

# Youngblood, Mark:

Mark's cell: 651-329-0815

## VIDEOS:

Half hour SHOW, like Privy Diggin' 101: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYNWXWYnmBg&t=1s>

Brained dig: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agB6xur8Id8&t=358s>

Diggin' 101, Menomonie, WI: <https://youtu.be/PYNWXWYnmBg>

Plainview: [https://www.facebook.com/gregory.logajan/videos/10207654835222833/;](https://www.facebook.com/gregory.logajan/videos/10207654835222833/)

<https://youtu.be/Fd27kUhcOjE>

Marks Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/mark.youngblood.92?fref=nf>

St. Croix dig: <http://eastmetrowater.areavoices.com/2013/08/29/digging-for-treasure/>

Pine City: <https://youtu.be/1Aa8BrIbbiE>

Brian does the calls for 811 locates: 763-856-4345

## Kicking glass: Local outhouse archaeologist talks findings with WCHS



## Mark Youngblood at a privy dig July 11 near Red Wing.

Posted: Friday, August 7, 2015 4:54 pm

by Michelle Miron Editor | [0 comments](#)

WHITE BEAR LAKE — If Mark Youngblood knocks on your door wanting to investigate your backyard, you may want to answer in the affirmative.

The White Bear Lake resident, 52, is an expert in finding historic artifacts on residential properties — with a specific slant. The longtime treasure hunter knows how to locate old privy pits, excavating the sometimes-valuable vintage bottles and antiques buried there before restoring the landscape to its original state.

Sure he gets grimy, but only from dirt. Over hundreds of digs, Youngblood has encountered only two pits that contained less-decomposed matter.

In return for the right of way, the homeowners keep part of the findings as mementoes related to their home's history. These days Youngblood, who works as a self-employed metal scrapper by day, is in it for the thrill of the hunt and the chance to find specific collectors' items on his bucket list. The mother lode? That would be a vintage bottle bearing a White Bear Lake embossing.

He discusses his hobby in a presentation at the Warden's House Museum in Stillwater Sunday, Aug. 16.

Youngblood estimated he's completed nearly 1,000 digs throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois, 70 to 80 so far this year. Helping him gain permission through multiple property owners is that he and Princeton-based accomplice Brian Mann are somewhat well known in the field after being featured in regional media outlets.

His favorite finds through the years?

"The ones I like best are worth more to me than money. There have been several one-of-a-kind bottles. But recently I've been into early soda bottles I found in Menomonie, Wisconsin and coffin whiskey bottles — that refers to the shape of the bottle — embossed with the proprietor's name."

Bottles aren't the only treasures in the pits, considering latrines were the all-purpose disposal systems of the day. Youngblood has found dentures, breast pumps, glass buttons, doll's heads and worn-out shoes, some of which likely fell in accidentally back then.

Youngblood was bitten by the bottle collecting bug shortly after moving to White Bear Lake at around age 7. Collecting aluminum cans for profit in the woods near Dellwood, he began to find interesting vintage bottles and collectible beer cans. Eventually the Mariner High School grad moved on to scavenging at construction sites and dumps like one formerly off Highway 96. When workers dredged White Bear Lake circa 1977, he followed trucks to a nearby dump site and retrieved vintage treasures including bottles, license plates and a porcelain advertising sign. Another pickers' dream back in the day: the lakeshore off Lions Park, where customers at the former auto license bureau once routinely chucked old plates into the lake.

After he got hooked he learned to quickly identify the nature and age of old bottles and began to amass his personal collection, selling some on eBay or Craigslist or at shows including the Minnesota Antique bottle, Advertising, and Stoneware Show and Sale in Bloomington each March.

About 30 years ago he heard about fellow pickers making finds in long-abandoned and decomposed old privy holes, and decided to try it himself.

Identifying likely sites can be a science in itself, he noted. Homes built prior to 1900 are the most likely to have had outhouses, but hidden treasure troves often exist near new homes built on old lots. Old residential maps help, as does talking with neighbors or noting new homes built in older neighborhoods.

