The Curious Career of T.W. Dyott, M.D.

Part I of a four part mini-series

by Q. David Bowers

Introduction

Among my numismatic interests, paper money is in the front rank. Over a long period of years I have studied different banks, their officers, and methods of distribution. I have also collected various series, especially obsolete notes. As the years have slipped by, I have deaccessioned most of the notes, but have kept all of my research information and have added to it.

In 2006 I completed the manuscript for *Obsolete Paper Money Issued by Banks in the United States 1782 to 1866*, which was issued by Whitman Publishing and had become a best seller and standard reference. In it is a section devoted to Dr. Thomas W. Dyott and his Manual Labor Bank, from research I had started years earlier. Located in the Kensington district of Philadelphia it and its founder have in parallel two of the most fascinating—sometimes almost unbelievable—histories.

In the meantime I have researched and collecting glass bottles, flasks, and related items from the 19th century. As an example, in 1984 Antique Bottle News published my study of bottles used by Drake's Plantation Bitters.

In the present study I share what I have learned about Dr. Thomas

W. Dyott and his long career in glass manufacturing and his short career in banking. Much has been written about Dyott in past, most notably and magisterially by Helen McKearin in Bottles, Flasks and Dr. Dyott, 1970, which emphasized glass and was my main source for flask varieties. McKearin included a sketch of the Manual Labor Bank but was not aware of why it was formed and felt that contemporary as well as later historians' negative comments about Dyott had no real foundation, probably based on her studies of the glass business and not of the Manual Labor Bank. Today in the Internet era with vast sources available to search, I have had access to much information of which she was not aware.

There are many stories and essays about Dyott and his glassworks in the Kensington district of Philadelphia, but nearly all have incorrect information about his factory, which was newly constructed in the second decade of the 19th century and was not set up in an an earlier and now defunct factory called the Kensington Glass Works.

In the past the bills of the Manual Labor Bank have been studied by various scholars as well, the most important being two pages

Pro Bono Publico

Patent Water proof Brunswick Blacking. Prepared with oil, which softens and preserves the leather—words cannot set forth its just praise, nor can its transcendent qualities be truly known, but by experience—it is particularly recommended to sportsmen and gentlemen who are much exposed to the wet, as it will prevent the water from penetrating, preserve the leather from cracking, and render it supple and pleasant to the last.

Prepared and sold, wholesale and for exportation, with full directions for using it, by T.W. Dyott, at his medical warehouse, No. 57 S. Second Street, Philadelphia, second door from Chestnut Street; also by appointment at J.B. Dumontet's, No. 120 Broad Street, Charleston, South Carolina, where may be had the Imperial Wash for taking out stains, and preserving the quality and colour of saddles, and the tops of boots, prepared only by T.W. Dyott, who has for sale an assortment of brushes of superior quality for using the patent blacking.

N.B. Captains of ships and storekeepers throughout the United State will be supplied on the most reasonable terms, and their orders punctually attended to and executed at the shortest notice.

T.W.D. has also for ale, patent wine, bitters of a superior quality, together with a variety of patent family medicines, essences, perfumery, &c. suitable for the West Indian and other markets.



Thomas W. Dyott, M.D. as seen on a bank note of the 1830s.

devoted to varieties by Richard T. Hoober in Pennsylvania Obsolete Notes and Scrip, 1985. Again, these and other studies were mostly conducted before the Internet era of access to newspapers, books, and other publications. Research in modern times has greatly added to what I compiled years ago, resulting in the present text including much information not hitherto available in any single printed source. My only regret is that I never met Helen McKearin (1898-1988), the leading scholar on Dyott's life.

Although there are some elusive varieties, both the Dyott flasks and the bills of the Mutual Labor Bank are easily collected today, with most of the currency being moderately priced. Many enthusiasts belong to the Society of Paper Money Collectors or the Federation of Old Historical Bottle Clubs, but not many have joined both.

Enjoy the following pages—the story of a unique American entrepreneur (if that is the right word).

