



## **Half Quart Temperance Snake Flask. cc: 1875**

**By Greg Mathis**

The small elaborate flask features an applied multi-colored rattlesnake warning against excessive alcohol consumption and public drunkenness. The obverse displays a finely detailed domed bordered map of the South Central Region of America, spotlighting Arkansas and Missouri, the Arkansas River, the Mississippi River, and the Ohio River, specifically depicting Fort Smith, St. Louis, Poplar Bluff, Cairo, Memphis, Little Rock, Benton, Hot Springs, and Malvern. The flask's reverse features a cobalt incised dome bordered medallion bearing a cobalt-filled incised crosshatching.

Evident are many highly skilled potting and decorating techniques used in wheel-turning, hand sculpting and glaze applications with heavy cobalt, Bristol, and manganese. Mapping incisions of towns, trails and rivers are neatly cobalt filled in a stylish hand script, possibly that of the skilled potter Jacob Bachley. Aside restoration to the spout and rattlesnake's head, the scarce flask is all original, solid, and survived in good condition. 7 3/4" h, 4 3/4" w, 3" d.

Often skilled contemporary potters of the Kirkpatricks appreciated and were influenced by Cornwall and Wallace Kirkpatrick creations. Visits between them and the Kirkpatricks obviously occurred at State Fairs and other special pottery exhibitions. They most likely visited each other's pottery operation, admiring and sharing ideas and skills.

Known are very scarce temperance related snake flasks with elaborate Arkansas and Missouri mapping and cobalt filled crosshatching. Some believe they were made by Jacob Bachley while at the Anna Pottery, using distinctive Anna Pottery high quality clay and glazes, and then fired in the Anna Pottery kiln. Bachley sculpted exquisite Anna Pottery style pig flasks, spotlighting Arkansas and Missouri rivers, trails, and towns, that likely were produced on a Bachley stop at Anna, Illinois. This notion has the support of highly regarded field experts. While no known supporting written census documentation, Anna City Business Directory, Anna Pottery log registries, or any historical biography exists, one most significant

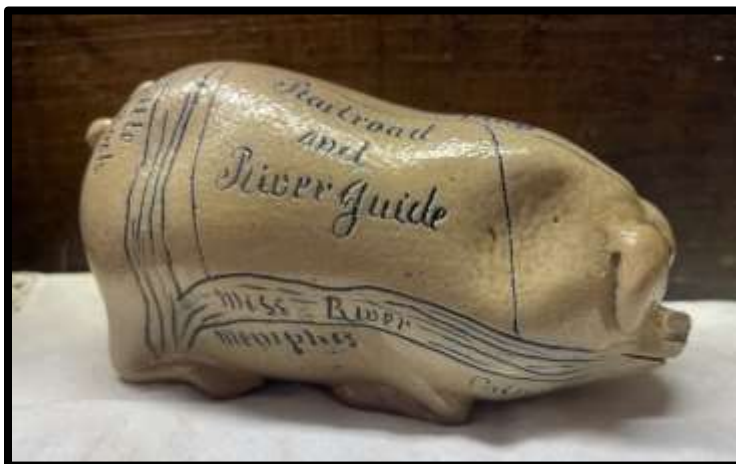
newspaper article proves Bachley factually worked at the Anna Pottery. Very meaningful details have surfaced through the exhaustive archival research of Brock Buckner, determining Jacob Bachley worked for the Kirkpatrick Brothers pottery operation in and around 1875.

*The Jonesboro Gazette* July 29, 1876 edition reports “**Aquarium. - the Anna Pottery has achieved, considerable celebrity for the variety, beauty and usefulness of its products. The Kirkpatrick Brothers have hitherto manufactured with their own hands the various articles that have been deemed unique, such as cairo (sic) cups, porcine wine bottles., temperance jugs that resemble the Gorgon head and ate the concrete embodiment of the drunkards dream, rustic cottages, &c., but they have found an artist, Mr. Jacob Batsley (sic), to whose hands they can trust this class of work. The statuettes in the Kirkpatrick drug store are specimens of his skill. He is making an aquarium in clay that will be his master piece. It is not easily described. Its style of architecture carries one back to the feudal days of old England. It will be placed in the Kirkpatrick drug store.”** Bachley first trained at the Uhl Pottery in Evansville, Indiana, and worked in 1875 for the Kirkpatricks. Afterwards, he moved westward to Texarkana and connecting with Jack Weed to establish their Texarkana Pottery in 1878.



Aquarium Castle Anna Pottery styles samples attributed to potter Jacob Bachley

Established Arkansas newspapers have documented and reported Jacob Bachley being a highly skilled potter of the famed Texarkana Pottery and have conveyed Bachley, “Humbug Jake,” being a well-known and established potter artist in Arkansas, especially around Little Rock.



Cobalt filled fine hand incisions attributed to Jacob Bachley script style.



