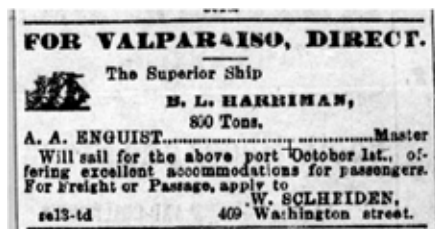


California Washing Extract

By Eric McGuire

Occasionally bottles are found that appear to be made for someone who doesn't fit an occupation that makes sense of the product being produced. For instance, a bank president who decides to make hair dye, or a hair dresser who sold soda water. Such is the case of the maker of the bottle presented here.

The proprietor of the CALIFORNIA WASHING EXTRACT was Alfred August Enquist. (1) He was born in Sundsvall, Västernorrland County, Sweden on June 8, 1825. Alfred married Fredrika Charlotta Johansson on September 4, 1859, in Stockholm and immediately set sail for the New World. The young couple's first child, Mia Elizabeth, was born in New York in July 1860 and they soon set sail for the other side of the continent. Their second child, Nina Fredrika, was born in Mexico in 1862, but by 1863 the Enquists were living in San Francisco where Alfred was in partnership with



Advertisement from the San Francisco Daily Alta of September 15, 1870, announcing the impending departure of the ship Benjamin L. Harriman, bound for Valparaiso, Chile, with Alfred Enquist as its Master. This was likely his last voyage as a sea captain.

Alfred Lindau as ship chandlers. (2)

His experience was with ships, but it was common for West Coast residents to speculate in mining during the early 1860s. The glory days of finding gold on the surface had long passed but stock companies

abounded for the speculation of hard rock mining for gold, silver and other mineral commodities throughout the West. Enquist also invested in, and was elected treasurer of the Silver Cloud Gold and Silver Mining Company in Alpine County, California, in 1864. (3) Many of these companies went bust and it is not known whether the Silver Cloud was good to Enquist. It is known that the company was still in existence 10 years later although he was not an investor at that time.

Enquist loved ships and sailing even though it was a difficult environment – especially for a family man. Professional seamen, especially in San Francisco, were treated very poorly and he tried his best to correct the situation. He was instrumental in forming an early sailor's union in January 1866, called the Seamen's Friendly Union and Protective Society. Enquist was elected president of what is considered the first seaman's union in the United States. A shoestring organization, it couldn't be properly maintained when the key operatives were out to sea and it fell by the wayside. (4)

Enquist continued in the maritime industry at least until the early 1870s. In fact, in 1870, the U.S. census notes his occupation as captain of the Salvadoran Barque Marmaluke, which was owned by San Franciscan, and fellow Swede, Charles J. Janson. This vessel left San Francisco February 8, 1870, bound for San Blas, Mexico. (5) In June it was reported lost about 30 miles from the entrance to Scammon's Lagoon (6), but a later report noted that the ship went aground while crossing the bar at Scammon's Lagoon on May 3, 1870. (7) The crew was saved but the event must have weighed heavily on Enquist and his chosen occupation. Charlotte, his wife, managed the hotel at 201 Sacramento Street in San Francisco, in 1870, in which the Enquist family was living at the time – a much safer

endeavor. His last documented voyage as a ship captain was in October of the same year when he sailed the B.L. Harriman to Valparaiso. This ship was also owned by Charles J. Janson, a wealthy dry goods merchant based in San Francisco.

In 1872, Enquist embarked on one more voyage, when he returned to his home town of Sundsvall, Sweden as a passenger, for a visit, probably dealing with family matters. Upon his return, Enquist chose his family over the sea which began a series of land-based jobs, including masonry, insurance, steamship passenger ticket agent, secretary of the Scandinavian Hall Association, and finally the notary public for the City of San Francisco. The pioneer notary for the city, it was

To the Ladies of California

IT IS A FACT, WHICH IT IS Important that all should know, that **Washing may be done for half the cost,**

And in half the time, required by pursuing the method now in use. An enormous waste of time and materials attends the old and ordinary process. And this is not because a better method is not known, but because housewives persist in treading in the beaten track followed by their mothers and grandmothers before them, opposing every change, and refusing even TO MAKE A FAIR TRIAL of those new inventions which scientific research has produced.

