

The Hudepohl Brewing Company of Cincinnati, Ohio: a case study in regional brewery prosperity and decline

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Introduction

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Hudepohl Brewing Company in 1985, then-executive vice president and general manager Bob Pohl noted the strengths of the firm that enabled it to celebrate the milestone. Among the virtues of the brewery were 'quality products,' 'hard working and loyal employees,' and 'a special bond between the wholesalers who handle our products and the retailers who sell our products,' the hallmarks of a community-minded enterprise which led Pohl to stress that 'Hudepohl has always been a good local brewer with a good reputation.' Yet at the same time Pohl acknowledged the challenges that stood in its path, most notably that

the market is changing every day, and we have to adjust to it. We realize that we cannot compete head-on with the large national brewers on a national scale. We must go around them. ... We are well on our way to accomplishing our goals, but there is still plenty of work to do.¹

Unfortunately the work would remain largely unaccomplished: within two years the brewery would be sold to a local rival, the Schoenling Brewing Company, ultimately to be shut down and dismantled as another casualty in the ongoing consolidation of the American brewing industry during the post-Prohibition era.

A closer examination of Hudepohl business practices over its last half-century reveals a representative portrait of the successes and failures of regional brewing enterprises nationwide during the period, from the rise of the firm from the ashes of Prohibition to sustained and growing local sales success; through a period of stagnation and gradual decline in the face of a loss of consumer loyalty and increasing competitive pressures from larger, more financially secure regional and national brewers; to closure as the ultimate acknowledgment of an inability to remain profitable and hold market presence into an uncertain future. The trend did not discriminate between the size of the brewery and its location. A plethora of small towns gave ample evidence of the shift: during the 1970s and 1980s alone the casualty list in the battleground northern states encompassed

* This article has undergone peer review.



Figure 1. A Hudepohl tin advertising sign celebrates the repeal of Prohibition ('Something to Blow About'), 1933. (author's collection)

several dozen once-successful firms within a thousand-mile range from Allentown, Pennsylvania (Horlacher) and Dunkirk, New York (Koch) to Houghton, Michigan (Bosch) and Eau Claire, Wisconsin (Walter). Large cities were no less susceptible to the pattern over time, as demonstrated by prominent breweries along the East Coast in Greater New York (Schaefer, Piel, Rheingold, Ballantine), Philadelphia (C Schmidt, Ortlieb, Gretz, Esslinger), and Baltimore (Gunther, National); in Upper Midwest bastions including Minneapolis (Grain Belt, Gluek), St. Paul (Hamm, Schmidt), Milwaukee (Gettelman, Independent Milwaukee), Detroit (Stroh, Pfeiffer,

Goebel), and Chicago (Meister Brau, Canadian Ace, Atlas, Schoenhofen Edelweiss); within southern markets (Jackson in New Orleans, Pearl and Lone Star in San Antonio); as well as along the West Coast (Rainier in Seattle, Blitz-Weinhard in Portland). All across the United States, the era of the traditional local and regional brewery gradually drew to a close.²

The return of an old friend

The end of Prohibition on 7 April 1933 was met with wild enthusiasm by a public which had been forced to do without legal

alcoholic beverages for the previous 14 years. While many consumers simply were glad to have beer from whatever producers might supply it, considerable anticipation concerned the state of brewers that had been successful in their markets in the years before dry legislation. Established in Cincinnati in 1885 by Ludwig Hudepohl II and George Kotte, the Hudepohl & Kotte Buckeye Brewery - formally organized in corporate form as the Hudepohl Brewing Company in February 1900 - became a well-established name in its home market and nearby environs over the next 35 years, carving out a steady trade with its Golden Jubilee, Buckeye, Dortmunder, and Hudepohl brands. The firm quickly positioned itself among the top third in

production among its roughly two-dozen local competitors, growing from approximately 25,000 barrels manufactured in 1886 to 40,000 barrels at the onset of the 1890s, and an estimated 68,800 barrels by the end of the 1896 fiscal year.³ But despite the impressive growth registered by Hudepohl & Kotte during its formative years, the brewery still stood deeply in the shadows of its most prominent area rivals, most notably Christian Moerlein (300,000 barrels produced in 1896), Windisch-Muhlhauser (140,000), and John Hauck (120,000).

As it turned out, the arrival of Prohibition in Cincinnati in May 1919 paved the way for later success for Hudepohl, at the expense of larger firms either forced to



Figure 2. A Hudepohl & Kotte Buckeye Brewery advertisement of the late nineteenth century. (author's collection)



Figure 3. Cases of Hudepohl Pure Lager Beer come down the bottling line in the late 1930s. (author's collection)

close during the dry years or unwilling to attempt to ride out the storm. Despite its status as the unquestioned leader among area breweries, Christian Moerlein made only a perfunctory effort to market two near beers - Moer-lo and Chrismo - before announcing on 1 June 1919 the decision to cease business and divest itself of brewery property and equipment. Windisch-Muhlhauser likewise produced a near beer, Lion Beverage, as well as a root beer, and marketed malt extract and hops for enterprising home brewers, before lackluster sales forced the firm to end operations in 1922. John Hauck managed to hold on slightly longer, manufacturing near beer and soft drinks at its Dayton Street facility until

March 1927, when the final 46,500 gallons of malt beverage were dumped unceremoniously down the city sewer system in advance of closure.⁴ In contrast, Hudepohl managed to survive the dry years by manufacturing not only near beer, but also vichy water, sundry soft drinks, and a 'Dutch Cocktail' made of real beer mixed with ginger ale. The latter product was discontinued sometime around 1928, along with its own near beer manufacture, in favor of taking on local distribution of a non-alcoholic brew from the Falls City Ice & Beverage Company (after Prohibition the Falls City Brewing Company) of Louisville, Kentucky.⁵ The active state of the business made it possible for Hudepohl to retool its production quickly with the advent of repeal, such that by October 1933 it was one of seven Cincinnati breweries producing beer for the thirsty masses. Like many brewers across the country, Hudepohl was forced to hastily update and modernize, in ways such as the purchase of a new condenser and water cooler to improve the efficiency of the physical plant, given the progression of technology during the dry years and the relative obsolescence of much of the brewery's equipment as a result of the hiatus. Hudepohl also was one of the earliest brewers to demonstrate an awareness of a pending consumer shift away from draft brews in favor of packaged beer: in early 1933 it spent \$130,000 in part to install a new bottling unit, including a modern soaker and pasteurizer as well as filling, capping, and labeling machinery designed to handle

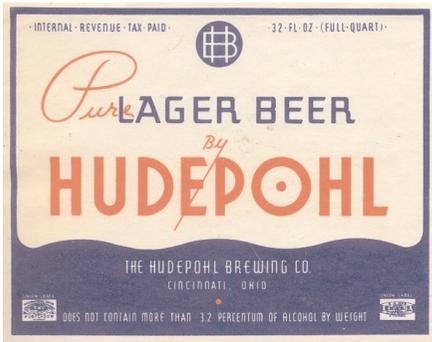


Figure 4. Hudepohl Pure Lager Beer quart bottle label, circa late 1930s. (author's collection)

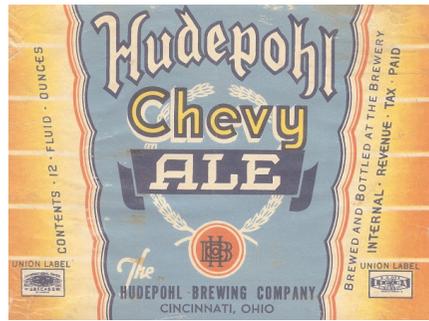


Figure 5. A Hudepohl Chevy Ale label, circa early 1940s. (author's collection)

what was foreseen as an increasing trade in bottled beer.⁶ Along the same lines, the company adopted cans for packaging beer relatively soon after their introduction in 1935, and during the late 1930s and early 1940s the firm produced its flagship brand, Hudepohl Pure Lager Beer, and a companion brew, its top-fermented Chevy Ale, in 'J' spout cone top and Crowntainer cans manufactured by Crown Cork & Seal of Philadelphia.

Modernization and a lack of strong rivals gave Hudepohl a leg up on its early local post-Prohibition competition. Returning breweries such as Vienna, Jackson, and Foss-Schneider were saddled with small, inefficient, mostly landlocked plants and showed little serious potential for growth and expansion. New brewers such as Red Top (utilizing the former Hauck plant), Burger (in the Windisch-Muhlhauser facility), and Schoenling (a startup operation) needed time to garner

name recognition, develop new brands, and establish vital distribution networks, all existing strengths for Hudepohl. Aided by the fact that regional and national rivals were only a minor presence in the local trade, the result was an early period of prosperity that made the company the leading producer among Cincinnati brewers during the critical reestablishment phase of the industry. One signal of newfound success, as well as a clear indicator of the company's desire to become the dominant local brewer, was the acquisition in 1934 of the former Lackman Brewery at Sixth and Stone Streets. The buildings had not witnessed beer production since the onset of Prohibition, but their use by the Niser Company, a local ice cream manufacturer, ensured that much of the needed equipment had been well-maintained in the meantime. Combined with its existing plant along East McMicken Avenue, in the old German district known as Over

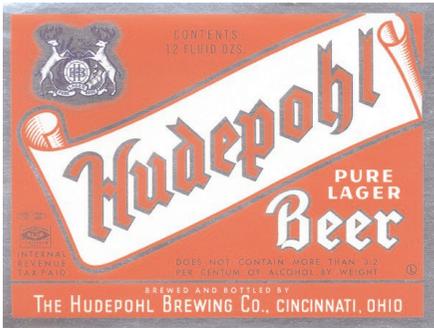


Figure 6. The Hudepohl Pure Lager Beer label in its most familiar design, late 1940s. (author's collection)

the Rhine, the new site gave Hudepohl two brewery facilities when most of its competition could sustain no more than one.⁷

The upward trajectory of the firm was interrupted somewhat with American entry into World War II in December 1941 and the resultant changes which impacted all aspects of the manufacturing sector. Like other brewers, Hudepohl lost vital manpower through conscription; brewed under reduced grain allocations; felt the impact of gasoline, tire, and other rationing measures; and was deprived of metal for caps for bottles and cone top cans, in the former case compensating via reconditioning used caps and utilizing quart and half-gallon ('picnic') bottles that did the work of as many as six standard containers. Faced with the choice of brewing less but higher-quality beer with a smaller grain allotment or more beer but of lesser quality through the use of

inferior alternative adjuncts, such as potatoes and lower-grade corn, Hudepohl opted for reduced output but better beer, unwilling to risk its good name for short-term gain. The strategy was reinforced in contemporary advertisements where the company noted that, unlike some brewers which sought to gain market share in a time of crisis at the expense of others, it was willing to wait out the difficulties in the hope that the public would show patience under the circumstances.

