

# The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors Serving the National Capital



## February 2005

In this issue:

- What Ever Happened to Maryland Rye  
by Jack Sullivan.....page 2
- Results from Our Annual Contest.....page 5
- Upcoming Area Bottle Shows.....page 7

## Meeting February 22<sup>nd</sup> – 7:30 PM

The February meeting will start early for our annual banquet. Please come hungry. The club will provide soft drinks and a sandwich platter. Any other food that club members care to bring along is welcome. Please help us plan for this event: email [searsjim@usa.net](mailto:searsjim@usa.net) if you have a particular food item you plan to bring or if you are planning on bringing along family members to join in the eating. Guests are extremely welcome.

## January Meeting

Welcome to **Arthur Bentley**, who joined the our club at the January meeting. The contest for collectibles acquired in 2004 brought in a good variety of entries. Thank you to **Andy Goldfrank** for taking photographs including the one below. We are going to break with tradition and announce the winners in this newsletter. Please join us at the February meeting to congratulate the winners.



If you are wise, you will give your trade

# Maryland Club

Pure Rye Whiskey.

They will like it and stick to it and to you.  
It TASTES old because it is old.

CAHN, BELT & CO., Baltimore, Md.

Ad for Maryland Club Rye, Circa 1914  
See article on page 2.

### What Ever Happened to Maryland Rye

By Jack Sullivan (Special to the *Pontil*)

For decades Baltimore was the center for a product known and consumed the nation over – Maryland rye whiskey. So important was “Maryland” as a symbol of liquor quality that distillers and distributors all over the United States felt compelled to appropriate the name.

A St. Louis distiller, Gustave Riesmeyer, for example, called one of his brands “Old Maryland” and included the seal of the state on the label of the container. A Chicago outfit, Breen & Kennedy, registered the trademark “Maryland Rye” as one its brands in 1906, seemingly ignoring that the M.V. Monarch Co. of Owensboro Kentucky already was using that name for one of its whiskeys. The Sherbrook Distilling Company of Cincinnati nationally advertised its “My Maryland Rye” whiskey.



Riesmeyer’s “Old Maryland” Whiskey

In New York City, Samuel C. Boehm & Co. issued a brand it called “Maryland Union Club Rye.” Thurber and Wyland of the same city merchandised a “Little Brown Jug Brand” of old Maryland rye whiskey. Another New York whiskey outfit, P.W. Eng & Sons, founded in 1808 as wine and liquor merchants, took things a step further. Around the end of the 19th Century the firm issued two or more varieties of earthenware jug. In an apparent tribute to the city and its famous rye whiskey, Eng labeled them “Engs Baltimore Rye, 1808.” While the contents could have been supplied to the New York distributor by a Maryland distillery, we have no way of knowing what those jugs truly held.

## My Maryland Rye WHISKEY

*Bottled in Bond*

Compared to all other Pure Ryes we consider this whiskey their equal in every way  
The Price—Well, See for Yourself



12 Short Quarts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$7 00
12 Full Quarts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8 00
24 Pints	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8 50
48 Half Pints	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9 25

A 1907 ad for “My Maryland Rye” (above)  
Engs Baltimore Rye Jug from the Jim Bready Collection (below)

There also were a substantial number of Maryland outfits producing the state’s famous rye whiskey; in fact, literally dozens of them. The majority were located in Baltimore or close-in suburbs. Several of these distillers and distributors have stories of more than usual interest:

#### The Gottschalk Co.

Albert Gottschalk is accounted one of Baltimore’s great distilling success stories. When he arrived in the city in 1855, he was a 21 year old immigrant from Germany with barely the clothes on his back. By the time he died in 1898 he has been described as “a one-man Baltimore conglomerate.” Gottschalk owned a distillery, an alcohol rectifying plant, a wholesale liquor business, a North Charles Street fancy grocery, and a brewery.



An 1864 Baltimore city directory lists Albert Gottschalk, just nine years after arriving in the U.S., already the co-owner of a liquor distributing company with a partner named Spillman. Their establishment was at 46-48 Light St. By 1887, Spillman was no longer in the picture, and the firm now was Gottschalk & Co., still at the same address. By 1890 the firm had undergone a further name change to The Gottschalk Co., as it would be known until its demise. It also had moved down the street to 106-108 Light St. and had opened a second outlet at 21-23 Balderston. The firm also boasted that it had a representative in Chicago, indicating the national sweep of its business.

