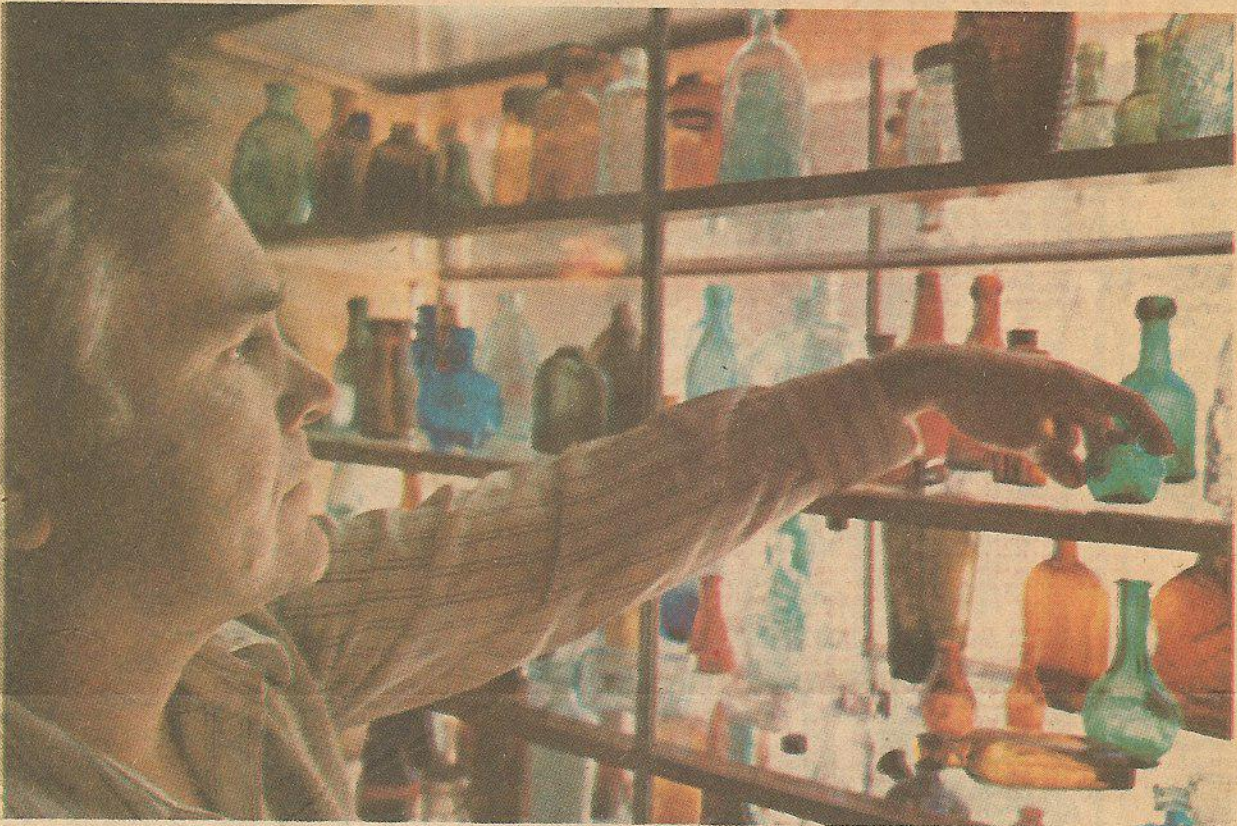


The San Diego Union

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, THURSDAY MORNING, JUNE 19, 1980



Cecil Munsey, a nationally recognized authority on collectible bottles, shows a few choice examples he keeps in a glass case.

Collecting Rare Bottles Collected A Rare Ph.D. For Hobbyist

**Cecil Munsey Wrote The Book On it ... And 'The Bottle Book
Bought The bottle store'**

By HELEN L. CALL

Financial Writer, The San Diego Union

Cecil Munsey is the only known person who got his Ph.D. — at USIU in 1973 — on a hobby that gets hotter every year: collecting.

That followed publication of the Illustrated Guide to Collecting Bottles, which established Munsey as an authority — currently, he prices antique bottles for the quarterly catalogue published by the internationally recognized Antique Trader.

The bottle book has sold more than 250,000 copies since 1970 “and has become the basic text for the hobby,” said Munsey. Royalties put Munsey into business.

“The bottle book bought the bottle store,” said Munsey. He and his wife, Dolores, own the Rancho Bernardo Spirits Shop located near their country home. Munsey likes to create displays such as the 1880 Gor-

don's Gin bottle on the top shelf and, under it, a 1980 Gordon's Gin for sale.

For a while, Munsey ran the liquor store himself. That was when he became disenchanted with the public school system, where he had been a teacher since 1963. He abandoned teaching for a mid-career change, but later reversed course and now is coordinator of the leadership development center for the San Diego County Department of Education. His staff carries on at the liquor store.

But this month, Munsey will head for the Northern California wine country. “I will visit many small wineries to buy boutique wines for the store,” he said. His bottle shop specializes in wines from California and around the world. He also will keep an eye open for wine country memorabilia. “That is one of the

hottest collectibles now.”

Turn-of-the-century letters, bills, documents from any of the old wineries, as well as posters and old

advertising material “are just now becoming collectible,” Munsey said. “Also production items, boxes, machinery used in bottling.”

Of a recent trip to the Napa Valley, Munsey said, “I saw in a plumbing shop a certificate from the Pan-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco early in the century. This was an award won by the Gundlach Bunchu Winery, a company still in existence. I wrote to the company and told them where it was and suggested they might like to pick it up for their



—Staff Photos by Russ Gilbert

historical archives.”

Munsey, himself, has an insatiable interest in collecting. But, with discrimination, he says. “And I don’t

just collect things; I have to know about them.”

Munsey started the hobby as a child. “I collected Kellogg Pep pins of cartoon characters. My family traveled and I noticed that certain pins were found in some areas and not in others.” Munsey built his collection and then put it away until it surfaced years later.

“Collecting is like a disease,” he said. Now, when it attacks, he feels he can fight it off. “Collection — I can take it or leave it.”

The collecting fever intrigued Munsey as a psychological characteristic of people who squirrel things away. That is what he decided to study in making a bid for a doctorate.

His dissertation was on the Personality Characteristics of Collectors. Said Munsey, “I was looking for their motivations. It turned out to be a classical example of not finding out anything. Collectors are not that much different than non-collectors. They are a little more greedy, or perhaps I mean a little more acquisitive, and that’s about it.”

Munsey’s first book on bottles was called “Would You Believe,” which dealt with unusual Ripley-type facts about bottles.

“I was teaching gifted students at Florence Elementary School in 1964,” Munsey said. “They were the ones who got me started on bottles.

One day at lunch hour they found some old bottles under a building across the street. I decided to teach them about the history of San Diego using the bottles.

“When that was over, I was left with the bottles. I found there was no literature on the subject so I started researching. I did a local newsletter on antique bottles for the San Diego Antique Bottle Club, then began writing for a national magazine.”

Several years later, Munsey was contacted by Hawthorne Books in New York for a book on bottle collecting.

Now he is warming up to begin a book on advertising collectibles.

“I will deal mostly with the major companies. Quaker Oats, National Biscuit, Carnation, Prudential Life, RCA Victor, Cracker Jack, Smith Bros. Coughdrops, Lydia Pinkham.”