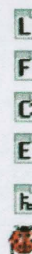
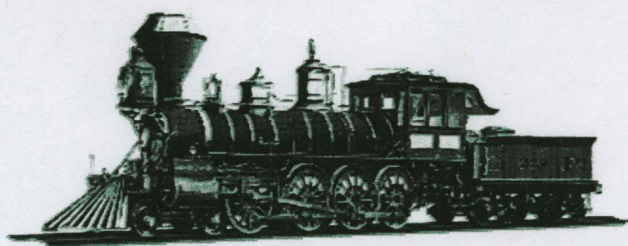


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A Dictionary of Old Hobo Slang

Stephen P. Alpert - March 31, 2004

Compiled from many books on hoboes, and also some original material supplied to the author.



ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

~ A ~

- accommodation - a local freight train
- ace spot - one dollar
- airdale - an extreme loner
- alkee stiff - a tramp that consumed alcohol
- alki - a) an alcoholic b) alcohol
- alligator bait - fried or stewed liver
- All Tramps Sent Free - Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe RR
- anchor - a pick
- angel - a person who gives more than you expect
- angel food - a mission sermon
- Angelina - a punk or road kid acting as a hobo's companion
- Auntie - Angelina grown older
- antique - an old-timer on the road
- apple knocker - an apple picker
- Apple Butter Route - Norfolk and Western RR (southern Ohio)
- axle grease - butter
- axle swinging - riding under a railroad car

[Back](#)

~ B ~

- badorder - a boxcar on its way to the repair yard
- bad road - a railroad or division where trainmen are especially hard on hoboes
- bakehead - a fool or idiot
- baldy - an old man
- bale of straw - a blonde woman
- balling the Jack - speeding
- ball lump - sandwiches or cake wrapped up and handed to a tramp
- balloon - a pack or bedroll, carried over the back or shoulder
- banjo - a short-handed shovel
- baraby - a genteel, quiet, respectful tramp
- barber - to talk, usually too much
- barnacle - a fellow who sticks to one job a year or more

[Back](#)

barrel house - a cheap, filthy lodging house

batter - to beg

batting - to wander aimlessly

battleship - a high-sided steel coal car usually with a hopper or dump bottom

→ bazoo - mouth

beagles - hot dogs

→ bedroom of stars - a city park

to beef on - to inform

→ beeper - a) one who whines b) an informer

belly of a drag - the underside of a slow freight train

belly robber - a boarding boss who tries to save money on food

ben - a vest

benny - an overcoat

biddies - hen's eggs

the Big Burg - New York City

big four - a duck egg omelet

X Big "G" - Great Northern RR

big hook - a big steam crane

big house - the state penitentiary

big O - a train conductor

→ Big Ole - a fellow who tries to show the boss how strong he is

→ big school - the state penitentiary

the Big Smoke - Pittsburgh

Big Rock Candy Mountain - the hobo's paradise

the Big Town - a) New York City b) Chicago

→ bindle - a bundle, bag, bedroll, or backpack carried by a hobo

→ bindle stick - a stick used to carry a bindle over the shoulder

→ bindle stiff - a) a hobo who carries his gear in a sack or bundle b) a hobo who carries his bedding

→ biscuit - a silver dollar

→ biscuit shooter - camp waiter or hash slinger

bit - a term in prison

bitch - an improvised candle

Bitter Biscuit Line - Piedmont divisions of the Southern RR

black bottle - poison allegedly given to hoboes in hospitals

black strap - coffee

→ blanket stiff - a hobo who carries his bedding

blind - the space between the engine and the mail or baggage car

blind baggage - hoboes who ride the blind

→ blinky - a train rider who lost one or both eyes

blip - a nickel

blister - an old woman

blisters - beggars who put chemicals on their limbs to simulate ugly sores

Mr. Block - one who believes police mean well and sharks are good fellows

block scrapings - meat begged from a butcher

blowed in the glass - trustworthy

blowed-in-the-glass stiff - a) an upper-class tramp b) a true and trusted pal

blowing smoke - boasting

B.N. - Burlington Northern

bob tail - a short local freight train

bo-ette - a female hobo

Bohunk - A Polish or other Slavic laborer

boil up - to wash clothes and kill any vermin therein

bone orchard - a graveyard

bone polisher - a wicked dog
 boodle - cheap grafting done by yeggs
 boodle jail - a jail providing a good winter's lodging
 boomer - a) a transient railroad worker b) a seasonal or migratory worker
 booming - going from one job to another
 booster - a chronic drunk
 booze hoister - a heavy drinker
 → bossy in a bowl - beef stew
 boston - a pool game
 Boston bum - a highbrow poser
 bottle wagon - an iron coal car
 Bowery barometer - curbstome philosopher from the New York main stem
 boxcar tramp - one who regularly rides boxcars
 boxcar Willies - hoboes and tramps
 bracers - legs
 braky - a brakeman
 X Bread and Milk Route - Boston & Maine RR
 breezer - a hobo
 bridal chamber - a) a flop house where guests lie on the floor b) a miner's workplace
 Bridgeport - any hick town
 bridge snake - a structural iron worker
 bridger - a train rider who has ridden both steam and diesel trains
 Broken & Maimed - Boston & Maine RR
 Browning Sisters - the Angelina sorority
 Buck - a Catholic priest good for a dollar
 budge - an upper front pocket
 bug - a lamp in a hobo jungle
 → bull - railroad policeman
 bull artist - a hobo with a gift of gab
 → bull cook - a) a camp flunky; b) a cook's helper
 → bullets - beans, when poorly cooked and hard
 bull horrors - obsessive fear of the police
 bull local - a freight which travels between divisions, often stopping at local yards
 bum - a skid row alcoholic, infrequently found on freight trains, does not work
 bumpers - couplings between freight cars where hoboes sometime ride
 → bums on the plush - the idle rich
 The Bum's Own - Baltimore & Ohio RR
 bundle tosser - a hobo harvest hand who pitches bundles
 buttermilker - a hobo from Pittsburgh, PA
 buzz - to beg

~ C ~

C. and A. pockets - huge pockets on the inside of a coat for carrying food
 cackleberries - eggs
 cacklers - white collar workers
 cages - cubicle rooms in the cheap lodging houses
 Cali - California
 California blanket - newspapers, used to sleep under
 call - a hobo dish of mashed potatoes, butter liverwurst and onions
 calling in - a) using another's campfire to cook b) visiting
 cally or callie - a police station (from calaboose)
 camp eye - the hobo who looks after jungle while the others are away
 candle eater - a Russian

