

SHRIVER'S BALTIMORE

Ferdinand Meyer V

Photography by Gina Pellegrini



Oyster bars were popular establishments starting in the early to mid-1800s and could be found in eastern cities such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore that were close to the Atlantic oyster beds. The Dorlon & Shaffer oyster house at Fulton Market in New York City was famous nationally and even internationally to travelers to the big city. I wrote about that concern and their pickled oysters in the last issue of *Bottles and Extras*. The Union Oyster House in Boston touts that they are the oldest continuously open restaurant in the United States as it opened in 1826. Baltimore, you see, was the epicenter of seafood at that time with its proximity to the Chesapeake Bay.

James Shriver, whose name is represented on the museum's Shriver's Oyster Ketchup bottle, was born on November 15, 1827. He was the eldest son of William Shriver and Mary Margaret Josephine Owens of Union Mills (Myers District), Carroll County, Maryland. Union Mills is northwest of both Baltimore and Westminster, Maryland.

The Shriver family was quite large as James had six brothers:

Thomas Herbert, Benjamin F., William Tell, Christopher Columbus, Mark O., and Albert K. Shriver. He also had five sisters: Elizabeth, Sarah, Mary, Emma, and Margarite. The eldest, Elizabeth, was married to Thomas J. Myer (Thos. J. Myer & Co.) who was one of the pioneers in the oyster and fruit packing business in Baltimore. The Shrivvers and Myers were connected in many ways. You can see the museum example of the Thomas J. Myer pint jar from Baltimore, Maryland in our Jar Gallery.

On January 21, 1852, James Shriver married Elizabeth Jane Myer who was a sister of Thomas J. Myer. In the *1850 United States Federal Census*, James was counted as a member of the Myer household. Two of the Shriver brothers were also partners with Thomas J. Myer, that being Mark O., and Albert K. Shriver.

James Shriver started out in the pickle and preserve business in 1856 located at 307 W. Pratt in Baltimore. In 1858, he formed a partnership with Joseph Fink, Jr. which ended with a Notice of Dissolution of Partnership on August 31st, 1860, "The firm of Shriver & Fink is this day dissolved by mutual consent. James

OYSTER KETCHUP

Every Bottle has a Story | FOHBC Virtual Museum | Food & Sauces Gallery



Color run of Shriver's Baltimore Oyster Ketchup bottles from the Lou Pellegrini collection.



The product was made of the finest and highest-flavored Baltimore Oysters, containing all of their flavor, and is pronounced the best Ketchup, or Sauce, now in use. It is intended for use on all meats, hot or cold, and is particularly good on poultry.

Shriver & Co. having purchased the entire interest of Joseph Fink, Jr. are alone authorized to use the name of the late firm in settlement.

An adjacent Notice of Co-partnership read "The undersigned have this day formed a Co-partnership under the name and style of James Shriver & Co., for the purpose of continuing the Oyster, Pickling and Preserving Business lately carried on by Shriver & Fink, 307 West Pratt Street, Baltimore."

At this same time in 1860, Shriver's Oyster Ketchup bottles must have been in production at Baltimore Glass Works because we start seeing advertisements nationally in 1861. One said, "The product was made of the finest and highest-flavored Baltimore Oysters, containing all of their flavor, and is pronounced the best Ketchup, or Sauce, now in use. It is intended for use on all meats, hot or cold, and is particularly good on poultry. For seasoning soups and gravies it has no equal and is a delightful addition to chicken salad, or wherever a ketchup or sauce is desirable. Originated and prepared only by Jas. Shriver & Co., Baltimore, Md."

Both sizes of the Shriver's Baltimore Oyster Ketchup in three slightly different shades of green glass.

Three of the smaller size Shriver's Baltimore Oyster Ketchup bottle bottoms with distinct iron pontils.



Oyster Ketchup!
A NEW ARTICLE!
TRY IT! TRY IT!
SHRIVER'S BALTIMORE OYSTER KETCHUP!
 Shriver's Baltimore Oyster Ketchup!

THIS IS AN ENTIRELY NEW ARTICLE, made of the finest and highest-flavored Baltimore Oysters, containing all their flavor, and is pronounced the best Ketchup, or Sauce, now in use. It is intended for use on all meats, hot or cold, and is particularly good on poultry. For seasoning soups and gravies it has no equal, and is a delightful addition to chicken salad, or wherever a ketchup or sauce is desirable.

