

# The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

*May 2011*

In this issue:

- Theodore Roosevelt Bottled by Jack Sullivan.....page 2
- George Bush by Mike Cianciosi.....page 5
- Upcoming Area Bottle Shows.....page 6

## Meeting – May 31st

We look forward to seeing everyone at 8 PM on Tuesday, May 31st at St. Mark's Orthodox Church, 7124 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817. Please bring bottles for show and tell. Lee Shipman suggests milk bottles as a May theme. If you have some unusual or newly acquired milk bottles, please bring them along.

## Club Website Down

We have experienced a malware attack on the club website. We look forward to seeing the site working again as soon as the problem is resolved.



Views from the April meeting: Roland Longerbeam (left) and Peter Rydquist (above) present bottles for show & tell. We welcomed some new faces to the club (below).



Meetings: 8:00 PM on the last Tuesday of each month January-June, October-November; picnic in September.

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](http://www.potomacbottlecollectors.org)

Maintained by Al Miller: [www.potomacbottlecollectors.org/contact.php](http://www.potomacbottlecollectors.org/contact.php)

# Theodore Roosevelt Bottled

By Jack Sullivan

[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

In a 2009 article for the Pontil I recounted the story of Carrie Nation, the famed ax-wielding proponent of Prohibition (**Fig. 1**) and her 1904 invasion of Washington, D.C. The article described her attempt to see President Theodore Roosevelt and after being turned away at the White House, invading the U.S. Senate, raising a ruckus, getting arrested and being fined \$25.



**Fig. 1: Carry Nation with ax and Bible**

Mrs. Nation, who sometimes spelled her name “Carry,” did not take her rebuff by the President lightly. (She said she had only wanted to warn him about the smoking habits of his daughter, Alice.) She took to the warpath against Teddy, attacking him savagely in her temperance lectures.

Returning to Washington Carrie gave a speech brandishing a bottle that carried a likeness of the President. “Here is a whiskey flask with Theodore Roosevelt’s picture on it, the most appropriate place I have ever seen it in my life,” said she. Later she confessed that after her first use of the bottle she expected hisses but got only nervous giggles.

That tepid reaction emboldened her to use the prop again and again in appearances all around the United States. Carrie’s flask peaked my interest intensely about what bottled likeness of Teddy she used. My research indicates that Roosevelt can be associated with a number of whiskey containers of his time.

For example, in the election of 1900 when William McKinley was running for President and Teddy for Vice President, the Republican Party issued a glass canteen with the pictures of the two and the U.S. Capitol (**Fig. 2**). I have rejected this bottle because by 1904 McKinley had been assassinated, and even Carrie – who also hated McKinley – would not have been that vindictive.



**Fig. 2: McKinley-Roosevelt Canteen**

A figural bottle of Roosevelt as a Rough Rider exists from that era (**Fig. 3**). It is not, however, immediately recognizable as the man who galloped down San Juan Hill in Cuba and extended the ride right into the White House. Shown here is the photo that Teddy chose for the dust jacket of his book on the Rough Riders (**Fig. 4**). Note that the head covering is very different and that the tunic on the bottle has two rows of buttons; Roosevelt’s uniform has only one.



**Fig. 3: Rough Rider figural**

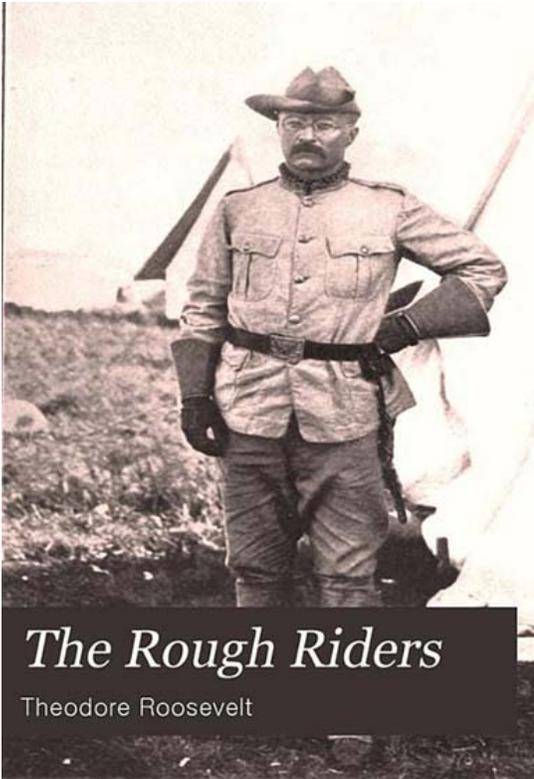


Fig. 4: TR photo as Rough Rider

Another figural that purports to be that of TR depicts him as a big game hunter (Fig. 5). This one is more true to life. Comparing it with a photo of Roosevelt after shooting an elephant, it recreates his brimmed hat and his rifle (Fig. 6). His eyeglasses seem to have been lost in translation to glass.