Back

- candy job - a pleasant or "sweet" job
- canned heater - one who drank a deadly potion of cheap alcohol and water
- XX Canned Meat & Stale Punk - Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul RR
- cannonball - a) a fast freight train b) the mythical hobo's train which is fast and goes everywhere
- Captain - a head man or big shot
- card man - a union man or hobo with a red I.W.W. card
- car knocker - a yard man who works assembling trains
- The Carry All - Chicago & Alton RR
- carry the banner - to walk the streets all night, not having a place to sleep
- case dough - the last of your bankroll
- Casey - Kansas City, MO
- cat - a young tramp or hobo, new to the roads
- cat wagon - a brothel on wheels
- catch - to board a train
- catch back - to ride the way you have come on a freight
- catch him on the run - to board a train while it is moving
- catting in - using another's campfire to cook
- cattle stiff - a cowboy
- chaw - an Irishman
- checkerboard crew - mixed crew of white and black workers
- cheesy - to be filthy with dirt
- chicken in the clay - a fowl rolled in mud and then roasted
- chuck-a-dummy - to fake a fainting fit in order to get sympathy
- chronicker - a hobo who carried his cooking utensils
- Cincie - Cincinnati, OH
- cinder dick - a railway policeman who rode the trains
- cinder sifter - tramping along the railroad tracks
- the City - New York City
- clam - one dollar
- clay on the shuck - ears of corn rolled in clay and put to roast
- clover kicker - farmer
- coal passer - fireman
- coffee bag - the coat pocket (where the coffee is carried)
- Cold, Hungry & Damp - Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton RR
- collar and shoulder style - everything is put on the table and the hobo guest helps himself
- combination stew - a jungle dish of vegetables and meat
- combination train - a mixed passenger and freight local train
- comet - a) hobo new to the road b) a high-class hobo or tramp who only rides fast trains
- con (or connie) - a) conductor b) a tubercular person
- convention - any impromptu gathering of hoboes
- coop - jail
- XX Cough and Snort - Colorado and Southern RR
- Cousin Jack - a Englishman
- cover with the moon - to sleep in the open
- cozzy - a men's public lavatory
- crimps - rheumatism
- croaker or crocus - a doctor, especially a quack
- crotch crickets - crabs (lice)
- crowbar hotels - local police stations
- crumb boss - a janitor or porter for western construction-camp bunkhouses
- crumbs - lice
- crummy - a) the caboose b) to be lousy
- crum roll - a bed roll

crums - lice
 culls - hash, inferior
 cushions - a passenger train or car
 cut out - to drop off one or more freight cars on a siding or in a freight yard

~ D ~

Back

dace - a two-cent piece
 → daddy - a Cadillac auto *clackety-lac*
 dago red - a cheap wine
 Damn Rotten Grub - Denver, Rio Grande RR
 damper - cash register
 de - the
 deadhead - an empty car in back of the engine tender
 dead one - a) a retired hobo b) a drunken hobo c) a hobo who just spent all his money
 dead picker - a yegg who robs a drunk
 dead soldier - an empty whiskey bottle lying beside the road
 death wood - plank above the coupling of boxcars
 deck address - a secret address
 deck 'em - to ride the top of a passenger train
 → deck hand - a domestic, who does ordinary work around the house
 → decorate the mahogany - to buy the drinks
 deece - a dime
 → deep-sea chef - a dishwasher
 dehorn - denatured alcohol
 derail - denatured alcohol
 deuce - two dollars *half a deuce - dollar*
 dicer or dice train - a fast freight train
 dicer - a hat
 dimmer - a dime
 ding bat - a dreg of vagrantom; mooches off other hoboes
 → dingoes - hoboes who refuse to work even though they claim to be looking for a job
 ding shop - a mission or transient camp
 dingy - a colored vagabond
 dino - one who sponged food off fellow hoboes
 dip - a pickpocket
 discard artist - one who wears picked up clothes
 ditch - to put off a train
 division - main freight yards, usually 500 miles apart
 doc - someone who supplies alcohol
 Doctor Bates - a tough hobo
 dog house - caboose
 dog robber - a boarding house keeper
 The Dope - Baltimore & Ohio RR
 double-ender - a train with two engines and two cabooses
 doughhead - a baker
 doughnut philosopher - a hobo who is satisfied with coffee and feed
 drag - a) a slow freight train b) the main street of a town c) a homosexual party
 drag, on the - on the road or on the street of a town
 drag line - track onto which a train is pulled when being passed on the main line
 Dr. Hall - alcohol, liquor
 drill - a) to walk or hike b) a switch engine
 dry combo - a meal that needed no cooking
 ducket - a ticket or card good for a feed or a flop

duffer - bread and coffee
 duke player - a person who cheats at cards or checkers
 dukie - anything to eat
 dummy - a tramp that pretends to be deaf and dumb
 dump - a meeting place, a rendezvous
 dynamiter - one who sponged food off fellow hoboes
 dyno - a) a tramp who follows the highway instead of the railroad b) a tramp who begs off other tramps c) a rock man who handles dynamite

~ E ~

Back

eagle eye - locomotive engineer
 → eat snowballs - to stay north on the road in the winter
 empty - an empty boxcar, without a load of freight
 Espee - Southern Pacific RR
 exhibition meal - a meal eaten at the doorstep (so neighbors can witness madam's generosity)
 extra gang - a crew that works on the railroad track
 eye opener - an early morning drink

~ F ~

Back

faded bogey - a Negro acting as an informer
 fag - a) a cigarette butt b) a road kid with homosexual tendencies
 fakir - a bum or tramp pretending to be a hobo
 faith man - a mission stiff
 fanner - being hit on the soles while sleeping on a park bench
 fielder - a brakeman
 → fin - five dollars
 → fin or fingers - a train rider who lost one or more fingers *Fingy*
 fish - jail term for new prisoners
 fisheries - missions along the main stem
 → First of May - an new, inexperienced hobo
 five-hundred milers - through freights that stop only at divisions
 flannel mouth - an Irishman
 flat - a flat car
 flat-wheeler - a bad-riding car
 fleabag - a bedroll or sleeping bag
 flicker - to faint or simulate fainting
 flim-joint - a bank
 flip - to hop a moving train
 flop - to sleep, or a place to sleep
 flopper - a tramp that squats on the sidewalk in business thoroughfares; may fake being crippled
 flying light - a) hungry b) traveling without a bindle
 fly-away - a military deserter
 flyer - an express train
 fly light - to miss a meal
 fly mugs - private police
 forty-fives - navy beans
 → Foul Water & Dirty Cars - Fort Worth & Denver City RR
 freezer - a refrigerator car
 Frenchy - a French-Canadian hobo
 fresno - a roadbed scraper drawn by horses
 frisk a drag - to search a freight for a suitable riding place
 frog (or frog eater) - a Frenchman
 fusee - a warning device to place on the track

Back

→ fuzzy tail - a) a dreg of vagrancy b) a tramp in bad humor

Don't get fuzzy tailed.

