

# The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

## October 2011

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## Meeting – October 25<sup>th</sup>

Please bring **summer finds** for show & tell. We hope everyone has found something interesting for their collection since our June meeting. Lee Shipman will share a brief PowerPoint presentation of the glass blowers on the cruise she took this summer.



The weather cooperated for our September picnic, but forecasts of rain may have limited attendance. Those few who did make the trip to Fort Hunt Park shared a pleasant visit with good food, drink, and of course bottles. Richard Lilienthal's carrot cake and Jack Sullivan's beverages (albeit in cans) were particularly well received.



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)

# Pouring Over George

By Jack Sullivan

[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

Since the time of George Washington's death, his image has appeared on a wide range of practical and souvenir items. By the end of the 19th Century and into the 20th, the Father of Our Country was particularly popular as a device for pouring liquids. Shown here is an 1896 ad for Belleek China jugs that provided a full-bodied look at Washington, one that seems to show him with a pot belly (Fig. 1).

**HIGGINS & SEITER**

The  
**Washington Jug**

Our Latest Novelty,  
made in Belleek China,  
representing Wash-  
ington in Continental  
Uniform. Note fol-  
lowing prices:

	EACH
5/16 Pint.	\$1.00
2/8 "	1.35
1 1/2 Pints.	1.75
2 1/2 "	2.25
3 1/2 "	3.00

Orders by mail promptly filled.  
Send for our 192-page illustrated Catalogue No. 6 M, also our book of Delft Novelties, just issued.

**FINE CHINA  
RICH  
CUT GLASS**

50 & 52 W. 22nd ST.  
NEW YORK  
170 BELLEVUE AVE.  
NEWPORT R. I.

Fig. 1: 1896 ad for a Washington jug

In more recent years just GW's head has been used. The American Artist and Cartoonist William MacLean (1897-1997) in the late 1950s gave us a Washington who is old, bald and toothless (Fig. 2). George who was very careful about his appearance would not be pleased. This item was part of MacLean's "Great American" series of character jugs.



Fig. 2: The McLean jug

The next jug is from Lefton Pottery of Chicago but, in reality, shows us how the Japanese interpreted GW's physiognomy. His mouth is pinched and looks as if he was using lipstick (Fig. 3). The handle has a definite eel-like appearance, a delicacy in Japan. The pottery was founded in 1941 by George Zoltan Lefton, a Hungarian immigrant, who brought all his ceramics from abroad. Right after World War II he went to "Occupied Japan" which became his principal supplier of items like this.



Fig. 3: Doulton "prototype"

In more recent years, Royal Doulton of England, whose character jugs are avidly collected in some quarters, has taken various stabs at the man most responsible for wresting the colonies from the British. A jug was launched in 1983 to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Washington's birth. Reputedly, by the way, it was the first time Doulton had so honored an American President. Sour grapes, I suppose.

Shown here is the first prototype of the Doulton ceramic (Fig. 4). Note that George looks a good bit cross-eyed. This may be why the item bears a label on the base with the words "Rejected - please smash," signed by Eric Griffiths, the Director of Ceramic Sculpture at Royal Doulton. For some reason this instruction was never carried out. This piece clearly was never meant to be released for sale because it was manufactured without a handle.



Fig. 4: Doulton issue #1

By 1983 Doulton had straightened Washington's eyes and given him a handle that appears to be a scroll. (Fig. 5) Perhaps it is the British surrender document at Yorktown. Once having made George's head into a pitcher, Doulton seems not to have been able stop. A second Doulton jug bears only a passing resemblance to GW but does include as the handle the fabled hatchet that chopped down the fictional cherry tree. (Fig. 6).