Gottschalk advertised widely some of his brand name liquors. These included A.A.A., Bortner, Family Nectar and, most famously, Pointer Maryland Rye. This last was featured in an 1892 ad with a distinctive trademark: a hunting dog on point within an oval that looked like a buckled belt. It carried the inscription, "The Gottschalk Co., Baltimore, Md." Pointer Maryland Rye was available by the barrel, bottle or jug – the jug being the most imaginative whiskey ceramic that Baltimore would see. The Pointer Rye jug featured a label very similar to the advertisement. It showed a dog on point as the center of interest and incorporated the slogan: "A Superior Article of Fine Maryland Whiskey."



An 1892 Pointer Maryland Rye ad



Pointer Rye jugs, Sepia and Off-White (above)

Roxbury Rye Jug (at right)

At this point Gottschalk was still a liquor distributor, receiving his product from other Baltimore or area distillers. In 1894 he moved to cut out the middlemen and opened his own operation, calling it the Maryland Distillery. Its address was North, Saratoga and Davis Streets, with the office back at the 108 Light St. address. Albert Gottschalk died in 1898 only four years after founding The Maryland Distillery. His heirs ran the business in alliance with the Fleischmanns of Cincinnati (yeast and liquor) following a marriage between the two families. Using many of the merchandising gambits of its founder, the firm continued to expand operations. Two of its national brands were Calvert ("The Banner Maryland Rye Whiskey") and Old Drum Maryland Whiskey ("You Can't Beat It"). In 1914, the company also registered an unusual brand called Dictator Rye Whiskey.

**Roxbury Rye**

Another Baltimore-headquartered whiskey producer with an interesting history was Roxbury Rye. The distillery first shows up in city directories for 1899 in connection with Fisher Brothers, liquor dealers at 115 W. Baltimore St., who were principal distributors of the brand. The distillery itself had been established some years earlier. In 1900 Roxbury Distilling established offices at 42 Chamber of Commerce St. in Baltimore.

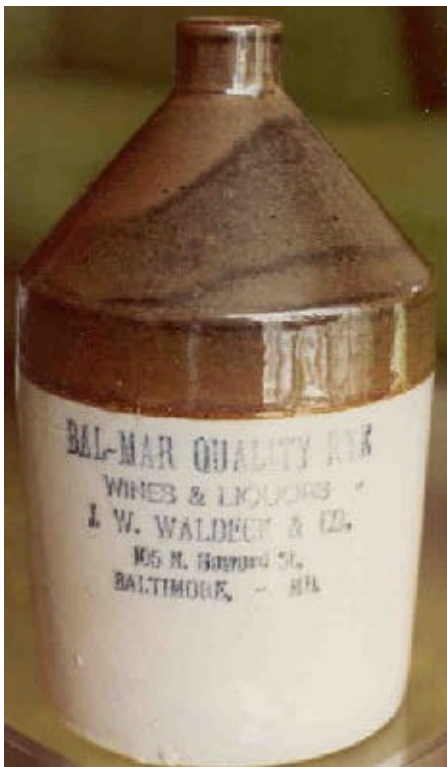


As the result of an energetic sales effort, Roxbury Rye took off and became one of Maryland's better-known national brands. It was relatively inexpensive – 45 cents a gallon for the non-aged variety – and not shy about singing its own praises. At the time the Pure Food and Drug Act became law in 1906, Roxbury Rye ads claimed that, "Its purity has never been questioned by any State board where pure food laws are in force. It's America's Purest Whiskey."

But if the whiskey was pure, the ownership was not quite. Roxbury's president, George T. Gambrill (1845-1930) of Baltimore, was a wheat speculator as well as a distiller. In 1910 Gambrill was convicted in Baltimore courts of having put up the same quantity of whiskey (pure Roxbury Rye?) as collateral for separate loans totaling \$500,000, loans on which he subsequently defaulted. Although sentenced to four years, Gambrill apparently never served a day in prison for his misdeeds. As a result of appeals and other legal maneuverings, he eventually was able to have the conviction quashed. Roxbury Rye went into bankruptcy, however, and was bought by interests that continued to operate the distillery under the same name.

### Bal-Mar Quality Rye

In 1967 when the home of Baltimore's most famous citizen – author H.L. Mencken – was being prepared as a tourist site, its contents were cataloged. Among items found in the cellar was a quart of Bal-Mar Quality Rye. It was empty. Although primarily a beer drinker, the "Sage of Baltimore," as he was known, had a great appreciation for Maryland rye. In his memoirs Mencken wrote that his family doctor believed that a shot of Maryland whiskey was the best preventive against pneumonia during winter months.