~ G ~

galway - a priest

gandy dancer - a) a railroad worker b) a hobo shovel stiff

gandy stiff - one who occasionally labored, a day or two at the most

gas - wood alcohol or doped cider or ether

gat - a gun

gate - a railway switch

gay cat - a) a tenderfoot hobo b) someone employed as a scout by criminal tramps

George - a) one who is shrewd, alert, and well informed b) everything is fine

get a fanner - to be moved on by the police

ghosts - beggars who simulate pallor, haggardness, or disease

ghost story - plausible tale told to the housewife

giggle - a gumbo made by gandy dancers

Gila-monster route - part of the Southern Pacific running through Arizona

→ gink - a poor unfortunate ?

gink stiff - same as gandy stiff

gin mill - a) a speakeasy b) a leather wallet

Give Tie Passes - Grand Trunk Pacific RR

glauming - gathering or stealing

glims - spectacles

glomming the grapevine - stealing clothes from a clothesline

G.N. - Great Northern

goat - a yard locomotive

→ going by hand - walking *hitchhiking*

going on the farm - a train going on a side track

go junking - to scavenge for scrap metal or other material to sell for salvage

gondola (or gonnies) - a shallow, uncovered car

gonsil - a youth not yet adopted by a jockey

gooseberrying - stealing clothes off a clothesline

gooseberry ranch - a brothel

goozlum - thick and gummy in substance (mud, food, etc.)

→ go with the birds - to go south for the winter

grab and armful of boxcars - catch a freight train

grabbing scenery - an inexperienced hobo easily spotted as he watches the scenery

grab iron - a bar welded onto a boxcar and held onto when jumping over the couplings

grainer - a freight car for carrying heavy loads that need protection from the elements

graveyard - hash

graveyard stew - hot milk and toast (for those of few or no teeth)

grease ball - a dreg of vagrancy

→ grease ranch - restaurant

grease the track - suicide by leaping in front of a train

grinder - teeth

groundhog - brakeman

growler - a can of beer

gummy - a hobo who goes along with the crowd but never contributes

gumbo - an old can used by a tramp or hobo

gump - chicken

gun boat - a) a steel coal car b) an empty tin can for cooking or washing clothes

gun moll - a dangerous woman tramp

gunnels (or gunnells) - the rods of a train where hoboos ride

gunsel (or guntzel) - a green youth

[Back](#)

- gut plunge - a trip to the butcher to beg for meat for the Mulligan
- guts - meat, usually sausage
- gyppo - a sub-contractor with poor equipment

- ~ H ~
- half a yard - fifty dollars
- halfy - train rider who lost both legs above the knees
- ham - to walk about the country
- hand the match - giving an intruder a match to make his own fire, indicating he is not welcome
- hard oil - butter
- hard tails - old mules
- harness bulls - uniformed policemen
- harvest buzzard - a hobo who works in the harvest
- hasher - a female cookhouse helper
- hay bag - a female hobo or stew bum
- head end - the front section of a train (locomotive and water tender)
- headlights - eggs
- heifer - any young woman
- helpers - extra engines attached to a train to pull it over an upgrade
- hidden hands - beggars who hide or bind their hands
- hieser - tramp
- highball - a) to go full speed b) two whistle toots signaling that a train is about to move
- highball whistle - one short and one long whistle signaling a train is about to leave
- high diver - a yegg who picks pockets
- high fence - a man's white neck collar
- high heels - a woman hobo, or women hoboes collectively
- high iron - the main line of the railroad
- high jacket - a yegg who robs hoboes
- XX High Line - the old Great Northern route through the Dakotas, Montana, Idaho, Washington
- high-roller - a hustling tramp
- High Yaller Line - Savannah & Atlanta RR
- hiker - town Marshall
- the Hill - the Sierra Nevadas
- His Nibs - police court judge
- hit a lick - make a score
- hit the ball - to speed up on the job
- hitting grounders - picking up cigarette butts
- hitting a New Yorker - finding a long cigarette butt
- hitting the grit - a) walking along tracks b) being forces off a fast moving train mit . grit
- hobo belt - the citrus belt of California (a favorite wintering place)
- Hobohemia - the universe of the hobo
- hobo nighthawk - a railroad policeman disguised as a hobo
- hobo shortline - suicide by flinging oneself in front of a train
- hobo special - a freight train of empty cars
- hog - a locomotive
- hogger (or hog mauler or hoghead) - engineer
- hogleg - a long-barreled gun
- holding the lady (or her) down - riding the rods under a train car
- home guard - a native, non-migrating worker
- honey dipping - working as a shovel stiff in a sewer, or any unpleasant shovel work
- hoop chisler - a peddler of worthless rings and watches
- hoosier - the natives, generally simple fellows (rubes, hicks, yaps)
- hooty - angry

- Hoover blankets - see California blankets
- hoppins - ingredients
- the Horn - the triangular extension of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy RR
- Horned Toad - the Albuquerque-Deming stem of the Santa Fe
- horstile - a town unfriendly to hoboes
- hot - a) illegal and dangerous b) fast c) wanted by the law
- hot boxes - old-style lubrication on boxcar axles that created a rough ride
- hot shot (or hotshot) - a freight train that goes cross country without breaking up
- hot stuff - stolen goods
- hot yard - a freight yard where hoboes are arrested for riding
- house dog - someone who cleans windows, beats carpets, does other housework
- how strong are you? - how much money do you have
- hump - a) a small hill in a freight yard over which uncoupled cars are pushed b) the continental divide
- hundred on a plate - a can of beans
- hunger lane - a railroad that passes through country hostile to hoboes
- hunt a wampus - a wild goose chase
- hustle buggy - police vehicle

