



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Marking Time

### Poison Bottle

*Alexandria Times, October 11, 2007*

*Image: Poison bottle, collection of the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum. Photo, Office of Historic Alexandria.*

This cobalt blue bottle was the most widely used type of bottle for poison in the United States during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. First manufactured in 1872 by the Whitall-Tatum Company, this specific style was actively produced until about 1920.

The popularity of the apothecary business in the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century made many chemicals and liquids more widely available to consumers for households as well as medicinal purposes. Such chemicals as chloroform, formaldehyde, and iodine could be very toxic if they were confused with other chemicals.

In 1853 the American Pharmaceutical Association adopted a resolution requiring that bottles and packages containing poisonous substances be distinctly labeled or marked as such. To differentiate poisonous substances from others in addition to this label use, companies began producing bottles that were unusually shaped or had specific features that identified them. See this bottle and other early pharmaceutical artifacts at the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum at 105-107 South Fairfax Street. For more information, visit [www.apothecarymuseum.org](http://www.apothecarymuseum.org).



*“Out of the Attic” is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as “Marking Time” and explored Alexandria’s history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into “Out of the Attic” and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.*

*These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by Amy Bertsch, former Public Information Officer, and Lance Mallamo, Director, on behalf of the Office of Historic Alexandria.*