Fig. 5: Great Hunter figural

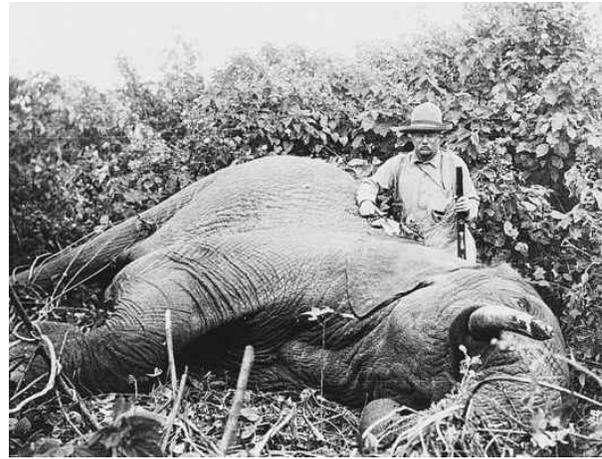


Fig. 6 TR with elephant

Both the Rough Rider and Great Hunter figural bottles appear to have contained strong spirits. Upon inspection, however, they would not meet the requirements of Carrie Nation's bottle. Neither immediately looks like the President and both would have required some explanation to her audiences.

Another TR-identified flask that doesn't fit is a ceramic bottle shaped like a club that bears the name "Big Stick" (Fig. 7). It is an allusion to the President's famous statement on international diplomacy: "Walk softly but carry a big stick."



Fig. 7: "The Big Stick" flask

A container shaped like a nursing bottle, one that probably held whiskey, is embossed "Teddy's Pet." It is shown here in several views (Fig. 8,9). There are conflicting views on its intent. One opinion is that it refers to the Panama Canal which TR vigorously was pushing through to completion



Fig. 8: "Teddy's Pet" bottle, view 1



Fig: 9 Teddy's Pet" bottle., view 2

A more logical explanation is that the bottle was given away by his opponents during his Presidential campaign in 1904. References to alimony and matrimony are embossed on the bottle. They appear directed at Roosevelt's brother, Elliott, who had just gone through a messy and well reported divorce. With this interpretation Teddy's "Pet" was his black sheep sibling.

Clearly none of these bottles meet the criteria for the whiskey flask Carrie Nation waved around at her audiences. My choice is one of two that bear the same label-under-glass likeness of Roosevelt. Both were issued in 1904 as campaign giveaways when he ran for a full term as President. Both have his picture prominent on the front and were of a size to have held whiskey (**Fig. 10,11**). Either bottle easily could have served Carrie as a prop.



Fig. 10: TR Campaign flask 1



Fig. 11: TR Campaign flask 2

A final note: Carrie herself eventually became the subject of a bottle (**Fig. 12**). It shows the ax-wielder with her trademark large handbag and an umbrella. The clear glass figural carries an Owens-Illinois mark that indicates manufacture sometime post-1929, years after Ms. Nation's death in 1911. The bottle originally contained – what else? – vinegar. Teddy Roosevelt would have loved the joke.

**Notes:** This article and the images were drawn from a number of Internet and historical sources. The incident about the Roosevelt flask was described in her autobiography, "The Life and Need of Carry Nation."



Fig. 12: Carry Nation vinegar bottle

# George Bush

By Michael Cianciosi

This article is **not** about an ex-president. It's about an 1890s Washington DC beer bottler, and his 4 brothers.

I recently acquired the 9-inch clear blob top bottle shown in figure 1 on eBay. It's embossed "GEORGE BUSH / 426 10<sup>TH</sup> ST NW / REGISTERED/ GB / WASHINGTON, D.C." in an oval slug plate. So I started researching the bottle, and here's what I found.

George, Henry, Joseph, Louis and Tobias Bush were brothers. The 1880 census lists them living in Elmira NY. Their father Wolf Bush was listed as a beer bottler, and George, Tobias & Henry were also listed as beer bottlers, even though they were only 15, 17 and 19 years old respectively. 10 year old Louis did not yet have an occupation, and 22 year old Joseph's occupation was listed as "buying produce".



Fig. 1: George Bush Blob

During the 1880s and 1890s, the 5 brothers moved to Washington DC. Each of them started his own business, each at a separate address in NW Washington DC. All but Joseph started out as beer bottlers, but eventually became saloon or restaurant owners. Joseph was a wholesale liquor bottler/dealer.

