

# Notes From the Firehouse

*Home of the Annisquam Historical Society*



May 2024

## Mucking in Lobster Cove

Rita Littlewood Teele



Our children, and, in later years, our grandchildren looked forward to low tides during summer holidays when they could “go mucking” at the edges of Lobster Cove. How that expression evolved is lost to memory--but the noun "muck" meaning dirt, rubbish or waste, has to be the genesis. In the not so distant past, the Cove was used by local inhabitants as a rubbish dump. People threw empty bottles, cracked china, and broken toys into the water. (Sewage from houses flowed freely into the water from leaking pipes or tanks but has now, thankfully, ceased.)

In her book, **Summer Magic**, Mary Wallace related a story from her grandfather, Frederic Saville Jewett of Annisquam: "The only garbage collector we had in those days was the outgoing tide, and the New England term for garbage...was 'orts'." Each morning, his mother gave the kitchen garbage to Frederic. He was ordered to throw it over the side of the bridge when he went to work in central Gloucester with his father. From the house at 5 Bridgewater Street, the pair crossed the bridge to catch the horsecar on Washington Street. When attempting to escape the house without the "orts", Frederick was usually summoned back by his mother whose voice carried across the water to his laughing friends at the car stop.

Ever since the STEP sewer system was installed in Annisquam during the 1990s, rocks have appeared that were previously covered by biomass. The color of the mud has changed to become lighter over the same 30 years. Only bits of china and colored glass can now be found amongst rocks. Intact bottles and other treasures have already been claimed, or possibly lie at depth under the mud.



As you enter our kitchen, you will see three tall bottles, of recent make, on the windowsill. On the tray, are a few of the old bottles, found by our offspring, years ago, when they went "mucking" along the water's edge at Lobster Cove. Some bottles are clear; others are green, blue, or aqua in color. The smallest is blue, unmarked, and 2 inches in height. The two tallest of the old bottles are shown below, in greater detail.

FYI: If you own some old bottles of uncertain age, this reference on the internet provides a history of glass bottle making, and detailed information about old bottles.

<https://sha.org/bottle/index.htm>

(SHA = Society for Historical Archaeology)

Gloucester city directories from a century ago are an invaluable resource for identifying the businesses associated with names on old bottles.

ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT. 521

**WARREN W. WITHAM,**  
**TEAMING AND JOBBING.**  
Furniture and Piano Moving a Specialty.  
**OFFICE, 371 MAIN ST., GLOUCESTER.**  
TELEPHONE 6-5

**AUGUSTUS HOBART,**  
**Teaming and Jobbing.**  
All Orders will Receive Prompt Attention.  
STAND, FOOT OF WATER ST.  
RESIDENCE AND STABLE.  
13 State Street, Gloucester, Mass.

**ALBERT C. ANDREWS,**  
JOBBER AND RETAIL DEALER IN  
FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC  
**CIGARS AND LIQUORS.**  
— AGENT FOR —  
Jones' Golden Ale and Pacific Wine Co.  
U. S. Dist. and Provisions Agent. Auctioneer. Entry Public.  
Justice of the Peace. Sporting Officer.  
75 MAIN STREET, GLOUCESTER.

**A. H. ROWE,**  
**Hack, Livery and Boarding Stable.**  
Hacks Furnished for Weddings, Funerals and other occasions.  
MIDDLE ST., cor. WESTERN AV., GLOUCESTER.

**F. H. ABBOTT & CO.**  
— WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DEALERS IN —  
**CAPE • POND • ICE.**  
Offices, 4 Duncan Street, and Eastern Avenue Grocery, Gloucester.  
TELEPHONE CONNECTION.

**COMMONWEALTH STABLE,**  
W. P. ALEXANDER, Proprietor.  
First Class Board with Good Care.  
HACKS FOR WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS.  
— ALSO —  
FIRST CLASS TURNOUTS.  
Veterinary Supplies.  
PROPRIETOR OF THE FINEST CONDITION  
POWDERS IN THE WORLD.  
Junction of Main and Washington Sts.  
GLOUCESTER, MASS.

**CITY LIVERY.**  
**Boarding, Hack  
and Livery Stable.**  
All Teams at Moderate Rates.  
Porter Place, rear 77 Main Street.  
GLOUCESTER, MASS.  
W. H. REED, Manager. A. C. ANDREWS, Proprietor.



The clear embossed bottle, above, labelled A. C. ANDREWS GLOUCESTER MASS held alcohol. The page from the city directory of 1900, at far left, includes his advertising for cigars and liquors. By this date, bottles were usually manufactured.

In spite of the message at the base: THIS BOTTLE TO BE RETURNED, it ended up in Lobster Cove.

Note the number of advertisements related to horses and horse-drawn vehicles on the page. In 1900, offices of “Cape Pond Ice” operated out of the Duncan Street and Eastern Avenue Grocery.

Years ago, ice was harvested in winter from the large Cape Pond. The ice, stored in sawdust in large sheds, was available year-round to supply the fishing vessels that sailed to George’s Bank and elsewhere.

The light green bottle in the photograph above, has a “crown”. The lip at the top is present on bottles that were manufactured after 1892, the date of invention of crown bottle caps by William Painter.

GEORGE A. DAVIS was in business in Gloucester for more years than Mr. Andrews. He was selling soda water in 1880 but by 1892, the date of the Gloucester Directory at right, he had moved into selling other liquids!

Sarsaparilla Beer, with its flavorful name has a flavorful history. Native Americans brewed the roots of Sarsaparilla vine, *Smilax pumila*, which grows in the southeastern United States, to make a non-alcoholic drink. George A. Davis, manufacturer, must have increased his profits when Porter, Ale, Cider and Sarsaparilla Beer were available for purchase.

