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National Bottle Museum®

*Educating the public on the history of bottles and bottle-making*



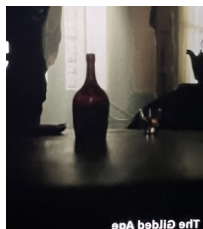
# THE BOTTLE MUSE

Summer 2025

## Gilded Age on HBO features Bottles from the Museum



We were honored when the prop department from HBO's the Gilded Age reached out to the NBM for help in designing the bar room scene for the third season of the award winning show.



The museum provided a selection of "orphan" bottles to adorn the bar, walls and tables during the scene. We can't wait to see what happens in the rest of the season.



## From the Desk of the Executive Director, Chris Leonard

Happy Summer! This is a great time to visit Saratoga County and Ballston Spa, as well as the National Bottle Museum. There is a great deal happening here. Our summer exhibit, *Bottles and Baseball: The Glass History of America's Pastime*, is running, and our full collection of Ralph and Eleanor Work Saratoga style mineral water bottles is back on display in three new backlit cases. Our Summer Open Call art show starts on July 19 in the Jan Rutland Memorial Art Gallery.



We've also updated our membership program, introducing a tiered plan that offers members enhanced benefits and increased access to the museum. You'll receive an email about this in a few days.

Later this summer and into the fall, we'll be rolling out temporary exhibits, including *A Little off the Top: The Art and History of Barber Bottles*, *Crimes Against Glass: How to Spot Fake and Adulterated Bottles*, and our intern Ted is working on a display of "Indian" Patent Medicines, in all their glory as well as their divisive history. And that's not all. Shortly, we'll be rolling out youth-focused programs, a lecture series, and a slew of special events. If you haven't visited the National Bottle Museum in a while, it's time to make plans to come here.



“ So I made an afternoon of it.....went to the Museum and walked in on their new exhibit Bottles and Baseballs. Decided to end afternoon down the street for a pint at the Real McCoy Brewery....And birthplace of Abner Doubleday. Perfect!”

Karl -Albany

## FROM BOARD PRESIDENT, ELLIE DILLON



Dear Members and Friends,  
Now more than ever we are asking you to join or renew your yearly membership. We are all feeling the pinch and are stretched to the max to make less do more. And more we are doing!

Our recent networking breakfast with the business community of Ballston Spa yielded over 20 new faces. The Gideon Putnam Historic Hotel in Saratoga Springs invited the National Bottle Museum to display for the summer months in their historical hotel. The Saratoga Bottle Show, our major fundraiser was a success.

Attracting young people to the museum is a goal. To support this, the annual Family Fun Day in Ballston Spa will again include the National Bottle Museum. We will again be at the Saratoga County Fair educating fairgoers on bottles!

So if you haven't recently visited the National Bottle Museum come see how we have grown! Exhibits are changed regularly and the second floor Artists' Space rotates art all year long. Our membership includes people from throughout the United States and visitors have come from around the world! Visit us this summer!

## STATE BOTTLE— New Hampshire



New Hampshire's bottle is a double eagle flask that is attributed to the Granite Glass Works in Stoddard. The eagle symbolizes strength, power and sovereignty. The olive branch for peace is in the right talon and three thunderbolts for strength in left talon. The shield has seven vertical bars protecting the eagle and democratic ideals.

Most early bottles produced in New Hampshire were greens, ambers. “black” glass bottles made from local sands whose impurities produced the beautiful colors.

The Foster Glass Works located in Stoddard closed in 1850 but buildings were used for Granite Glass Works where the New England Flasks were produced from 1842-1873.

## BOTTLES AND BASEBALLS `America's favorite pasttime





## OLD EXHIBIT....NEW HOME



The revered collection of Ralph Work Saratoga type bottles are in a new home thanks to Jeff Ullman, Jim Bender and Saratoga Bottle Club. The mineral bottles are now displayed in three back lit show cases to emphasize the beauty of the glass! Thank you!

## FROM VOLUNTEER DIRECTOR OF THE JRM ARTISTS' SPACE, FRED NEUDOERFFER



The JRM Artists' Space is a regional art gallery located on the second floor of the National Bottle Museum. The "Artists Space" features changing exhibits of important artwork in diverse styles, ranging from post impressionism to folk art, once again representing the art, history, and technology inherent in all things created by hand.

