

A bottle in one colour can be relatively common but in another quite rare. This is certainly true of the W.S. Robinson Dispensing Chemist bottle from Yorkville (now part of Toronto).

The clear version can be found with some searching. However, the cobalt blue variant is extremely rare. This is the only sample I have seen but I have heard that another Toronto collector also has one.

What makes this bottle so special is not just the rarity factor and the colour but the embossing. It is emblazoned with a beaver, maple leaf, and a Latin motto that reads "PRIMAE, CURAE, NOBIS, CANADA, SIT". Loosely translated this means Canada must be our first concern. Well, how much more Canadian can you get! William S. Robinson must have been a strong supporter of confederation. His practise certainly spanned that era. His is listed in The Ontario Drug Store and Druggist List as operating in Whitby in 1857 and then in Yorkville between 1867 and 1883.

Yorkville was a prosperous village located in the Yonge and Bloor area. It was amalgamated with the city during the 1880's. During the 1960's Yorkville was a mecca for Canada's hippies and draft dodgers from the United States. Today it is home to trendy shops, art galleries and restaurants.

Some of the other distinctive features of this bottle include:

- Blown in the mould
- Six and a quarter inches in height
- Contents eight ounces
- French cross design
- Patent lip
- Bottle manufacturer unknown, possibly American, has M on the base

Cobalt blue druggist bottles of any kind are quite rare. Of the hundreds of pharmacists that operated in Toronto between 1850 and 1930 I have only seen three other embossed cobalt druggist bottles, including a D.L. Thompson, J.R. Lee and Bingham's Pharmacy.

These bottles are not as old as the Robinson and none have such nationalistic symbols.