~ I ~

Back

- ice palace - a high class saloon or brothel (with many mirrors)
- ink - cheap red wine
- Irish turkey - corned beef and cabbage
- iron man - a silver dollar
- irons - rails

~ J ~

Back

- Jack - a generic term for any hobo or man
- jack - money
- jack-roller - one who robs a drunken person
- Jake - everything is fine
- jake leg - a chronic drunk
- Jane - any woman or girl
- java - coffee
- jawbone - credit in the company store
- The Jawbone - the Montana RR
- J.B. - a Stetson hat
- jerk town or jerkwater town - a small village or town
- jerries - section hands
- jerry gang - a railroad construction crew
- Jesus guy - a mission stiff
- jiggers - pretending affection to elicit sympathy while begging
- jitney or jit - a nickel
- jocker - a) an experienced hobo who taught minors that way of life b) the relationship was often sexual
- Joe - coffee
- John Brown Division - Harper's Ferry division of the B & O RR
- John Family - farmers, police, or yeggs
- John Hollow Legs - a hungry stiff
- Johnny O'Brien - a boxcar
- John O'Brien - a freight train
- Johnson Family - the yegg community
- join out - to hire out in order to gain transportation
- jolt - a jail sentence
- jolt wagon - a rough riding farm wagon

juble joo - yegg term for riding on top of a train
 jug - a jail or prison
 jug heister - a chronic drunk
 jump the blind - ride on the platform of a baggage car
 → jungle - a) a hobo camp b) a social group that occupies a camp c) to camp together
 → jungle buzzard - a dreg of vagrancy; one who begs around hobo jungles
 → jungle up - to rest, wash, and eat in a jungle
 junk - drugs
 junker (or junky) - a) fellow who uses drugs; b) a local work train

~ K ~

Back

→ kale - money
 The Katy - Missouri Kansas & Texas RR
 Kay See - Kansas City, MO
 keister - suitcase
 → kelly - a hat
 → kelly stick - a device to aid in washing clothes and boiling up
 key men - skilled workers
 kick - a pocket in trousers
 kicks - shoes
 → kip - a) to sleep b) a bed
 kip house - a tramps or vagrants lodging house
 kip jack or dough - money for a bed or lodging
 knobhead - a mule
 knob-knocker - safe-cracker
 → knowledge box - schoolhouse where hoboes sometimes sleep
 ky wah - a hobo pitchman selling jewelry, pens, novelties

~ L ~

Back

→ lace curtains - whiskers
 the Lake - Salt Lake City
 lakers - hoboes who work on the Great Lakes and go south for the winter
 lamb - a boy tramp or road kid
 lambing - to heard sheep
 Land of Manna - State of Utah
 Land of Milk and Honey - State of Utah
 leather poke - wallet
 lee of a reefer - icebox on a refrigerator car, a potential place to ride
 lefty - a train rider who lost left arm and leg
 Less Sleep and More Speed - Lake Shore and Michigan Southern RR
 library birds - unemployed men who lounge in libraries for shelter
 → lid - a cap or hat
 lighthouse - a) one who can recognize plainclothes detectives b) a stingy person
 light pieces - small gifts of money
 limpy - a cripple
 line - the underworld
 little red wagon - a dump wagon
 little school - reform school or house of correction
 lizzie moocher - a tramp who panhandles food and gas in a car
 load of culls - a plate of hash
 → Long Island peek - a sly glance from the corner of the eye *acorn+*
 → louse cage - a hat
 → Lousy Anna - Louisiana

lump - a handout (a sack or package of food)

lump oil - coal

~ M ~

Back

- XX Ma and Pa RR - Maryland & Pennsylvania RR
 made - the assembling of a train
 main line - the track in the yard on which the through trains run
 main stem - main street of a city or neighborhood
 → make a hole in the water - suicide by drowning
 making a riffle - begging money
 → makins - tobacco; cigarette tobacco and papers
 manifest - a fast train
 mark - a hobo sign relaying information to other hoboes
 meg - a penny
 → mess moll - a woman cook
 Mickeyville - Mechanicsville, NY
 milestone inspector - a professional; tramp
 mill - a locomotive
 Milk and Honey route - railroads through Mormon territory
 minister's face - pig's head server in cheap restaurants
 mission squawker - an evangelist
 mission stiff - a tramp who lives in a mission
 mitts - a train rider who lost one or both hands
 → mix me a hike - Pay me off! Give it to me!
 moll-buzzers - women who pickpockets or begs from other women
 mongee - money
 → moniker - a nickname
 monitor - a long cigar butt
 monkey chasers - West Indians or other Negroes from the tropics
 mooch - to beg, usually at back doors
 moocher - a professional beggar
 Mop - Missouri Pacific RR
 Mop Mary - a scrubwoman
 moper - a bum who is even lower than a moocher
 Mop Mary - a scrub woman
 mop stick - barfly in a cheap saloon
 muck stick - a long-handled shovel
 mud - a) coffee b) strong coffee mixed with weak milk
 mule - corn alcohol
 The Mullet Line - Atlantic & East Carolina RR
 → Mulligan stew - hobo stew
 mumbly pegs - a woman's legs
 munies - municipal lodging houses
 mushfaker - an umbrella mender or other repairman
 mush rigger - an umbrella mender
 → mush talk - flattery

~ N ~

Back

- nail a rattler - catch a train
 Nat Wills - an old suit
 navy - a long cigar butt
 Never Come, Never Go - Nevada County Narrow Gauge RR (Calif.)
 nickel flop - an all-night movie house

- nickel note - a five dollar bill
- noch - a Hebrew shelter for homeless men
- nose bag - lunch handed out in a paper sack
- nose diver - a tramp who lives in a mission
- N.P. - Northern Pacific
- nuttury - hospital for the insane

~ O ~

Back

- obie - post office
- Octopus - the Southern Pacific Railroad
- odd fellows - three doughnuts and coffee
- oil of joy - any strong drink
- O'Leary - to walk
- Oliver - the moon
- One-Eyed Connolly - a gate crasher
- one of the burlap sisters - a prostitute
- one thousand miles - a dark or black shirt
- on the hog - having no money
- on the hummer - being on the bum but not down and out
- on the plush - well off financially
- on the uppers - being on the bum and nearly down and out
- O.P.C - other people's cigarettes, recycled
- open road - a railroad or division easy to travel (opposite of bad road)
- Original Ham and Egg Route - Oberlin, Hampton and Eastern RR
- outfit - a number of hoboes traveling in company (term later adopted by military in WWI)
- outside 'bo - a hobo who winters outside
- outside ride - riding a freight car exposed to the elements

