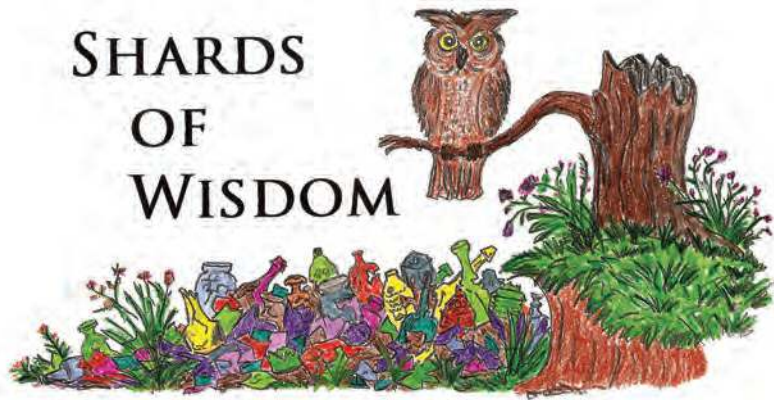


SHARDS OF WISDOM



Some observations on how to become a bitters proprietor, excerpted from Rev. Rowland Connor's address to the December 1884 East Saginaw Sanitary Convention

The following lively extract, from Dr. Gibbons, of California, may assist the imagination of those who are slow to believe anything of the resources of human ingenuity in the invention of bitters:

"In the concoction of the various kinds of bitters, there is but little else than fraud, * * * The verist fool can manufacture medicinal bitters - an experiment which has been successfully tried over and over again. The process is admirable. Some children of toil, who has grown weary of wiping sweat from his brow, buys a lot of the cheapest whisky which the market affords, and steeps in it one or more bitter herbs which he finds at hand. He gives the decoction a distinctive name and calls himself 'Doctor,' though he has never so much as held a doctor's stirrup or blacked a doctor's boots. The formula for medicinal bitters in general runs thus: Take of cheapest whisky, an indefinite quality; of any bitter vegetable, herb, flower, root, or bark, *quantum suff.* Mix and flavor with anything or nothing. Put in bottles and employ an expert liar to write labels and certificates. Present a few bottles to editors and clergymen of taste. Advertise largely and sell for 500 percent above cost of material."

Submitted by Chris Bubash, Dayton, Ohio

The Ten Year Itch

Marilyn Monroe made a movie called *The Seven Year Itch* and having never watched it I can only guess what the plot was. My plot is considerably simpler. Ten years ago, Paul Jeffries showed up at my house suggesting we go find a place to dig bottles.

Now I'm not as fortunate as diggers living in Portland; however, I do have a reasonably good location about ½ mile away. It's a residential area that my *Sanborn* maps cover back to 1909. We selected what we felt would be a good spot and began knocking on doors. We got a few permissions but couldn't find the privies. Finally, from the other side of a high wooden fence, I heard Paul say, "I got one." We knocked on the door, but it was an apartment complex, and all the tenants said, "the owner lives in Idaho." I was able to get his phone number, but he refused our request to dig. Paul had already commented "man, it's loaded" which didn't help. This was in 2011. I even tried sneaking into the backyard, but a tenant caught me and immediately called the owner who ordered me off the property.

In dismay, I chalked that privy up to "never gonna happen" and moved on, but I did write the owner and apologize and gave him my business card with my phone number. I also explained what digging bottles was about and their interest for me. He was polite but still refused. Knowing there were bottles buried in that privy was very difficult to ignore. I even had dreams about going in undercover to dig, but I never did.

Surprisingly, in June 2021, the owner called me out of the blue and asked if I still dug bottles. Then said, he'd reconsidered my request, and, in the fall, he'd call me. On September 11, 2021, he called me back saying he was in Hood River, and I could come to dig the property at 5 PM. I don't normally start a privy at 5 PM, but I'd waited ten years to find out what was buried there!

I showed up, introduced myself (we'd never met face to face), and he pulled out a chair motioning me to sit down. This proceeded to turn into an interview in which he grilled me about how I'd found the privy in the first place. Naturally, I blamed Paul for trespassing but took full responsibility since Paul was just a guest. The fella even had me sign an agreement saying I could keep bottles up to \$100 in value, but over that, we'd split everything. I signed the paper, and by now it was probably 6 PM.

I proceeded to try and probe where I remember the privy being, but over the past ten years he had dumped a load of dirt, then compacted it and covered it with gravel. He even admitted it was to prevent me from digging since I seemed (to him) to be so determined. Wow! I was impressed.

I had to break holes in the hard pack to probe, while the owner plopped down in a lawn chair and watched. I'm not sure if it was to keep guard over me, or from an actual interest in "treasure hunting" as he put it? And he began filming the event. When it finally began getting dark, I hit the privy, laid down tarps, and started to dig. The privy was about five feet from a hundred-year-old oak tree, so the roots were a real issue. And it occurred to me "if ever a privy wasn't meant to be dug, it was this one."

Two and a half feet down I began hitting rusted cans and broken pottery, but it was so dark I had to hang a portable light I'd brought, on my probe to see. And due to the hole size, I was standing on my head to carefully dig which led to chest pains and becoming lightheaded...bad sign since I have a pre-existing heart condition. The first bottle was so impacted by roots, I struggled to get it out. I didn't want to break the lip because I was sure it was going to be a large Hood River Pharmacy bottle. It turned out to be a threaded Rawleigh's bottle from the 1930s. This and other indicators I found pointed to this being a 1930s era privy. It was loaded as Paul had said but with newer trash.

