



Betty Zumwalt: She Was There, at the 1976 St. Louis Expo

By Bill Baab



Betty Zumwalt, the 2008 inductee into the FOHBC Hall of Fame and author/co-author of several books, was among the collectors who were fortunate to attend the 1976 St. Louis Antique Bottle & Jar Expo. This was the show which gave birth to the 29 others that have since taken place.

Here's what Mrs. Zumwalt, who lives in Salem, Oregon, had to say: "It was the greatest! The weeks, months and years of anticipation - all worth it.

"Collectors from all over the U.S. plus England and Canada were present. There was something for every collector whether the smaller items, the rare and not so rare, the go-withs, all within any type of budget. Everyone went home with something, including some of the great souvenirs offered by the Federation."

One of the souvenirs was a reproduction scroll flask featuring the Federation eagle logo on one side and crossed flags on the other, with appropriate descriptive embossing.

"The displays showed great time and effort in workmanship and thought. The bottles on display were outstanding! It was a once in a lifetime chance to behold some of the rarest, crudest, most beautiful bottles. Quite an education in just one show.

"The banquet was the highlight, the night of honors and awards and a fine fashion show by participating, nattily costumed individuals. Plus an unusual circumstance, a really fine dinner (which

one seldom receives at banquets). Some 500 were in attendance and sounding applause was awarded to the co-chairmen for all their time and efforts in making the Expo such a great success. This in itself was evidence that all attending were having the times of their life and wished to express their appreciation for someone's efforts in making it all possible.

"The event was great, but the nicest part of it was getting to meet soooo many people. People that you read about or articles written by them, the collectors of many years, as well as the newcomers. All interesting people and all sharing our hobby - absolutely fascinating that so many people can all share a common interest.

"We feel so lucky that we were able to attend the Expo and represent our club at the Federation meetings. It took several years of planning for us and lots of saving, but we wouldn't have missed it for the world!"

Mrs. Zumwalt, the keynote speaker at the 2016 FOHBC Sacramento National Antique Bottle Convention and Expo, August 4-7, 2016 in Sacramento, California, the 30th show of its kind, authored many articles in the *Glassblower*, monthly publication of the Northwestern Bottle Collectors Association of Santa Rosa, California.

Many had to deal with pickles and other foodstuffs, topics of which helped make her famous, especially after publication of her book, "*Ketchup-Pickles-Sauces, 19th Century Food in Glass.*" It has become the standard for that segment of bottle collecting.

Here are just a few of the mouth-watering subjects she covered: Bunker Hill Pickles (Skilton Foote & Co.), Welch's Grape Juice, Baker's Chocolate, Shriver's Oyster Ketchup, Atmore's Mince Meat, Milwaukee Pickle Co., Yorkshire Relish, Brand & Company A-1 Sauce, Sanborn, Parker & Co. and Boston Pickles.

The St. Louis show set the standards for those that followed. There were 140 outstanding displays of bottles and fruit jars, many of which had never been in the public view. There were 280 sales tables visited by 4,000 collectors. It was just what the hobby needed to push out of the doldrums, assuming said doldrums existed.

Mrs. Zumwalt, 83, who got involved in the hobby in 1957, fell in love with pickle bottles early on. "We dug in the Benicia, California mud flats and the pickle bottles found there were just gorgeous in iridescence," she remembers. "But they were unembossed. Later, when I discovered embossed pickles, I was astounded. I soon started my collection of foodstuff bottles that eventually led to my book."

Mrs. Zumwalt noted that she did most of her digging in books about bottles, because "curiosity of when, who and how got the best of me. I never got the 'gold rush' fever of digging."

2016 Sacramento National Antique Bottle Convention & Expo

Betty Zumwalt, will be the guest speaker discussing "50-year celebration of achievement" at the FOHBC Banquet, held on Friday evening, Aug. 5th from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Lions Gate Hotel Club Ballroom. Tickets available at FOHBC.org

