

St Louis - The Trip

by

Martin Van Zant

I had been awaiting this show for a while now. Last year I went with an old buddy who passed away since. I sure miss him, he was my bottle show traveling buddy. I wasn't for sure I wanted to go alone, so I called in some buddies. I called my good buddy Bill Granger to see if he was interested in going. He was going to go but ended up not being able to make it. I had mentioned going to Doug Smith a while ago. However he had just moved and wasn't for sure he could make it.

The week leading up to the show, I called up Doug and He said let's do it. He also said well maybe we'll dig if you want. "Well heck yeah I want to dig", I said. Somewhere around the same time I got an e-mail from an old buddy who said. Why don't you come down early and listen to my son's band play. I said why not, so I called Doug to see if he wanted to go. I wrote Dave back and said sure I would love to come and listen to their band. I have known Dave Beeler or Digger Dave for a long time. I have dug with his son Paul on numerous occasions. I have also Doug with Dave's nephew Brandon Smith. I enjoy hanging out with these guys anytime I get the chance. So Doug and I met up after I drove the three hour trip over there. What a long drive that is. I was thinking the whole time "what will I find, will I get a new Indiana bottle?" I thought all kinds of things during that drive.

I drive to Doug's house in Highland Illinois which is just east of St. Louis about 30 miles or so. We chit chatted for a minute and looked at recent finds, WOW. Then we were off to see the band play. Paul's band is a cover band that covered just about every genre of music. They were really good and had the crowd a-hopping. We stayed until around 12 and then decided we had better go so we can get to the show early.

Rise and shine, after about 3 hours of sleep. When we got back to Doug's more bottle talk and more show and tell. We arrived at the show for early admission which is \$20. We split and were on our way. I talked to Tom Feltman and told him to keep sending us those digging articles, everybody loves them. He said he would try; he is having back problems right now. He did have some stellar stuff on his table. I keep going back and every time I did something was missing. Jim Hall was there with his usual high end stuff

I didn't see very many members at this show. I ended up finding only one bottle but continued to look for another three hours. The bottle was a medicine bottle from Kokomo, In. Mrs. Cora something, something, something, I forget. I met a few new people and had a wonderful time looking around at the show. The bottle people and the brewiana people have combined together to make this a pretty big show. I didn't see as many aluminum bottles this year as I did last. I did enjoy looking at the brewery stuff. Sometimes you never know what you're going to find. I also like some of the local brewiana stuff from places like the T.H. Brewing, Indianapolis Brewing. Keeps things mixed up a little bit.

I talked to Tom Doligale and asked him about his summer show. He stated he had plenty of support and had a show lined up. However he had to cancel his show at this time. He said keep your ears open because it's going to happen sometime soon! I was glad to hear that he would still have a Louisville show in the future. We stayed until around 11 or 12 and then took off.

We had planned to maybe try and find a spot to dig. However it was late in the day and we were running out of light. We meet up with some of Doug's new friends and off we were. First off we had too many people and when you get that many people things happen. We opened a cistern in high hopes of lots of bottles. Well, we dug down to about the five foot level. Then bottles were just flowing out, and I mean flowing out. The only problem is that they were of the sort that nobody wants. They filled this cistern in the 1920's and everything was that age. Even the deeper test holed proved to be new and seemed to be getting newer. Well, needless to say we did more talking than digging.

Next we decided to go and find the privies. Out to the back we went and probe, probe, probe we did. We opened two little shallow pits only to find holes full of seeds. The shards were few and far between and only one or two at that. It was fairly disappointing to say the least. We packed up with a little light left and only one or two bottles to show for it. Oh and a five way split between two bottles. No big deal I opted out and give my pick up. We went back to Doug's and had a wonderfully cooked home meal. This was probably the best part of the weekend.

The next day we arose early only to find it was raining, just my luck. So I headed on the long trip back. I thought well I'll just hit some antiques stores on the way home. I really wasn't thinking, what antique store is open on Sunday morning. Really though, what antique store is open before 10 am. Oh well, I had a wonderful time and was able to do what I love the best, look at bottles.