T.W. Dyott, the Early Years

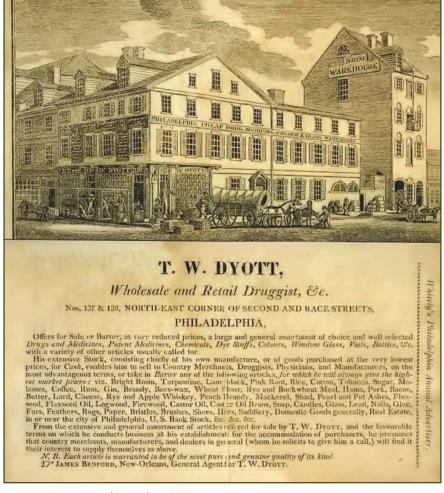
Thomas W. Dyott

Thomas W. Dyott was born in England in 1777. As a young man he sailed to America and arrived in Philadelphia by early 1805. In 1807 the city directory listed him for the first time as owner of a "Patent medicine warehouse, No. 57 South Second Street." *The Philadelphia Gazette*, January 24, 1807, carried this advertisement:

It is obvious that by this time Dyott had his fingers in many business pies, early evidence of his entrepreneurship. His narrative, written in a convincing manner, would be essential in his future enterprises. In April 1807 he ran large advertisements for Dr. Robertson's Celebrated Stomachic Elixir of Health and Dr. Robertson's Patented Stomachic Wine Bitters. These were "Prepared only by T.W. Dyott, sole proprietor and grandson of the late celebrated Dr. Robertson, physician in Edinburgh, and sold wholesale and retail at the proprietor's medicine warehouse, No. 57, South Second Street." Sans Pareille Oleaginous Paste to improve the beauty of the mahogany and other hardwood furniture was another product, not to overlook his agency for Bug-Destroying Water. A list of his items sold for health and beauty would be lengthy.

By 1808 he was a heavy advertiser, including for his own preparations, stating, "Take Notice: As a security against counterfeits, that none are genuine without a small label on the outside wrapper, the signature of T.W. Dyott." A strong possibility is that at least some were made by the Kensington Glass Works conducted by James Butland and James Rowland.

By 1809 some of his medicines were put up in rectangular clear flint glass bottles embossed "Dr. ROBERTSON'S / FAMILY MEDICINE / PREPARED / ONLY BY / T.W. DYOTT." There were many makers of bottles at the time, and it is not known which one produced these from Dyott's private mold. A strong possibility is that at least bottles some were made by the Kensington Glass Works conducted by James Butland and James Rowland.



In that year his business was listed as "Medical dispensary and proprietor of Robertson's family medicines, No 116 North Second Street," apparently an expanded facility. In that he is listed for the first time with "M.D." after his name and as Dr. Dyott. By that time it seems that his brother John had joined him in the trade. Dyott continued to make liquid blacking. It is not known if he had actual medical training. In that era there were no licensing requirements, and the patent medicine field was rife with "doctors." In that year in many advertisements he claimed to have 41 agents in 36 towns and cities in 12 states, including 14 in New York State. In 1810 his brother, Dr. John Dyott, was dispensing medicines in Atlanta, Georgia. By 1817 John was in Charleston, South Carolina where he managed a wholesale warehouse at East Bay, a depot for shipments to Southern agencies. Goods were sent by coastwise ships from Philadelphia to Charleston.

On September 3, 1811, Dr. T.W. Dyott moved to 137 Second Street in Philadelphia, the address where he maintained a store for years afterward. This was also his residence, where he could be consulted for free advice from early in the morning until 10 o'clock in the evening, a claim that was advertised until at least 1819. Various leaflets and pamphlets were published in English and also in French, German, and Spanish, the foreign texts to aid immigrants.

Dyott soon acquired premises next door at No. 139 and built a large warehouse there at a cost of \$9,000. This address was most often advertised as the northeast corner of Second and Race streets. His agencies expanded, and by 1814 in New York State he had 14 agents in Upstate New York.

In the *Philadelphia General Advertiser*, July 1, 1815, he advertised to have had "long experience and extensive practice in the City of London, the West Indies, and for the last nine years in the City of Philadelphia." This would place his arrival in Philadelphia in 1804. Nothing has been learned of his alleged lengthy experience in London or the West Indies. In 1815 he married Elizabeth, and in October 1816 the couple had a son, John Dyott, named for his uncle. In 1822, Thomas W. Dyott, Jr. was born.

