

Two Pits Before the Lockdown

The corona gloom puts a damper on the Badger's dump

By Rick Weiner

The year 2019 pretty much started on a slow note for any type of digging. The privy excavations were almost non-existent at the beginning of the year and the only big dump that I did frequently visit was “Badger’s dump.” We have hit a few older sections in his dump, but it requires major work getting to those sections. On occasion, we have dug down to fifteen feet. Then there are always those dangerous cave-ins that hamper the whole operation.

The dumps are fun but I prefer an out-house dig. The most difficult part of privy digging is getting permission — without permission you can’t dig privies. Lately, I have become stagnant in my willingness to knock on doors. I have all of the resources to accomplish this task, addresses of potential old homes, plenty of digging stories to show the homeowners, and pictures of dug bottles so people can understand what we do in our hobby. So I do have what it takes, I just needed to get off my butt and do it! The privy digging days will probably never be what they used to be, but I won’t throw down the shovel until the good Lord says it is time.

One weekend I took my dog, Willy, for a walk down at the Burnside plantation. It was a farm and grain plantation built in the early 1800s. Today it is open to the public as a passive park. While walking there for the first time I noticed a big stretch of woods that ran behind an old two-story stone building. I thought there had to be a dump hiding in those woods somewhere. I gave Willy the tug on the leash to follow me.

As we walked up a grassy hill I began to think about the folks who lived here in the 1800s. My first thought was, “What path did they take while walking to the woods when they were dumping their garbage?” If it were me I would travel the path of least resistance. These big grassy hills would be avoided. As we got closer to the hardwoods I cut through some raspberry prickly bushes. Right away I saw glass, but it was milk bottle glass. Alas, that was par for the course, the newer glass will always be on top.

I tied Willy to a tree so I could check it out. He gave me that look of, “I’m old, I’m not going to run away.” It’s funny how I can read his mind. When I scanned the base of the hill I saw a spot, it had that “dumped-in look.” I picked up some old rusted rebar that I found nearby and started to dig. And, low and behold, applied tops started to pop out! They were all broken, but it was a sign that older goodies were soon to come. In no time I had ten broken blown meds laying in front of me. But I had myself in a tizzy before I knew the whole tale.

As I dug down deeper I hit hard clay at one foot. Mother earth does not lie. This was not a full-blown house dump, it was just a “bucket drop.” They would come to the woods and toss random buckets full of trash around the area. I have been fooled many times in my younger days by this practice.

There was probably a bigger dump somewhere, but I would have to search another day. I could see Willy was getting tired

and crabby and wanted to go home. It was near lunchtime, and he knew it.

I truly don’t have bottles on my mind 24/7, contrary to the beliefs of a lot of friends — and my wife. I try to do other activities in life that balance things out. One of my other passions is mountain bike riding. I used to ride the hard trails through the dense woods when I was younger and less brittle. But now I take the nice, flat, scenic routes, and my knees thank me for it every time. I enjoy riding along the river at the Lehigh Canal. There I can easily put fifty miles on the odometer! Along this river ride, there are many cool sites to see. I make it a point to take pictures of the day or my rides would not feel complete. The same holds true for bottle digging.

I have been taking pictures of my digging adventures for many years. I often wish I had snapshots of my earlier undertakings, back when I first started digging at age fourteen. What would even be cooler is if I had videos! I may not have the hard copies but I do have the memories.

I must admit sometimes, while riding, a few passing thoughts do enter my mind about where the old bottle dumps might be located along the river. I am usually traveling at a pretty good clip so stopping every few minutes to search the woods would be defeating the purpose of getting exercise. But one day, while heading out to the trails, I started to go off of the main drag. I veered towards an old stone bridge and a side creek. There was a blacktop path along the little creek wrapped in cau-



tion tape. Upon further inspection, I saw that a big part of the blacktop walkway was caving in right in the center, most likely due to flooding over the years.

