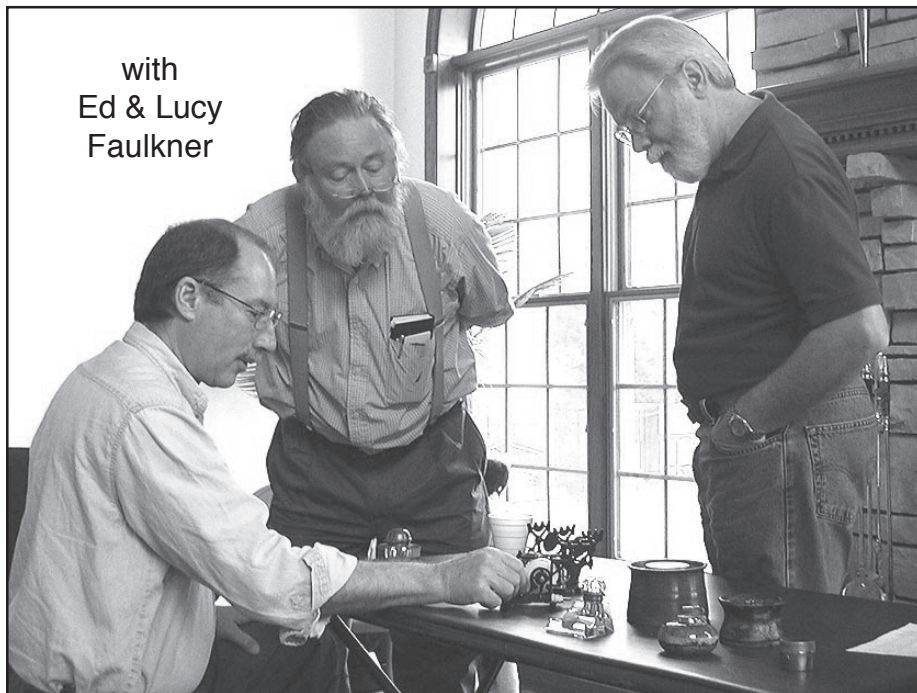


Let's Talk About Ink

with
Ed & Lucy
Faulkner



Bill Wakelam (right) answers questions about inkwells after his talk.

1st Annual Ink Symposium

For a number of years, John Hinkel of Pacific, Missouri and Keith Leeders of Chicago have had informal get-togethers with other local ink collectors in conjunction with the St. Louis Bottle Show. This year, with the help of Bill Wakelam of St. Louis, they organized a symposium with several collectors talking about their collecting interest. A lovely Bed and Breakfast was rented near John's and several of us stayed there and the presentations were held there as well.

We started Saturday morning with breakfast at the Hinkels' (with many thanks to Sue) and viewing of John's collections. John collects labeled inks, and has an extensive collection of inks, pottery jugs, and store display cases by various manufacturers. Labeled inks can tell so much history of an ink company and add interest and value as well. While we were there, we also looked at Sue's beautiful kiln formed art glass that she makes herself and her collection of Crayola items.

Back at the B & B, the first presentation was by Curtis Finley of St. Louis, who has researched ink formulas for many years. He gave a demonstration on how iron gall ink is made mixing it up as he talked. Early gall ink was corrosive to

pens and it also spoiled quickly. If you look at labels on a lot of the early inks, they will say noncorrosive, and will not mold. As the use of steel pens replaced the quill, ink formulas had to change.

Next up was Keith Leeders. Keith began collecting in 1971 after digging for bottles in the Chicago area. For his talk, he selected pottery inks. He noted that many early pottery inks came to this country from England and were a good item for ballast in sailing ships as they were heavy and inexpensive to produce. These inks range in size from two-ounces to a gallon size. Small ones were often called penny inks as that was the cost when first produced in the 1800s. Pottery gallons were probably sold until around 1935. It is hard to date these inks as the bottles changed very little and unless the label remains with a date, there is no way of knowing exactly when produced. Some of the larger companies often debossed their bottles. Most American potteries that produced these bottles were in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

For our next presentation, Bill Wakelam displayed a number of different inkwells while talking about the history of inkwell production. Quite often, old inkwell desk sets often included a bell which was used to summon a servant to post the letter. Another fact he noted was

that the US Post Office used an inkwell with a dip pen until 1957 when they finally changed to ball point pens.

Quinton Wells, of Overland Park, Kansas, who collects fountain pens, was the next speaker. He talked about writing methods and the evolution of fountain pens all the while demonstrating various methods of filling the pens and design changes over the years. He also showed us a number of interesting pens from his collection.

After lunch, (thanks to Sue), we had an informal show and tell. Charlie Baldwin (and Joyce) of Swansea, Massachusetts, had a book with hundreds of wonderful pictures of his ink bottle collection. He collects not only labeled inks, but early colored and embossed inks as well. Ed and I brought along a lot of paper ephemera as well as an Omega watch promotional inkwell, an early Sanford ink pen filler and an example of an amber igloo ink made by the Clevenger Glass Works in the original mold (# 651 in Covill's book).

John talked about trying to find a method of standardizing bottle colors and wrapping the paper labels on inks. If you do wrap, make sure to use archival plastic. Keith briefly talked about repro inkwells, and what to look for. Buck (and Sandy) Van Tine talked about the Society of Inkwell Collectors. Buck is the director of the society and is always looking for new members interested in inkwells. He can be contacted through the society website: <http://www.soic.com> if you are interested in joining.

After much talk and just enjoying being with other collectors, it was time to go to the home of Bill and Judy Wakelam for supper and viewing Bill's collection. Bill has a large collection of inkwells, labeled inks, crocks and other ink items. They are beautifully displayed and everyone enjoyed looking.

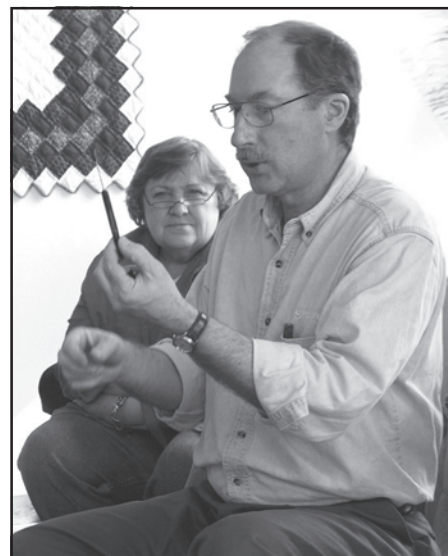
I think everyone would agree, we had a fun and educational experience. It was a great day of talking with other ink collectors, laughing (especially at Keith), and hearing Charlie tell some of his hilarious life experiences. All of us who attended would like to thank John, Sue, Bill, Judy and Keith for the planning and effort they did in organizing this event. If you would like to know more, or be put on next year's list for notification, send us an E-mail at faulkner@antiquebottles.com and we will forward it to John.



Keith, Charlie and John discuss an ink.



Keith discusses pottery inks.



Quinton Wells talks about pens while Sue Hinkel looks on.



Curtis Finley showed the group how to make iron gall ink from scratch.



At the end of each presentation there was lots of discussion.



After pizza we admired Bill Wakelam's nice ink displays.

Right: John Hinkel beside one of his many ink displays.

