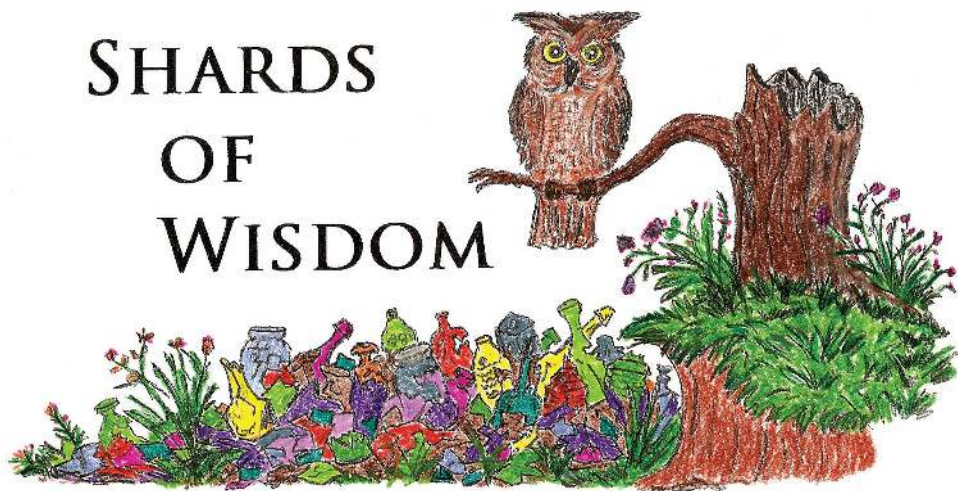


SHARDS OF WISDOM



The antique bottle hobby has been good to me in more ways than one

By Bill Baab

I would imagine many beginning collectors of antique bottles found themselves surprised or stunned to unearth bottles that once contained products of foreign countries, such as inks or mineral waters.

I know I was.

However, uncovering soy sauce pots, tiger whiskies and opium bottles wasn't all that much of a surprise to those familiar with the history of Augusta, Georgia. Large numbers of Chinese immigrants came into Augusta from the 1840s on. They worked on the construction gang building the Augusta Canal (1845) and later on railroads. In fact, at one time Augusta was home to the largest Chinese population east of the Mississippi River.

The first foreign bottle I ever dug back in the early 1970s was a pottery ink from the United Kingdom. Under the glaze was impressed J. BOURNE & SON / DENBY POTTERY / NEAR DERBY. Other examples had different markings. They must have been exported from England by the zillions because our 19th century dumps were full of them.

As time went on, handled ceramic mineral waters from Nassau in old Prussia started to show up in dumps whose bottles dated to the 1880s. I thought they were neat. Then more inks showed up in my spade, marked N. ANTOINE et FILS / ENCRE JAPONAISE / PARIS. Often wondered what became of Antoine and his son.

I found an Augusta dump dating to the 1850s and soon



some Crawford County, Ga., jugs. Don't regret that, either.

A friend and I dug a lone privy behind an antebellum mansion, having found the multi-holer's floor mostly missing and contracted to replace it if we'd receive permission to dig it. Sadly, someone else without permission had beaten us to it. We dug the brick-liner all of 10 feet to the bottom and found a couple of plain pontiled bottles. At least, we eliminated that thing from our minds. And we did install a new floor.

I never got into regular privy digging, not having the knowledge, Sanborn fire insurance maps, a probe or the time. Anyway, I was digging early dumps and having a great time.

Much later, I learned that others including a bunch from Savannah had been finding and digging privies in the old section of town. None of them had permission. But I did and always in writing.

added lots more inks, sealed wines from Spain and elsewhere and my first pontiled examples, iron and open. I purchased a collection from an elderly resident who had uncovered it in his back yard during the 1950s in an older section of the city. He was digging to build a rose garden at the time and found a privy.

A favorite was a French bottle in teal green, pontiled and with an embossed bell. (If you drank that stuff, did it ring yours?). It was embossed Tessier et Prevost / au Paris. (Much later, I saw an amber, smooth-based example). Crude case gins (sadly unembossed, but free-blown through their mouths) and a couple of iron-pontiled U.S. sodas (1848 Knickerbocker, N.Y., and Deer Park, L.I., in cobalt) were in that hole. The latter's top had been broken off and later was lost as was the bottle during a move.

