

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

March 2009

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Meeting March 31st

In honor of the start of spring, please bring **spring water** bottles for show & tell. If you do not have any spring water bottles, please bring other types of water bottles in their place.



February Meeting

The February meeting featured our club contest as well as the annual club dinner. Some collector-of the year entries are shown below. Contest winners will be announced at the March meeting.



Baltimore Antique Bottle Show

Several of our members attended the Baltimore bottle show on March 8th, and a great time was had by all. This photo of Andy Goldfrank is on the Baltimore Bottle Club web site along with many other views of the show:
<http://baltimorebottleclub.org/2009show/?t=40>

Our Washington, DC bottle book is now out of print. We sold the last remaining copies of the current edition at the Baltimore show. The club hopes to complete a new edition in 2010. Richard Lilienthal has been compiling listings for the new book, but other club members are encouraged to volunteer to help with editing, photos, and layout.



The Day the Hatchet Fell on Washington

by Jack Sullivan
(Special to the Potomac Pontil)

A century was fading fast,
When o'er its closing decade passed
A matron's figure, chaste, yet bold,
Who held within her girdle's fold
A bran' new hatchet.
--C.B. Andrews, 1908

In February of 1904, the "chaste, yet bold" heroine of the poem above, a woman who stood six feet tall and weighed in at 175 pounds, came to the Nation's Capital, preceded by her reputation for creating havoc and destruction. Her name was Carry Amelia Nation (**Fig. 1**), whose crusade of destruction against strong drink was enforced with an hatchet and whose legacy is found in bottles (**Fig. 2, 3**) and other period artifacts .



1. Carry Nation with hatchet and Bible



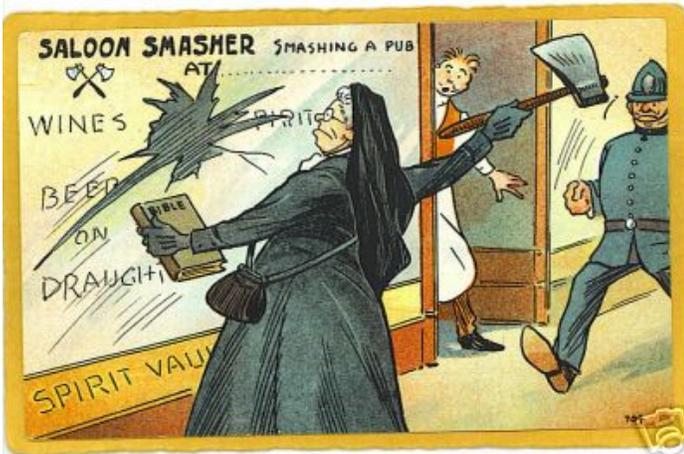
2. C. Nation figural bottle



3. Woman whiskey nip

Born in June of 1846 in Kentucky, Carry (sometimes spelled Carrie) Nation was a member of the Temperance Movement which she joined following the death from alcoholism of her first husband. In 1900 she heard a "Voice from Above" that told her to take something hard in her hands and go wreck saloons. Her first adventure was in Kiowa, Kansas, where she stormed into a barroom and proceeded to heave rocks. Within minutes almost every bottle in the place had been smashed along with the mirror behind the bar and both of the front windows.

Thus began her rampage of vandalism against saloons all across Kansas and into neighboring states. Carry soon graduated from rocks to a hatchet, as shown in a postcard of the times (Fig. 4). Her antics got her arrested more than 30 times and jailed on 22 occasions from 1900 to 1910, but they also secured her a national reputation among fervent Drys. Billed variously as the Bar Room Smasher, the Wrecker of Saloons, and the Home Defender, she drew large and enthusiastic audiences, mostly of women, with her widely advertised lectures (Fig. 5). She titillated the crowds by shouting: "Oh, I tell you, ladies, you never know what joy it gives you to start out to smash a rumshop." To the men she boasted: "You have put me in here a cub, but I will come out roaring like a lion, and I will make all hell howl!"