Hudepohl patrons know that the rich mellowness of this delicious brew is zealously guarded for them during these abnormal times, by a loyal Hudepohl organization. The present beer shortage will last as long as grain restrictions exist, but Hudepohl will continue to produce quality beer only. Hudepohl Beer requires the best ingredients and substitutes will not meet Hudepohl Quality standards.⁸

While most American brewers were denied the opportunity to can their beer during the war era, Hudepohl was one of a few that secured a contract with the federal government to use the metal containers, specifically for distribution of its Pure Lager Beer to military installations in the Pacific theatre. The cans - with an olive drab paint scheme that prevented light from reflecting off the surface and potentially alerting the enemy - gave Hudepohl another strategic advantage over its hometown competition, involving increased production, the extension of its name to unfamiliar consumers who eventually would return

stateside, and goodwill earned from the patriotic endeavor. Hudepohl also stood at the forefront of local brewers in advertising designed to support the war effort, sponsoring a series of promotional messages entitled 'Back the Attack' that urged the public to purchase war bonds, also noting that it had contributed more than its fair share of payroll savings toward the same end.

Postwar expansion and prosperity

The end of World War II in 1945 and the subsequent elimination of materials restrictions placed upon brewers sig-

naled the beginning of a new era for the brewing industry. Reacting to the new freedom as if shot out of a cannon, large national brewers led the way in expanding and modernizing still further, with a vigor previously unseen and with an eye toward both increasing sales in existing territories and penetrating new and distant markets. The measures became necessary due in part to rapid growth, accomplished to no small extent through effective use of mass media advertising in newsprint, on radio, and by the early 1950s with greater frequency via a new but increasingly powerful format: television. The overall level of sales exhibited by the brewing industry during the post-

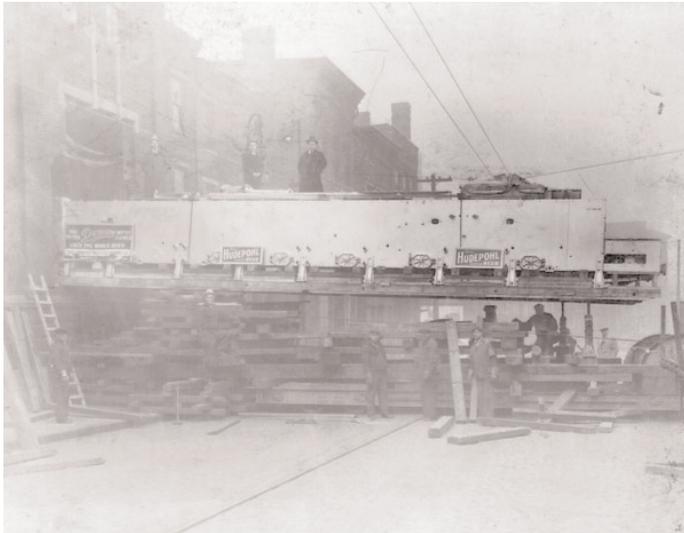


Figure 7. Installing a new pasteurizer at the Hudepohl Sixth Street brewery, August 1947. (Hudepohl-Schoenling Brewing Company archives)



Figure 8. Preparing to install a new quart bottle soaker at the Hudepohl Sixth Street brewery during postwar modernization, September 1947. (author's collection)

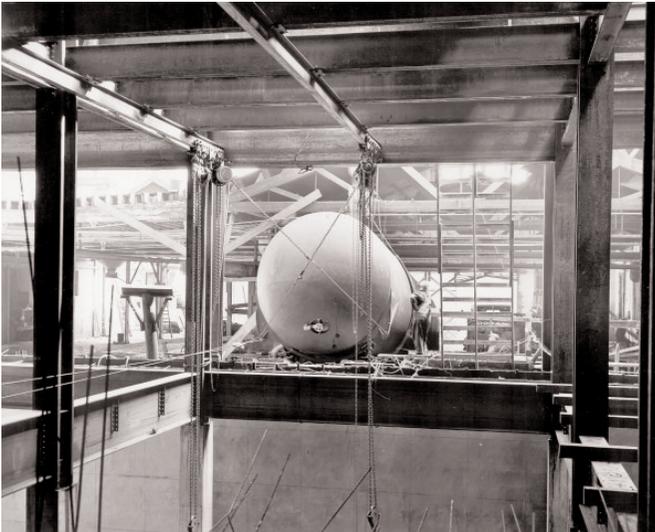


Figure 9. Installing a new storage tank at the Hudepohl Sixth Street brewery, late 1940s. (author's collection)

war period was stagnant, and gains registered by giants such as Anheuser-Busch and Schlitz on a national basis, and Carling, Hamm, Schaefer and Stroh on a regional level, took place largely at the expense of smaller local producers with a limited sales area and little money for expansion and advertising. Inevitably an intense period of consolidation began, in which a rapidly growing number of small brewers were forced to close their doors, early victims of a 'grow or go' mentality that came to dominate the industry. Greater Cincinnati was by no means immune from the curse: from a high of seventeen post-Prohibition brewers in 1937 - including fourteen in the city and three others across the Ohio River in neighboring Newport and Covington, Kentucky - only 15 years later the number had dwindled to six: Hudepohl, Burger, Red Top, and Schoenling in Cincinnati, and Wiedemann and Bavarian in Northern Kentucky.

Aware of the trend toward modernization in the industry, and attempting to recover from war-mandated production shortages, Hudepohl began an extensive process of updating its Sixth Street facility shortly after the end of governmental restrictions. In 1947 the brewery installed a new pasteurizer so large - at 50 feet long, eleven feet wide, six feet high, and 64,000 pounds - that streetcars had to be temporarily rerouted and overhead electric lines raised to permit its passage. One month later virtually the same procedure took place again, to allow for the delivery and installation of a new bottle

washer and sterilizer that could handle an increased rate of 220 bottles per minute, and over time 40 new Smithway glass-lined tanks brought to the city via railroad were installed to enhance beer storage capabilities.¹⁰ In subsequent years Hudepohl continued its efforts to augment production and efficiency, most notably through construction of a new fully-automated brewhouse beginning in 1959 under the Kenyon-Barr urban renewal plan. The facility, opened in 1961 as the first phase of a planned five-year expansion, featured state-of-the-art Pfaudler stainless steel equipment including a 30,000-pound malt hopper, 8,500-gallon cereal cooker, 17,500-gallon mash mixer, 15,000-gallon lauter tub, and 660-barrel brew kettle. In June 1964 the brewery initiated construction of a new packaging warehouse and service facility; in September 1965 an updated seventy-five ton bottle washer was shipped from Milwaukee to Cincinnati and installed; and in May 1967 work was concluded on a new Hudepohl administrative building that allowed the company finally to consolidate all of its business activities along Sixth and Gest Streets in Queensgate, west of downtown, nine years after phasing out beer production at the East McMicken Street plant in Over the Rhine.¹¹

The expansion of brewery property, while beneficial on multiple levels, did not sell the beer; advertising did. By the 1950s brewers without an ambitious promotional program and a catchy slogan for their product stood little chance of sur-



Figure 10. A view of the northeast portion of the Hudepohl Sixth Street brewery complex, as it appeared in August 1951. (author's collection)

vival against well-heeled competitors with a deep awareness of the power of image and marketing. In a realm where money spoke volumes, large brewers spent many of their smaller rivals into oblivion, utilizing expensive but highly effective advertising agencies to come up with glitzy and convincing campaigns. Sales of premium brands soared despite being higher in price than their local counterparts, partly due to a growing 'bigger is better' mentality but also on the basis of name recognition and catchy, often-heard slogans such as 'Where There's Life, There's Bud,' 'Move Up to Quality, Move Up to Schlitz,' 'Pabst Makes It Perfect,'

and 'Miller Makes It Right.' Years later Bob Pohl noted the difference such advertising campaigns made upon the competitive balance of the industry, to the detriment of local producers like Hudepohl whose own high-quality products got lost in the shuffle created by different levels of advertising savvy and economic prosperity.

The way we brewed [at Hudepohl] was the old world way, with no shortcuts, no gimmicks, nothing. It was just [the] traditional way of brewing. It would cost us a little bit more to brew beer, and on top of it over the years the bigger breweries were able to twist

around certain terms to their advantage. It used to be that if you were in Cincinnati and you were drinking a locally manufactured beer, that was the local beer, and then there was the premium beer. Well, the reason it was called a premium beer was because it cost a premium to ship it from St. Louis to Cincinnati, while eventually they were able to turn the premium around to mean "better," as opposed to "paying shipping." And, you know, Budweiser was no better than any other beer, or Miller was no better than any other beer, or Stroh's was no better than any other beer, or Pabst, or Hudepohl, or Wiedemann, or Burger. It was just how they marketed and what they could afford to do. You know the old saying, "You get what you pay for." Well, if it's a little more expensive, you think maybe you get something a little bit better.¹²

While national brands made highly effective use of television, radio, and major magazines like *Time* and *Life* through coast-to-coast sponsorships, reaching millions of potential consumers with a single message, local brewers were obliged to utilize more cost-effective and traditional means such as billboards and newsprint, each a useful format but by no means capable of garnering the same level of saturation. Less able to sell image than product quality, smaller brewers in Cincinnati, like elsewhere, frequently hyped their product with buzz phrases occasionally folksy in nature (Red Top: 'Brewed the Light Lager Way;,' Felsenbrau: 'The Biggest Treat in Town;,' 20 Grand Ale: 'A Prize Winner;,' Schoenling: 'All We're Selling Is Real



Figure 11. Inside the Hudepohl fermentation cellars during the 1950s. (author's collection)



Figure 12. Taste panel sampling Hudepohl 14-K Beer for quality control purposes, August 1968. (Hudepohl-Schoenling Brewing Company archives)

Good Beer') and sometimes confusing (Gotham: 'Jetter Controlled;' Burger: 'Sparkle Brewed;' Brucks: 'It's Jubilating;' Wiedemann: 'Live Flavor in the Bubbles'). In the end Hudepohl scored the biggest hit with its 'Process 14-K' moniker, a successful attempt to capitalize on the rich golden color of its beer and the perceived quality and status of gold as a commodity. Master brewer Peter Marcher detailed the procedures involved in bringing the beer to fruition upon its release in 1953:

Under Process 14-K, each brew is sampled and checked daily, from the beginning of the brewing operation in the mash tubs and kettle, through the unhurried fermentation and lagering periods. The final blending of the

lagered beer and the filtering processes are accurately controlled and supervised by Hudepohl's well-trained brewing technicians. The exact brewing and blending and filtering produces a uniformly fine finished product which passes the rigid requirements of 118 separate laboratory tests. Hudepohl's Master Brewers augment all of the ancient skill of the Art of Brewing with modern science and a new technique, which we call Process 14-K, and give you a golden grain treasure of drinking pleasure.¹³

Hudepohl 14-K Beer became an instant hit with the public - replacing the former flagship Hudepohl Pure Lager as the largest-selling beer in the city before the end of 1954 - so much so that brewery advertising gleefully noted that

[it] kind of surprised us, though, how fast everyone started using '14-K' as a friendly nickname in asking for Hudepohl. We like the idea. We like it just fine.¹⁴

Sales figures bore out the wisdom of the image-based approach: after producing 535,000 barrels of beer in 1952, Hudepohl manufactured 596,000 barrels in 1953, 652,000 for 1954, and 680,000 over the course of 1955, a 27% gain over the three-year period despite increasingly intense competition.¹⁵ Over the years specific campaigns were formulated by advertising agency Stockton-West-Burkhart for 14-K and the 'Pure Grain' slogan that accompanied it - the common theme of which centered around the beer serving as a reward for a job well done, a hard day's work, and other personal accomplishments - including 'Hudepohl's Golden Difference' (utilized in 1952); 'For Golden Smoothness' (1953); 'Just Say 14-K' (1954); '14-K Saves the Day' (1955-57); 'It's a Great Day' (1958-59); 'Cold and Golden Hudepohl' (1960); 'When a Beer Would Taste Good' (1961-65); and 'Beautiful' (1966).¹⁶ Taken together, the Hudepohl advertising campaigns firmly positioned the product as a premium-quality brew worthy of both special occasions and everyday consumption. While not nationally famous like some of the agencies representing larger brewers, Stockton-West-Burkhart clearly knew which buttons to push in order to reinforce Hudepohl brand identity with the 14-K name, as well as how to make it an especially appetizing choice in a social setting, as demon-

strated by one particularly effective radio commercial.

