

Under the Myrtle at the Peter Dougherty House
(by Nancy L. Warne)

Over the years of poking around in the ground behind the Dougherty/Rushmore house, we have found pieces of early 1900's antiquity. This past fall a group started digging in the spot indicated as the privy location. According to family legend, the original Dougherty outhouse was located close to the house (this spot has not yet been determined.) Sometime in the late 1870's to early 1880's, a new outhouse hole was dug by the Rushmore family further from the house just outside one of the doors of the summer kitchen/carriage house.

This outhouse was used from then through the 1940's, though apparently moved a couple of feet either backward or forward every so often. During the forty years between 1880-1920, the Rushmore family both farmed the property and operated the house as a summer inn. From the 1920's-1940's the outhouse was used during the summers when the Rushmore family spent those months at Old Mission.



Apparently the area around the outhouse was also a trash area, judging by the location and substance of some of the stuff found. In the late 1950's the outhouse building was moved to a cement block for preservation and storage. During the summer and fall of 2009, PDS volunteers restored it from its collapsing condition to its current condition.

During the dig last fall, a variety of bottles, disintegrating metal (tin cans etc), broken glass, pottery, dishware mostly broken, was found, all underground, all currently covered with a flourishing lovely bed of myrtle that has spread during the years over most of the backyard.



Some of the metal found, cans of all shapes, sizes, and uses, curtain rods, saws, much of it unidentifiable. Also in this photo are parts of leather shoes.

The bottles, pottery, dishes, china shards have been cleaned, some glued, and all are in the process of being categorized, dated, and photographed.

The bottles (and jars) include those used for medicine (druggist and patent), food, household, and personal use (including many white glass jars). The majority of the bottles and jars are machine made, which means they were manufactured after 1900. A bottle making machine was invented around 1895. Prior to that, bottles were either free blown, or blown into molds. On a machine made bottle, the side seams run up over the rim of the bottle. Some of our bottles might have been made between 1850 and 1900, but according to manufacturers marks and scars on the bottle bases, most of them were made between 1895 and 1930.

Besides the bottles, pottery, dishes, diggers found remnants of a shotgun, automobile parts, 1924 license plates (that were when new a bright yellow), an 1869 shield nickel, a child's ring, parts of men's and women's leather boots and shoes, clay marbles, part of a kewpie doll, parts of an outboard motor, Prince Albert pipe tobacco cans, etc.

Some examples:



The 1924 license plate (ours on left, new from computer on right).



On the four sides of this 4-1/2 inch aqua colored bottle, is embossed:

“HIRES’ IMPROVED ROOT BEER
MAKES FIVE GALLONS OF A DELICIOUS DRINK
MANUFACTURED BY THE CHARLES E. HIRES CO
PHILADELPHIA, PA U.S.A.”

Bottle has C 28 on the bottom. The seam does NOT go over the lip. (It is not machine made). This bottle could date around 1890’s, before machine made bottles. The Charles E Hires Company was established in 1890, and began selling this in 1893.



A mixture of stuff found on one day. The nails are all handmade square nails. The stopper fits a vinegar bottles. Long thin bottle on bottom of photo contained bluing for laundry.

This is how the dig appeared after a few days. All of the soil removed from the hole was sifted through the screen. This dirt, after at least 70 years of rain and snow filtering through it, is just a sandy soil.



Some of the soil (here slightly damp with rain) with Prince Albert tobacco cans.

An exciting find about 4 feet down! Only obvious reason for this 11” tall jug to have been thrown into the toilet was a sliver of a crack across the bottom, apparently enough for the contents (possibly vinegar) to leak out. “Western Stoneware” inside of a maple type leaf is printed in blue on the side of the jug.



A child’s ring, clay marbles, and a 1869 nickel -- one side says “UNITED STATES OF AMERICA” large 5 in middle, “CENTS”, 13 stars around the 5; other side says “IN GOD WE TRUST” over a shield and 1869 on bottom. (Clear photo is from internet.) Our coin at first glance appears to be a copper penny.

Indeed, it is 75% copper and 25% nickel. They were minted from 1866-1883. In 1869 over 16 million of these coins were minted.

Some of the smallest bottles with the child's ring and nickel. The bottle with the stopper is an antimole medicine. The stone in the ring is blue glass, ring sterling silver.



One of the tallest bottles, mineral water, 12" tall, devil shape and Pluto on bottom, advertised as a laxative. Lovely green color.

White milk glass salt and pepper shakers. There is some remnant of pepper in the pepper shaker on left. These were only about two feet down.



The shotgun.



This is a tiny part of what will be on display at the Sunday, June 30 open house. Come and see. You might even be allowed to handle some of them!