Bal-Mar Rye jug

Mencken probably appreciated the ingenuity that took the first three letters each in Baltimore and Maryland and turned them into a brand name. Bal-Mar was a brand name of J.W. Waldeck & Co. of Baltimore. The firm first shows up in city directories in 1906, listed as wine and liquor dealers doing business at 105 N. Howard St. Not a distiller but a distributor, it bought its liquor from other Maryland producers. Waldeck promoted its Bal-Mar Brand vigorously, including issuing etched whiskey glasses boasting the name of the product. J.W. Waldeck also distributed other brands including one called Gwynn Brook Rye.

Before 1920 Maryland ranked third behind Kentucky and Pennsylvania in whiskey production. With Prohibition, everything stopped. Like many of its peers, the Waldeck company went out of business in 1920, and Bal-Mar Rye vanished forever. Roxbury Rye also disappeared. When Repeal came 14 years later the Maryland industry attempted a comeback but found itself subordinate to large corporations located in places like Kentucky and Canada. An excellent example was the fate of the Gottschalk Co. Prohibition shook to its foundation the house Arthur Gottschalk built. Although Baltimore investors revived the Maryland Distilling Co. in 1933 and built a new plant at Relay, Md., the firm soon was absorbed by the Canadian super-distiller, J.E. Seagram & Co. The new owners changed the distillery name to Calvert and the lead brand to Lord Calvert - blended whiskey. It was "goodbye" to Maryland rye. Eventually the Relay distillery was closed.

Maryland rye, lacking the marketing resources of bourbon, continued to decline until today the Maryland label has disappeared completely and Baltimore is without a single true distillery or nationally distributed brand. Moreover, few people today drink rye whiskey and none of them think of "The Old Line State" when they do.



\*\*\*\*\*

This article draws importantly on material provided by Jim Bready in the Winter 1990 Maryland Historical Magazine (Vol.85, No.4) entitled, "Maryland Rye: A Whiskey the Nation Long Fancied--But Now Has Let Vanish." Jim, the well recognized expert on Maryland whiskey, has been a great help to me in gathering material. Other sources were Baltimore city directories and the Internet.

## Annual Contest Results for Items Collected During 2004

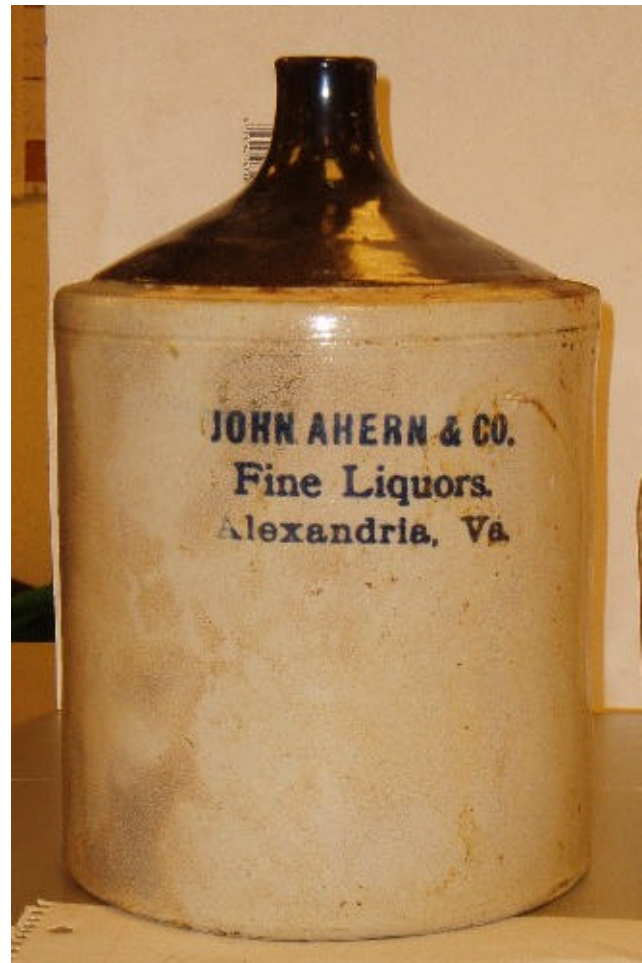
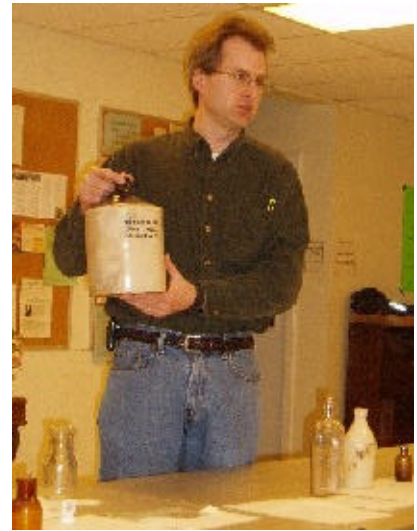
### Digger of the Year