The gentleman saw one of my "Bottlenecks" columns in The Augusta Chronicle-Herald Sunday edition (1970s), contacted me and asked if I was interested in buying his bottles. Indeed I was and paid about \$2,000 for the lot, which also included a couple of bulbous, pontiled demijohns. I never regretted taking out that bank loan for that collection, which numbered about 50 and included pontiled examples of New York patent medicines and hair dyes. I traded most of the pontiled, out-of-town examples to John Ryan expert Tommy Mitchiner for



The antique bottle hobby has been good to me in more ways than one, especially connecting me with many other people who love it, too.

Jim Bender on A.M. Bininger Bottles: 'Day Dreams' Ready for Collectors

By Bill Baab

During a dig in Savannah, Georgia more than 40 years ago, a collector unearthed a strange-looking bottle. It was in the shape of an old time cannon.

Once he scraped off the mud, he read the embossing: A.M. BININGER & CO. / 19 BROAD ST / N.Y. Nearly 12-1/2 inches in height, the bottle was the first of its kind to be dug in Georgia, as far as that state's longtime collectors know.

Question is: What did it contain? Who was Bininger?

Those questions can now be answered by thumbing through the fascinating pages of A.M. BININGER BOTTLES, a 162-page book penned by Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors Historian Jim Bender. This book deserves a place in the libraries of all collectors of antique bottles.

Readers will learn more than they bargained for in the well-illustrated pages documenting one of the young United States' pioneer liquor business men whose glass containers were anything but ordinary.

According to Bender, all cannon bottles have smooth bases and either a ground or re-fired top. What is really neat is that cannon bottles had a store display consisting of a two-wheeled base on which the cannon rested. To top it off, a 30-star American flag made of tin perched on the rear of gun chassis. Only one complete cannon, stand and flag is known to exist in a private collection.

Researching material for the book took more than two years of Bender's

HISTORY'S CORNER

In Memory of Dick Watson

longtime FOHBC Historian



The oldest Saratoga type mineral water bottles are the **Lynch & Clarke New York** bottles which were a product of Thomas Lynch and John Clarke. They were first produced in the early 1820s. They come in quarts, pints and the very rare one-half pint size.

If you would like to learn more about these great bottles or any of the other Saratoga type mineral water bottles that were made, please join the Saratoga Type Bottle Collectors Society. Contact **Jeff Ullman** for a free copy of their newsletter.

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518-925-9787

Watch each issue for a new installment of History's Corner.

New Limited Edition A.M. Bininger Bottles Book



By Jim Bender

Offered for
the first time
at the 2017
FOHBC
National
Show

\$35.00

Over 160 pages of all known embossed and labeled Biningers bottles, all in full color.
A new numbering system for bottle identification

time, but was made easy by super collectors Jack Pelletier and Don Keating, who allowed Bender access to their wonderful collections.

"Between them, they have the greatest Bininger bottles on the planet," Bender writes on the book's back cover,

So, what did the cannons contain? Bourbon, gin and cognac gave buyers more bangs for their bucks.

Aside from the shapes and colors of Bininger's containers, collectors will be fascinated by some of the liquors' names, like Rip Van Winkle Gin. There is no guarantee that drinking it will keep one asleep for 20 years, but the paper label shows a bearded old man peering at something ahead of him, so who knows?

Another bottle sports the "Old Tom" Label, with a fiendish-looking tomcat whose image is enlarged on the last page of the book.

Bininger sold a handled pitcher or jug embossed BININGER'S DAY DREAM, NO. 19 BROADWAY NY, its applied handle stretched from neck to shoulder.

Bender also traces the beginnings of the Bininger family and even found A.M.'s grave site in Camden, New York.

Every variety, and there are quite a few, of known Bininger bottles are shown in full color throughout the book.

Bender admits being fascinated by Bininger and 30 of them rest in his personal collection.

The book sells for \$35 plus \$7.95 shipping and can be ordered from the author, P.O. Box 162, Sprakers, NY 12166.

