



The earliest known St. Louis, Missouri blob soda bottles date to the 1840's. However, for years, no pontiled St. Louis soda bottles were being dug.

In the 1960's, blob soda bottles were a very hot collectible. A large group of collectors were grouping, and were ready to form two area bottle clubs, "The St. Louis Bottle Club" and the "Metro East Bottle and Jar Association." Among these early collectors were Joe Messmer, Terry Phillips, Dale Henry, Liz Rath, Lee Foland, John Love, Hal and Vern Wagner, Sarah Hartmann, Sam Taylor, Ted Bradley, Dennis Green, John Stech, Jerry Mueller and Bob Steven.

These collectors were being supplied by many bottle diggers, which included Gene Kelley, Dale Steele, Larry Cummins, Ed Weidert, John Smelley, Mark Miller, Tom Feltman and Bill Karius.

Busch Stadium was under construction in 1964 and 1965. Diggers like Gene Kelley found some early pontiled St. Louis soda bottles at this site and collectors quickly became interested. At this stage in the game, bottle names like H. Grone, Hassinger and Petterson, J. Cairns and D. Colver all were the same. Nobody knew at this time which bottles were common, scarce or rare; they were all good and the prices were high on all of them.

The Convention Center was under

construction in the late 1960's. This is the site where many blob bottles were found, and the rarity was starting to fall in line. Many H. Grones, Haight and Obrein, J. Cairns, C. W. Schlepers and Hassinger and Pettersons were being dug. While very few D. Colvers and Allen and Co. were being dug. Thus most collectors by the mid-1970's now knew which bottles were rare and commanded the higher prices.

Throughout the 1970's, the categories of rarity were falling into place more and more. Soon it became evident that St. Louis Hutchinsons, quart blobs and colored soda bottles had started to go from uniform to specific. The truly rare bottles went up in price, while the common bottles came down.

It must be noted that unlike other cities where you have some common colored soda bottles, such as: J. Ryan, Savannah and Lomax, Chicago, all St. Louis colored blob soda bottles are hard to find. They run from scarce, L. Block and Bro. in teal, to extra-rare, R & J Adams in cobalt blue. Therefore the prices on colored St. Louis soda bottles remained high.

By the 1980's, the St. Louis bottle market softened quite a bit. Many of the original collectors had most of what was available and their interest started to wane. Not as many young collectors were buying St. Louis blob soda bottles, as many were interested in beer cans or sports cards. The prices on blob soda bottles came down so low that they became very good investments.

By the 1990's, a new influx of collectors entered the blob soda market.



Slowly the prices started to rise again. Collectors like Arlin Cargill, Ken Farnsworth, Gene Anderson, Theo Adams and Jim and Delores Brawley were very assertively building great collections. Both pontiled and smooth base blob sodas have a strong following. These collectors know the truly rare bottles and seek them eagerly.

Today, along with the names mentioned, collectors - like Bob Hawkins and Jerry Walters - have made the market very strong. Truly extra-rare bottles can run into the thousands of dollars, and colored St. Louis bottles even more. Theo Adams and I stated that if a "Congress Hall" or "M & W" ten-pin were placed on a table with a \$2500 price tag, how long would it be there before it was snatched up? Both of us thought

less than two minutes. EBay has caused the prices to go up even higher. Common bottles are being sold every week for higher prices than ever realized.

This author feels these bottles are well worth the price. Not only are collectors collecting history of long-gone companies, but as time goes by, fewer and fewer bottles are being dug. There are only an infinite number of privies out there and when these bottles are no longer being dug, then they must come from the second market. The prices then would go up to a much higher level.

Common Bottles

1. H. Grone & Co
2. Haight & Obrein
3. Hassinger & Petterson
4. Hassinger & Obrein
5. J. Cairns
6. C. Damherst
7. Jno. Obrein
8. G. Sudhoff
9. c. Abel
10. C. Hannemann

Scarce Bottles

1. P. Bermingham
2. R&J Adams
3. Brandon & Feasby
4. Blocke Bro
5. Beck & Zeisler
6. Timmermann & Grone
7. C. Voelker (?)
8. H. Borgstedt
9. L. Nickolaus
10. Wetter & Mehrkens

EXtra-rare Bottles

1. Congress Hall
2. Will Stevens
3. Sinnutt & Smythe
4. Witter & Christian
5. T. I. Reichenbach
6. L. Richardson
7. Jno Weaver
8. M. Pearl
9. Arch Matthews
10. Champion Bottling Co