This award goes to the person who dug the best bottle during the last year. The voting resulted in an exact tie between **Peter Rydquist's** jug from **John Ahern & Co** and **Andy Goldfrank's** black ink bottle from **S. Fine & Co**. Peter's find came from Alexandria, Virginia, while Andy unearthed his bottle from an 1850's layer in New York City.



Peter Rydquist displays his Ahern jug at right.

---



**Collector of the Year**

**Jim Sears** wins this award with a deep teal blue Mason jar from the Hero Fruit Jar Company. This unusual colored is only known in half gallon size, with fewer than 5 examples reported. This particular one came from the collection of fruit jar columnist Tom Cannif.

**Go-With of the Year**



This contest resulted in another tie. **Bob Ford** is one winner with his **Caf-Fee-No** advertising mirror from Baltimore, Maryland. He shares honors with **Dodd Delph**, whose miniature **Sheffield Farms** milk goes nicely with the actual milk bottle.



**Shard of the Year**

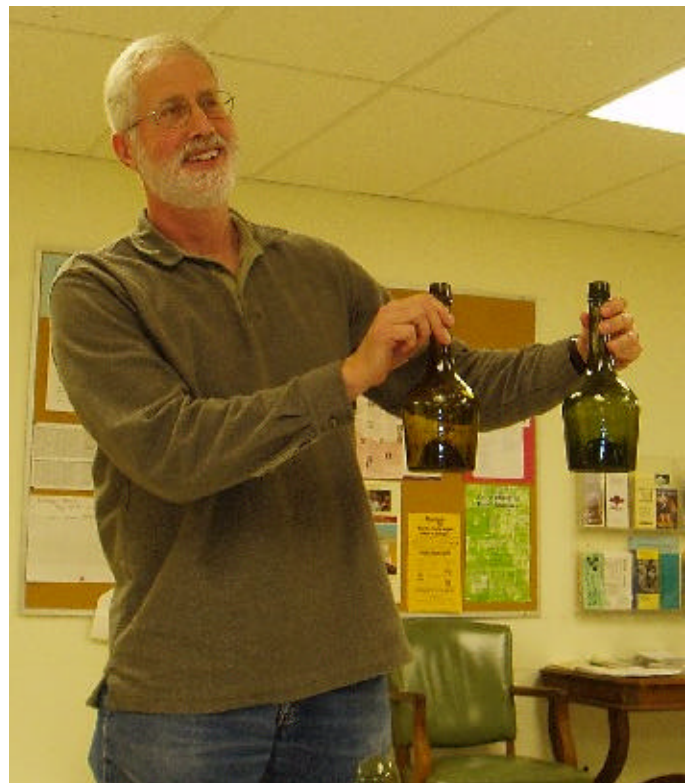
**Andy Goldfrank** wins this contest with part of a **Lynch and Clarke** bottle (left) from New York. Andy dug this very early mineral water in an 1830's trash layer in New York City.



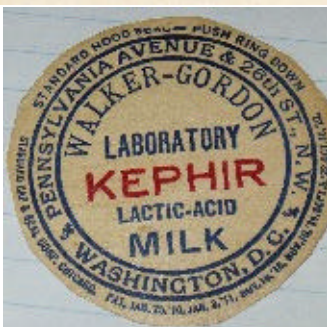
**Other Entries of Interest**

Thank you to everyone who participated in our contest. We do not have room to show individual pictures of all the entries, but below are a few items of particular interest to local collectors.

**Richard Lilienthal** displays a pair of scarce **Gautier Wine Bitters** bottles from Washington, DC at right. The amber one



has some damage and was part of the shard contest, while the perfect olive one was a contender for collector of the year. Richard also brought the **Kephir** label at left, which proves that Walker-Gordon did have a Washington, DC operation.