I turned the bike around and started to head back to the main path, but then I noticed little pieces of shiny glass on the hill next to the trail. I did have a few more miles to put on to fill my biking quota, but I did need a quick break and what better way to rest my legs? That's right. I was ready to dig some bottles! I grabbed the nearest stick that closely resembled a digging tool and got underway.

Right off the bat, I noticed a few whole bottles sticking out of the hard layered gray ash. On the first pull, I got a clear tall boy blob from Bethlehem "Samuel Wiesenerberger." With that find, I knew it would be a nice digable dump. But for now, I had to get a move on because my wife is unmanageable when I am late for dinner. I called the Badger on the ride home and asked if he wanted to dig a dump. That was like asking a dog if he wanted more food after he just gulped half of a juicy cheeseburger. We made the plan to come the next day because this spot was right in the public eye, and sooner or later another like-minded digger might see it and wipe it out.

It was a Monday, a day like any other day, except today Badger and I took off from work! That's right, we were playing "bottle digging hooky." I was retired but I worked part-time landscaping, so it was still considered hooky. I had to pick Badger up because both of his cars were broken down. I got up bright and early, around 5 a.m. On the ride over to the park our conversation consisted of, "What would be in the dump and would anyone say anything if we dug in that spot. We were about to find out.

TOP: A tiny basket bottle.

MIDDLE: The Mad Hatter figurine at home.

BOTTOM: Samuel Wiesenerberger bottle from South Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

I parked under the iron bridge. It was very early so there were only a few cars parked there. With our backpacks on, we made our way to the creek. This was the first time Badger was here, but his bottle sniffing experience took him to the spot. Within minutes he popped out an amber blob! We both looked at each other with that wide-eyed exciting feeling. Soon we had a few keepers on the ground.

I was washing the last find off in the creek when I heard someone talking in the distance. "What are they doing?" I noticed a man and a woman across the creek on the walking trail, looking through some bushes like some Russian spies. I knew it was a city park we were digging, but we were not really digging "in the park" per se and we were not digging any deep holes, we were just scratching around.

Badger popped out a few more goodies and just then I got a weird premonition. "They called the cops!" We packed up and made our separate ways to my truck. When I was able to see the truck through the trees I spotted two cop cars sitting in the lot and one officer talking to Badger. What a way to end a good bottle dig.

I started to walk over and saw Dave handing the officer his driver's license. Badger was going to the slammer! It would have been kind of funny but the whole thing started to turn around in our favor. One of the cops asked what we were doing by the creek? When I said digging bottles, he blurted out, "Digging bottles? Is that all!" Then they proceeded to verbally bash the kind of people who call in about every little thing and send them on wild goose chases when they have bigger fish to fry.

This debacle ended with three police officers standing around the parking lot asking questions about our hobby of bottle digging. One of them even gave us a lead on a place where a dump might be located on the other side of town. We would go back to the "creek dump" another day, but for now, the dinner bells were ringing and it was time to head home.

For the week ahead I had no plans to dig. I had to work for a few days and I needed a break from the dumps, to be honest. That did not mean I was going to hang around the house all day. I can only last so long indoors. No, it wasn't the wife. I just get that rammy feeling like a caged animal. I had been texting back and forth on FaceBook with my friend "Doug," a local digger/collector. He has been asking me to stop by his studio when I had some free time. Well, today I had plenty of that.

His shop was literally five minutes from my house. I was embarrassed that I hadn't dropped in sooner. But you know us bottle diggers, we are busy people. When I finally got to his studio at the Banana Factory in Bethlehem I was in awe with what I saw. Doug was not just a bottle digger/collector, he was an awesome artist! Critically acclaimed for that matter.

