

SEPTEMBER 2020

HERITAGE is the newsletter for Pabst Mansion, Inc., a historic house museum dedicated to the restoration of the Pabst Mansion and the preservation of the Pabst family legacy.

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IN DAYS GONE DRY

The Pabst Brewing Company During Prohibition

One hundred summers ago, Milwaukee was going through a difficult period, not dissimilar to our current Pandemic era. While not a health crisis, it was nevertheless devastating leading to closures in industry, restaurants, bars, and to significant unemployment and desperation. It was a self-inflicted wound that the entire country had to grapple with. Prohibition was meant to solve many of society's ills and while its goals were perhaps well intentioned, the result was not the roaring success the leaders of the temperance movement had envisioned.

For the Pabsts and other Milwaukee brewing families, the threat of Prohibition had been a constant source of anxiety for decades. Captain Pabst had kept a wary eye on the temperance movement throughout his brewing career, fully aware that if it were well organized, they could destroy the industry that he helped to build. "The path to true temperance is the consumption of beer" Captain Pabst was quoted as saying, drawing the fine line between beer and hard liquor, an argument that was made right up until the moments before Prohibition was enacted.

Following Captain Pabst's death in 1904, both of his sons, Gustave and Fred, Jr. took up the reins of the brewing company, with Gustave as president and Fred, Jr. as vice-president. A year later, Fred decided to leave the brewing industry and turn his attention to scientific farming and established Pabst Farms in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin in 1906. Gustave now had the responsibility of the Pabst Brewing Company squarely on his shoulders. While outwardly this was a golden age for the brewing industry in America, no one realized at the time that 1907 would be the high-water mark of American brewery production in the pre-Prohibition period. The next decade would see a precipitous decline in the industry as county by county, the country started going dry.

Gustave Pabst was a towering figure in brewing circles and many turned to him to fight for the rights of the entire industry in the face of almost certain catastrophe if Prohibition were to be enacted. In October 1915, Gustave Pabst dove directly into the breach when he was elected as president of the United States

Brewers Association (USBA). Pabst wrote extensively on the issue of Prohibition, gave speeches and testified before the United States Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. When the United States entered World War I against Germany, American nativist tendencies emerged leading brewing families with German ancestry to become targets of anti-German sentiment. Once these two issues were conflated, the brewing of beer and World War I, Prohibition became seemingly inevitable.



Gustave Pabst, 1918

IN DAYS GONE DRY

The Pabst Brewing Company During Prohibition

While Gustave was making persuasive arguments against Prohibition, he was also preparing his brewing company for what also seemed the inevitable. In 1916, the Pabst Brewing Company debuted a near-beer product named Pablo—The Happy Hoppy Drink. Pablo was a non-alcohol product introduced as a trial balloon into temperance beverages. They bottled artesian water, manufactured malt syrup (later an important ingredient for the home brewer) and continued to produce their old Victorian standby tonic, Pabst Malt Extract.

The steady march towards Prohibition continued through 1917. In October of that year, Gustave Pabst stepped down as president of the USBA. Two months later, Congress presented the wording for the 18th Amendment to the United States Constitution, Section I stating, "After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited". The amendment then went to the state governments for ratification. Throughout 1918, state by state ratified the amendment and on January 16, 1919, with the ratification of Nebraska, the 18th Amendment passed. The following day the unthinkable happened—Wisconsin ratified the amendment as well. The clock was set, one year from ratification the country would officially run dry.

As you can imagine, consumers purchased case after case of liquor to stock up their cellars for the duration. For many parts of the country, it was legal to consume alcohol if purchased prior to Prohibition; it was the manufacturing and distribution that was outlawed. If you found yourself in a completely dry region, consumption became more difficult and ultimately illegal.

For the brewer, Prohibition was a bigger issue due to the relatively short shelf life of brewed products and the fact that production had been greatly reduced due to grain rationing during World War I. As the one-year clock ticked forward, one thousand brewing companies across the country were on the brink of going out of business and shared the same question as the Pabst Brewing Company,

what to do next? Could a newly organized company survive making near-beer and other products? It looked doubtful.

On December 14, 1920, the Pabst Brewing Company was officially dissolved and the Pabst Corporation was founded. The Pabst Corporation was designed to carry on the legal business of selling Pabst's Prohibition products and to manage the broad real estate holdings of the company. One year later, Gustave decided to resign as president of the Pabst Corporation. In an arrangement with his brother, Gustave took the real estate arm of the corporation and Fred received the brewing company complex, and with it, took the gamble that beer would eventually return.

It fell to Fred Pabst to develop a plan that would make the company financially viable while waiting for the end of Prohibition. In order to expand its offerings, it acquired the Sheboygan Beverage Company in 1923 and began production of root beer, ginger ale, and grape and cherry soda. What also hung in the balance for Fred was the viability of Pabst Farms in Oconomowoc. While it took several years to develop, the output of the dairy at his farm would turn the fortunes of the Pabst Corporation.

Pabst Farms was never meant to be a dairy farm in the traditional sense. Fred Pabst had developed a high-producing dairy herd in the advancement of the Holstein-Friesian breed of dairy cows. Of course when breeding dairy cows, the farmer ends up with a great deal of milk.



Fred Pabst and his daughter-in-law, Beverly Pabst, inspect the first bottle of beer produced after Prohibition.