~ P ~

Back

- P.A. - Pennsylvania
- pack of butts - a package of cigarettes
- padding the hoof - going by foot
- pale Vienna - coffee made with cream instead of water
- palooka - a riving fighter who lives in the past
- papa - a Lincoln automobile
- park ape - a tramp who suns himself in city parks
- Paul Bunyan - a chronic but interesting liar
- pay station - a social welfare agency that gives out money
- pay streak - a job that pays well *get on a...*
- pearl diver - a dishwasher
- peanut farm - workhouse where the inmates crack stones
- pea soup - a French Canadian, often a lumberjack
- peatman (or peterman) - a safe-blower
- peddler - a local or slow freight
- peg - a train rider who lost a foot
- the Peg - Winnipeg, Canada
- pennies - money, cash
- pennsy - a coal car
- xx Pennsy - Pennsylvania RR
- Pennsylvania feathers - soft coal or coke
- Pennsylvania salve - apple butter
- Peoria - thin soup, generally potato water with salt
- pershin - see prushun

- pete man - a safe cracker or burglar
- phony cripp - self-mutilated or simulating a deformity
- phony stiff (or phony man) - one who sells fraudulent or cheap jewelry
- pickets - teeth
- pie card - one who hangs around someone with money
- pig - a box car or other train car
- piggyback - a flat car on which a truck-trailer is bolted
- pig's vest with buttons - sow belly, or any fat bacon
- pile driver - good strong coffee
- pill roller (or pill peddler) - a doctor
- Pitsy - Pittsburgh, PA
- Peoria (or Peory water) - a thin soup, usually potato water with salt
- pickets - teeth
- pig - a locomotive
- pig iron dump - a hardware store
- pig's vest with buttons - sow belly, fat bacon
- pile driver - good strong coffee
- pill peddler - a physician
- pimp's turban - a bowler hat
- pin grease - butter
- pipe - to mooch or beg
- piping the stem - begging on the streets
- P.K. - the principal keeper of the little school
- plainer - a hobo walking or riding through the Great Plains
- plaster - butter
- pling - to beg
- plinger - a tramp that solicits alms at stores, offices, and residences
- plinging - walking fast
- plough jockey - a farmer
- pogey (or pogie) - an almshouse or workhouse or poorhouse
- poke - a wallet
- pokeout - handout
- pokey stiff - one who subsists on handouts solely
- polish the mug - wash one's face and hands
- poodle - town Marshal
- possesh - a road kid
- possish - one's position in the tramp's social scale
- possum belly - riding atop or the deck under a passenger coach
- postman - a hobo who goes fast and far
- pot gang - a cluster of hoboes around a pot in a hobo jungle
- pot wallop - a dish and pot washer *pearl diver*
- pound the ear - to sleep
- power - engines
- preshun - punk
- privates - private dwellings
- profesh - an experienced hobo, sometimes a criminal
- prone the body - to lie down and rest
- proper stiff - a tramp who considered manual toil the acme of disgrace
- prushun or prushin - a) a young boy on the road b) a boy held in bondage by a jocker
- pull a pin (or pull the pin) - to quit
- punk - a) a boy discarded by a jocker b) a young hobo c) bread
- punk and gut - bread and sausage
- punk and plaster - bread and butter

punk and plaster route - traveling among the Pennsylvania Dutch

push - a road gang

→ pusher - the person in charge of the job

~ Q ~

Q or The Que - Chicago, Burlington & Quincy RR

Back

~ R ~

Rabbi - a frequent moniker of a Jewish hobo

raghead - an oriental, from the turban some wear

rag(s) - a) a book or paper b) clothing c) paper money

→ railroad bull - a railroad policeman

→ railroad dick - a railroad policeman

rambler - a high class hobo who rides only fast passenger trains for long distances

rank cats - the lowest form of bum

rattler - a fast train

razor back - a circus roustabout

read your shirt - examine your clothes for lice

→ ready-mades - store-bought cigarettes

redball - a) a through freight train b) a fast fruit train

red eye - whiskey

red lead - catsup

reefer - refrigerator car

relievers - good shoes

remittance man - a hobo paid by his family to stay away from home

reuben - a small town inhabitant

ride the cushions - a) to live in luxury b) to pay for and ride in the passenger coach

ride the velvet - see ride the cushions

riding bulls - railroad police who ride the trains to arrest or chase off hoboes aboard

righty - a train rider who lost right arm and leg

rip-rapping - reinforcing the sides of a railroad cutting with stones

road hog - a hobo or tramp who is always on the move

road kid - a) a young hobo b) a boy held in bondage by a jockey

road sister - a female hobo

robbing the mail - snatching food and milk delivered at doorsteps early in the morning

Rodney - a tramp or hobo (from rod of a RR car?)

rods - bars beneath a freight car

roll - to rob a sleeping drunk

→ roundhead - a Swede

rubberglue - a plainclothes cop

rubber tramp - a tramp who lives and travels in an old automobile

rubbydub - denatured alcohol

ruff - a quarter (coin)