4. Postcard - Saloon Smasher #1

Early in 1904 the "Hell Howling Lioness" decided it was time to take her strident message and her hatchet to Washington, D.C. The ostensible reason was to warn President Theodore Roosevelt about the bad example his daughter, Alice, was giving by smoking in public. Carry, it seems, was as violent against smoking as she was against drinking. With plenty of reporters in her wake, this formidable matron marched straight up to the White House. According to contemporary reports, The guard was polite but firm. He met Mrs. Nation before she got to the door to inform her it was not possible to see the President. When she began a harangue about cigarette fiends, the guard broke in.



5. C. Nation Poster

"Madam," he said, "do not make a lecture here." Mrs. Nation left shouting: "I suppose you have the same motto here in the White House that they have in the saloons, 'All the Nations Welcome Except Carry.'" She went away to tell reporters that Roosevelt's predecessor, President McKinley, might have recovered from the wounds of his assassin "had not his blood been poisoned by nicotine." She left ominous inferences that something similar might well happen to the Roosevelts.

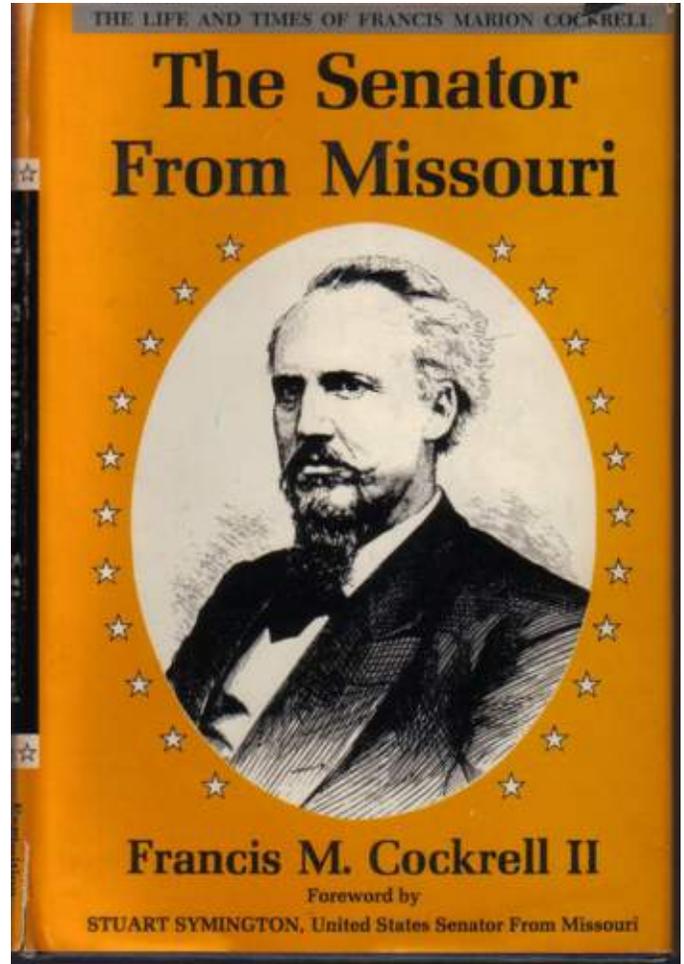
Carry was not so easily dissuaded from seeing the President. She headed back to the White House, again trailed by the press. Aware of her presence, this time Teddy Roosevelt sent out his personal secretary, William Loeb Jr., to confront her (Fig. 6). Loeb was well known as the President's alter ego. A contemporary account described him as standing between the President and busy bodies, office-seekers, and cranks. Certainly the meeting with Carry Nation qualified.



