



Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue (and Green Too!)

Happy Fourth of July everyone! Sometimes, when I write these articles I feel like I'm at a bottle show and I'm just having a pleasant conversation with some of my bottle friends. I'd be lying if I didn't tell you I enjoy writing these articles, doing the research, and having good conversations with my bottle buddies. I hope that you enjoy reading them as much as I enjoy writing them.

One thing about this Corona virus is that it really makes you appreciate the camaraderie we share in the bottle world. Not attending bottle shows is really a drag and I'm reminded of a Joni Mitchell song where she says you don't know what you've got till it's gone. So let's look on the bright side, there is light at the end of the tunnel and we'll be back together again soon.

Some time ago, we had a "conversation" celebrating Saint Patty's day and talking about green bitters bottles. Now, here it is Independence Day and I am still thinking of green bitters bottles. On the Fourth of July, Uncle Sam is celebrating for sure. Let us see if you can follow where this train of thought is going.

In that past article, I stated that if you ask a bitters collector to name a green bitters, the reply would possibly be "Dr. Loew's Stomach Bitters." Sample bottles aside,

there are three variants of this really fine bitters. Let's take a look at those variants.

The first variant is described by Ring/Ham as follows:

L 111 DR. LOEW'S CELEBRATED / STOMACH BITTERS & / NERVE TONIC // f // THE / LOEW'S & SONS CO. / CLEVELAND, O.

9 1/4 X 3 (5 1/4)

Square, Yellowish green, LTCR, Tooled lip, 2 sp, Scarce

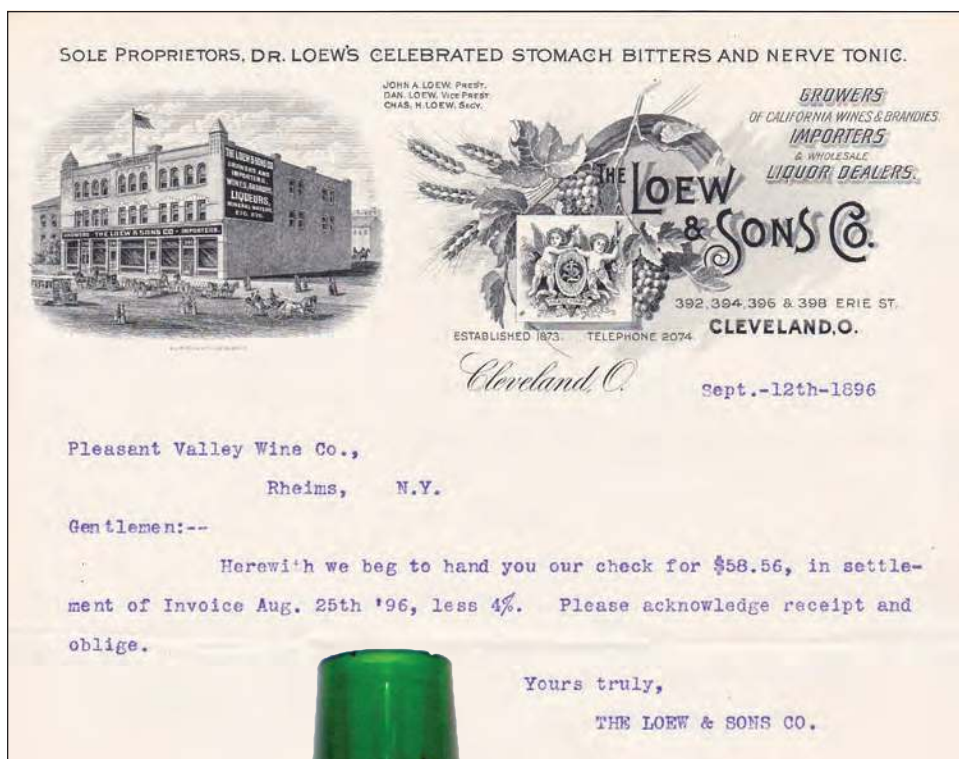
Swirled fluting on neck and shoulder

Be reminded that the LTCR notation indicates a long tapered collared mouth with a ring. The bottle is listed as scarce, which indicates that there are between 76 and 150 examples known. The green color of this bottle and the swirled fluting on the neck are the two features that make this bottle so easily identified. These traits follow through in all three variants, some of the sample-sized examples available as well, and another bottle we will visit in this article later on.