rummy stiff - a tramp with deranged intellect from habitual use of raw rum

~ S ~

→ saddle blankets - hot cakes

sack of weeds - bag of tobacco

Sacred Tract Road - Boston & Albany RR

→ sagebrush philosopher - a gabby fellow from the west

→ sales lady - a prostitute

Sally, Sally Ann - Salvation Army

salve - a bribe given to a trainman for a ride

Back

salve eater - a snuff chewing Swede
sand - sugar
sand hog - where sand is kept dry, for use on icy track
Santa Fe Town - San Bernardino, CA
→ sap - a policeman's club
→ sawbuck - ten dollars
scatter - a speakeasy
scenery bum - a young tramp on the move for the pleasure of it
scissorbill - a) one who doesn't want to join a labor union b) an ignorant person c) a farmer
scoffing - eating
scrape a mug - shave one's face
scrape the pavement - shave one's face
scrapers school - a barber school where hoboes could get a free haircut and shave
scratch - money or other assets
scratches - trousers
screw your nut - get wise to yourself
seam squirrels - body lice
sea food - a sailor
sea stiff - a sailor tramp
seed - a dollar
set down (or sit down) - having a full meal inside someone's house
set off - leave part of the train behind
sewer hog - a ditch digger
shack - a brakeman
shackle-up - to cook one's stew, especially in a jungle
shack fever - a) tired, sleepy, dopey feeling b) desire to hit the road and travel
shanny - shanty
shanty queen - any woman around a camp
shark - employment agent who sells jobs to hoboes
shatting on the uppers - to be broke
shavetails - a) young mules b) a young army officer of low rank
sheets - newspapers for a bed
shicer or sheister - swindler, shyster
shill through - to get in for free or bluff one's way
shine - a colored vagabond
shiner - a dime
shirt rabbits - lice
shiv (or shive) - a razor
shoo fly - a) a detour track built around a temporary obstacle b) avoid passing though a hobo-hostile town
shoot snipes - to collect discarded cigar and cigarette butts
short staker - a hobo who stays on the job long enough to amass traveling money
shroud - a suit of clothes
shuffler - a jobless worker
Shy - Chicago
side-door pullman - a boxcar
single O -- working alone by preference
sinker - a) a dollar b) a donut
sit down - see set down
sizzler - a) a cook b) a stove
skating on the uppers - dead broke
→ skee - whiskey
skin - a shirt or blouse
skin hustling - selling fake furs

skinner - a mule driver
skipper - the conductor
skoff - to eat
skuds - lots, plenty
sky blue - vegetable soup with little ingredients
→ sky piece - a hat
sky pilot - a mission-house or highbrow preacher
slamming a gate - to go to a private house and beg
slave market - employment agency
sleep - a short prison term
slides - shoes
slob sister - a moocher who weeps to his clients
sloughed - to be arrested (pronounced "slowed")
Slow Town - Detroit, MI
→ slum-gullion - stew, usually uninviting
slum hustling - selling fake jewelry
sly hay bag - a woman hobo who crafted items for sale
smacker - a dollar
smoke - strong liquor
→ smoke wagon - a pistol
snail - cinnamon roll
snake - switchman
Snakey Route - Oregon & California RR
snapper rig - second-hand suit of clothes
→ sneaky Pete - cheap wine
snipe - section hand
snipes - gathered-up cigarette or cigar butts
sniping - stealing
Sonora Town - a section of Los Angeles where hoboes wintered
snowball - morphine
snowbird - a person who uses drugs
snow-flier - a tramp that gets himself into jail for winter lodging and shelter
soft shoe - a railroad detective
→ son of Adam - a tramp willing to work for a snack or a meal
soogan (or sugan) - a blanket or comforter carried by a hobo
sop - gravy
Sow Belly Hack Line - a railroad division in central Tennessee
S.P. - Southern Pacific
spear - a success in mooching or begging
spear biscuits - to retrieve food from garbage cans
speck bum - a stew bum
speed balls - wine
spider - a) a small frying pan with a long handle b) a Ford car
spike pitcher - a harvest field worker
splinter belly - a) a carpenter b) a man who works on bridges and trestles
Spud Route - Bangor & Aroostook RR in Maine
square - a good meal
stable dog - a man who looks after the camp stables
stampers - tramps and hoboes in general
stack of bones - a cheap hash house dish, mostly boiled spare ribs
stake - money in pocket after leaving a job
star routes - country roads where food could be obtained
steam hog - a coal-burning engine

stem - street
 stemming - panhandling in cities
 sterno - wax soaked with alcohol
 → stew builder - a hobo camp cook
 stew bum - a) a dreg of vagrantdom b) an old hobo wasted by alcohol
 Stew Junction - Puyallup, WA !
 stickers - a) disguised begging by selling court plaster b) postage stamps
 sticks - a train rider who lost a leg
 stiff - any kind of hobo worker
 stiffy - a tramp that simulates being paralyzed
 straight crip - one actually crippled or otherwise afflicted
 streamlined - traveling with little gear
 Studebaker Town - South Bend, IN
 student - a youngster on the road
 stye bum - a tramp or bum who winters in jail
 submarines - doughnuts
 → substantials - meat and potatoes, and bread and butter
 sugan - see soogan
 summer birds - tramps and hoboes who go south for the winter
 swamper - fellow who cleans out the bar room
 sweat board - concrete mixing by hand
 sweet back - someone only sampling hobo life

~ T ~

tail end - the end of a train
 tailor's helper - a vicious dog
 → tailor's measure - a \$50 bill
 tails - tram stops
 Take Patience and Walk - Toledo Peoria & Western RR
 → take the westbound - to die
 Take Your Parcels and Walk - Texas Pacific & Western RR
 → taking the whiskers off - harvesting *cutting hay*
 → talk west - to speak the hobo lingo
 tallowpot - the fireman on a train
 tally! - I understand, keep me in on it
 tank town - a small town where trains stop to take on water
 tap city - broke
 tar pit - a derby hat
 teapot - a locomotive
 tear baby - one who bums women or men with women
 thick - rich
 thick one - a nickel
 thin ones - small coins (pennies, nickels, dimes)
 thin piece - a dime
 third rail - whiskey
 thousand-mile paper - thick brown paper used in freight cars for packing
 → thousand miler - a hobo's dark shirt that doesn't show dirt
 through freight - a freight that goes from division to division without breaking up
 throw - spend freely
 throw my feet - to walk
 throw the feet - to beg
 throw the guts - to talk freely or too much; to squeal
 ticket - a piece of wood placed over the rods for hoboes to sit on

Back

tie pass - a fictitious permit from a RR president to walk along the track

timbers - disguised begging by selling pencils

timber beast - woodsman, logger

timber stiff - itinerant lumberjack

time freight - same as a through freight

→ tin roof - a free drink (it's "on the house")

tip the office - to warn a fellow hobo with some signal

toby - an English hobo

To Hell and Back - Toronto Hamilton & Buffalo RR

→ tomato can - can carried by hoboes for heating food, boiling water, etc., often tied to the waist