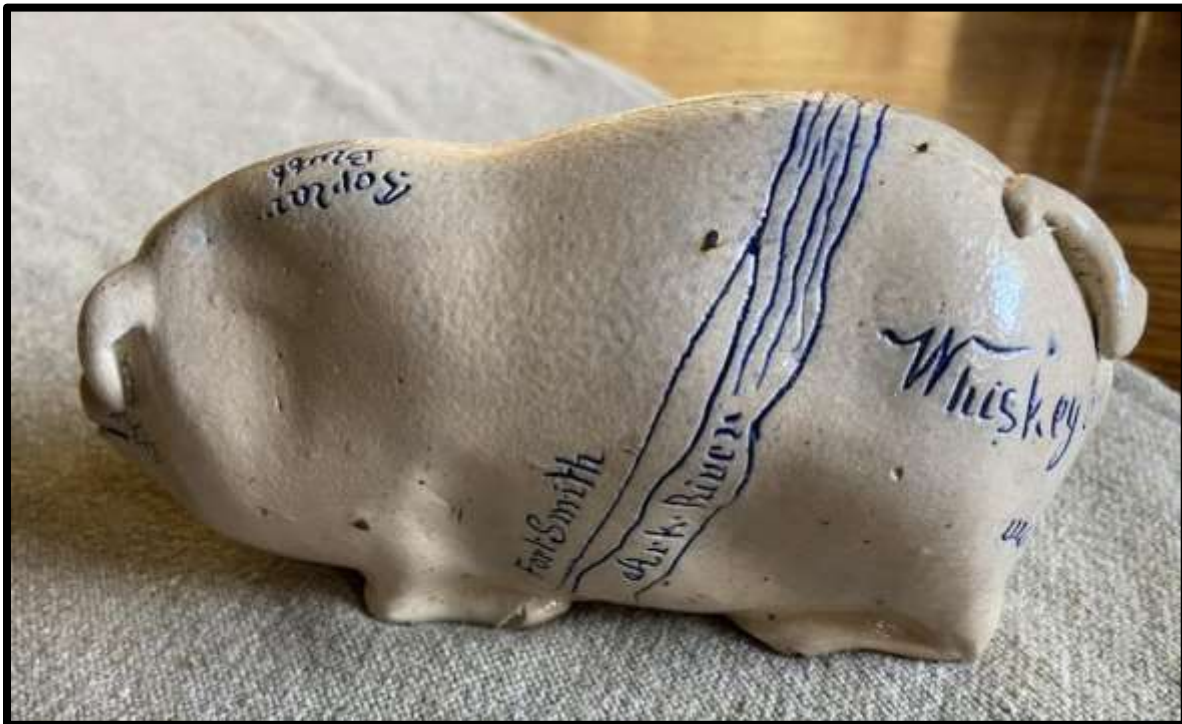


Snake flask displaying the great influence of the Kirkpatrick's Anna Pottery.



Note the great Kirkpatrick's Anna Pottery traits, clay and glaze colors.





Sample of scarce Railroad & River Guide pig flasks attributed to Jacob Bachley.



Temperance flask featuring frogs being entrapped by an evil rattlesnake.

Conveys - Minds captured by excessive alcohol consumption and public drunkenness.



Jacob Bachley (1840-1885) Arkansas art potter, known as Humbug Jake, the "pottery man" of Texarkana. Bachley originally trained at the Uhl Pottery in Evansville, Indiana, before he came to Arkansas in the 1870s to work with Lafayette Glass in Benton. In 1878 he ventured westward to Texarkana, where he partnered with Captain "Jack" C. Weed, a conductor with the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway. The pair formed the Texarkana Pottery Company, with Weed as the proprietor of the "celebrated fancy pottery works" and Bachley as potter, reports the *Arkansas Weekly*, Little Rock, Arkansas.

The *Daily Arkansas Gazette* stated on April 5, 1879, that "among our visitors yesterday was conductor J. C. Weed, of the Texas Division, St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Railroad. Jack is proprietor of the celebrated fancy pottery Work of Texarkana, and we are pleased to know he is meeting unexpected success. His foreman is famous Humbug Jake, with many of us acquainted at the State Fair. He's a skillful workman and designer. The many articles shipped from the establishment include hanging baskets, water pitchers, beer mugs, and so on."

The April 10, 1879, edition of the *Arkansas Democrat* reports "the guy is glazing the ware like porcelain and that's almost transparent. In fact, it's difficult to conceive people of the truthfulness of the statement that it is Arkansas made. The pottery is much finer than the average. Mr. Weed telling us that it really brings \$.12 per gallon. The novelty work is most striking and artistic, Mr. Bachley having crown

the exhibit with his own head and face. Among the most remarkable pieces are the Dog Catching the Rabbit, Darwinian Theory, Cat in a Sack, frog, and Arkansas Traveler in the Velvet Veiled Profit. If you failed to see this, you may miss half of the show.”

“The Texarkana pottery company, Jacob Bachley, and conductor Jack Weed, proprietors, make an excellent exhibit in Floral Hall, Arkansas. Mr. Bachley is one of the most expert workmen in the country, and the display would be credible to a much older and much more extensive company. The pottery exhibit, most of which for sale, consist of mental ornaments, aquariums, Arkansas traveler, ornaments, flower, vases, chamber sets, water, coolers, medallion jugs and cups, and a thousand and one original ‘little tricks’ that could only have been found in the fertile brain of old Humbug Jake. Don’t fail to see the curiosities.”