Wouldn't you say there's something kind of special about the satisfaction you get at your favorite tavern when you order up a tall, cool, refreshing glass of draft beer? It's kind of personal and friendly to have the bartender draw a frosty, cold beer-especially for you. You lift that sparkling glass with its snow-white creamy head of foam. And you pause a second, just thinking about how good it's going to taste. How extra good, because it's golden Hudepohl draft. Just about the golden smoothest beer there is. And you know the reason why. It's Hudepohl's special flavor-smoothing process. That costlier step in brewing that makes Hudepohl taste so clean, so bright, so golden smooth they named the process 14-K. And 14-K just sort of caught on, as a handy, friendly way to ask for Hudepohl draft. So next time you stop in for a real, tall cooler, just say 14-K.¹⁷

Although beer advertising lent itself well to a variety of different approaches, small brewers found sports marketing to be notably fertile ground, combining the popularity of athletic competition in American culture with the male demographic so strongly associated with the beverage. Baseball provided far and away the most lucrative sponsorship opportunities, such that during the 1940s and early 1950s major league teams which had entered into agreements with breweries did so almost exclusively with local or regional brewers based in or near the home of the franchise. By the early 1950s 15 out of 16 major league



Figure 13. Hudepohl shares advertising space with the Bavarian Brewing Company at Crosley Field, home of the Cincinnati Reds, 1957. (author's collection)

teams - only the Pittsburgh Pirates held themselves apart from the trend - had breweries as a primary or secondary sponsor of their games. At the time the only true national brewer with such a sponsorship agreement was Anheuser-Busch (St. Louis Cardinals), yet the company did not have an exclusive contract with the team, obliged to share promotional space with brewers Griesedieck Bros. and Falstaff, both also of St. Louis.¹⁸ In Cincinnati Hudepohl shared sponsorship of the Cincinnati Reds baseball team with the Burger Brewing Company, with Burger doing beer advertising for radio broadcasts

from 1942 through the end of the 1965 season. Hudepohl in turn became the exclusive beer sponsor for Reds television transmissions beginning in 1956 and carrying that forward for eighteen of the next twenty seasons, until the end of 1975 save for a brief period from 1971 to 1973 when Burger held the rights. As was the case with other small brewers nationwide, rising costs for advertising on increasingly expensive broadcasts, combined with a decreasing revenue stream and consequent lack of money to spend on mass media promotions, forced Hudepohl to relinquish sponsorship of the Reds for purely fiscal reasons,

despite - or perhaps because of - the fact that the team was enjoying the best on-field success in its history at the time.

The last year that Hudepohl sponsored the Reds - the following year Pabst got it - the reason Hudepohl gave it up was, the cost of broadcasting the Reds doubled in one year. It [would have been] our total advertising budget to just do Reds television, and maybe, what did they do, twenty games a year on TV, something like that? Twenty games a year on television for your total advertising budget just didn't make sense. And so we had to give it up, and Pabst was big enough to take it.¹⁹

By the early 1960s Hudepohl had staked its claim to being the largest brewer in Cincinnati, despite the fact that it had closed its original East McMicken Avenue plant in 1958 for reasons of redundancy. In contrast, its largest local rival, Burger, continued to operate two facilities, one in the city and another in Akron, in far northeastern Ohio, which it had purchased in 1956 as a means to supply increased demand in-state and seek additional markets in Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York. One major reason for the success of Hudepohl was integrated leadership, cultivated since the earliest days of the firm and based upon a careful policy of allowing only two family members at a time to operate at the level of upper management, ensuring a diversity of business viewpoints and preventing the company from becoming a family employment agency. Yet it was family members who clearly held sway over the most significant

business decisions, and whose leadership styles often meshed well when dealing with critically important aspects of running a small brewery operation both from the production and personnel sides. Throughout the 1960s secretary and general manager William L Pohl and president John A Hesselbrock - both of whose forebears had married into the Hudepohl family before and during Prohibition respectively - provided the continuity necessary for the stability of the firm. Each held strengths that compensated for areas less pronounced in the other, as well as components of success found in many of the prosperous breweries of the time. In contrast, many other small brewers of the period sold their interests to outsiders in a usually futile attempt at survival. In fact the standard of strong family leadership at Hudepohl would remain in place for the entirety of its 101-year existence as an independent brewery.

Between John Hesselbrock and Bill Pohl, they had a pretty doggone effective management team. ... John was more of a leadership type of person. He had a stronger personality than Bill Pohl did, I think. He was in charge of some-a lot, really-of the major plant projects and things like that. Bill Pohl, I would say, handled more the day-to-day stuff, whereas John [oversaw] a lot of capital improvements and that kind of stuff. So John was more the foresight person in that area, and Bill Pohl did, like I said, the day-to-day operations, marketing, he made those final decisions. And they pretty much worked



Figure 14. The Hudepohl Sixth Street facility as it appeared in 1960, at the height of the company's influence as a Cincinnati beer brewer. (Hudepohl-Schoenling Brewing Company archives)

hand-in-hand, and I think they actually complemented each other. John's greatest strength was his power of leadership and his foresight at the time, and Bill Pohl was one of those guys who pretty much got along with everybody and had a way of working more with people than John did. John was a little more autonomous and standoffish to people; Bill Pohl was a little more readily available to people. So they were both very different personalities, and luckily they really did complement each other.²⁰

Changing fortunes: hard times and revival

The postwar success exhibited by Hudepohl through the 1950s and into the 1960s represented the high-water mark of the firm. Insulated since long before Prohibition as a bastion of local beer production and consumption, Cincinnati began to exhibit the same changes that impacted many other traditional beer cities of the epoch. A shift in demographics took place as older consumers were replaced by a newer, more

mobile, less loyal clientele. A growing awareness of television and other mass media advertising altered the perception of what constituted 'familiar' brands at the point of purchase. Subsequent greater market penetration took place not only by experienced, cash-rich national brewers, but also growing regionals - most notably the Detroit-based Stroh Brewing Company - seeking new outlets to offset sales losses to the nationals in their own markets. Additionally, a general turn by younger consumers away from what was widely seen as 'dad's beer' occurred

during the turbulent late 1960s and their aftermath, breaking long-established bonds of tradition. In an era where change had become the operative word, Hudepohl exhibited the same relative inertia in both business practices and market awareness which plagued many of the remaining small brewers, reluctant to discard previously successful measures in a 'tried and true' approach that both forsook a direct response to the assertive maneuvers of larger competitors and failed to see that a new era in beer production and sales was at hand.



Figure 15. Shipping new pasteurizers for the Burger and Hudepohl breweries via barge down the Ohio River, September 1965. (author's collection)

The result was a period of stagnancy that placed the firm at a severe competitive disadvantage in several critical areas.

Despite the completion of the new automated brewhouse in 1961 and other plant improvements around the same time, increasingly tight finances prevented wholesale upgrading of the facility, such that by the end of the 1970s, and in light of additional rapid advances in brewing and packaging technology, several areas of the brewery had become decidedly inefficient in comparison with its primary rivals.

Anheuser-Busch could put up a tank, for example, clean it in place, have virtually one employee on the outside of the tank do the whole job. Hudepohl, with the older style tanks, had to put a man into the tank to clean the thing, had to have a man stand outside to watch the guy inside and make sure he's okay. And then the union demanded another guy to watch the guy that's watching the guy in the tank, just in case he has to go in the tank and rescue the guy that's in the tank. So I've got three guys trying to clean one crummy tank, and Anheuser-Busch is pushing a button to do it. The industry changed. They could run 2,000 cans a minute, and I could run 600. They had maybe three guys on the line, and I've got six or eight. They had the dollars. They could afford to keep going and going and going, and we just didn't have the dollars to do the advertising, do the upgrades of the plant, and ... it just got to be a financially impossible situation. We just couldn't compete with those guys.²¹

The vulnerability of the brewery also manifested itself in its outdated product line. Before the end of the 1960s production of Chevy Ale had been discontinued due to poor sales, and its seasonal bock beer also had become a memory in spite of a longstanding tradition. Into the early 1970s, at a time when national brewers marketed at least a flagship American-style lager beer, a European-style super-premium lager, and a priceline economy brew, Hudepohl was dangerously reliant upon essentially a single beer, 14-K, complemented solely by a miniscule amount of draft-only production of Hofbräu, an all-malt, German-style lager available in selected outlets.²² Labor difficulties, always a concern but felt particularly strongly during the period, also exacerbated differences between the company and its larger rivals, including an almost two-week walkout in March 1967 and another of similar duration in April 1970 which resulted in wage and benefit concessions that further taxed the ability of the firm to absorb the increasing cost of doing business. The future of the company also suffered at the hands of management that, while skilled in traditional decision-making, had little feel for the realities of modern marketing. During the 1950s promotional messages such as 'Hudepohl's Golden Difference,' with its hint of upscale exclusivity, and 'When a Beer Would Taste Good,' psychologically calculated to enhance thirst appeal, struck a receptive chord with real and potential consumers. But in later years, when ever-fancier advertising campaigns from national brewers resonated with

their audience, Hudepohl settled for homespun catch-phrases (from 1967-69 'Hudepohl Tastes the Way Other Beers Would Like to Taste,' 'Join the Enjoyers,' and 'The Most Enjoyable Taste in Beer Today') and outdated promotional messages that, at best, paled in comparison with other brewery advertisements and, at worst, made the brewery the butt of jokes in its own home market. Likely the most damaging in the latter case was the 'Happy Hudy Time' campaign of the mid-1970s; set to the theme music of the 'Howdy Doody' children's television show of the 1950s, reaction to the commercials left brewery executives with the realization that

when you're walking around talking to people, and they're laughing about "Howdy Doody," it's time to do something. I mean, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that we've got a problem here.²³

