

Portland, Maine. - April, 2003

from Dave Hilton, York, Maine

We had a very good attendance at this year's show and sales were reported to be good from most of the dealers. There were at least 25 additional early buyers over last year and with a nice sunny day, the general crowd seemed more numerous.

Dealer, and Bininger collector, JACK PELLETIER of Gorham Maine reported a strong day of sales, as did DAVE & DIANE HILTON of www.dnhcollectibles.com in York, Maine. Local collectors Rick Carney, Gerry Sirois, Jerry Dorval, Joel Bucci and Rodney Huff also had a successful day of sales. It was nice to see JEFF & HOLLY NOORDSY from Cornwall, Vermont, JOHN HATHAWAY from Bryant Pond, Maine, HAROLD BLAKE of Montpelier, Vermont, FRED SCHWEIKERWITZ (spelling?) of Randolph, Massachusetts and JIM ROGERS of Manchester, New Hampshire, all selling their wares!

It is always a pleasure to attend the Maine bottle show each year. There is a wealth of knowledge among the Maine collectors and if you get to know them, they offer a wide range of great bottle collections to visit!

Digging reports from York Maine:

April and May have proved to be productive for about six local diggers! A cellar hole along Rt.1 in the Cape Neddick section of York yealded a hord of great pontiled bottles! A Stoddard Amber "N.WOODS PORTLAND ME" Iron Pontiled Medicine was excavated intact. Also a number of pontiled meds such as RRR RADWAY, JOHNSONS LINIMENT, assorted Hair Bottles, a rare SHAW & CLARK / Dr. BURLEIGH SMART'S COUGH MEDICINE from BIDDEFORD MAINE, a nice Quart Lyndeboro seam sided flask, a Yellow Olive pontiled UMBRELLA INK, a pontiled C.W.Atwell Portland, ME medicine and much much more!

A second area of at least 8 different dumps located by Dave Hilton & Alan Kristoff behind the colonial homes in York Village has provided them with several eary bottles including an 1820's pontiled Black Glass rum bottle. Broken Harrison's Columbian Inks, Shaker Syrup from Canterbury NH, Purple Sandwich colognes, cobalt corsetted colognes and numerous other pontiled medicines were found in several dumps. It looks as though this area was used by several area homes who took their trash and dumped it in random piles throughout an acre of pine forest. More to come out of these dumps!

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Minneapolis, Minnesota - April, 2003

from Steve Ketcham

A big April weekend for bottle collectors

The Dig

It was bottle, advertising, and stoneware show weekend. Friday night, April 11. The call came around 4:00 P.M. Another club member had received permission to dig on some property near his office, a few blocks from downtown Minneapolis. Older homes had been removed, and the top few feet of soil had been scraped away from several lots, exposing privy holes and cisterns. The caller had already uncovered several circa 1890 blob-top beers and a nice Red Wing crock. Shards of a cobalt blue Indian Medical Spring Water from Minneapolis, complete with embossed Indian head, were found as well. Bulldozers would

make short work of the area Monday, and the bottles would be crushed. Another collector, my son and I were invited to join the fun of saving some history before it disappeared forever.

I don't get in much digging anymore. When we started our family, I put aside my shovels. Now, my teen-aged son is just the right size for some serious dirt removal. We readily accepted the invitation.

By sunset we had only a little to show for our efforts. Good portions of both a privy and a cistern were dug, but few intact pieces were found. We uncovered some tantalizing pieces of Bennington-type pottery and several shards of Red Wing salt-glazed stoneware. At the end of the dig we went home with a few nice bottles, some great father-son time, and a fun beginning

to a big bottle weekend.

The Dinner

There was much more to Minnesota's 32nd annual Antique Bottle, Advertising, and Stoneware Show and Sale than just selling old bottles, jugs, and beer trays. On April 12, dealers old and new were greeted as old friends at the Saturday night pot luck. Over plates piled high, show participants from across the Midwest swapped stories of the past year's finds. Stories of memorable digs and remarkable purchases were told and retold, priming the already-high levels of enthusiasm among the diners. Especially exciting pieces served as spontaneous centerpieces, gracing the large, round dining tables for all to admire. The talk and socializing continued long past dinner, as tomorrow would afford little time to chat. But dealers didn't linger too late. Set up was looming at 6:30 A.M.