Reported in the *Daily Arkansas Gazette*, Friday, January 23, 1885, is “the special telegram, announcing the sudden death of Mr. Jake Barkley at Texarkana. The deceased was a member of the firm Weed and Bachley, proprietors of the Arkansas pottery, and was well known in Little Rock. He was a man of genius, a skilled workman in his business. The curiously design pottery shown in the Arkansas exhibit at New Orleans is the work of the diseased. His death is generally regretted.”

Bachley was born in France in 1840. Bachley died of pneumonia at age 45, on January 22, 1885, at the home of his partner John Weed. The Bachley obituary

states he had “many friends, in Texarkana, in Little Rock, and elsewhere” and that Bachley “was one of the California Forty-Niners” (*Daily Arkansas Gazette*, Jan. 22, 1885). Jacob Bachley’s pottery operation partner was John C. Weed. Weed of Irish descent was born October 1, 1839, and in addition to his Texarkana Pottery passenger proprietorship, John Weed was regarded “one of the best and most popular conductors on the Iron Mountain narrow gauge railroad, running out of Texarkana, Arkansas,” and described as “one of Texarkanats best and most useful citizens.” John Weed’s residence was at the corner of Walnut and Third Streets. Mr. Weed’s death occurred at a railroad wreck near Arkadelphia on October 30, 1891. He is buried in the State Line Cemetery, located in the 3000 block of North State Line Avenue, Texarkana, Miller County, Arkansas (extracted by Texarkana historian Wayne Adcock from the *Daily Texarkanian*, March 11, 1907).

The January 23, 1885 issue of the *Arkansas Gazette*, called Bachley a man of genius with his life cut short as he was perhaps, beginning to achieve significant notoriety. A sad turn of events devastated his legacy.

Numerous fine displays of fancy pottery were made by Weed and Bachley of Texarkana. The designer must’ve been a happy mood of fancy, sculpting characters of snakes, toads foil folds of which serve for handles, and Razorback pigs, true to life, seeking subsidence from cornless cobs. The *Daily Arkansas Gazette* edition on



January 21, 1885 reports “ Bachley pottery being exhibited at the New Orleans world fair having his snake jugs displayed there.

Surviving snake vessels made by “Humbug Jake,” Jacob Bachley, are scarce. His creations closely followed the style of the Kirkpatricks of the Anna Pottery, having worked there and being hugely influenced by the Kirkpatricks Brothers.



Temperance Jug featuring applied snakes, a lizard, and a turtle, attributed to Jacob Bachley, Texarkana Pottery. 10 ¾” h.



“Little Brown Jug” bearing applied snake and owl motif,  
attributed to Jacob Bachley, Texarkana Pottery, Texarkana, AR. 3 ¾”h.



Keg bearing applied cobalt and manganese decorated rattlesnake, inscribed "A Whiskey Gauger", / "by Jacob Bachley," Texarkana, Arkansas. 9 ½" h.

. Colors on Keg snake body match the colors applied on the Half Quart Temperance Snake Flask.

As virtually no records existent in Illinois federal and state census sources, some intensified the mystery holding the not farfetched notion that Texarkana Pottery's existence was a mere hoax played by the Anna Pottery. However, Bachley does



appear as a potter in the 1880 federal census of Texarkana, Arkansas. Archival researcher Brock Buckner's efforts ended the major Bachley "mystery" by uncovering and reporting significant information in the aforementioned Jonesboro Gazette article of July 29, 1876. Special accolades are in order for Mr. Buckner.



The "Eakin Arkansas Traveler" watering hole setting, featuring multiple cobalt and manganese decorated figurals and mottled base application. 10" H, 11" L, 11" W.



Elaborate Half Quart Temperance Snake Flask with cobalt and manganese decorated snakes and entrapped frogs. Rectangular map depicts St. Louis, Poplar Bluff, Cairo, Miss River, Ohio River, Fort Smith, Ark River, Memphis, Little Rock, Benton, Malvern, and Hot Springs. It's reverse bears a incised rectangle with cross-hatching, each forming a diamond pattern. The interior of each diamond has a dot. 7 ½" h.

## THE JACOB BACHLEY POTTERY TIMELINE

1870 UHL Pottery Huntingburg, Indiana, training /potter apprentice..

1873 Lafayette Glass, Benton , Arkansas.

1875 Anna,Pottery, Anna. Illinois

1878 Texarkana Pottery, Texarkana, Arkansas.



Lafayette Glass Pottery, cobalt decorated churn.

Stamped "L. Glass. Benton, Ark.". Benton, Saline County, Arkansas, cc: 1873.

Departing his UHL training at Huntingburg, Indiana, Bachley relocated and potted at the Lafayette Glass operation where he became attached and quit acquainted with Benton, Arkansas cities, rivers, and trails, and America's Midwest Region. He relocated and potted for the Kirkpatrick Brothers in 1875. In 1878 he connected with famed train conductor John, "Jack" Weed and established the Texarkana Pottery.