

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

November 2011

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Meeting – November 29th

We look forward to seeing everyone at 8 PM on Tuesday, November 29th at St. Mark's Orthodox Church, 7124 River Road, Bethesda, MD 20817.



Scenes from the October meeting:

Bill Porter explains the base embossings on Coke bottles. After the town names on Coke bottles ceased to be meaningful, Coca-Cola brought these base embossings because they were popular with customers.

Mike Cianciosi displays a stoneware bottle that he purchased after the detective work of bottle digger Chris Rowell showed it to be from Washington, DC.

The picture at right shows some of the summer finds displayed by various club members. The blue calabash in this photo was a gift to Lee Shipman from Marvin Croker at the recent Richmond antique bottle show.

Meetings: 8:00 PM on the last Tuesday of each month January-June, October-November; picnic in September.

President: Andy Goldfrank

Vice President: Al Miller

Secretary: Jim Sears

Treasurer: Lee Shipman

Pontil: Jim Sears (email: searsjim@usa.net, PH: 609/472-5473) &

Andy Goldfrank (email: amg_sticky@yahoo.com, PH: 202/588-0543)

Web Site: www.potomacbottlecollectors.org

Maintained by Al Miller: www.potomacbottlecollectors.org/contact.php

Victory Bottling Works

By Michael Cianciosi

The Victory Bottling Works in Vienna Virginia was started on May 30, 1923 by William T. Buser (b.1871, d.1935). In April 1926 the company was incorporated with Mr Buser as the president, Hugh W. Gunnell as the vice president, and R.C. Yost as the secretary and treasurer. All three of these men were from Vienna.

A 1926 newspaper advertisement said that they bottled grape, orange, lime and peach flavored drinks, sold in Fairfax by Doves Lunch and Piggly Wiggly. A 1931 newspaper advertisement said "A telephone call to Vienna 28-F-11 will bring you a case – mixed or of your favorite flavor", so it seems their trucks would deliver soda to your door.

When W.T. Buser died in 1935, Hugh Gunnell took over the company. It then started distributing Beer, including Christian Heurich's Senate beer from Washington DC.

The company was located on the corner of Chain Bridge Road (route 123) and Sutton Road. Figures 1 and 2 show what the Vienna Bottling works looked like circa 1946.



Figure 2 - Courtesy of the Fairfax County Public Library Photographic Archive

Figures 3 and 4 show what the interior looked like circa 1946. I wonder if these were considered modern offices in the 1940s? My guess is that the man in Figure 3 is Hugh Gunnell, but I have no idea who the woman in figure 4 is. If you look closely you'll see a Senate beer can on top of the old safe in figure 4. Also, both figures 3 and 4 have Senate Beer calendars on the wall.