tooting ringers - ringing house doorbells

toppings - a) dessert at a meal; b) pastry

tossouts - beggars who distort and throw their joints out of order

tourist - general term for all hoboes, tramps, bums and vagrants

→ town clowns - town police

tramping - traveling on foot

trapeze artist - a rider of the rods

trombenick - a Jewish hobo

trombo - a hobo boxer, or one who hopes to be

turkey - a) a canvas bag for carrying possessions b) a half dollar

Tweetsy - East Tennessee & Western North Carolina RR

twist - a woman or girl

twist a dream - roll a cigarette

~ U ~

units - engines

U.P. - Union Pacific

up on top ride - riding on top of a boxcar

upper deck - the top of a train

Back

~ V ~

→ vag - a) a vagabond b) to arrest for vagrancy

varnish - passenger train

Back

~ W ~

wagon tramps - families who travel in covered wagons

→ walking dandruff - head lice

wallie - a town bum who never loses sight of the town's walls

wally - a small town sport or gambler

wandering Willy's - hoboes and tramps

wangy - disguised begging by selling shoestrings

warthogs - a trainmaster

way freight - local freight train

Weary Willies - hoboes in general

weave hustling - selling spurious cloth

weeds - hobo jungle

weigh in - to meet

West Bound - what a hobo catches when he passes away

whale belly - a steel coal car

wheel - a leg

Whiskey Railroad - Frankfort & Cincinnati RR

whistle stop - a stop in a division to change crews

white line stiff - a tramp that consumed alcohol

Back

white mule - uncolored moonshine whiskey
 white one - a silver watch
 Willy or the Willies - Goodwill Industries
 windcheater - a burlap bag, feed sack, etc., worn for protection against the elements
 → wind pudding - air (having nothing to eat is living on wind pudding)
 wingy - a train rider who lost one or both arms
 wires - a tramp that peddles articles made of stolen telegraph wire
 → wobs - Wobblies, members of the I.W.W.
 wolf - an older hobo who preys on young hoboos
 wood butcher - a carpenter
 woodhead - a lumberjack
 woolies - sheep
 working for Jesus - being a mission stiff
 working stiff - a tramp or hobo who regularly works
 wye - a railroad junction for trains

~ X ~

[Back](#)

~ Y ~

[Back](#)

yank - to arrest
 yap - a) a hick, farmer b) a tenderfoot hobo
 yard - \$100
 → yard bull - railroad police who stay in the yards
 yard donkey - yard engine used to push segments of trains from one track to another
 yard goat - same as yard donkey
 yard master - railroad employee who supervises the yard activity
 yegg - a roving criminal
 yellow one - a gold watch
 York - New York City

~ Z ~

[Back](#)

zoo - a brothel
 zook - a worn out old prostitute

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

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HOME		CISCO		NIGHT TRAIN		THUNDERBIRD		WILD IRISH ROSE
MD 20/20		OTHERS		RANKINGS		WHERE TO BUY		SHIRT NEW!
BUMVIDENCE		POLLS		GUEST BOOK		MYSPC / FACEBK		LINKS



Thunderbird

17.5% alc. by vol.

As pictured to the left, look for the pigeon feces and you'll find this old bird. As soon as you taste this swill, it will be obvious that its makers cut every corner possible in its production to make it cheap. Self-proclaimed as "The American Classic," Thunderbird is Vinted and bottled by [E&J Gallo Winery](#), in Modesto, CA. Disguised like Night Train, the label says that it is made by "Thunderbird, Ltd." If your taste buds are shot, and you need to get trashed with a quickness, then "T-bird" is the drink for

Bumwine.com wrote Chapter 23 of this book:

you. Or, if you like to smell your hand after pumping gas, look no further than Thunderbird. As you drink on, the bird soars higher while you sink lower. The undisputed leader of the five in foulness of flavor, we highly discourage drikng this ghastly mixture of unknown chemicals unless you really are a bum. A convenience store clerk in Show Low, AZ once told me that only the oldest of stumbling indian drunks from the reservation buy Thunderbird. Available in 750 mL and a devastating 50 oz jug.

The history of Thunderbird is as interesting as the drunken effects the one

of becoming the "Campbell's Soup Company of the wine industry," decided to fortify and sweeten an existing product and came up with the name "Thunderbird." Launched in the mid- 1950s, the Gallos blitzed the country with one of the more famous ad campaigns.

"What's the word?" "Thunderbird!" "What's the price?" "A dollar twice."

Thunderbird had an alcohol content of 21% and it became the brand for America's slums, as it turned out; forging an unsavory image in the consumer psyche ever since.

The Gallos sold other downmarket wines including Spanada, Boone's Farm and Bartles & Jaymes. And the brothers, particularly Ernest, the brains behind the operation (Julio was the wine expert), were aggressive, with early salesmen for the company being taught the "three Rs": rigorousness, relentlessness and ruthlessness. It was said, "If you turn your back on a Gallo salesman, he'll turn the place into a Gallo outlet," one liquor store manager told Time magazine in 1986.

But while the lower quality brands were big sellers, the Gallos did branch out into more upscale fare such as Turning Leaf and Gossamer Bay and even into the \$30 market.

Ernest wasn't afraid of a fight, such as his battle with Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers who launched a national boycott that lasted around five years in the 1970s. The UFW was upset they lost out to the Teamsters and as Ernest said, "We believe we have turned the other cheek too long," even as his sales temporarily declined 30%. Chavez called off the boycott in 1978.

Ernest Gallo was very tough on his own employees as well. In 1986, he learned two longtime executives were secretly planning on buying a winery of their own. Gallo fired them on the spot.

Ernest and his brother put California on the map for wine growing, and then the world through their aggressive exporting. By most estimates, today E. & J. Gallo Winery is one of the largest privately owned businesses in the country, producing anywhere from 70-80 million cases a year, or in excess of 2.5 million bottles per day. Ernest's own net worth was last judged by Forbes to be in the neighborhood of \$1.3 billion. The company employs 4,600 with Ernest's son, Joseph, CEO. It's now up to him to protect his father's wish that the company continue to remain private.

The Gallo brothers were very secretive but one thing they did was foster some rather key political relationships with the likes of Senators Alan Cranston and Bob Dole. Thanks to pressure from Ernest and Julio, wealthy families today can spread their estate-tax payments over a decade (dubbed the "Gallo amendment").

But what of brother Joseph, who died in February, you might be asking? It was said that Ernest and Julio were always jealous of little bro Joseph because their father never forced him to do the hard labor the older brothers had to.

When the father killed their mother and himself in '33, Joseph was just 13 but he did help his brothers establish the winery during high school and while attending Modesto Junior College (it's not known for sure whether Ernest and Julio even graduated from high school, at least from everything I read). Then when World War II hit, Joseph served in the Philippines and Korea. [One of his three sons

experiences from the wine. When Prohibition ended, Ernest Gallo and his brothers Julio and Joe wanted to corner the young wine market. Earnest wanted the company to become "the Campbell Soup company of the wine industry" so he started selling Thunderbird in the ghettos around the country. Their radio adds featured a song that sang, "What's the word? / Thunderbird / How's it sold? / Good and cold / What's the jive? / Bird's alive / What's the price? / Thirty twice." It is said that Ernest once drove through a tough, inner city neighborhood and pulled over when he saw a bum. When Gallo rolled down his window and called out, "What's the word?" the immediate answer from the bum was, "Thunderbird."