The Show

As dealers set up on Sunday morning, there were many questions on their minds. Would the economy matter? So many folks have watched their investments dwindle and their jobs disappear. Would they come and buy? And what about the war? Would people even feel like going to a show with the concerns of the Middle East looming? Then there was the weather. In the previous 31 years of this show, the best turn-outs came on cool, drizzle-soaked days. With high temps in the sunny 70 degree range, show dealers imagined even the die-hard customers at home, rakes in hand.

As the 9:30 opening approached, a very long line formed. The public was out there, anxious for a look at what the 95 sales tables held. Once the doors opened, business was brisk. Happy customers were seen buying bitters bottles, historical flasks, and figural bottles. Glass insulators were sought. Quack medicines were sold. Red Wing stoneware was requested and a Red Wing Nokomis vase found a new home. Several pieces of early breweriana, as well as beer bottles, changed hands.

More than one bag or box of bottles came into the show with a patron seeking advice, information, a trade, or an outright sale. A nice cobalt Norwegian flask was traded for a trio of old glass pieces consisting of a perfume, an apothecary jar, and a glass hat whimsy.

It wasn't all old bottles and glass, though. A dealer from South Dakota offered early photography. A Minnetonka dealer featured a huge assortment of colorful spice, coffee, and tobacco tins. Both booths were busy. Ephemera in the form of

advertising posters, calendars, pamphlets, almanacs, and trade cards lay beside the bottles and jugs on many tables.

An 1866 St. Paul city directory was a part of a swap for a historical flask. Its pages were filled with advertising, and several anxious collectors took turns scanning the volume for ads which might relate to local bottles of the period. Early St. Paul liquor dealer George Benz was represented in an ad. Two of his popular bitters bottles were for sale at the show. At least one of them sold. Finck and Theobald were listed as rectifiers of whiskey and importers of Rheinisch wines. M. Dorinden, located at Jackson between fifth and sixth, advertised himself as a wholesale dealer in Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and St. Paul Ale and Porter. In sharp contrast, S. B Childs placed an ad for the Temperance House, apparently a dry hotel, on Jackson and Fourth - only a block from Dorinden's ale and porter establishment. Paul Reiger promoted his drug business in the directory, emphasizing patent medicines and bitters of all kinds. Bottle collectors love this kind of resource.

One Minnesota dealer brought early bottle openers featuring beer advertising. Some were for sale, others were enclosed in cases as an educational display. Another long-time collector laid out two educational displays: one of milk glass figural bottles and another of early marbles. Fire grenades, a big amber Hazelton keg and a turquoise Harden Star, were offered.

This large variety of goods makes this a show which draws collectors with a wide variety of interests. Collectors know that, despite what the show's name suggests, this event can surprise and delight with what its dealers bring. And the dealers come from many states to sell here. In addition to many Minnesota dealers, North and South Dakota were represented. Iowa and Wisconsin dealers were there. Folks from Missouri and Nebraska also set up. The show was important enough to one Wisconsin dealer that, after selling at a show in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on Saturday, he packed up and drove to Minnesota Saturday night. Sunday morning he was ready to set up at 6:30 A.M.

Were dealer concerns about attendance warranted? That depended on who was asked. One long-time show patron commented that he had never seen a longer line prior to the 9:30 A.M. opening. The crowd seemed to linger a bit longer than usual, too. This was done despite the beautiful, sunny weather which belied the April 13 show date.

Next year's show date has yet to be decided. An early Easter may push the show into late March. Whenever it occurs, folks from across the Midwest will again gather for a collector weekend like no other in Minnesota.



A line up of Red Wing jugs



A wonderful pre-Prohibition beer tray picturing the Park Brewing Company, Winona, Minnesota, was offered