

G. HARRAL

By Eric McGuire

THE BEST OF GEORGIA

Sweet Georgia Peaches
Bottle Competition

1st Place — Jack Hewitt,
Big Canoe, Georgia

Dr. G. Harral Druggist,
Savannah, Georgia,
Embossed in Applied
Seal, Black Glass



In the last decade or so it has become increasingly popular for collectors of antique bottles to rate or compare them in various categories. These categories are many and varied with parameters that are rather conjectural but somewhat understandable by the collecting community. The task of rating is often given to a group of individuals at bottle shows who are familiar with the attributes of certain bottles. Included in this game of top spot for a certain category is the best bottle for a regional area, eg. Western or Southern. Also included may be a sub-category as in best Southern soda bottle or bitters bottle. At the recent FOHBC National Convention in Augusta, Georgia, was just such a competition. As is usually the case the judging parameters were somewhat subjective and left up to the individual judge's experience to make a determination. They usually confer and either come to a mutual decision or vote, with the bottle entered into the competition garnering the most votes declared the winner. One of the three categories judged at Augusta was best Georgia bottle. As flawed as the subjective mutual decision may be, it is all in fun with the owner of the winning bottle walking away with bragging rights – at least until next time.

Interestingly, the winning item of the best Georgia bottle was also a previous winner of Top 25 Georgia bottles back in 2003. Possibly the only example known, the G. HARRAL / DRUGGIST / SAVANNAH / GA bottle is so heavy with 'historicity', that it is hard to beat. The fabric of the bottle is similar to many that were produced during the late 18th and early 19th century, but its applied glass seal speaks volumes for its deserved top Georgia bottle spot. This is a case where history beats aesthetics – and rarity helps too.

What is known about George Harral has not been well investigated with regard to his business activities; however, his genealogical record has been fairly well documented. His German-born father, George Harral, Sr., immigrated to Charleston, South Carolina about 1765 and married the English-born Barbara Ann Muilin there on February 24, 1778. He was the second child of George and Barbara Harral. He was born in Charleston on October 1, 1780, and raised there until he moved to Savannah, Georgia. His education has not been well documented; however one source notes that he was trained in the field of medicine. It is certainly possible that he was either trained or indentured to someone with experience in the medical field for he often addressed himself as a doctor. It should be clarified that this title was often used loosely at this period in time and did not require any formal training as a physician. It should also be noted that when he opened his drug store in Savannah, in 1797, George Harral was only seventeen years of age. His young age and apparent business acumen implies that he had some tutelage from a more experienced and funded individual – perhaps even his father.

The year of 1799 was important to young Harral. He was married April 14, 1799, in Savannah, to Charlotte Wright, born in London, England, June 4, 1779, daughter of Edward and Ann Wright. Then, his father died in Charleston on December 20, 1799.



Dr

CHARRAI

RUGGIS

AVANNAI

G

New Medicine Store.

The Subscriber most respectfully informs his Friends and the Public, that he has taken the Store next to Mr. Cleland's, in Duke Street, Market-Square, where he is just opening a complete assortment of fresh and genuine

Drugs, Medicines, &c.

Which he offers to the Public, at the most reduced prices; and every article in his line will be warranted of the very first quality. Hopes from his assiduity and attention to business, to meet with the patronage of the public. The following are few of the articles he has on hand, as the whole would be too tedious to enumerate.

B EST pale Bark.	Prussian Blue, from No. 1 to 3.
Do. red do.	Rose Pink.
Refined Camphor.	Glauber Salts.
Alum.	Talap.
Crude Antimony.	Elippo.
Double Aquafortis.	Rhubarb.
Tartar Emetic.	Nipple Pipes & Shells.
White Vitriol.	Smelling Bottles.
Gla's of Antimony.	Tooth Brushes.
Vermillion.	Essence Bergamot, Lemon & Lavender.
Sing Gla's.	
Borax.	Patent Medicines.
Quicksilver.	Anderson's Pills.
Calomel.	Baccharian's Drops.
Cream Tartar.	Daffoe's Elixer.
Saffron.	Essence Mint.
Camomile Flowers.	Hooper's Pills.
Sulphur.	Jamies's Powders.
Opium.	Squire's Elixer.
Best Soccotrine Aloes.	Turlington's Balsam.
Do. Magnesia.	Harlem Oil.
Manna, Lake and common.	Dalby's Carmine.
Red Precipitate.	Balm Honey.
	Godfrey's Cordial.