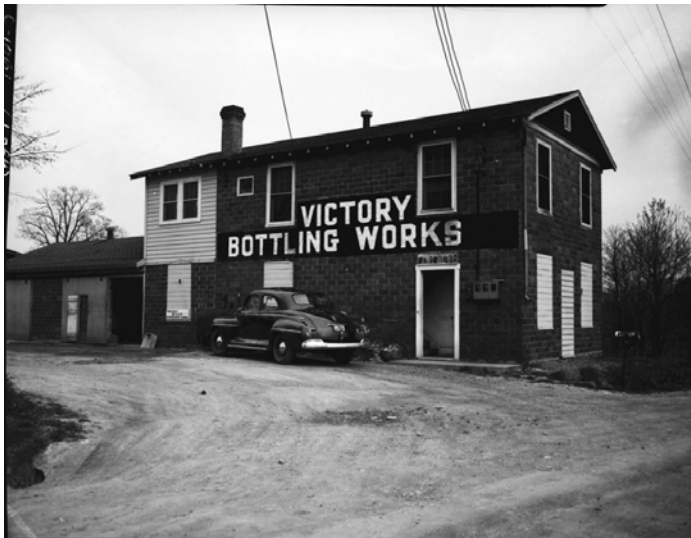


Figure 1 - Courtesy of the Fairfax County Public Library Photographic Archive



Figure 3 - Courtesy of the Fairfax County Public Library Photographic Archive



Figure 4 - Courtesy of the Fairfax County Public Library Photographic Archive

Bottles from the Victory Bottling Works are shown in figures 5 and 6. The one in Figure 5 is a straight sided machine-made crown top bottle with rings. It is embossed in an oval pattern with "VICTORY / BOTTLING WORKS / W.T. BUSER / PROP. / VIENNA, VA." The one in Figure 6 is a machine-made crown top with a diamond cut pattern that is very heavy and has a neat feel to it when you hold it in your hand. It's embossed in script with the word "Victory" on both shoulders, with "VICTORY BOTG. WKS. INC. VIENNA VA 6 FL. OZS." around the edge of the base, and a large "B" on the underside.



Figure 5



Figure 6

There is a variation of the bottle in figure 6 with an unusual lip. A close up of this lip is shown in figure 7. The lip is embossed with "REGISTERED PATENTED PRIOF". I think the word "PRIOF" is supposed to be pronounced like "pry off", since the design is intended to allow you to use a coin to pry the bottle cap off of the bottle.



Figure 7

The bottles in figures 5 and 6 were almost surely soda bottles, as they only held 7 and 6 ounces respectively. I suspect that the beer bottles used by the Victory Bottling works were unembossed, as I've never seen Victory bottles in any other shapes or sizes.

Sources:

1. Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 were Courtesy of the Fairfax County Public Library Photographic Archive
2. Various newspaper articles from the Fairfax Herald and Fairfax County Independent
3. Online book: An economic and social survey of [various Virginia counties], Issues 1-4 By University of Virginia. School of Rural Social Economics
4. Book: This Was Vienna Virginia Facts and Photos" by Connie & Mayo Stuntz
5. Various phone books

The DeHarts of Virginia: Moonshine in the Sunshine

By Jack Sullivan

[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

Descended from a Dutch ancestor, many of the large DeHart family, were settlers in Patrick County, Virginia, a region just east of the Blue Ridge Mountains not far from the North Carolina line. There they engaged in a wide range of businesses (Fig. 1), the most lucrative of them making whiskey.

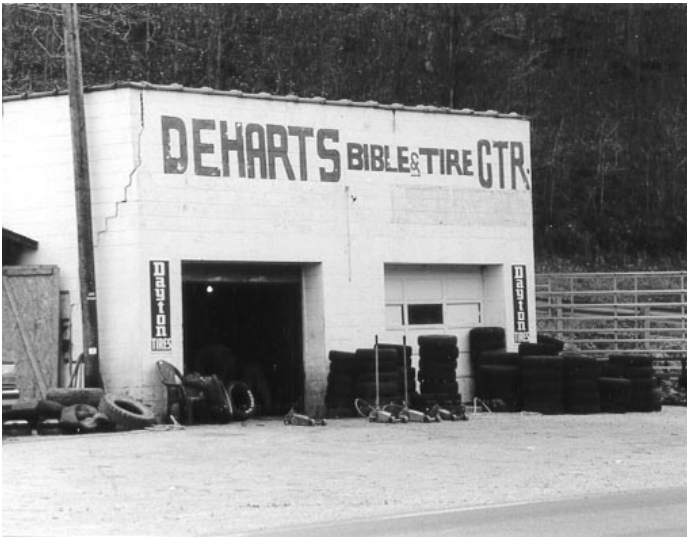


Fig. 1: Photo: DeHart Bible & Tire

The DeHarts differed little from many of their neighbors. Although some residents avoided taxes by running illegal stills producing “moonshine,” by the 1880s dozens of Blue Ridge stills were operating under state license. A business census of that time listed 54 distillers in Patrick County, but strangely enough, only two saloons. With improved roads and railroads, liquor could be shipped from the region to coal camps, factory towns and larger cities.