Taken together, the various failures of Hudepohl to adjust and respond adequately to a more competitive environment led to a pronounced decline in sales, from over a half-million barrels per year in the early 1960s to just 340,282 barrels in 1979, the end of its most tumultuous decade.²⁴

Ironically, the seeds of recovery for Hudepohl initially came at the expense of its strongest local rival. In March 1973 the Burger Brewing Company ceased operations, in order to concentrate on more lucrative Pepsi Cola franchises and ending a lengthy slide in business

caused by both the general trends of the period against small brewers and a misguided decision to change its brewing water from a municipal source to artesian wells beneath the brewery. Following a pattern established by other producers, seeking to solidify their own standing via the acquisition of defunct brands of rivals, Hudepohl obtained most Burger assets - the physical plant excepted - for \$650,000, including the trademarks and formulas for Burger Beer and another brew, Tap. While most breweries found such a measure no better than a stopgap that only postponed eventual failure, for Hudepohl the move proved fortuitous, in that the company was able to add barrelage with a minimum of changeover, capitalize on remaining loyalty to a long-time hometown product, and over time take market share away from another local brewer that had been gaining at Hudepohl's expense. In 1967 the Wiedemann Brewing Company, the largest producer in the region, was acquired by the G Heileman Brewing Company of La Crosse, Wisconsin and quickly incorporated into its stable of breweries that focused on volume production and sales, specifically involving selling its beer at lower prices but, by virtue of higher output, maintaining solid profits. As a result of the practice, Wiedemann Beer consistently came in under Hudepohl 14-K pricing by ten to fifteen cents at retail, taking sales away from Hudepohl in a number of key accounts. After an initial period during which Burger Beer - altered only slightly by Hudepohl in its formulation, by using a

Hudepohl yeast strain and less hops to create a somewhat sweeter beer - was treated as a companion premium-quality beer to 14-K, around 1978 Hudepohl executives announced a price increase for the Hudepohl brands but slyly left Burger out of the equation. The measure, unnoticed by Heileman executives initially, allowed Burger Beer in turn to undermine Wiedemann sales when Heileman followed the Hudepohl price hike, thus helping Burger to become a valuable and well-performing priceline entry in the Hudepohl brand portfolio for the duration of its existence.²⁵

Hudepohl also was able to realize a measure of sales growth and a viable new market entry by virtue of the success of a large national brewer. By the early 1970s several small brewers had experimented with reduced-calorie beer, through an enzymatic process that left a less-filling brew with much of its expected flavor. Of those attempting to cash in on a growing trend toward fitness and healthier products, only the Chicago-based Peter Hand Brewing Company (aka Meister Bräu, Inc) found any measure of success, marketing an obscure yet growing beer under the trade name



Figure 16. Filling and sealing quarter-barrel kegs in the old Hudepohl racking room, circa late 1970s. (Hudepohl-Schoenling Brewing Company archives)

Meister Bräu Lite, as part of a series of Lite low-calorie products including candies, snacks, and other foods designed for coast-to-coast distribution.²⁶ With Meister Bräu on the verge of failure in the early 1970s, the Miller Brewing Company purchased the Lite Beer label along with other Meister Bräu trademarks; backed during the mid-1970s with substantial financial resources from its owner, cigarette giant Philip Morris, Miller cleverly positioned the product to have appeal to men as well as women, primarily by using a series of prominent former athletes to advertise the brew under the slogan 'Tastes Great, Less Filling'.²⁷ The move single-handedly propelled Miller to become the second-largest brewer in America within just a few years and created a new light beer segment within the marketplace, one which the national brewers came to dominate over time with more than a 90% share. Inevitably the success of Lite inspired other brewers to create their own version of a light beer; for its part Hudepohl released Hudy Delight in early 1978 to capitalize on the development and further diversify its product line to relieve pressure on 14-K, which had entered into a slight but steady sales decline despite an attempt to turn it into a strong regional brand in an eight-state area. Within three years Hudy Delight came to account for 25% of all brewery output and by 1982 it constituted 40% of light beer sales in Cincinnati, trailing only Lite (at 55%), although Hudepohl marketing director Phil Burdick noted that strong draft beer sales brought the figures close to even.²⁸

Entering the 1980s it became clear that significant change was on the horizon at Hudepohl. At the end of the 1970s fewer than fifty brewing companies remained in the United States; the American beer market was dominated by the top five brewers (Anheuser-Busch, Miller, Pabst, Schlitz, and Coors) which accounted for over eighty percent of all beer sales. The few remaining small brewers, scattered largely across isolated rural areas of the country but occasionally - as with Hudepohl and its lone remaining Cincinnati rival, Schoenling - located in highly competitive urban settings, gradually came to the realization that standing pat and fighting large brewers for market share solely with American-style lager beers and light beers in their profile offered a pathway to eventual closure. Competition with exponentially larger rivals was no longer an option; the key to survival lay in going around the giants of the industry, making and selling beers that were economically unfeasible to brew on a large scale or otherwise represented a new incursion into the marketplace. The concept was embraced and put forward at Hudepohl by general manager Bob Pohl under the guise of niche marketing, or seeking a series of specific segments that, taken together, offered a brewery sufficient volume to offset losses by the flagship brand and even gain overall market share by creating new opportunities.

Honestly, niche marketing was, in my opinion, the only way that a small brewer could survive, to differentiate yourself from the big

brewers. You know that it's not going to be great volume in any one location. But if you add it all up, it's probably your best chance for survival. So you really get into doing some things that are different that the big guys can't do. You do have a much smaller plant. You do have a less efficient plant. But you're doing things the way they were done in the 1800s in a lot of cases. Big brewers are way beyond that. It's a plant, not a brewery anymore. So the small brewer had to look at a way that it could survive, and niche marketing was the only way that I saw that a small brewery had any chance. We came out with several niche market brands and concepts, and they did work.²⁹

Although Pohl arrived gradually at the concept of his own accord, the idea gained steam within the company when a group of Harvard graduate students performed an in-depth analysis of the brewery and its business practices in 1979, ultimately concluding that Hudepohl had to go in a different direction and separate itself from its larger competition if it were to survive and prosper. Initial changes were limited to packaging, when the longstanding design on Hudepohl 14-K cans and bottles was dropped in favor of a revived 'bucks and barrel' logo first used by the firm a century earlier. The back-to-the-past look, combined with increasing sales of Hudy Delight, helped the brewery to a 1980 production gain of almost 27,000 barrels - at 5.8% almost double the national average³⁰ - over that registered in the previous year. Much more significant was the decision by Pohl to

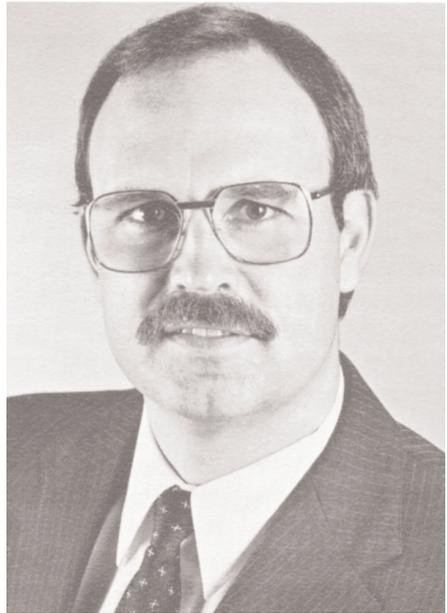


Figure 17. Bob Pohl progressed from director of marketing services to general manager, then vice president, and ultimately president and chief executive officer at Hudepohl from the mid-1970s to 1986. (Hudepohl Keg Kurier newsletter)

explore the market for a flavorful all-malt superpremium lager beer and at the same time revive the name of the most legendary Cincinnati brewer. The move was not without precedent, given the introduction of upscale specialty micro-brewed beers in California and Colorado a few years earlier and the development of a comparable product, Henry Weinhard's Private Reserve, along the West Coast by the Portland-based Blitzi-Weinhard Brewing Company in the late

1970s. Yet the decision to introduce Christian Moerlein Cincinnati Select Beer in September 1981 proved an attractive novelty to a Midwestern audience accustomed to essentially three options at the point of purchase by the early 1980s: beer, light beer, and imports. The appeal of something different led to a rush of sales that rendered an extensive advertising campaign - under the banner 'Quite Simply, A Better Beer' - unnecessary for the short term: a planned six-week supply in bottles of the new brew was sold within a few days, leaving it available only at draft accounts until late October and obliging Hudepohl to ask consumers instead to wait patiently for supply to catch up with demand.³¹ Spurred by the positive response, overall Hudepohl sales for 1981, despite the introduction of the new beer late in the year, grew by over 5,000 barrels compared with 1980, and by some 12,000 barrels - to 384,660 - for 1982, in what turned out to be the highest annual production level for the brewery for the remainder of its existence. The immediate success of Christian Moerlein was gratifying to Pohl and other members of company management and served to validate the effort, in light of internal disagreement over the proposition during the late 1970s under then-president Tom Zins.

The whole Moerlein concept and those kind of things were already kind of in our heads. The advertising director and the marketing director and I had already been talking about doing this kind of thing. We could talk on our own. We just couldn't talk with Tom Zins

there, because he didn't believe in the concept. The three of us agreed that this was something we ought to do. It just had to prove itself, or we had to figure out how to prove it to Tom. ... He kept asking [me], as marketing director, "Why do you guys want to resurrect this old dead brand?" He was straight Hudepohl and Hudy Delight and Burger, and we're not going to do this whole other concept, whereas - God rest his soul when he passed away - Moerlein was a "go immediately" under me. But, you know, when you're looking at something, who's to say who's right and who's wrong until it's been proven afterward? As we've all said, hindsight is 20/20. It did work, and it was good for us. We just couldn't keep up what we needed to keep up in the way of support for the brands and everything else. Since we were one of the originals to try to do this kind of concept, we didn't know what the heck we were doing.³²

Armed with the knowledge that there was a clientele for higher-quality specialty beers from a small brewer, Hudepohl promptly moved into the next phase of new product development. Foreshadowing a trend toward seasonal brews, yet with an eye on the Germanic traditions of the industry, the company introduced its limited-edition Ludwig Hudepohl Special Bock Beer in March 1982 and followed that with the similarly short-run Ludwig Hudepohl Special Oktoberfest Beer in September. Each was limited to two 600-barrel batches - approximately 16,000 cases at retail - and, like the initial run of Christian Moerlein, sold out well before expected.³³ Like Henry

Weinhard's had been for its maker, the fact that each was sold under the Ludwig Hudepohl name was significant for the brewery, a throwback to the origins of the company but also a move designed to test the viability of the Hudepohl moniker above and beyond its long-standing presence in the American-style lager beer market segment.

