

# The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

## December 2011-January 2012

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### Meeting – January 31<sup>st</sup> at 8 PM

**St. Mark's Orthodox Church**, 7124 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817

To reach it, follow River Road inside the Beltway, turn right at the third traffic light onto Nevis Road, and then turn right after a block into the church parking lot. Enter through the lower level door on the side of the church. We will meet in the first classroom on the right.

Our January Meeting will feature the club's **annual contest**. Members are encouraged to bring in their favorite dug bottle, shard, go-with, and bottle collected during 2011. We will vote on our favorites, and winners will be announced at our February meeting.

**Collector of the Year** will be awarded for the most impressive bottle entered.

**Digger of the Year** will be awarded for the best bottle dug by a club member.

**Shard of the Year** is traditionally awarded for the best broken bottle acquired during the year, but we allow pottery shards in this category as well.

**Go-with of the Year** entries are collectibles that complement a bottle collection. Most go-withs are advertising materials for bottled products. If you have the bottle that your entry goes with, please bring it along.

### Dues are due

We will be collecting 2012 dues of \$10 per person or family at the January meeting. Alternatively, you can send payment to Potomac Bottle Collectors, care of Jim Sears, PO Box 370, Garrett Park, MD 20896.



Show & Tell at our last meeting: Bob Ford brought a holder for a torpedo bottle, which he purchased at the Elkton, MD bottle show. Jim Sears brought several Mason from the Bethlehem, PA show. Alan Ou showed a scarce Hawaii Hutch.

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)

# 2011 Bottle Statistics

By Michael Cianciosi

For the past 2 years I've been keeping track of all the beer & soda bottles from Washington DC and Alexandria VA that have sold on eBay®. I started doing this to help determine the prices for the bottles listed in the next edition of our club book. I figured that the most subjective way to determine the prices was to have some actual data to back it up.

Now that 2011 is over, I have 2 years worth of data. Keep in mind that this is only for local beer & soda bottles, and the prices do not include postage.

There were 177 bottles sold on eBay in 2011 for a total of \$4,842, which averages out to \$27.36 per bottle. This is the exact same number of bottles (177) as were sold in 2010, however the average price seems to have gone up from \$20.91 in 2010 to \$27.36 in 2011. I don't think the average price increase is an indication that the price of bottles is going up, because there were a much higher percentage of blob tops vs. crown tops in 2011 than in 2010, so it's not an apples-to-apples comparison. The table below shows a breakdown of the quantity and average price for various types of bottles sold on eBay in 2011 and 2010.

Type	2011		2010	
	Qty	Ave Price	Qty	Ave Price
Hutchinson	15	\$ 30.73	19	\$ 12.63
Squat / Short blob top	17	\$ 64.53	11	\$ 30.09
Tall Blob top	30	\$ 34.77	25	\$ 51.48
Straight-sided crown top	80	\$ 19.88	93	\$ 14.90
Deco crown top	22	\$ 21.73	18	\$ 14.22
ACL crown top	14	\$ 12.57	9	\$ 21.33
Picnic crown top	0	0	2	\$ 4.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>\$ 27.36</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>\$ 20.91</b>

The highest price paid for a bottle in 2011 was \$375 for a straight-sided amber coke bottle (listed as #117 in the "Beer & Sodas" section of our club book). Note that I'm not counting the "J ROTHER" torpedo bottle that I bought on eBay for \$2300, since it doesn't actually say "WASHINGTON DC" on it. The coke was one of 9 bottles that sold for over \$100. There were 63 bottles that sold for under \$10.

For the second year in a row, the most common bottle sold was the crown top Robert Portner Tivoli beer bottle with the embossing on the shoulder, listed as #465 in our club's book. There were 12 of them sold this year, for an average of \$8.67 each. The Robert Portner blob top listed as #451 in our book was a close second, with 11 of them being sold (averaging \$11.09 each).

Five of the bottles sold on eBay in 2011 were not listed in our book. They were sold for an average of \$53 each.

Only 12 of the 177 bottles were bought by me. That's only about 7%, so there must be a lot of DC beer/soda bottle collectors out there besides me.

Happy bottle hunting in 2012 everybody.



Lee Shipman displayed this surveyor's pen and ink holder at our November meeting. The pens carried in this type of container were quills used by 18th Century travelers.



Danhaki bottle and other items displayed at our November meeting.

