

By Rick Weiner



Privy Digathon

The reality of Privy Digging

It was mid July and a heat wave was upon us. My favorite time to dig privies is in early spring and fall when the weather is cool and crisp. We will dig in any kind of weather including the three H's -- Heat, Humidity and Hell. Sometimes it feels like hell when you are down a deep hole on a 98-degree day. The air down that deep is thin and makes it hard to breathe with the steam just pouring off of your body. None of that really matters when we are digging an old privy with the possibility of finding old bottles!

In this hobby, you have to take what you can get. Do it or lose it, I always say. On occasion, the people you get permission from might change their mind if too much time passes before you actually dig the privy then you are out of luck. So whatever the weather is like, whatever the situation, we have to "get 'er dug!"

There is a little mental check list I go over in my head to try and make getting permission a little easier. The list goes something like this: How will I go about talking to the owners? How can I gain access to the yard? Will they be

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interested in our hobby? Do I have all of my bottle pictures and bottle info books to show the home owner? Will they think I am crazy for wanting to dig out an old outhouse on their property? Probably, but I never let that stop me before. It does take a little thought and mind preparation to ask for permission to dig in someone's back yard, but it can be done.

When I see a building that is old enough and has potential, I try and find out the people's names who own the home through a local website. Next, I must decide if I should knock or do I wait? We will knock on doors if we have to but it is best to talk to the people outside of their homes. It feels more comfortable and less threatening than some stranger knocking on their door asking to dig out the old outhouse in their yard.

This privy Digathon was a little different. All of the homes we got permission to dig were empty. The city took over the properties due to the landlord's neglect. To find these eyesores, we would drive around town looking for the big orange stickers on the front doors that read, "unfit for human habitation". To us, all that meant was a possible privy to dig.

I would check the year the homes were built to see if the house was old enough for a decent aged privy. Once that was determined, it was time to get written permission from City Hall to dig the privies. I had a few connections there to make this happen. The only stipulation was we had to finish all of the privies in twelve days.

When it was all said and done, we had seven places in the city to dig. These homes were not located in the best part of town if you catch my drift. Some would even say it was a little dangerous, but we didn't care. All we had to do was put on a yellow hard hat and a vest and no one even gave us a second glance. We were just a couple of construction workers doing their job, digging for bottles!

We took twelve days off of work to dig these privies. It turned into a real

Digathon. We dug every day including weekends. It was a fun adventure but digging back to back days is rough stuff, especially when you are getting up in age like me. My buddy Paul is thirteen years younger so I can rest a little longer in between bucket pulls if need be.

The first few pits we dug were behind an 1850s building that was once a bakery. It was also an apartment building at one time. The city had taken over the lease due to structure failure and it was set to be demolished within the week because

"At the start of this Digathon we didn't have a clue what to expect, but that is why I love this hobby, digging up the un-known."

it was a hazard to the public. Pieces of the building were literally falling onto the sidewalk. We had to act fast.

We got our gear together and started the next day. That would be the start of the twelve day privy Digathon.

It wasn't too hard to find the privies in this inner-city yard. The

depressions were clearly visible and practically a foot deep. Now all we had to do was pick the oldest pit first but it usually never works that way. The first privy was a 1930s milk bottle hole. There were more milks than any other type of bottle. I started my bottle digging career on milks at the age of fifteen but now days they do nothing for me. We will take them home if they have a different town name embossed on the slug plate. There is always someone who collects milk bottles. They also make great gifts. I prefer the older bottles myself. 1850s, 1860s, 1870s, 1880s and 1890s is the cut off point for keeper bottles for us.

It was time to dig down into the other depression on the lot and see what kind of luck we would have. Paul took a few shovels of dirt off the top which revealed an aluminum pull tab and an adult toy. Nothing shocks us digging inner-city lots.

We always say "it don't mean nothing". There is always new junk at the start of a privy. Over the years, the privy holes sink and the people who lived in the house tried to fill the depressions in, thus adding junk and dirt to fill the gap and level out their yard. We have found things like no parking signs, old snow tire chains and dog bowls. Some of the privies that had this stuff on the top turned



Milks and shards from one pit



Check out the stone walls

out to be good pits at the bottom. The moral to this story is "never judge a privy by its cover".

As we dug past the top layer of ground, I started to see a change. Old rusted square nails, a little ash, a shard or two of aqua glass and darker looking fill were apparent.

