



**GREATER CHICAGO
INSULATOR CLUB
NEWSLETTER**
Rick Soller, Managing Editor



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Antique Store Finds

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| <p style="text-align: center;">N. J. BIGHAM. INSULATING HANGER. APPLICATION FILED APR. 26, 1910.</p> <p>977,262. Patented Nov. 29, 1910.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WITNESSES <i>C. Jennings</i> <i>P. C. Spratt</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">INVENTOR <i>Neal Jay Bigham</i> <i>L. Parker & Burton</i> <small>Attorneys</small></p> | <p>Many GCIC collectors stop at US 30 Countryside Antiques in Larwill, Indiana on their way to eastern shows like Columbia City or Strongsville, Ohio. In addition, there are several club members who live in the area. That is why I was surprised by what I found in the store when I stopped on Friday, December 13, 2019.</p> <p>Right away, I grabbed a nail knob with an embossed marking of PAT / (reverse arc) 11-29-10. I have only seen one other (currently in my collection) and, with a price of \$2, felt like I was getting an incredible bargain. I checked Elton Gish's web site and found that he neither showed the insulator nor listed the patent. To the left is the patent drawing for the piece.</p> <p>Neal Jay Bingham lived in Detroit, Michigan and assigned half of the patent rights to Harry A. Robertson of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Perhaps the location of the inventors is why the piece turned up in Northern Indiana.</p> <p>I think I could double or even triple what I paid for the insulator! AND that wasn't all I got at the store.</p> |
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Antique Store Finds (continued)

It wasn't until I got home and could look at my price guide (I should always carry one) that I bought another rarity. It is a CD 106.3 [035] Duquesne with only three ribs rather than the usual four. The price (\$38) was in line with the price guide (\$30-40) but I've wanted one of these for a while so I could compare the embossing to the [030] listing to determine if an extra rib was added to the [035] mold to make the [030] mold since the insulators have the same embossing. Now I just have to find my CD 106.3 [030] insulator among the thousands of insulators in my basement.

Feeling like I got good deals on the first two insulators, I also paid full price for a CD 126.4 [040] embossed (dome) W.E.MFG. CO. (skirt) PATENT / DEC.19.1871 (dome) W.U. (skirt) H and forked out \$2 for a U-52A chocolate brown piece with two side grooves that I probably already have and may have sold to Mike at the last Wheaton show.

Dig at the King City Glass Works (K.C.G.W.) Factory Site

At the Mid-Ohio show on November 1-3, 2019, several collectors of K.C.G.W. insulators brought CD 160s from their collection to compare. Eventually the discussion moved to several collectors talking about going to the factory site and doing some digging. A week later, the trip happened.

5 a.m. – Friday, November 8, 2019. To make the most of the sunlight, I was up before 5 a.m. and on my way in order to drive the 1-1/2 hours to Arlen Rienstra's home in Crown Point, Indiana. From there, it was a two-and-a-half hour drive to Fairmount, Indiana and the K.C.G.W. factory site, now serving as a junk yard along the railroad tracks. At that hour, traffic was light and I made great time, arriving at Arlen's before schedule.

6:20 a.m. – Arlen is waiting for me and glad I'm a little early. I moved my equipment to his truck: A shovel, bucket, hand trowel, car floor mat to kneel on, tape measure, knee pads, 5 layers of clothes, and gloves. I realized I forgot to bring water but Arlen had some. Arlen loaded his truck with his own equipment: A potato fork, mats, machete, knee pads, baggies, work boots, tarp, and energy bars. I didn't realize he had some of these until later in the day. Once he backed his truck out of the driveway, I moved my truck to one side of the drive so that Tina, his wife, could get in and out of the garage without difficulty.

6:30 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. CST – We proceeded south on I-65 to around Lafayette, Indiana and went east into the rising sun on Indiana-26, passing through lots of small towns: Meadowbrook, Monitor, Heath, Petit, Edan Mills, Rossville, Middlefork, Russiaville, Indian Heights, Oakford, Hemlock, Phlox, West Liberty, Point Isabel, and Hackleman. Some were so small, I didn't even notice that we were going through a town at the time but saw them on a map afterwards. I spotted a train depot in Russiaville and thought I saw a vineyard using crossarms somewhere along the way that I made a mental note to check out on the way back.

9:15 CST/10:15 a.m. EST – Somewhere along the way, we crossed into the Eastern Time zone. As we neared Fairmount we stopped for a restroom break and a snack. Approaching Fairmount, we called retiree Gene Hawkins, the third digger of the hunt, to find out where he was. All of us met at the junk yard main office with Gene arriving a few minutes before us. The three of us entered the office to confirm we could still dig in the fenced yard and to ask if the gate was open. A "yes" to both, some small talk, and a "thanks" sent us down the street to the entrance.

10:30 a.m. EST – We parked on the east side of the street outside the lot. From there, all I could see was a 12(?) foot steel fence. Entering the fenced area, we took a left turn and headed

for the far wall. The thorns blocking our way were thick so Arlen went back to his truck and got a machete. When we reached the far wall, we each picked a spot to start digging.

