

2008 Honor Roll Inductees



Steve Ketcham

Steve began collecting antique bottles, advertising, and stoneware in 1967 while still in high school. He can still recall buying his first bottle at a long-defunct antiques shop known as Pete's Emporium on County Road F outside of Dresser, Wisconsin.

While attending the University of Minnesota, Steve began digging for bottles. His first digs were on the banks of the Mississippi River near the U of M campus. About the same time, freeways were being built in the inner city of Minneapolis, and Steve frequented these construction sites as the older neighborhoods were being demolished.

When the North Star Historical Bottle Association was established in 1970, Steve was charter member number 11. He joined Minnesota's First Antique Bottle Club a couple of years later and began attending regional meetings of the Federation of Histori-

cal Bottle Clubs in 1973. He later served as assistant chairman and then chairman of the Midwest Region of the FOHBC. During that time Steve established the Federation Writers' Contest and served as its chairman for several years. Steve sat on the board of the Federation from 1982-1998, and was Federation president from 1982-1984. As a Federation officer, Steve was also on the National Bottle Museum Board of Governors until the sale of the museum in 1992.

From 1990-2003 Steve was a bottle price consultant to Schroeder's Antique Price Guide. He has spoken about bottles to numerous antiques collecting clubs in Minnesota. He has twice given bottle presentations for the Minnesota Historical Society.

As a member of the Red Wing Collectors Society and a regular participant at the group's annual convention, Steve has presented educational seminars for the convention four times. In

1999, after speaking to its local chapter on several occasions, Steve was invited to speak at the national convention of the National American Glass Club when it met in St. Paul. In 2008, Steve spoke on bottles and advertising for the Minnesota Antiques Dealers Association.

In 1995 Steve began writing a monthly column, often promoting one aspect of bot-

tle collecting or another, for the "Old Times" newspaper. During these same years Steve was also a frequent contributor to the Federation's "Bottles and Extras." He has also written pieces for "Antique Bottle and Glass collector."

It has been Steve's privilege to serve as president and vice-president of both Minnesota bottle clubs several times and to also serve as co-chairman of the Minnesota bottle show. Other club activities include serving as a contributor and one of many co-editors for both volumes of "The Bottles, Breweriana and Advertising Jugs of Minnesota."

Before retiring from 34 years of teaching junior high English, Steve chaired an antique bottle show and sale at Burnsville Nicollet Junior High as a fund raiser and he also advised the school's Collector Club. Two of Steve's former students are now bottle collectors.



Katie Foglesong

Katie spent much of her life in Ottumwa, Iowa and had developed an interest in collecting and other interesting relics during the late 1950s. By the early '60s, Katie's collecting scope had broadened to include antique bottles and eventually fruit jars.

Katie joined the Antique Bottle Collector's Association of California founded by John Tibbitts of Sacramento, in 1965. After checking the club roster she was surprised to see fellow Iowan Dr. George "Doc" Herron on the list. She immediately contacted him and the idea of forming an Iowa bottle club was one of the first topics discussed.

Doc Herron and Katie made plans to set up a bottle display at the 1966 Iowa State Fair, with Vivian Jones, another of Katie's many good friends,

helping out. The idea was to seek out other bottle collectors in the state. The first display at the State Fair was a tremendous success with large crowds surrounding the shelves of bottles. Questions were also plentiful and the potential for forming the Iowa bottle club was set in motion.

The following year, 1967, the Iowa Antique Bottle club was established with Doc & Ruth Herron, Katie & Curly Foglesone, Ralph & Helen Welch, Max & Vivian Jones, and Frank & Juanita Welch as the "charter members". The club soon had over 100 family memberships and the IAB was well on its way, thanks to Doc and Katie.

In May of 1968, Katie became the club's newsletter editor. This involved composing and mailing a monthly multi-page newsletter to each of the members on an every-

increasing club roster. Katie faithfully carried out the duties of editor for the IAB for the next 23 years! She never missed putting out an issue and even after she retired as editor, she continued to contribute articles for the IAB newsletter.

By 1969, the Federation of Historical Bottle Clubs (FOHBC) had its first meeting and in 1970, Katie was elected its treasurer. Feeling communication and information were key elements in promoting the hobby and the FOHBC, Katie proceeded to type and mail out a monthly newsletter for the FOHBC. She also compiled and typed a brief history of the establishment of the FOHBC.

With her involvement in the FOHBC, Katie soon became friends with numerous collectors across the country. Never one to put off writing a letter, Katie always responded quickly to any correspondence she received. She became good friends with John Eatwell of Colorado, Richard Hansen of California and Bill Baab of Georgia, just to name a few.

Katie's involvement with bottle collecting didn't stop with just the FOHBC and the IAB. She also wrote numerous articles for the Tri-State Antique Trader, the Collector's Weekly, and a weekly historical article for the Ottumwa Courier called "Remember When". She gave classes locally on collecting antique bottles and jars and also gave antique appraisals for the local bank in Ottumwa. Additionally, Katie wrote a 40 page book about her adventures as a bottle collector called "Trials and Trails of a Bottle Collector".