The shape of this privy was beginning to look like an old oval stonelined hole. Stone lined privies can be tricky. The privies that are lined with stone or brick can be re-used and dipped many times over the years un-like the wood lined privies that rot and let the contents

seep into the ground and contaminate the soil around the living area. An 1850s stone or brick lined pit can be used into the early 1900s or longer. It all depends when indoor plumbing came into the area. Most wood liners were filled in and new holes were re-dug every ten to fifteen years. That is why wood liners are the better bet to find old glass in.

The big shovel was starting to crunch glass now so we had to put it aside and start using our small hand tools. Paul was putting shards into a bucket so we could examine what year we were at with the bottles. When I dumped the five gallon bucket out on the ground, I determined them to be 1850s or earlier pieces of glass. Very cool black and white plates and bowls. These things are vary rarely whole. They also gave us a clue to the age of the items in the privy.

So far it was looking good. We had that gut feeling that this pit was not dug by other diggers. Yes, there are other crazy outhouse diggers like us. We

always hate it when we open up a privy and it was dug by someone else. This pit was looking like a virgin outhouse. We dug down a little deeper to make sure.

It was my turn to jump in the hole. I only took out two heaping shovels when I heard a crunch. I looked down and said "Crap! I busted an aqua cathedral pickle"! Oh well, these things happen. I just wish they didn't happen to me. I was more careful from then on, scratching slowly, and feeling for tell-tale signs of whole bottles. Sometimes when a dig tool is run over a bottle, you can just tell it is whole before you even dig it out. I call that talent "bottle ESP".

The first whole bottle out was a "Vegetable Cure" from New Brunswick, New Jersey. I like when we dig those out-of-state bottles. I often daydream about how they made it all the way to our town and what the journey was like getting here back in those days.

The reputation for this vegetable cure must have been really good for the buyers to travel so far to acquire it or someone could have brought it here. Either way, it is a long way to travel for a cure that most likely never cured a thing.

All of the glass in this pit was looking old (1840s-50s). Sometimes in older privies, the bottles are 90% broken as they were in this one. The only other whole bottle was a dark



Getting the gear set up is always half the fun

green "Schiedam Schnapps."

It is always worth it when the pit is old and untouched. I would rather dig an old privy with a few whole bottles, versus a newer pit with one hundred bottles in it.

As I grow into this hobby, I am leaning more towards quality rather than quantity. I remember when I first started bottle digging, a Listerine cork top got me really excited. Now it takes a little more to fire me up but I still have that same spark as I did when I was a young digger.

At the start of this Digathon, we didn't have a clue what to expect but that is why I love this hobby.... digging up the unknown.

Our next stop was in the heart of the city, "The Gateway", the main artery into town. At one point in time, all of the homes that lined this street were pristine and owned by well-to-do people. Now, it is an inner-city jungle with trashed yards and run-down houses. To the privy digger, that is an awesome sight. The more trashed the better.

We have dug some really manicured and pristine yards, but the "trashed yards" are still much easier to score permission. Sometimes we even offer to clean the junk up in return for permission to dig. "Anything for a privy".

The homes we were digging on this Digathon had no one living in them. We didn't have to worry about anything. No owners peering out the windows, no flowers to be careful around. All we had to do was move the

junk around so we could probe the area for the privies.

To gain access to the back yard of the next house on the list we had to walk through a long brick breeze way. I always loved walking through these narrow tunnels. It was like going from the modern streets of today back to the past to the time of the outhouse.

I often think about the kids back in the 1800s running and playing tag or a fun game of marbles in these clapboard and bricklined breezeways.

Now it was our time to play.

As soon as we saw this yard, we knew we had a little work to do before we could start to probe. A huge blue shag rug was lying across the yard. It was covered in mold and had plants and weeds growing through it. There were weight lifting items scattered about and a rusted treadmill in the back corner. I guess the guy who lived here liked working out in the great outdoors.

We find some strange things lying around the yards of these abandon homes but today our main focus is what is under the yard..... not on it.

We got all of the stuff moved and piled it up on one side so we could probe the key spots in the yard. The property line, the back lot line, and the corners were the first places we checked. If we can not find the privies in those locations, we will probe the middle and front of the yard.