6. William Loeb, Jr.

In her autobiography, entitled *The Use and Need of the Life of Carry A. Nation*, the author described her very short conversation with Loeb. Things clearly did not go well: *Mr. Loeb called to a police to take me out. I said: "If I was a brewer or distiller I could have an interview. As a representative mother, I ought to be received. I wished to ask him [Roosevelt] why he practiced the vice of smoking cigarettes? Why he has never said a word against the licensed saloon when it is the greatest question that ever confronted the homes of America?"I was taken outside in a very orderly manner by two policemen, something unusual, for I am hustled and dragged generally.*

Undeterred, Carry next went to Congress where she confronted Senator Francis Marion Cockrell of Missouri, seen here on the cover of a biography written by his son (Fig. 7). Once again the meeting was confrontational. Cockrell, who had been a Confederate general and was a force in the Senate, "got excited immediately," Carry recalled. He threatened to have her thrown out of the Capitol Building. That got her mad enough to want to wield her ax. Or as she put it, "I wanted to do some 'Hatchetation,' that not being possible, I thought I would do some agitation." According to her own account she stood in a hall near the Senate Chamber and began shouting over and over at the top of her voice: "Treason, anarchy and conspiracy! Discuss these."



7. Sen. Francis M. Cockrell

This time all patience had been exhausted. As she probably had hoped, Carry was arrested and taken to a D.C. police station. A court was in session. Acting as her own lawyer she argued that her outburst was justified on the same principle that an individual was allowed to holler "fire" if a building were burning. The judge was unimpressed. He found her guilty and fined her \$25, the maximum penalty under the law for disturbing the peace. While the judge professed to be sympathetic to the Temperance cause, Ms. Nation was not mollified. His was, she said "the kind of sympathy that a cat has for a mouse when she crushes the bones between her teeth."

Outside the courtroom, Carry was greeted enthusiastically by her female followers and proceeded to help pay off the fine by selling them souvenir hatchet pins (Fig. 8) from her commodious purse. The purse itself became an iconic item and is now on display in a Kansas museum (Fig. 9). The purse also can be seen represented on the bottle in Fig. 2 along with an umbrella. It is not clear what this clear glass figural bottle originally contained. It may well have been whiskey in the spirit of ridicule that Carry Nation continually evoked (Fig. 10).