Originated and prepared only by
JAS SHRIVER & CO., Baltimore, Md.
 For sale, wholesale, by
J. T. WARREN & CO.,
 Main-st., Cincinnati.
 Also, by retail grocers generally. fe24-cm

Oyster Ketchup! A New Article, Shriver's Baltimore Oyster Ketchup!
 Originated and prepared only by Jas. Shriver & Co., Baltimore, Md.
 Cincinnati Daily Press (Cincinnati, Ohio) April 8, 1861

James Shriver would remain in business for another ten years or so and he would move into the insurance business next where he was respected, well-known, and very successful. We also see that James Shriver of Baltimore was granted a patent in 1866 for a refrigerator, and assigned it to his son, Charles H. Shriver, of Dedham, Massachusetts. James Shriver would die on January 31, 1887.

Brother Benjamin Frank Shriver would start B. F. Shriver Company in 1869, the first canning plant in the Union Mills Carroll County area of Maryland. Thomas Herbert Shriver would join as a partner in 1874. The business expanded so rapidly that by 1881 the plant was moved from Union Mills to Westminster. Within the next twenty years, the B. F. Shriver Co. had plants in Littlestown, New Windsor, Sykesville, and Williamsport, in addition to the parent plant in Westminster.

The company was incorporated in 1905 at which time Thomas Herbert became president; Frank Shriver, vice president; and Herbert's eldest son Joseph, second vice president; and Herbert's youngest son William, treasurer.

There are two sizes of bottles embossed 'SHRIVER'S OYSTER KETCHUP BALTIMORE.' The smaller is roughly 7 ½" tall x 2" diameter while the second is 9" tall. Both are represented in our museum and are considered extremely rare. Some examples that are smooth base that were most likely blown at the end term

Both examples of Shriver's Baltimore Oyster Ketchup in the museum. The taller example on the right with the Lea & Perrins style applied mouth.



of James Shriver & Co., though most examples are open or iron pontiled.

When looking at the bottle, you see that the embossed copy 'SHRIVER'S' is arched on the face on the bottle over three lines of copy, 'OYSTER' (2nd line), 'KETCHUP' (3rd line), and 'BALTIMORE' (4th line). The mouths are typically long or short tapered collars. The bottles exude character with crudity and whittle, bubbles drips, high kick-ups, and stretch marks in the glass. You can find them in beautiful shades of amber, green, and aqua. The reverse was probably reserved for a label that we have not seen an example.

We also have in our museum an example of the 9" tall, club-style bottle which is the taller of the two size variants of Shriver's Baltimore Oyster Ketchup. What is interesting and significant about this bottle is the Lea & Perrins style mouth that was applied to the top of the bottle. The bottle mouths are typically long or short tapered collars. This museum example has a double tapered collar with a ring on the top.

It is interesting to note that Lea & Perrins bottles of this period had a cork and glass stopper and were of British manufacture. This club-style bottle is a distinctive shape that is closely identified with various brands of sauces that were intended for meat, poultry, and seafood. The origin of this style was most likely the bottle for Lea & Perrins company which was first used in the

1840s. Due to the success of Lea & Perrins, the sauce was copied by scores of other companies and put up in bottles of the same shape, often with the same or similar embossing pattern with different lettering for the producer.

Lea & Perrins is best known for its brand of Worcestershire sauce which was first sold in 1837 by John Wheeley Lea and William Henry Perrins, dispensing chemists from Broad Street, Worcester, England. The sauce was inspired by Marcus Sandys, 3rd Baron Sandys who had served in Bengal and tasted a fish sauce there which he asked them to recreate but ended up putrid until it lay fermenting for three years. The sauce was first imported to the United States by the Duncan family of New York in 1839 which continued involvement for over a hundred years.

By the mid-1800s many sauce brands were shipped west of the Mississippi as thousands of gold seekers made their way to California and the goldfields. This popular condiment soon found a receptive market in restaurants, hotel dining rooms, and in the dining salons of passenger ships.

Now, these great bottles are represented in our museum.



This is the second in a series highlighting select specimens in the Virtual Museum. See and read the gallery version online at fohbcvirtualmuseum.org

