

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

January 2013

In this issue:

Andrew Hatke: His window faced South
by Jack Sullivan.....page 2
Upcoming Area Bottle Shows.....page 5
2012 Bottle Statistics by Mike Cianciosi.....page 6

January 29 Meeting

The January meeting will feature our annual club contest for the best bottle, go-with, dug item, and shard acquired during 2012. If you bring in a piece of advertising or other go-with, we would also appreciate seeing a bottle is goes with

Dues Are Due

If you are unable to attend our January meeting, you may mail annual dues of \$10 per person or family to Potomac Bottle Collectors, c/o Jim Sears, PO Box 370, Garrett Park, MD 20896.

Washington, DC Bottle Book

Our club's book on local bottles is currently out of print, and Mike Cianciosi and Richard Lilienthal are considering work on a new edition. Anyone who is interested in helping with this project or who has previously unrecorded Washington, DC bottles, may contact Mike at chosi@cox.net. If you are unsure whether your bottle has been recorded, please note that Mike's web site is an excellent source of information local beer and soda bottles: <http://www.chosi.org/bottles/index.htm>.



Bob Ford and Steve Charing wished Lee Shipman a happy birthday in December. Lee herself was camera shy.



Andy Goldfrank sent this photo of a cobalt Johnson & Johnson jar lid that he recently dug in New York. Andy reports that he has also had an opportunity to do some digging in Washington, DC. We look forward to seeing an article from Andy in an upcoming *Pontil*.

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

Maintained by Mike Cianciosi (chosi@cox.net)

Andrew Hatke: His Window Faced South

By Jack Sullivan
[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

A favorite country song of mine is “My Window Faces the South,” which extols the pleasures and benefits of Dixieland. Andrew Hatke of Richmond, Virginia, had a sales window that faced the South and thereby achieved the benefit of prosperity.

Hatke was an German immigrant to the United States, his birthplace in 1834 given as Hoerstal, Westphalia. When he came to the United States is a fact not recorded in census data. Sometimes his name was given as “Henry (Heinrich) Andrew Hatke.” He seems to have dropped the Henry somewhere along the line.

Hatke claims to have started in business in Richmond in 1867, in the immediate wake of the Civil War. Although Richmond had not suffered significant damage during the conflict, the social and cultural life of the city had been badly disrupted. One effect was a proliferation of drinking establishments. Hatke’s was among them. The 1880 census finds him living in Richmond, with his wife, Anna (nee Sitterding), also from German immigrant stock. They had three children at the time, Mary, Lewis and Henry. A fourth child, Alphonso, would be born in 1886.

The 1880 census lists Hatke as as a grocer and barkeeper. It is likely that he was more than both. In those days it was standard practice for grocers to be rectifying (blending) whiskey in their back rooms and offering it to the public. Since he also had a drinking establishment on premises (Fig. 1), it would be natural for Hatke to whip up his own whiskey from raw liquor supplied by distilleries elsewhere.

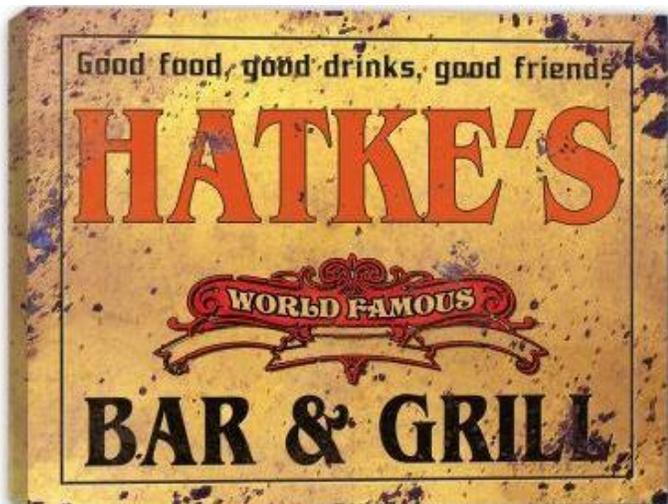


Figure 1: Hatke Sign

As the 19th Century progressed, more and more localities in the American Southland were voting to go “dry,” as a result of adopting “local option” laws. If you lived in one of those towns no alcoholic drinks were easily available. An important exception was liquor arriving through the mails. While localities might like to keep out mail order booze, local, state, and federal courts had ruled repeatedly that such sales were legal, despite local prohibitions, usually citing the Interstate Commerce clause of the Constitution.