We talked about bottles as I carefully examined his jars full of marbles and doll heads. I knew he was an OK guy if he had a jar full of doll domes sitting in the open. It looked to me like Doug saved everything! He had a half-gallon jar full of dice he had dug. "Where do you find that many dice?" "All over the world," he replied with a crazy kind of smile. My focus began to shift towards his paintings. One that caught my eye had old bottles in it. Go figure. His paintings looked like actual photographs, they were that good. As I walked around the room, looking at each painting intently, I commented, "Man, this takes some dedication and lots of patience."

We wrapped up our visit and made plans to do a little digging together in the near future. It is always a treat to see the array of different hobbies that our fellow bottle diggers and collectors enjoy.

The weekend was approaching and I had the opportunity to dig a privy out of town, but family comes first. Yes, even over bottles. There was a little thing I did when I visited the kids. I searched through my collection of "smalls" and

picked out a few goodies. I would get a marble or two, some small bottles and maybe an old coin I have dug. Then while they were not looking I would bury the treasure in a designated area. A spot that was OK'd by mom, of course. Then later in the day they would always say "Let's go dig, Popieo!" That's what they call me.

The excitement on their faces when a shiny marble or a rusty coin was unearthed was priceless! I guess this silly adventure will continue to be a part of my regular visits until they get older and wiser and then realize Popieo is the treasure man.

Digging was in my blood long before I had been bitten by the bottle bug. I was digging in my grandmother's backyard with a tablespoon at the age of five. I had no idea what this was going to lead to but now I realize it was the making of a bottle digger. Now when I see the grandkids digging with their spoons and getting excited, it floods my mind with wonderful thoughts of the past. Soon they will be on their way to a real bottle digging adventure with Popieo!

Another part-time workweek was ahead for me. But that was OK, it kept this old body in shape for digging. We had a job right up the road from my house. I often pray that the customer has an old home so I can spring into action and try to acquire permission to dig a privy. But that rarely happens.

We usually take care of newer upscale neighborhoods, and today was no exception. These homes were not all that new, but they were not good for any kind of bottle action. I believe they were built in the 1960s or '70s. After I unloaded all the tools and got ready to do some decorative mulching, I took a walk to the nearby woods for a nature break. As I got a little deeper in I noticed a deer stand overlook-

TOP: Dr. Jayne's Tonic Vermifuge.

MIDDLE: Holy water holder unearthed.

BOTTOM: Tall boy Seitz.





ing a deep ravine. I reminisced a little about the long days I used to spend in a deer stand waiting for that big buck to walk by. That daydream vanished in a puff when I saw a wall of ash in a deep ravine!

Could it be? An old dump among the new homes? Anything is possible, I guess. I thought maybe there were older homes here before these were built. But the only way to tell the true age was to drop in the crater and dig out a bottle. I slid down on my butt and started to chip away at the white ash. I prayed it would be at least TOC — “turn of the century” — then I saw glass!

As I dug around it I said a prayer. Please, God, make it an old one. But God had other plans for me that day. A milk bottle rolled out, then a Clorox right on its tail. Bummer. The dump was dated, things from the 1930s and '40s. When I was a kid I would have been doing backflips over this stuff. But alas, I have outgrown it and what excites me has changed.

On my way home from work I got a call from my buddy Damian. He called to tell me he scored permission in “Catty.” When I heard that I lit up like a 100-watt light bulb! I knew Catasauqua was one of the best places to dig privies. I have dug there for many years and wrote countless stories for *AB&GC* magazine and other publications about our adventures. The million-dollar question to Damian was, “How old is the house?”

My timeline for saying yes to digging an outhouse pit is the era from the 1850s to 1880. Anything newer than that is a recipe for heavy depression.

I waited for the answer. He came back with the build date as being 1880. I would have rather have 1850s – '60s, but beggars can't be choosers. I haven't dug a privy in a while so with a little luck and

a prayer we might get a well-loaded pit. Plumbing did not make it to Catty until the late 1900s so we had a chance.

Everything was going fine until Damian hit me with the stipulations of the permission. He said we could not dig the privy until spring. There is always a wrench tossed into the works, but we had to deal with it, and spring was only a few months away.

