

# J.D. Paige's Ale Cider and Marv Juel

By Marv Juel



Marv out walking his dog Minnie in the snow



This bottle started it all as it was the aqua bottle offered at the antique store

About 40 years ago it happened .... Fern and I were selling at the Plainfield Antique Mall. It had been a few months when we noticed items were missing from our booth: someone was stealing things. So we decided to move out. Shortly after we left, a fellow from Lockport came to the mall. He had some old things to sell and one of the items was an old blob top aqua bottle marked "CIDER J. D. PAIGE JOLIET. ILL." The clerk did not know bottles but knew we collected them and sent the fellow to see us. We purchased the bottle and told him if he had more

we would purchase them, too. He lived in a very old house, The Fiddlement House, which had only two rooms suitable to use; the others were missing window glass and the floors were not safe to walk on. The fellow was separated from his wife and was living with two young children.

Fern and I were directed to the basement where we located a large barrel full of old bottles. We bought them all. Now, I realize that my nine J. D. Paige bottles are very rare. Four of them have cord strings attached to their necks. Paige was bottling ale, cider, and spruce beer starting in 1857. At that time, there was no way to stabilize the bottles' corks. The purpose of the cord string was to do just that. Soon, a wire was used to hold potato masher shaped steel that would slide in place on top of the bottles' corks. Perhaps Paige was the only bottler to use cord string for cork stabilizing; has anyone heard of any other? The four examples in my collection are probably the only ones to survive. There are other Paige bottles but they were dug, so if they originally had cords, the cords did not survive. The house was located on the west side of State Street, the entrance to the basement was at the rear. As

one was leaving the basement, facing west, the view included a few trees and a pile of ashes mixed with other trash--including some glass.

There was a cement mixer resting against one of the trees. Beyond the edge of the property in a very shallow ravine, were the railroad tracks. My thoughts told me I could very well use that cement mixer; so I asked the owner if he would sell it and also asked if I could dig in the ash pile to search for bottles. He sold me the mixer and gave me permission to dig. This happened about forty years ago, but I do remember finding two cobalt blob top J. G. Bolton, Lemont, Ills sodas. some shards of various sizes and colors of Paige bottles and many milk bottles. The milk bottles are from Lockport and Joliet; most common. However, the two are very unique and exhibit unusual innovation by the designer. They are embossed: "ONE PINT" {and in a slug plate} "THE WEBER DAIRY CO. SPECIAL GERM PROOF MILK." The spacing of the words is such that the "M" in the word "GERM" and the "M" in the word "MILK" is the same--there is just one "M"! Both of these bottles have damage near the mouth.



Here are 3 of the 9 bottles found in the barrel in the basement of the Fiddlement House



Weber Dairy was located in Joliet. I was able to use the cement mixer when building some porch foundations, porch steps, and a limestone sidewalk.

An article by John Whiteside on January 2, 1990, Joliet Herald-News, is about J. D. Paige. Whiteside describes Paige as "A leader of his time." He says that J.D. began to bottle flavored water under gas pressure, which some believe was the first soda pop. His advertisements said the flavored water "imparts health-giving qualities and a brisk refreshing taste to the beverage." J.D. sold his bottling business in 1884, but he was still a long way from retiring. Through the years he served as township school treasurer, the fire chief, police chief, county clerk, mayor, township supervisor, township assessor, and city treasurer. As mayor, he purchased the city's waterworks. J.D. was the fire chief who brought the department from a group of volunteers to paid professionals. They bought their own fire horses, conducted drills, installed fire alarms, and won honors in the 1878 National Fireman's Tournament. His fire department was so ready that a team of horses was kept in harness at the engine house. They were ready to go within

a ten-second notice of a fire. As police chief, J.D. bought the first patrol wagons, installed call boxes, and hired the first black police officer. But his patrol wagons weren't popular with the thugs that then lined Whiskey Row on Collins Street. J.D. still wasn't finished as a businessman.

In partnership with J. G. Elwood, a former mayor, he helped bring the first telephone service to Joliet. In all his years of public service, J.D. was a man willing to help his community with any problem. He was known as a troubleshooter for city problems. He even promoted and protected women's suffrage. On December 2, 1916, J.D. died in his home on North Eastern Avenue after suffering from pneumonia. He was 79 and buried in Oakwood Cemetery. All his pallbearers were former mayors of Joliet. Upon his death, the Evening Herald-News said, "(He) was characterized as the most energetic public man in Joliet's History. In those things requiring understanding, courage, and action, John D. Paige was the leader here of his time."



Here are 3 more of the 9 bottles found in the barrel in the basement of the Fiddlement House, what a day!