Some folks are understandably uneasy about letting a stranger dig up their yards, but once they view his "before and after" dig photos and/or see neighbors' fruitful digs they often change their minds, he said. These days, 10 to 15 percent of Youngblood's digs are by homeowner request; the rest usually involve knocking on doors for permission.

To get started he and accomplice Brian Mann of Princeton made their own tools, steel poles of four to eight feet with beads on the bottom, used to probe potential sites for the holes that might reveal artifacts. He soon learned to seek depressions in lawns, and to feel the difference when his probe hits softer dirt, glass or other materials. Some sites have had up to seven different pits. The digging itself doesn't happen without a strong likelihood of a pit, and he checks with power companies first to avoid buried lines.

The dig itself involves sectioning off surface grass or sod onto a tarp, excavating the hole with hand shovels (usually making at least a four-by-four foot opening), carefully removing any artifacts then re-filling the hole and replacing the surface. A typical dig lasts several hours.

The artifacts are shared with the property owner, and valuable bottles can be sent to Youngblood's contact who cleans off the effects of age via a mechanical "tumbler."

Lately, he said, homeowners have been particularly interested in the century-old heirloom seeds he finds underground that are native to the site; they can be used to grow new kinds of vegetables and flowers.

While Youngblood has lately been conducting lots of digs in Menomonie, he said Stillwater, Bayport and Hudson are among his favorite digging sites. Stillwater pits are sometimes empty because the city once had a "dipping" service that removed outhouse contents, but the North Hill can often still yield great finds, he said.

This time of year finds him conducting digs a couple times a week, but the local history buff spends winters conducting research, trading online and monitoring two Facebook sites he founded (see sidebar).

To answer the question everyone has, no, the sites are almost never still fecal-ridden. In two years, Youngblood has encountered only two pits that contained undecomposed matter because they were surrounded by clay.

Because he's not the only privy digger these days, some sites he checks out have already been professionally searched. That doesn't deter him from trying again elsewhere.

He pointed to a recent Menomonie excursion in which he dug up 70 pits that yielded 70 old bottles, 50 of which he gave to the homeowner.

"It's the thrill of finding the unknown, another bottle I don't have, or something cool," he said of the appeal. "We do that quite a bit."

The digs themselves often become entertainment for the residents, he noted.

"Several people sit around, pull up lawn chairs and watch us dig. A 9-year-old girl in Menomonie was on her hands and knees, looking down and watching us dig the whole time."

\*\*\*\*\*

If you go

### **'Outhouse Archeology'**

**When: 2 to 3 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 16**

**Where: Warden's House Museum, 602 Main St. N., Stillwater**

**Details: Free. Presenter** Mark Youngblood on his 30 years locating and excavating 19th and early 20th century privies in search of historic artifacts.

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Interested in a dig?

Youngblood seeks old privy pits to dig in Minnesota and Wisconsin, particularly near White Bear Lake houses built in 1900 or earlier.

The digs are free if the property owner is willing to share the findings; otherwise a fee is charged. Contact him at 651-329-0815

Or [myoung6766@aol.com](mailto:myoung6766@aol.com).

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## **Man finds gems such as rare bottles in old outhouse pits**

*posted May 1, 2016 12:00 a.m. (CDT)*

**Contributed photo | [Enlarge](#)**

- In Eau Claire, Mark Youngblood stands in a 7-foot-deep hole that used to serve as an outhouse pit.

When Mark Youngblood has gone fishing, chances are he's in someone's backyard.

With a spring-steel probe, he pokes the through the grass and dirt, feeling for soft spots indicating the ground below has been disturbed.



That's gold to Youngblood, who first has to locate the sites of old outhouses before he can find the treasures buried along with them.

Sometimes those long lost gems are shoes, dentures, marbles, doll parts or Youngblood's kryptonite: rare bottles that date back to the 1800s.

