

Early Mankato Breweries (cont'd.)

until it was destroyed by fire in 1887. The plant was not rebuilt. He engaged in the care of the remainder of his property and enjoyed the comforts of a businessman, who by many years of hard labor, had earned a period of rest in his declining years. He died on January 23, 1908 at age 75.

Part Two of the EARLY MANKATO BREWERIES 1878-1890 will continue in the September BECHS newsletter.

SOURCES:

Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota, A. I. Andreas, 1874; *History of the Minnesota Valley*, Reverend Edward D. Neill and Charles S. Bryant, 1882; *History of Blue Earth County*, Thomas Hughes, 1906; *Mankato City Directory* 1871, 1873-74, 1878, 1885-1886; *Mankato Record*, March 2, 1867; June 8, 1867; March 3, 1876; *Mankato Union*, February 21, 1868; and *Mankato Review*, March 13, 1883.

Welcome

We wish to welcome our new volunteer, Ryan Langseth. Ryan has been working with collections and doing a fine job. If you are interested in volunteering some time here at the museum, call any of the staff at 345-4154 or 345-4155. Your contribution of a few hours a week would be most appreciated.

Special Thanks To:

Mr. R. Wynn Kearney for monetary contribution.
Brett's Department Store for their assistance with the membership drive.

HOMESTEAD PLAYERS

If you haven't had an opportunity to see this year's season of performances of the Homestead Players "When We Were Young" try to see them soon. The scripts are filled with COMEDY, DRAMA, MUSIC, and FUN! The upcoming dates for future performances are listed in the Calendar of Events. Don't miss um'!!!

AROUND THE COUNTY



Deep Valley Quilters is sponsoring a bus trip to Winona County Historical Society to see their annual "Harvest of Quilts: A Study in Blue and White," Thursday, September 5, 1985. Bus leaves Blue Earth County Historical Society at 8:30 a.m. and returns between 5-5:30 p.m. Lunch at Hardee's in Winona or bring your own sack lunch. Deep Valley Quilters and BECHS Member Cost: \$12.00 per person, non-member (either group): \$13.50 per person.

Bus will stop in Waseca to pick up a group from Waseca County Historical Society. Paid reservations must be made by August 31, 1985. Contact Marcia Schuster, R.R. #6, Box 234, Mankato, call 625-6314. Make checks payable to Deep Valley Quilters.

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If you wish to submit an item for the "Around The County" section of the newsletter, please write or call Jan. 345-4154 before the 10th of the month preceding publication.

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With Sympathy

The Blue Earth County Historical Society Board of Trustees and staff wishes to express their deepest sympathy to family and friends of Dr. Ted Nydahl. Dr. Nydahl was a past president and former board member of BECHS. His contributions to BECHS will always be fondly remembered.

New Members

Couples

Mr. & Mrs. R. L. Seibert
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Karl & Michele Sassenberg
Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Kraus
Don & Sandy Kerkhoff
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Dr. & Mrs. J. C. Von Drasek
Mr. & Mrs. Elias Halling
Jerome & Bernita Cummsiskey
Mr. & Mrs. Forrest Rettmer
Dr. & Mrs. Paul Rozeboom

Individual

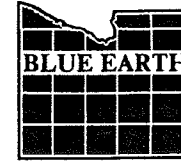
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Blue Earth County Historical Society

606 South Broad
Mankato, MN 56001

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BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

August 1985

Calendar of Events

- Aug. 1-4 **Blue Earth County Fair**
Garden City Fairgrounds
BECHS exhibit and films
- Aug. 3 Homestead Players, "**When We Were Young**"
Minnesota Valley Regional Library
Mankato 2:00 p.m. Performance
- Aug. 13 Homestead Players, "**When We Were Young**"
St. Clair High School Cafeteria
St. Clair 7:30 p.m. Performance
- Aug. 21 "**Neighborhood Historians**"
Children's Wednesday Workshop
- Aug. 28 Homestead Players, "**When We Were Young**"
Cherry Creek Theater
Mankato 8 p.m. Performance
- Sept. 8 "**Sunday on Broad Street**"
★ A Community Celebration ★
Mankato 12 - 5 p.m.