The Hudepohl name, which was a blue-collar beer, was not necessarily a real help for the higher-quality beers. In fact the higher-quality beers were marketed under the Ludwig Hudepohl name, as opposed to just Hudepohl. That was intentional, to try to distinguish Ludwig Hudepohl from Hudepohl. It was kind of interesting to us that we could actually sell a product at a superpremium price with the Hudepohl name on it. That's what I wanted to find out. And it worked. We did that.³⁴

Continuing the quest to find new market niches unexplored by other breweries, Hudepohl turned its glance toward Australia and its custom of marketing reduced-alcohol beers, for automobile drivers and others seeking the flavor of beer but without the possibility of intoxication. The result was Pace Pilsner Beer, which at 1.7 to 1.9% had about half the alcohol of Hudepohl and Hudy Delight beers and also fewer calories - 85 - than either. Marketed as 'America's First Reduced Alcohol Beer,' Pace required special label approval from the Ohio Department of Liquor Control given the unique nature of the beverage, although to the consternation of Hudepohl officials

- who according to a company press release were receiving inquiries from beer wholesalers 'from Seattle to New England' - federal laws against the placement of alcohol content on beer containers prevented the brewery from selling the product initially outside of Ohio. After successful test-marketing the brew received a full rollout in August 1983 and an expansion into additional markets statewide two months later.³⁵

Rapid decline and fall

The widespread public acceptance of the Hudepohl specialty beers gave new life to the company at a time when most remaining small brewers were struggling to find a formula for survival. Emboldened by the success, company management reiterated its commitment to the production of top-quality beers, stating assuredly that

We at the Hudepohl Brewing Company feel confident we are headed in the right direction. We'll brew and market our beers properly or we'll quit brewing altogether.³⁶

The sentiment was laudable, but it did not speak to a host of competitive issues that stood well beyond the control of Hudepohl, and which ultimately determined the fate of the business.

For all that had gone right with the Hudepohl superpremium brews, the company faced the same basic problem as other breweries of its size: given their

sales volume it was still the mainstream beers, Hudepohl and Hudy Delight, that stood to make or break the brewery. Taking a pro-active stance, Hudepohl discontinued 14-K as its standard lager beer in May 1983 in favor of a reformulated entry, Hudepohl Gold, described in company literature as an 'upgrade' to the earlier recipe with a greater smoothness and less prominent grain flavor. New, streamlined packaging called greater attention to the product name, and prominent gold, red, and black colors were designed to appeal to a younger audience, a tacit acknowledgment that the brewery and its image were growing long in the tooth in the public eye; as Hudepohl public relations director Lee Oberlag stated candidly,

Hudepohl has come to be perceived by younger people as a local, old-fashioned beer. They see it as the beer of past generations. And we think our ads have not overcome that tendency.³⁷

Although \$200,000 was committed to new promotions through August primarily to introduce the new label and brew,³⁸ and Hudy Delight and Christian Moerlein continued to perform relatively well within the company portfolio, Hudepohl Gold had little chance to change the fortunes of the company with Anheuser-Busch and Miller strengthening their control over the American lager category with each passing year. Total brewery sales fell slightly, by 5,000 barrels, from 1982 to 1983, but then much more substantially, by almost 50,000 barrels - to 329,235

barrels - for 1984. As was the case with Hudepohl Gold, sales of Pace Pilsner, after an initial positive reaction to the new brand, began to slide, a victim of consumer indifference on one level but also the strategic entry by Anheuser-Busch and other brewers into the low-alcohol segment, according to Bob Pohl depriving Hudepohl of its exclusivity and the potential for a significant addition to its annual production.

Personally I think Pace, as a low-alcohol beer, had a huge potential market if Anheuser-Busch had stayed out of it. But I think they came in and tried to mass-market a product that we didn't think was a mass-market product. We were getting calls from Iowa, from the West Coast, from all over the country asking us about Pace, [from] distributors wanting it. We knew we had a market. We knew it wasn't a huge market, but for us it would have been huge. For Anheuser-Busch it was a drop in the bucket. I think they killed the whole category. ... When you're a little brewer and you've only got so much barrelage you can make, a little bit helps a whole lot. For a big brewer a little bit means nothing. It was not a mass-market product. It never was intended to be.³⁹

Reflecting the changing times, Hudepohl became the last brewery in the country to abandon the use of full 31 gallon barrels in December 1984. Given the large volume of draft beer production at Hudepohl - over 25% of total sales, as opposed to 15 or so at most other breweries - during the same year the company went out on a sizable limb to

upgrade its keg packaging capabilities, investing \$7,000,000 to build a fully automated new facility on site. Hudepohl executives sought industrial revenue bonds from the Cincinnati-Hamilton County Port Authority to finance the measure in part, under the clearly stated premise that the fate of the brewery likely turned upon the vote. The measure passed under assurances from Hudepohl that the expansion plan could add up to 30 jobs and that the more efficient operation would narrow a substantial gap in barrels produced per employee (2,828 at Hudepohl in 1982) compared with principle rivals such as Anheuser-Busch (4,718) and Stroh (5,022).⁴⁰

Yet no amount of improvement in efficiency could overcome the widening gulf in promotional budgets between Hudepohl and its regional and national competitors, and the profound impact that it had. After Greater Cincinnati was designated a target market around the early 1980s, Anheuser-Busch outspent Hudepohl in local advertising by a 35:1 ratio, ensuring that Hudepohl's fight for survival would be waged from a defensive position.⁴¹ The Miller Brewing Company also exerted tremendous pressure upon Hudepohl and other local brewers nationwide in its attempt to catch and pass Anheuser-Busch for industry supremacy. Caught in the middle of a battle between titans, and lacking sufficient financial resources to enter the fray, Hudepohl and other small brewers turned inward, maximizing promotional exposure on a limited budget and formu-



Figure 18. Hudepohl employee Dick Ziegler seals the last full barrel of beer produced in the United States, December 1984. (Hudepohl Keg Kurier newsletter)

lating ad campaigns that appealed to civic pride as a last stand in the battle to maintain the home market. To court college-age and young adult drinkers, the brewery worked closely with rock radio station WEBN, with Bob Pohl appearing occasionally on Sunday-evening call-in shows during the early 1980s to discuss beer and brewing matters, several years after working behind the scenes with its

advertising department to create a promotional 45 rpm phonograph record that was placed in jukeboxes inside a variety of area bars. More substantive was an agreement with the station from 1984 to 1986 to serve as the primary sponsor of the WEBN Labor Day Fireworks, an annual end-of-summer event along the Ohio River that took place before an estimated crowd of 500,000 and a still-larger television audience.⁴² The local focus was consistent with the company's most recent advertising campaign, 'The Better Beers of Hudepohl,' introduced in May 1983, featuring images of noted Cincinnati landmarks such as Krohn Conservatory and Riverfront Stadium and highlighting a new tag phrase that embraced the size of the company: 'America's Great Small Brewery.' The series of commercials revolved around all of the Hudepohl core brands, in an effort to reinforce the connection between the brewery and its community and an image of superior quality associated with a small, hands-on producer in an era of large factory manufacturing.

[It was] trying to upgrade the image of the company as a quality producer, and of the individual brands. It was more of an image-type thing, just trying to [say] we are Hudepohl, "America's Great Small Brewery." Again, people were so in tune to the national brands because of the huge media blitz that you had to really try and do something different. It was getting harder and harder to promote individual brands because you just didn't have the budget to do it. And if you could say "The Better Beers of Hudepohl,"

well, I don't care whether you drank Hudy Delight, Hudepohl, or Moerlein, please drink one of ours, you know. Budgetarily it was what we had to do in trying to promote the concept of being a good little brewery and producing a high-quality product. That's what we were trying to do.⁴³

The image of quality received a boost in November 1983 when Christian Moerlein was recognized by West German authorities as the only American beer to date which had passed the legendary *Reinheitsgebot*, the German beer purity law dating back to 1516 that stipulated that all beers qualifying for sale in the country had to be made from just four essential ingredients: malt, hops, water, and yeast.⁴⁴ Good public relations also were fostered through the availability to civic organizations of the Bavarian-themed Hudepohl tasting room and a significantly increased schedule of brewery tours, despite the fact that the facility was not set up to conduct them on a large scale. Unlike national brewers, whose tours frequently took place along glass-enclosed corridors separated from the production and packaging areas, Hudepohl took visitors down into the midst of the operation, such that many aspects of the process were seen from the same vantage point as that of employees doing their jobs. According to brewery official Dick Nichols, before mid-1982 'if sixty people came through here in a three-month period, it would be a lot;' during the sixth-month period of June to the middle of December 1982, some 2,700 toured the facility.⁴⁵ Yet in

spite of hometown-friendly advertising and favorable publicity for its beers, Hudepohl sales continued to slide into the middle of the decade, hastened by the entry into Greater Cincinnati of Coors and Coors Light beers, from yet another large rival with far deeper pockets for advertising than was possible for a small brewer, and an increasing number of cut-rate brews designed to compete head-to-head with Burger and come in below pricing for Hudepohl Gold.

Despite the dark clouds on the horizon, Hudepohl entered 1985 in a celebratory mood, marking its 100th anniversary with a yearlong series of events and activities. The highlight of the commemoration was the release of a special dark beer, Hudepohl Jubilee 100, formulated by brewmaster Gerry Erftenbeck according to specifications provided by company management. To make the brew even more exclusive, production was limited to just 2,000 cases - half of which were presented to company employees and the other half sold via the brewery gift shop and selected retail outlets - and placed into old-fashioned hinged and lidded wooden boxes. In spite of the considerable difficulty in procuring it, consumer reaction to the new beer was highly favorable, leading the firm to add the brew to its regular product stable in 1986, under the name of Christian Moerlein Doppel Dark as a line extension of the superpremium entry. The focus on upscale brews and other unique beverages had received renewed attention at the beginning of 1986 when Hudepohl

attempted to diversify, by expanding its distribution center to include the products of its nearby rival Schoenling - which had sold its local distribution operation to Hudepohl at the beginning of the year - plus the well-known German beer Warsteiner and California Cooler, a mix of citrus-flavored beverage and white wine which rode the wave of popularity that wine coolers enjoyed at the time.