Fig. 5: Doulton issues #2

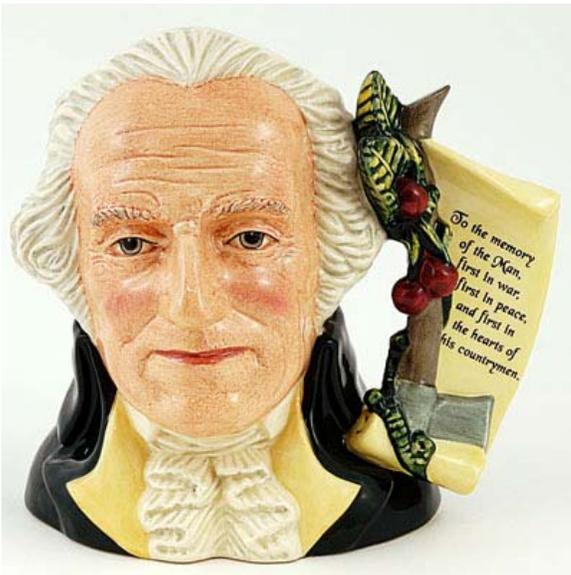


Fig. 6 Doulton "Antagonist" Series

In 1985 Doulton situated George back to back with King George III, part of a character jug series they called "The Antagonists" (Fig. 7). Designed by Michael Abberley of the ceramic firm, the ceramic commemorates the Siege of Yorktown in 1781. Once again a scroll is used for a handle.



Fig. 7 Bairstow Manor jug

With Doulton having "broken the ice" on Washington's head as a jug, other British potteries were quick to jump into the market. Bairstow Manor, located in the pottery center of Staffordshire, made a limited edition of 1,500. To me the face looks like a highly unhappy school teacher, not a gallant general (Fig. 8).

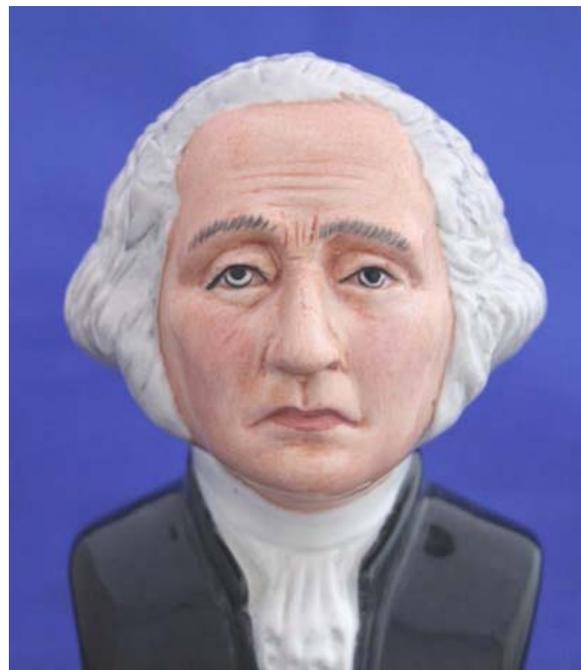


Fig. 8 Lefton jug

Another British pitcher head was the product of the Peggy Davies Ceramics Ltd. of Stokes on Trent, Staffordshire (**Fig. 9**). Ms. Davies seems to have had someone else in mind when she created this object. If it were not for the furled American flag handle and the eagle crest on the hat, this might be mistaken for a Dicken's character. At least whoever put out the next jug got the mouth about right (**Fig. 10**). It originated from the design of an outfit named "Smart Object." That alludes, I suppose, to the fact that it is decorative and can be used to pour iced tea.



Fig. 9 Davies jug



Fig. 10: "Smart Object" jug

The last depiction of GW's head and probably most recent comes from, where else, China. It shows a young Washington and, so that we will know who are looking at, the

Chinese helpfully have printed his name on his tri-cornered hat (**Fig. 11**)



Fig. 11: Chinese jug

What did George Washington really look like? A recent biographer says that his contemporaries thought the life mask taken by Jean-Antoine Houdon, a leading French sculptor, provides the best guide to the mature leader (**Fig. 12**). With the encouragement of Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, GW allowed Houdon to put him through the rigors of a life mask, which required a layer of plaster on his face and straws in his up his nose so he could breathe.

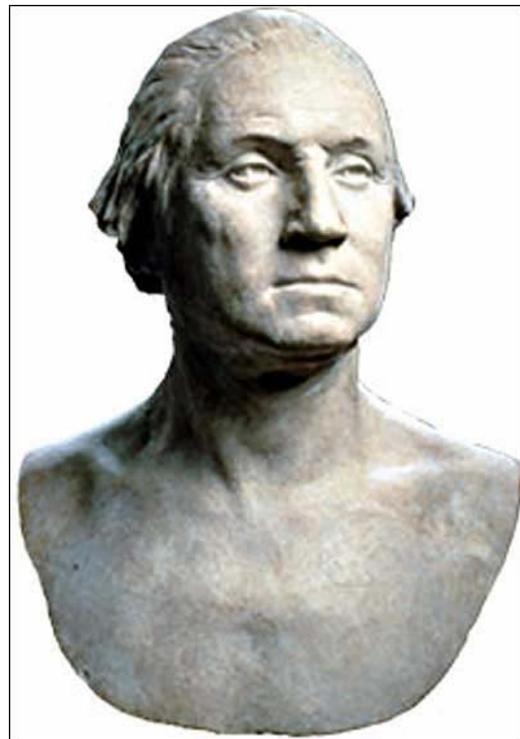


Fig. 12: Houdon's life mask

With that life mask in mind, revisit the jugs shown here to decide which you think best represents George Washington. Do any of them really do him justice? I don't think so. Moreover, to my mind the flawed images compound the indignity of having liquids pour from the head of the Father of Our Country.

