TECHNOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY: The demijohns and carboys are large bottles of varying sizes differentiated by their content. Demijohns were utilized to ship and store potable and non-corrosive liquids, such as wine, oil, and vinegar. Carboys were specified for corrosive contents, such as sulphuric, nitric and hydrochloric acids. Shipping rates were significantly higher for the more dangerously laden carboys. The size of the bottles ranged from two to ten gallons. Generally, they were made of heavy green glass. Regardless of the content, this type of large, approximately 5-gallon bottle goes back to at least 15th century Persia. Originally the form is from the glass-making town of Damaghan. In Arabic it was termed a *damagan* and subsequently this was anglicized to demijohn. It seems natural that the English term, demijohn, would be a fairly easy transition were it not for the alternate fact that the 17th century French term was *dame jeanne* or in English, lady Jean. Some scholars believe that a corrupted pronunciation of *dame jeanne* became demijohn in English.

**Glassgall:** An unusual feature of this week’s object is the color. Ranging from an almost opalescent blue on the upper half and merging to a greenish turquoise in the lower, all on the exterior of a dark green glass. When illuminated from the front by direct light it appears to be opaque, but when back-lighted it is translucent. This effect is termed glassgall, and the cause is variously described. Willy Van den Bossche in *Antique Bottles and Glass*, from Antique Collectors’ Club accounts for this with a turquoise blue sulphate salt of sodium (Na₂SO₄) which in amounts up to 5% dissolves in the metal, however, when “content is above 5% the excess sodium sulphate swims on the molten glass surface and is opaque turquoise blue in color.” The color may also be reproduced when slag from a metal blast furnace is introduced into the batch. Gall is often used to make the pontil, mostly in Belgium, in which case the entire base of the bottle may be discolored. Note that the applied string rim was from a different batch of glass of a pure green without the gall effect.

THE OBJECT: The origin and date of this particular bottle in the globular/ovoid form is difficult to pin down. Without firm history it might assume to have been made in Belgium or England circa 1800. However, an American origin of circa 1825-50 is possible. With the advent of substantial tariffs on imported glass, these bottles were made in profusion in America during the third quarter of the 19th century. Production occurred most notably at Dr. Dyott’s Kensington Glassworks in Philadelphia, PA and at the New England Glass Bottle Company in East Cambridge, MA. The American bottles were probably similar in form to the 18th century European and English versions, although by 1850 the form had largely changed to cylindrical. The base usually has no pontil mark as the free blown bottle was simply broken off from the blow-pipe and the mouth fire-polished or, as in this example, left rough. A rough flat band of glass was applied as a string rim just below the mouth. The base is a smooth low dome. A peculiarity of this particular bottle is a roughened area, approximately three by eight centimeters, on the shoulder presumably relating to a former label. Whether the shallow deformity is an irregularity in the glass or simply a residual adhesive is uncertain. The possibility of some type of repair is also a consideration. Almost all these large bottles were initially encased in woven wicker for protection. In America wickering was the job of delinquent and orphaned children working 10 to 12 hour days.

Supported with grants from

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**Glass demijohn or carboy, c. 1760-1850. Height 18”, Origin undetermined: France, Belgium, England, or America. Large free-blown globular/ovoid bottle of dark green glass. Low-domed base without pontil mark. Rough-sheared neck. Surface covered with glassgall but for applied string rim of dark green glass. Surface irregularity on shoulder, possibly related to repair or original label. Chris Havey Collection.**