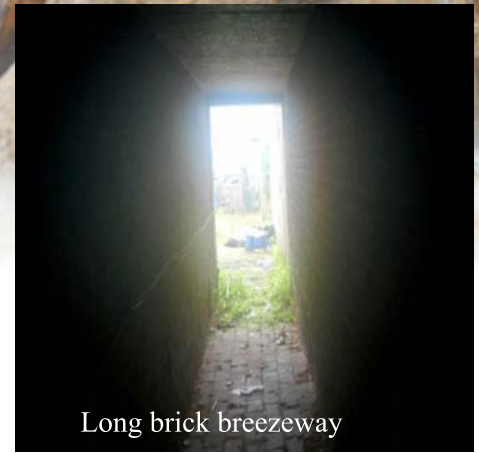
There has to be an outhouse hole somewhere.

We had a little trouble in this lot because there were two big brick-lined flower beds loaded with top soil on both sides of the yard.

It took a little time but we finely probed out a privy.

The probe sunk with ease and felt really good. Now all we needed were a few bottles to save the day.

As I started to open up the pit and fill the barrels, Paul decided to do



Long brick breezeway

a little metal detecting. He brought the detector along on this Digathon because all of the homes we had permission for were of good age and might hold some decent relics.

In no time, I heard the "beep beep beep" of the detector going off. I wasn't sure if it was "junk" as Paul says, or if it was a good coin or piece of jewelry. My main interest was bottles but it was cool to see the finds that Paul uncovers.

The first item that Paul popped out of the ground was a medal or pin of some sort. It was a saint or religious figure. Soon, the coins were setting off the detector. An 1876 dime, a few 1880s Indian heads and a two cent piece came to the surface. He also dug out a U.S civil war buckle and a number of other cool metal buttons, some pins, and knick knacks. One that caught my eye was a little metal rabbit, maybe a child's toy.

We thought maybe someone that was in the civil war lived here because of all of the patriotic buttons and buckles.

The privy was slow going because there were a lot of large roots to cut out, so I just took my time and let Paul work his magic with the detector. A few minutes went by and I heard him yell out "I got an eagle!" Usually when we are bottle digging and I hear the word eagle it might mean a flask or some sort of liquor bottle. In the detecting world, it could mean a number of things, coins, buckle, and buttons etc. The bald eagle has always been a very popular symbol.



Cast iron rabbit and several old coins

Paul popped out a nice Civil War eagle button. This yard was producing some cool detecting finds and I hoped the bottles would follow that lead.

I was happy for Paul. He did find some neat things but now I was ready for some bottle action!

All of the roots were cut and now it was time to start pulling some buckets. We had a little work to do before we hit that prime use layer. If you are the type of person who is afraid of a little hard work, this hobby is definitely not for you. I don't look at it as work. I look at it as uncovering a history, something that was buried for over one hundred years and untouched by modern 21st century life.

As we dug and talked about what we might find in this privy, the old wooden fence beside us busted in half and fell into the yard with a loud crash!! Then a man burst through the opening and jumped the fence in the next yard! We both looked at each other in amazement. Someone must have been chasing him but we never saw the other person. There is never a dull moment when you are digging inner city privies.

We had to keep our minds on digging. It was getting late in the day and we wanted to be out of here

A Turkish man, an Indian and the Franklin Pierce bowl.



Civil War belt buckle and eagle button

before dark.

Half way into the dig, shards of old glass were beginning to appear. That was a sign that this privy had not been dug by other diggers. Not saying it wasn't dipped by the dreaded "Honey Dipper" of the 19th century, but if it had been dipped, I hoped they had left us a few whole bottles.

The first whole item spotted was not a bottle. It was a white "clay face pipe". When Paul dug it out, I thought it was just your typical smooth bowl clay pipe, but when he tossed it over to me I saw President Franklin Pierce looking back at me! It was a presidential face pipe. We would go on to dig two more face bowls, a Turkish man, an Indian, and the Franklin Pierce bowl.

So far, the whole bottles

were non-existent in this pit. All of the shards were old and they were from the 1860s. There was nothing in one piece. Sometimes when digging privies, other items besides bottles make the dig more memorable. In this case, it turned out to be the metal detecting finds and the three cool face pipes we found.

When we are finished with a dig, we would mark it off of the list. For each house we did, we had a separate signed permission paper that said we had full run of the back yard. It was a good feeling to have that paper. It gave us piece of mind and a little bit of power.

For instance, if a cop came up to us and asked what we were doing, I could just hand him the paper and keep on digging! Not that I would do that, but just knowing I



could, made me feel more at ease even in this concrete jungle.