This spring and summer the Artists' Space featured 3 shows in one! The Garden Walk with over 100 pieces of art created an indoor garden. Our 8th annual Art of the Bottle included art inspired by or including bottles. Stu Eichel's Ballston Spa Visions rounded out the shows.





## ON OUR DOORSTEP.....



A very unusual bottle from the 1940's found its way to the museum. It is a Aigner Austria dual-sided clear bottle specifically designed for vin and aqua. (wine and water).



This Farmer John's bottle was a favorite of parents to cure children's colds. First formulated in 1855 in a Lowell, Massachusetts Pharmacy, this tonic was a non alcoholic mix made up of cod liver oil and had a licorice taste.

## SARATOGA BOTTLE SHOW 2025



THANKYOU!

We have just wrapped up a successful 45th annual Saratoga Bottle Show. We would like to give a big shout out to the vendors and regulars who year after year pack and unpack their bottles to dazzle us. Thank you. Your support of the museum. It is forever appreciated. See you next year!

**Date Change 2026: Sunday May 31st**



## Mystery Bottle – solved! By Dave Labno

### About the author

Dave has dug around 1000 privies over the last 35 years, mostly in Minnesota where he lives. He is also a member of the North Star Historic Bottle Association in Minneapolis.

### Introduction

In the spring 2024 issue of this publication (insert link here), Roy detailed the discovery of a mystery bottle he had recently dug in Albany. The bottle was embossed “F.H. Metzger” and looked like an ink or mucilage. Given that F.H. Metzger advertised "Metzger's Pain Eradicator" in Albany until mid-1849, Roy questioned whether this was an Albany-produced bottle. His research revealed that a W.J. Metzger sold the same product in Minneapolis Minnesota during the 1880s and 1890s. This led Roy to consider

whether there was a potential family connection between the two Metzgers.

This article presents new research proving that F. H. Metzger lived in Albany for at least nine years and that W.J. Metzger was originally from Albany. The research also shows that F. H. Metzger and his family – as well as others - later sold the same product in Illinois, Minnesota and Iowa.

### The Dig

In September of 2024, I found an undipped privy dating to the late 1850s or maybe as late as 1860 in a Minnesota river town platted in the mid-1850s. Among the handful of pontil bottles was an early broken



smooth base double eagle flask, along with shards of early 1850s British ironstone and orange and green glazed Galena Illinois style pottery which is commonly found when digging 1850's era privies in Minnesota. One of the pontil bottles was the exact same Metzger bottle that Roy found in Albany! Two additional Metzger bottles were also found damaged or broken.

As Roy mentioned, there weren't very many people in Minnesota in the 1850s so any privy from that period is uncommon and exciting for a Minnesota bottle digger. To provide context, Minnesota became a state in 1858 and St. Paul was the largest city with 10,000 people (1860 Federal census) while the second and third

largest cities had populations in the 3,000 to 4,000 range. In 1860, Minnesota had only 12 towns with populations over 1000. Despite this relatively small population base, the growing Minnesota river towns had a thriving trade with cities further down the Mississippi and goods from the eastern states were commonly sold in frontier stores.

When the Metzger bottle came out of the hole, I was unfamiliar with this specific design and assumed it was a mucilage. I took a break from digging and pulled out my phone to do





some brief research. and found very little information on the bottle – no photographs or information except the article from Roy and an obscure mention from Kovals. What really caught my attention was Roy's reference to a Minnesota connection since I was digging in Minnesota but during a period significantly earlier than the late 1880s when Metzger products were prevalent. How did this bottle end up here around 1860?

Fellow bottle digger Spencer Adamson was also on the dig with me. Before we had finished the hole, he found newspaper articles about F.H. Metzger living in Galena Illinois in early 1859, selling ink. (Galena is an early Illinois town on the Mississippi, about 250 or so miles as the crow flies south of St. Paul MN or 380 miles by river) This was a bit confusing as the bottle we found still had white content residue suggesting medicine rather than ink.

Next, Spencer found a September 1859 article announcing F.H. Metzger's death while traveling in St. Paul Minnesota with the body to be returned to home to be returned to Galena for burial. The obituary mentions he had been a barber in Galena for many years and was originally from Albany! Roy noted that the last advertisement for Metzger's Pain Eradicator in the Albany paper was 1849. Perhaps this corresponded with Metzger's move west.