In 1815, John G. O'Brien became a partner in O'Brien & Dyott, and a store was opened in the downtown business district at the junction of the Ohio and Monongahela rivers. This advertisement was placed in the Pittsburgh Daily Gazette to run for one year:

O'Brien & Dyott: Wholesale and retail druggists, west side of the Diamond, Pittsburgh, have received from their connections in New York and Philadelphia additional supplies of fresh drugs, oil, chemicals, dye stuffs, medicines, camel's hair pencils, perfumery, Reeves and Welles water colors, vials, paints, &c., with an extensive variety of other articles in their line, all of which are warranted to be of the most approved and genuine qualities.

Physicians, country merchants and others who deal in drugs and medicines, or any of the above articles can be supplied at the lowest Philadelphia wholesale prices. Families in town and in the country can be furnished with superior medicines of very description, on the cheapest terms. All orders thankfully received, and attended to with care and promptitude.

Pittsburgh, July 22, 1815.

As O'Brien's name appeared first, it is presumed that he conducted the affairs of the Pittsburgh facility. The partnership serviced agencies in western Pennsylvania and beyond, including Brownsville, Greensburgh (later named Greensboro), and Washington in Pennsylvania; Chillicothe, Hamilton, Marietta, Zanesville, Dayton, Clinton, Canton, Urbana, Cincinnati, and Columbus in Kentucky; Vincennes, Indiana; St. Louis, Missouri; and Lexington, Russellville, Maysville, Shelbyville, and Louisville in Kentucky. These agencies also sold goods from other suppliers, often including groceries, housewares, and other items. In Philadelphia in 1816, in addition to his main store, he had an outlet at 341 High Street.

In a May 9, 1817 advertisement in the *Western Herald & Steubenville Gazette*, there was a large advertisement that began with "Approved Family Medicines which are celebrated for the cure of most diseases to which the human body is liable, prepared only by the sole proprietor, T.W. Dyott, M.D." It was signed, "M. Johnston & Co., Agents for Steubenville." There was no mention of O'Brien, nor has any other listing for him been found after this date.

In Philadelphia on November 9, 1822 Dyott advertised this in the *United States Gazette* and *True American*:

To Those Wishing to Commence the Drug Business

For Sale the stock and fixtures of a handsome and long established wholesale and retail drug store situation in one of the most flourishing towns in the western part of the State of Pennsylvania.

The stock can be lessened to suit the convenience of the purchaser, payment for which if more convenient than cash will be received in articles of produce such as whiskey, flour, flaxseed, oil, pot and pearl ashes, pork, bacon, &c. No back land need be offered.

For information apply to T.W. Dyott, Wholesale Druggist, &c., Second and Race streets.

The Kensington Glass Works

Early American Glass

The first glass factory in what became the United States of America was established in Jamestown, Virginia Colony, after its settlement in 1607. This was a separate facility about a mile from the main community. Bottles were made there and, possibly, other products. In 1622 a factory for making glass beads was set up, such beads being used for trade with Indians. In Salem, Massachusetts there was a bottle factory by 1639. In Philadelphia in 1683 a factory was established to make various glass products.

As settlements expanded, glass was needed for many purposes, including windows, bottles, flasks, jugs, and other items. Dozens of factories prospered in the various colonies and, later, the states.

The Whitney Glass Works in Glassboro, New Jersey, was especially large and operated from the late 18th century onward. Relative to the present narrative, New Jersey and Pennsylvania were both very important in the industry in the early days.

Pocket flasks for whiskey and other ardent beverages became widely popular in the early 18th century, giving rise to countless designs depicting national figures, patriotic emblems, and other motifs. These were produced by blowing a heated glass blob into molds professionally engraved. Most flasks were clear or aqua, but various colors were used as well.