(True root beer, from the sassafras plant, has carcinogenic properties.)

216 GLOUCESTER DIRECTORY.

**GEORGE A. DAVIS,**  
MANUFACTURER OF  
**Sarsaparilla Beer,**  
AND MINERAL WATER.  
Also, **BOTTLER OF PORTER, ALE & CIDER.**  
PARTIES FURNISHED AT SHORT NOTICE.  
**SAWYER'S BLOCK, (Basement,) 95 MAIN ST.,**  
**GLOUCESTER, MASS.**

---

**WM. P. DAVIS,**  
**Fancy Bread & Pastry Baker,**  
— AND —  
**CATERER.**  
CAKES, PIES (Large & Small,)  
And all kinds of  
**PASTRY AND BREAD.**  
PICNICS and PARTIES supplied at  
short notice.  
15 Commercial St., Gloucester.



<p><b>B. HASKELL &amp; SONS,</b> Wholesale and Retail Dealers in <b>FAMILY GROCERIES,</b> FLOUR, BUTTER, SHIP STORES, <b>PORK, SALT, LARD, HAMS,</b> POTATOES and VEGETABLES, HAY and STRAW, WINDMILLS, BUCKETS, CROCKERY, GLASS, &amp;c. 284, 288, 317, and 319 MAIN ST. We labor to buy and sell low at all times.</p>	<p><b>E. P. WOVSON,</b> <b>TAXIDERMIST.</b> All Varieties of Birds and Animals prepared in the best manner. Confectionery, Periodicals, OYSTER SALOON, <b>CIGARS and TOBACCO.</b> INDEPENDENT HALL, 185 East Main St., E. Gloucester.</p>
--	---

---

**ATLANTIC HOUSE,**  
**E. H. HUTCHINS, PROPRIETOR.**  
Cor. Washington and Main Sts.,  
**GLOUCESTER, Mass.**  
Within two minutes' walk of the Beach.  
The proprietor, thankful for past favors, so-  
licits a continuance of the same.  
Particular attention paid to Excursionists.  
Five trains of cars daily from and to Boston.



In the latter part of the 1800s, the sale of liquid "medicines" increased enormously because of the development of cheaper glass bottles, and extensive advertising. Whether many such brews actually lived up to their reputations to treat disease(s) is questionable. The little sample bottle, below, is embossed: PINEOLEUM, on opposing sides; PHYSICIAN and SAMPLE on each of the other. To appreciate the small size of this bottle, a dime is alongside for reference.



**PINEOLEUM:** The indications or uses for this product as provided by the manufacturer: "For the relief of catarrhal conditions of mucous membranes. Recommended in nose and throat disease. When placed in the nose and throat allays irritation and soothes inflammation. The ideal remedy in La Grippe and Influenza."

**EYE WASH CUPS** doubled as stoppers for bottles of eye wash. Wyeth's brand, "COLLYRIUM", (antipyrine 0.4%, boric acid, borax and 0.002% sodium ethylmercurithiosalicylate) was likely to have been the best known. Collyrium is a Greek word, dating back to Hippocratic medical books from 2,000 years ago, meaning "eye-salve." The ingredients in generic collyrium varied between manufacturers but one basic recipe appears to have been boric acid, sodium borate and sodium chloride. Preservative: benzalkonium chloride (0.1%)



John Wyeth & Brother, Incorporated, was based in Philadelphia, PA, USA. This bottle closure which doubled as the eye cup survived intact without any chips.

## SAWYER'S CRYSTAL BLUEING

Liquid blueing (or bluing) is a colloidal suspension of very fine blue iron powder and water. Other ingredients included a pH balancer and a biocide to prevent the buildup of algae and bacteria.

Bluing improves the brightness of white fabrics by adding the blue pigment that counteracts the yellowing that occurs during regular laundering.

Reference: thespruce.com



**FROSTILLA**

**THE FIRST  
HAND LOTION  
SOLD NATION-WIDE  
IN AMERICA**



**WAS ORIGINATED  
BY AN ELMIRAN  
68 YEARS AGO**

*'And Has Been An Elmira Industry  
Ever Since*

In 1871 Clay W. Holmes of Elmira originated Holmes Fragrant Frostilla, the first product of its kind to be sold nation-wide in America.

Within a few years the product had become exceedingly popular in the Southern Tier, and in 1880 Mr. Holmes began to devote his entire time to supplying the demand. In 1922 the name Holmes Fragrant Frostilla was changed to Frostilla Fragrant Lotion.

Today over 100,000 stores in the United States alone supply the ever increasing demand for Frostilla Fragrant Lotion. In addition, thousands of stores in Canada, Great Britain, and other foreign countries stock it regularly for American visitors, as well as their own customers.

**OTHER FROSTILLA PRODUCTS in-  
clude Frostilla Scrubline Soap and  
Frostilla Scented Cream.**

Frostilla Scented Cream was introduced in 1924 after years of research for a cream possessing in efficiency a purity of the highest type of the skin that some people were. Applying it to exposed portions of the skin's surface before shaving will, undoubtedly, soothe and soothe, and only a few minutes and before the skin is again subjected to the irritation of the razor.

**THE FROSTILLA CO. INC.**  
410 W. GRAY STREET ELMIRA, N. Y.

A fitting end to this display of mucking treasures from Lobster Cove, Annisquam, is a bottle labeled FROSTILLA. This contained hand lotion, which was manufactured in Elmira, New York, to soothe chapped hands.