I'd agonized for ten years over this pit, only to have it be too new. By the time I got the hole refilled, it was completely dark, and I was sick and felt I was going to pass out from the exhaustion, and high blood pressure. The whole time the owner continued taking pictures and asking silly questions and offering helpful suggestions while I kept on with my meltdown. I ended up lying flat on the ground, so I wouldn't pass out and hurt myself in the fall, while the owner stood over me filming. I felt like those people on YouTube who everyone rushes to film while they're dying,

instead of offering help. Somehow, I managed to load my gear and drive home, where I finally began to feel a bit better. In the owner's defense, he did call and ask if I made it home, which was nice of him to do. He may have been filming himself doing it, I'm not sure. So, this entire "fail" may end up on YouTube? I hope not. It wasn't one of my finer moments.

So, the moral of the story is...? I'm still trying to figure that out. Obviously, this privy did NOT want to give up its contents. The owner said one of his older long-time tenants died in the apartment, so perhaps her ghost was behind all this mayhem? I guess the lesson I learned was, even though I act like an immature juvenile a lot of times, I'm still 71 with health issues. So don't push your luck! And God Bless America!

By Tom Bostwick. Reprinted from the Oregon Bottle Collectors Assoc. *The Stumptown Report* newsletter

A Row in the Police Court – A New Use for Mineral Bottles

September 30, 1869 issue of *The Cincinnati Enquirer*

There was trouble in the Police Court yesterday morning, such as the Police Court never saw before. The regular attendants had scarcely recovered from the shock produced by the throwing of a bowlder (sic) through the window of the Judge's room, on the night previous, which seriously incommoded one of the jurymen, when Miss Cordelia Wade was brought in. Delia is the lady who bore a brickbat through the ornamental window of the Commercial office on the evening previous, and she was brought in to answer the charge of malicious destruction of property. Cordelia showed no signs of contrition-in fact she was a little drunk-and she said that she had done just exactly what she intended to do, only that she wanted to smash a reporter's head. She seemed delighted with what she had done. A clear case was made against the vicious lady, and the Judge sentenced her to thirty days in the county jail, and to pay a fine of \$100 and costs. All this time Cordelia had kept an evil and wicked eye upon the reporters' desk. No sooner had the Judge pronounced his sentence upon her than she straightened herself up with womanly dignity and drew from her pocket an old mineral water bottle. Drawing back quickly she threw it with all the force of her enervated arm at the desk where sat her mortal enemies-the reporters. The agile youth of the *Times* dodged just in time to save his head from being crushed to impalpable powder, and the missile struck bloodless against the opposite wall. Poor Cordelia almost overflowed with grief and anguish when she found that she had failed to kill a miserable reporter; but she was immediately seized and marched away before she could devise a new method of destruction. Her last words, as she was taken from the painful scene, were fearful oaths against the whole newspaper fraternity.

Just after the faded Cordelia disappeared, Miss Nellie Keith, another degenerate lady of pleasure, was brought up on a charge of vagrancy. She, too, came provided with a mineral water bottle, and when sentenced was pronounced against her, she drew the novel weapon from her pocket, emboldened by the exploit of Miss Wade, and hurled it with vicious force at the head of Sergeant White, of the Hammond Street Station-house, an individual against whom she entertained a particular grudge. The Sergeant ducked his head, and the deadly mineral whistled harmlessly over

him. But Nellie had not satisfied herself fully, and as she was being taken down managed to smash a pane of glass out of the door. She was brought back, and the Judge increased her term of servitude to six months in the City Prison.

The mineral-water bottle dodge was an "astonisher" to the Court, and after the irate females had been removed, the Judge sent for the keeper of the Ninth-street Station-house and reprimanded him severely. It was evident that the women had been furnished with bottles of whisky after they were placed in the cells, as they were searched when first locked up, and managed to be drunk when they were brought to Court. They must have been supplied by the station-keeper, or somebody who had access to them. The reporters unite in requesting that disagreeable females be searched hereafter before they are brought into the Court-room, lest some valuable member of the community be deprived of his life through their agency.

Submitted by Chris Bubash, Dayton, Ohio

Nothing once tasted so good like cool drink of 'Love Bug Juice' By Bill Baab

Lucy Cleghorn and her eight siblings grew up in South Georgia and as soon as they were old enough, they'd join neighbors in the fields of their family farms and pick peas, cotton, tobacco and other crops during the spring, summer and fall. Hot work? You betcha! Later in the day, a good neighbor would pour a bottle of Redi-Aid into a one-gallon glass jug of ice water, stir it up to mix the orange-flavored concentrate and then kindly serve the beverage to the parched kids in the fields. "We'd all drink it straight from the jug," said Lucy, now the wife of Billy Murphy and resident of Augusta, Georgia. "It tasted so good! We called it 'Love Bug Juice!'" C.A., Aaron, Elise, Polly, Charles, Alex and Ricky - her brothers and sisters - would make that observation unanimous.

The beverage's maker was Mar-Key Foods Inc. in nearby Vidalia, a farming area nationally known for its crops of sweet onions. There was a branch factory in Wadley, a Jefferson County community some 40-odd-miles south of Augusta. The concentrate was housed in small clear bottles with little pouring spouts and are hardly collectible and their value is nil. But there is an optimistic Internet website offering them priced from \$1 to \$39, the latter for an example sporting a colorful paper label. There may have been other flavors, but neither Lucy nor sister Polly Hogan remember them. The latter owns Redi-Aid bottles from both communities, the town names embossed on the 1950s-era bottles' bases.

The Cleghorn farm was located in Irwinville, first called Irwinsville when it was founded in 1831 and named for Georgia Governor Jared Irwin. It was given its present name when it was incorporated in 1837, according to *Wikipedia*. Presently, it is an unincorporated community, having lost its post office and other amenities some years ago.

So while there is little in the way of market value in the bottles, the Cleghorns' pleasant memories are priceless.

