

Tom Askjem, the Nebraska and Dakota bottle king, digger and researcher, has sent this update on how he keeps busy out on the plains. "I finished up my digging season recently. Brought an excavator in on a ghost town. We got nine Hutches: seven from Grafton, N.D., one from East Grand Forks and one generic without embossing."

Welcome to the Grant Marsh House

And while visiting, say hello to Mark Twain and Gen. Custer

Another interesting dig shared by Tom Askjem of Buxton, North Dakota

In 2017, I dug the Grant Marsh House in Yankton, South Dakota. The house was built in 1877. There were two privies in the yard. There was one bottle that stuck out to me, and was one of several intact-of-era artifacts found in the privy that fit the historical time frame he lived there, being that Grant Marsh located to Tennessee in the mid-1880s.

Though a bit unimpressive as far as embossing goes, this is one of my favorite bottles. It has some of the best history associated with it of any bottle I've dug. It appears to be a beer bottle. It came from the bottom of the oldest privy in the yard of the Grant Marsh house. The beer bottle is embossed on the bottom with "C&I", indicating that it was made by the Cunningham & Ihmsen Glassworks of Pittsburgh. The glassworks was out of business by 1878.

Grant Marsh was considered one of the greatest riverboat captains in U.S. history. He started his career in 1856 as a cabin boy. He became first mate and student pilot under Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain).

Marsh served on more than 23 vessels in his career. He is best known for piloting the Far West, which in 1876 accompanied the U.S. Army column that included Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and the 7th Cavalry.

That army column was part of the Great Sioux War of 1876, which included the Battle of Little Bighorn. After the battle, Grant Marsh piloted the Far West down the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers to Bismarck, carrying 51 wounded Cavalry troopers from the site of Custer's Last Stand. Marsh brought the first news of the Custer massacre, which was relayed to the rest of the country via telegraph from Bismarck.

— Tom (thomas.askjem@gmail.com)

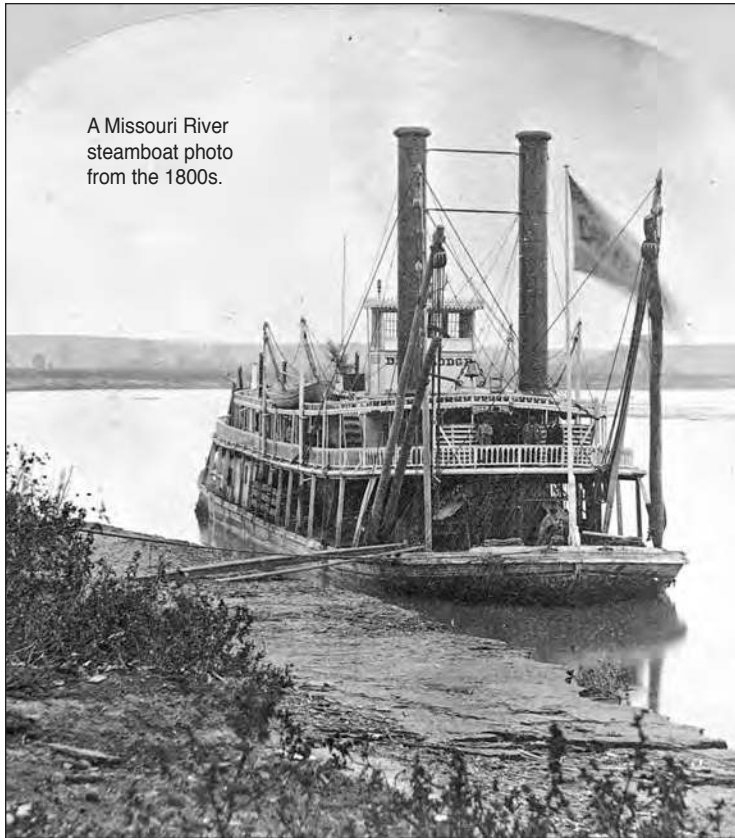
Wikipedia adds a ton of great information about Marsh, stating "Captain Grant Marsh Was King of the Missouri River." It continues: "The Far West's 54-hour, 710-mile day-and-night dash to Bismarck with the wounded troopers of Major Reno's command was one of the most remarkable exploits in the history of Missouri River steamboating. It was Marsh

and those he brought with him who relayed the fate of the Seventh Cavalry to the rest of the nation, which was then celebrating its centennial year."

