

Ohio Labeled Whiskeys

By Jack Sullivan

Collectors of pre-Prohibition labeled whiskeys often send me photos of their purchases to help with identification. I am delighted to receive them because the labels often are colorful with interesting illustrations, lettering and design. They also are uncommon. Few if any have been unearthed by diggers since burying quickly removes paper labels. Moreover, many such whiskeys have suffered damage over the years and finding a label completely intact is rare.

The Mountain Cabin Straight Bourbon Whiskey flask (Fig. 1) appears to be post-Prohibition. A main clue is the listing of 90 proof on the label. That designation was not required before National Prohibition but was mandated by the 1934 federal law that ushered in Repeal. Records indicate that the Acorn Liquor Company, the firm retailing the brand in Cleveland, was founded in 1937 and registered as a "foreign corporation."

Acorn Liquor apparently was very short-lived as were other outfits that sprang up with Repeal.

Many Pre-Prohibition Christmas flasks were provided with a paper label. Few of them have survived the vagaries of time, leaving the bottle plain and no clue as to its initial use. The label on the bottle shown here (Fig. 2) is in general good condition with a just a bit of

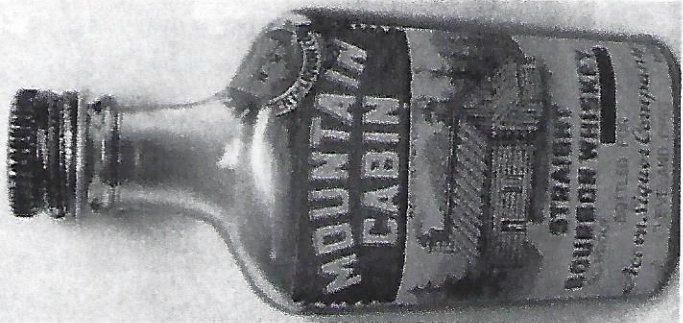


Figure 1

damage to the left top. The boy depicted must have had a full bladder since he has been able to write extensively in the snow to wish us a "A Merry Christmas + a Happy New Year." This flask bears the identification of Dan Longbrake, a liquor dealer from Lake View.



Figure 2

France. Perhaps the label reflects his ocean voyage to the United States.

Another immigrant was Louis Haas whose labeled flask (Fig. 4) is typical of the damage frequently seen on these items. Originally from Germany, Haas initially worked for another liquor house in Toledo. In 1895, having saved his money, the ambitious Haas left his original employer to begin his own competing wine and liquor enterprise. He called it L. Haas & Company and located it initially at 128 Summit St. but quickly moved it to a more permanent location at 402 Monroe Street.

The next flask (Fig. 3) bears a slightly damaged paper label, one that depicts an unusual holiday scene. It appears to be a scowling Father Christmas looking back over his shoulder at a large two-masted sailing ship apparently about to sink in heavy seas. It is hardly a cheerful yuletide illustration. The label identifies Joseph Horter of Zanesville as having issued it. Horter was an immigrant from

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Figure 3

Although the photo on this whiskey (Fig. 5) has washed out the flask, the label is legible. It came from the Schauer Distilling Company of Dayton. Directories suggest that the company was established in 1902 at 115 E. Third St. with Joseph Schauer as president. Schauer was not a distiller but a rectifier, buying whiskey from a variety of sources in bulk, blending and bottling it with proprietary paper labels. Apparently quite successful, the company later expanded to 23-25 S. St. Clair St. before shutting down in 1917 after Ohio voted statewide prohibition.

Pemberton Old Time Whiskey (Fig. 6) was a product of a whiskey rectifier and wholesaler identified in trademark records as William Lee of St. Louis. The label was constructed to allow a name of a local retailer to be added at the bottom, in this case Frank Marzluff of Chillicothe. Inheriting a confectionary business from his father in 1901, Marzluff added a large restaurant, a billiard parlor and a liquor store. His principal place of

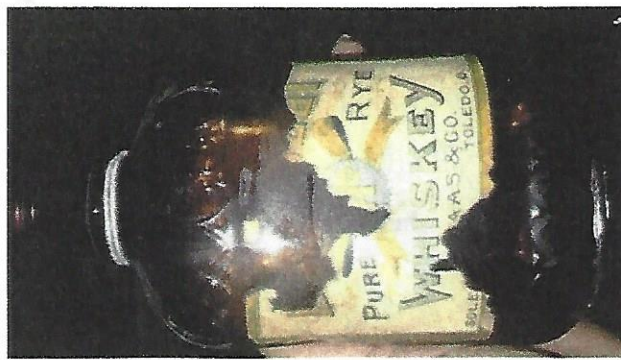


Figure 4

business was 17 North Paint Street.



The label on this pumpkin seed flask (Fig. 7) identifies it as "Live Oak Whiskey." a Cincinnati product of Schmidlapp & Company, a liquor wholesaler that owned the Live Oak Distillery, also based in Cincinnati. Founded by J. G. Schmidlapp circa 1872 this company issued more than thirty different brands of whiskey, indicating that owning a distillery assured Schmidlapp a continuing supply of product.

Figure 5

The final paper label (Fig. 8) also comes from Cincinnati, featuring "Sandy Run" whiskey. This product was reputed to be from "Horback Distilling Company." In truth, Peter Horback was a saloonkeeper, in 1911 located at 138 West Sixth Street. Like many of that occupation he issued a whiskey as his own proprietary brand. Horback poured Sandy Run over the bar to patrons and sold it in flasks and, as here, in labeled clear quart bottles.



Figure 6

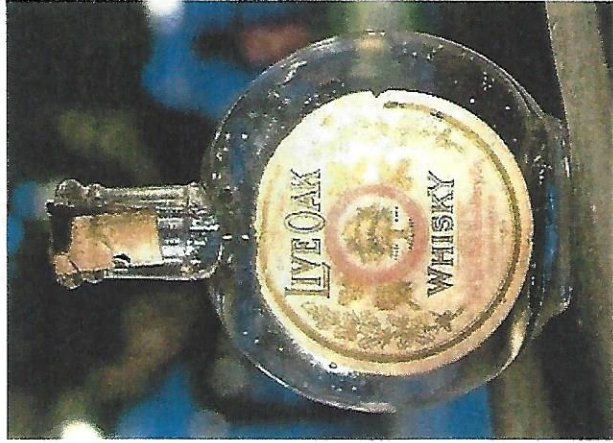


Figure 7



Figure 8

Illustrations:

- Fig. 1: Mountain Cabin flask
- Fig. 2: Longbrake, Christmas flask
- Fig. 3: Horter, Christmas flask
- Fig. 4: Haas Toledo flask
- Fig. 5: Old Joe Schauer flask
- Fig. 6: Pemberton flask
- Fig. 7: Live Oak pumpkin seed
- Fig. 8: Sandy Run quart