11:40 a.m. EST – We've been digging for over an hour now. My hole is about 15" wide and 22" deep. Arlen is doing better than me with a 21" x 27" hole that is also 15" deep. There are lots of roots to contend with as well as stones to dig out. I find lots of coal and it seems my best finds would be trivial to most collectors: A piece of glass with a "W" on it and a piece of glass that looks citrine in color. I ask Arlen about the color and he indicated that there is a known example of a citrine-colored K.C.G.W. so I have some evidence of another.

Gene is farther down the fence so I didn't get to see his digging spot. I did notice that he brought a few other tools that would be worth bringing the next time. These included a rake, a large piece of foam to kneel on, overalls, a plastic sorting tray, short pruners to cut roots, various wrenches (not used on this trip). Next time, I would add to this list a hatchet, long pruning shears, and a saw although the machete did have a saw on one side of it.

Afternoon – The early morning hour I awoke and the waning thrill of the dig started to hit me sometime in the early afternoon. Nothing close to a whole insulator was found, digging was tough, I was tired and starting to get hungry. By this point, I spent more time taking notes on the experience and watching a still energetic Arlen dig. The energy bars brought by Arlen helped at this point and I managed to do some more digging but not nearly as diligently.

I think it must have been around 2 p.m. when Arlen uncovered an opalescent piece of glass. It took a long time to dig it out with all three of us taking some dirt out from on top and around it. When it was finally out of the ground, it was about 6" in diameter and a few inches thick. It seemed to be glass attached to some firebrick. I thought Arlen would want to keep it but he gave it to me so I was delighted.

3 p.m. EST – We decided to call it a day at this point. I got my stuff back to the truck first before going back to help Gene with all he had. We all then went back to the junkyard main office and thanked the owners, shared what we found, and talked about the hobby.

A visit to a local antique store was a nice addition to the day after we left the office. Arlen found some signs and negotiated a deal with the store owner but the rest of us left empty handed.

After antiquing, we found a local, non-chain coffee house to eat at. The wait was a little longer than at a fast-food place but the food was good and the rest was welcome. I remember I had apple slices with the sandwich I ate but I think I was so exhausted, I don't remember what kind of sandwich I had.

After eating (Lunch? Late lunch? Slunch? Supper?), we stopped at the local historical society/museum. They were closed but outside there was a big (8 or so feet wide) slab of glass and some railroad stuff to look at.

It must have been around 4 p.m. when Gene went north and Arlen and I headed west into the sunset. On our way, I spotted the vineyard I noticed in the morning but was disappointed that it was not crossarms I saw holding the wires that supported the vines. In Russiaville, we stopped to look at the depot. It was closed and in the process of being renovated. A nearby building had additional displays about the interurban at the back of the property and other local history but it too was closed so we had to settle for looking in the windows. I did walk to the back and check out the old railbed. There were some poles and insulators there but the insulators were common and broken. Nevertheless, it would be nice to travel back to the area and search the line more fully since the common insulators were clearly replacements.

At home, I did some research on the depot. I found that the line behind the depot was an interurban line that ran from Russiaville to Kokomo to Frankfort to Marion. The line dates back to 1907 although the section in Russiaville was not built until 1910. The depot itself (pictured below) was one of the few buildings that survived a 1965 Palm Sunday tornado.



(Above) Russiaville, IN interurban train depot along highway IN-26

7 p.m.-ish CST – Arriving back in Crown Point, I loaded my tools and finds in my truck and headed home, arriving around 8:30. I left everything in the truck until the next day since I was tired and hungry. Sleep came easily that night.

A few final notes about the hunt are in order. At 1 p.m. EST, I checked the weather on my phone and found the temperature to be 33 degrees. This was actually perfect digging weather. Digging is hard work so a colder temperature is preferred. The cold kept the mosquitos away and prevented the vegetation from hiding the ground. It was a sunny day and we enjoyed it during most of the dig. Toward the afternoon, however, the tall fence we were working near blocked the afternoon sun making the temperature feel colder.

Russ Frank was asked if he wanted to join the dig but he declined. Bob Stahr was working that day so was unavailable. We probably passed by Cole King's house and could have asked him to come along but didn't think of that until after we were coming home. Maybe next time ☺. I've now dug at four insulator company dumps: Hemingray, Canadian Porcelain, New Lexington, and K.C.G.W. Where can I go next?

Upcoming Shows

Strongsville, Ohio

Saturday, January 18, 2020

The Western Reserve Insulator Club's 21st Annual Winterfest / Swap Meet & Club Meeting will be at the Spyglass Hill Recreation Center, 13201 Compass Point Drive, Strongsville, OH 44136. Dealer Setup: 9:00 AM; Show Hours: 10:00 AM -3:00 PM. Club Meeting and Lunch: 12-1:30 PM. There are no admission or table charges, but space is limited, so please contact us ahead of time if you plan to set up! Info/RSVP to JOHN HOVANEK (216)392-3622, E-mail jrhovanec@ymail.com