If the housekeepers of San Francisco and of the State will try the

CALIFORNIA WASHING EXTRACT

Simply by way of experiment, they will be amazed to find how much unnecessary labor may be saved by its use. It may be obtained at all the principal Groceries of the city, or in quantities of the Agents, HOSSETTER, SMITH & DEAN.

The use of the EXTRACT renders "rubbing," "pounding," "washboards," and all the severe drudgery of the usual method quite unnecessary. It thoroughly cleanses, without injuring the clothes. In short, it works such wonders as no one will credit without witnessing them. All that the inventor asks of any doubting housewife is

A SINGLE TRIAL.

The following certificate from the State Assayer, furnished after an analysis of the EXTRACT, speaks for itself:

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 19, 1865.

A. A. ENQUIST.

DEAR SIR:—I have examined the sample of liquid handed me, and find it free from acid or any substance that would be injurious to clothing.

Very respectfully,

B. B. THAYER.

Full Directions accompany each Bottle. se211

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ALFRED A. ENQUIST, OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

IMPROVED WASHING-FLUID.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 55,997, dated October 23, 1866; antedated October 3, 1865.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, ALFRED AUGUSTUS ENQUIST, of the city and county of San Francisco, State of California, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Compoounding Ingredients for Washing-Fluids, called the "California Washing Fluid," and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description for preparing and using the same.

The nature of my invention consists in a combining saponaceous and other alkalies and ingredients so that the clothes to be washed will need no rubbing or pounding by the operator, which will be readily appreciated by those having fabrics of thin and costly texture, such as laces and other expensive articles of apparel to be washed.

To enable others skilled in the art to make and use my improved washing-fluid, I will proceed to describe the method of preparing and using the same, as follows:

I take one-half pound of common soap, cut it into thin slices, and put them into one gallon of boiling water. When it is well dissolved I add nine gallons of hot water. This forms sufficient fluid for the washing of an ordinary family.

I prepare, by mixing in some suitable vessel, one fluidounce of water-ammonia and one-half ounce spirits turpentine, adding the

whole to the ten gallons of soap-suds above described. I then take the dirty clothes and put them into the above solution, covering the kettle or tub closely, letting them stand two hours, after which they are to be taken out and rinsed in clean warm water. After this is performed they are again to be rinsed in cold water, when the clothes are sufficiently clean for drying.

By this process and the use of my washing-fluid the labor of rubbing and pounding the clothes is saved, as well as the boiling, as is now the custom, thereby insuring the expense of fuel, as well as the wear and tear of the article to be washed, as in case of fine clothing, which cannot be rubbed without seriously damaging the fabric.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

The compounding of the ingredients in about the proportion as herein described, in combination with the process substantially as set forth.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 16th day of September, A. D. 1865.

ALFRED A. ENQUIST. [s. s.]

Witnesses:
C. W. M. SMITH,
C. W. BOYNTON.

The patent specifications for Enquist's California Washing Fluid

considered a prestigious position. He was appointed by Governor William Irwin on March 20, 1878.(8) In this capacity he witnessed the signing of thousands of important documents in San Francisco and his signature is placed, as witness, upon at least 124 U.S. patents that originated in California.

In 1879, the Enquist family had moved to Sausalito immediately north of San Francisco and across the strait from where the Golden Gate Bridge would be built in 1937.(9) At the time of Alfred's residence in Sausalito he would have had to commute to San Francisco on the ferry which regularly plied the waters of San Francisco Bay from Sausalito. He moved back to San Francisco in 1892. Even though Enquist owned and maintained a house in Sausalito, he also occupied a residence at 2701 Laguna Street in San Francisco, because Charlotte died there about September 15, 1905. (10) Alfred was not long to follow her heavenly journey. He moved back to his residence in Sausalito and died there on October 8, 1906.

