

Ten Wagon Loads of Beer Bottles

A Study of Fort Stanton Trash Deposition



Bill Lockhart

Original Report 2007

Revised 2010

Dedicated to my wife, Wanda Wakkinen.
Without your help, this would never have been written.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents..... i
Figures..... ii
Tables..... iii
Foreword..... iv
Sources..... v

Ten Wagon Loads of Beer Bottles: A Study of Fort Stanton Trash Deposition..... 1
 Abstract..... 1
 Location..... 1
 Historical Background..... 2
 Fort Stanton..... 2
 Railroads..... 2
 Local Breweries..... 2
 Archaeological Background for the Study..... 3
 Methods..... 5
 Bases..... 7
 Deposition Lag..... 9
 Validity and Reliability of Dating Manufacturer’s Marks..... 11
 Individual Loci..... 12
 The Southern Beer Bottle Dump..... 13
 Locus 1..... 13
 Locus 2..... 14
 Locus 3..... 15
 Locus 4..... 15
 Locus 5..... 16
 Locus 6..... 16
 Locus 7..... 16
 The Eastern Beer Bottle Dump..... 17
 Locus 1..... 18
 Locus 2..... 18
 Locus 3..... 19
 Findings and Discussion..... 19

Finishes.	19
Bases.	20
Rankings.	20
Comparisons of Rankings.	24
General.	26
Conclusion.	29
Sources.	30
Appendix A.	33
Manufacturer's Marks Found in the Study by Company and Dates.	35
Appendix B.	37
The BGCo Mark on Beer Bottles.	39

Figures

Figure 1 – Location of the study area.	1
Figure 2 – Biedermann-Rufley Brewery in 2008.	3
Figure 3 – Bottle Drop, southeast of Locus 3, Southern dump.	4
Figure 4 – Apollinaris Finishes.	5
Figure 5 – Two-part finish with sharp lower ring.	6
Figure 6 – Two-part finish with rounded lower ring.	6
Figure 7 – One-part finish – two variations.	6
Figure 8 – Lightning finish.	6
Figure 9 – Seriation of Beer finishes from 1872-1920.	7
Figure 10 – LGCo basemark.	9
Figure 11 – C&CoLim basemark.	9
Figure 12 – AGWL basemark.	12
Figure 13 – MGCo basemark.	12
Figure 14 – CVCoNo.2 basemark.	12
Figure 15 – Site map of the Southern bottle dump area.	13
Figure 16 – Author at Locus 1, Southern dump.	13
Figure 17 – Flaked surface of sugar bowl lid.	14
Figure 18 – Author at Locus 2, Southern dump.	14

Figure 19 – Flaked whiskey flask neck.	14
Figure 20 – Rock “datum” at Locus 2, Southern dump.	14
Figure 21 – Wanda Wakkinen at Locus 3, Southern dump.	15
Figure 22 – Author at Locus 4, Southern dump.	15
Figure 23 – Author at Locus 5, Southern dump.	16
Figure 24 – Author at Locus 6, Southern dump.	16
Figure 25 – Author at Locus 7, Southern dump.	16
Figure 26 – Aqua base with embossed “B”.	17
Figure 27 – Site map of the Eastern bottle dump area.	17
Figure 28 – Wanda Wakkinen at Locus 1, Eastern dump.	18
Figure 29 – Author at Locus 2, Eastern dump.	18
Figure 30 – Locus 2, Eastern dump, showing sandstone blocks.	18
Figure 31 – Author at Locus 3, Eastern dump.	19
Figure 32 – BGCo – “normal” G with serif to left.	40
Figure 33 – BGCo – G with serif to right.	40
Figure 34 – BGCo – G with reworked serif extending both left and right.	40
Figure 35 – BGCo – inverted G.	40

Tables

Table 1 – Date Ranges for Marks and Probably Quality of Ranges.	8
Table 2 – Number of Manufacturer’s Marks by Locus – Beer Bottle Dump Sites.	10
Table 3 – Rankings of All Loci by Finishes.	20
Table 4 – Seriations by Locus – Southern Beer Bottle Dump.	21
Table 5 – Ranking of Basal Date Ranges by Locus.	24
Table 6 – Comparison of Basal and Finish Rankings by Locus.	25
Table 7 – Final Comparison of Basal and Finish Rankings by Locus.	26
Table 8 – Possible Chronology for Dumping Episodes at the Beer Bottle Dump Sites, Fort Stanton, New Mexico.	28

Foreword

The background for the study is explained in the following pages. A few things, however, were not included in the original report, and I have not added them to the body of this revision. One is significant to the report; the others are personal.

I originally presented this study at the 2007 Jornada Mogollon archaeology conference at Las Cruces, New Mexico. I chose the conference both because of the local interest and to see how well the study was received. The comments afterward were quite positive. The paper was published in the collected papers of the conference (Lockhart 2009).

In 2008, I presented the paper to an entirely different audience at the annual conference of the Society for Historical Archaeology. Again, the paper was well received, along with three offers for publication. The only one I accepted did not pan out. The paper presented here is a revision, adding a few insights without disturbing the original research.

My wife, Wanda Wakkinen, and I both teach at the Alamogordo Campus of New Mexico State University. Since we live in Alamogordo, less than a two-hour drive from Fort Stanton, we had the luxury of returning. All too often, when the Bottle Research Group records a site or a collection, we discover things we wish we had recorded – long after we have returned home. Quite often, we only discover a new avenue of research when analyzing the data, sometimes months or years later.

This time, Wanda and I visited Fort Stanton at least seven times. Each was for a different reason. Aside from the original trip, we returned three times for this study, twice for the brewery report, and additional visit to record numbers. Each time, we learned more and looked at things differently.

In my very first bottle study (Lockhart & Olszewski 1993; 1995), I was immersed in 379 bottles for several weeks – first as a work-study student for John Peterson at the University of Texas at El Paso, then writing a 99-page report on the El Paso Coliseum bottles with Wanda Olszewski, the most prodigious class project I had completed to that point. I thought that would be my last time seeing bottles.

I learned a valuable lesson, however, that I have never forgotten. The study of bottles requires time. Over and over again, I notice some detail that I had missed on the third look – or the twentieth one. Often, a major discovery has come from looking at a bottle that I had not held in my hands for a year or more. Maybe some people can just look at an artifact once and learn its secrets; I need to return – again and again.

We had this opportunity – returning – at Fort Stanton and took full advantage of it. Will we go again? – almost certainly.

Sources

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