N. B. MEDICINE CHESTS, with suitable directions for Shipping and Plantation uses, put up on the shortest notice, with neatness and dispatch.

G. HARRAL.

July 25. n. 42.

The earliest advertisement located for George Harral, in the *Columbian Museum & Savannah Advertiser*, of July 28, 1797, wherein he states, "New Medicine Store, The subscriber most respectfully informs his Friends and the Public, that he has taken the Store next to Mr. Cleland's in Duke street, Market-Square, where he is just opening a complete assortment of fresh and genuine Drugs, Medicines, &c."

medicines of the day, such as Cordial Balm of Gilead, Anti-Impetigines, or the Charleston produced, Dr. Dalton's Concentrated Tincture of Yellow Bark.

Not unusual for this period in time, Harral embodied strong religious beliefs and became involved with the Presbyterian Church of Savannah, where he was one of its trustees.⁽¹⁾ He was also an early treasurer to the church which included the task of collecting subscriptions from pew holders.⁽²⁾ Reserving a particular pew was a common practice of the time. During this time, Harral was also one of the first managers of the Georgia Bible Society, whose charge was Christian philanthropy, disseminating bibles and other religious tracts. His likely early success in his business also afforded him status in the city of Savannah.

As the incorporated city expanded its boundaries Harral was appointed as one of five individuals to oversee the process of public sale of eleven newly created lots of property assigned to the Franklin Ward, on the bay, and bounded on the NW by

Beginning as early as July 1797, Harral advertised a large selection of drugs, medicines and also fitted up medical chests for use by ships, plantations and doctors. By September of the same year, Harral added a mortar and pestle to the design of his advertisements. His later advertisements noted his store was located, "at the sign of the Man and Mortar, (perpetual motion,) Market Square, Savannah."


The perfection of perpetual motion still has yet to be achieved so it may be assumed that his sign was, somehow, actuated by wind energy. He consistently advertised the sale of patent medicines and chemicals generally used in the pharmacy trade as well as perfumery, confectionery, surgical instruments, paints and shop furniture. A considerable amount of his stock was being imported directly from England. Much of his early advertisements focused on the sale of patent

West Broad Street and to the East by property owned by Telfair and Clay, two prominent citizens.⁽³⁾ In March 1804, Harral left Savannah for three months, presumably for business purposes, either in England or New York.

With regard to this absence, it is also noted that two undeliverable letters were sent to Harral in Washington, DC, which may be an indication that he had resided in that city for some period of time prior to 1806.⁽⁴⁾

Not unusual for the gentry of the South, Harral was a slave holder. While we would like to think that he was benevolent to his human property, he still had issues with this now unthinkable practice. Prior to his temporary absence from Savannah in 1804 one slave, named Rachel, decided to leave her master which motivated Harral to advertise for her return. Not to be the last time this happened, he offered a reward of fifty dollars for her capture.⁽⁵⁾ No further notice was forthcoming about the fate of Rachel.

Fifty Dollars Reward.



RANAWAY, on the night of the 16th inst. a country born negro wench, named **RACHEL**, about 35 years of age, she is of a small size and has a very quick walk, artful and impertinent when spoke to, and is very fond of drink; she is well known in Savannah as she formerly belonged to Major Frederick Shick, deceased; she had on when she went away a drab colored bath coating wrapper and petticoat, and carried off with her on old green stuff and a white negro cloth petticoat; as there is no doubt she was inticed away from me and is now harbored by some white person, the above reward will be given for detecting and prosecuting any person who may harbor her, or ten dollars reward will be paid for delivering her to the goaler of Savannah, or to the subscriber. All persons are forbid harboring the said wench or carrying her out of the state, under the severest penalties of the law.