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Notes: The impetus for this article came from reading a recent biography entitled "Washington: A Life." authored by Ron Chernow. It is the best treatment of the many aspects of this Founding Father that I have read. The images were gathered over many months from various Internet sites.

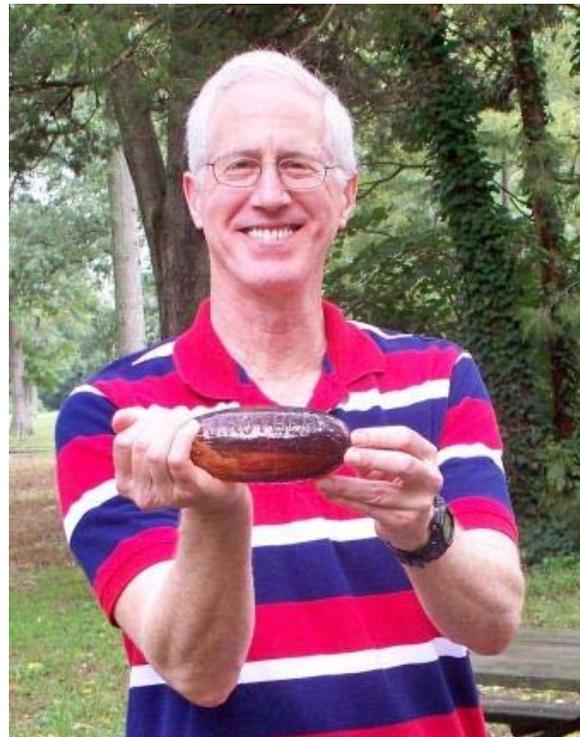
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## Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

**November 6, 2011**

(Sunday) **Elkton, Maryland**

The Tri-State Bottle Collectors and Diggers Club 39th Annual Show & Sale (9:00 am to 2:00 pm) at the Singerly Fire Hall, Routes 279 & 213, Elkton, Maryland. Info: Dave Brown, 302.738.9960, dbrown3942@comcast.net



Richard Lilienthal displays a J. Rother torpedo with a surprising short (OK, missing) neck at our September picnic.

**November 13, 2011** (Sunday) **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

The Pittsburgh Antique Bottle Club's Annual Show & Sale (9:00 am – 2:00 pm \$3, early admission 7:00 am \$25) at The Ice Garden, Rostraver Twp, Exit 46B off I-70 to Rt 51 North 4.1 miles. Info: Bob DeCroo, 694 Fayette City Road, Fayette City, Pennsylvania 15438, 724.326.8741 or Jay Hawkins, 1280 Pleasant Rd, West Newton, Pennsylvania 15089, 724.872.6013.

**November 20, 2011** (Sunday) **Greensboro, North Carolina**

10th Annual Greensboro Antique Bottle, Pottery & Collectibles Show & Sale indoors at the Farmer's Curb Market on 501 Yanceyville St, Greensboro, North, Carolina, Public admission 9:00 am-3:00 pm for \$1. Free appraisals. Dealer setup 7:00 am-9:00 am, No Early Buyers. Info: [Reggie Lynch](mailto:Reggie.Lynch@antiquebottles.com) 704.221.6489. [www.antiquebottles.com/greensboro](http://www.antiquebottles.com/greensboro)

**November 27, 2011** (Sunday) **Bethlehem, Pennsylvania**

Forks of the Delaware Bottle Collectors Association 38th Show & Sale (9:00 am – 3:00 pm, early buyers 7:30 am) at the Bethlehem Catholic High School, Madison & Dewberry Avenues, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Info: Bill Hegedus, 20 Cambridge Place, Catasauqua, Pennsylvania 18032, 610.264.3130



A pair of Frostie variations seen at the picnic should be included in our next Washington, DC bottle book.