

Recent Finds

In May of 2003, I received an E-mail from one of my friends, Charlie Holt, advising me that he had come across a half-pint coffin flask embossed N. AHRENS / MARKET / & STEUART STS / GOODS / AS REPRESENTED. The N. Ahrens cylinder whiskies are highly sought by the Western whiskey collectors for their reddish coloration, coupled with extreme whittling. These San Francisco cylinders are rare, but the flask had never previously been reported!

Nicholas Ahrens is first found in the retail liquor section of the San Francisco directories in 1876. His establishment, located at the northeast corner of 2nd and Natoma, was run in partnership with John W. Tamm. By 1878, Nicholas had partnered with Orville T. Shattuck in the grocery and liquor business at the northwest corner of 2nd and Minna. This partnership was last listed in the 1883-84 San Francisco Business Directory.

Ahrens is not listed in the liquor sections of the directories from 1884 through 1889. He is listed in the general directory for 1887 as a clerk for Henry Wellbrook, who had a grocery and liquor

concern at 214 Davis, and as a bartender in the 1888 directory.

Starting in the 1890 directory, he is noted to be in the saloon business at the southwest corner of Market and Steuart Streets. He remains at this address into the 1895-6 directory, adding a second establishment at the northwest corner of 1st and Mission in 1895. This dates the flask to the period of 1890-95.

By 1896, Ahrens was the proprietor of the Rococo Saloon at the junction of Market and Sacramento (2 Market Street changing to 10 Market Street in 1910) and The Novelty at the northwest corner of 1st and Mission. Beginning in the 1900 directory, he is listed as being owner of the Rococo Saloon only.

The 1906 earthquake apparently changed his business for a time, as he is listed as proprietor of the Bush Street Cafe at 447 Bush Street in 1906 and 1907. He continued to be listed as a liquor dealer at 2 Market Street in the liquor section, but this was not included in the general listings. In 1909, he is listed by residence only, but in 1910, he is again listed as proprietor of the Rococo Cafe and



proprietor of the Hansa Hotel (447 Bush Street). The 1918 listings include him as the manager of the Rococo Cafe.

From Carl Sturm:



The half pint amber flask on the far left is a major find in the flask collecting field. It is a heretofore unknown historical flask. It is similar to McKearin's GXIII-1 but is the half-pint size, while GXIII-1 is listed as a pint.

In questioning Norman Heckler, James Hagenbuch and Mark Vuono, all said they had never heard of a half pint in the NOT FOR JOE flask.

Two different styles of the NOT FOR JOE flask are



listed and known along with the GXIII-3 shown pictured above with the new find. The GXIII-3 has an eagle on the reverse and is marked A.& DH.C. The half pint NOT FOR JOE is plain on the reverse as are the listed NOT FOR JOE pint flasks.