Flasks and bottles of the period under study, required skill and craftsmanship to make, involving a learning or apprentice period. The heated glass blob was fixed at the end of a metal blow pipe, Inserted in the mold, it was blown to expand and fill the mold. At this point a metal pontil or punty rod was attached to the base of the bottle or flask, and the blow pipe was removed. By means of metal shears the mouth was formed by cutting, resulting in many variables and irregularities. The flask or bottle was then carried to an oven and the pontil removed. The product was they slowly cooled and, in time, removed. Most Kensington flasks were oval in shape and flattened or shallow.

All of these flasks as well as bottles are avidly sought by collectors today.

The First Kensington Glass Works

The history of the first Kensington Glass Works dates back to 1771 when Robert Towars, a leather-dresser, and Joseph Leacock, a watchmaker, decided to erect a glass works in Kensington.

They purchased frontage on the east side of Bank Street (later called Richmond Street), extending back to the shore of the Delaware River, which was navigable at that point. The business was up and running in short order, as evidenced by this notice in the Pennsylvania Gazette, January 1772: "The glass-factory, Northern Liberties, next door to the sign of the Marquis of Granby, in Market Street, where the highest price is given for broken flint-glass and alkaline salts." This area was generally known as Fishtown.

Not long afterward in November of the same year the business was sold to druggists John and Samuel Gray, who added Isaac Gray as a partner. The works were expanded. In May 1780 the business was sold to tobacconist Thomas Leiper, who is thought to have found it to be a convenient source for bottles in which to store and sell snuff. On March 6, 1800, the factory was sold to Joseph Roberts, Jr., James Butland, and James Rowland for \$2,333, after which it was known as James Butland & Co., with an outlet at 80 North Fourth Street. In 1801 Roberts sold his interest to his partners, who continued the business until 1804, after which Rowland became sole proprietor. He published this notice for three months in the Philadelphia Gazette, starting on August 8, 1808:

Kensington Glass Works: Being now in complete order will go into operation about the 20th of this month when orders for bottles, &c. will be executed as usual, on application at the Glass-

house or to the subscriber, No. 93, N. Second Str. James Rowland

The Kensington Glass Works closed during the War of 1812, after which the facilities were idle. Likely, T.W. Dyott was purchasing glass there, and had to turn to other suppliers, such as those listed in the narrative below. According to his own account, he was doing this by 1815.

The Second Kensington Glass Works

Hewson, Connell & Co. advertised in *Relfs Philadelphia Gazette* and *Daily Advertiser*, August 2, 1816, that they had erected a glass house at considerable "on the lot adjoining the Old Glass Works in Kensington." This was on land of over five acres and was bounded by Point-no-point Road, Gunner's Run, the Delaware River, and the property of the discontinued old Kensington Glass Works, with which it had no connection.

This related advertisement appeared in *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Philadelphia, June 30, 1818:

Kensington Glass Works: The subscribers beg leave to inform their friends and the public that their Works are now in blast, and that they have constantly on hand a supply of gallon, half gallon, quart and pint jars; gallon, half gallon and quart bottles; also pint and half pint flasks, all of the first quality, which they will sell on the most reasonable terms.

Orders left at the store of Messrs. Harris and Wright, No. 27 North Third Street, will be attended to with punctuality and dispatch. Hewson & Connell

On the same piece of land Hewson & Connell had a furnace for converting iron into cast steel. John Hewson, Jr. had a plant pro calico-printing on cloth nearby. The calico-printing operation had been in operation there for many years and had been opened by John's father in 1780.

Probably as a result of needing glass bottles and flasks for his products, Dyott became involved in wholesale distribution of various related items. By 1817 he was the sole agent for the Olive Glass Works in Glassboro, New Jersey, the New Jersey Union Glass Works in Port Elizabeth in the same state, and for the Gloucester Glass Works in Clementon, also in New Jersey. It is likely he had an ownership interest in some or all. The Democratic Press, Philadelphia, September 17, 1817, published this notice:

Olive Glass Works: The proprietors of this Glass works beg leave to acquaint publishers and the public that as a new blast is commenced they will feel obliged by having early orders for bottles, vials, or any hollow-ware of any form in the making of which their attention will be given to please their friends, both in quality and figure, and every exertion made as to punctuality in time for execution.

