



*A commentary by the author Dr. R. Dean Axelson, The following is an excerpt from the Encyclopedia of Toronto Embossed & Etched Bottles from the soda water & soft drink industry 1830 – 1940*

To the classic historian and professional archaeologist, the “bottle digger” hobbyist or collector may be looked down upon as a “pothunter”. While it is true that bottles are part of our archaeological history, it seems that these people do not realize that without the myriads of collectors out there salvaging these highly collectible items from anywhere they can find them such as old outhouses, early farm dumps, old city dumps, etc., many of these no longer used items would never have been preserved. Funds are not available to dig a dump and salvage all the material that is discovered under proper archaeological methods and techniques and it never will be. Also, there are many thousands of items found and these people will never have the facilities to store,

catalogue and research these myriads of bottles and other items of historical value. Some people in the archaeological field say that private citizens should not be allowed to dig old sites or buy and sell bottles. Would they rather see all these bottles dug up from construction sites reburied in landfill sites that will never again see the light of day? I say “face the facts people, unless you can do it properly, store, process the material and analyze it, then don’t criticize those that are making some attempt to save and preserve it now”. A site that can be excavated under controlled archaeological conditions is one thing and should never be interfered with by bottle collectors, but these are very few and far between. There is also the constant battle between historians and archaeologists on one hand and property owners and construction companies on the other hand. Bottle collectors are often able to save some of the material before the construction crews dump it back into landfills that will never again be exposed.

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