

# The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

*February 2012*

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## Meeting – February 28th at 7:30 PM

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

**We will have our annual dinner and announce the winners of our annual club contest.** We will aim to meet at 7:30 because 8 seems a bit late to eat. The club will provide soft drinks and sandwiches. Members are encouraged to bring a dish to pass, but we will have enough food to share with all members and guests. Please bring bottles for show and tell.

## Baltimore Show – March 4th

We are looking forward to the huge antique bottle show in Baltimore on March 4<sup>th</sup>. Several of our club members will be offering a variety of bottles for sale as well as seeking additions for our collections.



Alan Ou saved this large Coke bottle from his childhood



Club members brought some of their favorite acquisitions from 2011 to display at our January meeting.

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)

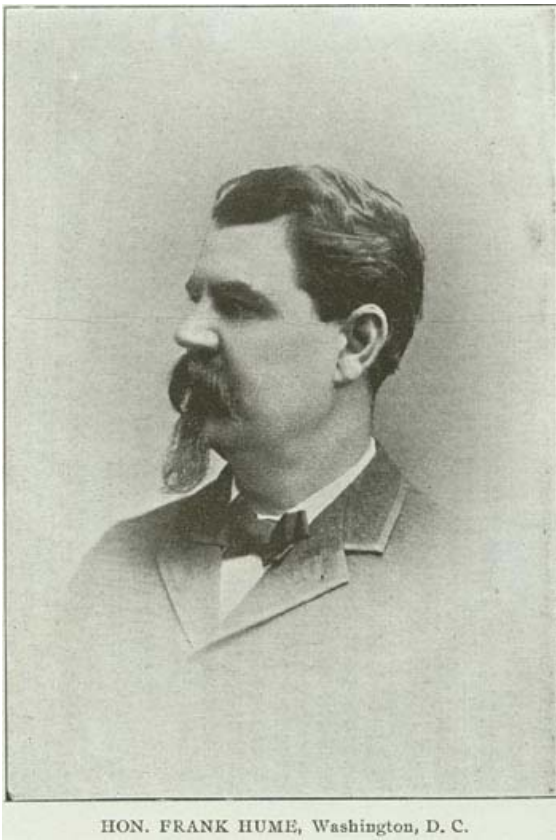
*Web Site*: [www.potomacbottlecollectors.org](http://www.potomacbottlecollectors.org)

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

# Frank Hume and Washington, D.C., “Wet Goods”

By Jack Sullivan  
[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

Shown here in maturity (**Fig. 1**), Frank Hume led a life that included service as a Confederate spy, later becoming the largest grocer and purveyor of liquor in the Federal capital, and ending as a well-known philanthropist whose name continues to be memorialized in his native Virginia. Bottle collectors also note the elaborately embossed bottles of his “wet goods” whiskeys.



HON. FRANK HUME, Washington, D. C.

**Fig. 1: Frank Hume in maturity**

Hume was born in Culpeper County in 1843, the son of Charles and Virginia Rawlins Hume. At the age of 18 he enlisted in the Confederate Army, joining up with one of Gen. James Longstreet's units called The Volunteer Southern. Hume served as a signal scout with General J.E.B. Stuart and participated in eleven major battles, receiving a serious wound at Gettysburg. Part of his service was reputed to have been as a spy sneaking Northern battle plans from D.C. to Gen. Robert E. Lee. It was during this escapade that he apparently stopped in Alexandria long enough to have his picture taken (**Fig. 2**).



**FRANK HUME, Confederate Soldier.**

**Fig. 2: Frank Hume as a Confederate soldier**

Hume returned home after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox and settled in Alexandria. He reportedly tried his hand briefly at farming and then went to work in a Georgetown grocery. His older brother, Thomas, already was an established grocer in the District. Finding mercantile an agreeable pursuit, Hume turned to starting a family. In 1870 he married Emma Norris at Trinity Episcopal Church in the District. She was the daughter of a prominent Washington lawyer with Virginia roots. Frank and Emma would have eleven children.

A year after his marriage Hume opened his own grocery store in downtown DC, located on Pennsylvania Avenue near the old Central Market. He is shown here in 1892 perusing a ledger (**Fig. 3**). The store prospered, with the sale of liquor being an important part of his merchandise. Among Hume's brands were “Old Stag,” Homestead Old Rye,” “Old ‘A’ Whiskey” and “Warwick Old Rye.” as shown here in four flasks (**Figs. 4-7**). One observer has noted that Hume chose to emboss his bottles rather than slap paper labels on them. Going to this additional expense, it is suggested, indicates he knew he could count on each brand having substantial sales.



**Fig. 3: Hume's store/Hume with ledger photo**



Fig 4: "Old Stag" bottle (left)  
Fig. 5: "Homestead" bottle (right)



Fig. 6: "Old A " bottle  
Fig. 7: "Warwick" bottle

Meanwhile Hume's brother Thomas was making a name for himself as a Washington social climber, known for the extravagance of his parties. A D.C. journalist noted about one such event that more than the notables present, it was the prodigality of the entertainment that caught his attention. He

wrote that Hume provided two hundred guests with "a perpetual lunch for all, (with liquid attachments embracing wines, brandies, whiskies, mixed drinks, and plain lemonade), cigars for all, and towards evening a dinner, which was not only ample but excellent."

Unknown to the public, Thomas Hume was heading into bankruptcy, ultimately with debts of \$100,000 and assets of \$6,000. In October 1881 on the day it was announced that his firm was being dissolved by his withdrawal and retirement, he suffered a heart attack in his office and died on the spot. A court later declared him "utterly insolvent." Creditors howled and attacked Frank Hume for repayment. Frank successfully fended off financial responsibility, although his brother's sudden demise must have been a shock.