Next on the list was a big three story brick tenement building built in 1880. It was also located in the heart of a rough neighborhood, but this one had a high white stockade fence around the whole back yard which made it like a sanctuary of sorts. The house was empty and the yard was all ours.

We knew that the privy would be easy to find at this location because the yard was very small and narrow. Knowing that the house was built in 1880 and stood three stories tall gave us day dreams of a deep privy layered with tons of old bottles on the bottom. The building was big and it probably housed a lot of people, which meant a lot of trash. There was only one place to go with the garbage and that was down the outhouse hole.

I will cut to the chase on this privy since it only yielded a few turn of the century slicks (plain bottles) and a marble.

The pit was a deep one, 22 feet deep. It was constructed in 1880 when the house was built. When the plumbing came to this area, they ran a terra cotta pipe from the house into the privy. Some people call these water closets. I call them a pain in the neck.

When the pipe showed up, we should have stopped digging but our minds kept saying "what if" there is a use layer full of bottles down there that they didn't touch when the privy was cleaned out for use with the pipe. Once in a while this does happen but not this time. The best thing we got from this dig is a lot of awesome pictures from the bottom of this huge converted brick liner. A picture is worth a thousand words they always say. How many people will get a chance to take a picture like that?

Once it is filled in, there are no more pictures. I only get one chance to take these shots of these cool looking time capsules from the past.

Sometimes in this hobby of privy digging, we get a little discouraged. If we take the bad digs too seriously, then we would end up quitting all together. You have to take the good digs with the so- so digs along with the bad digs. Eventually a good one will happen. You have to believe.

The next one we had to tackle was a two story brick dwelling. It was all boarded up like Fort Knox. The yard was a tough one to probe. It had 20 X 15 foot train track ties built into a square and filled with crusher stone in the middle of the yard. It was probably the base of an out building at one time. I tried to probe around the center of it but there was no way I could get the probe through. It was loaded with modified stone below the crusher stone. We prayed the privy was not under that.

As I started to walk to the far end of the yard, Paul hollered "I got one". He stuck his probe through a few big chunks of concrete and it buried to the handle. It almost felt like pure air! As we removed the junk around the probe hole, a pocket of space appeared then more and more space." Holy Crap! It is an open brick liner!" It must be twenty five feet deep! I knew it wasn't a privy. It looked more like an early 1900s cesspool. Paul still wanted to get a ladder and go down to check it out. Sometimes we just do crazy things.

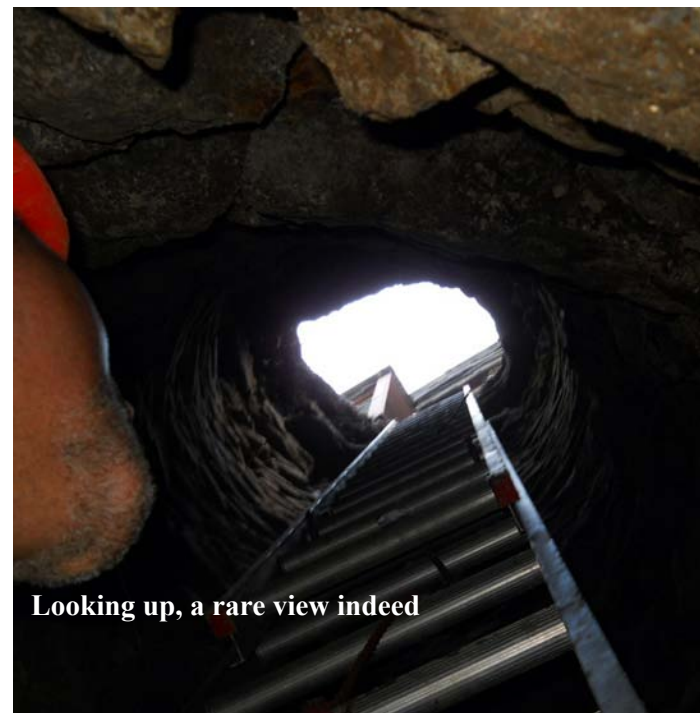
While Paul was fiddling around with the deep monster cesspool pit, I continued to probe the small yard. I suddenly heard a woman's voice from behind the back fence say "what yaw digging for pipes?" I replied "no, we are digging crappers". That must have thrown her