GEORGE HARRAL.

February 25 1803

The notice for the capture and reward for George Harral's slave, Rachel. (*Columbian Museum* [Savannah, Georgia] February 29, 1804)

March next, will be placed in the hands of an attorney for collection, as no longer indulgence can possibly be given."⁽⁶⁾ True to his word, for the next several years, the local newspapers often contained notices of legal action whereby the courts awarded Harral the proceeds of sheriff's sales, as well as property, including slaves, as payment for debts owed him.

Business for Harral appears to have been good for the next few years and in 1807 he advertised for additional help at his store for, "Two smart lads, of respectable connections, are wanted to the Drug Business; great care and attention will be paid to their morals and improvement".⁽⁷⁾

By the beginning of 1807, Harral found it necessary to deal with the many delinquent accounts on his books by placing a rather lengthy advertisement in the *Georgia Republican*, calling for payment or suffer the consequences of legal action. "The subscriber earnestly requests all persons indebted to him, by notes and open accounts, to settle their respective dues early in the present year so as to enable him to meet his own engagements at that time – from the repeated delinquency of many whose accounts have been standing open for several years, he is now obliged to insist on a settlement; therefore all of this description, not paid by the first of

As well as his usual importation of drugs and sundries, Harral also imported glassware in 1807, including:

"50 boxes Crown Window Glass, 8 by 10 and 10 by 12

1 hhd. (hogshead) 2 quart specie bottles, with lacquered tin top.

7 crates assorted phials

20 casks assorted glass ware, put up for country stores, containing in each —

4 dozen quart decanters, tops fitted

4 ditto pint ditto

4 ditto ½ pint ditto

12 ½ dozen ½ pint tumblers

2 ditto ½ pint goblets

6 ditto welted (?) wine glasses

2 ditto salt cellars"⁽⁸⁾

It is also evident that Harral had amassed enough funds to engage in the real estate market. By the end of 1808, he advertised for rent "a small two story dwelling house, with convenient out buildings, situated in the upper end of Broughton Street."⁽⁹⁾ This property would also be near to his own residence. Later in that year, Harral and 82 additional subscribing members, banded together and formed the Savannah Poor-House and Hospital Society.⁽¹⁰⁾

One Hundred Dollars REWARD.

ABSENTED herself from my service on or about the 10th of October, 1806, my **NEGRO WOMAN, JUDY**, she is about forty years of age, smooth black complexion, rather above the middle size, and usually dresses in a long wrapper, and handkerchief bound tight around her head; speaks very pleasantly and artfully. She has been frequently seen in the neighborhood of Augusta and Campbellton, and it is well known, she was long harbored by a free negro woman, called Flora Fishborne, an aunt of the runaway. She has a pass, and a paper licensing her to work out, both which are forged. The probability is, that she is now harbored in the same neighborhood, as the wife of an Augusta Boatman. Said woman was raised by the Howfston family, and formerly belonged to Dr. Brickell of Savannah, and during the time he owned her she was absent about twelve months, all which time she was near Augusta and Campbellton, where she is extremely well known. A reward of One Hundred Dollars will be paid on the delivery of her to me or the keeper of the jail in Savannah, or Fifty Dollars will be paid by Dr. Thomas L. Wray, for apprehending and lodging her in the jail at Augusta, or any other prison in the State. If the returns of her own accord she will be forgiven, and have permission to chase herself a master.

GEORGE HARRAL.

Savannah, Nov. 4.

An undeniable evil of the time, this practice should not be pushed aside but noted well, for it should never be repeated. (*Augusta Chronicle*, December 2, 1809)

finished rooms, with eight fire places, kitchen, wash-room, wood house, and apartments for servants. In the yard, are an excellent

Toward the end of 1809, Harral repeated his call for the return of a slave, named Judy, who chose to leave her "master." He apparently thought more of her at least her economic value to his service - than his slave, Rachel, as his reward for Judy's return was \$100. Again, no further information on this situation was noted.