Most of these operations were small. They largely produced limited amounts of brandy from apples or peaches after the fruit harvest. An exception was Fleming DeHart. Born in Patrick County in 1838, Fleming was the son of Thomas DeHart and Martha “Patsy” Via. He apparently had little education and signed legal documents with “x.” An early sign for his distillery indicates some problems with spelling (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: DeHart sign

Despite limited book learning Fleming had a wealth of business “horse sense.” He amassed a substantial amount of rich valley farmland and as an adjunct to agriculture started making whiskey from rye and corn. In 1865 he had married Millie Jane DeHart, a distant cousin. The couple produced four children of whom the first, Isaac (Ike), born 1866, and Joseph, born 1870, would walk in their father’s footsteps.

Around 1879 Fleming built large home, shown here in a later newspaper photo (Fig.3). He called his farmstead “Hartville, Virginia.” The location was just his estate and did not appear on Virginia maps. Hartville eventually covered 620 acres and more than 100 people are said to have lived there. In a later newspaper account Fleming was described as a very generous man who welcomed people to his “town.” In time Hartville would even have a U.S. Post Office, probably to facilitate the shipment of DeHart whiskey.

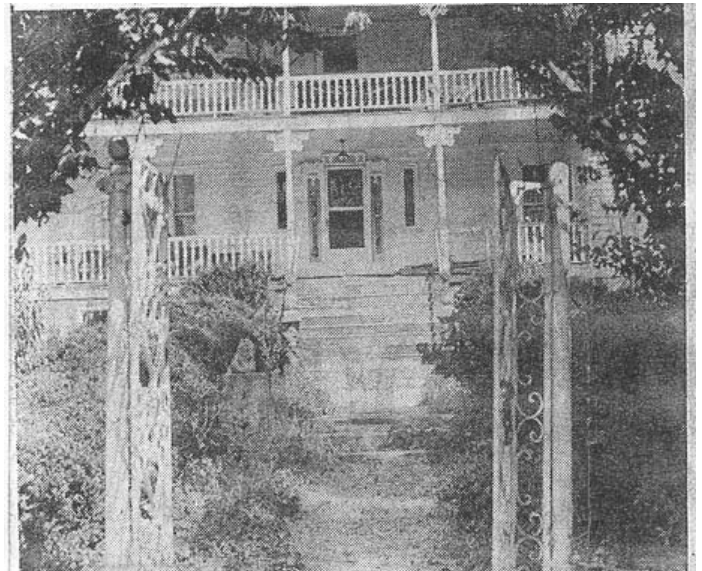


Fig. 3: Fleming DeHart house

With prosperity and the coming of age of the two sons the distillery expanded even further and in 1889 was incorporated as the Fleming DeHart Distilling Company. By 1900 Millie Jane DeHart had died and Fleming was sharing his house with Ike and his wife, Mollie. Because Ike was the elder son, he eventually inherited both the farm and the house as his father aged.

The son proved to be every bit the businessman his father had been in managing and expanding the DeHart enterprises. A contemporary article described Ike as farming some of the best land in Virginia, growing fruit and field crops, raising cattle, harvesting lumber, running a grist mill and operating a country store. It added: “DeHart operates a legal still in the area, shipping his products to many parts of the country.” Mollie DeHart was the postmistress of Hartville.

Ike brought more formal education and advertising savvy to the whiskey business. He began to bottle his whiskey, the better ship it to distant locations (Fig. 4). He also hired excellent artists to provide the labels for his liquor. The “Old

Ike” brand clearly was a spin-off from his nickname (Fig. 5). He also featured well-designed labels for his corn liquor (Figs. 6-7).