Stopper, Marble, Coins and a Pipe



Lots of Shards



Looking up, a rare view indeed



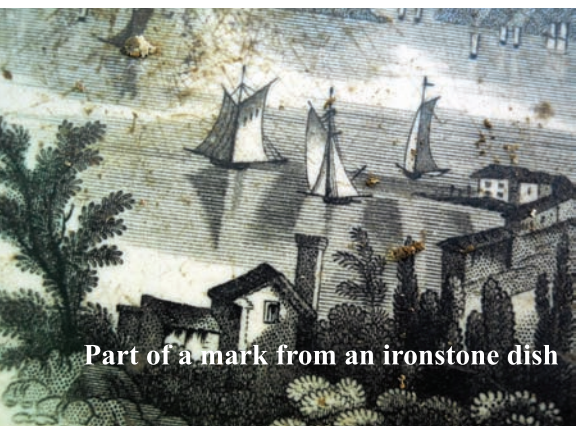
Early Stoneware



Early Stoneware in solid ash



Early rootbeer mug



Part of a mark from an ironstone dish

off a bit because she didn't say a word and went back in the house. I was glad since I had to get back to the task at hand anyway.

I decided to work the probe closer to the house since that was the only spot left that I was able to penetrate. The rest of the yard was full of stone. I pushed the privy rod in slow and prayed. Amen! It was a good reading. What was a privy doing so close to the house?

It didn't look like there were any new additions built onto the back of this one, so I started to do a test hole. When I broke ground, all I saw was white ash. "There is nothing like white ash in the morning". That is a saying of mine. What does it mean? Hell if I know. I just like saying it.

Soon, Paul came over to investigate and we took turns digging. We saw nothing but pure fluffy white ash! A little ash is good but a ton of ash may mean they used this hole as an ash dump back in the day. It was the only thing we had going so we kept digging. Soon, a wall appeared. It looked like white washed stone. Our guess was it could be a cistern since it was up against the house. We never had luck with cisterns because they filled them in either with ash from the coal and wood stoves or just filled them in all at once when they lost their usefulness. Either way, I didn't have a good feeling about this one. Just when I was running more negative thoughts through my head and thinking of filling this one in, Paul popped out an 1858 ground top mason jar! It was a common jar but it was a good sign. Soon, some shards were showing up. Without a doubt, this was a cistern for water, but someone in the 1870s decided to toss a load of trash in at the last minute when they were filling it in. It was strange digging in pure white ash but if old bottles are coming out who cares. Bring it on!

I jumped into the hole and started to move the ash like it was sawdust. Ash was a lot easier digging than privy fill. The white pile was growing top side. Soon, I spotted the bottom of a large jug, but will it be whole? A question we often ponder when we dig privies. I tugged on it with a little extra force then normal because the ash was soft. Pop! Out it came, a beautiful tan salt glazed liquor jug. As I held the jug up to show Paul my awesome find, I felt something hit my leg. When I looked down, I saw a two tone ginger beer bottle lying beside me! It must have been hiding behind the jug. I changed my mind quickly. I was feeling good about this dig!

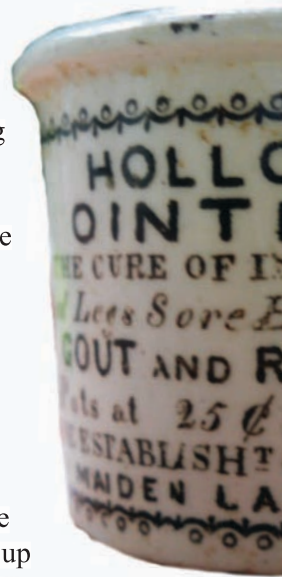
This was definitely not the average dig. We rarely get anything good from cisterns. They always seem to end in depression. This one was different.

We didn't get a ton of bottles from this one but we did get a few quality bottles for the shelf. Paul got a nice cobalt blue J. Wise beer from Allentown and whole mini beer mug. We also got a small Holloway's Ointment. The Jar reads

"For the cure of inveterate ulcers, bad legs, sore breasts, sore hands, gout, and rheumatism". It is interesting things like this that keep us digging privies.

This cistern was very wide but it wasn't too deep. We were almost near the bottom when we decided to probe around. The rod hit clay and we knew that was the end there but when we stuck it into the side towards the neighbors, it buried to the handle.

