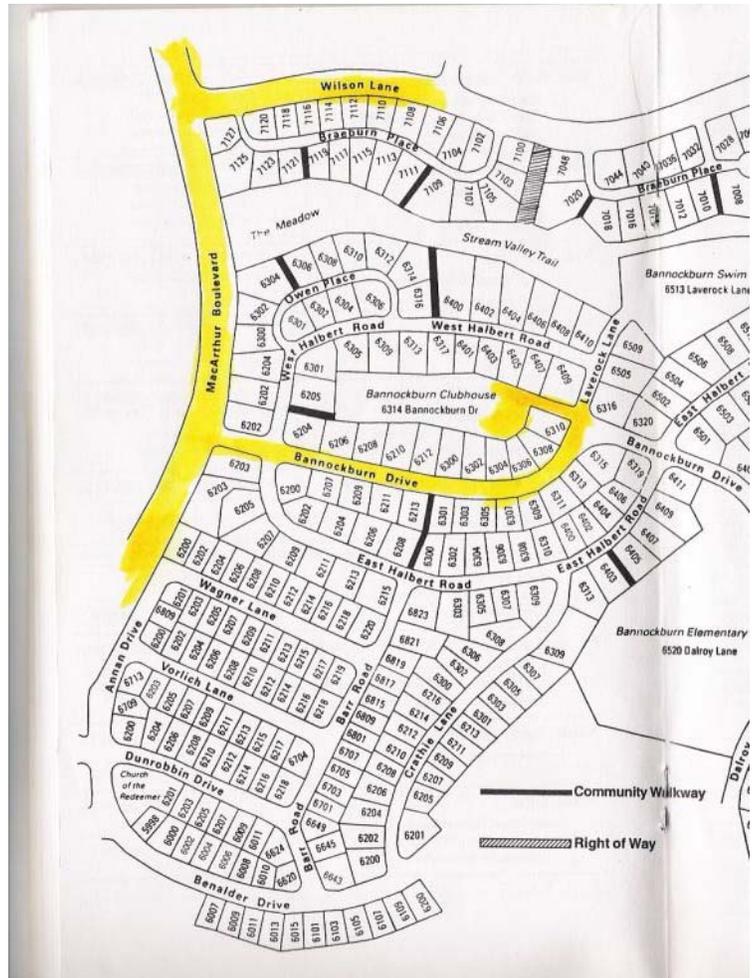
Since our January meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather, **our contest for 2008 acquisitions with take place at the February meeting.** Please bring your entries for collector of the year, digger of the year, shard of the year, and go-with of the year.

The February meeting is also our club dinner. The club will provide sandwich fixings and soft drinks as well as plates and utensils. Member contributions would be most welcome, but members should not feel obligated to bring food. Family members and guests are very welcome.

This meeting will start at **7:30 PM**

Future Meetings

We will return to the Church of the Redeemer for 8 PM meetings beginning in March. Upcoming meeting dates include March 24th, and April 28th.



Please note meeting place – Bannockburn Clubhouse – and time – 7:30 PM – for February 2009.

Capital Kitsch and the Goozh Family

by Jack Sullivan
(Special to the Potomac Pontil)

Now that the Inaugural is just a memory, we can contemplate the kitschy artifacts, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, that were purchased by Washington, DC, visitors for the occasion, items that may someday be prized by collectors as treasured antiques.

No people are as aware of the souvenir phenomenon as the descendants of Jacob Goozh, a man who in 1914 left his family in Europe to pursue his fortune in the United States. At first he had very little idea of what to do and where to do it, living at first with relatives in New York City and then moving to Boston, with no steady occupation.

Possibly through seeing an advertisement, Jacob seized the opportunity to open a souvenir photography studio in the District of Columbia and moved here. Self-taught as a photographer, he began plying the streets of the U.S. Capital taking pictures of tourists posed in front of historic structures and then selling them prints, using fast developing techniques. About 1915 he opened a studio at 917 Pennsylvania Av. N.W. and called it the Empire Photo Studio.

As World War I was ending, soldiers and sailors being demobilized descended on Washington and Jacob specialized in taking their pictures. As the business prospered, Goozh and his family, now reunited, incorporated in 1921 and branched out into a wide range of souvenir items for tourists. In 1931 Jacob changed the name of the firm to the Capital Souvenir Company, known popularly as "Capsco."

Capsco Kitsch

Company specialties have been ceramic items that depict historical figures like George and Martha Washington. One example is a sugar and creamer set (Fig. 1) in which Martha could be saying to George: "One lump or two?" If you were interested in all the Presidents (up to Reagan) there was a serving dish for you (Fig. 2). Other Goozh items included



1. The Washingtons on Cream and Sugar



2. The Plate of Presidents

plates, ashtrays and salt and pepper shakers that illustrated those same monuments Jacob earlier had used as a backdrop for his photos (Figs. 3,4,5). The company also has created souvenirs for other locales, including Virginia (Fig. 6).