Fall and winter were very mild for us. Hardly any snow or below freezing temperatures to deal with. So through November and February, we did a few road trips for privies and also dug some local dumps, mainly Badger's. But as it was getting closer to March I was getting ready for the local privy. Since the weather was still on the warm side I decided to give Damian a call about the permission he got in Catty.

Damian was a busy guy. He worked as a mixer (sound man) at various sports and music venues. He was always on the clock so he had little time for digging. I figured I would hit him up early so he could plan and take a day or two off soon.

There is one thing I learned in the permission getting game. Do not wait too long to dig the privy once you get the green light. Sometimes people change their minds. They might do a little research and see what a hole in their yard will actually look like when someone digs a privy and think, “Not in my yard,” and then it's over.

We did have a little security with this permission though, as Damian knew the homeowner. He used to be one of his students when he taught audio-video classes at his old job in Bethlehem. The guy recently bought the house and remembered Damian telling the class about his passion for bottle digging and gave him a call.

I was very excited about digging this 1880 house. We agreed to do it in the upcoming week, because the Baltimore bottle show was right around the corner. There was no way the Badger and I would miss

TOP: Shards and stuff.

MIDDLE: Milkglass oil lamp.

BOTTOM: Shoveling out of the pit.

that. We have been attending the show without fail, but sadly this year the show would have a different feel to it. The corona virus had begun to rear its ugly head, but thank god it was in the very beginning stages and the show was not affected by social distancing or, even worse, a total shut down.

People were just starting the safety steps. I saw a few using hand sanitizer — including me — but no masks and there was no “6-foot rule.” How things have changed.

It was a great show under the circumstances. The camaraderie and the great bottles made me forget for a little while what was going on around the world. But it was still always in the back of my mind. As the day inched towards that 3 o’clock bell, the show would be over and then it was time to get back to reality. But the news only got worse as this invisible nightmare began to engulf all of our lives.

Soon, I had forgotten all about the permission Damian had scored in Catty, as the virus erased it from my memory. But when I got home and settled at my computer there was a message from Damian. “It’s a go, can you dig on Friday?” It was about the 1880 house! There was no hesitation, I accepted. It was early on with the virus, so we figured if the homeowner was OK with it, so were we.

We planned on meeting at 9 a.m. The yard wasn’t probed yet so I suggested we get there a little earlier. Damion did have a spot he eyeballed when he was there last, an area he thought might be a pit because it was sinking. That is the location I decided to probe first. I stuck the six-foot probe in and put some weight on it. Down it went like it was going through pure air! In my experience this had to be some type of void, as it was lacking that crunchy feel when the probe is buried.

It felt way too easy, and with many years of probing experience you just know when something is not right. We started to dig the targeted spot. With half a

dozen shovels of dirt out, it started to take shape. I hit what looked like a concrete block and then another. It didn’t take long for us to discover what was making this spot sink. Damion hit a block with his shovel and it disappeared. It was swallowed up by a 20-foot brick-lined pipe-fed cesspool!

There was nothing in this hole but air; we could not even see the bottom. What we had here was an accident waiting to happen. It must have been used in the 1920s and ’30s and covered over with wood and dirt. I have encountered this before. The old homeowner probably just got lazy and covered the top of the hole, not the depth. The result is a death trap for homeowners and children in the future. If it were covered with a steel plate there wouldn’t have been an issue but it was covered with a thick piece of plywood which rotted over the years. I took a few pictures and we filled that brick-lined booby trap in.

We were back to square one. With no sunken spots in the yard to give us a hint I started to probe the property line. There are only so many spots an outhouse can be placed. After all, it was a private matter, so most were at the side or the back of the house. Since this was an 1880 homestead I figured there would be at least two thunder-shack holes. One would date from 1880 to ’90s and the other from the 1890s to 1900s. As I jammed the rod down with no luck, Damian yelled over. “Hey, check this board out.” Sometimes the fence on a property line will sink due to the privy sinking over the years. With this one, the fence wasn’t sinking, but the bottom board was hanging off.