Everything was going good so far but there was a slight problem. The other half of this ash filled hole



went into the next yard. It must have been a shared cistern. The guy that lived there was not a sociable kind of guy. We heard stories that he knocked a guy down his steps for asking to metal detect his back yard. He claimed the guy was trespassing so that permission was out of the question. We thought of tunneling into his yard but the ash was so light and fluffy we would definitely have a cave in. I am sure we would get more than a ride down the steps for caving his yard and fence in.

It was time to pack up and move to the next ARZ.....
 “Artifact Recovery Zone”

We decided to back track and head to center city. There was no order to do these privies. We just went day by day and did what we felt like doing. As long as we made good time and got all of the places done before our time limit was up with the city, everything was great.

The property we were about to dig had no house on it. It was just an open lot between a row of homes. From what we learned, the house was burned down in the 1970s and never

rebuilt. We didn't mind that the house was gone. The only thing that

bugged us was that people could look up from the street and see us digging. As you recall, we had a guy bust through the fence and run like death was chasing him just a few houses up from where we were. It is just that kind of neighborhood. That is why the hard hats and vest are needed, so we look like hard working construction workers. Just another day at the glass mines.

This yard was laid out no different from the rest of the ones we did in this area. We knew we should start probing at the back lot line in the corner.

The idea to put the outhouse as far away from the main house as possible seemed to be the norm for the 19th century thunder shack user. When trying to find these 1800s toilets, we have to think like the users of the past, put ourselves in their shoes per say. It kind of takes some of the guess work out.

The probing in the corner was a little more work than anticipated. On the first few stabs, we hit concrete. You can't give up right away when this happens. Something “in our time” could have been built over or near the privy hole. That was just the case in this yard. It seemed an old concrete side walk from the 1930s was just below the surface. It lead back to the overgrown inaccessible alley.

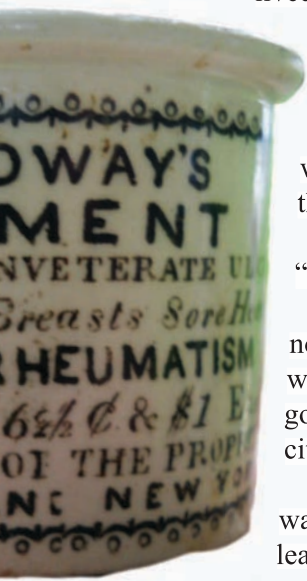
It was time to bring in the heavy hitters, the twenty pound sledge hammer and the pry bar. We don't need these tools very often, but they are a life saver to have handy.

With a few swings and a little sweat, the slab cracked in half. Paul inserted the probe through the crack and “Boom Baby!” down it went. We had a privy.

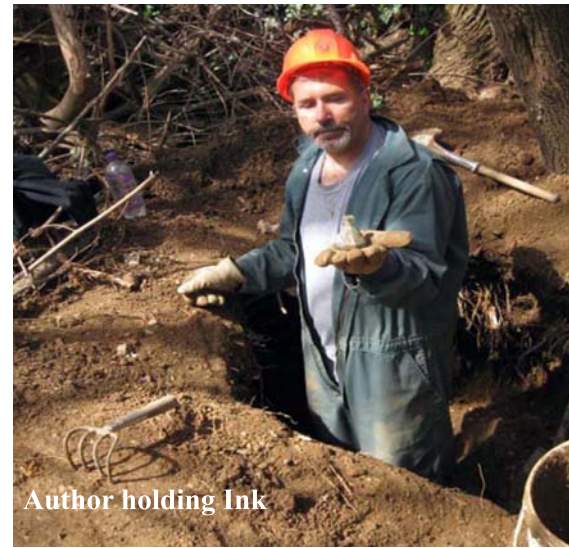
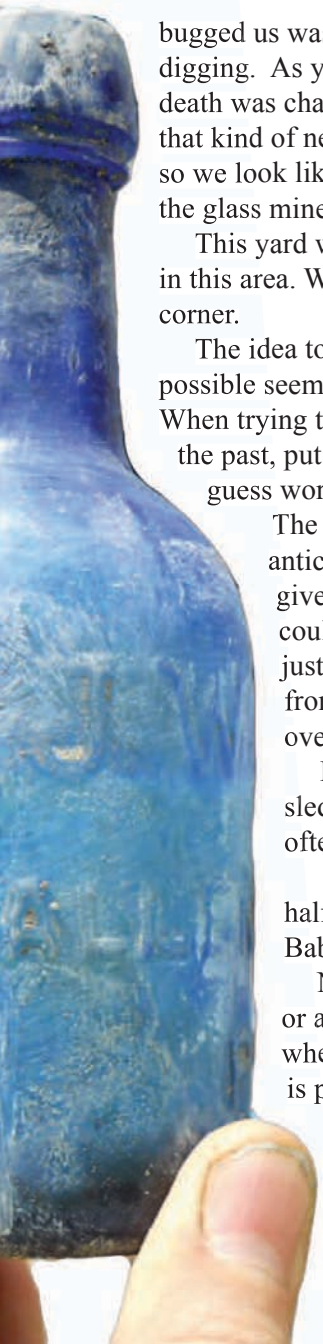
Now the test. Will it be the old pit, a dug pit, an empty pit or a loaded old pit? We prefer the latter. It is always a gamble when we start a privy. We wouldn't have it any other way. That is part of the fun.