# They Gave a World's Fair and (Almost) Nobody Came

By Jack Sullivan

[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

It seemed like a good idea at the time. The 1884 New Orleans World Cotton Exposition had been a great success, to be topped in 1893 by the huge crowds that visited Chicago for the Columbian Exposition and the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. Thus it was that the concept was born in Virginia of a World Exposition in 1907 to commemorate the 300th Anniversary of the landing at Jamestown.

Commonwealth boosters, recognizing the financial boon the earlier fairs had been, had dollars signs dancing before their eyes. Who could resist reliving the story of Pocohontas and Captain John Smith, a staple of every American's primary school history book? (Fig. 1). The actual isolated and abandoned original site of the Jamestown Settlement was not considered by anyone to be suitable. Supporters were divided between Richmond and the Hampton Roads area. Eventually the latter was chosen.



Fig. 1: Smith/Pocohontas postcard

The decision was to locate the international exposition on a mile-long piece of ground at Sewell's Point, once the site of a Civil War battle (Fig. 2). A key reason for choosing that spot was that it was a "politically correct" equal distance from Norfolk, Portsmouth, Newport News and Hampton. A postcard presented an artist's rendition of what the fair was to look like (Fig. 3). The organizers successfully lobbied the Federal Government for a loan of \$1,640,000 that was to be repaid by a lien of 40% of the gate receipts. The organizers also sold stock to the public (Fig. 4).

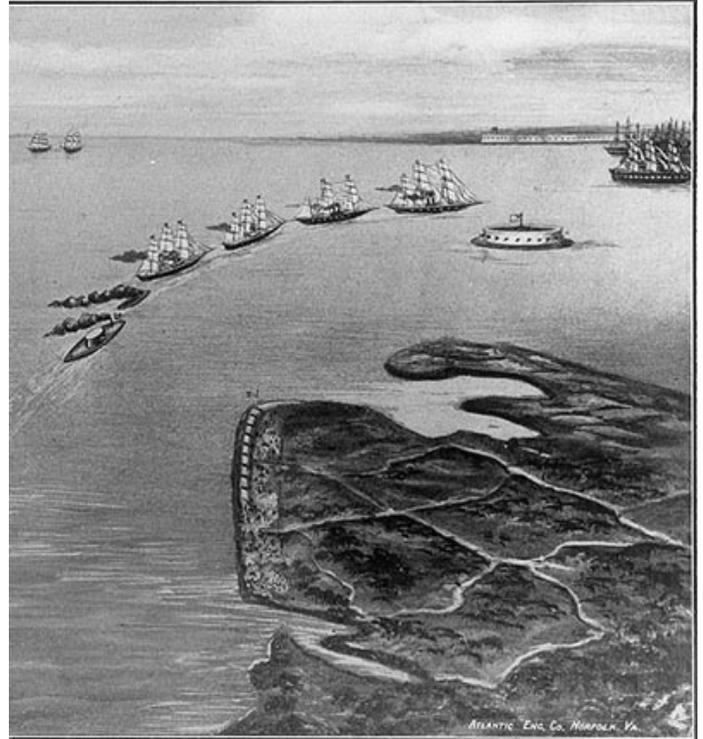


Fig. 2: Illustration of Sewell's Point



Fig. 3: Artist's concept of Expo grounds

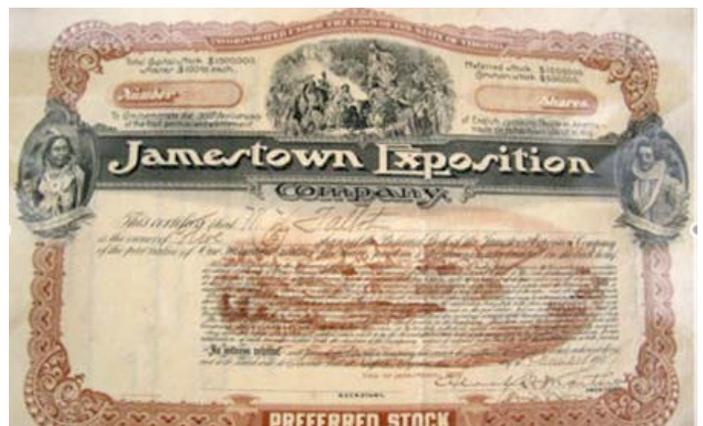


Fig. 4: Expo stock certificate

Unfortunately, the site was not close to any of the cities and difficult to reach by land. That proved to be a huge logistical headache for organizers. Two streetcar lines had to be extended to the Point, piers had to be built to provide supplies for the exhibit, and new hotels were required to accommodate the expected visitors. Bad weather hampered progress and in the midst of preparation former Virginia Governor Fitzhugh Lee, the Expo chairman, died while drumming up business for the event in New England.

