

VIRTUAL MUSEUM NEWS

By Richard T. Siri, Santa Rosa, California

The FOHBC Virtual Museum has been established to display, inform, educate, and enhance the enjoyment of historical bottle and glass collecting by providing an online virtual museum experience for significant historical bottles and other items related to early glass.



Note from Richard:



Alan DeMaison, our senior imager, had a successful trip to the Baltimore Antique Bottle Show and met with Lavere Edens and Vicki Freund, Fire Memorabilia

collectors from Tennessee. They were very excited with the possibility of having their collection imaged for the museum. Alan then went on to Pennsylvania to image about 50 select pieces from the Tod von Mechow collection of very early beers, ales and sodas. Alan was accompanied by Terry Crislip who helped with the imaging and did the driving for the trip.

You will see an email below to the Federation board of directors and the Virtual Museum directors from Eric McGuire addressing U.S. bottles that were made in foreign countries. I didn't realize that some of the early Historical Flasks were produced in England. I did know that the Palmer Green bottles as well as some of the Dickey's and Wakelee bottles from San Francisco, were English. There is also proof that as many as 41 Western whiskey bottles were produced in Germany. This information is in the book *Whiskey Bottles of the Old West* by John L. Thomas as an article by Tom Quinn. Some western beers also were made in Germany.

Virtual Museum Direction

At our last board meeting, there was a question about the potential expansion of the Virtual Museum (VM) to include bottles other than made in or for the U.S. Ferd (Meyer) rightfully submitted that it should include specimens from a broader geographical area. I couldn't agree more since it is nearly impossible to isolate the U.S. from the rest of the world. Of course, the workload becomes exponentially greater, which becomes the biggest challenge to an already monumental task of entering just U.S. bottles in the VM. I will digress from my point of the huge workload presented momentarily.

Many collectors are unaware that an unknown but substantial number of our bottles were produced beyond our shores. Several examples have come to light challenging the conventional wisdom that our bottles, both early and late, were produced in this country. The earliest printed sources go back to 1975 when Margaret Ellison wrote an article in *Archaeologia Aeliana*, the *Journal of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle* (England). The extensive article proved that at least some "Eagle" flasks were made in Newcastle for the American market at least as early as 1812. This was lightly touched upon in the book *American Bot-*

tles and Flasks by McKearin & Wilson. The original information was gleaned from a few glasshouse and mold makers' journals that have survived. It is postulated and likely true that far more "American" bottles were produced in England for the American market.

Another example of early flasks originating from England is a salvaged shipwreck from Newcastle, England, bound for Baltimore, Maryland. The ship *Caesar* ended up on the reefs of Bermuda in May 1818. The ship was salvaged shortly after it was wrecked. Among the salvage were a large number of Masonic flasks, which were commonly found in old collections on the island. The ship was "re-salvaged" in 1957, which led to the discovery of more, at least broken, Masonic flasks. This solved the mystery of why so many Masonic flasks had earlier been found in Barbados.