As we dug down we didn't like what we were seeing right off the bat. The fill was loose and too easy to dig out. That is often a sign of a “dug privy” but we can not go by the first negative sign. Anything can happen in the privy

J. Wise Cobalt Blue Bottle



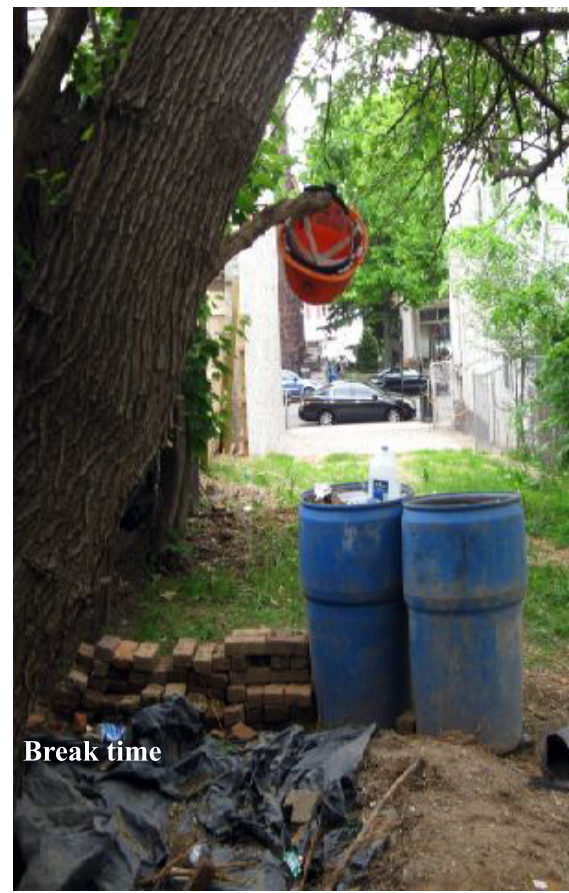
Holloway's Ointment Container



Author holding Ink



Two-tone ginger beer



Break time

digging world.

Soon, we were down to the three foot mark and the fill was still not looking right. There were no layers of trash and lime mix so we knew for sure that this one had been dug by someone in the past. By the past, I mean the 1970s & 80s.

The next item to pop out confirmed this. A "Chuck Taylor" Converse sneaker! I remember wearing "Chucks" back in the late 1970s.

We decided to dig a little deeper even though we knew other diggers were here before us. Soon, I was pulling out charcoal grill parts and screw top Schlitz quart beer bottles with the labels still intact. They must have been drinking while digging this one. Just as I was ready to give up and start to probe for other pits in the yard, I saw a small clear jar at my feet. Something was inside of it. I picked it up and held it to the sky for light. Nestled in the jar was an 1870s twelve sided aqua umbrella ink! With this stroke of luck, we kept on digging. I had a feeling they missed more goodies.

The privy pirates could have been digging hastily for one reason or another and missed more items. Even back in the 1970s and 80s, there were snakes in the privy digging hobby. We heard of a guy named "Ronnie J Deo" who would find out when people went on vacation and then proceed to dig their privies late at night! That is just horrible! This could just be an "urban privy legend" but like I said, anything can happen.

Permission is a must for us. Without it, we do not dig privies.

