

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

May 2010

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Meeting May 25th

Please join us at 8 PM at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Bethesda, Maryland.

Club History by Mike Cianciosi

20 years ago

The May 1990 issue of the *Pontil* thanked Al Steidel for his April presentation on Washington DC stoneware. There was a paragraph describing Karl Shipman, who was selected as the collector of the month. And there was an article by Henry Fuchs describing how to clean the insides of bottles using a coat hanger and a brillo pad, with hand-drawn figures included.

30 years ago

The May 1980 issue of the *Pontil* listed nominations for club officers to be voted on at the June meeting. Some offices had 3 candidates competing. There was also a glowing review of the club show (at the Elks Lodge in Falls Church Virginia) written by the president of a bottle club from Bedford PA.



Above are some views from our April meeting.

Peter Rydquist (at left) showed a decorated stoneware pot, which he had dug in three pieces and clued together.

Mike Cianciosi (center photo) brought some local bottles including an L. STABLER Hutchinson and some crown tops that are not in our club book.

Roland Longerbeam displayed the group of jars and bottles in the rightmost photo. Some of these came from the Baltimore bottle show, while others were in recent auctions.

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

Mini-Jugs of Virginia: North and East

By Jack Sullivan

[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

One sector of bottle collecting that has continued to flourish through the decades is the clear passion for mini-jugs. For the most part these were ceramic handled containers that usually held about one-tenth of a pint of whiskey. They were distributed widely by distillers, liquor dealers, grocers, saloons, restaurants, fraternal groups and others.

Pre-Prohibition mini-jugs fetch good prices at bottle shows, glassware auctions and on Internet auction sites. Because neither they nor their labels are biodegradable, new examples are being dug or otherwise discovered all the time. Their size also is an advantage. One can amass a sizable collection without filling up the bathtub or buying the house next door.

While states like Kentucky and Ohio probably have produced the most mini-jugs, Virginia has contributed its share of these artifacts. This article concentrates on examples from northern and eastern parts of the Commonwealth. A future article will document minis from Roanoke and west.

Let's begin with a pair from Alexandria. The scratch mini-jug (Fig. 1) was issued by the P. Pulham Company located at 825 Duke Street. This was a store founded by Peter Pulham (1832-1906) in the late 1800s. A 1900 ad describes the business as a grocery that handled "meats and provisions." Among the latter undoubtedly was whiskey, a sample of which probably was in the mini-jug.

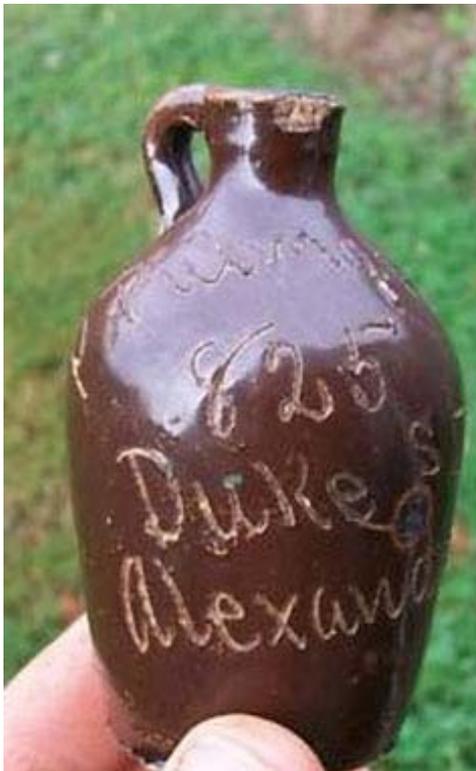


Fig. 1: Pulham Alexandria mini-jug

Pulham, whose residence was listed in Fairfax County was assisted in the store by Charles O. Pulham (1860-1925), probably his son. After Peter's death in 1906, Charles expanded the scope of the merchandise, a move that the Alexandria Gazette hailed as a "new venture" department store. Charles, who lived on Duke Street near the premises, added dry goods, including shoes and children's clothing. Both Peter and Charles are buried in the cemetery at the First Presbyterian Church in Alexandria.