The Jamestown Exposition opened on April 26, 1907, exactly 300 years after the band of English colonist made their first landing in Virginia, planting a cross and saying a prayer of thanksgiving. Organizers were saying their own prayers: The fair was far from being ready. Only one fifth of the electric lights could be turned on. The recreation area, with its income-producing attractions, was still unfinished. Construction had left the center of the grounds, as one observer put it, a “muddy soup.” Of 38 principal structures only 14 had been completed, several of them only a day before the opening. Two buildings never were finished, not even by the November end of the Exposition.

With President Theodore Roosevelt in attendance and drawing a large and enthusiastic crowd on opening day, those problems initially were forgotten (Fig. 5). But not for long. Attendance quickly slumped to only 13,000 a day, of whom only an average of 7,400 actually paid to get in. The Fair began to receive negative publicity in the press. Reporters noted the unfinished state of the grounds, the high prices being gouged by area hotels, and the poor transportation arrangements.



Fig. 5: President Theodore Roosevelt at the Expo

That said, the Exposition managed to have some interesting attractions. In the run-up to World War One it was perhaps most notable for the display of military prowess. Warships of several nations, including the sixteen battleships of the United States, participated in an impressive naval review. An array of the world’s most modern military hardware was displayed.

Also available were a large number of commemorative items to be bought and taken home as souvenirs for those who struggled through the gates. Among them were souvenir cups of ceramic and glass of sizes to accommodate beverages from beer to tea (Fig. 6,7). Visitors could purchase a plate that depicted Pocohontas saving the life of John Smith (Fig. 8) or replicas of the ruined Jamestown “Old Church” useful as a bookend or vase or even as a clay pipe (Fig. 9).



Fig. 6: Souvenir cups

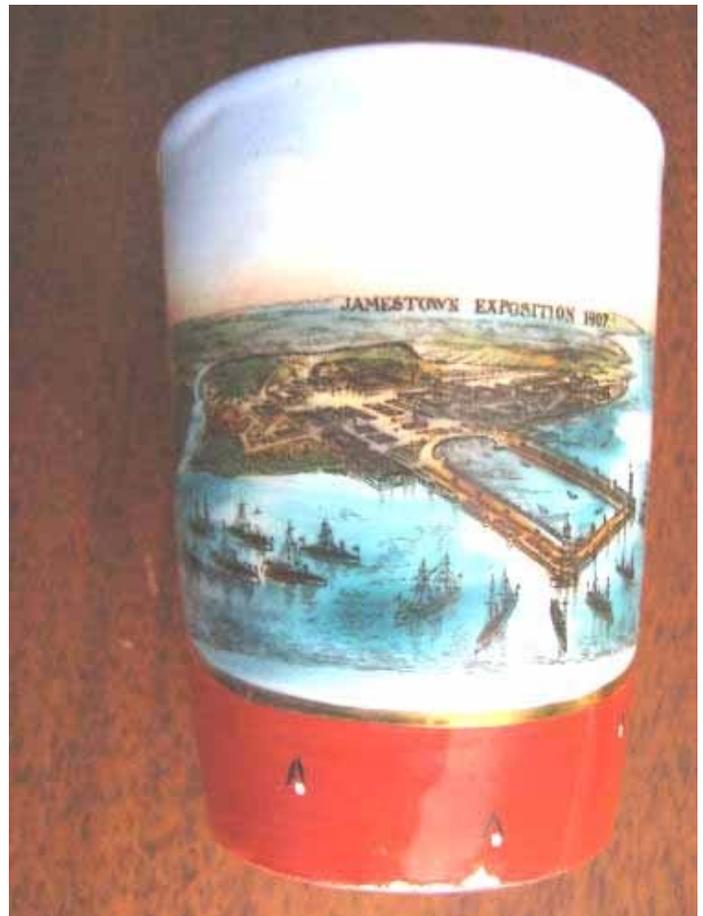


Fig. 7: Souvenir drinking cup



Fig. 8: Ceramic souvenirs



Fig. 9: Souvenir plate

A souvenir spoon was a hot item with John Smith stamped into the handle and an Indian in a canoe pictured on the bowl (Fig. 10). A special medallion celebrated an Indian on the front and ships on the back (Fig. 11,12). For alerting the home folks about your attendance at the Exposition you could choose an array of postcards, including the Virginia State Building (Fig.

