

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

August-September 2007

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Picnic September 22nd

(Picnic Takes the Place of Regular September Meeting)

Please join us at 1 PM on Saturday, September 22nd for our club picnic at Hunt Park in Alexandria, Virginia. The club will provide hamburgers, hotdogs, and soft drinks. Members are encouraged to bring a dish to pass, but everyone is welcome regardless of whether you have food to contribute. We would enjoy seeing any visitors and guests who wish to join us. In order to help us plan how much food to bring, we would appreciate if those planning to attend would let us know via the web site: <http://www.potomacbottlecollectors.org/contact.php>. Please let us know how many people you plan to bring and whether you prefer hotdogs, hamburgers, or something else.

To minimize confusion, we are scheduling the picnic for the same time and place as last year's picnic. We will meet promptly at 1 PM in the picnic area marked E on the map at right. Please note that this map is a bit unusual in that north is at the bottom.

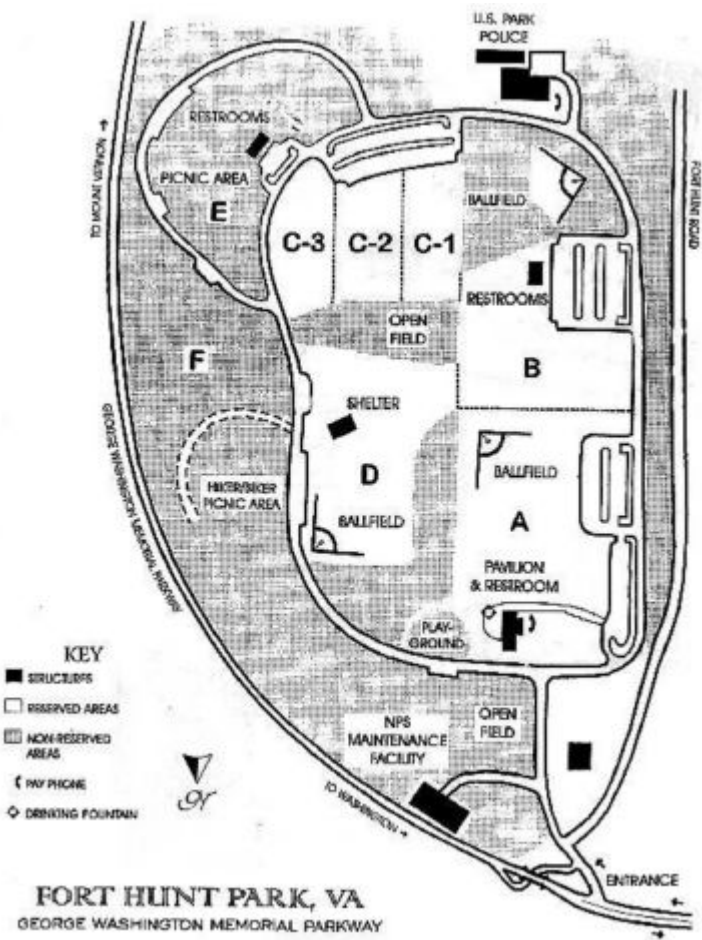
We do want to see bottles at the picnic. Members are particularly encouraged to bring along summer finds for show & tell.

Directions

Fort Hunt Park is located 5 miles south of Old Town Alexandria along the George Washington Memorial Parkway (parts of which are also called Mount Vernon Highway and Washington Street) in Fairfax County, Virginia. To reach this road from Washington, DC, cross the 14th Street Bridge south toward Virginia, and take the exit for Mount Vernon/National Airport. To reach it from the Beltway in Maryland, take the very first exit after the Wilson Bridge. To reach it from the Beltway in Virginia take exit 1 North, go to the first traffic light and take a right on Franklin Street; go about 3 blocks and take a right on South Washington Street.

Upcoming Meetings:

Our next regular meetings will be on **October 30th** and **November 27th** at 8 PM in Bethesda, Maryland.



D.C. Shot Glasses: The Legacy

by Jack Sullivan

Special to the Potomac Pontil

The invention of a semi-automatic bottle machine in the 1890s (pre-Owens) made it possible for glass items to be created much more cheaply than before. Its advent coincided with a period of intense competition among American liquor distillers and distributors. Advertising in many forms proliferated. Among them were the so-called “whiskey samplers” – shot glasses that advertised brands and distributors. Relatively inexpensive – as low as 35 cents a dozen undecorated -- some of those glasses were “give-aways” to saloons with their orders of whiskey. Others were offered as premiums to mail order and other customers.