While Ring/Ham describe this bottle as yellowish green, there are many variations of green out there. An almost olive green Loew's has surfaced and from time to time you will find deep emerald greens showing up as well. I would expect to

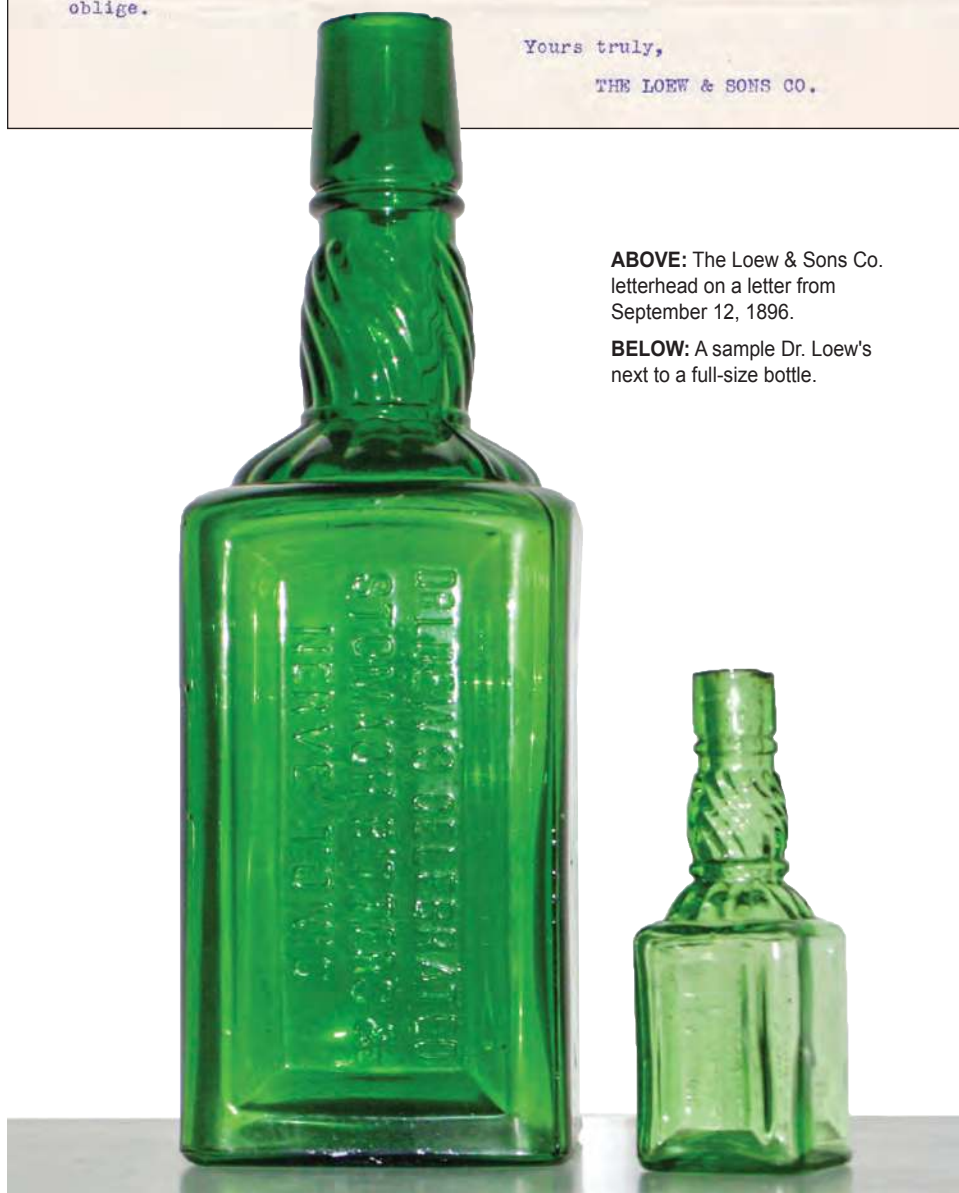


DR. LOEW'S CELEBRATED STOMACH BITTERS & NERVE TONIC.