It was in 1866 that something got Enquist thinking about selling a product that would clean clothes easier

and more effectively than other methods.

Nothing in Alfred Enquist's history speaks to the reason why he would want to delve into the world of cleaning products. Perhaps, as we all sometimes do, he thought he was struck with a really good invention and went so far as to act upon it. His marketing efforts appear to be dismal for the only advertisement that has been located for his California Washing Extract was found in the San Francisco Chronicle and ran from mid-September to the end of October 1865.

During this same time period, and likely filled with great expectation, Enquist was compelled to protect his invention. He applied for a United States patent to help ward off those who would steal his brilliant idea. Surprisingly, the government also concluded his invention was worth protecting and it awarded Enquist Patent Number 55,997 on October 5, 1866 – over a year after his application.

This writer has perused the patent specifications many times to try and make some sense out of this "invention." The three ingredients used, soap, turpentine and ammonia, were not necessarily difficult to find on the market. Why not make your own if one was so inclined to add turpentine to your wash water? With such a simple formula and normal process described for washing clothes, it is a wonder that the California Washing Extract was even awarded a patent. It is even more difficult to imagine that Enquist thought that marketing the product could be a profitable venture. Apparently, Enquist felt that boiling only one gallon of water and potentially no actual scrubbing of the clothes, was such a cost and labor savings that his product would be

irresistible to the public. The lingering odor of turpentine in the family wash probably negated any positive benefits of its use, especially during the extended rinse process which would have canceled out any savings from reduced fuel costs in the initial boiling. The labor savings would evaporate in trying to remove the turpentine odor.

The size of the bottle is baffling. At a content of 1.75 liquid ounces it is quite small. But admittedly, it would be difficult to sell a complete package as described in Enquist's patent. Perhaps the bottle contained a mixture of the elements that were less likely to be on the shelf of every house, the ammonia and turpentine, and the user was then only left with buying the soap. After all, nearly everyone already owned soap. But still, the small size of the bottle would only provide enough product for one wash. The cost of bottling alone would price this item out of the market. There is one other possibility – that the pictured bottle was a trial size. If this is the case, then the full size bottle was probably not embossed since none have been found to date.

Perhaps some information will come to light in the future that provides a better explanation for how the California Washing Extract was supposed to work, but unless the directions that accompanied the bottle are located in a dusty attic, it is doubtful the complete intended washing process will ever be known.

As a fascinating item of California history, this bottle harbors no doubt. The San Francisco Glass Works had just opened its doors in 1865 and was the first to manufacture what it called "flint glass" on the Pacific Coast. This bottle exhibits all the attributes of the flint glass that was actually a short-lived product of the glass works. Examples attributed to the company are often inconsistent in quality, ranging from an occasionally passable product to bottles exhibiting a translucent effect, generally termed "moonstone." After the fire in 1868, which leveled the factory, flint glass was no longer on its list of available colors. It is highly likely

product made only in 1865, never to return to the market again.

Alfred and Charlotte Enquist's ancestral legacy to California, and the world, include the following children:

Mia Elizabeth C. Enquist, born July 1860 in New York, married Henry Clay Devening in 1880. They lived in Middletown, Lake County, Calif., where he was a physician. They then moved to San Bernardino County, Calif., about 1900 where Henry died in 1926 and Mia died between 1935 and 1938.

Their children were:

Susan C. Devening, born March 1882, married John A. Molles and they had Andrew D. Molles and Charlotte Molles. Susan died probably in San Bernardino Co., Calif., between 1934 – 1938.

Harry Devening was born June 1884. He received a pharmacy degree

from the University of California at Berkeley in 1904 and died May 4, 1905 in Lake Co., Calif. He had no children.



The base is completely flat and smooth.



The top is crudely finished with a flared out lip.



