

Calico III

by Ted Bobrink



The 3rd Annual Mining Collect Underground Adventure was the biggest and best ever. It all started Saturday morning with 33 people gathering for breakfast at the Jenny Rose Cafe. Doc Thorpe kept it a mining collectors event right from the get go by bringing in an Apache Powder Box full of goodies for sale and trade. In a very short time I saw a mint Lindahl Take Down Match Safe Candlestick trade hands along with a very nice Hanson Carbide Cap Lamp and Brass Screw top Patented Oil Wick. We all jumped into our cars

and headed to Calico Ghost Town to set up camp. Hard Rock John Ransom had 9 huge free camp sites waiting for us and we had no trouble getting about 18 vehicles in there with plenty of room for tents. There was a nice large camp fire ring set up with two days worth of wood stacked up from everyone. At 10:30 a.m. we all gathered together for the days agenda. I gave everyone a little history about the mining town and pointed out the names of the different mines up on the mountain. We then piled into 6 vehicles and drove about a half mile from camp to a site at the base of King Mountain. We hiked up Wall Street Canyon about a 1/4 mile to the# lower entrance of the Red Cloud Mine and gathered around for the group photo you will see in the first photo people entered tunnel in single file and spread out into two groups. John Ransom leading the front group and me leading the rear. We stopped and explained all of the different mining things we came across such as flat strap rail, ore chutes, drifts, crosscuts, stopes and shafts. We gathered in a small stope in front of a ladder and took our second photo you see in the photo below. Only about half of the people are in the photo. We climbed up the short ladder to a higher level to show everyone a cool looking vertical wintz, and then we cut everyone loose on their own for 30 minutes to explore the numerous cave like workings.





The ore bodies in Calico were found in irregular masses and it is like exploring a massive cave with curving drifts and cross-cuts leading to small and large glory hole stopes in every direction. We had two mineral collectors in the group and they were having a heyday collecting all of the different minerals with their hand picks. We all gathered together again for the climb up an 80' ladder. The ladder was on about a 55 degree angle and everyone had a fun time climbing it. My son David and John Ransom were at the very top helping people climb over a short ledge. We had been underground about an hour and a half and it was a little after noon, so we all picked out a spot on the floor and had

lunch. You will see that in jpg#3 and as many people you see in the photo, there were half again as many behind me. This level had the most workings to explore and we cut the group loose again on their own to go in any direction they wanted for as long as they wanted. Some took off to the right and some to the left while Jim Steinberg, John Ransom and myself stayed put for a needed rest. It was at this time that the biggest Calico find of the year was found just 25 feet away from where we had all been sitting for lunch.

Jim, John and I were sitting down talking about where we wanted to take the group next when John Ransom got up and walked down the drift to a pile of rocks. He started turning over some rocks about the size of basket balls that had been stacked up by some early miners when all of a sudden he looked down and spotted a glass bottle wedged between two rocks as if the miner was hiding it there. At first he thought it was just a plain bottle with a cork in the top because the way it was laying he could not see a label. He slowly pulled the bottle out and when he turned it over it had a beautiful black and white label with bold words that said

