

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

April 2010

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Meeting April 27th

Please bring in plenty of items for show & tell. We hope that the pleasant spring weather has encouraged many members to get out and find bottles.

Club History by Mike Cianciosi

20 years ago

The April 1990 issue of the *Pontil* had a review of Karl Shipman's program from the March meeting, in which Karl told stories of his favorite digs, including some "narrow escapes". It also had a list of newsletter exchanges, listing 16 other clubs with which we exchanged newsletters.

30 years ago

The April 1980 issue of the *Pontil* had a discussion of the club's 8th annual show & sale, with paid attendance of 403 people (not as large as the previous 2 years). It mentioned that there was a banquet the night before, with music played by the musical duo named "The Manassas Blob Tops".

35 years ago

The March-April 1975 issue of the *Pontil* mentioned that 2 club members had recently dug Washington-Taylor open pontil historical flasks on 2 separate digs, one in Baltimore and one in DC. It had an article about the Alexandria "Roseberry" soda bottle that discussed where 5 different examples of this bottle were dug or found, and who currently owned them. It mentioned one example of that bottle that sold for a mere \$35 (*it's listed in the current edition of our club book for \$600-\$800*). And there was a report on the club's 3rd annual show and sale in which paid attendance exceeded 450 people. It mentioned bottles that were sold at the show, including a McKeon torpedo with a repaired lip selling for \$100, and several Portner hutches selling for \$6-\$8.



Above are some show & tell items from our March meeting. Mike Cianciosi displayed a binder full of C & O canal memorabilia as part of the "my other hobby" program.

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: 609/472-5473) & Andy Goldfrank (email: amg_sticky@yahoo.com, PH: 202/588-0543)
Web Site: www.potomacbottlecollectors.org Maintained by Al Miller: www.potomacbottlecollectors.org/contact.php

Mixing Whiskey in Mahoneyville

By Jack Sullivan

[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

Identified by McClure's magazine in 1920 as the U.S. Government's "chief analyst of whiskey," a Professor Tolman declared that the widely sold brand of liquor merchandised as "Arlington Pure Rye" was simply neutral spirits colored and flavored. In short, this purported whiskey was a fraud on the public. The conclusions of the Federal inspector must have caused chaos in Mahoneyville.

Not that Mahoneyville ever really existed. In modern parlance, it was a "virtual" place, apparently encompassing Alexandria, Portsmouth and Norfolk, Virginia, and eventually Baltimore, Maryland. Nonetheless, an investor could have bought stock in its distillery (Fig. 1). Mahoneyville was the brainchild of Edward and John Mahoney of Portsmouth, where, according to an 1872 city directory, they both resided on Crawford Street. Edward lived at the corner of Henry Street, John at the corner of Harrison. At the time they were listed as wine and liquor dealers doing business under the name J & E Mahoney at 11 and 13 High Street. Edward was president and John was treasurer.



Fig. 1: Mahoneyville Distilling stock certificate

Subsequently the pair hatched the idea of moving into distilling whiskey and calling the operation Mahoneyville. They located the distillery in Alexandria, as indicated in a 1893 ad (Fig. 2). Liquor tax records from the Federal Government indicate that Mahoneyville Distilling carried out transactions at its Alexandria area facility from 1898 at least through 1904. The brothers also adopted Northern Virginia names for their whiskeys: Arlington Pure Rye and Cameron Springs Whiskey. Their other liquor brands also reflected Commonwealth origins: Belle of Virginia Blended Rye, Lake Drummond Rye, and Hampton Roads Whiskey.

EDWARD MAHONEY, Pres't. JOHN MAHONEY, Treas.
MAHONEYVILLE DISTILLING COMPANY,
Distillers of Pure Rye Whiskey,
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA.
Main Office, Nos. 11 & 13, HIGH ST., PORTSMOUTH, VA.
AND
J. & E. MAHONEY,
Distillers, Rectifiers and Wholesale Dealers in Foreign and
Domestic Liquors, Wines, Etc.,
Distillers of the celebrated Arlington Pure Rye Whiskey.

Fig. 2: 1893 Mahoney ad

The company registered most of its trade names with the U.S. during 1905 and 1906. Monogram Whiskey, another Mahoney product, was not among them (Fig. 3). Although the labels long ago were washed away from most of its containers, Mahoney whiskey bottles were strongly embossed and can be readily identified. Earlier containers were fairly simple, such as this pint flask (Fig. 4). Subsequent bottles are more elaborately lettered and identify the Mahoneys as "distillers" (Figs. 5,6). At some point the brothers also acknowledged their role as "rectifiers," that is, outfits that mixed whiskey -- and too often other substances -- to obtain a more tasty, smoother product (Fig. 7). Early in the 20th Century, the Mahoneys opened a store in Norfolk and began to cite that location on their bottles (Figs. 8-10).



Fig. 3: Monogram Whiskey half pint (above left)

Fig. 4: Mahony pint flask



Fig. 5: Mahoney whiskey bottle #1



Fig. 6: Mahoney whiskey bottle #2



Fig. 7: Mahoney whiskey bottle #3



Fig. 8: Mahoney whiskey bottle #4



Fig. 9: Mahoney whiskey bottle #5 (above left)

Fig. 10: Mahoney whiskey bottle #6 (above right)

The brother's liquor empire included several entities. In addition to Mahoneyville Distilling and J & E Mahoney, the family members operated the Edward L. Mahoney Company of Norfolk (1898-1913) and E. Mahoney & Son of Norfolk (1906-1908). A mini-jug from the latter firm boasts that the whiskey inside is "On the Square," adding: "You know the rest, it is Mahoney's best." (Fig. 11).