It appears that by 1810, Harral had determined to rent out his own dwelling, including the smaller house that he rented a few years earlier. His advertisement notes, . . . "To be rented, and possession given immediately, The subscribers large and pleasantly situated dwelling house, on the corner of Broughton and West-Broad streets, containing twelve well

stable, carriage-house, etc."⁽¹¹⁾ For those familiar with the City of Savannah, this property would be in the Franklin Ward. George Harral served as an alderman for the City of Savannah from September 10, 1810 to September 6, 1811.

Harral was present in Savannah at least until 1811 when he appointed William Lloyd to act as agent during his absence.

⁽¹²⁾ Harral landed in New York, along with his family, on the Schooner, Edmund, as noted in the *New York Gazette & General Advertiser*, on July 11, 1811. He would have had six of his twelve children at this date. By early 1812, Harral was back in Savannah and on January 2 of that year, announced a new partnership with Edward Coppee.⁽¹³⁾ In May 1812, Harral advertised for sale, "his carriage and horses, which are inferior to none in the city. To save unnecessary trouble, the lowest price will be fifteen hundred dollars."⁽¹⁴⁾ In a notice dated September 1812,

Harral gave his first confirmation that he would soon be leaving Savannah "to the northward." In consequence of his decision, he also terminated his short lived partnership with Edward Coppee.

⁽¹⁵⁾ But not idle in his business activities, he became a founding stockholder in a new business titled The Insurance Company of City of Savannah, on December 10, 1812.⁽¹⁶⁾

Auction.
On Tuesday, 20th April next,
Will be sold at the dwelling house of Dr. George Harral, upper end of Broughton-Street.
A large quantity of elegant FURNITURE, consisting of
Side-Board, Secretary and Book-Cases
Dining and tea Tables; hair Sofa
Fancy and plain Chairs, Bureaus
Candle and wash Stands
Bedsteads, Cradle and Cribs,
Enfilade Cases (with ivory handled Knives and Forks)
Pier and toilet Glasses
Elegant Prints, complete sets
Table, Tea and breakfast China
One complete set (about 60 pieces) cut Glass
Wilton and Scotch Carpets
Sail Carpets and hearth Rugs
Feather Beds and Mattresses
Andirons, Shovels and Tongs
Painted and brass Candlesticks
Tea Urn, entry lamp Waiters
And in fact almost every article (either for use, or ornament) required in a well furnished house, with about 300 vols. well selected BOOKS treating on physic, surgery, history, divinity, &c.
ALSO,
Lot No. 33, Franklin ward, opposite Mr. S. Cowling, in Broughton-Street—on the premises are two two-story dwelling houses, with necessary out buildings, &c.
The building at Darien lately occupied by George Harral & Co. 490 acres of land, No. 135, third district Wayne county, and four valuable house servants.
Terms: Cash before delivery
Sale to commence at 10 o'clock.
D. Williford, auctioneer.
march 4—26

Notice of the auction sale of Harral's Savannah residence and its contents, which occurred on April 20, 1813 (*Savannah Republican* and *Savannah Evening Ledger*, March 13, 1813).

There is some indication that Harral first went to Washington, DC, since there are notices of undelivered mail for him in 1813; however, by 1815 he was acting more like an unspecialized commission merchant when he advertised the sale of turtle shell and pearl handled lancets in Philadelphia on April of 1815, at 134 Market Street.⁽¹⁷⁾ By July of the same year, and still operating in Philadelphia at the same address, Harral was up and operating as he did in Savannah, advertising his usual stock of drugs, medicine, painters colors and surgical instruments — a formula that served him well in Savannah. He also included a somewhat larger stock of glassware as noted in the following ad.⁽¹⁸⁾

Having fully established himself in Philadelphia, Harral then looked back home and partnered with Robert Worrell who would take charge of their new store in Savannah under the name of

23. *Pawtucket Chronicle and Manufacturers' and Artizans' Advocate*
[Pawtucket, RI] June 30, 1827