Distillers and dealers vied hard to make their glasses interesting and attractive. D.C.’s whiskey merchants were no exception. The Potomac Bottle Collectors “Antique Bottles” book lists some 26 D.C. whiskey shot glasses.

For many pre-Prohibition whiskey purveyors, the only lasting record of their existence is their shot glasses. Their bottles and flasks too often were not embossed, bearing only paper labels that long since have disappeared or deteriorated, making identification almost impossible. With their etched labels, by contrast, shot glasses continue to remind us of a time when a city like Washington could support a host of local liquor distributors, many with their own distinctive brands. Five District whiskey outlets and their shot glasses are part of that legacy:

Chas. Kraemer and Joseph Crowley

The Chas. Kraemer Company was a wholesale dealer in wines and liquors located at 735 Seventh Street N.W., according to its letterhead (Fig. 1). An illustration of its headquarters at that address from around 1890 shows an imposing four story structure with considerable pedestrian and horse and buggy traffic at street level (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1: Charles Kraemer Co. bill head



Fig 2: Illustration of Kraemer's headquarters

As was common among many dealers, the Kraemer firm featured its own “house” brand – in this case called “Fineza.” Although the name sounds like a sneeze, the word in Spanish means “finesse,” which probably was Chas. Kraemer’s idea of elegance. Unfortunately, the Fineza glass is singularly undistinguished to look at (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Kraemer “Fineza” shot glass

By contrast, John T. Crowley showed considerable imagination with his shot glass featuring an etched pig (Fig. 4). “Don’t drown the pig” was a frequent admonition on American drink glasses, apparently warning the user not to fill the glass too high. It is not clear whether this admonition was related to a fear of spilling good booze or overindulging on it.

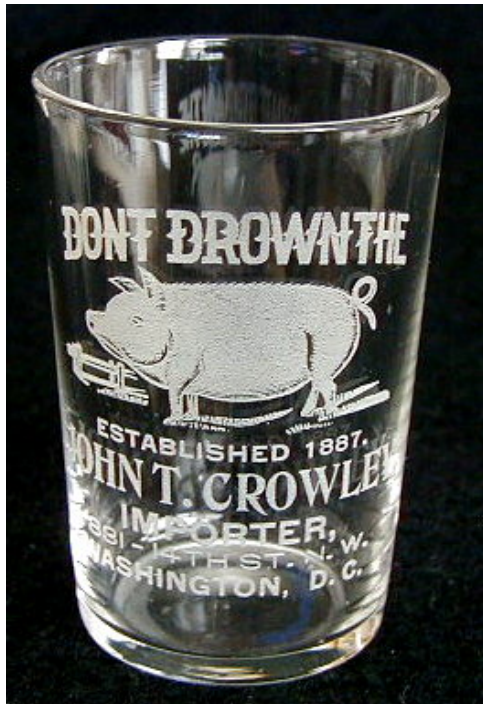


Fig. 4: John T. Crowley shot glass

Although the glass indicates that the Crowley began in 1887, his firm first shows up in Washington business directories in 1905, identified as a liquor dealer located at 1618 Nineteen St., N.W. By 1910 Crowley had moved to 831 Fourteenth St., N.W. where he also operated a saloon. When D.C. went dry in 1917, Crowley's enterprise disappears from directories.

Edw. J. Quinn & John Wedderburn

Another Irish saloon keeper with an eye for a fancy shot glass was Edward J. Quinn. The white etched label on his house brand, Oronoco Rye, features interesting typography (Fig. 5). Quinn ran a saloon at 604 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, just opposite the Pennsylvania Railroad Station, his saloon often was a first stop for thirsty travelers arriving in town, particularly those from locales where liquor already was banned.

