



I originally wrote the *Cheers to the Privy* article (*Bottles and Extras*, November–December 2017) to celebrate the discovery of three great flasks. These flasks were all dug in a short time period (just over a month) in Wheeling, West Virginia, and were all found at the bottom of the privy and near the center of the pit.

Cheers to

By Jeff Mihalik

I also added an addendum to that article as I wanted to include another extraordinary flask that we dug some weeks after the first three. This flask was also positioned in the middle of the pit, but it was higher up and seemed out of place. We were finding newer bottles below this flask, so this pit was disturbed at some point. This new find, a killer green GIX-41 flask, deserved to be included in that article.

A couple of years after digging the four flasks mentioned in the original *Cheers to the Privy* article, I secured permission on a downtown lot along Main Street in Wheeling. [Fig 1] After digging three privies on this lot, including a pontil pit which produced a really nice open pontil “Laughlins and Bushfield Wholesale Druggist Wheeling Va.” [Fig 2], the 1870s–1880s pit, and the 1890s–1905 pit, we thought that we had dug out all the privies on this lot.

After being persistent and probing again, I found a fourth privy! Well, it had to be either the newest pit on the lot or the oldest! When probing the pit, I could tell that it didn’t seem to have much in it. After digging into it, I confirmed that it was heavily dipped.



[Fig 2] Open pontil “Laughlins and Bushfield Wholesale Druggist Wheeling Va.”

the Privy



[Fig 3] from Pittsburgh, an embossed “Holmes & Kidd.”

“Privy builders may have celebrated the completion of the privy vault by drinking a good bottle of whiskey and, after using the privy for the first time, tossed in the bottle.”

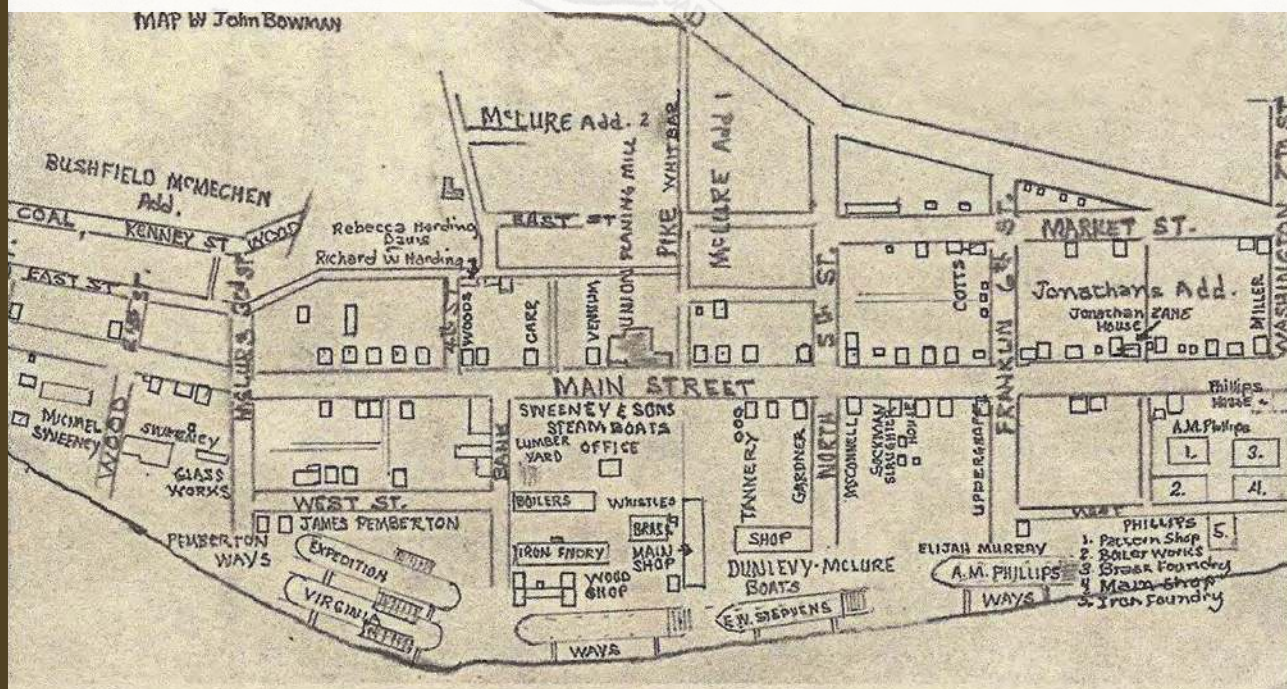


[Fig 5] Left: GI-1 Beaded edge Washington—Eagle flask from Pittsburgh.
Right: GIX-8 iron pontil, “Louisville, KY Glassworks” flask in amber.

Rebecca Harding
in 1836.
W. Harding's
6 Bank (Fourth)
See on Map.
boat *Virginia*
boat on the upper-
River.

Double Addendum

[Fig 1] Downtown lots along Main Street in Wheeling circa 1836 map.



North Wheeling's Steamboat Yards and Ways Circa 1836

James Pemberton Steamboats, T. Sweeney & Sons Steamboats, Dunlevy-McLure Steamboats, and Elijah Murray Steamboats. Elijah Murray building the A.M. Phillips

The first whole bottle and the first piece of glass was a nice open pontil scroll flask that was stuck to the side wall. On another side wall, I found a really early and rare pontiled medicine from Pittsburgh, an embossed “Holmes & Kidd.” Many years ago, I dug one of these in Lisbon, Ohio, and believe there are less than five known complete examples.

After digging this pit out, there was a wet, mucky layer that seemed to be about one inch thick or so at the bottom, so I decided to scrape it to ensure no other smaller bottles were hiding. As I was scraping the bottom and in the middle of the pit, I hit a piece of glass and popped up a whole flask. I couldn’t believe an entire flask could be stuck in this thin muck seam, but there it was, a GI-1 beaded edge “Washington Eagle” flask from Pittsburgh. It did have a small pry lip chip, but otherwise, it was in excellent condition! In all the digging I have done in Pittsburgh, I have never even seen a complete example dug. I was totally excited to find this flask! And it was another center-bottom-of-the-pit flask to boot.

When I wrote the original Cheers to the Privy article, I really should have included another killer flask in that story. It was also found at the bottom of and in the middle of a privy pit in Wheeling. Although this flask was dug a few years before the others, it nicely fits in with the Cheers to the Privy theory of how privy builders may have celebrated the completion of the privy vault by drinking a good bottle of whiskey and, after using the privy for the first time, tossed in the bottle.

So here I would like to present one of my favorite dug flasks in my collection—a GIX-8 iron pontil, “Louisville, KY Glassworks” flask in amber. The late Mark Vuono stated in his *The Writing is on the Scroll!* article in *Antique Bottle & Glass Collector*, Dec. 2018, “Enjoy the amber example pictured, as it is a real treasure.” I totally agree!! This flask also has the pebbly texture Mark mentions in his article. The privy this came from was close to ten feet deep and had many other bottles in it, including a “Cholera Syrup” from Wheeling, Virginia (prior to statehood and being Wheeling West Virginia), and several better pontil bottles including a cathedral pickle.

As much as I always try and dig out all the corner areas of a privy (as many bottles escape being dipped by hiding in corners), I now always dig a little deeper in the middle of the privy too!

So, here’s Cheers to the Privy! a second time around!!



[Fig 4] GI-1 Beaded edge Washington—Eagle flask from Pittsburgh.

