

A Tale of Two Batchelors

By Fred DeCarlo



This is an extremely rare pontil hair dye put up by Daniel Batchelor of Utica, NY. This photo was from a 2016 Glass Works Auctions sale.

In the hobby of collecting bottles many are familiar with the name Batchelors which are associated with hair dyes and hair-related products. William Batchelor of New York City sold these products on a grand scale taking out advertisements nationwide, and bottle diggers far and wide have discovered remnants or intact examples all over. What many have not heard of was another Batchelor family who also was engaged in the sale of

hair products from the city of Utica, New York. Let us look at the Utica Batchelor Brothers, and William's anger at the competition from this central New York family.

Daniel Batchelor emigrated from England in 1839 and took up residence in Utica, N.Y. after a short stay in Philadelphia. Soon after his brothers John F. and Peter also came to live in Utica.



Daniel Batchelor Tricogene bottle I excavated from a woodlined privy in Utica, N.Y. There are only a few known and this is the only example with a rounded double collar lip. Tricogene was advertised for the cleaning, restoring and regrowing of the hair.



Example of a John F. Batchelor Liquid Hair Dye No. 1. Daniel and his brother John both put out hair dyes and all examples I have seen have their first initial before Batchelor.

From everything I could read while researching the Utica Batchelor family, they were hairdressers by trade before coming to America. The first directory listing I could find in Utica was from 1842 and listed Daniel and his brother John F. as hairdressers with an established business address of 1 Genesee St. They continued in the directory for many years, but the focus of this article will be the 1840s – 1860s. Some listings changed a bit stating hairdressing saloon and hairdressers and dealers of wigs, human hair, fancy goods and perfumes.

In researching William Batchelor from NYC, I found several later advertisements which listed his son Charles, and these advertisements stated their business had been established in 1839. I could not find proof of this because my lack of access to New York City directories but most advertisements I could find started in around 1845. The odd part of the 1839 date was that it is the same year in which Daniel Batchelor from Utica immigrated to the United States. Like Daniel and John F. from Utica, William also sold wigs, hair products and “Fancy Goods.”

Now that we have a very briefly established the two families, I want to present my reason for the desire to research the Batchelor bottles. I had been always told Batchelor Hair Dyes were a product made in Utica, New York As a collector of only bottles from my hometown of Utica, I was interested in getting my hands on a few. When I began to ask around locally some collectors showed me examples. The examples presented were small hair dye bottles that were small square paneled and embossing of Batchelors, Liquid, Hair Dye, No. 1 each on one of the four side panels. A second example I was shown was practically the same bottle with the same embossing except with the name D. Batchelor on the panel where the name was embossed. These bottles amazed me as the appearance was strikingly similar. Though some local collectors believed the Batchelors absent the first initial may have been from Utica, I now am certain that they are not and are from William and Charles Batchelor from New York City. The examples from Utica either have a D. or a J.F. before Batchelor for Daniel and John F. respectively.

So, who came first when it came to market their hair products? I could only guess at this point but one thing I can say for certain, William was very upset as seen in many of his local advertisements. William had angrily disputed his product being the first and genuine product and without directly naming Daniel or John’s products ran ads calling names to the imitators and belittling the existence of any knock offs as unsafe and an imitation.

Here is one such advertisement:

“Monkeys, parrots, and dogs may be taught to imitate some of the outward forms and actions of humanity; and foxes manifest in aptness in stealing quite equal to the generality of mankind—but to man alone, is given the ability to originate, contrive and construct, and even the human animal seems to divide by his own acts his species into the different genre of men, or originators, contrivers or constructors – and monkeys, parrots, and foxes, or imitators pretenders and speculators. Mark the striking exemplification. Wm. A. Batchelor of 233 Broadway, New York, having by perseverance and years of toll and costly experiments, succeeded in producing a Hair Dye, for which he has received



A possibly only known example of an open pontil Daniel Batchelor Antispasiss from Utica, NY. Advertised as removing dandruff and restoring a natural glow to hair without a greasy appearance.

15 medals and diplomas – and by all, admitted to be perfect in all respects, a host of imitating monkeys and piratical pretenders, who always beset the paths of geniuses and toil, to take advantage of the wit they do not possess themselves, have sprung upon the trail laid out by “BACHELOR.” With peculiar pertinacity they beset and worry with pretentious stories and bravado, every one who will listen to them, and they frequently succeed in gaining credit for themselves and trash. To guard the unsuspecting, the original and genuine Wm. A. Batchelor Hair Dye is now put up with a costly Steel Plate Engraving, and his signature thereon on four sides of the box, and the address, 233 Broadway, New York.”