#### Additional Research

Since the dig, I've found more information on F.H. Metzger that connects many of the dots. The federal census of 1840 shows that Metzger lived in Albany Ward 4 with his wife and children. According to his gravestone in Galena and Ancestry.com, F.H. was born in 1809 in Germany.

So what was the connection to Minnesota? Spencer found another ad for Metzger's "Magic Pain Eradicator" manufactured "Only by Mrs. F.H. Metzger, St. Paul Minnesota" in an 1865 Galena newspaper. It was sold by two Galena druggists. At some point between 1859 and 1865, the Metzger Family apparently moved to Minnesota and continued to manufacture the "Pain Eradicator."

Fellow collector Steve Ketcham directed me to the 2021 book "North Star Snake Oil – Minnesota Patent Medicines 1860-1920" by Boyd Beccue for more information on the later W.J. Metzger company. The research in this book builds on Roy's findings that the "Pain Eradicator" was sold in Minnesota in the 1880s and after, but what was the connection between F.H. Metzger and W.J. Metzger?

My own research found that William J. Metzger was indeed F.H. Metzger's son. The 1885 Minnesota State Census confirms that William was born in New York in 1848. William's gravestone (Find a Grave.com) in Minneapolis says he was born June 19, 1848 and he passed on January 2, 1908.

Beccue concludes that that William seems to have sold the company and moved on shortly after starting it. By 1890, pharmacists Stephen and George Crocker were proprietors of the Metzger Medicine Company and William was no longer mentioned. In 1892, George Crocker and Ezra Truesdell ran the firm. The 1892 Minneapolis city directory lists William's profession as a veterinary surgeon rather than patent medicines. In 1894, "The New Metzger Medicine Company" moved to Decorah Iowa with A.F. Amundsen and Charles Gresser listed as proprietors. Amber ground top "Metzger's Pain Eradicator" jars from the 1890s are known.

Beccue concludes that the company folded in 1908 or possibly a bit later as he notes that Metzger ABM jars have also been reported.

City directories confirm William's continued practice as a Veterinary Surgeon until the year preceding his death in 1908. Interestingly, I found a clear "Metzger's Great German Healer" jar around 15 years ago but can't find it at this time. Sometimes things come full circle!



### Final Thoughts

For bottle collectors, it's interesting to see that the product was produced over a period long enough to include pontil to ABM examples.

Some questions remain - Was the pontil bottle I found from the same stock of bottles F.H. brought with him from Albany around 1849 or did he continue to order bottles? Were the whole and broken "Pain Eradicator" bottles we found sold by F.H. in the small MN river town just before or his death or did his widow continue to make it and sell in the same pontil bottles from Galena or St. Paul? Why was F.H. in St. Paul and why did his family move there shortly after his death? It's likely F.H. was already considering a move or doing some kind of business related to his product in the rapidly growing town of St. Paul when he died.



This new research connects the dots on the Metzger family and the "Pain Eradicator" as it was sold over the years across the country. We can conclude that Roy's bottle is indeed from Albany, and that F.H. Metzger and family were selling the "Pain Eradicator" in towns up the Mississippi around 1860 before his widow and son later produced the product in Minnesota before selling to others who moved it to Iowa in the early 1900s.

## NBM on Display at the Gideon Putnum historical hotel in Saratoga Springs, NY



The historic Gideon Putnam hotel in Saratoga Springs reached out to The National Bottle Museum to create a display highlighting the rich history of Saratoga springs and mineral water. This exhibit showcases both the sprouting springs and the mineral waters, beginning with the discovery of the Congress spring in 1792 up to the springs in the High Rock Park and Geyser lakes area.





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76 Milton Avenue, Ballston Spa, NY 12020  
**518.885.7589** [www.nationalbottlemuseum.org](http://www.nationalbottlemuseum.org)

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Members receive a quarterly newsletter containing information on the museum, and the history of glass bottle manufacturing, identification, and collecting. Each June, the Museum sponsors a Bottle Show & Sale known as “The Saratoga Show” which attracts enthusiasts from coast to coast in the United States and several provinces of Canada.

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