This pit was looking more and more like a "pirated privy". We were just picking through the broken glass when Paul spotted the next find. It was a dark green 1870s local blob top. We went from a 1970s sneaker to a 1870s soda. A sure sign to keep digging. They sure did miss a few! Before it was all said and done, we ended up getting another soda, an aqua J.W Wise, a few embossed local medicines and a turtle ink. Not bad for a "pre-dug privy".

It is hard to keep digging a privy when you know 110% that someone was there before you. In some cases you have to block that out and dig on! This was one of those times.

After that weird episode, we felt like leaving this yard and trying our luck on the next place on the list, but being the addicted privy diggers that we are, we decided to probe a little more in the yard. Paul fired a question at me. "Do you think the other pits were dug also"? That was a question we would soon answer.

The probe sank to the handle just ten feet in front of the "pirated pit". We had another one to crack open.

This one felt different right away. It was packed and it was crunchy. The sample on the shovel was looking good. Paul was rooting around the yard for more metal goodies with the detector while I was playing in the hole. The thought of the pirated privy ran through my mind, but it wasn't a total bust so maybe if this one was dug they missed some bottles also.

I started to see colored shards of glass two feet down. With the three prong tool, I scraped out a few of the bigger pieces of glass. One of the

chunks was the bottom of a green Iron pontiled spring water bottle. We had no idea what it was. There was only a top and the bottom to guess from. We often let our imaginations run wild and say, "what if it was a rare one?" It never is but it is fun to dream.

The next few shards were just aqua, but they really gave us hope for this privy. We dug out many pieces to an open pontiled Jenny Lind Calabash flask!

We didn't want to jump the gun but this privy looked untouched by human hands; pirate hands that is.

The more we dug, the more the shards piled up. These were good shards. A Union Clasp hands flask, a dark green Dr Townsend's sarsaparilla, seaweed wear pottery, slip wear dishes, banded yellow wear bowls and cups.

The pottery was the type of stuff they used until it broke and then tossed it in the privy. The whole bottles were not plentiful in this pit either but it didn't discourage us. I loved to see the old stuff in privies a lot more than the newer "turn of the century".

There is something about 1850s 60s and 70s pottery and glass. It makes us feel like we just went back in time and shared the lives of the people who lived in the house in the 1800s. In a sense, we did. We were the first people in the 21st century to touch that stuff. I would love to have a time machine and see who the last person was that tossed those bottles down the privy.

While Paul was down in the pit scratching away, I was busy playing with the neighbor's cats. They seemed



Ink Bottle



Other Ink Bottles

to be curious about what we were doing in a hole in the ground. They were perched in trees and on the fence looking down. Friendly little buggers. Just as I was ready to tell Paul about my feline friends, he yelled out "I got a green one!"

I walked over and looked in the pit. He had a tall square green bottle in his hands. I was excited. I thought it was a whole Dr Townsend's Sarsaparilla. But sadly, it was unembossed. It was still a keeper. An iron pontil with plenty of iron left on the bottom, it was probably a quack cure that once had a label.

We decided to take a little break from the digging and have some lunch. I walked over to the corner store "El Bingo" to get some Coconut soda. When I am in this neck of the woods or should I say neck of the city, I always feel like a coconut pop. As I

proceeded across the street I put my hard hat on. It always makes me feel safe. I started to wonder, do the people around here think I am a construction worker or one of the Village People? Either way I felt safe.

As I was dodging traffic to get to the store, I heard some yell out "Yo Sick Rick!" that is what some of my "bottle friends" call me.

It was Dave aka "The Badger" who is another digging friend of mine. He was just driving through the area to get to one of his bottle dumps. I offered him a spot in the privy if he wanted. Without hesitation he was in. We all ate lunch together and then it was back to business.

Dave jumped into the privy and did his thing. He pulled out a few slicks and a local medicine... a "Dr M J Backenstoe Emaus Pa"... a nice little medicine bottle. Then a strange object appeared. It wasn't glass and it wasn't pottery. It was a well preserved

bar of soap that said "Boston" on it. I guess someone forgot to take it out of the wash bowl before they dumped it in the privy. It was one of those odd items that will make a good conversation piece.

After the bar of soap, Dave determined that the privy was "clean". Pun intended. What he really meant was, it was the end of the line, he hit bottom.

I have dug many privies in my day and I always hate when I see that hard mother earth appear.

It was nice to be off of work for twelve days but digging privies is more work than actually being at work. No one understands what privy digging entails except another privy digger. (x)



Early Pontiled Medicine and Dave holding a Bar of Soap