This gave Fred the idea of making cheese at Pabst Farms. In 1922, he began production of Swiss cheese, the success of which furthered the idea of increasing production and developing new products that had a longer shelf life. Dr. Alfred Schedler, long-time chemist at the Pabst Brewing Company, was engaged to create a processed cheese product that retained more of its nutritional value than ordinary processed cheese. Following World War I, processed cheeses had grown in popularity, especially with a product named Velveeta made by the Kraft Company.

After considerable time, money and effort, Pabst-ett made its national debut in 1926. The name capitalized on the familiar Pabst brand and soon the product was available from coast to coast. Pabst-ett proved to be popular, too popular for the likes of the legal department of the Kraft Company who sued for patent infringement. As it turned out, Kraft held broad patents on the making of processed cheese. If Pabst wanted to continue manufacturing Pabst-ett, they would have to pay a royalty of one-eighth of a cent per pound. Selling millions of pounds of Pabst-ett every year, the royalty payments which amounted to a rather significant sum, were also paid.

Production of Pabst-ett continued apace into the 1930s when Fred Pabst could finally see the light at the end of the Prohibition tunnel. In order to modernize the old Pabst Brewing Company plant, an investor was needed to infuse much needed capital into the brewery. Harris Perlstein of Blue Ribbon Malt in Peoria, Illinois purchased the controlling interest in the Pabst Corporation in 1932, allowing for needed upgrades in order to brew beer once again.

The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt that same year gave everyone hope that Prohibition would be brought to an end as soon as he was in office. Two weeks after Roosevelt's inauguration, factory whistles across Milwaukee blew at 1:15 pm on March 22, 1933 when Roosevelt signed the Cullen-Harrison Act, modifying the Volsted Act, allowing for the manufacture of 3.2% (by weight) beer and light wines. This action effectively flipped

the switch on in America's surviving breweries. The full repeal of Prohibition came later that year with the ratification of the Twenty-First Amendment to the Constitution.

In the intervening weeks, beer production resumed and by April 6th, trucks were pulling out of the yards at Pabst, sending their beer out to a thirsty world once again. While the focus returned solely to beer, Pabst-ett, still a popular product, was soon sold to Kraft. Dr. Schedler, who was thrilled to be back in his laboratory at Pabst working on perfecting lager beer, later reflected on those Prohibition years and said that he would "rather work with

beer—there's less stink". While Dr. Schedler was most certainly correct, it was Pabst cheese that allows us to enjoy Pabst Blue Ribbon today.

*John C. Eastberg
Historian Emeritus*



Pabst-ett was marketed in clever packaging to make it look like a small wheel of cheese.



August U. Pabst, Sr., right, hands over the first case of Pabst to leave the brewery on April 7, 1933.

PROHIBITION

PABST DURING PROHIBITION WORD SEARCH

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

- Prohibition
- Cheese
- Oconomowoc
- Temperance
- Pablo
- Kraft
- Pabstett
- Roosevelt
- Volsted
- Adapt
- Dry
- Amendment
- Malt
- Patent
- Germany

A NOTE ON REOPENING

It feels so much time has passed since the Pabst Mansion closed its doors on March 15, 2020, to help combat the spread of Covid-19 and to keep our visitors, volunteers and staff safe. While there is no question this was a decision that needed to be made, it has been an unusual spring and summer not to have the Mansion open with tours and visitors inside its walls. To have a year without the Spring Lecture Series, the popular Behind-the-Scenes Tours and the annual Summer Wine Tasting just further emphasizes what a different time this really is.

As more has become known about the Covid-19 virus and how it is transmitted, we have seen the City of Milwaukee slowly ease restrictions and museums begin to reopen with new visiting protocols in place to keep guests and workers safe. The Pabst Mansion has also completed a reopening plan, yet we remain closed. The continued closure has nothing to do with politics, but rather a large-scale safety upgrade for the Mansion that was initiated just before the quarantine began.

Past readers of Heritage will recall an article in the Spring 2019 edition introducing Strang Inc., an integrated architecture, engineering and interior design firm hired to conduct the first-ever whole house

assessment. The detailed report that emerged from Strang's multi-month inspection assisted the Board of Directors and staff in prioritizing areas in need of immediate attention. One of these identified areas was the electrical system in the Mansion. A consolidation of the electricity coming into the building from We Energies, and relocation and upgrade to the electrical panel boxes inside the Mansion is where we chose to begin. As you might imagine, all the moving parts related to this safety project upgrade combined with the unexpected arrival of Covid-19 have created many unforeseen delays, causing the continued closure of the Mansion.

As this project progresses, please make sure to check the website and follow our social media platforms for the most up-to-date information on reopening plans. You will also be privy to fun and exciting news on other things such as new gift shop products and interactive games! Many thanks to everyone for your patience during these unprecedented times. A special thank you to those of you who have supported the Pabst Mansion financially since the closure through online gift shop purchases, membership renewals and donations. Please know your gift is very much appreciated! Stay safe, we hope to see you soon!

MEMBERSHIP

Yes, I want to be a member of Pabst Mansion, Inc.!

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comet | \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grand Circle | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beer Baron | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brewmaster | \$125 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Ribbon | \$60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Mate | \$40 |

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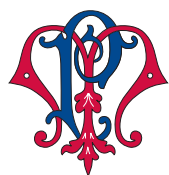
Please make checks out to Pabst Mansion. To pay securely by credit card, visit www.pabstmansion.com/shop

☐ I am interested in volunteer opportunities, please contact me.

I am currently a member but would like to make an additional contribution to the Mansion.

Enclosed is my contribution for \$ _____.

Detach and mail to: Pabst Mansion, 2000 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53233



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