At 4.1 inches in height it is embossed on the front: CALIFORNIA / WASHINGTON / EXTRACT. The reverse is embossed vertically A.A. ENQUIST.



Ida Emily Devening was born Nov. 1, 1889, in California and married Clinton M. Deakins. She died Dec. 29, 1890 in Calaveras County., California.

Dalnar Devening was born Oct. 26, 1893, in Middletown, Lake County, Calif., and died Jan. 7, 1989 in Inglewood, Los Angeles County. He was a writer of short stories and a poet. Dalnar never married.

Daniel Devening was born Oct. 5, 1896, in Middletown, Lake County, and died Dec. 22, 1956 in Alameda Co. He married Dora Martin, and had Daniel William Devening, born Aug. 12, 1926 in Los Angeles County, and Danella June Devening, born Dec. 15, 1927 in Marysville, Yuba County, Calif. Danella died August 29, 1999 in Everett, Wash.

Nina F. Enquist, was born about 1862 in Mexico. Nothing is known of Nina except that she was named in both her mother's and father's obituaries – 1905 and 1906 respectively. She was never noted as being married. Also, she was not listed in her father's will.

John Alfred Enquist was born April 29, 1865 in California. He married Belle Batchelder in 1894. John died about 1939 and had no children. He started his career in the printing business and soon switched to the paper business. John was a salesman

for Zellerbach Paper Co., from 1907 through 1930.

Nanna Charlotte Enquist was born April 9, 1867, in California, and married Charles Davis in San Francisco in 1894. She died April 1, 1951, in Sonoma Co., Calif., and had Helen Ruth Davis, who was born June 1895 in San Francisco, CA. Helen married George Marzolf and died in Sonoma County, Calif., on Nov. 25, 1988.

Ella Caroline Enquist was born June 12, 1869, in California, and married Sidney H. Fowler in San Francisco on May 8, 1900 (license issued). Sidney was the secretary for a hospital association in San Francisco and the couple lived their retirement years in Mill Valley, Calif. He died Jan. 31, 1942 and Ella died in San Francisco on Oct. 17, 1948. They had no children.

Agda Enquist was born about 1875 in San Francisco, and married Rinaldo J. Ronchi in Sacramento on July 27, 1909. She and Rinaldo spent their years in Nevada City and Folsom, Calif., mostly in the grocery business.

Rinaldo was, among other things, a Folsom Judicial District Court judge. Agda died between 1930 and 1934, and Rinaldo died Feb. 24, 1965. They had no children.

Axel Frederick Enquist Married Mary L. Bisbee in Oakland, Calif., on June 20, 1904. He became an officer in the U.S. Army. He died March 24, 1946, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D.C., beside Mary who died May 8, 1943. They had no children.

Mary Louisa Charlotte Enquist was born in San Francisco in 1883. She died at age 21 days.

End Notes:

1. His birth name was Enqvist but it was eventually modified to better conform to English usage.
2. San Francisco Directory. 1863
3. Daily Evening Bulletin (San Francisco, Calif.) August 17, 1864
4. see <http://www.seafarers.org/about/history.xml> for more information
5. San Francisco Bulletin, May 31, 1870

6. San Francisco Bulletin, June 20, 1870

7. Daily Alta California (San Francisco, Calif.) May 5, 1871. This reference also reported that Janson had to sue the Oriental Fire and Marine Insurance Company for loss of the vessel.

8. Sacramento Daily Union, March 21, 1878.

9. The name of the town was spelled "Saucelito" during the nineteenth century. Derived from the Spanish word for the willow, it referred to the small willow trees that lined the several creeks draining the watersheds of the town. The town name was modified to Sausalito in the 20th century to more correctly represent the Spanish word after which it was named – Sausal.

10. Charlotte Enquist's death notice appeared in the San Francisco Call on 16 & 17 September 1905, but the day of her death is not noted. It is assumed to be the day prior to the first newspaper notice.

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