Crown Point, Indiana

Saturday, January 25, 2020

The 12th annual "Beat the Winter Blahs" insulator swap meet is Saturday, January 25. This is the 3rd year at this location, bigger and better than ever: Lake County Fair, 889 S. Court St., Crown Point, IN. (SE entrance). Meeting in the 4H Building which is spacious, well lighted and warm. Tables supplied at \$20 each, additional \$10 each. Lunch provided. Bring insulators or related collectibles to show and tell, sell or trade. All are welcome to experience Hoosier hospitality, plenty of space, GCIC auction, business meeting and a great new larger location. Doors open 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Hosted by Arlen and Tina Rienstra and the Greater Chicago Insulator Club. Located easily from I80/94 and I65. RSVP ariens@att.net or (219) 226-4975

Wheaton, Illinois

Saturday, April 4, 2020

The Dupage Collectors Expo will be held Saturday, April 4th, at the Dupage County Fairgrounds, 2015 Manchester Road, Wheaton, Illinois, Hours are 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Items for sale & trade include: Insulators, Lightning Rod items & Weathervanes, Telephone & Telegraph items, Bottles, Jars, etc. Info: BOB STAHR: bob@hemingray.com (630) 793-5345 and RICK SOLLER: com574@clcillinois.edu (847) 782-8602.

Columbia City, Indiana

Friday & Saturday, May 1-2, 2020

Free Admission, free appraisals, and free air too! at the annual Columbia City, Indiana Insulator, Fruit Jar, Bottle & Collectibles show to be held at the Whitley County 4H Center, 581 Squawbuck Road, Columbia City, IN on May 1 & 2nd. Plenty of parking, RVs welcome (no hookups). Friday dealer setup Noon to 3:00 PM, Public 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, Pizza 5:00 PM, BRING SOMETHING FOR THE SHOW & TELL at 5:30 PM, Saturday Dealer setup 6:00 AM to 8:00 AM, Public 8:00 AM until the last dealer leaves. First dealer table \$28, 2/\$48, 3/\$60, 4/\$75, 5/\$80, 6/\$85. For discounts on local hotels or for more info email Gene Hawkins at: gene.hawkins@mchsi.com or call (574) 377-0171.

Renew your membership. Attached to this newsletter is the form to use to renew. You can now pay via PayPal. Send PayPal payments to Bob@Hemingray.com using the Friends & Family option. To sign up for PayPal, go to <http://www.paypal.com> and follow the directions.

Tama, Iowa

Saturday, May 30, 2020

The 23rd Annual Hawkeye State Insulator Swap Meet will be held on Saturday, May 30th at the Tama Civic Center from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Tama Civic Center is located at 305 Siegel Street in beautiful downtown Tama, Iowa. Those dealers planning on setting up can do so starting at 7 a.m. There will be no cost to those who plan on attending and there will be a lunch provided around noon. This annual event is well attended by collectors from the Hawkeye state as well as our friends from neighboring states. The relaxed atmosphere is enjoyed by all. There will also be an auction scheduled with part of the proceeds going to support this show. Donations towards this event are welcome. We are again looking forward to hosting you and provide some Hawkeye hospitality here in the Midwest. For any additional information and table reservation, please contact DAVE SHAW at (641) 484-5463 or e-mail at dashaw@mchsi.com. Please note the show is scheduled a week earlier than usually as a courtesy to those attending the national.

Berkley, Michigan

Saturday, June 6, 2020

The 3rd annual swap meet is on again but with a new location and the same day as the St. John Woods neighborhood garage sale. A 1 hour drive north of the Ohio border on I-75. Set up is free, please bring your own tables. Some food will be provided, not necessary but if you like, bring a dish to pass. Show location: 3518 Cumberland Road, Berkley MI, 48072, show time 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Contact information: Curtis Erickson (248) 515-4612 or crerickson1@gmail.com

Logan, Utah

Friday to Sunday, June 12-14, 2020

The National Insulator Association's 51st Annual Show and Convention will be held at the Cache County Fairgrounds in Logan, Utah. The fairgrounds is located at 450 South 500 West, Logan, UT 84321. There will be plenty of dealer space and exhibit space plus a multitude of things to do in the area. Show Hosts are: DON & JEANNE BRIEL, (435) 753-5786, Don.Briel@comcast.net and ARNOLD & LINDA SMITH, (801) 829-3383, smithlrh@hotmail.com. www.nia.org/shows/2020_national

Tecumseh, Michigan

Saturday, June 27, 2020

The first ever official All Insulators - Crown Jewels of the Wire Insulator Show! Held in Tecumseh, MI at the AJ Smith Recreation Center, 810 N. Evans St., Tecumseh, MI 49286. Only 45 minutes from the Michigan/Ohio border and 1-1/2 hours from the Michigan/ Indiana border. The show welcomes all types of insulators and closely related go-withs. Eight foot tables are available for \$30 each. Electricity available in a limited basis for an additional \$10. Dealer setup will be at 9 a.m. Dealer information is available at: <https://allinsulators.com/hobby/show/dealer/>

Loudenville, Ohio

Saturday, July 25, 2020

2nd Mohican Country Insulator Swap Meet.

Springfield, Ohio

Friday to Sunday, November 6-8, 2020