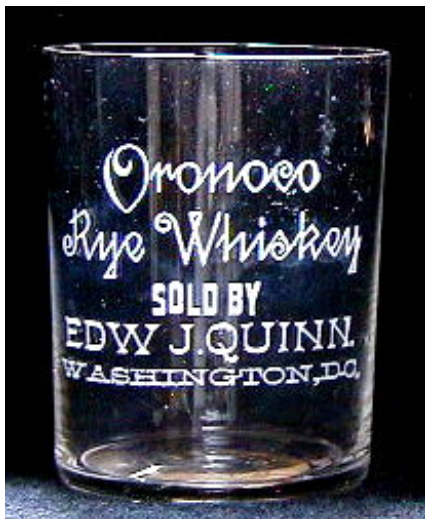


Fig. 5:
Quinn's
Oronoco
shot
glass

Quinn was proud of his Oronoco Rye brand, which probably was mixed somewhere in a back room, because he took the trouble to register the name with the federal government in 1905. He also featured another house brand he called Bluemont Whiskey. Later another Irishman – D. J. O'Connell – appears to have bought both the saloon and the rights to Oronoco Rye. Bottles with O'Connell's name and the Pennsylvania Ave. address show up from time to time.

Another enterprising Washington whiskey merchant was John Wedderburn. John also was a patent attorney, which may account for his having registered multiple brands – an expensive process for non-lawyers. Among Wedderburn's whiskeys were Hallmark, Karlan Club, Over-Wood, The J.W., Three Points, and Wedderburn Rye ("A Modern Improved Whiskey"). He also distributed a national brand called Golden Wedding that is featured on a Wedderburn shot glass (Fig. 6). He called his enterprise the Pure Food Liquor House, a name that appears on another glass (Fig. 7).

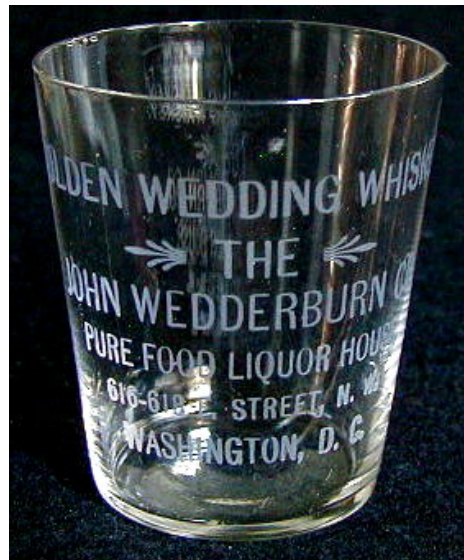


Fig. 6: Wedderburn Golden Wedding shot glass

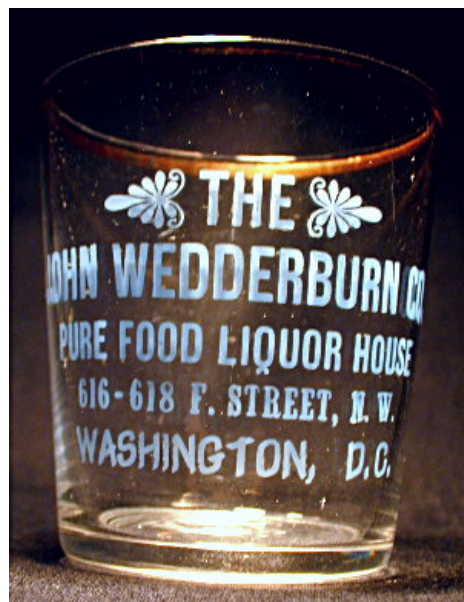


Fig. 7: Wedderburn Pure Food Liquor House shot glass

John Wedderburn Co. first shows up in D.C. business directories in 1906, located at 618 F Street NW., listed as a liquor dealer. A 1909 bill head also shows an office in Baltimore at 227 N. Charles Street. Bottles with Wedderburn labels regularly appear at auctions and in collections, indicating a vigorous business until D.C. went dry. He continued to be active as a D.C. businessman until 1958 and his papers are collected at D.C.'s Martin Luther King Library.

The Silver Wedding Mystery

Shown here is a shot glass advertising Silver Wedding whiskey (Fig. 8). It is almost certainly from Washington, D.C. but from there on its provenance gets murky. The Potomac Bottle book lists one Silver Wedding Whiskey shot glass as the product of the Colonial Wine Co., located at the corner of Ninth and D Streets NW. It was owned by Alonzo E. Bunch, who boasted in ads that his was "...the biggest mail order liquor house in the South...."