As it turned out, the moves to bolster the distribution side of Hudepohl, like the changes made on the brewing side of the operation, only served to buy the company some extra time before it was forced to bow to the inevitable. At the beginning of 1985, Pohl sounded an optimistic note on the future of the business, stating to the press that 'we have an excellent chance of survival. If sales remain constant, if we can just maintain the course we are on, we're going to be fine,' although he cautiously noted at the same time that 'a lot of our future is in the hands of the people of Cincinnati'.⁴⁶ But by the end of the year, as Pohl recalled in retrospect,

it was just so obvious that we were being out-spent dramatically in advertising. Our sales were sliding, not dramatically, but it was getting to the point that the profits were no longer there. [It had to do] with the chances of reviving this thing, and what did we have to do to do that?⁴⁷

Faced with 1985 sales that had fallen to around 280,000 barrels, and with estimates for an additional drop to nearly 250,000 barrels for 1986, Pohl - elected in June 1985 as president and chief

executive officer of the company, succeeding his father, Louis - approached the Hudepohl board of directors and, with no realistic possibility that the fortunes of the brewery would change, recommended that the operation be either sold or shut down and liquidated as soon as possible. After receiving instructions from the board to proceed, Pohl entered into negotiations with the Stroh Brewing Company as well as Schoenling to sell the business outright, and after discussions were concluded, in November 1986 Pohl and Schoenling president Ken Lichtendahl met the press to announce the merger of the two remaining Cincinnati breweries, under the new name of the Hudepohl-Schoenling Brewing Company. Billed as a union for strategic reasons, in fact the transaction was an outright purchase by Schoenling of Hudepohl assets, as evinced by the fact that Schoenling personnel maintained control over top management positions and primary decision-making. Under the new organization, all of the primary Hudepohl brands remained in production, combined into a firm which wedded the best of Hudepohl's capabilities - relatively strong local brand support, broad name recognition, and its century-old tradition - with the advantages that Schoenling had accumulated over the years, most notably extensive out-of-town sales and multistate market acceptance for its flagship brew, Little Kings Cream Ale.⁴⁷ The end came quickly for the venerable Hudepohl plant. Initially Hudepohl-Schoenling operated both breweries, to fulfill existing orders and determine how

best to manufacture and distribute the products of each side of the business. But given the declining demand for the company's beers, in reality there was no need to maintain two plants in the same city by the late 1980s. For company management it was easy to decide which of the two facilities to keep open, given that Schoenling was a newer and more modern brewery at a time when efficiency was a primary concern.

The reason why [Hudepohl] had their issues was that they had a very modern facility in some aspects, incredibly modern, and in other aspects it was a dinosaur. It dated back to the turn of the century down there and [was a] wonderful facility, but not in today's world. Only part of it was right, and you have to have it all right. [The Schoenling plant] was a vintage 1940s and 1950s and 1960s [facility], [with] very few original buildings back from the 1930s. From what was inside of the brick walls, Hudepohl still had wood floors in some areas. But our structure at Central Parkway was steel and concrete floors and sewers where they were supposed to be, and it was a food plant. So the objective was that, if this would work out, we could continue to make those same products and keep them on the shelf and be more efficient at it. It was just a financial situation for Hudepohl that you can't run that facility and make a buck. ... We needed a plan, and we put that plan together, and basically sold off the real estate and a lot of the equipment and purchased a lot of equipment at [Schoenling], and within a year the entire [Hudepohl] facility was shut down. We needed to preserve as many jobs as we could, because obviously we were much

more busy when we [combined] both our manufacturing and theirs, I mean their brewing and bottling. We brought a lot of their brewing team up and [the Schoenling facility] got busier, and unfortunately [the Hudepohl] plant had to close, but there wasn't an option. It was closing anyway.⁴⁸

In the end the inability of Hudepohl, like that of so many small brewers nationwide in the post-Prohibition era, to remain open as an independent brewery can be traced to several fundamental factors. Most profound were the competitive forces arrayed against it, primarily from the national chain brewers who maintained greater scales of efficiency, lower costs of doing business, and accordingly greatly higher revenue streams, which they were able to channel effectively into comprehensive advertising and promotional campaigns that simply overwhelmed their more limited local and regional rivals. Frequent changes in company management also exerted considerable influence over the decades; in the case of Hudepohl, the potential for strong and stable leadership over time was cut off suddenly when Bill Pohl died in 1973 at age 58 and Tom Zins in 1980 at only 43, forcing the brewery to adapt to change at the highest levels in an unforeseen manner. Ironically, decisions made in an earlier era, designed to make the brewery bigger and more like its larger competitors, served to undermine its ability to change and evolve in subsequent years. Foremost in that light was the brew kettle at Hudepohl: at over 600 barrels it was designed to handle large

batches of American-style lager beer at a time when that was the only brew in regular production. With the evolution of the Hudepohl specialty beers, however, and the limited production runs which they required, a smaller kettle would have been more cost-effective and could have given the company much greater flexibility to adapt to changing market needs in a short period of time.⁴⁹ Yet when all was said and done, possibly the simplest explanation for the failure of Hudepohl was that its time had come, that the model that had made it a successful business operation for almost a century had become outdated, bypassed through circumstances well beyond its control. Thus the company joined hundreds of other breweries over the half-century since repeal, in both large urban centers and small rural environs, which were unable to adapt to new realities of marketing and manufacture and the classic consumer mindset that - product quality occasionally aside - bigger and better were synonymous.

Postscript

After its closure in the summer of 1987, the Hudepohl facility suffered much the same fate that befell other abandoned brewery complexes over time. While the former office building, distribution warehouse, and new keg facility found other tenants, most of the remaining buildings - too large and subdivided to be of use to other businesses - stood vacant for years after the brewing operation ended. Most



Figure 19. The northeast side of the Hudepohl brewery complex, as it appeared after a fire inside the abandoned facility in September 1995. (author's collection)

of the equipment and tankage was sold as surplus or as scrap metal, with gaping holes in large window panels and brick walls showing where their removal had taken place. In one case the effort resulted in permanent damage: in September 1995 sparks from a cutting torch found their way into cork lining inside the walls of one building, smoldering for hours until a fire broke out that destroyed a large section of the central part of the complex.⁵⁰ Another blaze three years later took with it parts of an older warehouse and storage area; in the aftermath of the fires and in light of ongoing general

decay, the entire central portion of the facility was torn down, including the original Lackman brewery building at the core, physically separating the east and west side of the complex. The most notable remaining entity is the 165 foot tall smokestack, with the Hudepohl name still prominently visible; in January 2005 the chimney garnered national publicity when it was placed for sale on eBay for \$1,500,000, but ultimately it went unsold. Plans were drawn up for adaptive reuse of the six buildings that still stood after their sale at a sheriff's auction in 2002, including office space and loft apartments



Figure 20. Remnants of the Hudepohl brewhouse, as it appeared in October 2006, after partial demolition and almost twenty years of decay. (author's collection)

with a stunning view of downtown Cincinnati.⁵¹ But after two of the buildings were condemned by the city, nothing came of the effort, such that general neglect, vandalism, and looting - including theft of valuable copper wiring inside the walls - rendered the remains of the Hudepohl plant into a shell, a safety hazard and an eyesore visited primarily by transients and urban explorers seeking adventure. At the time of this writing there appears to be little feasible alternative to demolishing what remains and redeveloping the site from scratch.

The Hudepohl beers have enjoyed a somewhat better fate than the buildings in which they once were made, although it has been a rocky ride. During the Hudepohl-Schoenling era Christian Moerlein remained a constant presence, and Hudy Delight continued to sell well in comparison with many other light beers, a trend later described by Ken Lichtendahl as one that 'defied a lot of the old norms of the big guys eating your lunch'.⁵² But a dwindling consumer base for the hometown brews led to a steady decline for the other brands, most notably Hudepohl Gold, whose downfall was

hastened by an ill-advised decision to reintroduce Hudepohl 14-K Beer - complete with a nostalgia-themed advertising campaign - in time for the Cincinnati bicentennial celebrations of 1988. The attempt to reconnect with tradition fell largely on deaf ears, and ultimately 14-K sales cannibalized those of Hudepohl Gold as comparable entries in the same market segment.⁵³ The Hudepohl name received a new impetus in November 1995 with the introduction of Hudy Bold Golden Lager Beer, designed to replace both Hudepohl Gold and 14-K. Lichtendahl made clear that the 'bold' moniker represented a conscious break with the past, targeting younger drinkers with an aggressively-hopped brew, more modern graphics on the packaging, and a new company attitude. But Hudepohl-Schoenling had no more control over the competitive forces in its midst than did its predecessors; with an advertising budget of approximately \$1,000,000 for the entire year - roughly the cost of one 60 second Bud Bowl television commercial from Anheuser-Busch during the Super Bowl - there was no ability to give the beer a high-profile launch into a crowded American-style lager segment. After two years of moderate to poor sales, Hudy Bold was withdrawn, leaving the company without a premium lager beer for the first time in the post-Prohibition era.

After a decade in which Hudy Delight served as the only tangible reminder of the Hudepohl name in the beer market, in February 2007 Greg Hardman resurrect-

ed Hudepohl Bock Beer as a one-off brew for the annual Cincinnati Bockfest celebration, utilizing an original formula to gauge reaction with an eye toward future production plans. Hardman, a former director of North American sales for German import Warsteiner Beer, previously had purchased the Christian Moerlein label in 2004 and eventually the other Hudepohl-Schoenling brands, before establishing the Christian Moerlein Brewing Company to house them. Capitalizing upon a trend across the nation that saw a number of previously popular local beers nostalgically revived as 'retro beers,' in September 2009 Hardman reintroduced Hudepohl 14-K as part of a wider initiative to bring classic Cincinnati beers back to prominence in the home market, including the return of Burger Beer to store shelves the previous May and the strategic repositioning of Hudy Delight in November 2008. The growth wave - including a 200% sales rise for the Hudepohl brand and 34% for the entire Moerlein specialty beer line in just one year - continued in September 2010, when the Hudepohl product line received its first new entry in 13 years with the release of Hudepohl Amber Lager, an all-malt beer reminiscent of the early post-Prohibition Hudepohl Pure Lager brand and with packaging that revived the late 1940s label design used by the brewery.⁵⁴ In a curious way the brand came full circle 125 years after the founding of its original brewery, returning to its roots at a time when consumers exhibited a greater willingness to embrace the familiar icons of the past

and reinvigorate the traditions which made Hudepohl the most famous name in modern Cincinnati brewing history.

References

1. cited in 'Looking Ahead to Next 100,' *The Keg Kurier: News From the Hudepohl Brewing Company*. 5.3 (1984): p.8. During the 1970s the firm published its newsletter under the name of *Hudepohl Pure Grains*, devoted primarily to the production and distribution of the Hudepohl and Hudy Delight brands and miscellaneous facets of brewery operations. In 1980 *The Keg Kurier* was created via the merger of *Hudepohl Pure Grains* with another, similar company publication - *Burger Brewings* - in order to cover under one banner all aspects of the business and its beers for employees, distributors, and other friends of the operation.