I didn’t think much of it at first but when I stuck the trusty probe in and gave it a steady push I heard that magical crunch and felt the easiness of the push. When it



TOP: Cobalt W.H. Hooker & Co. / Sole Agents / North and South America.

MIDDLE: Let the glass begin!

BOTTOM: A mystery bottle appears.



came out, the tip was loaded with white ash. No doubt about it, we had a privy!

It was time to get into action fast because we did not know what would become of this corona menace. It felt strange to be digging a privy at this time to begin with, but we were taking it a day at a time. I started to cut out the grass that needed to be placed on a tarp and saved for when the job is finished. The next step was to start removing the contents. I buried the shovel with ease in the hole, that was a real good sign. We both examined the first few buckets with anticipation.

It looked really good, as the texture of the fill and the bits of the foreign matter told us this was an outhouse crafted in the 19th century. The further down we went, the more excited we became. There wasn't any sign of earth whatsoever, just ash and old fill layers. A half-hour of digging revealed a huge clay cap. These clay monstrosities were used to cap off the contents of the privy. A clay cap sort of reminds me of big corks.

It always struck me as strange to put three feet of clay in a privy when they were about to fill it in for good, never to be used again. Some cities and towns had their own set of wacky rules and regulations when it came time to fill these pits in. In the town we were digging, some of these clay caps were huge. Most of the time there is nothing found in these dense blocks of earth. But once in a while, you will find a bottle. The bottles we find are mostly liquor bottles. This a good way to estimate a date when they filled the privy in for good.

Why liquor bottles in the cap? My theory is the people were drinking while they were filling in the hole. Every bottle I have ever found in a cap was a booze bottle. I guess it took the edge off of the crappy task at hand.

TOP: Assorted goodies.

MIDDLE: Can't touch this.

BOTTOM: A.W. Long bottle from Bethlehem.

This cap was slowly shrinking. The massive chunks were piling up on the blue tarps. Just as I was getting a little perturbed with the weight and the awkwardness of this stuff. Damian yells out: "I see a square brown bottom!" Right away, I thought of a bitters bottle. It was hard to dig a bottle out of this clay because it is so dense. There was always that chance of breaking it. After ten minutes he had it free.

When Damian held it up I kind of recognized the shape. It was an amber square whiskey with a swirled neck. It also had a round slug plate. My first question was, "Does the seam go up," and the answer to that was yes. I must say I did get a little depressed knowing that the first bottle out was an automatic bottle machine product, which started in 1903.

But upon further investigation, I found out the history information on this bottle was off the hook. It turned out it was part of a family of distillers that ran a business where some of my family has lived for most of their lives, namely Benton township in Columbia County, Pennsylvania.

The Rohr McHenry Distilling Co. was in business from 1812 to 1913. In 1911 there was a fire that destroyed 17,000 barrels of whiskey. The company stayed open for two more years and then threw in the towel. I am guessing the bottle Damion found was one of the remaining few distributed that year. Here is a link for more history on the McHenry distillery: www.born1812.com/history.html.

After admiring the bottle, we kicked the shovels into overdrive. I just polished off a can of Starbucks triple shot and felt like a teenager for a good fifteen minutes! Finally, we began to see a change in the fill. A nice black texture was popping through the dull white ash. It was the use layer, bottle bed, and trash layer, whatever you wish to call it. To us, it was "the sweet spot" where all the fun starts.

I was scratching around the right corner of the pit and right away I hit glass. It

felt like it was whole but I never count my bottles before they are dug. As I was pulling it out I began to pray, "Please be whole, please be whole." With a steady tug, out popped an aqua tall boy blob beer! After that, the glass just started to pour out of this privy.

