

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

September 2013

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Picnic – Saturday, September 28th at 1 PM

Please join us for our annual club picnic at the home of Lee Shipman: 5403 E. Halbert Road, Bethesda, MD. Thank you to Lee for providing the map below. The club will provide hamburgers, hotdogs, and soft drinks. Members are encouraged to bring a dish to pass, but everyone is welcome in any case. Please bring guests and antique glass.



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

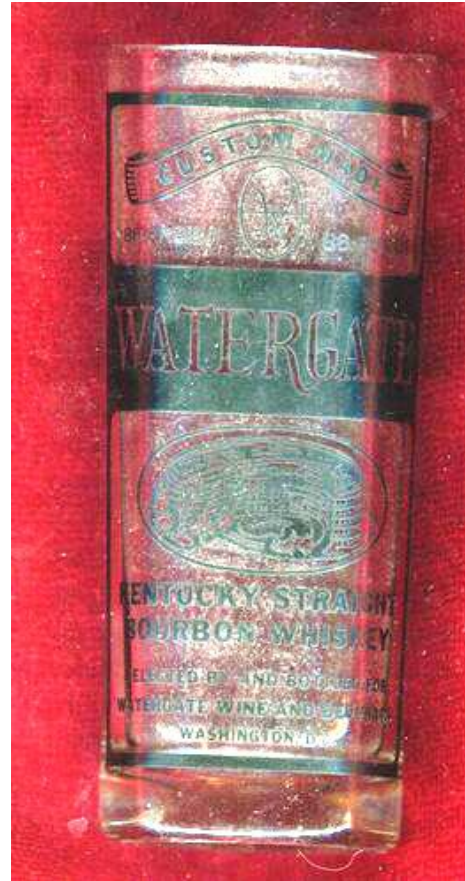
Maintained by Mike Cianciosi (chosi@cox.net)

Remembering “Watergate” 40 Years Later

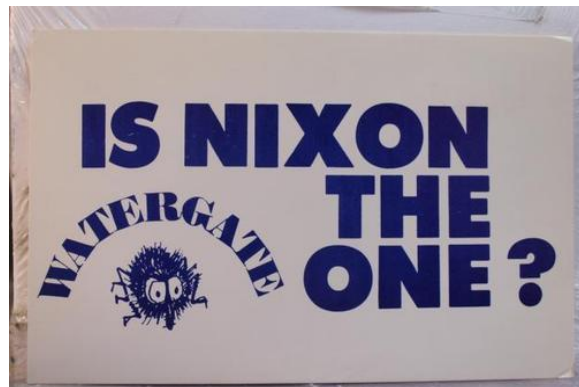
By Jack Sullivan
[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

During the summer of 1973, the Watergate scandal broke open as the Senate Judiciary Committee conducted an investigation into the events surrounding the 1972 break-in at the Democratic Party Headquarters in DC’s Watergate Complex. Those events and the Watergate itself have given rise to a plethora of souvenir items, many in glass, ceramic and other materials.

The Watergate complex itself was controversial, purportedly built by funds from the Vatican, of a seemingly radical architecture previously unseen in federal Washington. Even before it became famous for the “bugging” incident (Fig. 1), the buildings themselves had become something of a tourist destination. A gift shop there sold patriotic souvenirs (Fig. 2) to be taken back to Keokuk, Iowa, to impress the kinfolk. Or if the relatives were more unbuttoned, a highball glass that advertised “Watergate Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey” bought at Watergate Wine & Liquors (Fig. 3).