Memorials

In Memory of:
Florene Weber Stradtmann
from:
Mr. and Mrs. Garry Kiffe

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Editorial Staff: Jan Gullo, Inella Burns, Audrey Hicks, Denise Hudson, Gail Palmer, Louisa Smith

Early Mankato Breweries

1857 - 1890

Information about early Mankato breweries is both meager and sketchy. Often conflicting or approximate dates are available for the time of operation. Frequently sources differ in the spelling of names of the owners or give only the last names or only an initial for a first name.

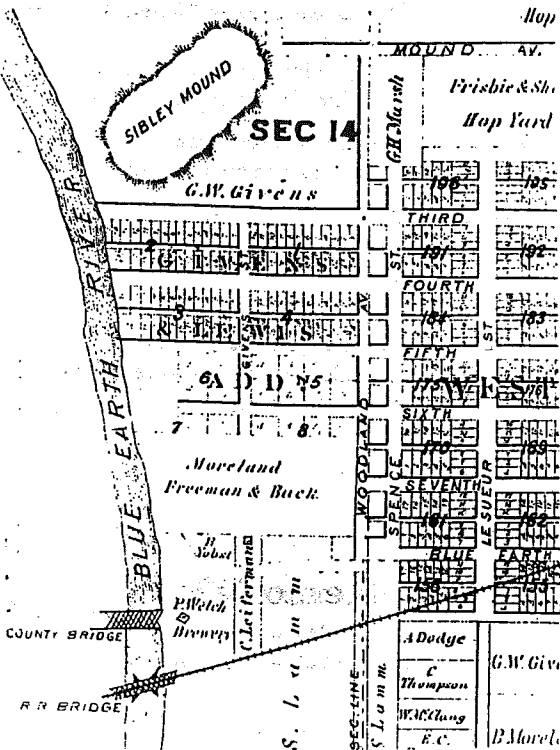
Many of the owners of these early breweries were in and out of business in record time. It would seem that many of them were in business to make money quickly. If this meant selling the plant for a profit, they did so. Sometimes they seemed to become disenchanted when the profits were not readily available. Then they disposed of the enterprise to the first available buyer.

Furthermore, in spite of the fact that the early brewing business contributed considerably to the economy of early Mankato, writers of early Mankato accounts did not seem interested in such happenings, so few complete or accurate sources are available.

1867

The MANKATO RECORD dated March 2, 1867 recorded this report:

"Mr. Welsch (also spelled Welch) a gentleman lately



P. Welch Brewery located along the Blue Earth

of Goodhue County, last year purchased several acres of ground bordering the Blue Earth River near where the old government bridge was constructed and is engaged in constructing a brewery. The location is a good one, the high sand and rock bluffs offering excellent opportunities for excavating cellars. The frame of the brewery is now enclosed."

Another business that was established near Welch's Brewery was a beer garden. The MANKATO RECORD dated June 8, 1867 printed this article:

BEER GARDEN

"Mr. Conrad J. Klein has purchased an acre of Lewis Branson in the timber near Welch's Brewery, which he has fitted up for a beer garden and erected a commodious dance hall. They will be open for visitors every Sunday and on holidays and the lovers of "genial beverage" are cordially invited to visit the pleasant resort, the proprietor assuring the public that every effort will be made for their enjoyment and nothing of a disorderly character permitted."

1868

BREWERIES

The MANKATO UNION dated February 21, 1868 recorded this information:

"There are three breweries, the largest being that of William Bierbauer. It is a splendid brick building at the edge of the hill and has two cellars which alone cost \$8,000.00. The capital invested in the business is \$20,000.00 and the manufacture of the beer is not less than 1,000 barrels. Its capacity is much greater and if demand warranted 100 barrels could be made per week.

Last winter Peter Welch erected a large brewery near the Blue Earth River and excavated a cellar under a ledge near the bank. He has a very cool and cheap cellar and the capacity of the factory is 50 barrels per week although it is not necessary to work it to that point. The cost of his works is over \$7,000.00.

Trout and Wolf have just completed a brewery of about the same dimensions a short distance from the same river and have excavated a cellar under the same ledge of rocks. The cost is about \$7,000.00."

1873-74

According to the 1873-74 MANKATO CITY DIRECTORY, there were four breweries operating in Mankato. The William Bierbauer Brewery was located on the end of Rock Street. The Hass and Schmidt Brewery was operating in west Mankato. The George Leiferman Brewery was also located in west Mankato. On an 1874 city map of Mankato a section of property near the county bridge over the Blue Earth River is shown to be owned by A. C. Leiferman. The 1871 MANKATO CITY DIRECTORY listed a C. Leiferman as a brewer. The relationship between these Leifermans is speculative. A fourth brewery owned by Peter Welch was located near the Blue Earth River in west Mankato.