ABOVE: The Loew & Sons Co. letterhead on a letter from September 12, 1896.

BELOW: A sample Dr. Loew's next to a full-size bottle.



pay in the \$400 to \$600 range for a nice example and, while the bottle does show up from time to time at shows and on the auction block, it is not all that often. That said, you may see some really high prices paid for this bottle, especially if the color is strong and not so washed out.

You have heard me say that every bottle has a story, and the example of Doctor Loew's that is on my shelf is no exception. The year was 1995 and I had it in my mind that a splash of green would really look good on the shelf.

While I live in New Jersey, I have traveled yearly to Rochester, New York whenever possible to attend their regular show each spring. In fact, I may be one of the most long distance club members, as I was encouraged to join the Rochester club way back in the day by a fellow by the name of Kel Kelsey. He was quite persuasive and I'm glad he was, as I have enjoyed this group of people for a long time. Jack and Audrey Stecher, Bob Sheffield, Bert Spiller, John DeVolder, Jim Bartholomew, Chris Davis and a host of others are among the members you would get to see yearly, and Aaron and Pam Weber are still at it, putting on a great show year after year. If you've never been to the Rochester show, I strongly suggest you make the trip as I have for the last thirty years.

I was on the hunt for a nice example of a green Dr. Loew's and met up with a gentleman by the name of Ken Cornell. I had met Ken before but never had quite the conversation I had with him that day. If you remember Ken, he was a mountain of a man and I always respected him as a knowledgeable bottle dealer.

He asked me what I was looking for and I told him about the green Dr. Loew's. He said "If you really want a great example, don't buy one now, come back and see me next year, I'll have one for you."

I said, "OK, I'll wait, and I'll see you next year again," and he smiled. Next

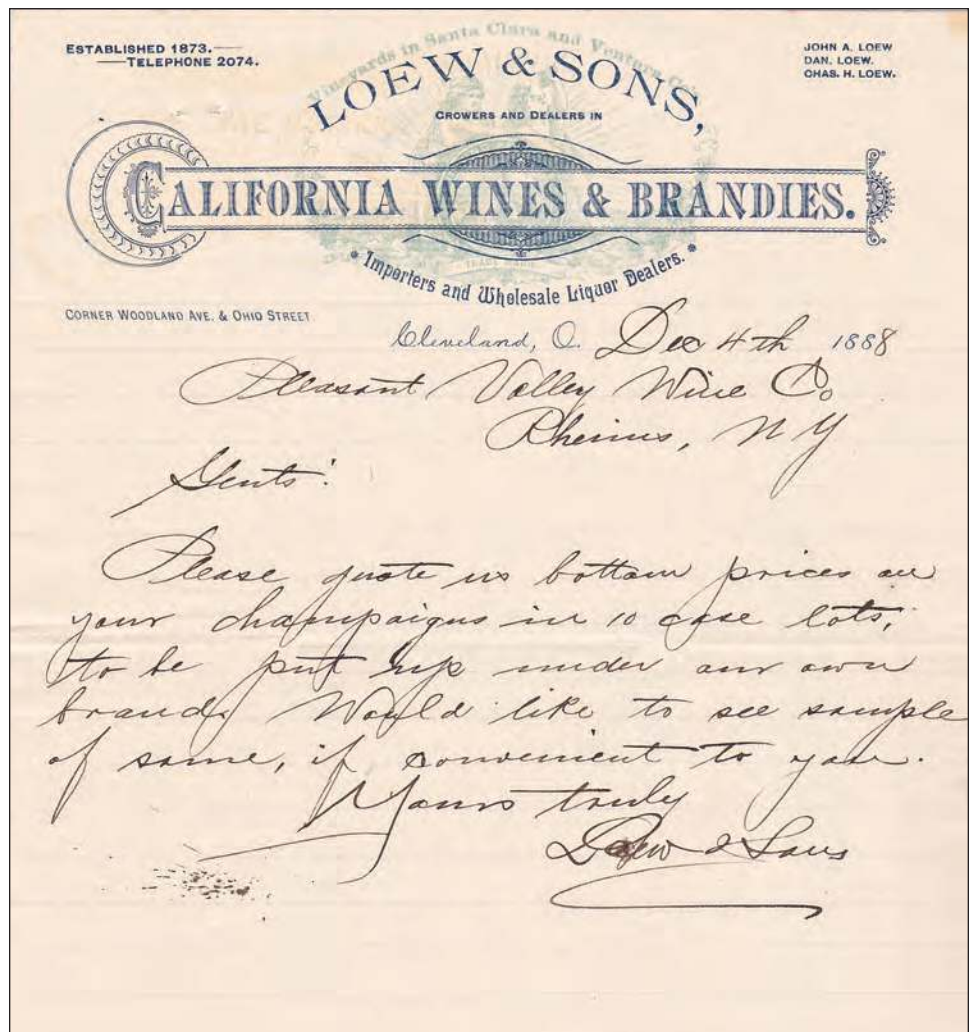
year rolled around and I walked up to his table sort of thinking that perhaps he didn't remember our conversation from the previous year. I didn't even get a hello out of my mouth when he put up his finger and said, "Wait a second, I have something for you." As he reached under the table and handed me the bottle he said, "You're going to pay for it, but I think you'll agree it's worth it." That nice, mint, deep dark green Loew's still sits on my shelf and every time I look at it I think of Ken Cornell. He didn't forget the conversation or the bottle, and I'll never forget him.