"A lot of times, stuff got tossed in the pits," Youngblood, 52, of White Bear Lake, Minn., said. "Instead of walking it to the dump, the guys would say 'heck with it' and throw it in the outhouse." It's a hobby that established itself when Youngblood was a boy. While on bike rides, he'd pick up bottles and old beer cans that had been pitched in ditches.

His self-employment lends well to Youngblood's hobby that he shares with Altoona native Brian Mann, now a resident of Zimmerman, Minn. The two met as members of the North Star Historical Bottle Club and bonded over a mutual desire to dig.

Youngblood and Mann will relay their excavating adventures during a presentation Saturday, May 14, at the Chippewa Valley Museum in Carson Park. Cost to attend is free for museum members or \$7 for adults and \$4 for children ages 5 to 17.

The museum's Liz Reuter said this is the first presentation of its kind, the next closest being a geography professor who spoke about ground-penetrating radar, which she joked isn't quite the same thing.

Eau Claire is a kind of digger's paradise because the city never had "honey dippers" -- a kind of cleaning service for outhouses. Youngblood said he and Mann prefer to dig in city lots where there is less real estate. That makes it easier to find the pits.

It takes about three hours from start to finish to dig about eight feet, Mann said. The pits are usually anywhere from five to 10 feet down.

"You have to have a good partner," Mann said about working with Youngblood. The two rotate roles of digger and overseer and generally wait until after the digging season to split the spoils.

"Whoever dug the best piece gets the first pick," Mann said.

Mann is a door-knocker, getting approval to dig from about 70 percent of the homeowners he asks permission from, while Youngblood has tapped social media to amass interest and prospective sites.

Youngblood especially is in search of bottles inscribed or embossed with a town's name. He and Mann have been lucky enough to find bottles from local breweries, Johannes Mathias soda bottles, medicine and whiskey bottles, among many others.

One find they had been in search of for eight years, an Ole Berg, produced twice during a dig in Menomonie.

Many of the recovered items go back to the homeowners, but sometimes people ask for the only organic remnants left from the privies' use: seeds safely preserved in the bottom of the pits.

It's a new trend, Youngblood said, where people replant "heirloom" seeds that passed through the bodies of people 125 years ago.

"They plant them and sometimes they grow," Youngblood said, also mentioning that the sites no longer smell and are void of waste and disease.

Anyone interested in inviting the excavators to their home can contact Youngblood at 651-329-0815 or search "Old Eau Claire Wi" and "Old Menomonie Wisconsin" on Facebook.

Others such as Reuter can relive the experiences during the presentation.

“As I kid, I was interested in archaeology, Reuter said. ”This is as close to being an archaeologist as I’ll ever get.“

Contact: 715-833-9206, [elizabeth.dohms@ecpc.com](mailto:elizabeth.dohms@ecpc.com), @EDohms\_LT on Twitter

***If You Go***

**What:** Outhouse Archaeology with Mark Youngblood.

**When:** 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, May 14.

**Where:** Chippewa Valley Museum in Carson Park.

**Cost:** \$7 for adults and \$4 for kids ages 5 to 17. Kids younger than 5 and museum members get in free.

**Information:** 715-834-7871 or [l.reuter@cvmuseum.com](mailto:l.reuter@cvmuseum.com).

TUE 10:52PM



Andy

hey Fert Mark discuss about best type items of old outhouse pits also he has Pemiissions for dig

Mark, this Fert Faust my friend he work for Crow Wing County Historical Society and his own historical webpage too..



Mark

Any home built before 1910 will most likely have bottles . outhouse pits are far and away the best .



Andy

how do y know many people has bottle before 1910 on ground?



Mark

i run a few Facebook sites my self . Old St Paul mind has about 13,500 members

outhouse pit . outdoor plumbing . they put evrything down in pit .

i find locations with a probe .



Andy

Interesting .. i just wondering why people doing that is there no business for trash before 1910 so they just throw away few back of each house on yards?



Mark

1910 is an approximate age of bottles i am looking for ./ I am after embossed bottles

1910 and earlier.