The C. T. Goods mini-jug (Fig. 2) also was issued by an Alexandria retail grocer whose full first name was Charles. Goods also was Alexandria Chief of Police for a number of years during the early 1900s. He is seen here seated in a 1911 photo, flanked by some of his officers (Fig. 3). For a time he was assisted in the store by a relative, possibly a brother, J. Washington Goods, Both resided in the Alexandria, according to city directories -- J. Washington at 917 King Street, and Charles at 1317 King St. and later at 108 S. Columbus,

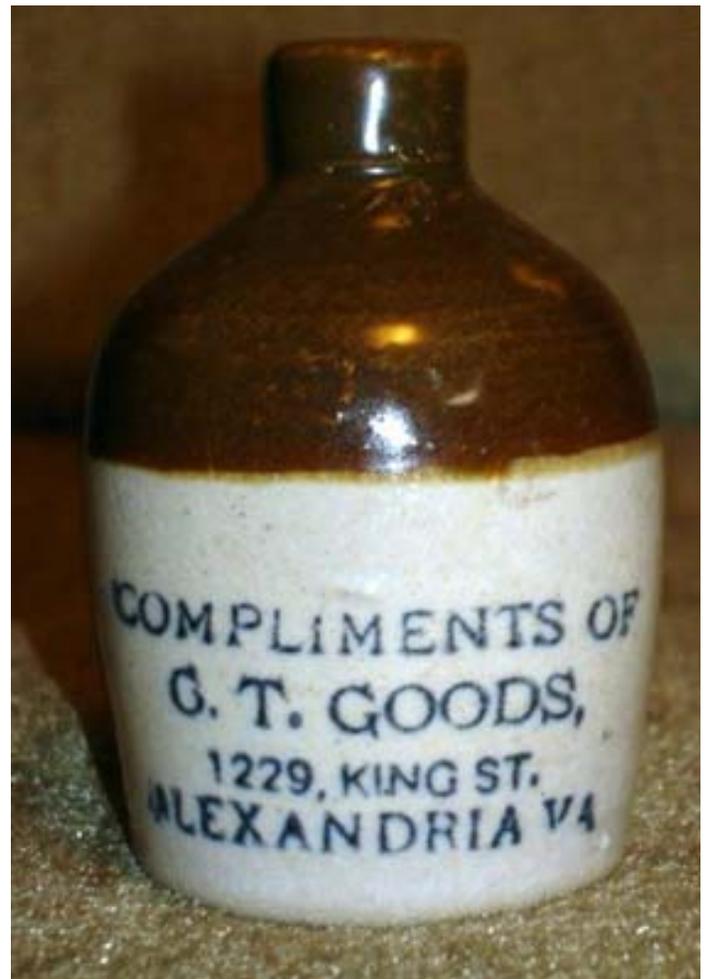


Fig. 2: C.T. Goods Alexandria mini-jug



Fig. 3: Photo-Chief Goods with police

While it is possible to date most mini-jugs as pre-Prohibition artifacts, as the first two shown here, it often is difficult to pinpoint the exact year of issuance. Not so with a mini-jug from Norfolk (Fig. 4). It is clearly dated at 1896. The initials stand for the Uniform Ranks, Knights of Pythias. This is a fraternal group and secret society founded in 1864 by Justus H. Rathbone, a Washington D.C.-based Federal employee.



Fig. 4: URKP Norfolk mini-jug

In the aftermath of the Civil War, Rathbone established the organization to further the ideals of male friendship and loyalty, basing it on the myth of Damon and Pythias. The fraternity grew very rapidly. The Uniform Ranks emerged out of drill corps units that had been organized within Pythian lodges. It was formally recognized as an associated group in 1878 and quickly grew to 100,000 men. Members wore special uniforms, shown here (Fig. 5). URKP declined as Civil War veterans died off and eventually was dissolved.



Fig. 5. URKP uniform

In addition to bearing a date, this item also carries the name of the pottery that produced it, also unusual for mini-jugs. The Enterprise Pottery of New Brighton, Pennsylvania, was founded in 1883. It made stoneware articles, including jugs, small kitchen items and inks. In 1900 it was purchased and eventually became part of the better known Elverson, Sherwood, and Barker (ES&B) Pottery of New Brighton.

A second Norfolk jug brings the “compliments of” Junius Bright (Fig. 6). A notice in a 1909 city directory identified Bright as a saloonkeeper. Many mini-jugs were issued by saloons and their owners, often given to favored customers at Christmas and other holidays.



Fig. 6: Junius Bright Norfolk mini-jug

Even long time Virginians have never heard of Center Cross. It does not appear in the Rand-McNally map of the state. Nevertheless, it exists a few miles down the road from Tappahannock on the Northern Neck. From this tiny community came a small jug inscribed from Hoskins and Seward (Fig. 7). A directory of 1888-1889 shows William Hoskins as a merchant in Center Cross and Frank Seward as a businessman there, but no listing of their partnership. That effort may have come later.



