



LEGENDS of the JAR

Bo Trimble

by Bruce Schank

[Editor's Note: This article is a result of long time collector and author Bruce W. Schank reaching out to longtime collector Bo Trimble.]



I met Bo quite by accident only a few years ago at the Shupp's Grove, Adamstown, Pa show. He seemed like a nice enough guy who was definitely interested in fruit jars, yet I was never totally sure what he really specialized in. What I found out during my visit is that Bo is a classic example of an "under the radar" collector. He is just a quiet, nonchalant and ego-less guy that most people don't even know what he's all about, let alone know what's in his small but dynamite fruit jar collection.

It was while attending the 2009 Baltimore Show that I finally managed to talk with Bo for any real length of time.

We just happened to share a hotel room the night before the show and both of us stayed up very late talking jars on the balcony of the 2nd floor. It was then that I realized there was more to Bo than what met my eye. It was also at that time that I became convinced he was a very good candidate for one of my articles.

Bo was born in Shreveport, La., in 1952 and according to him, he grew up as a military brat. Bo's father was stationed in places such as Louisiana, Michigan, California, Puerto Rico and North Carolina before moving to Virginia. Bo attended graduate school at Charlottesville in 1982 and has remained in the area since then. Bo is a contractor and has done a major part of the renovation work himself on his soon-to-be new home.

Bo's interest in fruit jars came about in the late 80s when he was renting a house and happened to have his own garden in the back yard. When it came time for the harvest, his next door neighbor (a Ms. McCormick who was

103 at the time) just happened to leave for him a bag of mayonnaise and old canning jars to put up the beans and tomatoes. In that bag he found a couple of blue Ball Perfect Mason jars, but thought to himself they were too pretty to can in so he put them to the side. A couple of weeks later he went to a flea market and found a guy there who had more blue colored jars mixed in with other jars. There were approximately 40 different jars in three boxes and Bo bought them all for \$25. Only later did he notice there were about 20 different embossing styles of 1858s and assorted Ball jars. It was at that time Bo realized he had an instant collection of fruit jars.



Beautiful Olive Green CFJ quart



When Bo was first starting out, \$10 or \$20 was a lot for him to spend on a jar.

Awesome Bottle Display

From there, Bo went to an antique store where a guy sold bottles and jars and it was then that he found out there were so many different weird jars with closures and strange lids. That same dealer told him about the Red Book and so he subsequently ordered one. After getting the Red Book, he found out to his amazement there were 3,000 or whatever different kinds of fruit jars. Not knowing anything, of course he went through the Red Book thinking how this jar, that jar or this other jar would be cool to have so he actually started looking for them.

When Bo was first starting out, \$10 or \$20 was a lot for him to spend on a jar. He happened to go into a store in the valley one time where he found a reproduction amber midget and mentioned to the dealer how it was too bad it wasn't real. So the dealer asked him if he would

be interested in real ones and of course he said sure, not knowing what they would cost. So they went to a room above the store where the dealer had eight real amber midgets, four of which were damaged. He ended up talking the dealer into selling him two of the amber midgets even though he really couldn't afford them. Fortunately, he ended up selling one of the amber midgets to John Hathaway at a York bottle show which happened to be the very first show he ever went to as well.

Back in the early 90s Bo met Dan Corker and bought a couple of midgets from him. They have remained friends ever since and Dan has been a great source of good jars for him through the years. Soon after Bo had managed to get his jars displayed, Dan came over to Bo's home one day to take a look and spied a Franklin fruit jar midget in the



**Above: Three beautiful colored Masons.
Right: A great looking, crude and bubbly CFJ**

collection. Well,

Bo had an extremely nice original lid on the jar that Dan wanted really badly. Bo didn't really want to sell it but Dan was persistent over time and finally about a year ago he gave in to a trade. They exchanged Franklin lids, Bo gave Dan cash and Dan gave Bo an original closure for his H & S jar. And best of all, both were happy with the trade arrangements.