[http://www.wchsmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/outhouse\\_poster.jpg](http://www.wchsmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/outhouse_poster.jpg)

Check out Facebook site Old Menomonie Wisconsin

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/243376475836807/>

### Old Menomonie Wisconsin

809 members

Several posts are there .



Andy

cool! i know there is lots booze bottle factory around in Mn and Wisc until 1914 to 1915? become legall not sell booze until 1933

Thank for more info about bottle!



Mark

I would rather you get permission for a dig from Someone who owns a house built in 1880's 1890's . they will have some druggist bottles buried in yard.

We most likely will try and get some permissions this fall . I dig around 100 pits every year



Andy

I have lots friend here.. also Fert too.. but make sure ask Fert first .. and i live north side my house build in 1880 to 1910 in area my house is 1905 could be bottle there?



Mark

sure . Fert do you have any places?

we dug near jimmy johns



Andy

that building was tear down by Jimmy Johns?



Mark

House we dug at people still live there

check out my Facebook posts on digging

it is very hard to learn how to probe . Most people never get the knack on how to find old outhouse pits .

we dug a hutch soda enterprise last tuesday



Andy

i got rare Jug that they sell from 4th ave ne near jimmy john area but i got no information business name from CWCHS



Mark

james cullen soda bottle as well.



Andy

they found enterprise bottle in Boom Lake about 8 year ago. and James Cullen soda umm not heard that..



Mark

Fet Let me know if you can secure permission in town . Farm sites really don't interest us .

Smaller the lot . the easier it is to locate privy .

I have a few you tube videos out on digging



Andy

yes Fert would like your help to search bottle but he only one get permission by city and keep touch w fert on his Email ok?



Mark

ok . we are mainly looking for private home owner permission . which any one could get .

Have you read or looked at my site ? midwest Privy & dump Diggers.



Andy

also i just wondering have y found any old Brick with name from under ground? and yes i can ask private owner home in northside and NE and SE





Mark

In Brainerd ? for bricks ? . not yet



Andy

i will read on your site soon when i finish talk with you 😊

yes we collect lots Brick from under ground there is lots history name on brick..



Mark

I have been digging for the last 42 years for bottles. . we have a lot of people that are looking for certain bottles .



Andy

Interesting .. have y find anything like metal cup or dish or sign or stuff like that?



Mark

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1412045305704807/>

### Old Minnesota Bottles

167 members

Brainerd should have one similar to this bottle from john Coates,



Andy

nice bottle from Buffalo,Mn



Mark

everything that was discarded i have found .

shoes dentures doors head , plates jugs bowls etc.





Andy

wow y did great job find many rare bottle i am glad that! and forward to meet y someday in brainerd!! 😊



Mark

your 1905 house would be a good place to start.

how old are neighbors houses



Andy

and there is dirt alley road back of house



Mark

ttyl.



Andy

all house build in 1880 to 1900's



Mark

well it looks like we might get some interesting brainerd bottles out of yards . you will be surprised at the process.

please get some permission & we would come up



Andy

this picture is 1910's north side of brainerd y see older hospial building white

old 1880's court house and many house build in 1880 to 1910 area



Mark

see if you can find more pictures . sometimes they show outhouses

a 1880's house would have around 6 pits in a yard .

Plenty of druggist bottles could be found



Andy

this is 1900's southeast is most people who live and walk to North Pacific Railroad Shop back



Mark

southeast would be great . The A Marceau bottle dates to around 1881-3 vintage . it is a amber saloon beer .

wm bredfield also had a beer bottle

i know there are more druggist bottles from Brainerd to be discovered .