8. Hatchet pin

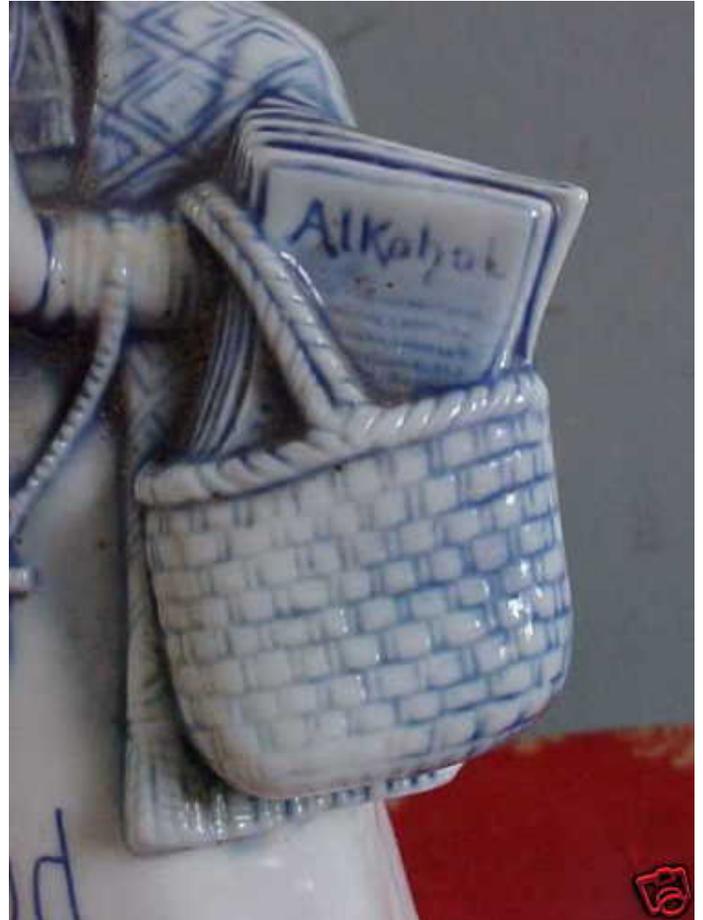


9. C. Nation's purse



10. Postcard - Saloon Smasher #2

There can be little doubt, however, that the ceramic bottle in Fig. 3 is a whiskey nip, probably made in Germany. While it is not appear to be of Carry herself, it clearly is a spoof. The finely detailed figurine holds a purse from which protrude pamphlets with "Alkohol" on them (Fig. 11). Not all Carry Nation artifacts poke fun. Among them are several varieties of hatchets issued by her adherents (Figs. 12,13). The miniature hatchet with Carry's face on it came from the Ace Stove Company of Detroit, one of that city's largest stove manufacturers. The owner clearly was a Temperance advocate. Bearing a date of 1901, the item shown here may be a re-strike.



11. Detail of whiskey nip

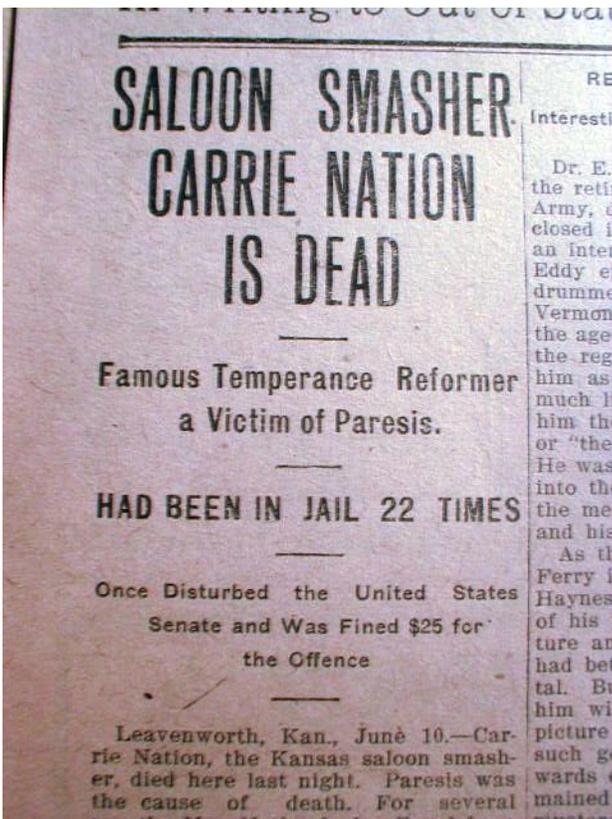


12. Miniature hatchet



13. "Ax of all Nations"

Apparently satisfied with the havoc she had caused in Washington and without any hope of getting to see anyone in authority, Carry Nation went back home to Kansas. As her popularity and health declined, she and her husband went to Europe in 1909 and returned to live for a time in Washington. Still ignored by the power brokers, she moved back to Kansas and died there in February 1911 at 65 years of age. Her Washington exploits were prominent in stories of her demise (Fig. 14). Ironically she died almost a decade before her fond dreams of a drinkless-America would come true in National Prohibition.



14. Newspaper story

Notes: The materials for this article were gleaned from a number of electronic and print sources, chief of them being Carry Nation's autobiography, cited above. The book appears in its entirety on the Internet.

Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

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

JUNE 4-7 – GRANTVILLE (HERSHEY), PENNSYLVANIA

The National Association of Milk Bottle Collectors' 29th Annual Convention at the Holiday Inn in Grantville (Hershey), Pennsylvania. INFO: **PENNY GOTTLIEB**, 18 Pond Rd., Cos Cob, CT 06807, PH: (203) 869-8411, E-mail: gottmilk@msn.com. Website: www.milkbottlecollectors.com. .