Fig. 8: Silver Wedding shot glass

On the other hand, Robert Snyder, America's leading expert on whiskey brands, says that the Silver Wedding name first was registered to one John Keyworth of Washington and subsequently in 1901 to H. (Harry) H. Meyerstein, also of DC. About Keyworth, I can find nothing. Meyerstein first was listed in business directories in 1901, engaged in the grocery trade under the name "L. Strauss Company." By 1905 Meyerstein was operating a saloon at 417 Eleventh St., N.W. Like many others, he apparently was forced to close in 1917. None of these details, however, leads us any closer to who was responsible for the Silver Wedding shot glass shown here.

This is the legacy: Five D.C. liquor distributors, none of them surviving Prohibition, who left posterity something to remember them by – cheap give-away glasses etched indelibly with their names and brands.

Notes: Material for this article has been gathered from a range of sources. Most important among them were the book "Old Advertising Spirits Glasses" by Barbara Edmonson, a pioneer in research on vintage advertising liquor glasses and the enterprises that generated them, and "Antique Bottles from the Washington, D.C., Area." All illustrations are through the courtesy of Robin Preston and his *pre-pro.com* website.

Father John's Medicine

Howdy Folks!,

I was in Lowell, MA recently and walked by a big red brick bldg. What a surprise to look up over the door and see the sign. I thought I heard angels singing, and for a brief moment felt Father John's hand on my shoulder. It was actually the guy I was working with pushing me down the sidewalk because we had an appointment to make. Anyway, I got these shots on the way back and thought you would enjoy seeing the real deal. How many of his bottles have we dug over the years!

Dodd Delph



Diggin' Up Denver with the Legendary "Colorado Boys"

By Al Miller

Thanks to a recent work trip to the Denver area, I had the golden opportunity to meet (and dig with) the dynamic duo, Marty Homola and Mike Saindon, better known from many of Andy Goldfrank's digging articles as "The Colorado Boys". My interest in bottle collecting (and subsequent obsession with digging) all started with an online search for a keepsake bottle from my Great-Grandfather's pre-Prohibition brewery in southern Colorado. Six years later, I have several nice shards of broken hutches and blobs from the family brewery, and plenty of great memories of Washington D.C.-area digging adventures. The prospect of my first dig in Denver, where my Great-Grandfather lived, worked as a cooper, and eventually became a U.S. citizen in 1888, combined with meeting Marty and Mike, made this one of my most anticipated work trips ever.

When I found out I'd be travelling to Denver, I immediately contacted Andy in hopes he could introduce me to Marty and Mike and possibly line up a dig. After a few problems getting linked up, I finally got in touch with Marty shortly before the trip and couldn't wait to get there. I arrived in Denver on a Monday morning, with all-day meetings scheduled every day through Thursday, and a flight home Friday morning. Upon landing, I made the drive to work, and grudgingly went through the motions, eagerly awaiting the chance to drive out to Marty's house to finally meet this digger I'd read and heard so much about. Finally, five o'clock rolled around, and I happily hit the road for Marty's place in the Rocky Mountain foothills.

Upon my arrival, Marty and his wife Kendra welcomed me, and he gave me the grand tour of their late 19th-century house, the acres of parkland (and resident elk and buffalo herds) he oversees for the city & county of Denver, and of course, his amazing bottle and relic collection. We hit it off immediately, and talked for hours about bottles, digging, Colorado history, and so forth. Each bottle in his display case had a story, and he described the digs that produced them as if they'd just happened yesterday.



Fig. 1 - Marty Homola with a small portion of his collection

Marty showed me his homemade bottle tumbler, and spoke of his years of pioneering tumbling devices and cleaning bottles, all the while experimenting with new hardware, compounds, and approaches. He also generously presented me with several beautiful Denver bottles, including a C.A. Scheidemantel Denver blob soda, and a J. Schueler Denver hutch (both already tumbled!), two different style AW Clark Denver Druggist (with addresses), a Wm Whitaker Denver Pharmacist, and an early crude hutch from historic Leadville. I was completely overwhelmed by his kindness and generosity toward someone he'd just met.

As the night flew by, we strategized on dig possibilities for the week, given my relatively short window of opportunity in the evenings after work, and Marty's family and work obligations. I even broached the subject of a drive up to Leadville, but Marty had a friend checking it out and hadn't heard anything, and noted that the snow there was still too high for us to make any real progress. We settled on Wednesday as our best chance, and I agreed to meet up with Marty and Mike in downtown Denver as soon as I could break free from work. I left Marty's with an armload of bottles and headed for my hotel, exhausted but thankful to have made yet another great friend in the bottle hobby.