Andy

that 2 house is 1880's and still there now

have to ask owner about this



Mark

excellent . we can dig behind newer houses as well . the outhouse pits would still have items . we just need to know that an earlier house was there .

go ahead . It would be great to dig some more in Brainerd . Looks like an outhouse in one of the pictures,



Andy

yes i will ask my few friend who live in area and give me time ok also touch w Fert about Brainerd Brewery Beer Factory in 1880 to 1914 he need help with this!

in 1890 brewery beer



Mark

Excellent . looks like i will be digging pine city this saturday



Andy

Brainerd Brewing Company, illustration of new building being built in 1910, owned by Edward Boppel and Werner Hemstead, a partnership formed in 1906, located at Boom Lake, ca. 1910.

just make sure touch w Fert for this also i am work on owner people of Southwest and Northside about this ..



Mark

<http://www.leadertelegram.com/News/Front-Page/2016/05/01/Digger.html>

### Man finds gems such as rare bottles in old outhouse pits

When Mark Youngblood has gone fishing, chances are he's in someone's backyard. With a spring-steel probe, he pokes the through the grass and dirt, feeling for soft spots indicating the ground below has been disturbed.

leadertelegram.com



Andy



Mark

thanks . glad you like my posts .



Andy

very much! and thanks! we will keep touch w y 😊

Chat Conversation End

9:19AM



Mark



Andy



Mark

there is a wm bredfield bottle from Brainerd that i have i can not find it . William bredfield , most likely owned a saloon bottle is a blob top so dates to 1890's in my opinion

I have never done any research on bredfield



Andy

I am going check info at CWCHS about bred field and let y know in few day ok and thank foe info !!!!

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-----Original Message-----

From: Carl W. Faust <[fertfaust@msn.com](mailto:fertfaust@msn.com)>

To: 'mark youngblood' <[myoung6766@aol.com](mailto:myoung6766@aol.com)>

Sent: Tue, Jul 26, 2016 10:30 pm

Subject: RE: brainerd bottles

How did you get an interest in Brainerd...are you from here? FYI, Andy and I have been on several "walkabouts" together!

I have some friends in SE & NE that might allow a dig. How do you find the best spot???

My interest in Brainerd stems from seeing a **teal green embossed druggist bottle from Brainerd**. [one of these Mark donated to the CWCHS] at one my bottle club meetings .several years ago also the town has been virtually un touched by bottle diggers , the town has several embossed druggist bottles & soda & beer bottles . Plus it is not that far away from princeton mn where my digging partner lives . we can go up 25 & get there in less then 1.5 hours.... as far as finding spots we use probes made of spring steel. brainerd has lots of bottles . also has a cool soda bottle with map on it. . My digging partner & I do presentations some times . I will be doing one oct 17 monday at 600pm in long prairie at legion on 71 south side of town .

, Not from Brainerd at all . My hobby is like fishing . always looking for the big one .! Mc Fadden druggist has an amber colored druggist as well.

Good thoughts, thanks! As I study Brainerd, I realize that it grew at hyper warp speed. Here we had a town that grew around The Crossing of the river, the NPRR headquarters, the biggest town north of the cities, huge timber reserves and more. If any town in MN was like the wild

west, it was here. The Villard Hotel was the most opulent in all of MN north of St. Paul. So I suppose this fast growth is now showing up in the artifacts of merchants.