Hatke, and other Richmond liquor dealers, were in the right place at the right time to seize this opportunity. Richmond was strategically placed to serve the thirsty population of the South. The Virginia capital was a major hub for three important railroads. The Seaboard Air Line Railroad, headquartered in Portsmouth, Virginia, had a main track that ran from Richmond, via Raleigh, North Carolina; Columbia, South Carolina; and Savannah, Georgia, to Jacksonville, Florida. Seaboard competed with the Atlantic Coast Line that originated at Petersburg, Virginia, and went south.

A third major competitor was Southern Railway. This line came into existence in 1894 through the merger of the Richmond and Danville system, the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, and the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia Railroad. It operated 4,400 miles of track, primarily in Dixie. Shown here is an 1895 map of The Southern Railway (Fig. 2), listing the hundreds of town it served. The maps of the other two railroads would show the same wide coverage. In short, there was scarcely a Southern hamlet or town that was not available to a freight office.



Figure 2: Southern Railway map

Unlike transcontinental railroads that had a reputation for price gouging for freight, competition along the Atlantic coast made for lower rates. Moreover, Virginia had adopted a regulatory system that put fewer restrictions on railroads; railroad barons for their part were interested in maintaining the favorable climate. Andrew’s company, incorporated as A. Hatke & Co., and located at 800-806 East Cary Street, concentrated on mail order sales. The mails moved rapidly up and down the East Coast insuring that a thirsty customer

ordering whiskey from Richmond would not have to wait too long for supplies.

Hatke sent some of his whiskey in embossed glass flasks (Fig. 3), usually a dozen to a box. More often, however, he packaged his whiskey – his flagship brand was “Richmond Rye” – in ceramic jugs of quart, gallon or even two-gallon size. From the striking variety of these containers, we can assume he kept Henrico and surrounding county potteries very busy. Some are in a saltglaze with dark underglaze lettering (Figs. 4, 5). A variety was “shoulder jugs” with Albany slip tops and necks (Figs 6-9). Others have brown tops with a blue cobalt stenciled label (Figs. 10,11).