While the next two variants are quite different from the L - 111 example, these two Loew's bottles are very similar to each other and separated only by one small change in the embossing. These bottles introduced the H.C. Christy Company embossing and are a later bottle. So, this is a good time for a little research concerning the Loews Company.

"Those Pre-Pro Whiskey Men" is a blog authored by Jack Sullivan, and he has done some wonderful research which I share with you now. Thanks, Jack, for your terrific research.

As far as a timeline is concerned, Loew's Bitters can be dated all the way back to the late 1870s when John Loew first started his business. In 1883 John's sons, Charles and Daniel, joined the business and we end up with John Loew's and Sons embossed on the bottles we collect. John Loew retired and subsequently died in 1897, but the boys continued the business until 1912. The boys appear to have sold the rights to their family business to Henry Christy, a Cleveland wholesale grocer who specialized in alcohol and alcoholic products.

The later Dr. Loew's bottles are listed by Ring/Ham as follows:



TOP: The H.C. Christy Loews with label.

BOTTOM: Loew & Sons letterhead.



L 115.5 LOEW'S / STOMACH BITTERS // f / THE / H. C. CHRISTY CO. / CLEVELAND, OHIO // f //

L . . . Loew's Celebrated Stomach Bitters

9 1/4 x 3 (5 1/4)

Square, Yellowish green, LTCR< Tooled lip, 2 sp. Rare

Swirled fluting on neck and shoulder

and:

L 116 DR. LOEW'S / STOMACH BITTERS // f // THE / H. C. CHRISTY CO. / CLEVELAND, OHIO // f //

L . . . Loew's Celebrated Stomach Bitters

9 1/4 x 3 (5 1/4)

Square, Yellowish green, LTCR, tooled lip, 2 sp. Rare

Swirled fluting on neck and shoulder

Note that the only difference between these later two bottles is the addition (or deletion) of DR. before Loew's. Also note that these later two specimens are listed as rare as compared to the scarce classification for the L - 111 example. Rare indicates that there are between 16 to 35 specimens out there and I think they are more difficult to come by. I suppose that the H.C. Christy company bottles are not as abundant due to the fact that by the time Christy took over the business, Prohibition was putting the brakes on alcohol and less product was being sold.

I was able to come up with a letterhead from the Loew's Company and I think you'll agree that the engraving is quite impressive. The hustle and bustle of a busy business at work can be felt when we zoom in and take a closer look at the headquarters of the Loew's product.

But let us now turn our attention to another bottle that has a very similar style and shape, yet reads a bit more patriotic, if you get where I'm going.

The iconic green bottle with a fluted neck was also utilized by another bitters company, this time with a bit more appeal to the American Fourth of July customer.