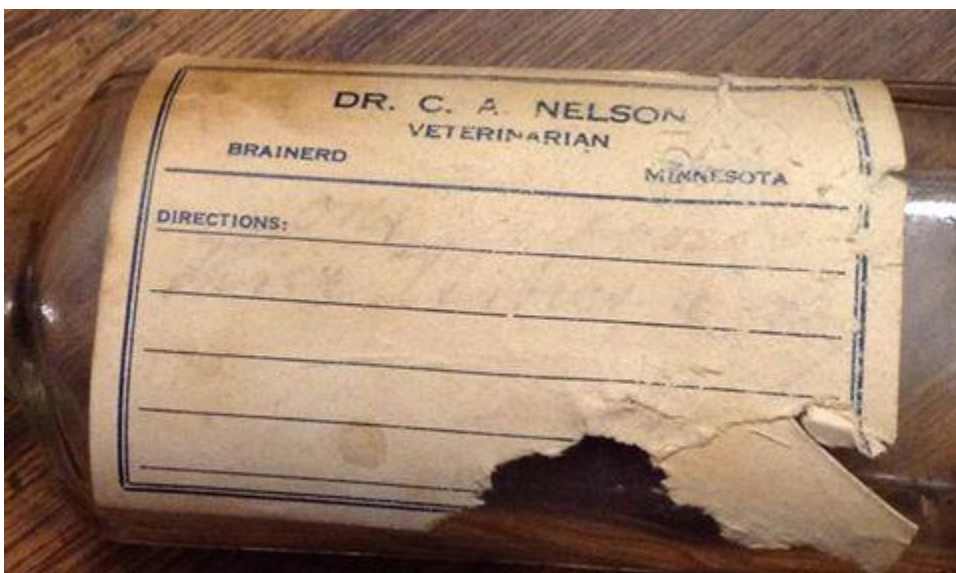
I do maintenance for a guy in town who has a half dozen older house if Frogtown and NE, so I'll ask him if he would let you dig. One is where I found that Coates jug in the basement, 1800 block of Maple St. On this lot is the old carriage house, now a small apartment.

As of yet I have done little digging per se, just surface hunting. I do use a probe to find slabs and bricks and pipes and clinkers. I should get one of your T handle spring steel ones though! I take it they are just sharpened, and there is no boring cut or screw on it.

[Mark Youngblood](#) shared his [post](#).

11 hrs

Frank Johnson ACL Druggist "applied color label" bottle



[Mark Youngblood](#) *to* [Old Brainerd Minnesota](#)

11 hrs

Frank A Johnson Economy Drug Company Brainerd Minnesota. Bottle

[Like](#)Show more reactions

[Comment](#)[Share](#)

15 [Andy Walsh](#) and 14 others

Comments



[Andy Walsh](#) Wow nice! Thank for share photo and never seen before!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 10 hrs



[Sandra Hallas Johnson](#) Doc Nelson and his wife Winnie were my neighbors on the 700 block of South Sixth.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 9 hrs



Write a comment...



[Mark Youngblood](#)

July 26 at 10:05pm

A few bottles from Brainerd that I own . Several were dug up in backyards in town.









[Like](#) Show more reactions

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[Share](#)

102 Andy Walsh, Brian Marsh and 100 others

Comments



[Ryan Justin](#) awesome

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · July 26 at 10:06pm



[Cassandra Cooper](#) So cool! I love old bottles.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · July 26 at 10:19pm



[Andy Walsh](#) [Mark Youngblood](#) have y seen any "SWARTZ DRUG STORE" ?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · July 26 at 10:22pm



[Mark Youngblood](#) yes

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · July 26 at 10:22pm



[Kathie Dee](#) I remember digging up a lot of these kinds of bottles back in the early 70's. I found many to be Watkins printed on them.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · July 26 at 10:23pm



[Mark Youngblood](#) I own a dozen or so different embossed druggist bottles from [Brainerd Minnesota](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [July 26 at 10:23pm](#)



[Andy Walsh](#) wow Interesting! can u give me all list name of Druggist bottle in Brainerd?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [July 26 at 10:28pm](#)



Write a reply...



[Mark Youngblood](#) I own several brainerd Bottles Some are buried behind others . there is a teal green embossed one . as well. I will look to see what i can round up . I have johnson ones as well

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [July 26 at 10:30pm](#)



[Jim Trout](#) We have a "swamp bottle" collection. The beach road borders our swamp and one of the first projects after buying that property was cleaning up all the trash our "wonderful" neighbors dumped there.

We did find some cool old glass. Also slashed a \$800 tractor tire on something someone sank in there. Some people's children...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [July 26 at 10:49pm](#)



[Jessika Pearl Drake](#) Those are so cool!!!! What a find!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [July 26 at 11:00pm](#)



[Kim Sears Finch](#) Used to find old elixir bottles on the Mississippi River bank when I was a kid . Should have kept them!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Yesterday at 12:15am](#)



[Michael Volk](#) I found fine China in my back yard about 18 inches down

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [1](#) · [16 hrs](#)



[Jeanie Tromblay Neville](#) Me too. I'm trying to figure out if there was a standard distance for an outhouse from the house pre 1900.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [10 hrs](#)



Write a reply...