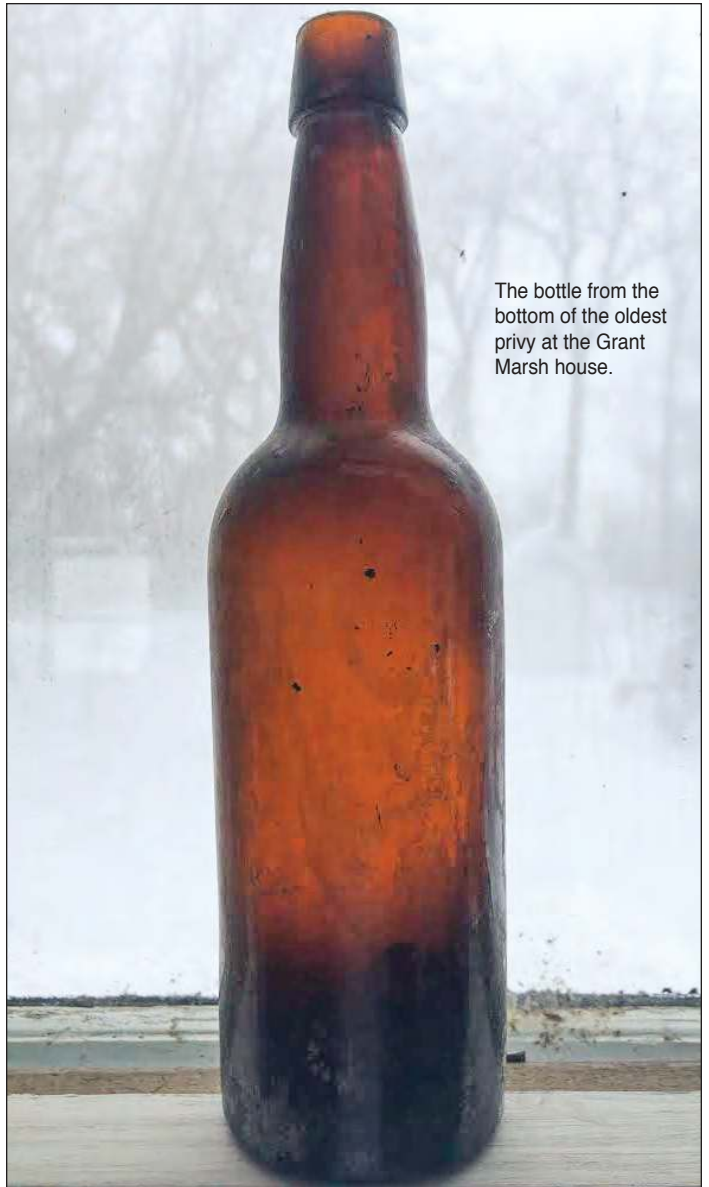
"Marsh then continued his work on the Missouri. In Yankton, he bought a handsome brick house in 1877. With his own packet boat, the W.J. Behan, he participated in one more notable event in late April 1883, transporting Sitting Bull and his remaining followers from Fort Yates to Fort Randall, where they had been detained after their return from Canada.

"Then, as river traffic waned on the Missouri, Marsh moved to Memphis, Tenn., where there were still opportunities for individuals like him on the Mississippi.

"He did, though, return to Bismarck, operating snag boats, towing coal barges, transporting grain and cement. He stayed active on the river as long as he could. Marsh died in near poverty in Bismarck in early January 1916, at the age of 83. He was interred in St. Mary's Cemetery, located on a hilltop overlooking the Missouri River valley."



A Missouri River steamboat photo from the 1800s.



The bottle from the bottom of the oldest privy at the Grant Marsh house.



Tom in the yard of the Grant Marsh house.



The base of the bottle above.