Ohio's Beer Brewing Industry

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov)

Introduction

Ohio's beer brewing industry grew significantly with the arrival of a large number of German immigrants during the 19th century. Not only did beer production provide jobs for many German-Americans, it supported social and cultural traditions that involved beer consumption. Breweries opened in large cities like Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland, as well as in smaller ones like Sandusky, Massillon and Dayton. Cincinnati's first brewery was established in 1812, and by 1860, there were 36 breweries, most in the Over-the-Rhine district. In Cleveland, the number of breweries grew from one in 1800 to nearly 30 by the early 20th century; and in Columbus, several opened in the Old German Brewing District beginning in 1836. During Prohibition (1920-1933), many breweries across the state switched over to soft drinks or "near beer", a drink that tasted like beer but did not have alcohol, and others were forced out of business altogether. Ohio's beer brewing industry was revived after Prohibition ended, with numerous breweries reopening and new ones being founded throughout the latter part of the 20th century.

Important Dates

- 1800: First brewery opens in Cleveland on the Cuyahoga River.
- 1812: Davis Embree opens in Cincinnati, the city's first commercial brewery.
- 1829: Over-the-Rhine, a German-American neighborhood, is created in Cincinnati.
- 1836: Louis Hoster opens City Brewery, the first brewery in Columbus.
- 1863: John Hauck Brewing Company opens in Cincinnati.
- 1892: Wenzel Pilsner Brewery Company opens in Cleveland.
- 1904: Hoster-Columbus Brewing Company is established to create a more competitive market.

Suggested Search Strategies

- Try the following terms in combination (as an "all" word search), proximity or as phrases, in English and German: beer (bier), brewing (brauerei), brewers (brauer, bierbrauer), beer garden (biergarten).
- Try searching names of breweries, in whole or in part, as well as variant names as companies changed their names over time: Christian Moerlein Brewing Company, Frederick Bruckmann Cumminsville Brewery, Gottfried & Henry Koehler Buckeye Street Brewery [Cincinnati]; Standard Brewing Company, Brewing Corporation of America [Cleveland]; Schlee Bavarian, Capitol Breweries [Columbus].

Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- "Bairisches Bier gegen Cincinnati Bier" *Westliche Blätter* (Cincinnati, OH), August 16, 1874, Image 4, col. 1.
- "Save the Bottles" *Ohio Democrat* (Logan, OH), February 28, 1901, Image 1, col. 6.
- "Breweries Combine" *Ohio Democrat* (Logan, OH), December 22, 1904, Image 7, col. 1-2.
- "Denials of Charges" *Stark County Democrat* (Canton, OH), February 7, 1908, Image 5, col. 2.
- "Boiler Blew Up" *Democratic Banner* (Mt. Vernon, OH), March 20, 1914, Image 1, col. 6.
- "Moerlein's Barbarossa" (ad) Tägliches Cincinnatier Volksblatt (Cincinnati, OH), May 3, 1916, Image 8, col. 6-7.
- "The Bruckmann Brewing Co." *Labor Advocate* (Cincinnati, OH), June 24, 1916, Image 1, col. 4-5.