

Tavern site dig reveals bevy of bottles

Pennsylvania 'Mystery Tavern' dig uncovers more than 700 artifacts

Rick Weiner

These bottles were dug from a pair of privy sites at a former tavern that operated from the 1870s to the 1890s. The tavern is long gone, but a house that was next to the tavern still stands. The house was built in 1868.

There was not much information on this tavern's location at our local historical society, but the bottles and other items in the privy told us it was no run-of-the-mill house privy.

There were close to 700 whiskey "Warranted" flasks in the 1880s-90s privy and 30 or more beer mugs, shot glasses and countless broken oil lamp globes in the 1870s privy.

All but one beer mug was broken, and all of the lamp globes were broken. The bottles shown in these pictures are some of our better finds. By the age of the bottles found in both privies, the tavern was probably in operation for a good 20 years.

The full tale of Rick Weiner and Paul Seidel's dig, titled "The Mystery Tavern," was published in *Antique Bottle & Glass Collector* magazine. It can be read online at www.19thcenturybottlediggers.com. ■



Light yellow "pumpkin seed" picnic flask.



Brilliant blue pressed glass shaker.



Ceramic nest egg in perfect condition. Nest eggs are still used to train hens to lay in the nest, not on the floor.



Wittled amber picnic flask.



Left: Dark amber/brown ribbed flask.



Right: J. Wise, Allentown, Pa., cobalt blue soda bottle.



Many Kilmers medicine bottles. Dr. Andral Kilmer is reported to have had one of the best known quack medicine product lines of the 19th century. Earlier varieties have a kidney-shaped recess on the front of the bottle.

Photo courtesy Rick Weiner and Paul Seidel



Rick Weiner with Warner's Safe Liver & Kidney Cure bottle. Warner's was another popular brand of "quack" remedies.



Dark brown Warner's Safe Liver & Kidney Cure bottle.



Milk glass Hartwig Kantorowicz bitters bottle.



Possibly falling from a disappointed lad's pocket, this carpet marble never made the return trip from the privy.

If you have an early 19th century homestead in the Lehigh Valley area (or within 50 miles) and are interested in having Rick and Paul dig its privy site to see what lies beneath, contact Rick at slamiezzzz@aol.com or visit www.19thcenturybot tlediggers.com and leave a comment in the guest book.



The only beer mug found in the dig that wasn't broken.



This pedestal drinking glass was found in perfect condition.



Though the chimney didn't survive, the base of this lamp was dug in great shape..



Creepy porcelain doll head still covered in soil.