

Follow Your Dreams

Digging bottles makes the grade (seventh)

By Peter McQuade

It all started for me when I was in the seventh grade. A friend and I would go down to the river and fish during recess. On one trip, I noticed bottles sticking out of the bank just above the water level. I put my pole down and started digging right away. I had no rake but brought home many bottles that day.

My next trip to the dump was with my mother and a rake. I was twelve years old and the bottle bug had bit me hard. It took a summer to dig the dump. Many good bottles came out, including a G.O. Blakes in yellow amber, a Wilson Fairbank's Whiskey, Geyser Springs, and more. The year was 1970.

The following year my brother, David, brought home a Hood's Sarsaparilla packed with ash and stained all over. He said he found it on the path off of South Main Street. My mother and I started digging. This was a large ash pit over the road bank. We went to the bottom of the bank and dug a ten foot wide trench. The ash was already two feet deep. As we dug up the bank, the ash got deeper and deeper. It took all we had just to keep the bottom in sight. You could see all the layers from all the years. Bottles would appear from the ash and you had to be careful not to break them, as most were pontiled and valuable.

We had a cave-in which took weeks to clean out. It exposed many bottles, including the Zieber ink, Dr. Townsend's Sarsaparilla, Harrison's Columbian ink, Phoenix Bitters, etc. We dug there for five years before the interstate went over it.



TOP: The author, Peter McQuade, selling bottles in fall 1972 at Holiday in the Hills, Granby, Vermont.

ABOVE: Delores McQuade holding a quart Zieber Ink dug by her son, Peter McQuade. The bottle was dug in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, in 1975.

Holiday in the Hills was an annual event held in Granby, Vermont. It started in the '60s to generate funds to get electricity into the small town. It was a lot of fun, with log boring, blacksmithing, horse pulling, Revolutionary War reenactments, cannon firing, and much more. The picture is of me selling bottles in the fall of 1972!

The bottle hobby has been very good to me. I still dig to this day, and dream about bottles often. I will have more stories later, but for now, happy digging!

Excited to announce the Summer 2021 opening of the **Royal Crown Cola Museum** in **Columbus, GA**, home of Royal Crown's founder Claud A. Hatcher!

Looking for artifacts (signs, display pieces, etc.) from the following: Chero-Cola, Royal Crown Cola, Nehi, Diet Rite Cola, Upper 10, Par T Pack Ginger ale!

Please contact Allen Woodall at 706-332-6378.



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