WARNING: This light yellow liquid turns your lips and mouth black! A mysterious chemical reaction similar to disappearing-reappearing ink makes you look like you've been chewing on hearty clumps of charcoal.


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The Creators of Thunderbird

Brian Trumbore
 President/Editor, StocksandNews.com

In the past few weeks, two of the three Gallo brothers of winery fame passed away; Ernest, 97, and kid brother Joseph, 87. The third, Julio, died in a car crash back in 1993. Oh, what an interesting story this family was.

The three boys were the sons of Joseph and Susie Gallo who lived in the Modesto, Calif., area. The elder Joseph, along with his brother Michael, purchased wine from smaller wineries and then resold it in bars in Oakland and San Francisco, operating as the Gallo Wine Company by 1906. Susie's family, the Biancos, were already successful winemakers.

In the 1920s, Joseph and Susie bought a farm near Modesto and like everyone else in the area began growing grapes. As the New York Times' Frank Prial writes:

"Their fruit was loaded on railcars and shipped east (private winemaking was still allowed during Prohibition). The railheads in Eastern cities, from Boston to the Carolinas, from Pittsburgh to Cleveland and Buffalo, were dominated by thugs who took a cut of whatever was sold. By the time he was 17, Ernest was traveling with the grapes to ensure the family received top dollar."

But the Depression slammed the Gallos and the debt piled up. On June 21, 1933, Joseph Gallo shot and killed his wife and then himself, leaving Ernest, now 24, Julio, 23, and Joseph, 13.

Two months later, Ernest and Julio started their own winery with \$5,900; \$5,000 of which was a loan from Ernest's mother-in-law. But while they had a rudimentary knowledge of the business, they didn't know how to grow grapes so they studied pre-Prohibition pamphlets on the topic that they found in the Modesto Public Library. Soon the two were making ordinary wine for 50 cents per gallon, half the market price at that time. In just their first year, working 18 hours a day, they made 177,847 gallons and \$30,000 in profits.

The Gallos focused on making a quality product at a good price, starting with everyday wines such as Hearty Burgundy and Carlo Rossi. They then evolved into specialty and fortified beverages like Night Train Express, Thunderbird and Ripple.

Ah yes, Thunderbird. For years Gallo wines were known for their screw-caps and marketed to the bottom end of the American market. But what they began to notice was that folks in the minority communities were dumping concentrated lemon juice in a bottle of Gallo's wine port. So the Gallos, who long had the goal

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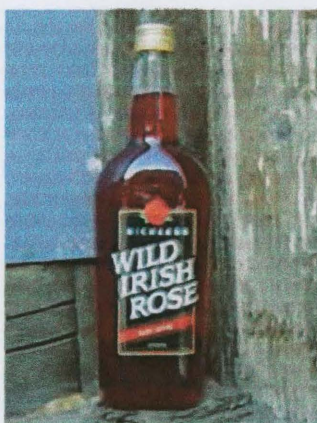
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HOME		CISCO		NIGHT TRAIN		THUNDERBIRD		WILD IRISH ROSE
MD 20/20		OTHERS		RANKINGS		WHERE TO BUY		SHIRT NEW!
BUMVIDENCE		POLLS		GUEST BOOK		MYSPC / FACEBK		LINKS



Wild Irish Rose

18% alc. by vol.

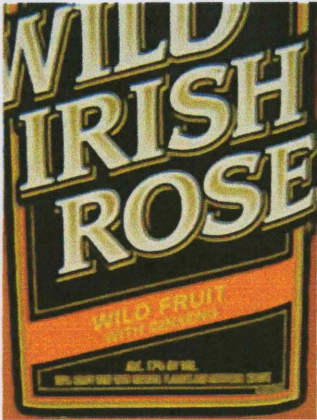
The thorn in your hangover is a wild rose from Ireland. Bottled by [Canandaigua Wine](#) in Canandaigua, NY, the same company as Cisco. Like its brother Cisco, "Wild I" definitely has some secret additives that go straight to the cranium. Another web page claims that this foul beverage is a conspiracy by the republicans to kill the homeless. Bums ask a liquor store clerk for Wild Irish rose by saying, "gimme a pint of rosie with a skirt," a skirt being a paper bag. Some don't want it cold either. It's

called "wild" for a good reason, and bystanders should beware. Wild Irish Rose is sure to light a fire of drunken rage in your soul. A guy named "Richards" is mentioned on the label.

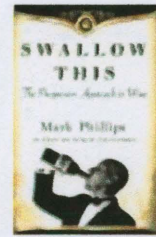
Bumwine.com wrote Chapter 23 of this book:

A helpful viewer named Carl wrote an email directing our attention [this web page](#) that claims that "Richard's Wild Irish Rose (named after his son, Canandaigua's current president Richard Sands)." The "White Label" variety of this beverage is definitely a hard wine to come to terms with. "White Label" smells like rubbing

alcohol, and has no added flavoring to mask its pungent taste and noxious odors. Available in 375 mL, 750 mL, and a 50 oz jug.



Field reporter "Greyham" brings us this report: *Here is Wild I's devastating new addition, "Wild Fruit with Ginseng". I'll be honest with you: the normal Wild I has turned into some sort of fierce energy drink gone wrong mixed with the original to create a bumworthy migraine-inducing concoction. I purchased a 750 mL which goes for 3.99 and a 375 mL which goes for 2.59 (at least here in FL). Word on the streets here is that the bums are wary of it. I talked to a couple that said they'd prefer to "stick with what's tried and true". Apparently they haven't accepted it yet as the real deal. As for me, I drank the 375mL on a semi-full stomach and was just ruined by the stuff. The flavor retains it's same potent Wild I nastiness but has a whole new bouquet of fruity flavor added as well (potentially aimed at bums of the female persuasion). Upon completion of the 375, I was thoroughly inebriated and found myself honestly wondering where my next fix of the stuff was going to come from. This scared me so I immediately started drinking water....here's the best part. After that relatively small bottle, I didn't piss until the next evening despite drinking copious amounts of water. There is DEFINITELY something in this stuff that dehydrates you...possibly the "ginseng" or whatever it is that they added to this already foul stuff.*



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