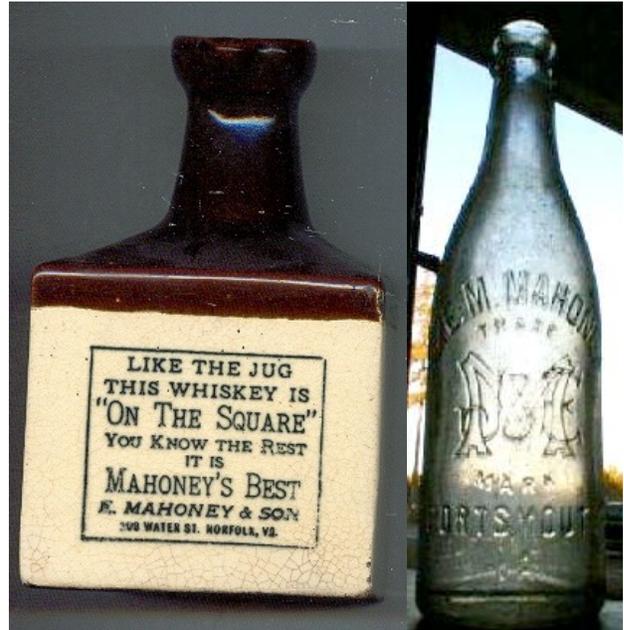


Fig. 11: Mahoney Norfolk mini-jug (above left)

Fig. 12: Mahoney beer bottle (above right)

John and Edward also branched out into selling beer, advertising themselves as agents for the Consumer Brewing Company and its "Bronco" Export Beer. Beer bottles embossed with the characteristic J&EM logo have emerged from time to time (Fig. 12).

Mahoneyville in Virginia came to a screeching halt in 1916 when the Commonwealth voted for a complete prohibition of alcoholic beverages. The family then moved its operations to Maryland where the Mahoneys set up shop at 30 S. Calvert Street in Baltimore. They continued to sell their whiskeys from that location from 1917 until 1920 when the Nation went completely dry.

My guess is that the adulteration of Arlington Pure Rye, as decried by Professor Tolman and McClure's magazine, was a result of the Mahoneys shutting down the Alexandria distillery and moving entirely into rectifying whiskey in Maryland. Instead of creating and aging the product, they were mixing up ingredients in batches in a back room and slapping the old labels on it. In effect, the family was counterfeiting whiskey in their Baltimore Mahoneyville and in the process defrauding the public.

Notes: The material for this article came from a variety of Internet and printed sources. The bottle images from Figs. 5 through 10 are courtesy of Dr. Richard Lilienthal, a member of the Potomac Bottle Club.

Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

APRIL 25 -

HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

The Historical Bottle Diggers of Virginia's 39th Annual Show & Sale (9am - 3pm), at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds, US Route 11 (Exit 243 off I-81), south of Harrisonburg, VA.

Info: **Sonny Smiley**, 1025 Greendale Rd, Harrisonburg, VA 22801, ph: (540) 434-1129, email: lithiaman1@yahoo.com



MAY 2 - BRICK, NEW JERSEY

Jersey Shore Bottle Club's 38th Annual Postcards & Local Memorabilia Show & Sale (8:30am - 2pm), Brick Elks Lodge, 2491 Hopper Ave, Brick, NJ 08723.

Info: **Richard Peal**, 720 Eastern Ln, Brick, NJ 08723, ph:(732) 267-2528, email: manodirt@msn.com or www.bottleclub.org

MAY 8 - SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

Piedmont Bottle Club's 4th Annual Bottle and Pottery Show & Sale (8am - 2pm), at the Salisbury Civic Center, 315 S Boundary St (AKA Martin Luther King Jr Ave), Salisbury, NC 28144. Info: **John Patterson**, ph: (704) 636-9510, email: ncmilks@carolina.rr.com or **Jimmy Wood**, ph: (704) 692-7888 or **Chuck Rash**, ph: (704) 732-0373. club website: www.antiquebottles.com/piedmont

MAY 16 - MILLVILLE, NEW JERSEY

The New Jersey Antique Bottle Club's Annual Millville Show & Sale (9am - 3pm), at the Elks Lodge, 1815 E Broad St, Millville, NJ.

Info: **Joe Butewicz**, 24 Charles St, South River, NJ 08882, ph: (732) 236-9945, email: botlman@msn.com.

This is an FOHBC Club

MAY 16 - WASHINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA

Washington County Antique Bottle Club's 36th Annual Show & Sale (9am - 2pm), at the Alpine Star Lodge, 735 Jefferson Ave (Exit 17 off I70), Washington, PA.

Info: **Russ Crupe**, 52 Cherry Rd, Avella, PA 15312, ph: 724) 345-3653 or (412) 298-7831, email: heidirus@gmail.com

JUNE 3 & 5 - HERSHEY, PENNSYLVANIA

The National Association of Mile Bottle Collectors' 30th Annual Convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Grantville (Hershey), PA.

Info: **Penny Gottlieb**, 18 Pond Pl, Cos Cob, CT 06807, ph: (203) 869-8411

JULY 17 & 18 ADAMSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

The 9th Annual Shupp's Grove Bottle Festival, (Sat. & Sun from sun-up until ??, early buyers Fri. 5 PM), at the famous 'Shupp's Grove' in Adamstown, PA. Info: **STEVE GUION**, PH: (717) 371-1259, email: affinityinsurance@dejazzd.com.



Lee Shipman displayed collectibles including stamps and postcards that go along with her bottles. Some of her items are shown below.

