

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

November 2014

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Meeting – November 25th

Please join us at St. Mark's Orthodox Church in Bethesda at 8 PM. We will not have a December meeting.



Jim Sears and Roland Longerbeam compare Mudge canners at the October meeting (above left). No two of the canners turned out to be exactly alike.

Mr. Alec Peltier brought in the Evans & Ragland Old Ingledew Whiskey bottle from LaGrange, GA as well as the Rickett's patent bottle with Olmsted 1820 seal. A small group of bottles including these two rarities is available for about \$500. If anyone is interested, the club can put them in touch with Mr. Peltier.



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

Pontil: Jim Sears (email: searsjim@usa.net, PH: 609/472-5473) &

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Was John Stump Selling Bigotry with Whiskey?

By Jack Sullivan

[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

John J. Stump, a wholesale liquor dealer of Cumberland, Maryland, probably had a certificate like the one shown here (Fig. 1). It was issued by the Patriotic Order Sons of America, an organization that had a reputation, deserved or otherwise, of being anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic. Stump was an elected national officer of the P.O.S of A., in a position called the "Guard," likely the sergeant-at-arms. His prominence is all the more startling for living in Maryland, a state founded by Catholics, welcoming immigrants, and known for its tolerance.



Figure 1: Patriotic Order Sons of America certificate

The "Patriotic Order" was formed in Philadelphia in 1847, as the youth wing of a secret organization that eventually became a part of the semi-secret "Know Nothing" Party. Its agenda was to exclude Irish, Germans, Eastern Europeans, Chinese and other immigrants from the U.S. When a member was asked about party activities, he was instructed to reply, "I know nothing." With the outbreak of the Civil War, the Know Nothing Party collapsed and with it the Patriotic Sons of America. Following the war, the organization was revived. Its constitution was opened membership to males in the U.S. over the age of sixteen providing that they were born in the United States and had not emigrated here. It is ironic to see the Statue of Liberty on its certificate.

John Stump was a native-born American, coming into life in Maryland in 1874 to parents both of whom had been born in that state. He appears to have entered the liquor trade at an early age. The so-called National Road ran through the Cumberland to a gap in the Appalachian mountains and on into Ohio. Saloons were by far the most numerous businesses in Cumberland as recorded in the 1895 local directory. Seventy-nine were listed.

That same directory recorded the 21-year-old Stump as a saloon keeper who also sold wines and liquors. His establishment was located at 22 Bedford Street, an address that also doubled as his residence. By 1900, according to census data, Stump had disposed of the saloon and was concentrating his energies on being a wholesale liquor dealer. That year also found him marrying. His bride was Anna Genevieve, a woman seven years his junior. They would have two sons, John, born in 1902, and Charles, 1908.

As a wholesaler, Stump provided his liquor in large ceramic jugs to his customers. He appears to have used a variety of containers. They included a crude stoneware with a cobalt stenciled lettering (Figs. 2,3) and a more finished jug with a Albany slip top and handle and a Bristol glaze base and under glaze lettering (Fig. 4). Like other liquor dealers trying to keep ahead of the competition, Stump also featured a number of giveaway items to favored customers. Among them were small jugs holding a few swallows of whiskey (Figs. 5, 6) Bearing the label "Compliments of John J. Stump & Co.," they clearly were meant to be gifted.