3. Plate: Sights of Washington



4. White House Ashtray



5. Capsco Salt & Pepper Shakers



7. Capsco Mark



6. Gilded Virginia Plate



8. Taylor, Smith and Taylor Plate

Although many of these china items carried the Capsco logo on the bottom (Fig. 7), the company actually produced only the designs, farming out ceramic and other work. An example is a fancy plate depicting the Capitol (Fig. 8). Judging by a mark on the bottom it was a product of the Taylor, Smith & Taylor pottery of Chester, West Virginia. That company, founded in 1899, survived until driven out of business by foreign imports in 1982. The Goozh family itself imported from Japan items like vases (Fig. 9) and from Germany, beer steins (Fig. 10). The bottom of the stein shown here is incised with the mark of the Albert Jacob Thewalt Pottery. It was founded 114 years ago in Hohr, Germany, and today still producing decorative steins.



9. Japan-made Vase (left)

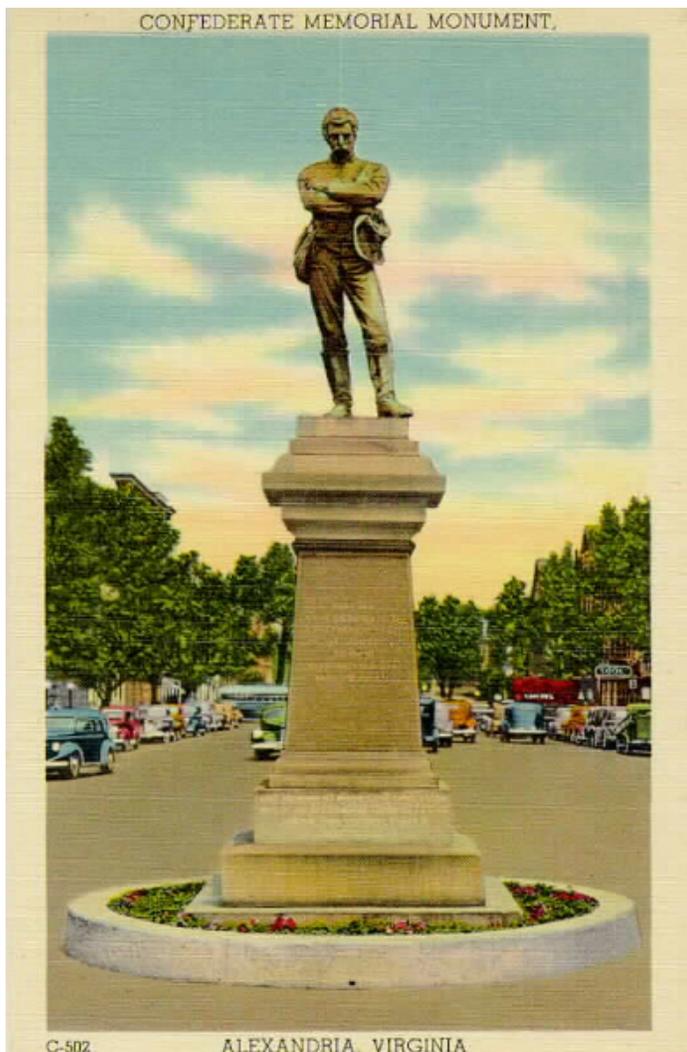


10. German-made Stein (right)

Another Goozh line, popular with collectors, are vintage postcards of the Washington area. A favorite picture of mine – possibly because I flew here on one in 1961 – depicts a DC-3 at National Airport (Fig. 11). Another postcard is of the Confederate soldier statue in Alexandria (Fig. 12). Capsco items also have included felt banners (Fig. 13) and DC sites in bronze (Figs. 14,15).



11. DC-3 at National Postcard



12. Alexandria Statue Postcard



13. Detail of Felt Banner



14. Bronzed White House



15. Bronzed Capital Building

Capsco Today

Jacob Goozh's descendants, down to the fourth generation, have continued run the Capitol Souvenir Co. as DC's premier marketer of tourist kitsch. Over the years tastes have changed and business has fluctuated, but Presidential elections and inaugural are always prime time. "We love inaugurations. It's like our Olympics," Michael Goozh, the 33-year-old president, last year told the *Washington Post*: "There is a huge spike in volume. Obama is getting sold out 8 to 1 to McCain. And Hillary was outselling everybody." (Since Election Day that last no doubt has changed.)