I was excited, but Damian was even more excited. He was fairly new to the privy game and hasn't had the pleasure of digging a truly loaded outhouse before. I had a feeling today was going to be his day. Damian dropped down into the pit and started to do his thing. Only ten minutes had passed. The shouts I heard coming from the hole told me he found something awesome. Wooo wooo wooo! As I walked to the edge and looked in I saw Damian holding up another dark aqua blob top! The day would be filled with exciting moments like this. I think it was God telling us "Get it while you can boys, as things are about to change for a while."

As I looked through the bottles coming out of this privy, I knew it was not the older one. Reading a privy is like reading a clock. The items found on the very bottom tell the time the pit was first used. This house was built in 1880. None of the bottles or knick-knacks dated to the 1880s. This privy was used from the 1890s to 1914, give or take a few years.

While Damian was having fun down under I decided to try and find the 1880 pit. I proceeded to pace off six feet from the one we were in and slammed the probe down on the property line. I yelled out to Damion, "I got it." The rod sunk with ease and had that crunchy feel. It was without a doubt the older privy! It doesn't always happen that fast but today seemed to be our day. The bottle gods were shining down on us.

We were almost near the bottom of the first pit and it was my turn for digging. I started with an undug section on the back wall. While I was scratching around the privy, Damian broke out his metal detector to search the yard for old coins. He

decided to call Jeff, a friend of ours who works at a local TV station. He was off work and he lived ten minutes away. He also dabbled in metal detecting.

In the meantime, it looked like I was going to finish off this privy. There was just a small section left to do and I did not have to take any more fill out of the pit. I would just move it to the back section that had already been dug. A lot of bottles were coming out, but they were "clear slicks." Seeing so many of these also verified the date of this outhouse. It was 1890s and 1900s for sure.

Just as I put the last slicker in the bucket I spotted the bottom of a blue bottle. My heart started to race when I pictured a cobalt blue soda in my mind. I started to scratch around it and twist at the same time, and out it came, bingo. It was whole! It wasn't a soda but it was a very cool bottle nonetheless. It looked like a wine with a little blob top. With some research, it was confirmed as "Sparkling Water." After that pull, it was time to fill this baby in.

As Damian came over to the pit I heard another voice in the distance. I hadn't even noticed Jeff was already here. When you are in a ten-foot hole the world around you is pretty much silent. That is a good thing sometimes. Jeff stepped over to the edge of the pit. "Hey, Rick, check this out." He tossed down a neat old lock he'd found in the yard while detecting. This place is oozing with history. After I passed around the blue bottle and everyone rubbed it for luck, it was time to try our new-found luck on the next privy. But first we had to take a little well-deserved break.

Jeff wanted to interview us. He had a few questions about Covid 19 and how it was affecting our lives. The short segment would be on our local PBS news that



TOP: Embossed medicines.

MIDDLE: M.M. Boss / Druggist / So. Bethlehem.

BOTTOM: Williams Magnetic Relief from 1880s.



evening. He also filmed a shot of Damian in the privy.

We all started to fill in the first pit. I suggested one of us begin to open up the older one so we could save some time. Yes, I was calling it the older one before I even broke ground. I was pretty sure it was the original outhouse. Everything was going well but then it started to rain like cats and dogs!

But I saved the day because I just happened to have my pop-up tent in the truck. Lucky for Jeff, he also had a nice dry place to film the digging action.



It was time for more dirty work. I had dug about three-foot of fill out of the second privy, but the probe told me we had at least eight more feet to go. Jeff had been documenting each step for the TV show called "History Diggers" on our local PBS station. He didn't get to film the first dig but he would certainly get some good footage on this one.

Within a half-hour, I was up to my chest in the second pit and I wasn't seeing a monster clay cap as we had in the other hole. Every privy is filled in differently. They may have had a ton of red clay on hand for one hole and barely a thin layer for the other. So far this one looked like the latter, very little clay. That translates to less time to get to the bottles.