At the time Hume was enjoying life at his newly acquired mansion called Warwick Estate (Fig. 8). It served as his summer home, positioned on an Alexandria hill west of the point where Commonwealth and Mount Vernon Avenues merge. He also kept a DC residence. Over the next 25 years, Warwick was the site of many holiday and family celebrations where guests enjoyed Hume's hospitality, as well as views of the Potomac and Washington. As many as 150 guests at a time attended Fourth of July celebrations where large U.S. flags adorned trees and guests enjoyed picnic feasts, lemonade and champagne. These events were said to be especially memorable for the twilight fireworks display and the firing of a cannon.



Warwick, Virginia Residence of HON. FRANK HUME, near Washington, D. C.

Fig. 8: Photo of Warwick Estate

Unlike Thomas, however, Frank Hume could afford his hospitality. His mansion also gave him a residence in Virginia and from 1889 to 1899, over several elections, he was sent by Alexandria voters to the Virginia House of Delegates. He also was becoming recognized as a DC business leader. He became president of the Independent Steamboat and Barge Company, a director of the Fireman's Insurance Co., and served on the Washington Board of Trade. He was an advocate for a new bridge linking Alexandria and the District that ultimately became Memorial Bridge.

Hume was also gaining a reputation as a philanthropist. In 1891 he donated the land for a school in Arlington, along with an adjacent area for a playground. In return the school

(**Fig. 9**) was named for him. Hume Elementary School operated for 67 years, closing in 1958 but rescued by citizens for use as a local museum. It stands on Arlington Ridge Road and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



**Fig. 9: Hume school**

In a more controversial act of generosity, Hume provided food for Coxe's Army. That was a protest march by unemployed American workers, led by the populist Jacob Coxe (**Fig. 10**). They marched on Washington D.C. in 1894, the second year of a four-year economic depression that to that time was the worst in U.S. history. It is considered the first significant popular protest march on Washington. (Needless to say it would not be the last.) Officially called the Commonwealth of Christ, the march was popularly named for its leader. According to press reports, Hume received a bouquet of flowers from the marchers as they left.



**Fig. 10: Coxe's Army**

After a lifetime of achievement, in 1906 at the age of 63 Frank Hume died. His wife, Emma, whose photo indicates a no-nonsense woman, apparently continued to manage the grocery for a time (**Fig. 11**). Federal records show her registering the brand name Old Stag Rye in 1907. Emma died in 1931 and is buried with Frank at the family grave site in the Ivy Hill Cemetery in Alexandria (**Fig. 12**). Note the Confederate flag. Hume's Warwick mansion was demolished in

1953 and 55 acres of land sold for townhouses now known as Warwick Village.



**Fig. 11: Emma Norris Hume**



**Fig. 12: Hume grave marker**

One major tribute to an extraordinary man and his career remains on view. At the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, located in the plaza between Brown College and Monroe Hall, one still can see the Frank Hume Memorial Wall and Fountain, dedicated in 1938 (Fig. 13). It memorializes him as a benefactor of the university Mr. Jefferson founded.



Fig. 13: UVA Hume Memorial

Notes: The material and images for this article came from a number of sources, both printed and Internet. Thanks to Richard Lilienthal both for the idea to do a story on Hume and for the four sparkling photos of whiskey flasks.

## 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 (Show Chairman), 410.239.8918, [baltojar@comcast.net](mailto:baltojar@comcast.net), For contracts: 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



**22 April 2012 (Sunday) Harrisonburg, Virginia The 41st Historical Bottle Diggers of Virginia Bottle Show** at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds, U.S. Route 11 South, Harrisonburg, Virginia, Sunday 22 April 2012, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, No early admission, Set up 22 April, 6:00 am to 9:00 am, Admission for show \$3.00 with children under 12 free, Contact: Sonny Smiley, Show Chairman, 540.434.1129, email: [lithiaman1@yahoo.com](mailto:lithiaman1@yahoo.com)

**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, 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, 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, President/Show Chairman, 52 Cherry Road, Avella, Pennsylvania 15312, 412.298.783, [heidirus@gmail.com](mailto:heidirus@gmail.com)

**06 October 2012 (Saturday) Richmond, Virginia Richmond 41st Antique Bottle Show and Sale**, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Admission: \$3.00, Early Admission: 7:30 am, \$10.00, Chesterfield County Fairgrounds, 10300 Courthouse Road, Chesterfield, Virginia 23832, Info: [RichBottleClub@comcast.net](mailto:RichBottleClub@comcast.net) or Marvin Croker 804.275.1101 or Ed Faulkner 804.739.2951

Feb 25 Grandville, MI  
Feb 25 Lebanon, IN  
Mar 3 Athens, GA  
Mar 10 Badin, NC  
Mar 16-17 DeLand, FL  
Mar 18 Flint, MI  
Mar 24 Daphne, AL  
Mar 25 Enfield, CT  
Apr 1 Hutchinson, KS  
Apr 1 St Clairsville, OH  
Apr 20-21 Antioch, CA  
Apr 21 Salisbury, NC  
May 5 Gray, TN  
May 6 Utica, NY

Feb 25 Sarasota, FL  
Feb 26 Enfield, CT  
Mar 9-10 Chico, CA  
Mar 10 St. Joseph, MO  
Mar 18 St. Louis, MO  
Mar 23-24 Morro Bay, CA  
Mar 25 Brewerton, NY  
Apr 1 Bloomington, MN  
Apr 1 Dover, NH  
Apr 15 Rochester, NY  
Apr 21 Kalamazoo, MI  
Apr 28 Aiken, SC  
May 6 Antioch, IL  
May 11-12 Mansfield, OH