Figure 2: Cobalt stenciled jug

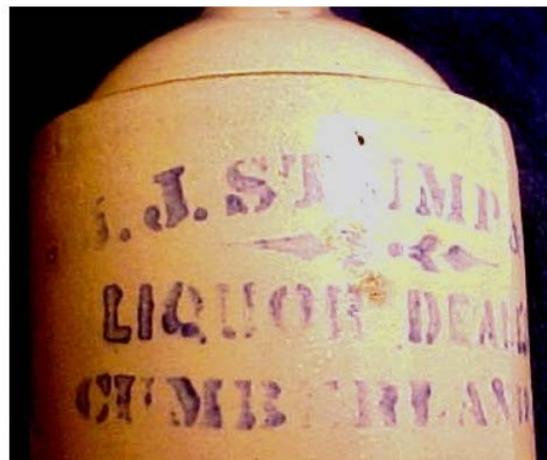


Figure 3: Close-up of cobalt stenciled jug

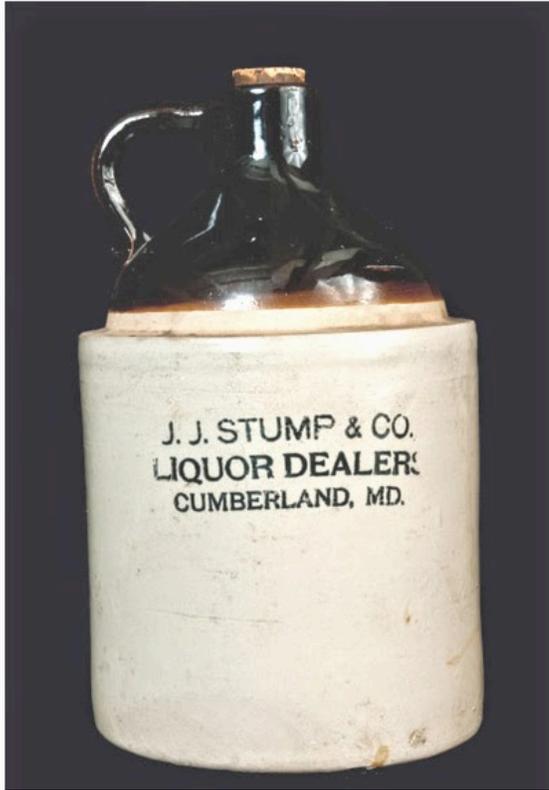


Figure 4: Jug with Albany slip top



Figure 6: Giveaway jug



Figure 5: Giveaway jug

For his wholesale clients, largely saloons, he provided the bartenders with fancy etched shot glasses (Fig. 7, 8). The similar two shown here appear to be the work of George Troug, acknowledged as the outstanding shot glass etcher in American history. Troug was the proprietor of the Maryland Glass Etching Works in Cumberland from 1893 until 1911. Stump's glasses bear the unmistakable artistry of this Italian immigrant who arrived in the U.S. in 1883.

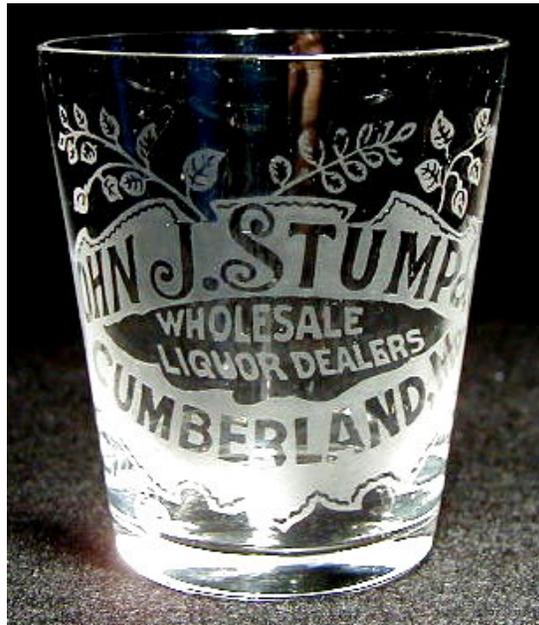


Figure 7: Etched shot glass



Figure 8: Etched shot glass

Since Stump apparently did not mind ordering his shot glasses from an immigrant, it is not clear the extent to which he adhered to the “nativist” views. Despite seeming contradictions in his life, Stump had a very active political career as a Republican in Cumberland. He appears to have begun as a volunteer fireman. A member of the Firemen’s Association of Maryland, Stump became its state president in 1898. He then parlayed that office into election to the Maryland House of Delegates from Allegany County, serving from 1904 to 1906.

Despite his Republican connections, National Prohibition came down just as hard on Stump as on Democrat liquor dealers. He was forced to close up his prosperous business in 1919. He subsequently turned from alcohol to annuities and by 1930 was operating his own insurance business in Cumberland. Stump also served terms as both the city’s finance commissioner and its street and sewer commissioner. In 1940 the census found him at age 66 living with wife Anna Genevieve in Cumberland. There the trail ends in the Internet record.

Was Stump’s membership in the Patriotic Sons a sign of bigotry? Or was it just another part of his social and political trajectory to local prominence? Without further documentary evidence of his attitudes, the question remains open.

Note: The P.O.S. of A., memorialized here on a pillow cover (Fig. 9), once had several hundred camps (lodges) with several thousand members in the U.S. and its territories but chapters now are found only in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, New Jersey and Louisiana. The motto of the organization is “God, Our Country and Our Order.”



Figure 9: P.O.S. of A pillow

Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

November 22 Milford, OH
 November 22 Terre Haute, IN
 November 30 Bethlehem, PA
 December 6 Roseville, CA
 December 7 Enfield, CT
 January 9-10, 2015 Palmetto, FL
 January 11 South Attleboro, MA
 January 17 Jackson, MS
 February 1 Manville, NJ
 February 8, Pewaukee, WI
 February 20-21 Columbia, SC
 February 27-28 Phoenix, AZ
March 8 Baltimore, MD



January 11 Muncie, IN
 January 24 Anderson, CA
 February 8, Columbus, OH
 February 14 Las Vegas, NV
 February 22, Enfield, CT
 February 28 Grand Rapids, MI