13) and the Baltimore City building (Fig. 14). To all of them you could affix a special one cent stamp showing Capt. John Smith (Fig. 15), part of a three set of U.S. commemoratives of the Tricentennial.



Fig. 10: Souvenir spoon



Fig. 11: Expo medallion front



Fig. 12: Expo medallion back



Fig. 13: Virginia State Building postcard



Fig. 14: Baltimore City Building postcard



Fig. 15: One cent commemorate stamp

Souvenir sales, however, fell far short of making the Jamestown Exposition a paying proposition. The press began to run stories about fights among Expo board members over the operation. In the end organizers were able to pay back less than one-tenth of their federal loan. The Jamestown Exposition, speaking candidly, had been a bust. Never again would the Commonwealth of Virginia be the site of a World's Fair.

At the same time, visitors could cherish the many souvenir items that the Exposition generated. Today they all qualify as antiques, but perhaps more important as symbols of the follies of civic boosterism in the 20th Century.

**Notes:** The information and images for this article come from a variety of Internet and written sources. Two principal ones were Wikipedia and OldCompany.com, the latter a vintage stock certificate research service. The stock certificate is worth more today as a collectible than it ever was to the original investors. The website "travelphotobase.com" carries more photos of Exposition souvenirs. They can also be seen at the Moses Myers House Museum in Norfolk.

## Upcoming Area Bottle Shows



**March 4, 2012 (Sunday) Baltimore, Maryland The Baltimore Antique Bottle Club presents its 32nd Annual Show and Sale.** Doors open: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm., Physical Education Center, Essex Campus-Community College of Baltimore County, 7201 Rossville Blvd. (off exit 34, I-695), Baltimore, Maryland, Free Bootle Appraisals, The largest one-day bottle show in the world!-over 300 tables, Admission \$3.00, Information contact: [Rick Lease](mailto:Rick Lease) (Show Chairman), 410.239.8918, [baltojar@comcast.net](mailto:baltojar@comcast.net), For contracts: [Andy Agnew](mailto:Andy Agnew), 410.527.1707, [medbotls@comcast.net](mailto:medbotls@comcast.net), [www.baltimorebottleclub.org](http://www.baltimorebottleclub.org),

**15 April 2012 (Sunday) Tylersport, Pennsylvania The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Bucks-Mont Bottle Show & Sale,** 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, early buyers at 8:00 am at the Tylersport Fire Company, 125 Ridge Road, Tylersport, Pennsylvania, Info: David Buck, Tele: 215.206.5878 or Greg Gifford, 215.699.5216

**06 May 2012 (Sunday) Brick, New Jersey Jersey Shore Bottle Club's 40th Antique Bottles, Post Cards and Local Memorabilia Show and Sale,** Brick Elks, 2491 Hooper Avenue, Brick, New Jersey 08723, Sunday, 06 May 2012, 8:30 am to 2:00 pm, No early admission, Set-up 7:00 am Sunday, Admission: \$3.00, Contact: [Monte Boshko](mailto:Monte Boshko), Show Chairman, 365 16th Avenue, Brick, New Jersey 08724, 732.887.2116, e-mail: [mjb142@comcast.net](mailto:mjb142@comcast.net)

**20 May 2012 (Sunday) Hammonton, New Jersey The New Jersey Antique Bottle Club presents the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual New Jersey Bottle Show** at the Hammonton Volunteer Fire Company #2, 51 N. White Horse Pike, Hammonton, New Jersey 08037, Sunday, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, No early admission, 7:00 am set up, \$3.00 admission, [www.newjerseyantiquebottleclub.com](http://www.newjerseyantiquebottleclub.com), [Paul DelGuercio](mailto:Paul DelGuercio), Show Chairman, 548 Spring Road, Hammonton, New Jersey 08037, Tele: 856.252.7730, [paulhavoc@comcast.net](mailto:paulhavoc@comcast.net)

**20 May 2012 (Sunday) Washington, Pennsylvania The Washington County Antique Bottle Club presents the 38th Annual Washington County Antique Bottle Show & Sale** at the Alpine Star Lodge, 735 Jefferson Avenue, Washington, Pennsylvania 15312, Sunday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm, Set-up Sunday at 7:00 am, \$3.00 admission, Attn: [Russ Crupe](mailto:Russ Crupe), President/Show Chairman, 52 Cherry Road, Avella, Pennsylvania 15312, 412.298.783, [heidirus@gmail.com](mailto:heidirus@gmail.com)