



Figure 1, above: Souvenir plates from Saratoga, showing the High Rock Spring.

Figure 2, below : A few of the many variations of High Rock souvenir spoons  
Close-up on right shows the detail of one of the spoon bowls. Each one is different.



Figure 6: Commemorative canteen flasks from the Spanish-American War.  
Close-up of the Com. W. S. Schley flask shown on the left.

# Do You Know “The Rest of the Story”?

by Don Fritschel

Have you ever wondered about some of the items in your collection? I'm not talking about the item itself, or where it came from, or what it is worth. I'm talking about the story behind it, or, as commentator Paul Harvey puts it, “The rest of the story!” Sometimes the most fascinating tales emerge as you start to research your favorite collectibles.

There are several “levels” of research. At the most superficial level, one gathers enough information to satisfy basic curiosity. In the case of an antique bottle this might be to determine its age, what product it held, and possibly its current value. As you dig a little deeper, you start to uncover history of the product manufacturer, information about the town where it was made, and frequently, interesting stories and anecdotes. Well-researched articles of this type appear in each issue of *Bottles and Extras*, as well as other hobby magazines. At the deepest level, one can amass so many data, photographs, drawings, advertisements, first person accounts and historical information that the story can only be told by writing a book. Such is the case with Peter Mallett's recent 184-page volume on

a single patent medicine, *Smith's Green Mountain Renovator*. (Reference 1)

While I don't intend to write any books, I do find myself becoming interested enough in certain items in my collections that I will often try to discover the story behind the story. For example, I was showing my bottle collection to another collector one day and he remarked on the interesting display on the bottom shelf of my bottle cabinet. Where the shelves above are tightly packed with flasks, medicines and other early glass, the bottom shelf has only eight Saratoga bottles separated by six decorated plates, each containing a different scene from the early Saratoga area. He noticed that two of the plates celebrated the Saratoga High Rock Spring. [Figure 1] After he left, I looked at the plates again. Both showed Indians drinking from a spring that was running from the top of a rocky mound, about four feet high. Next, I dug out my collection of souvenir spoons from Saratoga and noted that 16 out of 20 different spoons in the group also featured variations of the famous High Rock in their bowls. [Figure 2] With so many different mineral springs and bottles from Saratoga Springs, why is this scene so prevalent?

With a little help from George Waller's “Saratoga, Saga of an Impious Era” (Reference 2), the answer unfolded.

In 1738, William Johnson, age 23, arrived from Ireland in the Mohawk Valley of what would become New York, to manage his uncle's land and to establish a trading post. He soon won the respect of the Mohawks, the most powerful of the Iroquois Confederacy, by trading fairly with them when it was common practice to cheat the Indians.

He enjoyed the wild forests and the primitive ways of the Mohawks and he mingled with them at every opportunity, accepting them as equals when they were used to being treated with contempt by the whites. He learned their language, shared their food and dressed in their clothing. Eight years after his arrival in the valley, he was such good friends with the Indians that Britain commissioned him Colonel of the Six Nations. During the French and Indian Wars, he and a band of Iroquois joined an English militia and defeated the French at the battle of Lac du Saint Sacrement, which Johnson later renamed Lake George. He was soon appointed His Majesty's Superintendent of Indian Affairs and dubbed a baronet.

Johnson took Molly Brant, sister of the war chief of the Mohawks, as his wife and made her mistress of his baronial mansion, Johnson Hall in Johnstown. She bore him children, managed his household and helped entertain the continuous stream of guests. He was not only one of the most important men in the new world, but one of the wealthiest.

In 1767, at the age of 52, Johnson suffered severely from numerous ailments, including dysentery, the gout, and a musket ball, still lodged in his thigh from the battle of Lake George, years earlier. Neither Indian herbs nor doctors from Albany could ease his condition. He could not walk or stand, and kept to his bed, weak with pain.

The Mohawk chiefs held a council. About 30 miles northeast of Johnstown, in a little wooded valley at the edge of the Adirondacks, were the “Medicine Springs of the Great Spirit,” whose waters had repaired and renewed the Iroquois for nearly 400 years. The sachems decided that if Johnson were to be cured, they must transport him to the magical springs. On August 22, 1767, an escort of Iroquois braves set out from Johnson Hall, carrying their friend on a litter. Although rumors had abounded for years about a spring with



Figure 3: Early woodcut of Johnson being carried to the healing spring.

wonderful healing powers, no white men had ever been allowed to enter the sacred area. Sir William Johnson would be the first.

