

## OREGON EMBOSSED FLASKS

By Garth Ziegenhagen

My observations indicate that approximately 1% to 3% of all bottles at bottle shows or on eBay are embossed flasks from any state. There are, however, at least 105 embossed flasks known to exist in Oregon at the beginning of 2010 and only the Reception Saloon from Salem has the word saloon on the flask.

In 1913, there were at least 401 saloons in Portland and 31 of them were on First Street. These flasks are from different saloons and liquor establishments and the total number does not include various sizes of the same embossing. It does, however, include variants of the different flasks from different molds. Fleckenstein & Mayer had seven different flasks from Portland alone and many more from other states.

There are 17 common styles of flasks in Oregon with varying numbers of each style of flasks:

(4) Olympias. (1) Alton. (1) Newman. (3) Tokens. (19) Baltimore Ovals. (11) Pumpkinseeds. (3) Knife Edges. (15) Dandys. (12) Washingtons. (16) Coffins. (1) Union oval. (2) Ceramics. (4) Leathers. (3) Defenders. (4) Basket Swirls. (3) Eagles. (3) Shooflies.



Example of every type Oregon flask

Embossing usually includes the name of the proprietor and the address of the establishment. This information allows collectors to look up the history of the flask in bottle books or directories such as the R. L. Polk Oregon and Washington Gazetteers, the R.G. Dunn Mercantile Agency Reference book, or different R.L. Polk directories from various cities.

Most of the flasks are from Portland. Unlike whiskey cylinders that have only three Oregon towns represented by The Dalles, Astoria, and Portland, embossed flasks are known to exist in Albany, Astoria, Baker City, Marshfield, Pendleton, Salem, The Dalles and Portland. If you come across an embossed flask from Oregon, your best source of information is the book "Whiskey Bottles and Liquor Containers From the State of Oregon," by John Thomas in 1998. The book gives some indication of prices which can obviously change as more samples of the flasks may have

been found or the flask may have been more rare than the author and the contributors originally knew. Prices may go up or down throughout the years. The book has been out of publication for many years, but a better Oregon book is not available anywhere.

At a recent bottle show at Aurora, Oregon, a picture of an unlisted flask from Oregon appeared. After inquiring about the picture, I was told that Ralph Van Brocklin had just acquired the pint flask. I received a picture from Ralph after returning from the show. Later, I found out Jay Marks from Washington had dug a half-pint many years ago near Marshfield. It is the first embossed whiskey from Marshfield and a beautiful one at that.

Apparently John Thomas did not hear about the flask. Bottles and Extras is now the way to keep this hobby exciting and up to date for everyone no matter what they collect because new items are being discovered all the time.



Newly found, previously unknown Oregon flask

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