The local Costello's flask (above, left) was dug by Dodd Delph, while Larry Holmes unearthed the Sandkuhler (above right) from Baltimore.

## Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

The Baltimore show is almost here. We hope to see everyone on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

**MARCH 6, 2005 - BALTIMORE, MARYLAND** Baltimore Antique Bottle Club **25th Annual Show & Sale** (8 AM to 3 PM) at the Physical Education Center, Essex Campus of the Community College of Baltimore County, 7201 Rossville Blvd., Baltimore, Maryland. **INFO: Bob Ford**, PH: (410) 531-9459, Email: [bottles@comcast.net](mailto:bottles@comcast.net)



### MARCH 19 - RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

The Raleigh Bottle Club's 5th Annual Antique Bottles & Collectibles Show & Sale (Sat. 9 AM - 3 PM, \$2 Adm.; Dealer set-up, 6 - 7:30 AM, Earlybirds, \$10, 7:30 - 9 AM ) at the North Carolina State Fairgrounds, Holshouser Bldg., Raleigh, North Carolina. **INFO: David Tingen**, P.O. Box 18083, Raleigh, NC 27619-8083; Email: [RBC@antiquebottles.com](mailto:RBC@antiquebottles.com); Website: [www.antiquebottles.com/raleigh](http://www.antiquebottles.com/raleigh).

### APRIL 24 - WASHINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA

The Washington County Antique Bottle Club's 31st Antique Bottle Show (Sun. 9 AM - 3 PM, donation \$3) at the Alpine Star Lodge, 735 Jefferson Ave., Washington, Pennsylvania. (From I-70, exit 17) **INFO: Nigel Dunmore**, 121 Highland Ave., Avella, PA 15312; PH: (724) 587-5217; Email: [legin1247@msn.com](mailto:legin1247@msn.com).

### APRIL 24 HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

The Historical Bottle-Diggers of Virginia 24th Annual Antique Bottle and Collectible Show & Sale, (9 AM to 3 PM), at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds, (US Rt. 11 South, Exit 243 off I-81) Info: **Sonny Smiley**, PH: (540) 434-1129 or Email: [lithiaman1@yahoo.com](mailto:lithiaman1@yahoo.com)

### MAY 22 BRICK, NEW JERSEY

Jersey Shore Bottle Club's 33rd Annual Show & Sale, (9 AM to 2 PM), at the Brick Elks, 2491 Hooper Ave., Brick, NJ. Info: **Richard Peal**, 720 Eastern Lane, Brick, NJ 08723, PH: (732) 267-2528, Email: [boxcar1@worldnet.att.net](mailto:boxcar1@worldnet.att.net)

### JUNE 12 - MILLVILLE, NEW JERSEY

Wheaton Village Antique Bottle Show (Sun. 10 AM - 4 PM) at Wheaton Village, 1501 Glasstown Rd. (Rt. 55 South exit 26), Millville, NJ. Info: **Doris Abeling**, PH: (856) 825-6800 Ext. 104, E-mail: [dabeling@wheatonvillage.org](mailto:dabeling@wheatonvillage.org), Website: [www.wheatonvillage.org](http://www.wheatonvillage.org).

### JUNE 26 - CHEVERLY, MARYLAND

The Potomac Bottle Collectors Annual Show & Sale (Sunday 9 AM to 3 PM) at the American Legion Post 108, 3608 Legion Drive, Cheverly, MD 20785. Info: **Jim Sears**, 4211 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Rd., Apt. 1, Arlington, VA 22203 PH:(703) 243-2409, Email: [searsjim@usa.net](mailto:searsjim@usa.net) or **Andy Goldfrank**, PH:(202) 258-2389, Email: [amg\\_sticky@yahoo.com](mailto:amg_sticky@yahoo.com)

### ANNOUNCEMENT:

At 8 PM on April 8, 2005, the Baltimore Antique Bottle Club meeting will feature **Dr. James Gibb**, speaking on **Life and Death in Seventeenth Century Maryland**. Because Dr. Gibb's talk is supported by the Maryland Humanities Council, the Baltimore club has been asked to publicize the event. All are welcome to attend at Loch Raven High School, which is at Exit 29 of the Baltimore Beltway (I-695) and Cromwell Bridge Road. See <http://www.baltimorebottleclub.org/> for more information.