1873-74

west Mankato began in 1873 or 1874. The business had been established by Wolf and Trout and had passed under several ownerships until it was bought by Gessler and Company. They brewed from 1,100 to 1,400 barrels of beer per annum. The owners were William Gessler and John Nagle (also spelled Nagli). The location was given as the south end of Front Street.

William Gessler was born in 1845 in Baden, Germany. He came to the United States in 1865 and for four years was employed in a brewery in Milwaukee. After doing the same work in Winona for a year, he came to Mankato. He continued working in the brewery business for three years and then bought a brewery of his own, the West Mankato Brewery.

Gessler and Company continues to be listed in the MANKATO CITY DIRECTORY through 1885-1886. However, the following article in the REVIEW of March 13, 1883 gives this account:

BREWERY BURNED

"The brewery of Mess'rs Nagli and Gassler, near the Blue Earth River bridge, was burned about 2 o'clock on Tuesday morning last and as the flames spread with remarkable rapidity very little was saved from the conflagration. The origin of the fire is not known. One of the partners returned home about half past twelve o'clock and at that hour there was no fire in the stove in the saloon and there had been no fire under the boiler since noon on the previous day. There was insurance of \$1,000.00 with Christenson and Chapman's Agency on the furniture and brewing apparatus but none on the buildings, a policy for \$2,000.00 having been allowed to expire a short time previous."

This brings up the question - Did Gessler and Company rebuild after the fire and continue in operation for the next four years?

Nagli and Gassler had more trouble at the same time their brewery burned as recorded in THE REVIEW of March 13, 1883:

"Mess'rs John Nagli and William Gassler of the Blue Earth Brewery were taken to St. Paul on Tuesday A.M. last, charged with violating the internal revenue law. It appears that, at the Harvest Festival, the stamp in some manner, had slipped from the bung (stopper) of an 1/8th of a keg of beer and was not cancelled. The value of the stamp was 12 1/2¢. Someone entered a complaint for this technical violation of law and these men have been dragged off to St. Paul, at an expense of several hundred dollars to them on a charge that bears on its face no evidence of criminal intent. We have United States commissioners here, but the complaint was made at St. Paul and these men were taken among strangers where the expenses in fees and other prerequisites as inured of the benefit of the offices are aggravated."

Several breweries were operating in Mankato in 1878. Of course, one of these was the William Bierbauer Brewery located at 628 Rock Street. The Peter Welsh Brewery was

Earth River. This brewery was leased to Joseph Ibach (also spelled Iback) on March 3, 1876. The MANKATO RECORD of that date published this ad:

BLUE EARTH BREWERY
MANKATO, MINNESTA
Joseph Iback -- Proprietor

Having leased the Blue Earth Brewery of Peter Welsh, I shall manufacture and keep constantly on hand

BOCK AND LAGER BEER
Mankato

March 3, 1877

Joseph Iback

Joseph Ibach was born February 17, 1832 in Baden, Germany. His father died at an early age. In 1853 he came to the United States. He and several companions reached Davenport and Dubuque, Iowa. They were searching for a means of permanent employment. They debated about going north or south and decided to go north. They started up the Mississippi River to St. Paul while on their way the captain on the boat offered Joseph Ibach the position of fireman at fifty dollars a month. He eagerly accepted the job and worked as boatman on the Mississippi River and Great Lakes for five years.

Joseph Ibach settled in Preston, Minnesota in 1858. There he engaged in the brewing business until 1874 when he sold his brewery and moved to Mankato. Here he purchased a brewery from Stephen Lamm and after operating it for a year, sold out, and leased the Peter Welsh establishment, which he conducted for three years.

In 1878, Joseph Ibach bought a brewery in the southeast section of the city known as Tinkcom's Addition for Anton Jacoby. He purchased the brewery in 1876 from the original owner Carl Boekle.

Ibach's Brewery,
Joseph Ibach, Proprietor.
TINCKOM'S ADDITION.

MANKATO, MINNESOTA

Advertisement taken from the Mankato City Directory.

An 1874 plat map of Mankato shows a three acre plot under the Ibach name on Fairfield Street. High bluffs rose up from the property which lent themselves to the digging of cave-like areas for cooling, aging and storing of the beer.