

March – April 2023



### PETER, ART & MARY

# Huff, the Magic Bottle, Lived by the Tree, in a Magic Land they call PRIVALEE.

#### By Peter Jablonski

What do you do when no one can go to the Mansfield, Ohio Antique Bottle Show with you? It's a Friday, and you don't want to go to work due to a bad case of Spring Fever. Well, you have to get your bottle fix on somehow, so you go privy digging. What better digging trio is there than...

#### Peter, Art & Mary?

I connected with Mary Kummer of Geneseo, New York a few years ago on Facebook, requesting permission to dig, and she has been lining up approvals in Western New York ever since. You might say she also suffers from a chronic case of privy digging fever. She is brazen, bold, and not afraid to ask if we can dig up your privy.

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Fast forward, I found the privy relatively quickly, and the best part was there was no sod that needed to be cut. It was shallow and the only bottles to come out were a slick pharmacy and the dreaded warranted flask that is like a kiss of death for the privy digger.

The house was circa 1850 in this Erie Canal town, so surely there had to be another privy on the

## DR. S. A. RICHMOND'S SAMARITAN NERVINE

18,714.—REMEDY FOR EPILEPSY AND OTHER NERVOUS DISEASES.—Samuel A. Richmond, Tuscola, Ill. Application filed November 14, 1890. Used since December 1, 1889. "The representation of a fountain, and landscape, the words 'SAMARITAN NERVINE,' and the motto 'IN GOD WE TRUST.'"



## THE TEMPERANCE FOUNTAIN

Trade-Mark. S. A. Richmond, for Dr. S. A. Richmond's Samaritan Nervine. A Remedy for Epilepsy and other Nervous Diseases. No. 18,714. Registered Dec. 16, 1890.

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premises. I probed near a tree and I hit water and ash on the probe which in the spring is very common.

It will be a wet one for sure, as the groundwater table is high. Art Ward, my digging partner, and I pulled rock after rock and bucketed water, but there was no glass to be found in this pit, and the rocks made it dubious that this was even a privy.

Well, it was time to fill in and move to greener pastures. Mary had another permission lined up. She was really hungry to find some bottles and didn't waste time in locating her first privy. The good news was the tip was bone dry. We had the sod cut quickly and were ecstatic not to hit any rocks. We started finding shards of wax sealer fruit jars, Buckeye and Dexter jars without bases but a nicely embossed wreath of fruit. Mary pulled out a tear-jerker shard of a Cornucopia historical flask. Art hopped in and, in no time, pulled a medicine bottle with an image of a bearded man whose beard was much larger than Art's beard. It was a Dr. S. A. Richmond's Samaritan Nervine from St Joseph, Missouri.

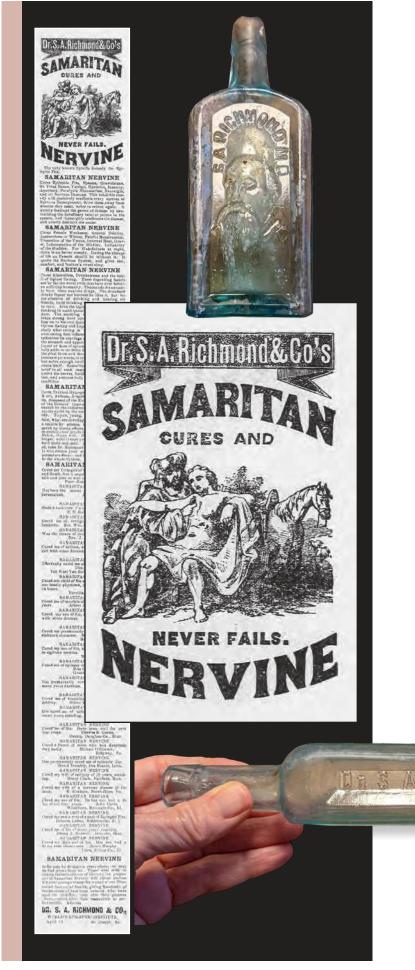
In his newsletter, *The World's Journal of Health*, Dr. Richmond published testimonies from patients and their families about how miraculous this elixir was. Interestingly the main ingredient was belladonna, also known as deadly nightshade. This is a hallucinogen of huge proportions.

An advertisement from the 1883 Phoenix Herald reads: Cures epileptic fits, spasms, convulsions, St Vitus Dance Vertigo, hysterics, insanity, apoplexy, paralysis, rheumatism, neuralgia, and all nervous diseases. The infallible remedy will positively eradicate every species of nervous derangement and drive them away from whence they came never to return again. It utterly destroys the germs of disease by neutralizing the hereditary taint or poison in the system and thoroughly eradicates the disease and utterly destroys the cause. Cures female weakness, alcoholism, drunkenness and the habit of opium eating.

Dr. Richmond lived in an ornate home with his family. There was an elaborate fountain statue in the yard called "Venus Rising from the Sea." At one entrance were two crouched lion statues, and at the south steps were two cocoa-colored elk with bronze antlers. The home had an eight-sided gazebo with winged arbors and a conservatory where the doctor housed the medicine factory.

Life for the Richmonds changed in 1886 when the managing editor of the *St. Joseph Daily Herald*, Col. James W. Strong, wrote something that apparently did not please the doctor. He got mad and went down and shot him, killed him dead, right in his office!

Dr. Richmond was tried and convicted, but he was determined insane, so he was committed to State Lunatic Asylum No. 2. Then he escaped. He basically left town and left his wife and five children. The doctor was never



apprehended, but the elixir started showing up in a little town outside Chicago. The house they lived in is now said to be haunted by his daughter Clara Fannie.

Mary pulled out another Dr. Richards bottle, but this one was not with the bearded image.

I had the pleasure of unearthing an agua open pontiled "W. W. Huffs Liniment." This bottle comes in a lovely Lockport green glass color as well. William Huff was a veterinary surgeon in Buffalo, New York, in the 1850s. His liniment was along the lines of Merchants Gargling Oil in that it was a "Cure for Man or Beast."

In 1860 Dr. Huff moved his operations across the border to St Catharines, Ontario, Canada. In 1895 after the death of Dr. Huff, there was an injunctive court case started by his daughter against his uncle Mr. R. Huff who began selling R. Huff's Liniment—the original Huff's.

We didn't let the first two pits of nothingness stop us from succeeding.

Privy digging keeps childhood dreams alive, searching and not knowing what treasures will be found. So let us keep Huff the Magic Dragon alive and not lose sight of our dreams.



**LEFT:** We started finding shards of wax sealer fruit jars, Buckeye and Dexter jars without bases but a nicely embossed wreath of fruit.

"DEXTER" / (Wreath of Fruits) "IMPROVED", (SFJR, #334), Pennsylvania, ca. 1865 - 1875, aqua quart, smooth base. An example from the FOHBC Virtual Museum is shown on the right.





LEFT PAGE: "S. A. RICHMOND MD (embossed man and beard) ST. JOSEPH, MO, / DR. S. A. RICHMOND / ST. JOSEPH, MO." aquamarine rectangular medicine. Advertisement: The Watchman and Southron (Sumter County South Carolina), April 18, 1882.

RIGHT: "W. W. HUFF'S / LINIMENT" (Odell, pg. 119), New York, ca. 1840 - 1860, aquamarine cylinder (they are also found in deep bluish green glass), 4 1/2"h, open pontil, applied tapered collar mouth. This is the smaller of two sizes and both are equally rare. Looking at the advertisement at the upper right, there looks to be a third size! Certainly a different shaped bottle though. Advertisement: Detroit Free Press, November 29, 1847.