Bo also remembered the year not so long ago when the Muncie show was iced out and canceled, but he went there anyway. Before the cancellation of the actual show he was room hopping as usual and was in Greg Spurgeon's room. Not really paying too much attention, he noticed an amber quart 1858 on the table. So he picked it up and took the lid off and noticed it had an immerser lid on the jar. Well, he turned the jar around and quickly realized the jar was a Tudor Rose in amber. That jar stayed in his hands and he never put it back down after that point. So although the show was cancelled he was still thrilled to pick up a super jar, making the treacherous trip more than worthwhile.

Bo mentioned to me that when he goes to shows he doesn't necessarily go to them with any expectations of buying or selling. He's more interested in socializing with all of the people he has met and known for years and considers that to be more important. Buying and selling is an added bonus as far as Bo's concerned.

Bo also remembers going into another antique store once and seeing a straight-sided Potter & Bodine's Air Tight Fruit Jar, Philada., for \$1,200 -- too much money for him. Every time he



went, the jar was still there unsold so after four or five years, one day Bo said to the dealer: "Look, that jar been sitting on the shelf without selling for a long time, so what's the best you can do on it?" So the guy hemmed and hawed but finally said \$400 so Bo immediately asked if he'd take \$300 and the guy said how about \$350? So Bo got a really nice jar fairly cheap and the guy told him since he only had \$275 into the jar he was happy, too.

Bo's thoughts to newer collectors include thinking newer collectors should buy what they like, but try not to go straight to the high end jars right away. Worry more about collecting the best jar(s) you can at the level of financial resources you have. "Having started out buying \$8 and \$10 jars and now having gone up to probably top notch level examples, the best thing about the \$8 and \$10 jars when you're starting out is you can always find



Franklin Fruit Jar and a couple rare Mason patents



Above: A great color run of Mason Pints

Below: A another great color run of quart Mason Patents





2 Rare Amber Mason jars, Rare Mason's Union with lid.

something," he said.

"The spirit of adventure and the hunt is always exciting and most often tended to make you want more and better jars anyway. And once you've progressed to the choice was between one good jar or say 10 lesser jars, then getting the one good jar is the best option. Having the better jar in the collection will make the collection better overall in the long run."

One caveat to my visit with Bo is a pretty interesting side story of its own. While talking to him and looking over his jars, I noticed he actually had some Ball jars. I immediately spied an absolutely beautifully colored 3L Balll Mason quart sitting on one of his shelves. I just had to look at that jar up close and personal in light of the fact I am currently into that genre of Ball jar and obviously seriously into great colored examples, too. Well, I was a bit weak-kneed over the jar and began going off on a tangent talking to him about how great it was and out of the blue Bo says to me, "Bruce, remember that green CFJ we were looking at yesterday in Shupp's?" I said yes, of course I remember it. "Well," he says, "I'll trade you this Ball jar for that CFJ." At first I denied to myself that what I heard him say was what I had actually heard. I was in shock and my mind was scrambling to get back to the surface for air. As soon as I regained my composure I said it's a deal and we shook hands and I immediately called the owner of the CFJ. Obviously, Bo's happy with the trade but truthfully I'm nothing short of elated!

In doing this article I happened to be at another collector's home in order to do yet another future article and that collector graciously drove over to Bo's with me so I could see what kind of a collection he actually had and get his story. The drive was about 1½ hours into the middle
Bo's Country home and Property



More great jars

of central Virginia with just absolutely spectacular scenic vistas and rolling mountains. I was impressed, to say the least. Upon our arrival, we saw that Bo was in the middle of putting up a brand new home adjacent to and against his older smaller home. From what we could tell by looking it over, the new digs are going to be really nice when it's finally done. Bo owns 17 ½ acres and if you enjoy rural and being out there in the country, he is in the right spot for sure.

I came away from Bo's realizing what an incredible good guy he really is and how when you least expect it fortune can smile upon you via an old time trade. Smile Be prepared for the unexpected, is all I can say. Bo has some truly outstanding jars and an overall great collection. I was honored that he allowed me for even a short time to see his collection and get his story. Bo, I'm raising a cold one to you! x

