



Collecting Nevada embossed bottles is a fascinating hobby because it is still possible to acquire a respectable collection even though there are not a phenomenal number of different examples still available.

Fred Holabird and Jack Haddock in their two editions of *The Nevada Bottle Book*, published in 1979 and 1981 respectively, provided line drawings and descriptions of all the known examples at that time.

The latest edition is more complete than the first and since its appearance on the market, a number of unknown bottles have been discovered. Fred Holabird has assembled extensive information on most of the known Nevada bottles since the first two books were published. However, it is unknown as to when the material will be assembled into a new book.

For this article, I will attempt to provide the true collector, as well as the casual collector, of Nevada bottles with information that will be useful in knowing more about this category of collecting.

Two bottles, the G.P. Morrill and the W.S. Wright, both maverick sodas from Virginia City, predate statehood which occurred on October 31, 1864. It's possible that another G.P. Morrill bottle; namely, the unusual apothecary bottle, was made at about the same time as these sodas. The W. S. Wright Bottle is base embossed with Pacific Glass Works, an early San Francisco glass company.

In my opinion, the G.P. Morrill Apothecary bottle from Virginia City is one of the most desirable Nevada bottles to own. Why? First is its age and then its cylindrical shape with a double collared lip. Also assisting greatly with this ranking is its color – something approaching emerald green.

There are rarer Nevada bottles than the two aforementioned sodas and apothecary bottle. To name a few, consider the Crystal, Theyes and Reece pint whiskey flask from Reno, one known example, or the amber cylinder quart by the same proprietor. To date, only one damaged example of the cylindrical whiskey is known. I have the lower half of one of the amber cylinders in my collection since it is uncertain, if ever, an intact one will become available.

Then consider the R.L. Higgins master inks from Virginia City in amber and green which are extremely desirable specimens. An amber, heavily whittled master ink recently sold at auction for \$17,000.

Even more provoking is the fact that several soda manufacturers established bottling plants in Las Vegas within several years after the town site was laid out in 1905. Only one example of each soda is known. Both are aqua crown tops and each would probably command a price somewhat in excess of \$1000.

Mentioning sodas, an Elko Coke bottle (Elko, Nevada is embossed on the base) recently sold for more than \$1000. When considering that only six specimens are known, one can easily see the reason why this particular Coke bottle demands such a high price. From these quoted prices, Nevada bottles are and will continue to be very collectable.



My Nevada collection consists of most of the known sizes for each firm's embossed bottles. When it comes to medicine or druggist bottles, each firm usually had from two to twelve different sizes for sale. Often times the more established firms utilized from two to four different styles of bottles for their products.



For example, there are eleven variants of the A.M. Cole druggist/apothecary bottles and a similar number for the G.W. Thaxter medicine bottles with a number of sizes available for each style. These firms were located in Virginia City and Carson City respectively and both were well established by the 1870s and 80s.

During the early collecting years, it was possible to acquire many of the medicines without a great outlay of cash. For this reason those of us who started collecting in the 1950's and 1960's were able to acquire almost every bottle variant and size used in selling a proprietor's product.

When considering whiskeys, several firms made ½ pints, pints (in several shapes) and quarts so the possibilities of putting together a complete collection of all Nevada embossed bottles is difficult to say the least, but several steadfast collectors have amassed very serious collections. It is also interesting to note that several of these serious collectors have also assembled extensive collections of embossed and painted milk bottles as well as the paper label medicine bottles.

Many times I have been asked why I collect Nevada bottles when so many are not really attractive in color or in style. The answer is simple; I enjoy the history associated with the firms that placed their names on the bottles and as noted these bottles also have value and seem to be getting more valuable as time passes. When I first started collecting Nevada bottles, they were available at relatively cheap prices. As can be gleaned from this article that is no longer true.

Several of the prominent firms with embossed bottles were also noteworthy for their involvement with other state historical events and for this reason, my interest in Nevada bottles is intensified.

Robert S. Ferraro is an advanced collector of Nevada bottles, as well as colored figural bitters and whiskeys. His collection of Nevada bottles is the most comprehensive ever assembled. Mayor of Boulder City, Nevada, he is married to Connie Burnett-Ferraro and has three children. He can be contacted by E-mail at [mayorferraro@aol.com](mailto:mayorferraro@aol.com) or Ph: (702) 293-9400.