Fig. 7: Center Cross mini-jug

We know more about John J. Hanrahan who advertised his “fancy groceries” on a mini-jug from Petersburg (Fig. 8). Hanrahan was born in Limerick, Ireland, in 1861, during the potato famine in that country. He probably came to the U.S. at an early age and eventually prospered in the grocery business, buying a Victorian mansion on fashionable High Street in Petersburg in 1912. But he appears to have been in declining health since his wife was given power of attorney to sell the house just two years later. Hanrahan died in 1915 and is buried in St. Joseph’s Cemetery, Petersburg.



Fig. 8: Petersburg mini-jug

The last example comes from Staunton (pronounced Stanton), Virginia, with compliments of Gunter & Wolff (Fig. 9). Except for being able to identify the jug as pre-Prohibition, little else has emerged from my research efforts. I assume that some time spent in the local history section of the Staunton library would shed more light on the partnership that produced it.

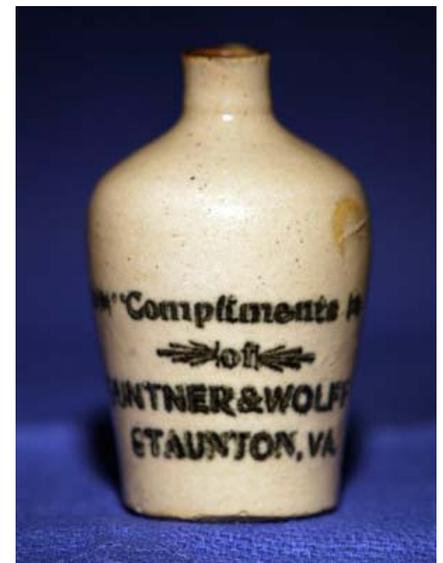


Fig. 9: Staunton mini-jug

Notes: The information from this article came from a number of printed and Internet sources. Many thanks to Dr. Ralph Van Brocklin of Johnson City, Tennessee, former president of the Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors (FOHBC) and a major collector. He provided images of many of the mini-jugs shown here.

Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

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.

AUGUST 6, 7 & 8 - WILMINGTON, OHIO

FOHBC 2010 National Show will be held at the Roberts Center in Wilmington, Oh (half-way between Columbus, Oh and Cincinnati, OH on I-71). Host Hotel is Holiday Inn (937) 283-3200.

Info: **Jamie Houdeshell**, PO BOX 57, Haskins, OH 43525, ph: (419) 722-3184, email: JHBottle@hotmail.com or **Joe Hardin**, 594 Laymon Rd, New Vienna, OH 45159, ph: (937) 371-0264, email: jkcollectables@gmail.com.

SEPTEMBER 19 - WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA

The Apple Valley Bottle Collectors Club's 36th Annual Show & Sale (9am - 3pm \$3, early admission at 7:30am \$10, seniors 65 and over free), at the Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Family Life Center, 1309 Opequon Ave (just off Pleasant Valley Rd), Winchester, VA.

Info: **Richard Venskoste**, 2038 Chestnut Grove Rd, Winchester, VA 22603, ph: (540) 247-4429

OCTOBER 2 - CHESTERFIELD, VIRGINIA

The Richmond Area Bottle Collectors Association's Annual Show & Sale (9am - 3pm, early admission 7:30am \$10), at the Chesterfield County Fairgrounds, 10300 Courthouse Rd, Chesterfield, VA 23832,

Info: **Marvin Croker**, ph: (804) 275-1101, email: RichBottleClub@comcast.net or **Ed Faulkner**, ph: (804) 739-2951

NOVEMBER 7 - ELKTON, MARYLAND

Tri-State Bottle Collectors and Diggers Club's 38th Annual Show & Sale (9am - 2pm), at the Singerly Fire Hall, Routes 279-213, Elkton, MD.

Info: **Dave Brown**, ph: (302) 738-9960, email: dbrown3942@comcast.net.

NOVEMBER 28 - BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA

Forks of the Delaware Bottle Collectors Association's 37th Annual Show & Sale (9am - 3pm with early buyers 7:30am) at the Bethlehem Catholic High School, Madison & Dewberry Avenues, Bethlehem, PA.

Info: **Bill Hegedus**, 20 Cambridge Pl, Catasauqua, PA 18032, ph: (610) 264-5945.



Scott Jordan obtained this early mallet when he joined several other club members in a dig.

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Thanks to Mark Benbow for sharing this advertisement from an Illinois Pharmaceutical Association meeting publication of 1889.