Another advertisement called out the dealers of whom sold his competitors' products. This was an advertisement put up by an agent in Rome, N.Y., Kinney & Greene, Druggist and Apothecary, 38 Dominick St.:

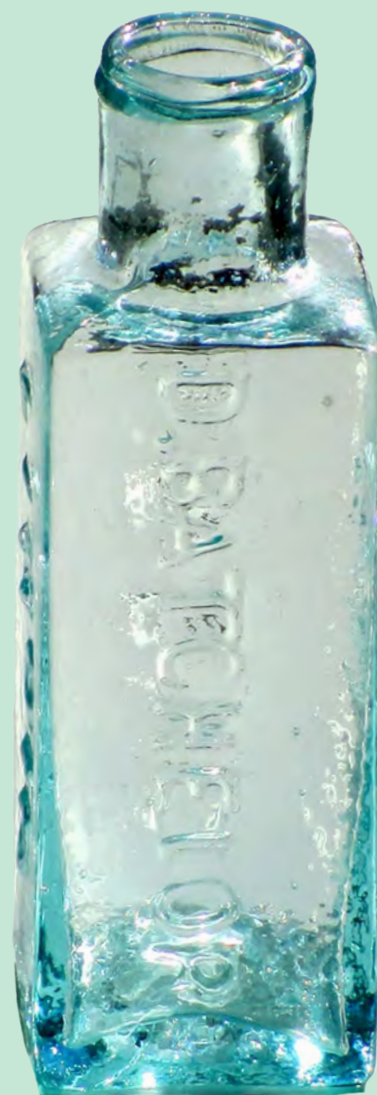
“Wm. A. Batchelor's Hair Dye To Dealers – the original, To those whose consciences are confined in their breeches pockets, and their brains in a broader part of their pantaloons, I have but little to say, but shall let the consequences of dealing in imitations and trash work their own course. If by accident, the names of such leak out, I shall not take much trouble to stop the leak. But for the protection of honest and honorable

dealers and unsuspecting consumers, the original, genuine, and reputable Wm. A. Batchelor's Hair Dye is put up with an elegant Steel Plate Engraving, with his signature and address up the four sides of the box.”

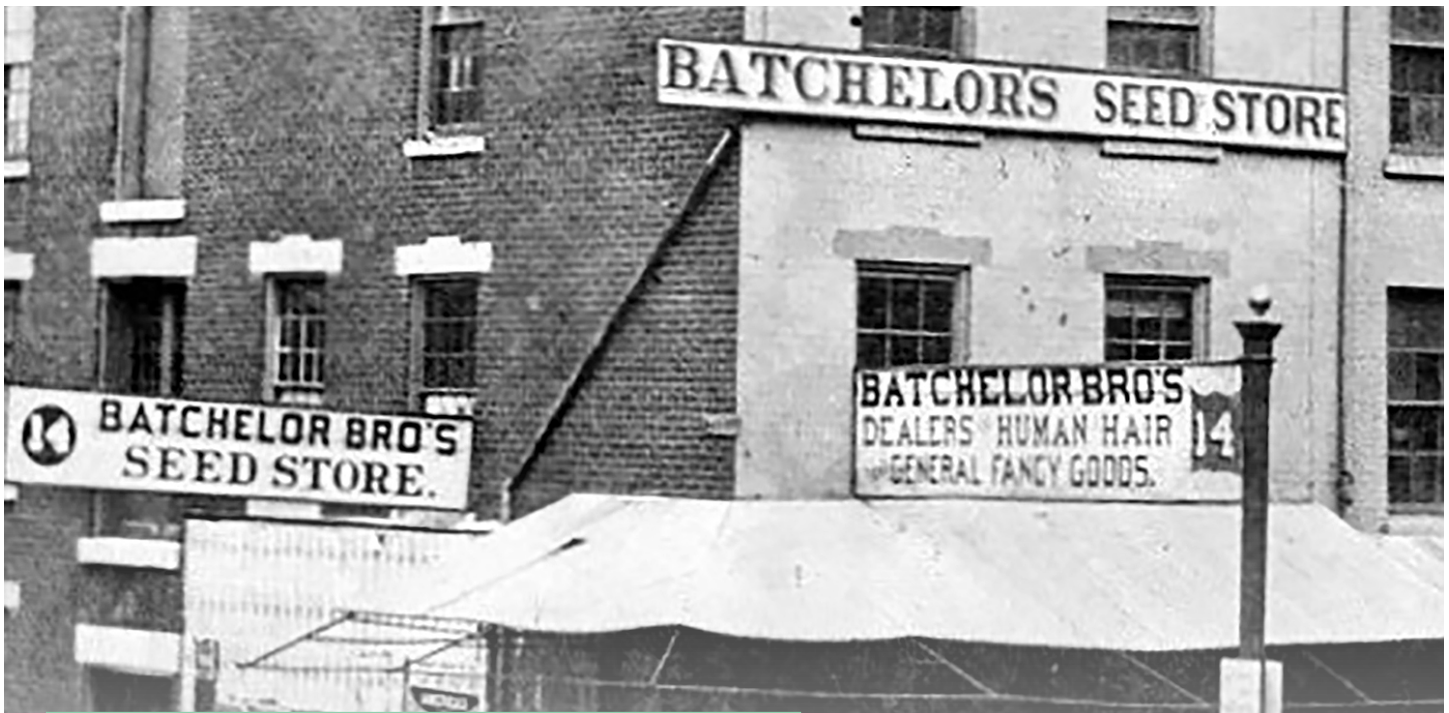
One last advertisement I wanted to showcase was also to discredit Daniel and John. This also listed Kinney & Greene of Rome, N.Y. as agents. Rome, N.Y. is a neighboring city to Utica.