2. Beyond the scope of the present work, a wide range of quality books on the American brewing industry has been published primarily over the last decade and a half, on individual breweries, prominent brewing cities, and states with a substantial number of brewery operations. The following works are particularly recommended for comprehensive coverage of the subject matter: Hoverson, D. (2007) *Land of Amber Waters: The History of Brewing in Minnesota*. Minneapolis: U Minnesota Press; Skilnik, B. (2006) *Beer: A History of Brewing in Chicago*. Fort Lee, NJ: Barricade Books; Holian, T.J. (2000) *Over the Barrel: The Brewing History and Beer Culture of Cincinnati, Volume One, 1800-Prohibition*. St. Joseph, MO: Sudhaus Press and (2001)

Over the Barrel: The Brewing History and Beer Culture of Cincinnati, Volume Two, Prohibition-2001. St. Joseph, MO: Sudhaus Press; Miller, C.H. (1998) *Breweries of Cleveland*. Cleveland: Schnitzelbank Press; Blum, P.H. (1999) *Brewed in Detroit: Breweries and Beers Since 1830*. Detroit: Wayne State U; James Maxwell, H. and Sullivan, Jr., B. (1999) *Hometown Beer: A History of Kansas City's Breweries*. Kansas City: Omega Innovative Marketing; Guetig, P.R. and Selle, C.D. (1995) *Louisville Breweries: A History of the Brewing Industry in Louisville, Kentucky, New Albany and Jeffersonville, Indiana*. Louisville: Mark Skaggs Press; Herbst, H., Roussin, D. and Kious, K. (2009) *St. Louis Brews: 200 Years of Brewing in St. Louis, 1809-2009*. St. Louis: Reedy Press; Monette, C.J. (1978) *Joseph Bosch and the Bosch Brewing Company*. Calumet, MI: Greenlee Printing; Johnson, C. (2004) *Fitger's: The Brewery and Its People*. Duluth: Fitger's Publishing; Moore Gettelman, N. (1995) *Gettelman, A History of the A. Gettelman Brewing Company: One Hundred and Seven Years of a Family Brewery in Milwaukee*. Milwaukee: Procrustes Press; and Harris, M.F. (2000) *The Paws of Refreshment: The Story of Hamm's Beer Advertising*. St. Paul: Pogo Press.

3. cited in Anon. (1894) *History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio*. Cincinnati: S.B. Nelson, p.329 and (1896) 'The Twenty-Six Breweries of Cincinnati, Newport, and Covington,' *Cincinnati Post*. 16 Nov. pp.6-7. See also Anon. (1985) *Hudepohl Brewing Company, Brewing in Cincinnati 1885-1985: 100 Years Hudepohl Brewing Company*. Cincinnati: Hudepohl Brewing Company, p.3, a booklet produced and distributed by the

firm during its centennial year.

4. In an odd finale to the existence of the John Hauck Brewing Company, the 46,500 gallons of malt beverage dumped into Cincinnati's sewers began to foam wildly immediately upon entering the new environment, forcing a manhole cover to blow out of its location in the ground, 250 feet away, followed by a flowing stream of bubbly, unpalatable liquids. See Hauck, T.A. (1986) 'Hauck Brewery and Family Businesses,' as cited in Petty, P. *Under a Lucky Star: The Story of Frederick A. Hauck*. Cincinnati: Cincinnati Oral History Foundation, p.149.

5. Anon (1985) p.6.

6. 'Scenes of Activity in Hudepohl Brewery,' *Cincinnati Times-Star* 28 Mar. 1933, p.11. As the only Cincinnati brewer still in production of near beer, the Bruckmann Company was the only brewery in the city fully operational with the return of legal beer on 7 April 1933, giving it a brief but prosperous leg up on other area producers when demand for relegalized beer was at its zenith. In an additional effort to ensure a rapid return to beer production, Hudepohl reinstalled a 490-barrel wooden cask, manufactured in 1900 by the local cooperage firm Hauser, Brenner, & Fath, described as the largest in the city at 15 feet high and 13 feet wide and, in a decided show of ceremony, paraded through the streets of Cincinnati on its way to Hudepohl atop an oversized cart pulled by twelve horses.

7. While Hudepohl was an early Greater Cincinnati brewer to have more than one facility, it was neither the first nor the only one to do so. The Bruckmann Company acquired the former Ohio Union/Cincinnati Home Brewing Company plant shortly after repeal in

1933 to run as its second plant, which it operated along with its original Cumminsville brewery until the business was sold to Herschel Condon in 1949. The Red Top Brewing Company purchased a nearby rival, the Clyffside Brewing Company, in December 1945 for the production of top-fermented brews Red Top Ale and 20 Grand Cream Ale and utilized it alongside the original Hauck Dayton Street Brewery, which for the next decade manufactured bottom-fermented Red Top and Barbarossa beers; the Dayton Street location was closed in late 1955 due to declining sales and the Clyffside facility approximately two years later. In Northern Kentucky the Bavarian Brewing Company of Covington bought its crosstown rival, the Heidelberg Brewing Company, in March 1949 and operated its plant as a second brewery until 1955, when operations were consolidated at the original Bavarian complex; the company merged with International Breweries Inc. in February 1959 and the Bavarian brewery operated as part of that chain until its closure in May 1966. See Van Wieren, D.P. (1995) *American Breweries II*. West Point, PA: Eastern Coast Breweriana Association, pp.121 and 266-272.

8. see *Cincinnati Enquirer* 5 May 1946: 27.

9. For an example of the Hudepohl wartime advertisements, along with those of other local breweries, see Smith, H. and Boertlein, J. (1996) 'Cincinnati Breweries Go To War,' *The Breweriana Collector*. 92, p.4. For more information on beer provided by Hudepohl and other local brewers for consumption by the armed forces during World War II, see also Anon (1985) p.13.

10. 'Brewery Installs Huge Beer Bottle Washer,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 11 Aug. 1947: 4C.

11. 'Hudepohl Plans \$1 Million Dollar Brewery In Kenyon-Barr,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 29 Oct. 1959 p.1; 'K-B Moves Ahead,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 31 Oct. 1959 p.4A; 'Hudepohl Begins Expansion Program in Queensgate,' *Cincinnati Post and Times-Star*. 29 Jun. 1964 p.1; and 'On Way to Local Brewery,' *Cincinnati Post and Times-Star*. 23 Sep. 1965 p.35. For more extensive information on the automated Hudepohl brewhouse, see Bender III, R. (1961) 'Hudepohl's New "Simulflow" Brewhouse,' *Brewers Digest*. 36.9 Sep. pp.52-56.

12. Bob Pohl, interview with the author, 9 Jul. 2008.

13. cited in Anon (1985) p.12.

14. see *Cincinnati Enquirer* 6 Aug. 1954 (n.p.).

15. Sales figures for Hudepohl during and after the introduction of the 14-K brand are taken from Fein, A.E (1956) man. dir., *Brewing Industry Survey Covering the United States, Canada and Mexico, 15th Annual Edition-1956*. New York: Research Company of America, a confidential subscriber-based publication of the era.

16. Information on the Stockton-West-Burkhart promotional campaigns for Hudepohl 14-K beer is taken from 'Hudepohl Advertising Themes,' a year-by-year overview sheet of main themes, secondary themes, and musical jingles utilized for the brand from 1952 to 1969, as prepared by either the advertising agency or the brewery and long held in the Hudepohl Brewing Company archives, a copy of which is in the possession of the author.

17. The text of the radio commercial cited is taken from an undated phonograph record containing the advertisement, made for radio

station usage and currently held in the archives of the Cincinnati Historical Society. Based on information in the aforementioned 'Hudepohl Advertising Themes' fact sheet and the use of the tag phrase 'just say 14-K' at the end of the spot, it is likely that the commercial was created and utilized sometime during 1954.

18. Among major league baseball teams which maintained sponsorship agreements with local and regional breweries from the 1940s onward were the Boston Braves and Red Sox (Narragansett Brewing Co., Cranston, RI); the St. Louis Browns (Falstaff/Hyde Park Brewery, St. Louis, MO); the Brooklyn Dodgers (F. & M. Schaefer Brewing Co., Brooklyn, NY); the Philadelphia Athletics and Phillies (P. Ballantine and Sons Brewing Co., Newark, NJ and Adam Scheidt Brewing Company, Norristown, PA respectively); the Cleveland Indians (Carling Brewing Co., Cleveland, OH); the Detroit Tigers (Goebel Brewing Co., Detroit, MI); the Chicago Cubs and White Sox (Peter Fox Brewing Company, Chicago IL and Theodore Hamm Brewing Co., St. Paul, MN respectively); and the Washington Senators (National Brewing Co., Baltimore, MD). In an ironic twist, the Jacob Ruppert Brewing Company, whose owner also had control of the New York Yankees during their initial glory years of the 1920s and 1930s, was struggling to maintain market share by the 1940s and no longer advertised with the team; a more prosperous brewer, Ballantine, took over Yankee sponsorship during their second era of almost yearly championships from the 1940s into the 1960s. Ruppert settled instead for an agreement with the more affordable New York Giants. See Corzine,

N.M (2004) 'American Game, American Mirror: Baseball, Beer, the Media and American Culture 1933-1954.' Thesis, University of Missouri, pp.76, 88-89.

19. Bob Pohl, interview with the author, 9 Jul. 2008. In fact the cessation of the television sponsorship between the Cincinnati Reds and Hudepohl did not mean the end of cooperation between them in other areas. For the remainder of the life of the brewery, Hudepohl Beer was sold by vendors at Riverfront Stadium, the home field of the club; and in honor of the team's back-to-back World Series championships of 1975 and 1976 Hudepohl released a commemorative can in honor of each, filled with 14-K Beer. Colorful and attractive in design, both cans became collector's items and the first of the two won Can of the Year honors from the Beer Can Collectors of America in the summer of 1976. See also Erardi, J. (1976) 'Baseball History Being Cast In Aluminum,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 14 Apr. D1; and (1976) "'Hude" Starts Ace Ham On Series,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 18 Oct. 1976 C7. Hudepohl also undertook a similar effort for the Cincinnati Bengals professional football team during 1982 and 1983, releasing a commemorative can under the name of 'Hu-Dey,' a play on the nickname of Hudepohl Beer and the popular Bengals fan expression 'Who Dey Think Gonna Beat Them Bengals?' See Kay, J. (1983) "'Who Dey" Owns 'Dem Rights?,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 12 Jan. B1.

20. Bob Pohl, interview with the author, 9 Jul. 2008.

21. *ibid.*

22. Specifically, during the late 1960s and early 1970s each of the "Big Three" national brewers maintained draft and packaged

production of the following successful lager beers: 1) American-style (Anheuser-Busch: Budweiser; Schlitz: Schlitz; Pabst: Pabst Blue Ribbon); 2) continental European-style (Anheuser-Busch: Michelob; Schlitz: Encore; Pabst: Andeker); and 3) a priceline budget entry (Anheuser-Busch: Busch Bavarian; Schlitz: Old Milwaukee; Pabst: Red White & Blue). Schlitz also made significant inroads into the malt liquor segment, originally pioneered by smaller brewers such as Gluek (Stite Malt Liquor) of Minneapolis, MN and M.K. Goetz (Country Club Malt Liquor) of St. Joseph, MO. Starting in 1964, armed with a substantial budget for product development and eventually a highly successful advertising campaign revolving around the so-called Schlitz Malt Liquor Bull, the firm garnered substantial revenue and market share with its Schlitz Malt Liquor until the sale of the company to Stroh in 1982.