Today the Capitol Souvenir Co. is a creator and wholesaler of souvenirs, selling to retailers all across the country. In 2000 the firm moved from 14th Street NW to College Park, Maryland. Michael Goozh says many offers have been made to buy out the family but they want to mark 100 years of ownership in 2021. At that point, it should be noted, Jacob's early kitschy creations will be *bona fide* antiques and probably be hauled to *Antiques Roadshow* for appraisal.

Notes: Material for this article came from two major sources. A "guide" to Capsco can be found on eBay. It is illustrated with what may be examples of Joseph Goozh's World War One era studio photographs. The *Washington Post* story about the contemporary operations of Capsco was published originally on Sept. 1, 2008. The illustrations here are from a wide variety of internet sources.

Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

MARCH 8 – BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

The Baltimore Antique Bottle Club's 29th Annual Show & Sale, (8 AM to 3 PM), at the Physical Education Center, CCBC-Essex, 7201 Rossville Blvd. (I-695, Exit 34), Essex, MD. Info: **ERIC EWEN**, PH: (410) 265-5745, email: teresaanderic@comcast.net

MARCH 14 BADIN, NORTH CAROLINA

Uwharrie Bottle Club 2nd Annual Show & Sale, (8 AM to 3 PM), at the Badin Fire Department, Badin, NC. Info: **TODD McSWAIN**, PH: (704) 474-0552, email: meswain8649@alltel.net

**MARCH 15 – TYLERSPORT, PENNSYLVANIA**

15th Annual Bucks-Mont Bottle Show & Sale, (9 AM to 2 PM, early buyers 8 AM), at the Tylersport Fire Company, 125 Ridge Road, Tylersport, PA. Info: **DAVID BUCK**, 123 East Summit St., Souderton, PA 18964, PH: (215) 723-4048 or **GREG GIFFORD**, PH: (215) 699-5216.

APRIL 25 – MILLVILLE, NEW JERSEY

The New Jersey Antique Bottle Club's (NJABC) Millville Annual Show & Sale (Sat. 9 AM - 3 PM, Adm. \$2; No early buyers) at the Elks Lodge of Millville, 1815 East Broad Street, Millville, New Jersey. Homemade food and refreshments will be available. Limited tables available for \$30 each. Info.: **PAUL DELGUERCIO**, PH: (609) 352-7104, E-mail paulhavoc@comcast.net or **JOE BUTEWICZ**, 24 Charles St., South River, NJ 08882..

APRIL 26 – HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

The Historical Bottle Diggers of Virginia 38th Annual Show & Sale, (9 AM to 3 PM), at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds, U.S. Rt. 11 South, Harrisonburg, VA. Info: **SONNY SMILEY**, PH: (540) 434-1129 or email: lithiaman1@yahoo.com

MAY 3 – BRICK, NEW JERSEY

The Jersey Shore Bottle Club's 37th Annual Antique Bottles & Post Card Show & Sale (Sun. 8:30 AM - 2 PM, Donation \$3) at the Brick Elks, 2491 Hooper Ave., Brick, New Jersey. Info: **RICH PEAL**, PH: (732) 267-2528 or E-mail: manodirt@msn.com.

MAY 17 WASHINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA

Washington County Antique Bottle Club 35th Annual Show & Sale, (9 AM to 2 PM), at the Alpine Star Lodge, 735 Jefferson Ave., Washington, PA. Info: **RUSS CRUPE**, 52 Cherry Road, Avella, PA 15312, PH: (724) 345-3653 or (412) 298-7831, email: heidirus@gmail.com

Sources for Herrmann article beginning on page 6:

1. The Washington Law Reporter, volume XLIV, by the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia, pp. 236
2. The Washington Post, various issues
3. The Evening Star, March 6th 1936 issue
4. Antique Bottles from the Washington DC Area, 4th edition, by Potomac Bottle Collectors
5. Web site: <http://www.theantiquesafecollector.com/photospage3.html> for photo of old safe
6. The U.S. Census, various years
7. Boyd's city directories for Washington DC, various years

Herrmann

by Mike Cianciosi

Last year I brought a bottle with a label from the A.G. Herrmann Ginger Ale Company to one of our club meetings for show-and-tell. The label showed an unusual trade mark that clearly depicted a dog, a key, and some type of box with a curved top (see figure 1). There was some debate about what the box was. Some thought it might be a mailbox; some thought it might be a chest. When I started researching it and learned that A. G. Herrmann was Mason, I even wondered if it was some mysterious Masonic item.