As the entourage neared the spring, he saw a strange cone-shaped rock, about five feet tall, and resembling a small haystack. Water poured from a round hole in the top of the rock and ran down its sides. **[Figure 3]** The Indians built a bark hut close to the spring and scattered leaves for Johnson to lie on. For four days, he drank and bathed in the salty waters of the spring. **[Figure 4]** The Indians built a bark hut close to the spring and scattered leaves for Johnson to lie on. For four days, he drank and bathed in the salty waters of the spring. On the fourth day, a runner arrived with news that required the baronet to hurry home. The death of one of the chiefs and new land disputes between the settlers and Indians required his immediate attention. Much to Johnson's surprise, his brief visit to the spring restored much of his strength and he was able to walk part of the way home. News of his miraculous cure traveled



**Figure 4:** A "High Rock" bottle showing the embossed 1767 date.

quickly and other health seekers were drawn to the spring. It was only a matter of time before the "high rock" spring, and others discovered nearby, would launch the spa that would become the famous Saratoga Springs.

I looked at one of my Saratoga High Rock bottles and there was the date "1767", (the date of Johnson's visit), arched over the embossed "high rock". **[Figure 4]** I looked more closely at my two souvenir plates. Both showed Indians drinking from water spilling from the haystack-shaped rock, but one of them, faintly, in the background, showed four Indians carrying a man on a litter!

As I put my spoons away, I noticed one of my all time favorite souvenir spoons lying in the drawer. It has the raised relief of the Alamo in the bowl, along with the words, "The Alamo, Built in 1718, San Antonio, Texas." This bowl is the most common of all San Antonio spoons, but the handle is not the usual "Texas" handle, showing cowboys, longhorns, a Lone Star, etc. This particular handle is in the form of a full-figured Theodore Roosevelt on horseback, dressed in uniform with a campaign hat. The workmanship is so perfect that you can even see the "U.S." insignia on his tunic collar as well as a monocle on one eye! **[Figure 5]** Is there a connection between Teddy Roosevelt and the Alamo? I plugged "Teddy Roosevelt + Alamo" into an Internet search window and soon found out that the answer was *both* "yes and no"!

Early in 1898, the United States sent its naval fleet to Cuba as a "show of force" against Spain, who was attempting to colonize the island. On February 15<sup>th</sup>, Spain sunk the *U.S.S. Maine* in Havana harbor. President McKinley declared war on Spain on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Theodore Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, resigned his post to join the war effort by forming the 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Cavalry Volunteer Regiment, soon called the "Rough Riders" by his men.

He set up his headquarters in San Antonio, in the Menger Hotel, and did most of his recruiting from the hotel bar. In fact, if you visit this historic hotel today, you will see dozens of old photos of the Rough Riders training in San Antonio, as well as the actual bar stool where Roosevelt sat.

Some of his new officers were already well known: Capt. Bucky O'Neill, mayor of Prescott, Arizona, and famous frontier sheriff; Capt. Llewellyn of New Mexico, a highly respected peace officer who had been

wounded four times by outlaws; Lt. Ballard, another former peace officer, famous for breaking up the Black Jack Gang; Benjamin Daniels, marshall of Dodge City in its heyday; Sherman Bell, deputy marshall of Cripple Creek, Colorado. In addition, Roosevelt's cause attracted patriots with names like Cherokee Bill from Indian Territory, Happy Jack of Arizona, Smoky



**Figure 5:** Sterling souvenir spoon featuring Teddy Roosevelt and the Alamo.

Moore, The Dude, Hell Roarer, Tough Ike, Rattlesnake Pete, as well as at least four former or current ministers and several former Texas Rangers.

Later, Roosevelt wrote, "They were a splendid set of men, these South westerners—tall and sinewy, with resolute, weather-beaten faces, and eyes that looked a man straight in the face without flinching. In all the world there could be no better material for soldiers than that afforded by these grim hunters of the mountains, these wild rough riders of the plains." After training for several weeks in San Antonio, Roosevelt's regiment deployed to Tampa Bay before the invasion of Cuba, where they charged to immortality on San Juan Hill.

Shepard Manufacturing (1893-1920), the maker of this superb souvenir spoon, thought it indiscreet to feature the war hero, and 26<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, with a hotel, or, worse yet, with a bar. So they created a spoon with T.R. in full battle dress, on horseback, along with the Alamo, the building *directly adjacent* to the Menger Hotel, where he did most of his recruiting.

A few months later, while my interest in the Spanish-American War was still high, I was offered a label-under-glass commemorative flask from that war. These bottles are shaped like figural canteens, about 4 ½" in diameter, with "U.S." debossed on one side and with a full color picture-under-glass on the opposite. I already had two different ones, one with Admiral George Dewey's face on the front, and a second one showing a soldier and sailor shaking hands. The one I was being offered had an unfamiliar face, marked, "Com. W.S. Schley, U.S.N." [Figure 6] I wondered what part he played in the Spanish-American War.