Wednesday afternoon finally arrived, and I called and checked in with Marty during a break at work. When I finally "escaped", I made good time into Denver, driving by Coors Field just as a Rockies game was about to begin. After a few wrong turns and another cell phone call, I finally found Marty and Mike at around 6 PM, metal detecting a site near the Five Points neighborhood of Denver.

Five Points is aptly named for the intersection of Welton St, Washington St, 26th Ave., and 27th St. When the eastern portion of Denver was originally laid out in a north-south orientation, it met up rather awkwardly with the existing downtown street grid, which was oriented along the South Platte River, running from northeast to southwest. The street car maps in the 1870s-1880s first coined the descriptive "Five Points" phrase, and through the years, it stuck, even appearing on some of the embossed bottles of the time.

Marty introduced me to Mike, and they mentioned that they'd already dug portions of this particular site some years back, but that the recent removal of a parking lot may have provided some new opportunities. We promptly began digging a test hole in a depression along the back edge of the lot. Shortly thereafter, they decided the present site was not worth the effort, and we drove in a caravan to a construction site Mike had been watching just a few blocks away.

The construction crew had gone home for the day, leaving behind a massive pile of excavated dirt and a huge hole covering the rest of the site. Unfortunately, neither the pile nor the hole showed much in the way of shards or other telltale signs. On the other hand, the back edge of the property appeared to be undisturbed and still at the original grade. Marty and Mike began probing along the fence line and quickly found what they

believed to be two privies, about 6 feet apart, one likely a woodliner and the other brick. We all took turns opening up the holes, and it became readily apparent I was out of my league – these guys could move some dirt! I did enjoy digging in the light, dry, almost sandy Denver soil, which was so different from the thick red Virginia clay and wet Baltimore muck I've encountered during east coast digs, but the Colorado Boys were putting me to shame with how effectively they were opening the holes up.



Fig. 2 - Marty and Mike show Al how it's done

From across the alley, a construction worker renovating another home asked what we were up to. Marty hopped out and began talking with him, and the next thing we knew the guy had offered up some current and future projects he was aware of that may yield some dig opportunities. He and Marty exchanged phone numbers, and he promised to call Marty when there was a dig opening. It always pays to make polite conversation with curious onlookers – you never know where that next permission might come from!

As the digging progressed, the woody yielded quite a bit of coal and burnt wood, but not many shards. As Marty continued working that privy, my turn came in the brick privy. At about two feet down, I made the disturbing discovery of a small plastic German Shepherd. Now, I love dogs, but this was not a good sign; while the Five Points area dates to the 1860s, this little "artifact" was likely from the 1960s, and coupled with a few other contemporary pieces of trash we quickly found, clear

evidence that the brickliner had already been dug. I sadly proceeded to fill it in.



Fig. 3 - Not a good sign when dating a privy...

Meanwhile, Mike had been probing the area between the woody and the brickliner, and was convinced he had found another possible privy. Marty and I continued working the first woodliner, and Mike dug a test hole in this new area. As Marty uncovered a very cool unembossed half-barrel whiskey flask with the neck sheared off, Mike and I began opening up what turned out to be a second woodliner. About 4-5 feet down, we hit a significant seed layer, and the excitement really began to build that perhaps we'd found a completely undisturbed area.



**Fig. 4 - "Oh please, oh please..."
Al flings some dirt and hopes for a miracle.**

During my next turn in this third hole, as I carefully worked the back wall near the seed layer, I caught sight of the edge of a small bottle. I gently worked around the edges, and said out loud, "Please be whole. Please be embossed...". It tumbled out into my hand, and as I wiped it off, both of my wishes came true! It was completely intact, embossed "Chiles & Co, Chemists, Denver, Col", with some fancy scroll work which Marty had shown me on another Five Points bottle the other night at his house. After a couple hours, we finally had the first whole bottle of the night, and according to Marty and Mike, it was a good one!



Fig. 5 - Chiles & Co, Chemists, Denver, Col - rare artifact from a short-lived pharmacy located at 556 Arapahoe St, Denver.

