

The Potomac Pontil

The Potomac Bottle Collectors – Serving the National Capital

November 2015

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Meeting – November 24th

Please join us at St. Mark's Orthodox Church in Bethesda at 8 PM.

Upcoming Bottle Shows

Nov. 29 Bethlehem, PA

Dec. 5 Roseville, CA

Dec. 6 Enfield, CT

Jan. 8 Palmetto, FL

Jan. 10 Taunton, MA

Jan. 16 Muncie, IN

Jan. 23 Jackson, MS

Jan. 24 Bayport, NY

Jan. 30 Rome, GA

Feb. 7 Manville, NJ

Feb. 19-20 Columbia, SC

Feb. 28 Enfield, CT

March 18-19 Deland, FL

March 26 Daphne, AL



Feb. 6 DeFuniak Springs, FL

Feb. 7 Columbus, OH

Feb. 27 Grand Rapids, MI

March 13 Baltimore, MD

March 20 Flint, MI

April 2 St. Clairsville, OH

October show & tell

- Peter Rydquist brought the Silver Wedding Rye bottle to go with the story in our October newsletter
- Mike Cianciosi recently won a bidding war to get the only known example of the green Cook & Peel bottle from Alexandria. Jim Sears got the green jar with letter G or number 6 in a much less contested auction.
- Peter Rydquist dug the Civil War buckle.



Meetings: 8:00 PM on the last Tuesday of each month January-June and October-November

President: Andy Goldfrank

Vice President: Al Miller

Secretary: Jim Sears

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Around Virginia with Vintage Glass Paperweights

By Jack Sullivan

[Special to the Potomac Pontil]

As a resident of the Commonwealth of Virginia for the past half century, I have made it a point to explore as much of the state as possible and still find new interesting places and attractions. Many of them have been memorialized in glass paperweights, including some weights that are more than 100 years old.

Luray Caverns was a fairly recent excursion and well worth the trip. The TV advertising and the hype were all made real. Having visited Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico and Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, the surprise was how much of nature's "glittering handiwork" is encompassed in a comparatively small area. Here are two 1906 paperweights, true antiques, that capture some of the wonders of the place (Figs. 1, 2). The photographer, J.D. Strickler, was well known in his time, the winner of many awards.



Fig. 1: Luray Caverns - horizontal



Fig. 2: Luray Caverns - vertical

The Endless Caverns at New Market (Fig. 3) is a six mile long cave at the foot of the Massanutten Mountain range that the owners say features "seemingly endless tunnels and chambers." It is said that many parts of the cave remain unexplored and untouched. Never having been there, I cannot vouch for the authenticity of the claims.



Fig. 3: Endless Cave

I have visited Natural Bridge on several occasions and have been put off by the blatant commercialism of the place. Under private ownership, relatively expensive tickets are required for a close up view of the arch that is 215 feet high with a width of 90 feet. Natural Bridge is such a marvel of nature that it should be a national or Virginia state park. Apparently some efforts are being made toward that goal. Of the two paperweights shown here one was a souvenir (Fig. 4) and the other a giveaway from an insurance company (Fig. 5).

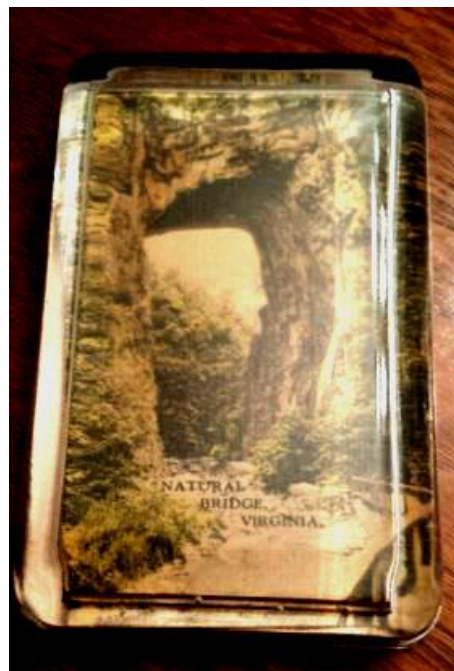


Fig. 4: Natural Bridge - souvenir



Fig. 5: Natural Bridge - life Insurance co.

Two glass weights depict Mill Mountain outside Roanoke. One shows the mountain as it loomed above the roofs of the city (Fig. 6). It bears a 1911 copyright. The other weight shows the Mill Mountain Incline (Fig.7). This was a 0.60 kilometer funicular that climbed the mountain for the benefit of tourists from 1910 to 1929. Costing \$40,000 to build, it took visitors from the base of Mill Mountain to the summit and a spot not far from where a large illuminated star now is located. A cleft in the trees is the only indication of where the funicular once operated.



Fig. 6: Mill Mountain



Fig. 7: Mill Mountain Incline

Among my favorite Virginia places is Williamsburg. The major attraction there is Colonial Williamsburg. Shown here is just one of the historic structures on the grounds, the Court House (Fig. 8). Completed in 1771, it was the place where the town residents first were read the Declaration of Independence and later celebrated victory over the British at nearby Yorktown. Not far away stands the College of William and Mary (Fig. 9), founded in 1693 and the second oldest institution of higher learning in America. The historic buildings on the college campus also are worth a visit.



Fig. 8: Williamsburg City Hall



Fig. 9: College of William and Mary

Richmond, the capital of the Commonwealth, is a city with multiple attractions, including a number of historic museums and homes and the prestigious Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. A vintage paperweight features the capital building against the city skyline (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10: Richmond

The final paperweight celebrates the Mount Vernon experience as it was more than a half century ago (Fig. 11). Then the site was just Washington's mansion, gardens, and some outbuildings as well as the tomb where George and Martha are interred. Today the complex has grown to include a visitor's center, a museum and a farm. Down the road a bit are replicas of Washington's distillery and grist mill. A visit to Mount Vernon today is a highly educational, full day experience.



Fig. 11: Mount Vernon

These souvenir glass paperweights remind us of just a few of the sights and wonders of Virginia. They allow a collector to visit or revisit attractions around the state without ever leaving the comfort of an armchair. On the other hand, they can be an impetus to "gas up and go."



Jim Sears showed these tiny Sharp & Dohme jars after acquiring them at the Baltimore club picnic.