As we kept the flow of dirt coming, the homeowners stopped by to see if anything interesting had come out yet. We had a five-gallon bucket full of bottles waiting for them. The wife went crazy when she saw the small perfumes and the husband loved the blob beers. Some things never change, even after 130 years.

After a little while, the conversation changed from bottle talk to what we heard about the corona virus. It was still in the back of our minds even though we were

digging and having a grand old time. The news hadn't really changed much. They just kept repeating what we needed to do to stay safe. Wash our hands and keep six feet apart. We definitely could accomplish that task while digging privies. There is only room for one guy in the hole at a time. I filled the last bucket and sent it up to Damian. At this point, I didn't need a ladder to get out, but I bet I looked like a crippled seal crawling out of an ice hole.

When Damian was ready to go in we decided to get the ladder, because after he finished digging deeper it would be tough to climb out for both of us. Soon, we got settled into our designated jobs. Damian was digging, I was the bucket man and Jeff, obviously, the cameraman. Not too much time went by before I heard that all familiar "Woo woo woo woo!" again. Translated, that means Damian found something good.

Jeff got on board and lined the camera up with the open pit, hoping to get a shot of the bottle in its undug state, but it was too murky for that. Damian sprung up like a dirty jack-in-the-box with a cool square brown bottle in his right hand. It was a "WH Hooker Blood Elixir," and in his left hand was a cure that read "Williams Magnetic Relief." These action moments are what Jeff was looking for. Hopefully, we will see this cut on the History Diggers one day.

As the hours went by the pile of bottles started to build. We also had a nice array of knick-knacks. It was always fun going through the items on the pile while the man in the hole was filling buckets. One of my favorites was a holy water holder. It was in two pieces but I would glue this one back together. Later Damian also found one. When I find religious items in privies I take it as a good sign for the day, and we could sure use it in these trying times. The next little item we found was what I call the "Mad Hatter," just a little fellow who lost his head. Yes, we later found his entire body. Another success story.



TOP: Some of the older finds.

MIDDLE: Damian with a tall boy.

BOTTOM: Doug's studio.

As the day progressed we got closer to the bottom. Bottles were still coming out, but it was getting deeper, darker and tighter. We were all getting tired and wet despite the tent. Damian was debating on coming back the next day to finish up. But that thought would vanish from our minds in a flash. The homeowner came out to us and said, "You guys are going to finish and fill that in today, right?"

His yard had a mountain of dirt five feet high, his grass was matted down, and there was a circus tent in his yard. Why panic now? The next words out of his mouth made me understand. "There is a lockdown." This was the first day of the lockdown from the Covid-19 virus. The homeowner knew we would not be back for a while. It was time to fill it in, this adventure was over.

Things were getting weird pretty fast. It was all over the TV and radio. They were telling us to continue to wash our hands and after a while, it was social distancing. People were still going to work, but soon after seeing how fast this ghost of a virus was spreading the shutdown began. Non-essential businesses were closing left and right. The streets resembled a ghost town. It was starting to get a little scary. Knowing there was no cure or medicine to combat this invisible enemy made it even more frightening! I had to learn more about it to try and calm my worries.

Watching the right news channel and reading the facts made me realize we needed to do the simple things to keep us safe. Wash our hands, stay at least six feet apart, and wear a mask when visiting public places. As the days and weeks went by the death toll around the world would rise. Wearing masks at the early stages was not mandatory but soon you could not enter a store without one. It would be the new normal until they found an antidote or a vaccine for Covid-19. I am sure glad we dug the privies when we did. We had that one last chance before lockdown.



TOP: A ribbed flask comes out of the pit; a Mrs. Dinsmore Cough Balsam.

MIDDLE: Cann's Kidney Cure / Philadelphia PA / U.S.A. / Est. 1876.

BOTTOM: Damian and Rick digging in.