We continued taking turns, and unearthed a hock wine (rather crude appearance, and the first one I'd ever seen on a dig), two unembossed champagnes, a crude old blob beer – unembossed except for “10” on the bottom, an 1850 patent date gutta-percha (hard black rubber) syringe, and shards of several blob beers (including a Carl Conrad & Co., the original Budweiser bottler), a broken slick coffin flask, a broken Mason jar, and some porcelain. Marty put the dates on most of the items as the early-mid 1880s. As daylight quickly faded, we bottomed out at around 5-6 feet, and finally filled in the holes. We gathered up our finds and tools, shot a few pictures, and headed over to one of the micro-breweries for what I felt was a triumphant dinner. I gladly bought them dinner as a small token of my appreciation.



Fig. 6 - Hughes & Chiles, Druggists, Frankfort, KY – coincidental find from Chiles' hometown

Subsequent research revealed quite a bit about the story behind the Chiles pharmacy bottle. Edward Chiles, born in Kentucky in approximately 1848, is listed as a druggist in the 1870 Frankfort, KY census. Ironically, during the research phase, Kentucky digger Chris Capley unearthed a "Hughes & Chiles, Druggists, Frankfort, KY" and posted its picture on several bottle-digging forums (see Fig. 6).

In the late 1870s, Chiles and wife Lizzie moved to Denver, first showing up in the 1880 Denver census. On October 1, 1880, Chiles entered into a business partnership with Atwell Rennick and W.J. Todd; Rennick provided the start-up capital, and Chiles the pharmaceutical expertise in a venture they called "Chiles & Co". Under this name, the three are listed together in the 1880 Denver city directory, selling "drugs and medicines" at 556 Arapahoe, corner of 21st. According to court documents, the partnership quickly went sour; on February 21, 1881, Rennick and Todd ejected Chiles from the premises, and placed notice in the local newspaper of the dissolution of the partnership.

Chiles brought suit against the other two men on March 18, 1881, alleging that despite devoting "...his constant time and attention and... all his skill in and to the business of said copartnership...", he'd been wrongly prevented from continued participation. Further, Chiles claimed that the original copartnership agreement called for the firm to continue business for five years from its inception, and that he was now owed his share of the estimated profits (plus interest!), amounting to over \$10,000. The response from the lawyers for Rennick and Todd laid the blame on Chiles for the firm's slow start, citing his "negligence in the management of the business... and extravagant expenditures of the funds of said firm..." and claimed the defendants were justified in removing him and dissolving the partnership. Chiles refuted their allegations in a subsequent court filing, noting that neither Rennick nor Todd had any previous experience as druggists, and that Todd's "misconduct, unwarranted, and wrongful interference...greatly injured the firm...".

The case finally went to trial in June 1882, and the jury, while finding for the plaintiff, awarded Chiles damages of \$1. This award generated another response from Chiles' lawyer, requesting the verdict be set aside, and a new trial granted, citing numerous "errors" on the part of the court, and concluding with "...because the proceedings are otherwise irregular, informal, uncertain, and insufficient...". In November, 1882, Chiles' lawyer issued a receipt for the payment of \$1 in damages and associated court costs; no further record of any court action was found. In the midst of all this, Chiles transitioned into a career as a mining stock broker, and was active in the early efforts to found a Denver Mining Stock Exchange. He subsequently was involved as a board member of several mining interests in the Colorado and New Mexico area. Fig. 7 shows a stock certificate for one of these ventures, with Chiles' signature as Secretary.



Fig. 7 - Bunker Hill Consolidated Mining Co stock certificate, with Edward Chiles as the Secretary

Meanwhile, Todd continued in the druggist business, but not for very long (perhaps Chiles was right about his lack of skill?). He shows up in the Denver business directories for 1881-1883, as a druggist agent, still at 556 Arapahoe. In 1881-1882, Rennick lived right next door at 558, and in 1882, Todd lived there as well. Todd disappears from the Denver directories after 1883 and Rennick after 1884, their time in the druggist business apparently over. All the while, Edward Chiles lived right down the street at 544, which must have been strange, given the enmity between the parties. Since the Chiles & Co name was only in use from October 1880-February 1881, this bottle is a rare one indeed. Given the efforts taken by Rennick & Todd to very publicly dissolve the partnership, it seems unlikely they would have continued to re-use the old Chiles & Co bottles; in fact, since Todd was only listed as an agent from 1881-1883, it is quite possible they only dealt in re-sale of pre-packaged drugs and medicines from national vendors after the breakup with Chiles.

