

SCHLITZ "The Beer [& Bottles] That Made Milwaukee Famous Follow-Up Comments & Illustration from Cecil Munsey

In the most recent issue of BOTTLES & EXTRAS (Vol. 15, No. 1 of 4 – Winter 2004, pp. 25-29, Issue #157), I wrote an article entitled, "SCHLITZ 'The Beer [& Bottles] That Made Milwaukee Famous'."

In that article, in the section headed, "Experimentation" (page 27), I dealt with the post World War II involvement (1948) of the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company with the Anchor Hocking Glass Corporation in the development of "Royal Ruby Red" beer bottles made in "Anchor Glass."

Besides the nine red beer bottles made for Schlitz to consider. Only three different sizes and shapes ever went into production and were used by Schlitz. In the article's "FOOTNOTE," the reader was informed that:

"Anchor Hocking made Ruby Red experimental and a few production bottles in several categories beside beer. These include milk, juice, chile, mayonnaise, pill bottles, baby food, wine, liquor, and ketchup. Few of those bottles were made and seldom are they seen on show sales tables."

Bryan Grapentine

FOLLOW-UP:

The variety of *experimental* "Royal Ruby Red" bottles and jars that actually made it into production, and therefore marketed, is not known. Because experimental bottles were designed, it must be remembered that *only a few* of those designs were ever actually purchased and used by the companies for which they were created. Experimental bottles, in this red-container-category, do or did exist. Occasionally experimental bottles do appear in the collector marketplace.

That recently happened. on eBay a seller listed what he described as a "Rare Experimental Royal Ruby Red Whiskey Bottle (see illustration)." The seller, who had read the *Bottles and Extras* article, was quite accurate when he further explained about his red bottle that: "This rare red bottle was made in a very small quantity by Anchor Hocking in the early 1950s. This experimental bottle never went into production ... The threaded – top bottle is 7-1/2" tall and 4-1/2" x 2-1/4" at the base. The front [obverse] has a recessed design of 3 squares joined at the corner arranged diagonally. The reverse has embossed 'FEDERAL LAW FORBIDS SALE / OR RE-USE OF THIS BOTTLE' [Embossed on liquor bottles by law from 1933-1964]. Embossed on the

bottom is '13 (Anchor symbol) 50 / Royal Ruby (in script) / Anchorglass.'"

The savvy seller started the bidding at \$49.95 for the 6-day auction. The final price, after 17 bids, was \$158.37.

"RED" ALERT:

Readers may find my recent embarrassing experience instructive. I blush to tell you that it was in seeking a red bottle that I had my first bad experience after several hundred successful buys at eBay auctions.

The item which caught my eye was a "1939 A. J. NIGG RUBY RED GLASS POISON BOTTLE!" with a starting bid of \$12.99. Under "DESCRIPTION" the seller announced:

"This is a stunning Ruby Red glass poison bottle. The label is mostly intact. The label has skull and cross bones and it reads Iodide Mercury Red. A. A. Nigg, Pharmacist, Charter Oak, Iowa. On the bottom it has a 39, 3, and an F inside a hexagon. I assume it stands for 1939 and the 3rd month. It measures 4" 3/8h X 1"3/4 X 1"1/4. It is in overall excellent condition and offered with No Reserve at a Very Low Price!!"

The seller's photograph of the bottle was fuzzy but the bottom of the bottle had been held up to a light and it appeared red. I felt confident because the seller had a feedback rating of 86 and 98.9% of those were positive feedbacks. He had been registered and selling on eBay since



July 28, 2002 – over a year from the time I started bidding on the item.

At the end of the auction, after a total of five bids, I won the auction with a successful bid of \$37.51.

I sent the seller a check for the purchase price plus postage and handling.

When the bottle arrived I was disappointed to find that he had sold me a small rectangle amber bottle that had contained iodine. The red-colored bottom of the bottle was a result of residue from the iodine.

I requested a refund that he agreed to with little hesitation. He indicated that as soon as he received the returned bottle a refund would be forthcoming.

I didn't receive the refund.

When contacted again asking for the refund, he responded with "I haven't received it yet. When was it sent? I have a money order for the refund, so when the bottle arrives, I will send the money order right out to you."

I was quickly losing faith in the integrity of the seller. My response to him was:

"I sent the bottle back to you (Postal Service Item #8000 1220 004 7338 4824) on 10-20-03 at 12:52 PM. It arrived and was signed for on 11-4-03 according to the 'Return Receipt for Merchandise,' Postal Service Form 3811 that I received back from the Post Office a week later."

From then on I have not able to get the seller to respond to a number of requests for a refund.

I contacted eBay and reported my problem (with a copy to Meg Whitman the CEO of eBay, meg@ebay.com). They replied with, "We want to assure you that we will investigate this situation and get in touch with you as soon as possible."

I periodically "search" eBay "by seller" and find that he has not used eBay since the failed transaction with me.

There has been no word from eBay.

I suspect the seller just re-registered with eBay under a new name and a new e-mail server or did any of a number of other things to avoid returning my money.

Reader, the lesson I have purchased for you, is really a simple Caveat Emptor – **Let the buyer beware!** I let my greed and knowledge overrule my common sense. Not new to the reader is the wonderful old saying, "If it looks too good to be true, it usually is."

Perhaps the reader will be able to profit from my experience. I certainly hope so. AND let me conclude by saying I will still buy and sell on eBay BUT I will try to be more careful and, sadly, more skeptical of that marketplace and its participants.