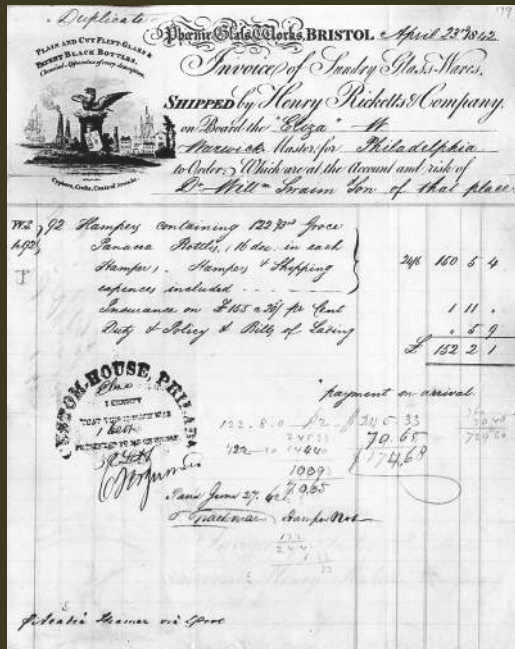
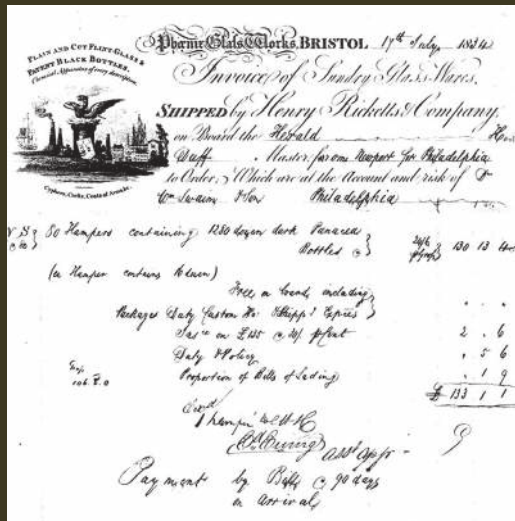
Yet another find from archives residing in England was the discovery of two receipts (pictured on the next page) for large orders of bottles from the Ricketts glasshouse for Swaim's Panacea. One is dated July 1834, for 1,280 dozen, and one is dated April 1842, for about 123 gross. An article on the subject was presented in *The Journal of Glass Studies*, Vol. 55, 2013. One can't help but wonder how many "American" bottles were actually blown in England, France and Germany. The Virtual Museum should include all bottles.

With just a few photographers and imagers, mainly Alan DeMaison, Gina Pellegrini-Ott and myself, and a few computer specialists like Miguel (Ruiz) and Ferdinand, who puts everything on the Virtual Museum site, along with his design expertise and background information, we have developed a fantastic world-class museum. Looking forward, my not-so-scientific analysis has determined that the VM won't be completed for at least a hundred years at the rate we are going. Time is not on our side. We need to get past the "hump," where anyone interested in bottles will automatically go to the VM site first to learn something about a particular bottle. Other bottle-related websites simply do not compare with what we have started. If we can't build a better base of contributors, or support, our project will fail.

How we go from our present circumstance needs our full attention, and it won't be easy. I would hate to see the VM die an early death when Ferd or one of our other essential contributors can no longer play a role.

Eric McGuire,
FOHBC Western Region Director,
West Coast VM Imager,
Petaluma, California

Swaim's Panacea label.



Two receipts for large orders of bottles from the Ricketts glasshouse for Swaim's Panacea. One dated July 1834, for 1,280 dozen, and one dated April 1842, for about 123 gross.

May – June 2023



Please help us fill our Phase 4 Wishart's Pine Tree Tar Cordial bottle!

30k

25k

20k

15k

10k

5k



Phase 1
Flask Filled
Dec. 2018



Phase 2
Jar Filled
Dec. 2021



Phase 3
Barrel Filled
Dec. 2022



Please help us in our Phase 4 fundraising capital campaign to continue development of the FOHBC Virtual Museum. The FOHBC and the Virtual Museum team thank our many donors who have helped us raise over \$92,218 to date. We have \$27,976 in available funds to continue development to build our galleries, exhibition hall, research library and gift shop. Donations are tax deductible. All donors are listed on our Virtual Museum Recognition Wall.

With one salaried website technician averaging \$1,200 a month, we need help. Plus, we are now traveling to collections with the Pandemic hopefully behind us, so more costs will be incurred. All other time is donated by the Virtual Museum team out of our love and passion for the hobby and the FOHBC. Thank you!



FOHBC VIRTUAL MUSEUM
OF HISTORICAL BOTTLES
AND GLASS

FOHBCVirtualMuseum.org

For gift information contact: Alan DeMaison, FOHBC Virtual Museum Treasurer,
1605 Clipper Cove, Painesville, Ohio 44077, a.demaison@sbcglobal.net