Katie hosted numerous IAB meetings at her home and frequently furnished a room for overnight visitors who came through to tour her collection. In fact, Katie used every possible situation to promote the hobby of in Iowa.

With all of her involvement with her hobby, Katie managed to operate her own bakery for 11 years. She was post mistress at the Ottumwa substation inside a grocery store where she also worked as a bookkeeper. Katie also put in many

hours at the Wapello County Historical Museum in Ottumwa, setting up displays and compiling research on local artifacts and businesses.

For those of you who knew Katie well, you would know that she was never short on letting someone know how she felt about any given situation. Katie always was frank and told it like she saw it. This may have rubbed a few people the wrong way, but, for those of us that knew her well, we knew where she stood and knew that her word was gold. Pretentious would not describe Katie as she drove a 1953 Plymouth name Gertrude, had a three-legged dog named Lady, and once traded a Colt .45 pistol for a historical flask!

"I have too much fun to be an expert and I am too busy hunting bottles to stay at home and sell my surplus." she told her good friend, Vivian Jones. "I have much to learn and I'm a happy bottle bug trying to promote our hobby in the Midwest locally."

As stated earlier, Katie was bitten by the bottle bug in the 1960s with her first bottle being a Hutchinson soda from Ottumwa. By 1970, she had over 2,000 bottles in one room of her small house! Her first 1,000 bottles were mostly dug or purchased with very little investment. She once paid \$15 for a cobalt blue Casper's Whiskey bottle and didn't want anyone to think that she might be crazy for paying that much for a bottle! Since that first Ottumwa soda bottle, Katie had picked up a Roback's Bitters barrel for \$15, a Kelly's Old Cabin Bitters for \$10, and she thought the \$20 she paid for a Log Cabin Sarsaparilla may have been too much!

Katie passed away on October 29, 1995 at the age of 76. She and her collections are no longer around, but her memories with her friends within the hobby and elsewhere continue to make us smile whenever her name is mentioned.

Thanks for all you've done for our hobby, Katie!

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I first met Katie

Foglesong by writing to her about a Mexican Mustang Liniment bottle that I had found. This must have been around 1970 or so and I was 12 years old at the time. She responded with a very nice letter within the week. Over the next few years, I continued to write to Katie from time to time and she would always promptly write back with answers to my questions.

I joined the Iowa Antique Bottleers in 1981 and became good friends with Katie. She was always a

"people" person and the love of collecting always came before the present day attitude of "How much is it worth?"

When she retired as editor in 1991, I assumed the duties of editor of the club newsletter which I continued for the next 15 years. Until her death in 1995, Katie continued to be active in our club by attending the meetings and contributing articles for the newsletter.

Mike Burggraaf
Iowa Antique Bottleers

An example of one of Katie's first FOHBC newsletters:

Federation Facts and Fancies from Katie Foglesong, Treasurer of the Federation, 1970.

"Hello, fellow members of the Federation:

"I am Katie Foglesong, newly elected Treasurer of the Federation for the Year 1970. Formality is fine — if you know how, which I don't, so for the next year you will here (sic) from me once a month — informally. I will keep you posted on financial progress and if I have nothing to report therewith, I'll just tell you of my latest find, bottlewise, or maybe even about the one the cat broke.

"If there are any clubs that do not have a copy of my unimportant little book for your library, just let me know and I will send you one free. ("Trials and Trails of a Bottle Collector" was a 40-page book Katie wrote about her adventures).

"If your club would like to exchange newsletters with our club, we are more than willing.

"I had a note from John Eatwell, the new president of the Federation, and he tells me that there are now 60 clubs that have joined the Federation. Pretty great for a one-year-old baby."

"I better warn all my readers that I am not the world's best typist, let alone stencil typer — or speller either. The money saved by typing my own stencil is a bunch tho, so please put up with my problems. I have been fighting the correction fluid off and on for over a year and I have as yet to get the hang of it. Once I ruined a pair of good slacks, once I got the darned stuff in my eye, twice I left out the cushion sheet and ruined my whole page and as far as I'm concerned, I am just going to live with my errors.

"I live in Ottumwa, the southeastern corner. Bottle digging isn't the best in this area tho a few real good ones have turned up here. My only child lives in Denver with her husband and my special little guy, three year old Mickey. We keep the Denver Zephyr in business, I think, running back and forth. I have tried bottle hunting in Denver but gave that up too. Denver has very active, very large club and I'm always too late. I buy 90% of my bottles for many reasons — no time to dig, I work seven days and two nights a week, I have a very bad back which won't let me do more than scratch the surface, and if I want 'em, I gotta buy 'em, so those of you who hate the silver pick, please forgive me.

"Oh yes! — the most important thing this month, your 1970 dues. I had a piece of a letter from Lenore Seiler and I do mean a piece. The letter was supposed to contain mailing labels but somehow the letter became damaged and most of the contents were lost so I am hoping this reaches every club concerned.

"If you have already paid your 1970- dues, ignore the blank below, if not — send \$3.00 to me and I will send you a receipt for same. I'll be around again next month. Katie"