Fig. 4: Old Ike bottle



Fig. 6: Mountain Dew label



Fig. 7: Pride of Virginia label

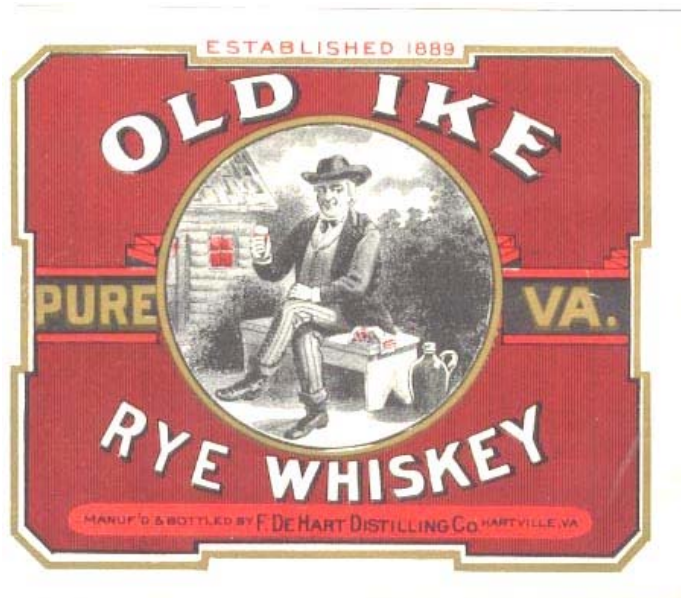


Fig. 5: Old Ike label

A clear indication of marketing talent was the emphasis on DeHart labels touting the “purity” of the whiskey. What today is called the Pure Food and Drug Act had passed in 1906 and canny distillers picked up the word for merchandising purposes. The purity of DeHart’s Mountain Dew Corn Whiskey was emphasized with a waterfall image. As the market for the products of the Fleming DeHart Distillery expanded, the family became increasingly wealthy.

Their liquor business stayed strictly legal, annually obtaining Virginia Commonwealth licenses. Later they kept their whiskey in U.S. Government bonded warehouses. Federal records show taxpaying transactions for the distillery almost from the time the “bottled in bond” legislation was passed until Prohibition. Although some of their whiskey was raw enough to be akin to “moonshine,” the DeHarts opted to make it in the sunshine.

The casualty in this success story appears to be Joseph DeHart, the younger brother. Brought up in the distilling business, Joseph found himself as the second son and out of the grand inheritance enjoyed by Ike. In 1889, age 26, he married Daisy Via, apparently a cousin. Joseph determined an independent course, not only starting his own distillery but changing the spelling of his name to de-Hart.

Joseph’s operation was near Woolwine, Virginia, also in Patrick County. He is seen here in an early 1900s ad extolling his liquor, which he called Mountain Rose Corn Whiskey (Fig. 8). His ad may be a slap at his brother, announcing that “I have not made up a dozen or more names for my whiskey and as many prices, which is now so common with the clever whiskey advertising of today....” Joseph’s plain and simple “new” corn whiskey was \$2 a gallon and “old,” \$2.50.

STOP!

Hear the Truth from an honest manufacturer and don't be deceived longer

REFERENCE:
Bank of Stuart, Inc.
Stuart, Va.

STOP!

Listen to the motto that has served so well to build my business:
"Honest Goods"
"Full Measure"

REFERENCE:
Any business man in Patrick County, or the Postmaster at Woolwine, Virginia

THE MOUNTAIN ROSE DISTILLERY, No. 250
J. H. DeHART, Proprietor
WOOLWINE, VIRGINIA

NEW CORN WHISKEY. Per Gallon \$2.00 } F. O. B. Stuart, Va.
OLD CORN WHISKEY. " " \$2.25 }

Fig. 8: Jos. de-Hart ad #1

Despite boasting only two products, Joseph also prospered during the early 1900s. He built a large home near Woolwine (Fig. 9). It stands today as a popular bed and breakfast just off the Blue Ridge. Joseph was keenly aware of the Prohibition pressures in Virginia and when the Commonwealth voted to go dry in 1916, he placed an advertisement urging Virginians to lay in a 10 year stock of his corn liquor and “Make Hay While the Sun Shines.” (Fig. 10).