It read:

“With a tub of putty and a thimble full of soap for brains, any one in an hour, may for a tolerable semblance of a man, capable of receiving impressions, a man of weight, and susceptible of increasing in worth, as the raw materials advances on “charge” for putty sometimes rises, not withstanding its weight, But in course of nature, it takes years of time and study, and anxious toil and thought to prefect the acting, thinking agent of Divinity; Now mark the application of this precept. Wm. A. Batchelor's Hair Dye. By its intrinsic worth, has won a reputation almost universal, and is acknowledged to be, beyond comparison, the most natural, and in fact, the only reliable known. Its very reputation has fertilized into existence, scores of imitating compounds, of the same relative worth to the genuine Wm. A. Batchelor's as the putty man bears to the thinking flech and blood. As it is



Daniel Batchelors Liquid Hair Dye No 1. You can see the almost identical resemblance to William Batchelors hair dye products.



Three examples of William Batchelor's, of New York City, Liquid Hair Dye No. 1, Williams bottles almost always had BATCHELOR'S with the 'S' at the end of his name

Daniel Batchelor's store on Liberty St in Utica. This is after Daniel began selling agricultural seed but on the front the sign reads Dealers in Human Hair and other fancy goods.

In the photos presented with this article you can see that some of the Utica Batchelor bottles were interesting. Examples exist from the 1840s on through the 1860s and a few even later probably 1870s-80s. The dark green example shown is considered one of the top hair bottles known to exist. This photo was from a 2016 Glass Works auction, and is most likely circa 1850. Another interesting bottle is a D. Batchelor's Tricogene which we dug in a Utica privy a while back with a rounded double-collared lip. This may be the

only known examples dug as two were found in one privy. A couple other Tricogene were found with a flat ring single applied lip. Also shown is a great example of a D. Batchelor's Antispasiss open pontil bottle. This example is most likely the only known but this would be tough to confirm.

As time went on Daniel Batchelor slowly migrated into a new business venture in that of selling agricultural seeds. This business thrived for well over a century and although not in business any longer there still is an old painted sign, albeit hardly visible now days, on a brick structure at the corner of Hotel Street and Liberty Street in downtown Utica. I hope that you found this article somewhat informative on the two separate families engaged in the same business with the same name and similar looking products. It was confusing for me at first as with other collectors I am sure. If anyone would like to discuss or share stories on the topic please reach out to me.



presumed that dealers and consumers are not all putty men, they will be able to apply moral for themselves and obtain the genuine and true, with Steel plate engravings signed on all four sides by William A. Batchelor, 233 Broadway, New York"

This ad went on and on and the reader can almost feel William's anger in the very writing of the ad. He often ran ads right above or below Daniel's ads in local newspapers proclaiming to beware of imitators. On the flip side, I personally had never seen Daniel place any ads claiming he was the original or other products being an imitation. Could it be Daniel really was an imitator not only stealing the exact mold styles as William but also having the same last name? It was easy to mistake one for the product for the competitor's product. We may never truly know but what we do know is William's business was probably at least 100-fold Daniel's business.