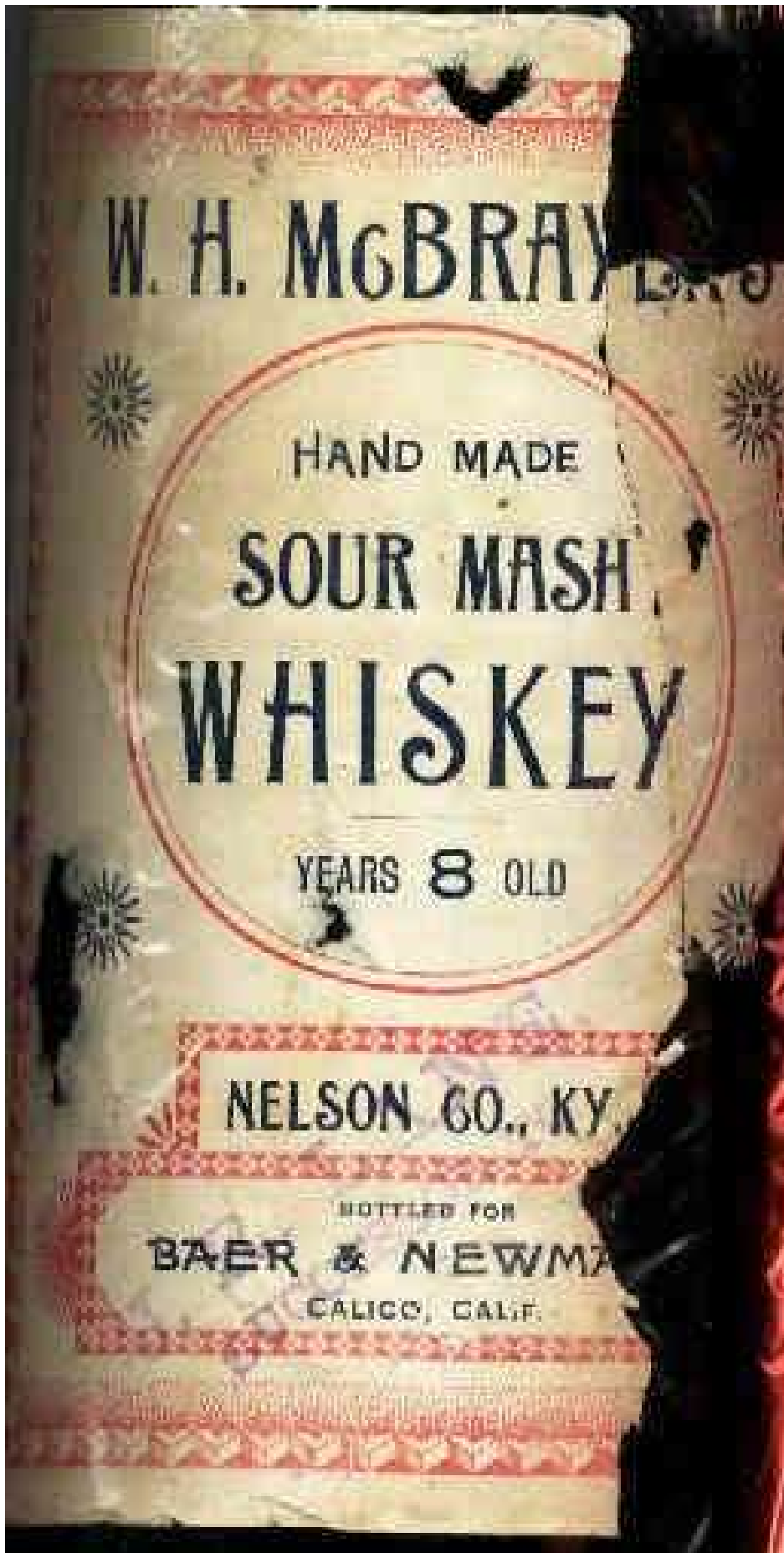
"Tincture of Myrrh - Used Chiefly For Diseased Gums, Sore Throat, Etc. H.J. Jordan, Calico Pharmacy, Calico, California." The Calico Pharmacy burned to the ground in 1884 and never rebuilt because there was another store called "The Calico Drug Store" owned by Dr. Rhea. To my knowledge this is only the fifth bottle known with a Calico place name and they are all different, and all from just those two localities. This is the largest bottle of the five as it stands a full 7" high and 3 1/2" across. You will see a photo of John Ransom holding the bottle and I will send a digital photo showing the label. After I took the photo of John Holding the bottle he handed it to me and said "You and David are the Calico collectors, it's yours. I said what !!! He said , you heard me, it's yours, now go show it to David. I am truly at a loss for words to tell you how I felt. It isn't every day that a friend hands you something that is priceless that he could sell for a hell of a lot of \$\$\$ just because you are friends.





I immediately walked down to a large timbered area about 500' away where most of the people were poking around in the ore chutes and timber lagging pulling out some neat stuff. I yelled for David and everyone to come over to see what John Ransom had found and when I pulled out that bottle David's eyeballs just about popped out of there sockets. David said "Darn dad that is the find of the year, how are we going to top that?" When I told him that John had given it to us he said "What!! is this an April fools joke?"

That heavily timbered area we were in produced a number of neat items that were lodged behind the lagging to plug the gaps. Jim "High Grader" Malouf found a really cool 1880s large square liquid can that used a cork stopper. It was about 10" and 6" wide high and completely hand soldered with its original shinny tin finish and no dents. Darrell Plumb and Gary Butrick pulled out most of a Goodwin Candle Box side that had lots of cool writing. David found a really nice hand carved wood powder poke with candle wax all over it. John Emray found a nice original Calico hand made wire Miners Candlestick that my son Daniel walked right over while exploring a lower stope. Someone found a little tin box of some kind, but I didn't get to see it. There were lots of parts of 1880s news papers found by different people and I cant name all of the square nails a mine rail spikes that were found. All in all, I think everyone who looked and wanted to find a mine relic from Calico found something to bring home and talk about. After almost five hours underground we all decided it was "Deep Enough" and time to pack up and head out. It took another good half an hour to climb through a maze of drifts, holes and short ladder climbs to get out, and when we did, we all looked like dirt moles. I wanted to get another picture of the unsightly crew, but I was out of film. We jumped into the vehicles and headed back to camp and the smart ones made a be line for the showers. After waiting for over two hours, me and Jim Malouf drove to another camping area to take our showers and get cleaned up the the Saturday night campfire get together.



Deric English adds:

In the San Bernardino City and County Directory of 1887, H.J. Jordan is listed as a druggist, which seems to suggest that he lingered on for a few years after the Calico Pharmacy burned down. As you mentioned, the other Calico bottles are from Dr. Rhea of Calico. I'm going to try to send an image of a third known bottle from Calico sold by Baer & Newmark, J.R. Lane successors. This bottle is dated somewhat by the business transactions that took place in 1892 when John Robert Lane acquired the old Norton Brothers Building from Oscar Baer and Harris Newmark. Baer and Newmark were assignees of the original owners of this building (Norton Brothers Building) built in 1884, and acquired it when the Norton Brothers went bankrupt. This bottle was bottled for Baer & Newmark, but it has been ink-stamped "J.R. LANE SUCCESSOR TO." It was most likely old stock Lane acquired from Baer & Newmark when he purchased the building and contents. Anyway, it would appear to be early 1890s. I found it partially buried under an ore chute.