All orders for this factory are received at the drug store of T.W. Dyott, north-east Corner of Second and Race streets

In the meantime Dyott's depot at the northeast corner of Sec-

ond and Race streets was more of a general store than an outlet for medicines. While lotions and potions were advertised, the advertised stock also included whiskey, fish, buckwheat and rye meal, beeswax, castor oil, turpentine, rosin, feathers, rags, paper, brushes, lead, window glass, soap, furs, bristles and brushes, saddlery, hats, shoes, candles, firewood, logs, potash, glue, and nails. Many goods were accepted in trade in addition to money as were deeds to real state and stock shares in the newly-formed second Bank of the United States. A more diverse operation cannot be imagined!

Dr. T.W. Dyott's humanitarian side, of which more will be said, is evidenced by this advertisement dated December 7, 1820, in The Union, Philadelphia:

Old Linen: Persons having old linen such as sheets, table linen, &c., that are not worn in holes may receive a price that will half pay for new linen, on application to an industrious widow, in manufacturing Patent Lint for the hospitals, &c., by means of which she will be enabled to support herself and a large family children that are left entirely destitute.

Apply to Dr. T.W. Dyott, corner of Second and Race streets, where specimens of her lint may be seen and orders left for any quantity.

In the spring of 1820 Hewson & Connell were still operating their Kensington Glass Works, and T.W. Dyott added it to the Olive Glass Works and Gloucester Glass Works as sole agent, with no mention of the New Jersey Union Glass Works.

An advertisement in the local *Democratic Press*, March 11 of that year, had this at the bottom: "Wanted: Two apprentices to the drug business. Boys from the country will be preferred, they will be required to be of good moral habits, of respectable connections, have a good English education and knowledge of the German language."

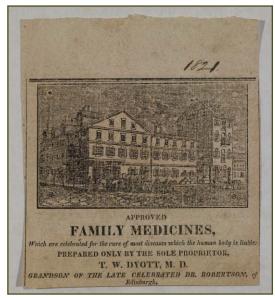
The Democratic Press, July 17, 1820, carried an advertisement stating that the Olive, Gloucester, and Kensington Glass Manufactories, in blast, informed readers that "they have appointed Dr. T.W. Dyott, druggist, their sole agent, with whom all the glass as it is manufactured will be deposited for sale, by which means, from the extensive stock generally on hand, almost every order can be executed at an hour's notice." Signed by "David Wolf & Co., Olive Glass Works; Jona. Haines, Gloucester Glass Works; Hewson & Connell, Kensington Glass Works." The outlet was at the old stand at the corner of North Second and Race streets.

In 1820 Dyott advertised his Cheap Drug, Glass, and Family Medicine Warehouse at 137 & 139 North Second Street, corner of Race Street. He offered dozens of patent medicines, dye stuffs, sundries, and other products, including many items of glass ware.

It seems that the future of the Kensington Glass Works was uncertain and was available to be leased, as reflected by this advertisement in the Democratic Press, Philadelphia, July 11 and later: "Kensington Glass Works to let for one or more years. For terms apply to Joseph Ball, Point-no-point Road." In March 1821 John Hewson advertised the property for sale, mentioning a large mansion and other facilities, the Delaware River frontage, but no word about the glass works.

It seems that times were good, and Dr. T.W. Dyott was enjoying wealth and the perquisites it made possible. A later account told that his dress and manner were unique. His dress included a broad-brimmed hat, brown surtout, and red cravat and shoes. "He kept the most elegant English coast with three or four outriders in livery."

The Kensington Glass Works was expanding, and by 1821 either a second furnace and glasshouse was built or the old adjacent



T.W. Dyott's store as advertised in 1821

factory was leased. No details have been found.

March 24, 1822 advertisement in the *Philadelphia Aurora General Advertiser*, a notice that was continued in various periodicals for the ensuing year. This is the earliest seen that mentioned commemorative flasks: "American Eagle, ship Franklin, Agricultural and Masonic Pocket Bottles."