Sometime around 1884, Chiles left Denver for Chicago, where he worked for at least a couple years as an agent for the American Forcite Powder company, dealing in mining explosives and equipment. By 1890, he was back in the druggist business, selling patent medicines; he even started a new "Chiles & Co" with a man named William Cronin, specializing in Chiles Cactus Cream (other than the city directory listing, I have yet to find a bottle or an advertisement for this product, or for any of his Chicago ventures). In 1892 and 1893, Chiles is back on his own, selling "toilet articles". He shows up one last time in Chicago in 1896, listed as a physician, and then disappears.

For me, the research is often almost as much fun as the digging; the detective story of the people behind the embossed names really brings the whole experience to life. Mike and Marty generously let me keep all of the bottles we found, and kept apologizing for the relatively low quantity. I, on the other hand, was ecstatic to have found a local embossed bottle, as well as a few other unembossed yet distinctly western examples, not to mention having the opportunity to dig with the legendary "Colorado Boys". Many thanks to both Marty and Mike for this great experience (and to Andy for hooking us up) - I look forward to another chance sometime down the road...



Fig. 8 - Al, Marty, and Mike with the evening's take

References:

The Rise & Demise of Colorado Drugstores, 1859-1915, by Glen R. Preble
 1860, 1870 US Census - Frankfort, KY; 1880 US Census - Denver, CO
 1880-1883 Denver City Directories
 1884-1899 Chicago City Directories
 Arapahoe County Court, Civil Action #5256, March 18, 1881
http://www.mtgothictomes.com/custer_county_colorado_mining_stock_certificates.htm
Special thanks to researchers Paul Daraghy and Colleen Maresca for all their help!

Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

SEPTEMBER 9 - LEWES, DELAWARE

The Delmarva Antique Bottle Club's 15th Annual Show & Sale (Sun. 9 AM - 3 PM, Early Buyers 7:30 AM) at the Cape Henlopen High School, Lewes, Delaware. INFO: PETER BEAMAN, 28947 Lewes Georgetown Hwy., Lewes, DE 19958; PH: (302) 684-5055 or E-mail: oldngnu@comcast.net.

SEPTEMBER 16 - WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA

Apple Valley Bottle Collectors Club, Inc.'s 33rd Annual Show & Sale (Sun. 9 AM - 3 PM, Adm. \$3, 65+ free, Early Adm. 7:30 AM, \$10) at the Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Family Life Center, 1300 Opequon Ave. (just off Pleasant Valley Rd.), Winchester, Virginia. Over 40 dealers in antique bottles, milks, Coca-Cola, White House vinegar, postcards, table top collectibles, etc. INFO: **RICHARD M. VENSCHOSKE**, 4496 Martinsburg Pike, Clear Brook, VA 22624, PH: (540) 247-4429.

SEPTEMBER 30 - BATSTO VILLAGE, NEW JERSEY

South Jersey's Antique Bottle & Glass Club 24th Annual Batsto Village Show & Sale (9 AM - 4 PM) at the Historic Batsto Village, Hammonton, New Jersey. INFO: **PAUL A DELGUERCIO**, 548 Spring Road, Hammonton, NJ 08037, PH: (609) 352-7104, E-mail: paulhavoc@comcast.net.

OCTOBER 6 - RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

The Richmond Area Bottle Collectors Association's 36th Annual Show & Sale (9 AM - 3 PM, Early Buyers 7:30 AM) at the Showplace Annex, 3002 Mechanicsville Tpk, Richmond, Virginia. INFO: **MARVIN CROKER**, PH: (804) 275-1101 or **ED FAULKNER**, PH: (804) 739-2951 or E-mail: faulkner@antiquebottles.com.

OCTOBER 14 - BEDFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

Bedford County Antique Bottle Club 30th Annual Show & Sale (9 AM - 1 PM, Early Buyers 7 AM) at the Bedford County Fairgrounds 4H Building, Bedford, Pennsylvania. INFO: **LEO MCKENZIE**, PH: (814) 695-0128 or **CHARLES HAZLETT**, PH: (814) 695-0128.

NOVEMBER 4 - ELKTON, MARYLAND

Tri-State Bottle Collectors and Diggers Club, 35th Annual Show & Sale (9 AM - 3 PM) at the Singlerly Fire Hall, Routes 279 & 213, Elkton, Maryland. INFO: **DAVE BROWN**, PH: (302) 738-9960.