3. Watergate whiskey glass

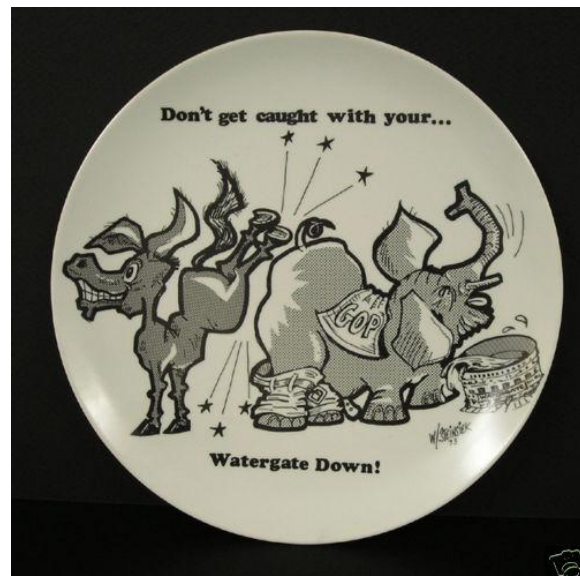


1. Nixon “Bugging” postcard



2. Watergate creamer

We don’t know what spirituous beverages the White House was serving the night in June 1972 it authorized the break-in at the Democratic National Committee Headquarters housed in the Watergate Office Building. What we do know is that the gambit backfired and eventually brought down a President. Partisans on the Democratic Party side were quick to fashion souvenirs like this ceramic plate to remind Republicans of the ensuing painful events (Fig. 4). The plate was the creative work of Walt Steinsiek, a longtime cartoonist.



4. Donkey-Elephant plate

The Senate Judiciary Committee hearings into the Watergate scandal began in May, 1973, and continued through June. Millions of Americans watched them on television as, one after another, Administration officials trooped to the witness stand to be asked, among other things, “What did the President know and when did he know it?” This famous event in American history occasioned any number of artifacts. Among them was a wall plaque that showed the committee seated while President Richard Nixon, dressed like a king in a crown and cape, walked in front of them (**Fig. 5**).



5. Watergate Committee plaque

Another ingenious item, apparently made in the United Kingdom was a chess set in which many of the characters involved in Watergate were depicted as chess pieces. The White House crowd was shown as the white pieces (**Fig. 6**). Depicted clockwise from left were John Erlichmann, Nixon, Pat Nixon, Robert Haldeman, Vice President Agnew, John Mitchell and Howard Hunt. Shown in close-up are Richard Nixon as the “king” in the retinue (**Fig. 7**) and Sen. Sam Ervin, who headed the Watergate Committee, as the black king (**Fig. 8**). The pieces are made of resin.



6. Chess men



7: Nixon chess piece



8. Senator Ervin chess piece

Not everyone, of course, was enchanted with the hearings considering them a “witch hunt” perpetrated by Democrats. One dissident was driven to produce a scalloped glass paperweight that branded them the “Watergate Circus” beneath the flags of a circus tent (Fig. 9). The chairman was branded as “Ringmaster,” but the perpetrator failed to check the spelling of the North Carolina senator’s name and it came out “Irwen.”



9. Watergate paperweight

The press at the time noted that the Watergate Committee members themselves had been “swamped by a flood of knick-knacks, most of which had been given away to constituents or school children and just sent to the wastebasket. Ervin was reported to have kept gavels; Howard Baker, a silver pipe; and Daniel Inouye, a fruitcake. Among the gifts may well have been the Watergate knife that presents Nixon in three poses, seeing, hearing and speaking no evil (Fig. 10).