Once again, the Internet was a big help. I plugged "Schley + Spanish American War" into a search window and soon had a five page biography in my hand! Winfield Scott Schley was named after the famous general of the War of 1812. Schley graduated from Annapolis, remaining lifelong friends with one of his classmates, George Dewey. As a young officer, he served boldly on one of the blockade ships during the Civil War, and began his rapid rise through the Naval ranks. His exploits included suppressing a riot of 400 Chinese on the Chincha Islands, taking possession of the U.S. Custom House in San Salvador during an insurrection, and landing marines in Korea to search for a missing American ship, believed plundered by Korean pirates. He held many positions, including various ship commands, head of the foreign language department at Annapolis, and chairman of the Naval Lighthouse Board.

In 1884, Schley became a public hero, when he commanded three ships in a daring rescue of Army Lt. Adolphus Greeley, an arctic explorer whose expedition had disappeared three years earlier in Greenland. Remarkably, he was able to locate Greeley and his group of six survivors in the frozen wasteland. At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, Schley took command of the "Flying Squadron," whose mission was to intercept the Spanish fleet. When it was determined that the enemy fleet was in Santiago Bay, Schley, with eight ships, blockaded the harbor. After five

weeks of waiting, blockading, and bombarding the coastal defenses, the Spanish ships, under the command of General Cervera, attempted to run the blockade. The Spanish fleet was destroyed, with little damage to the American ships. Schley retired in 1901 at the mandatory age of 62. Ten years later he died and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, where a gate is named after him.

Now that I knew Commodore Schley's story, I bought the flask.

While researching Schley, and his part in the war, I ran across a website that gave several dozen brief biographies of other major players in the war. Besides the military men, such as Roosevelt, Dewey, and Schley, there were others, such as Walter Reed, who became an international hero by tracing yellow fever to its mosquito origin, and William Randolph Hearst, whose newspaper empire gained readership during the war by its sensational war headlines followed by stories that were exaggerated, at best, and outright fabrications, at worst. One of Hearst's more colorful employees was Richard Harding Davis, often called "The First Modern War Correspondent." The daring Harding often defied orders in order to get to the scene of the action, as he did for coverage of the famous charge up San Juan Hill. His reports of this battle were largely responsible for the legend of Theodore Roosevelt and the Rough Riders.

For a time, Hearst also employed Frederick Remington to illustrate some of his more sensational articles. Prior to the outbreak of the war, Hearst ran a story about American women being strip-searched by male Spaniards, and he had Remington sketch a provocative picture to accompany the article. Neither the article nor the sketch were factual, but they did much to incite American outrage against Spain. One of Remington's original works of art, the famous "Bronco Buster" sculpture, was presented to Teddy Roosevelt by the men of the Rough Riders at the close of the war.

Hearst's primary rival in the publishing business was a Hungarian immigrant named Joseph Pulitzer. After merging two St. Louis newspapers, Pulitzer expanded his journalistic empire by purchasing the *New York World* from Jay Gould and went head-to-head with Hearst's *New York Morning Journal*, matching its sensationalism in war reporting.

Among other credits, Pulitzer introduced comic strips to newspapers. After his death in 1911, his will established both the Columbia University School of Journalism and the much revered Pulitzer Prize.

Bottles are not the only collectible items that are fun to research. I have a small collection of cast iron banks. Most of them are still banks, but I do have one mechanical bank. This features a fat man sitting in a plush chair. [Figure 7] When you place a coin in his hand, his arm tilts downward and drops the coin into his vest and his head nods. It's very cute, but there is more to the story.

The side of his chair is embossed "Tammany," so it didn't take much research to realize that the man is William M. Tweed, New York City's political boss in the late 1860s. His headquarters, located on East 14<sup>th</sup> Street, was known as Tammany

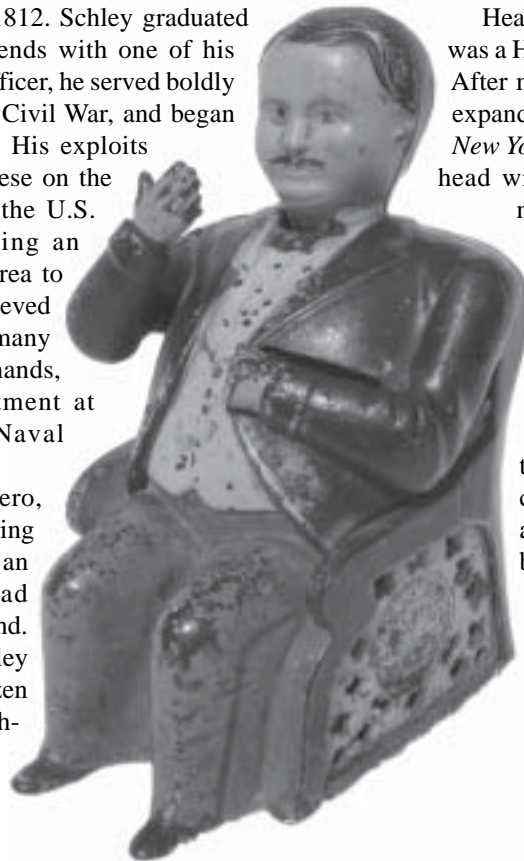


Figure 7: Cast-iron mechanical "Tammany" bank.