George did his beer bottling at 924 9<sup>th</sup> Street NW from 1893-1894, then in 1896 he opened a restaurant at 426 Tenth Street NW. In 1897 he upgraded his restaurant by adding a brick & tin music shell. Ads in the Washington Post called it the "Atlantic Summer Garden". It featured Mr. W.L. Thornton, Washington's "favorite Baritone singer", and at it they served Heurich's Maerzen beer. In 1901 George moved his restaurant to the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and G Streets NW, where he stayed in business until 1905.

Henry was a bottler at 424 and 425 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW from 1888-1890. In 1891 he moved to 421 10<sup>th</sup> Street and opened a restaurant. Our club book lists a beer bottle that is embossed with HENRY BUSH, but I don't have a photo of it. All five Bush brothers achieved a certain degree of success; however Henry seemed to think he was more successful than he really was. In 1894 he purchased some diamonds from a relative. Before he had fully paid for the diamonds, he started handing them out to strangers on the streets. Shortly after that he was judged to be insane and was institutionalized. Despite being in an institution, his name still appeared in the city directories as a restaurant owner through to 1898.

Louis was a bottler at 803 D Street NW in 1892, then a restaurant owner at 1305 E Street from 1893-1914. Washington Post ads described Louis's restaurant as an "elegantly appointed ladies café", which displayed art, and sold wine & liquors. Various brands of beer and liquor were advertised, some of them sold exclusively at Louis's café. Figure 2 shows a LOUIS BUSH beer bottle from the 1305 E Street address (the restaurant). Figure 3 shows a LOUIS BUSH embossed liquor bottle.



Fig 2: Louis Bush Beer Bottle (left)

Fig. 3: Louis Bush Bottle (right)

Tobias was listed in city directories as owning a Saloon from 1895 until 1915, although he bounced around to different addresses. He was at 817, 831, and 1118 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW, 216 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW, 636 D Street NW, and ended up at 1110 E Street NW. Washington Post advertisements touted the purity of the whiskey that he sold, as well as the quality of the cigars he sold. Our club book lists a beer bottle embossed "T BUSH" at 817 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW. Figure 4 shows a liquor bottle with a label for Melvale Pure Rye Whiskey, bottled by Tobias at the 1110 E Street address.



Joseph was the only brother who didn't follow the pattern of starting as a beer bottler and switching to a saloon/restaurant. Joseph was a wholesale liquor seller and bottler at 1731 Pa Avenue from 1906-1907, and at 1737 Pa Avenue from 1911-1917 (presumably closed down in 1917 by prohibition). Figure 5 shows a JOSEPH BUSH embossed liquor bottle.

So this George Bush was never a U.S. President, but he and his brothers worked hard to keep Washington DC supplied with liquor.

#### Sources:

1. Various Washington DC City directories on microfilm (from the Washingtoniana section of the Martin Luther King Jr. Library in DC)
2. "Antique Bottles from the Washington DC Area" by Potomac Bottle Collectors, 4th edition
3. The U.S. Census for various years (from ancestry.com)
4. Various Washington Post issues from the ProQuest web site
5. All photos courtesy of Dr. Richard Lilienthal except Figure 1

## Upcoming Area Bottle Shows



### June 2-4 – Grantville (Hershey), PA

**Milks:** National Association of Milk Bottle Collectors 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention. Info: Penny Gottlieb, 18 Pond Pl, Cos Cob, CT 06807, ph: (203) 869-8411.

### June 25 - 26, 2011 – Memphis, TN

Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors' Annual National Show & Sale at the Cook Convention Center, Memphis, TN. Info: R. Wayne Lowry, FOHBC Conventions Director, ph: (816) 318-0161, email: JarDoctor@aol.com.

### September 25 (Sunday)

#### Hammonton, NJ

New Jersey Antique Bottle Club's First Annual Hammonton, New Jersey Show & Sale (9am - 3pm) at the Hammonton Volunteer Fire Company #2, 51 N White Horse Pike, Hammonton, NJ 08037, Info: Paul Delguercio, ph: (856) 252-7730, email: paulhavoc@comcast.net.

### October 1, 2011 – Richmond, VA

Richmond Antique Bottle Show and Sale (9am – 3pm, early entry 7:30 am) at the Chesterfield County Fairground, 10300 Courthouse Road, Chesterfield, VA 23832. Info: Marvin Croker, ph: (804) 275-1101, or Ed Faulkner, ph: (804) 739-2951, email: RichBottleClub@comcast.net.



Mark Benbow displayed these National cans at our April meeting. They show how differing front and back labels were used during a transition period as National changed its can design.