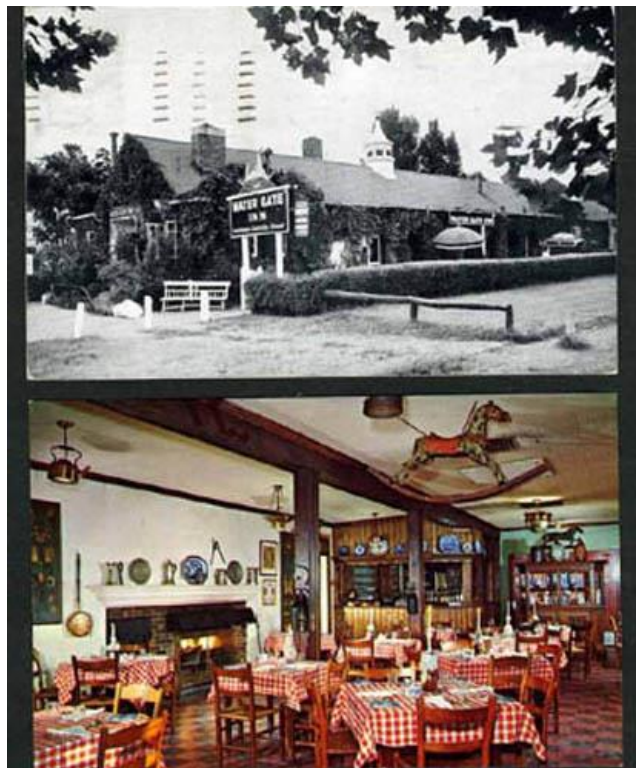
10. Watergate pocket knife

The next souvenir, a ceramic ashtray, probably dates from 1975 or 1976. By this time, Nixon and Agnew, the winning Republican ticket in 1972, both had been forced to resign and was no hint that either ever again would be a candidate for national office (Fig. 11). Notice that both men have broken their golf clubs, apparently in frustration over the situation.



11. Nixon-Agnew ashtray

In a switch away from the scandals of the 1970s to earlier, calmer time, the last two images relate to the original Watergate that old-timers (like me) in DC remember, the Watergate Inn Restaurant, as shown in a postcard view (Fig. 12). It served excellent German food in a quasi-colonial atmosphere and was among my favorite dining spots during the early 1960s. By a deft move at the table, one could even come away with a different kind of Watergate souvenir (Fig. 13).



12. Watergate Inn postcard



13. Watergate Inn ashtray

For political “junkies” it would be possible to build a substantial collection of Watergate souvenirs. Such an assemblage would be a historical reminder of a time when the attempt to bug an office ultimately brought down an American President. In an era of what seems like ubiquitous bugging of Americans, that idea seems almost quaint.

Upcoming Area Bottle Shows

Sept. 20-21 Aurora, OR
 Sept. 21 Santa Ana, CA
 Sept. 22 Indianapolis, IN
 Sept. 22 Buffalo, NY
 Sept. 28 Memphis, TN
 Sept. 28 Albuquerque, NM
 Sept. 29 Greensboro, NC
 Sept. 29 Lowell, MA
 Sept. 29 Richfield, OH
 Sept. 29 Batsto, NJ
 Oct. 5 Richmond, VA
 Oct. 6 Chelsea, MI
 Oct. 13 Keene, NH
 Oct. 20 Scriba, NY
 Nov. 3 Elkton, MD
 Nov. 9 Royal Oak, MI
 Nov. 10 Oakland, NJ
 Nov. 23 Terre Haute, IN



Oct. 4-5 Canyonville, OR
 Oct. 5 Point Pleasant, WV
 Oct. 11-12 Santa Rosa, CA
 Oct. 21 Findlay, OH
 Oct. 27 Glendale Heights, IL
 Nov. 9 Jacksonville, FL
 Nov. 10 Pittsburgh, PA
 Nov. 23 Miford, OH
 Dec. 1 Bethlehem, PA

October 5, 2013 (Saturday) Richmond, Virginia – Richmond, VA 42nd Antique Bottle Show and Sale, Chesterfield County Fairgrounds, 10300 Courthouse Road, Chesterfield, Virginia 23832, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Admission: \$3, Early Admission at 7:30 am for \$10, Info: RichBottleClub@comcast.net or Marvin Croker 804.275.1101 or Ed Faulkner 804.739.2951

November 3, 2013 (Sunday) Elkton, Maryland - The Tri-State Bottle Collectors and Diggers Club, Inc., 41st Annual Antique Bottle and Collectibles Show and Sale will be held on from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Singerly Fire Hall, Routes 279 & 213, (I-95, exit 109A), Elkton, Maryland 21922. Admission – \$3.00 – Children under 12 Free. Contact: Dave Brown, 302.738.9960 or Email – dbrown3942@comcast.net.

March 2, 2014 Baltimore, MD

August 1-3, 2014 FOHBC national show in Lexington, KY



Bill Porter shared these photos of of Coca-Cola home delivery and a boy selling Coca-Cola. The images come from “Ice Cold Collectables, Illinois,” by Scott Terrell.