[Rachel Norwood](#) We had a woodchuck that had burrowed under our garage. In her pile of "extra" dirt outside her hole, we found an old glass inkwell.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [3](#) · [13 hrs](#)



[Ann Schwartz](#) Wow so cool

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [13 hrs](#)



[Mark Youngblood](#) Most bottles that I recover are 6-7 feet deep in the earth . We use a spring steel probe to locate

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [2](#) · [13 hrs](#)



[Jeanie Tromblay Neville](#) How does the probe work?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [10 hrs](#)



[Mark Youngblood](#) locates anomalies soft spots . i can feel glass breaking .

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [10 hrs](#)



[Jeanie Tromblay Neville](#) I need to buy one. I have a very old house and I keep digging up very old glass and pottery shards in the yard. I'd like to figure out where the outhouse would have been to try and find bottles.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [10 hrs](#)



[Mark Youngblood](#) Are you finding Shards in your garden?

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [9 hrs](#)



[Jeanie Tromblay Neville](#) I dug for a fence, and for a vegetable garden. Plus the dog dug a couple holes. I have a fruit jar full of glass and pottery shards.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [9 hrs](#)



Write a reply...



[Mark Youngblood](#) Outhouse pits are much deeper 6-8+ ft down . locating them is hard to do . some times when we dig we get down 6'+ before we find glass . we have a 4.5' ft 6' 8' probe . soil conditions vary greatly

**From:** mark youngblood [mailto:myoung6766@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 27, 2016 8:52 AM  
**To:** fertfaust@msn.com  
**Subject:** Re: brainerd bottles

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**Not Youngblood:**

## Men digging up old outhouse find human remains, May 28, 2011

Other people might not want the job, but Jeffrey Springer is more than happy to dig up old outhouses, looking for any pieces of history he can find.

On May 6, he found a piece of history he'll never forget.

"I thought it was a large pig or a small cow," Springer said. "It's pretty wild, but we found human remains." Bob Breyer, a Faribault resident who worked with Springer last year, was helping with the dig when they found the bones.

"I thought it was the jaw bone of an animal but he tipped it up and I knew it was human," Breyer said. Springer has been digging up old outhouses for more than 20 years, and dug up more than 1,300 of them, but this is the first time he has ever come across a body.

It was Springer's brother who got him started in digging up old outhouses, collecting the bottles, marbles and other trash he finds. Throughout history, outhouses were also used as trash cans, and when they were full, you'd simply dig a new one.

Now Springer travels to older, smaller towns to introduce himself to neighborhoods and dig up outhouses, hoping to uncover a piece of history and spark an interest - getting people, especially kids, excited about history.

"It's hit or miss," Springer said. "You never know what you're going to find."

Springer said some guys he knows have been collecting bottles for 40 to 50 years and have never heard of anybody finding human remains while digging up an old outhouse.

"The guys kept telling me I should have bought lottery tickets," Springer said.

Scott Anfinson, a state archaeologist, said the bones date back to the late 1800s, and are probably from a young adult male who was likely the subject of an autopsy.

Anfinson said he thinks the body was already skeletonized when it was placed in the outhouse.

"It is indeed a mystery at this point and may never be solved," Anfinson said.

Springer said he knew something was suspicious about the bones because, while they were digging, he thought he would find the entire skull, but he only found the top part and he could tell it had been cut.

"My first reaction was he had been scalped," Springer said. "It was very strange."

The remains are currently at Hamline University with Susan Myster, a forensic anthropologist, who is currently out of the country and could not be reached for comment.

- Samantha Bushey covers public safety for the Daily News. Reach her at 333-3128.