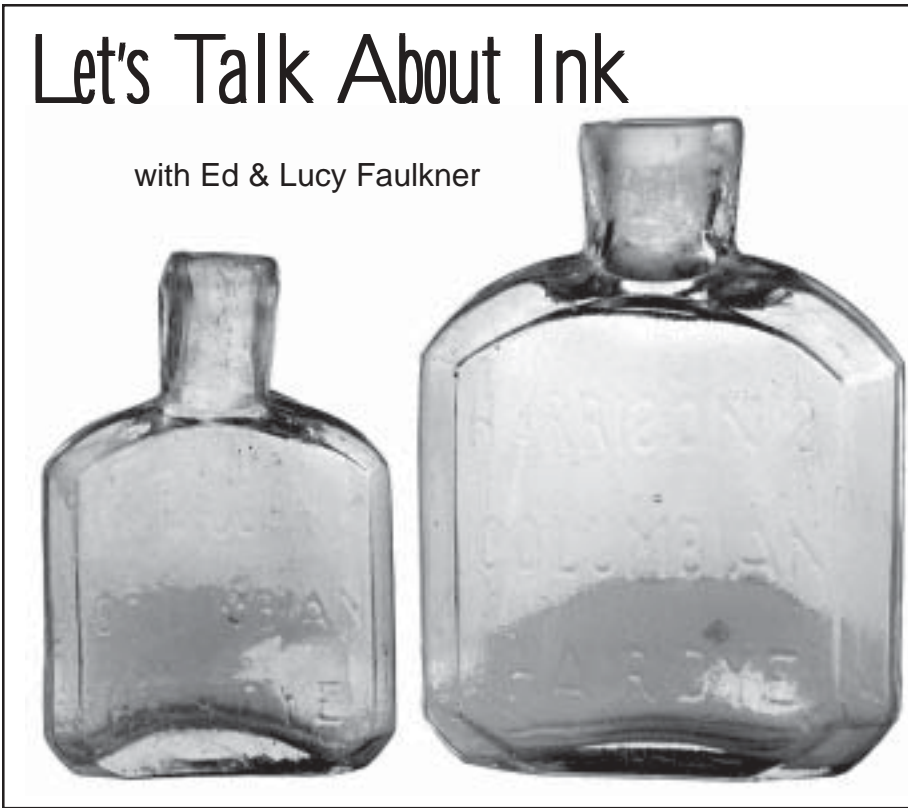


Let's Talk About Ink

with Ed & Lucy Faulkner



The Other Bottles of Apollos W. Harrison

The Harrison Columbian Ink Company is probably the most well known 19th century ink company, not only by ink collectors, but by bottle collectors in general. The first listing of the company in the Philadelphia City Directory was 1847 at 8 1/2 S. 7th Street, according to McKeanin and Wilson in their book. This address is listed through 1851. The company was known as Apollos W. Harrison, Books, Maps and Ink. The last reference they could find was 1877, which was a home address. There is also no reference to HC in a report published by the Boston City government in 1891 that listed major ink companies of the time, so it is probable they were out of business before then.

Their small aqua ink bottles are easily found at bottle shows, and at any given time, there is usually one on Ebay. Larger size and colored ones are more difficult to obtain. And of course, the large gallon cobalt one makes the news every time it is sold, the last time for \$30,000 plus buyer's premium in the Mebane auction. However, like most other 19th century ink companies, Harrison made other products and was not known as just an ink company. Products we know they made (from known bottles) include hair dye,