The bottle I'm referring to is listed by Ring/Ham as follows:

U 4.3 UNCLE SAM'S / WILD CHERRY BITTERS // f // UNCLE SAM'S / WILD CHERRY BITTERS

9 1/2 x 3 (5 1/4)

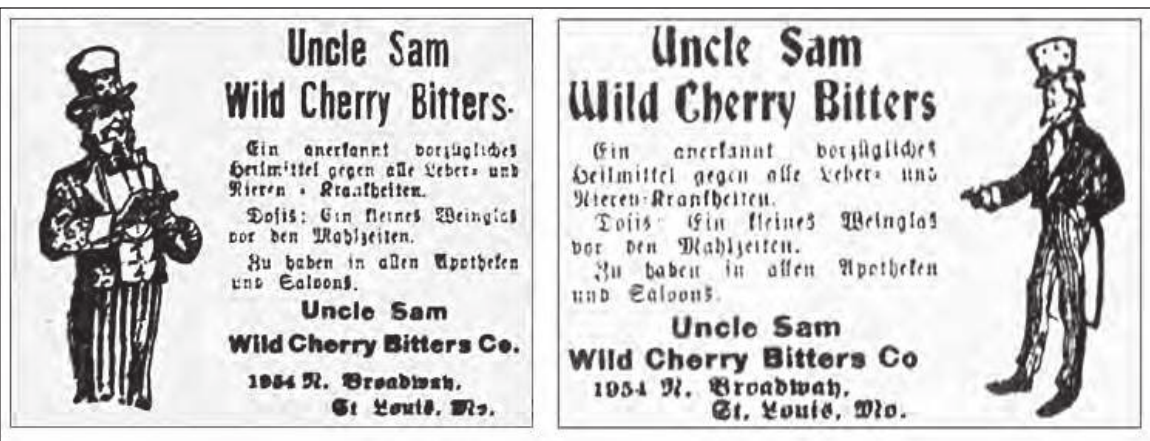
Square, Yellowish green, LTC, Swirled fluting on neck and shoulder, 2 sp, Tooled lip, Extremely rare

Example was found in the St. Louis Missouri area.

According to Ring/Ham there are only five or fewer examples of this bottle known. I cannot attest to the accuracy of this as I have only heard of one other example besides the one that sits on my shelf. Measure all you want and put the two bottles side by side, Uncle Sam's Wild

ABOVE: Uncle Sam's Wild Cherry Bitters bottle.

RIGHT: Newspaper ad for Uncle Sam Wild Cherry Bitters.



Cherry Bitters is the exact same bottle as Dr. Loew's.

To take it one step further, Peachridge Glass reported a label-only bitters being added to the next Bitters Bottle supplement called Ash Tonic Bitters. The new listing will be catalogued as A 100 L, and this bitters was discovered at the Conestoga Auction Company auction in Lancaster Pennsylvania back in October 2015. Once again, it is the exact same bottle as the Uncle Sam's Bitters or the Dr. Loew's bitters, but this time without the embossing and only a label.

Uncle Sam's Wild Cherry Bitters is really a mystery. No information could be found about it at all, including even where it was made. But once again thanks to my friend Joe Gourd I can share with you some advertising for Uncle Sam's, but that's about it. Ring/Ham mentioned that an example was found in the St. Louis, Missouri, area and if you consider that St. Louis is only an eight hour drive from Cleveland, it's not a far stretch to think that whoever put up Uncle Sam's just went to the same bottle manufacturer and said "Hey, do you have a bottle I can put my stuff in." My guess is they just took the same stock bottle and added two new embossings to the original mold and called it a day.

What a great name for a bitters though, Uncle Sam's Wild Cherry Bitters. Why, every red-blooded American would want some of that, wouldn't they?

I hope you got a bang out of this article, and as usual, comments or questions are always invited. I'd be glad to hear from you and you can direct your comments to me at strickhartbob@aol.com. Happy Independence Day!



ABOVE: Uncle Sam poster.



RIGHT: Uncle Sam's Bitters Trade Card.



Dr Loew's and Uncle Sam bitters bottles side-by-side.