

A Hike in the Park Yields an Old Bottle

By David C. Hess

Around 1965, my wife Ruth and I started bottle collecting. At that time, we lived in the far northwestern section of Philadelphia, Pa., in an area called Wissahickon. Adjacent to it is an area called Manayunk. To the north of us was the Wissahickon Valley and the historic Germantown area. All of these towns are now part of Philadelphia. Also, all of these areas are surrounded by Philadelphia's huge Fairmount Park system. These areas and communities are steeped in history dating back to the Revolutionary War and before – for example, the famous battle of Germantown.

From out our back door we had easy access to this huge park system, which contained miles and miles of hiking and bridle trails. Along the edge of these trails are many old homes and buildings dating back 150 years or more.

While hiking in the park one day along one of these trails near our home within sight of one of these old colonial homes, we saw in the center of the trail, the corner of what we thought might be an exposed bottle. We asked each other if we should we dig it out, because

so many times it's nothing more than a broken fragment. Well, we dug it out, and low and behold, much to our surprise and excitement, out came an entire bottle.

The bottle turned out to be an aqua squat beer with some surface scratches, 7-inches tall by 2-2/4 inches in diameter. It has an oval panel with P. (standing for Peter) Serwai, Manayunk, Pa. (Notice the reversed Z)

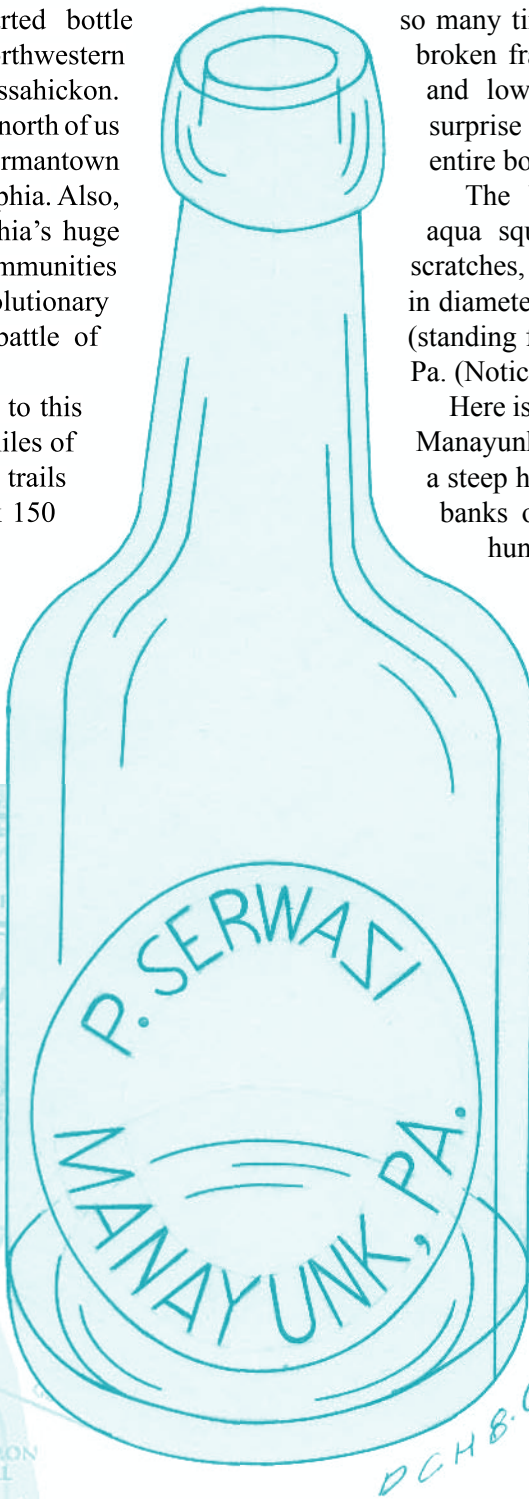
Here is just a little information about Manayunk. It is located on the side of a steep hill that steadily rises from the banks of the Schuylkill River. One

hundred years ago, it was an active mill town which had its share of local breweries.

For people interested in sports, this area is part of the course for the Philadelphia International bike race with the famous hill section known as the Manayunk wall.

Over the course of the following years that we lived in the Wissahickon area, we found several other bottles while hiking the trails – for example, a half-pint plain amber ribbed flask and a green aqua squat beer with embossed lettering from Philadelphia. (Both in mint condition)

These outings did not start out as a bottle hunt or dig, but, it just goes to show what you can find when you are just out and about and very observant.



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