



VIRTUAL MUSEUM NEWS

By Richard Siri

The FOHBC Virtual Museum has been established to display, inform, educate, and enhance the enjoyment of historical bottle and glass collecting by providing an online virtual museum experience for significant historical bottles and other items related to early glass.

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Interest is building for the Virtual Museum as we get closer to opening the first galleries. Alan has been busy editing images and Ferdinand has also been hard at work getting the first galleries ready to launch. Taking photos, editing, then building a gallery along with providing historical information is very time consuming and Alan and Ferdinand have devoted much of their time to this project. It's a wonder they have time for other things like family and work.

Alan is planning to set up at the 2019 FOHBC National Antique Bottle Convention in Augusta, Georgia to photograph and image bottles there. Anyone who thinks they have a bottle that fits into the program should contact Alan. He may be working on a specific category so check with him before bringing any bottles.

Ferdinand notes that he is about 95% done with setting up the Bitters Gallery and about 50% done with setting up the second gallery which is Historical Flasks. All bottles are on shelves, spinners have been loaded and we are awaiting the write-up for each flask from Mark Vuono which is due soon. All images for the third Spirits Gallery which includes whiskeys, bourbons, rye, gin etc. is about 20% complete. All imagery is in. The gallery room has been developed and shelving is being constructed for 25 initial bottles. Eric McGuire is busy developing the historical context. An example of one of his fine write-ups is below.

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Spirits Gallery - from Eric McGuire

Here we go with another spin around the sun. I thought I would send you this item for the Virtual Museum Spirits Gallery. I am starting at the top of the list and working down. As you might expect, some of the liquor bottles will have more information than others. About four items are somewhat complete and this is the first for California Club House. I have had more than the usual distractions on this project but will get through the list ASAP.

Looking forward to Augusta and booked a room already. Lisa and I were originally going to rent a car and drive back home for a road trip but decided two weeks plus was needed and that was just a little too long. So, we will drive as far as New Orleans and fly back from there. Should be a great trip.

Please review the following and let me know if this is the style or format that you might expect. The information on some bottles will vary depending on the data available.

CALIFORNIA CLUB HOUSE WHISKEY

A true 49er, John C. Morrison, Jr., arrived in San Francisco in June 1849. Born in New York in 1823, he was the son of John C. Morrison, Sr., a successful New York commission merchant. The junior Morrison followed in his father's mercantile footsteps in California, first becoming successful in Sacramento and then moving to San Francisco in 1857, selling nearly anything that could make a profit. Morrison eventually focused on one of the most lucrative of commodities for the California trade, selling liquor. He developed a strong market for several brands of whiskies which he procured in Kentucky. His most popular whiskey was initially his C.D. and Stag C.D. brands. After some scandalous allegations about its quality, Morrison suffered a downturn in its sales and proclaimed he would leave the State and return with other choice brands from Kentucky distillers. One of his new brands was his Club House Whiskey, for which he trademarked the name in June 1872 (California Trade Mark No. 226).



Among his eight or so different brands of whiskies, Morrison decided to produce only one bottle with the product name embossed upon. It is not known why he chose his California Club House brand for this honor, but it must be assumed he held it in high esteem and wanted to give it a promotional advantage. One of the first 'fancy' embossed round fifth bottles in the shape that was to become strongly associated with liquor bottles on the West Coast, it is also at the top of the list of most collectors of Western whiskey bottles. For unknown reasons the bottle is quite rare, which implies that the brand did not catch on with the public. There is currently no evidence when the bottles were produced, but it is most likely they were made closer to the date of the introduction of the brand. The engraving work on the bottle mold was executed by the currently unknown San Francisco artisan who used the curved leg R in his lettering. The bottles were, without a doubt, a product of a San Francisco glass factory.

Morrison's wife, Catherine L., died in San Francisco on December 10, 1876. Unlike his father, who lived to see 84 years, and died December 10, 1872, John Cramer Morrison, Jr., died May 17, 1881, at the age of 58 years in San Francisco.

His business was succeeded by Moon, Scully & Co. (Andrew J. Moon & Peter Scully) who occupied his old store and continued to sell his brands, probably only while his estate was settled. Both Moon and Scully worked for Morrison in his liquor business. By 1878, John C. Morrison & Co. was restructured with Morrison effectively retiring from active business and his company became Moon, Scully & Co. This partnership was officially discontinued on June 18, 1881.

This is the first notice found for John C. Morrison where he advertised his California Club House Whiskey. - (Elevator, [San Francisco, California] 31 August 1872).

SOMETHING NEW.—John C. Morrison, Jr., of No. 316 Sacramento street, has sent from Louisville a new brand of excellent whiskey, called "Congress Turf." Mr. Morrison is sole agent for Dunham's Celebrated Whiskies, some of which, including the above, and "California Club House," "Pioneer," Yosemite, and the famous "C. D.," are manufactured expressly for this market.