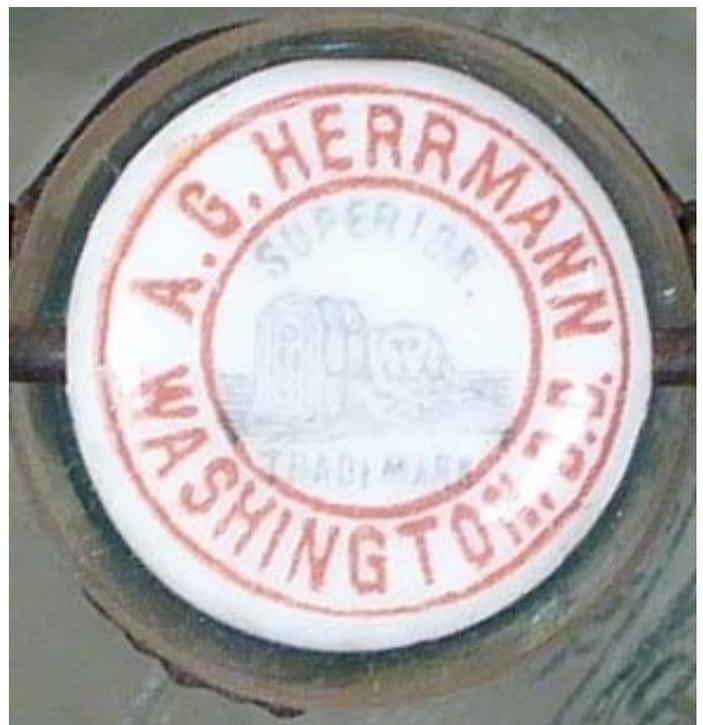
1. Herrmann Ginger Ale Label

But further research has provided a definitive answer: It's a safe. An April 4th 1916 legal notice for the registry of the trade mark described it as a "safe with a dog guarding the key thereof". The dog, key and safe all have a common theme of guarding something, although what that has to do with Ginger Ale or bottling is anyone's guess. Figure 2 shows a photo of a similar safe, so there really were safes shaped like that at one time.

A.G. Herrmann got a lot of use out of this trade mark. Besides showing up on at least 2 different labels, this trade mark shows up on a ceramic stopper (figure 3) and of course it showed up in the embossing of some of Herrmann's bottles (figure 4).



2. Safe Similar to that Depicted by Herrmann



3. Ceramic Herrmann Stopper



4. Herrmann Bottles with Embossed Safes

The use of a trade mark may have aided in getting bottles returned to their rightful owner. This was a problem in the early 20th century, as indicated by the fact that in 1906 Herrmann tried to sue a grocer for allegedly retaining Herrmann's bottles. The embossed trade mark on the Herrmann bottles is on the neck, so that if a label were placed on the body of the bottle, the trade mark would still be visible. This would certainly aid an illiterate person in figuring out whom to return the bottle to, even if the bottle had a label from another bottler. Some earlier Herrmann bottles had a simple heart for a trade mark (figure 5). Some later Herrmann bottles had a tiger for a trade mark (figure 6).



5. Herrmann Bottle with Heart



6. Herrmann Bottle with Tiger Trademark

Background on Herrmann Bottling Company

John Frederick Herrmann (1837-1927) started the Herrmann bottling company in 1874 at 2nd Street and Virginia Avenue SE, Washington DC. Apparently he used his middle name, as he is listed in the census at various years as "Fred", "Frederick", or simply "J.F.". It seems likely that the 2 bottles listed in the club book with "FRED HERRMANN" embossed in them were from his bottling company.

In 1885, the company was moved to 750 10th Street SE. Also in 1885, August George Herrmann (1862-1836), J.F.'s son, became a partner in the bottling business, which became known as "J.F. HERRMANN & SON". In 1902, A.G. Herrmann took over the business, and remained the owner for 30 years. In 1932, A.G. stepped down and the Herrmann Ginger Ale Company was incorporated, with his son William F. Herrmann running the business until it finally closed in 1941.

City directories show that the address 750 10th Street SE was occupied by the Squirt bottling company from 1941 to 1947. It was then occupied by both the Joe Lewis Punch Company and the Capitol Club Ginger Ale company from 1948 to 1949. That address no longer shows up as a bottling company after that.

BALTIMORE ANTIQUE BOTTLE CLUB



29th Annual Show and Sale

Sunday - March 8, 2009

8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

Physical Education Center
Essex Campus of the Community College of Baltimore County
7201 Rossville Blvd. (off exit 34, I-695)
Baltimore, Maryland 21237

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Information:

Eric Ewen - Show Chairman

Telephone: 410-265-5745 E-mail: teresaanderic@comcast.net



www.baltimorebottleclub.org