Figure 3: Hatke flask



Figure 4: Hatke saltglaze jug

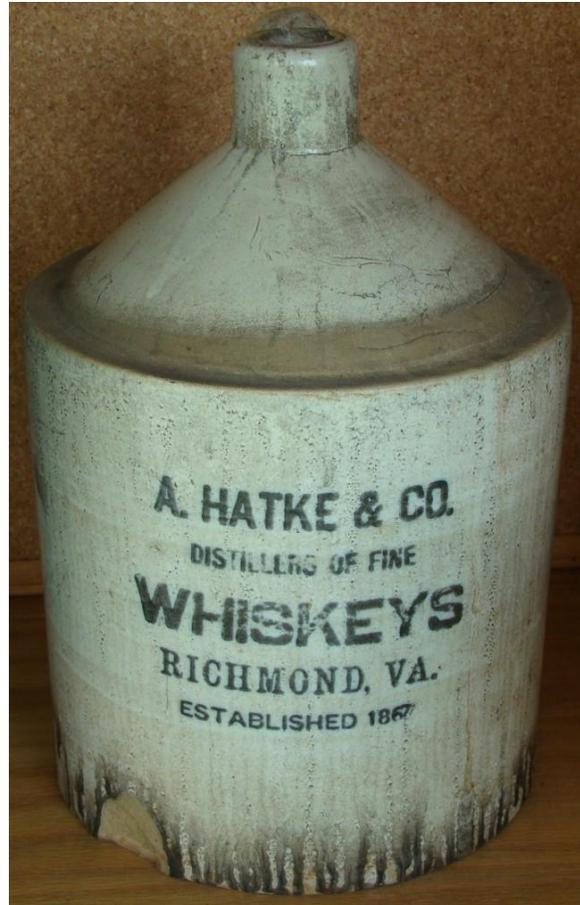


Figure 5: Hatke saltglaze jug

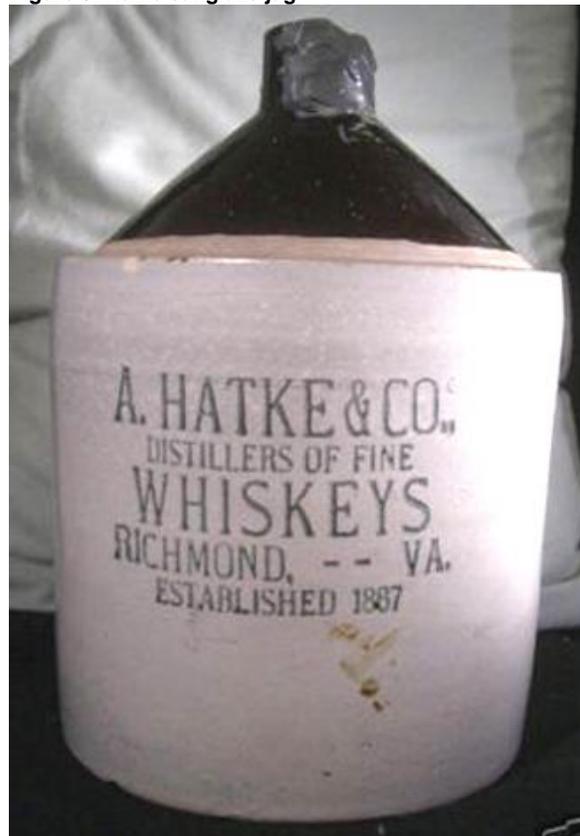


Figure 6: Hatke “shoulder jug” with Albany slip top

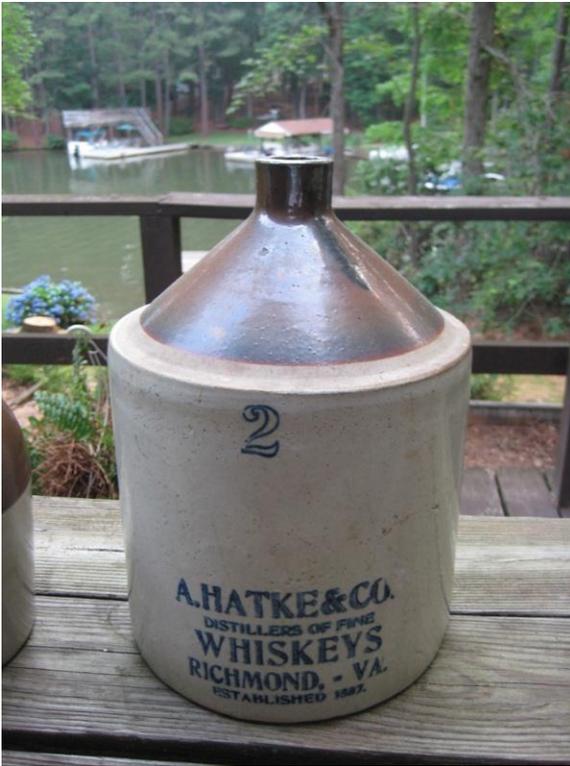


Figure 7: Hatke "shoulder jug" with Albany slip top

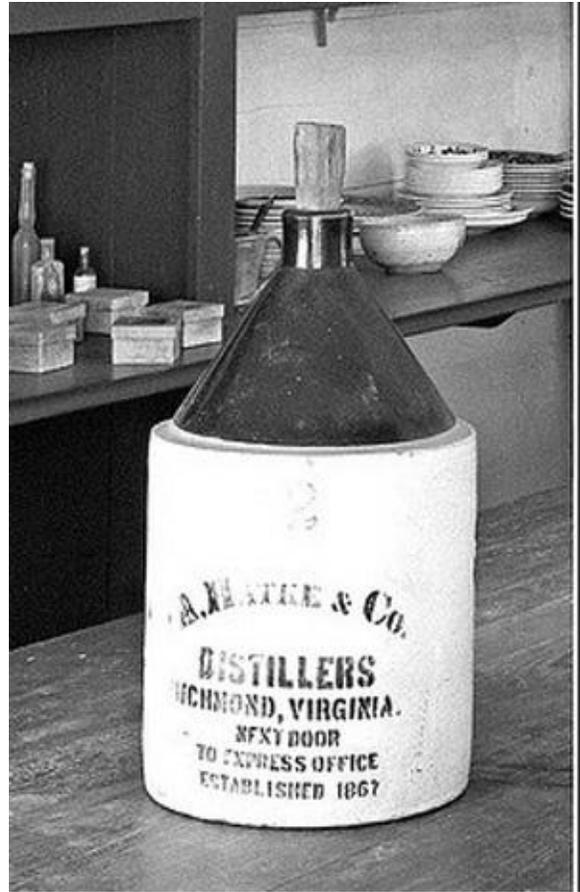


Figure 9: Hatke "shoulder jug" with Albany slip top

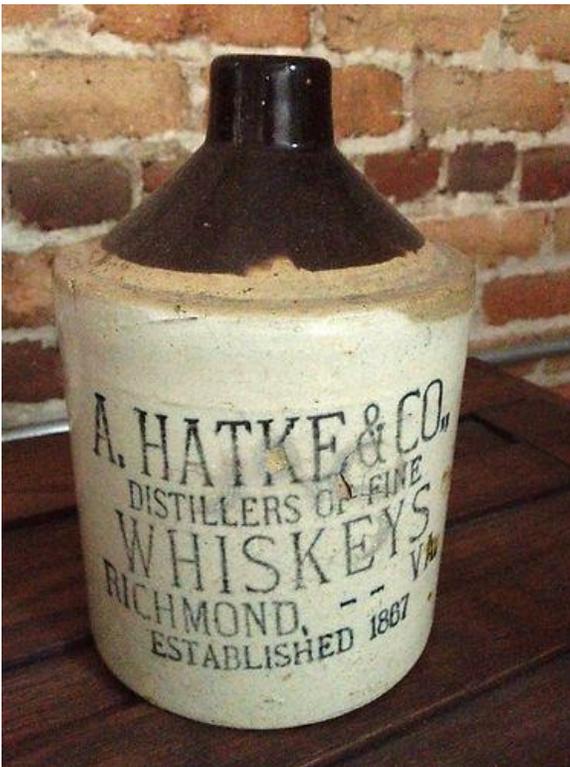


Figure 8: Hatke "shoulder jug" with Albany slip top

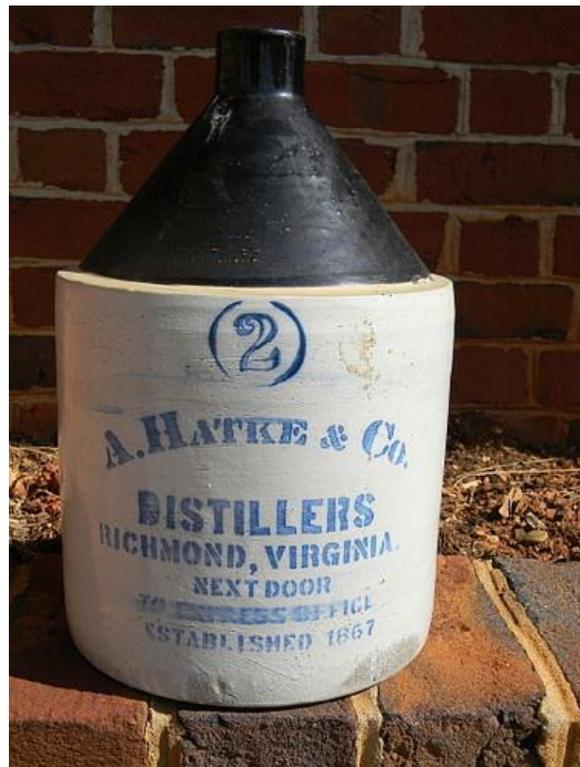


Figure 10: Hatke jug with cobalt stencil



Figure 11: Hatke jug with cobalt stencil

Note the wording on several jugs: “Next to the Express Office.” Obviously a subtle guarantee that shipment would be swift. Selling whiskey this way, however, was not without its pitfalls. The localities with “dry” laws frequently charged dealers with an assortment of offenses with the aim of curbing the mail order liquor traffic. In 1913, Hatke’s Company was haled into Superior Court of Craven County, North Carolina. The charge was that in 1911 it had sold a case of whiskey to Carl Spencer, a local, identified as “...a minor...under 21 years of age and unmarried...” The booze had been duly delivered via the Seaboard Air Line Railroad. When the jury offered a convoluted decision but in the end did not convict Hatke, the judge directed a verdict of not guilty.

Craven County’s prosecutor, however, would not let the matter die and appealed to the North Carolina State Supreme Court. The case was reviewed by that high court and with only one dissent the panel of judges upheld the lower court decision. By this time North Carolina, Georgia and Mississippi completely had abolished all alcohol sales and the mail order business in those states was booming for A. Hatke & Company.