Fig. 9: Jos. de-Hart house

Subject: "PREPAREDNESS"

The whole nation is talking "PREPAREDNESS," so why not the individual PREPARE? Prepare for the coming prohibition drouth that hits Virginia on November 1st, this year, 1916

On and after that date you will not have the privilege of fortifying your home with pure 100 proof Mountain Rose Corn Whiskey, made and sold strictly on its merits; nothing purer or better for medicinal purposes, regardless of the price you pay.

Good Whiskey will be Hard to Procure

at any price after our state goes dry, and if procured it will cost you three to five times the price I charge you. It will be no bad idea to lay away a ten years' supply of CORN WHISKEY strictly for medicinal purposes, and you will never regret it. Do not fail to include in your purchase ample supply for the coming Xmas holidays, as it is going to be hard on a supposed free people to conform abruptly to the fake prohibition measures. You had better

"Make Hay While the Sun Shines"

Now, in conclusion will say, get your orders in early and avoid the rush that will prevail during the last days of October. Remember that all orders to be delivered in Virginia will have to be placed in due time to be filled and delivered to you on or before October 31st.

Thanking my many friends and customers for their past patronage, and hoping to be of further service in the last days of my present business career, I remain,
Yours truly,
J. H. de-HART,
PROPRIETOR OF
THE MOUNTAIN ROSE DISTILLERY
PHILPOTT, VIRGINIA.

Fig. 10: Jos. de-Hart ad #2

How Brother Ike dealt with the last days of alcohol in Virginia has not been recorded, but his national market base apparently kept the distillery going a year or more beyond 1916. In time the heirs of Ike DeHart, showing the same generous spirit as Fleming, donated family land to Patrick County for a park. A monument stone marks the location (Fig. 11). Note that it cites the “government distillery” – a reference to the DeHarts’ strictly legal operation.



Fig. 11: Hartville Monument stone

The county park on the site has a range of recreational options but also contains the DeHart family cemetery. Fleming, who died in 1923 shortly after his 85th birthday, has a large grave marker that identifies him as “Father” (Fig. 12). Isaac and Mollie, who were childless, are buried nearby. Joseph deHart, perhaps symbolic of estrangement from the family, is buried elsewhere.



Fig. 12: Fleming DeHart grave marker

As a postscript to this story, it should be noted that the DeHarts’ good example did not filter down to all their neighbors. Patrick County today is considered a top Virginia hot spot for moonshining by revenue agents. Moreover, a 1958 press report described the arrest of a Virginia man for buying a supply of equipment and ingredients required for operating an illegal still. His last name was DeHart. **Notes:** The information and illustrations for this article came from a number of Internet and written sources. A principal source of photos was the DeHart Picture Gallery: homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~am1/dehartpics.html.



Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

November 27, 2011 (Sunday) Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
Forks of the Delaware Bottle Collectors Association 38th Show & Sale (9:00 am – 3:00 pm, early buyers 7:30 am) at the Bethlehem Catholic High School, Madison & Dewberry Avenues, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Info: Bill Hegedus, 20 Cambridge Place, Catasauqua, Pennsylvania 18032, 610.264.3130

March 4, 2012 (Sunday) Baltimore, Maryland The Baltimore Antique Bottle Club presents its 32nd Annual Show and Sale. Doors open: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm., Physical Education Center, Essex Campus-Community College of Baltimore County, 7201 Rossville Blvd. (off exit 34, I-695), Baltimore, Maryland, Free Bootle Appraisals, The largest one-day bottle show in the world!-over 300 tables, Admission \$3.00, Information contact: [Rick Lease](mailto:RickLease@comcast.net) (Show Chairman), 410.239.8918, baltojar@comcast.net, For contracts: [Andy Agnew](mailto:AndyAgnew@comcast.net), 410.527.1707, medbotls@comcast.net, www.baltimorebottleclub.org,