Hall. Tweed orchestrated elections, controlled the city's mayor, and was rewarded with bribes and kickbacks that he demanded from political supporters, in exchange for city contracts. There is little question that Tweed and his cronies were outright crooks. Between 1865 and 1871, an estimated 100 to 200 million dollars were swindled from the City. The most outrageous example of urban corruption was the New York County Courthouse, which cost more than three times its original estimate and took 20 years to complete. Contractors associated with Tammany Hall received exorbitant payments for their work and Tweed himself benefited from his personal interests in a Massachusetts quarry that provided the marble for the courthouse. When a committee investigated why it took so long to build the courthouse, it spent nearly \$8,000 just to print its report. The printing company was owned by Tweed.

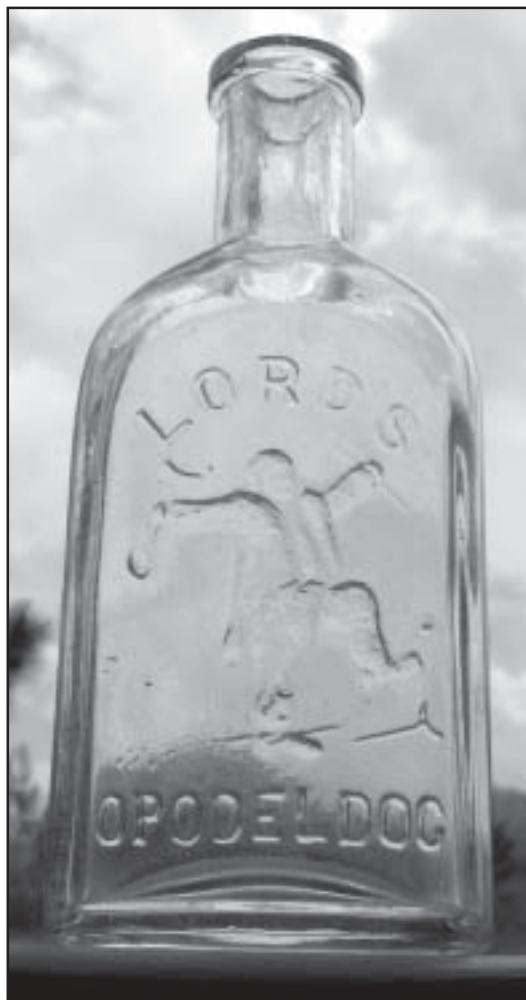
The iron bank now takes on a different meaning. When Boss Tweed's hand drops the coin inside his vest, he is accepting a bribe. The nod is one of patronage.

Since I was now on a roll, I began thinking of other old things I owned that might also have a story behind them. One thing that came to mind was an old map, which had been part of a small collection of maps, that I had recently obtained in a trade for some bottles. Where most of the maps were related to mining, showing mine locations, colors, topography, and other details, this particular map was very uninteresting. It was black on tan, and about 8" high by 40" long. It traced a wagon route from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Albuquerque, N.M. There was little detail, except for occasional rivers and passes crossed, and grassland notations. The entire "trace" was only about 1" wide, including the limited details. It was titled, "Wagon Route of Edward F. Beale, 1858." The map was certainly not very significant, but maybe there was a story behind Beale.

When I researched Edward Beale, I was astonished to learn who this man was, and what he had done. Edward Fitzgerald Beale (1822-1893) was an American frontiersman, a friend of Ulysses S. Grant, and is credited with being the first to bring news of the California gold strike to the east coast. During the Mexican War, he and Kit Carson, slipped through the enemy lines to bring reinforcements to save General Kearney's troops. Beale surveyed and marked numerous regional wagon routes,

as well as one of the three major wagon routes to California. Portions of "The Beale Wagon Road" exist today in the Southwest as the lines of the Santa Fe Railroad and old Route 66. During its brief existence, Beale also ran the Army's experimental camel corps in Arizona. President Millard Fillmore appointed him Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California and Nevada, and President Lincoln appointed Beale Surveyor General of the same region. I thought I knew a lot about western history, so why had I never heard of Beale?

It should be obvious by now that much of the fun in collecting can be enhanced by doing a little research about your collections. With the myriad of reference books available today, and especially with the capabilities of the Internet, this has become much easier. I need to close now as I just bought a little bottle called "Lord's Opodeldoc" with the embossed picture in the glass of a man breaking his crutches! **[Figure 8]** I need to go find out "the rest of the story".



< **Figure 8:** "Lord's Opodeldoc" medicine bottle.

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