Financial Stress

By 1822, Dyott was in extreme financial difficulty. The number of his advertisements decreased. This may have been caused by his luxurious living style, or there may have been other elements. He owned varying amounts to 17 creditors, and his business was managed by a trusteeship formed by these men. The largest debt was to Captain Daniel Man, who was owned \$17,400—equal to well over a million dollars in terms of later twenty-first century funds. An agreement stated that Dyott could "carry on the glass works," arrange personal affairs, and continue his retail business.

The Commercial Directory, 1823, reflects his business activities at the time.

Kensington Cylinder Glass Works. T.W. Dyott, proprietor. Kensington Hollow Ware Glass Works. T.W. Dyott, proprietor. Olive Glass Works, in Gloucester County, New Jersey. Manufacture bottles and vials. T.W. Dyott, agent.



Lafayette-Eagle flask by Dyott

Dyott, T.W. Druggist & colourman; manufacturer of window glass, &c., 137 & 139 North Second Street [Philadelphia]

In 1822 Dyott added an acre of land to the property, no doubt with the permission of his trustees. In time, rental houses were built there, producing income to reduce his debt. Not known outside of the inner circle was that he was being charged interest of 1% to 1½ % per month, equal to 12% to 18% per year—illegal and far about the 6% legal rate. Accordingly this was secret, criminal activity.

Dyott's actual ownership interest in the Kensington Glass Works at this time has not been determined. In any event, it would have been under trusteeship.

March 24, 1824 advertisement in the *United States Gazette*, Philadelphia, with an expanded list of commemorative glass including "Washington, LaFayette, Franklin, Ship Franklin, Agricultural and Masonic, Cornucopia, American Eagle, and common ribbed Pocket Flasks."

Among the Kensington Glass Works products were whiskey flasks with patriotic themes, including eagles and General Washington, not to overlook those with his own image. These are widely collected today.

March 22, 1825 advertisement in the *United States Gazette*, with added flasks. See the notice to nationwide editors. In the *Gazette* he advertised on March 14, 1825, that he had 3,000 dozen flasks available for purchase. After the deaths of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, they were commemorated on flasks as well.

It is thought the glass molds made during the Dyott era were by Stacy Wilson and later by George H. Myers.

(pictured above) Lafayette-Eagle flask by Dyott. (pictured above) Franklin-Dyott flask with T.W. Dyott's portrait on one side.

On May 17, 1826, in the Cayuga Republican issued in distant Auburn, New York, T.W. Dyott advertised his Philadelphia store, also indicating that he was involved in glass manufacture: "3



Franklin-Dyott flask with T.W. Dyott's portrait on one side

or 4 first rate vial blowers will meet with constant employment and good wages by applying as above." Not long afterward his advertisements told of his ownership, such as this notice in the Commercial Advertiser, New York City, June 18, 1828:

Glass Ware

Philadelphia and Kensington Factories. Apothecaries' vials, patent medicine and perfumery do, mustards, cayennes, shop furniture, confectioner's show bottles, druggists packing bottles, carboys, acids, castor oil, cordial and wine bottles, demijohns, flasks, quarts, half gallon, and gallon common bottles, preserving and fruit jars, with a complete and general assortment of every other article in the glass line.

The above establishment is on the most extensive scale, embracing three distinct factories located in the immediate vicinity of Philadelphia—affording every facility for executing orders with promptness. The quality of the glass is decidedly superior to any other of the same description made in this country.

Orders punctually attended to, addressed to the proprietor, T.W. Dyott, Philadelphia, or to H.W. Field, agent, New York.

Although Dyott's financial arrangements were still a great problem, loans provided for increased production and sales. By June 1828 there were three glass factories under his control in Kensington, and by a year later, four. Additional acreage had been purchased, including some previously rented. Dyott also conducted a wholesale business. This advertisement from a customer was published in the American & Commercial Daily Advertiser, Baltimore, September 11, 1828:

Demijohns

A constant supply of superior quality of demijohns of all sizes, from one quart to five gallons, manufactured at the Philadelphia and Kensington Glass Factories, and in point of strength, neatness of workmanship, and regularity of size and superior to foreign manufacture, for sale in any quantity.

Harrison & Sterrett