Andrew Hatke, unfortunately, was not there to witness the bonanza in sales. In 1892, at age 58, he died and was buried in Richmond’s Holy Cross Cemetery. A large tombstone marks his grave (Fig. 12). After his death, family members continued the business under his name, probably sons Henry and Lewis. After 1910 Alphonso Hatke was cited as a key executive in the firm. In the end Prohibition caught up with the Hatkes. Not only did Virginia vote statewide Prohibition in 1916, but the same year Congress also passed the Webb-Kenyon Act that made it unlawful to ship liquor into a dry state or community – a

law that is still on the books. A. Hatke Company closed its “window on the South” and indeed its doors to the liquor business that same year.



Upcoming Area Bottle Shows



Jan 26 Anderson, CA
 Feb 03 South River, NJ
 Feb 15-16 Columbia, SC
 Feb 16 Columbus, OH
 Feb 22-23 Phoenix, AZ
 March 1-2 Deland, FL
 Feb 23 Grand Rapids, MI show cancelled

Feb 02 Rome, GA
 Feb 10 Milwaukee, WI
 Feb 15-16 Las Vegas, NV
 Feb 16 Aurora OR
 Feb 24 Enfield, CT
March 3 Baltimore, MD

2012 Bottle Statistics
By Mike Cianciosi

For the past 3 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 (which we hope to have out soon). I figured that the most subjective way to determine the prices was to have some actual data to back it up.

Now that 2012 is over, I have 3 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 249 local beer & soda bottles sold on eBay in 2012 for a total of \$5,796, which averages out to \$23.28 per bottle. That's 72 more bottles than sold last year (up 41%). The average price was down \$4.08 (15%) from last year, but that's probably more due to the mix of bottles, i.e. there were a lot more crown tops (cheap bottles) and less short blob tops (expensive bottles) sold this year. The table below shows a breakdown of the quantity and average price for various types of bottles sold on eBay over the past 3 years.

| Type | 2012 | | 2011 | | 2010 | |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| | Qty | Ave Price | Qty | Ave Price | Qty | Ave Price |
| Hutchinson | 17 | \$ 29.29 | 15 | \$ 30.73 | 19 | \$ 12.63 |
| Squat / Short blob top | 10 | \$ 80.06 | 17 | \$ 64.53 | 11 | \$ 30.09 |
| Tall Blob top | 46 | \$ 35.35 | 30 | \$ 34.77 | 25 | \$ 51.48 |
| Straight-sided crown top | 108 | \$ 17.51 | 80 | \$ 19.88 | 93 | \$ 14.90 |
| Deco crown top | 26 | \$ 14.38 | 22 | \$ 21.73 | 18 | \$ 14.22 |
| ACL crown top | 40 | \$ 12.78 | 14 | \$ 12.57 | 9 | \$ 21.33 |
| Picnic crown top | 2 | \$ 20.00 | 0 | 0 | 2 | \$ 4.50 |
| Total | 249 | \$ 23.28 | 177 | \$ 27.36 | 177 | \$ 20.91 |

The highest price paid for a bottle in 2012 was \$366 for a short blob top R.A. SHINN bottle with an unusual "ABC" enclosure (bought by me). That was one of 11 bottles that sold for over \$100, and there were 101 bottles that sold for under \$10.

The most common bottle sold in 2012 was number 495 in our club book, a ROCK CREEK ACL crown top (19 sold for an average price of \$6.60). But number 495 is kind of a catch-all for ROCK CREEK mutli-colored ACL bottles, as it covers many variations. A close second was number 465, the ROBERT PORTNER crown top with Tivoli embossed on the shoulder (15 sold for an average of \$5.60 each).

If you ignore variations and just look at the most common bottlers, there were 61 ROBERT PORTNERS, 22 COCA-COLAs, 20 ROCK CREEKs, 13 ARLINGTON BOTTLING COs, and 11 ANHEUSER-BUSCHs. These 5 bottlers (out of 69 different bottlers represented) accounted for just over 50% of the total bottles sold.

There were 19 bottles sold on eBay in 2012 that were not listed in our book. They were sold for an average of \$45 each. These bottles will be added to the next edition of our book.

Only 18 of the 249 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 2013.