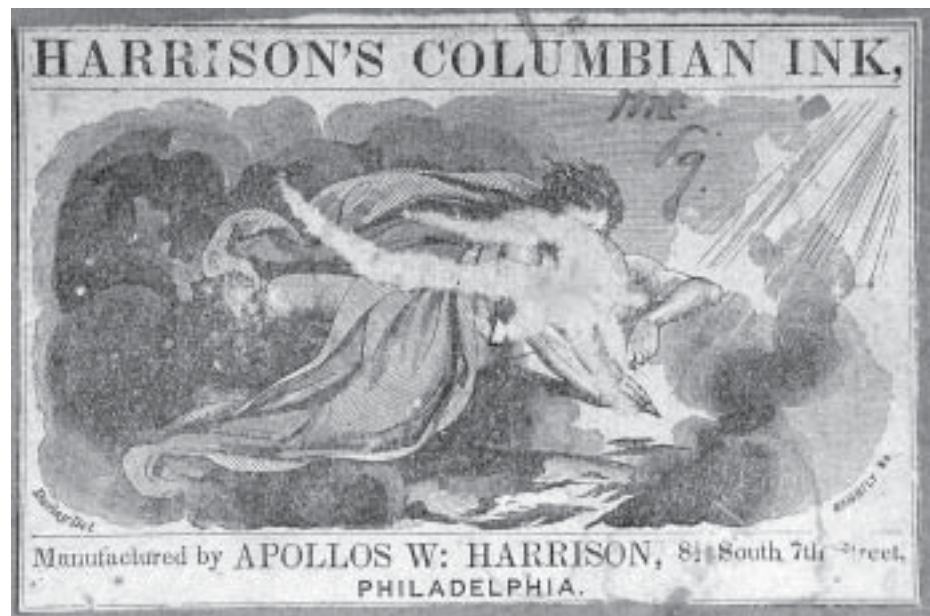
perfumes, tonic stimulants, and flavoring extract. Pontiled and smooth bottom bottles are known. While other ink companies made hair dye, perfumes, tonics and extracts are a bit unusual for an ink company.

By 1861, the Harrison Company was known as the Harrison's Columbian Perfumery and Ink as can be seen on the company envelope. His business address on this envelope is 26 South 7th Street. The stamp dates this envelope to the 1857-1861 period (the actual postmark date is

not legible). Perforated stamps were first used in 1857 and this stamp (No. 26) was taken out of circulation at the beginning of the Civil War. The Civil War caused many problems for the postal service. The Union decided to withdraw and invalidate all existing stamps, issuing new and different ones. The Confederate post offices were ordered to return all stamps, but it is doubtful that they did so. Confederate post offices eventually issued their own stamps. By August of 1861, the Union had issued new stamps although the old ones were accepted in exchange until the end of that year, after which any one used was marked with "Old Stamps Not Recognized". For the complete story, we suggest reading a history of the Confederate and US postal Services.

As many large ink companies were established in the mid-1800's, perhaps competition was a reason for turning to other products. One of the most unusual ones for an ink and perfume company, was a Tonic Stimulant. I don't have access to a picture, but one was sold in the Watt White auction in 1996-97. It had a label and was still in the box. Also in that auction was a large hair dye and a labeled bottle—Extracts for the Handkerchief. Ladies commonly perfumed their handkerchiefs. Perfumed ink was also popular during that period, although I can find no reference to it by Harrison.

Perfume bottles include the large clear one pictured here, as well as the aqua octagonal one, a round clear one with attached lid, and a small rectangular one, similar to a small ink bottle. All are



This label from an early shipping box gives the 8 1/2 South 7th Street address.



Company envelope, circa 1860.

References:

- American Bottles and Flasks and Their Ancestry, McKearin and Wilson, 1978.
- Report on Record Inks and Paper, Public Records, Boston, 1891.
- Web Search: Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, Stamps & Postal History of US.
- Web Search: US Stamps 1-39.
- Watt White Collection, Charles Moore Auctions, Dec. 1996-Jan. 1997.
- Mebane Collection, Glass Works Auctions, Oct. 2002, Feb. 2003.

embossed Harrison’s Columbian Perfumery with the rectangular one being embossed vertically. A large round one was also sold in the Mebane auction.

Another product made by Harrison was flavoring extract. The bottle is the typical rectangular bottle with embossing and label. Without the label, one would probably never pick it up at a show. It is clear and the embossing on one side is A.W. Harrison, and the other, Philadelphia. The label reads flavoring extract with an address for the company at 10 South 7th Street.

Also pictured here are two small flat hair dye bottles, one aqua, pontiled, and the other clear with a smooth bottom. The small one is only 2.5" tall and probably contained only one use. Note that on both these bottles, the “S’s” are reversed.

While their ink bottles are very popular, there seems to be less interest in these bottles even though they are much less common than the small inks. They generally sell at modest prices for bottles this old and uncommon. With these companion bottles being overlooked by most collectors, we are able to add to our collection of go-withs fairly inexpensively.

Check at the next show you attend for these bottles and let us know if you find any different ones that we may not have seen. We can be reached at:

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Article heading: Early Hair Dye bottles with reversed S’s.
 Above left: Harrison's Columbian Perfumery embossed bottle.
 Above right: Embossed and labeled flavoring extract.



Harrison Perfume with pewter lid.



Harrison eight-sided perfume.



Harrison perfume bottle.