23. Bob Pohl, interview with the author, 24 Mar. 2009.

24. Current and subsequent information on Hudepohl production for 1979 and other years during the period 1976-1984 is taken from records maintained in the corporate archives of the Hudepohl-Schoenling Brewing Company in the early 2000s and made available to the author at the time.

25. Bob Pohl, e-mail to the author, 2 Jun. 2008; interview with the author, 9 Jul. 2008. The Tap brand was utilized by Hudepohl as another budget beer during the remainder of the 1970s, and was discontinued in the early 1980s given the lasting success of Burger in the same market segment. For several years after acquiring the Burger label, Hudepohl treated it much as it did the flagship brew from the company, Hudepohl 14-K, with the

Friedman advertising agency charged exclusively with handling the Burger account for the brewery (as opposed to Hudepohl advertising, which at the time was formulated by another agency, Sive) including television and radio campaigns such as 'Get the Burger Urge' (1976). Substantial financial resources were devoted over time to point-of-sale materials for Burger, such that the brand maintained its own identity for much of the remainder of its years in production at Hudepohl.

26. Roger Sieben, interview with the author, 27 Oct. 2008. According to Sieben, an assistant master brewer at Meister Bräu at the time, Lite Beer had made inroads under Meister Bräu management, with 15 to 20% of overall brewery production by the early 1970s, and was poised for substantial success for the company until unforeseen problems within the food division and company mismanagement doomed the effort, to the ultimate benefit of Miller: '[Meister Bräu] had established this chain of production, and they were actually getting into the production of Lite Beer, from coast to coast. The lead-up, the thing was, it was the best year of all. The brewery was producing more, the Chicago brewery producing more, the whole system going good. And then the cyclamate bomb hit. Sodium cyclamate. It's a stabilizer for saccharine, artificial sweetener used in candies, low-calorie snacks, low-calorie foods. And they had this whole thing that grew up: Lite Foods, Lite Snacks, Lite Candies, being produced on the west coast by Kanda Corporation. That whole division got wiped out overnight. I think it was carcinogen. ... It was an overnight deal. The FDA came out and banned cyclamates. We

were't the only people that were using it. But with all the expansion and everything else, a lot of money had been laid thin. And that was the beginning of the end. That took the brewery with it.'

27. The extent to which Miller, backed by Philip Morris, supported the Lite brand financially can be seen in its advertising expenditures in the initial years after acquisition of the label, rising tenfold in one year from \$400,000 (1973) to \$4,000,000 (1974), then to \$10,000,000 in 1975 and \$12,000,000 in 1976. (cited in Anderson, W. (1987) 'I See the Light, I See the Lite,' *From Beer to Eternity*. Lexington, MA: Stephen Greene Press. p.96.)

28. 'A New Direction for Hudepohl,' *Brewers Digest*. 57.3, Mar. 1982, pp.11 and 17. Likely the most successful advertising campaign in the company's history was designed in large part to support the Hudy Delight brand. From 1979 to 1982 Hudepohl and Hudy Delight were promoted by well-known *Laugh-In* comedic actor Arte Johnson, who starred in a popular series of commercials centered around a traditional German character who extolled the virtues of the local brands in comparison to their better-known competition. The advertisements won first prize for Hudepohl in the 1979 U.S. Television Commercials Festival and admiration for the brewery for staying within its budget yet managing to deliver 'star appeal' with its message. According to Hudepohl president Tom Zins at the time, 'I think it will be even more image-enhancing for us as a regional brewery because people would assume we wouldn't have the wherewithal to do that.' See Styles, W. (1979) 'New Hudy Ad Man Verry Interesting,' *Cincinnati Post*. 15 Mar. p.18.

29. Bob Pohl, interview with the author, 24 Mar. 2009.

30. Brazes, J. (1981) 'Hudepohl Enters Premium Market,' *Cincinnati Post*. 1 May, 8A.

31. Hudepohl took the unusual step of apologizing for the initial shortage of Christian Moerlein via a press release, dated 30 September 1981, noting that demand exceeded supply fourfold and that 'our current shortage is a real problem. We cannot and will not rush a product of this nature. Our brewing process is a traditional one utilizing longer fermentation and aging.' On 2 October Hudepohl placed an advertisement in the two locals newspapers, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* and *Cincinnati Post*, similarly outlining the situation and both asking for patience from and thanking the public for its overwhelming acceptance of the new beer.

32. Bob Pohl, interview with the author, 24 Mar. 2009. At the same time that Christian Moerlein was released to the public, longtime draft-only Hofbräu Beer was made available in bottles for the first time. Initial plans were for Christian Moerlein to be sold exclusively in the Greater Cincinnati area, with Hofbräu destined for other markets outside the city. However, unlike Moerlein, which benefited over time from a major and sustained promotional campaign, Hofbräu received little advertising help from the brewery, consequently failing to catch on before being discontinued with little fanfare in favor of expanded Christian Moerlein distribution. According to Pohl, 'It was a good brew. The thinking behind it was, we want to take our time with Moerlein. We want to do this right. We want to bring it out slowly, carefully. But the distributors were screaming at us. What do we do? Well, we can appease them for a

little while with Hofbräu, and God forbid, should it work, which was highly questionable, but should it go over, we could bring it back into Cincinnati, and move the Moerlein out. And we're being successful on two different levels. But Hofbräu never really went anywhere, because we didn't advertise it. We didn't support it.' (author interview, 9 Jul. 2008)

33. 'New Brew,' *Cincinnati Post*. 6 Jan. 1982: 8A.

34. Bob Pohl, interview with the author, 24 Mar. 2009.

35. Shelton, J. (1983) 'Hudepohl Hopes Less Will Sell More,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 24 Aug. B2; 'Hudepohl Expands Pace Market,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 14 Oct. 1983 C9; Sator, D. (1983) 'Hudy To Test 2% Beer Here,' *Dayton Journal Herald*. 23 Aug. [Business Section] p.1. According to Bob Pohl, the moniker for Pace Pilsner Beer came about in a rather mundane way, based on standard business practices and parlance among Hudepohl executives and sales staff: 'We considered several names, but when you got in the brewing industry and your salesmen were out in the bars all day long, obviously they're consuming your product in the bars. We always talked about how, being a salesman, you had to pace yourself. You don't want to get crocked or anything. You wanted to make sure that you were okay. So you'd pace yourself during a day. And being a reduced-alcohol [beer], it's easy to pace yourself. So that's where the name actually came from.' (author interview, 24 Mar. 2009)

36. Pohl, B. (1982) 'Right From the Tap,' *The Keg Kurier: News From the Hudepohl Brewing Company*. 3.1, p.8.

37. cited in Souder, W. (1984) 'Special

Effects,' *Inc. Magazine*. [online edition - Oct.], an article which discussed in-depth locally-oriented marketing activity by Hudepohl during the period and its attempt to court younger drinkers.

38. Information on the introduction of Hudepohl Gold is taken from a company press release, 'Packaging, Taste Both Refined For Hudepohl's Flagship Brand,' dated 28 April 1983.

39. Bob Pohl, interview with the author, 9 Jul. 2008.

40. Wall, T. (1983) 'Hudepohl Says Bonds Vital,' *Cincinnati Post*. 8 Dec. 9A; Wall, T. (1983) 'Hudepohl Future May Hinge On Bond OK,' *Cincinnati Post*. 9 Dec. 5B; Fields, G. (1984) 'Hudepohl Starts Expansion That Will Cost \$7 Million,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 5 Jan. B7.

41. Bob Pohl, interview with the author, 9 Jul. 2008.

42. The phonograph record, created by radio station WEBN for Hudepohl in 1977, contained two distinct versions of the song 'Carefree Day,' the A-side featuring a pop-themed tune entitled 'Rock n' Roll With Hudepohl,' with the B-side carrying a country version under the name 'Bless My Soul It's Hudepohl.' The project was undertaken clandestinely by Bob Pohl and others in the Hudepohl marketing department, essentially circumventing the company's advertising agency which opposed it. The WEBN fireworks sponsorship, at \$70,000 for the initial year of what was planned to be at least a five-year agreement, grew out of contacts between Pohl and an acquaintance at the station - 'just being around the right guy at the right time' - and ultimately ran for three years until ended due to budgetary

constraints and the closure of the brewery. The collaboration was highlighted in 1985 and 1986 by the release of a special commemorative beer can for the event, featuring the radio station logo and filled with Hudepohl Gold beer. (author interview, 24 Mar. 2009; see also 'Special "Hudy" Brew To Help Toast Fireworks,' *Cincinnati Post*. 27 Jun. 1985: 6C; and 'Special Effects,' *Inc. Magazine*. [online edition] [Oct. 1984].)

43. Bob Pohl, interview with the author, 24 Mar 2009.

44. Andriacco, D. (1983) 'Even Deutschland Says Our Beer Pure Pleasure,' *Cincinnati Post*. 23 Nov. 1983: 1A. The finding was based on a sample of 24 cans-one case-of Christian Moerlein that Hudepohl sent to the Versuchs- und Lehranstalt für Brauerei in Berlin (VLB) for testing purposes. According to correspondence from the institute, dated 28 October 1983 and held in the archives of the Hudepohl-Schoenling Brewing Company, the analysis showed 'that the beer contains no preservatives, no adjuncts (corn or rice), no technical proteolytic enzymes and no ascorbic acid. Original extract, degree of fermentation, attenuation limit, colour and pH of the beer are normal, the content of nitrogen is somewhat high. In this beer sample no substances were detected which are inconsistent with [the] German "Reinheitsgebot".' A followup letter from the same institution, dated 13 January 1984, confirmed the results and acknowledged that Christian Moerlein 'is the first U.S. beer which has successfully passed examinations concerning [the] "German Purity Law".' In April 1984 Hudepohl contributed \$400.00 to the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce toward the cost of customs clearance and

transportation for the beer in West Germany, acknowledging additional costs that were covered by the Chamber and its extensive public relations work in the process. (correspondence of 10 April 10 1984, in the Hudepohl-Schoenling archives)

45. Erardi, J. (1983) 'Tour Has Tradition On Tap,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 30 Mar. C1. The expansion of tours at Hudepohl effective the summer of 1982 was done primarily for public relations reasons, according to Pohl, who contrasted those of Hudepohl with the nature of big brewery visits as a unique opportunity to show off the advantages of smaller-scale beer production: 'The tours kind of gave people more of a hands-on feeling about the company, and that is something that I think everybody down there agreed was a good thing. It was important to us from that standpoint. We weren't really set up for tours, which probably meant we gave the best tours you could get. You didn't sit in a tram and drive by the bottle shop, at twenty feet in the air. You got on the floor, which I think gave people just a little better feeling about the company. I think the tours did fine for us. I think they were a good marketing tool.' (author interview, 9 Jul. 2008) For more information on the Hudepohl tap room and its use, see 'BD Visits the Hudepohl Brewing Co. in Cincinnati, Ohio,' *Brewers Digest*. 46.7 (Jul. 1971) p.49.

46. cited in Byczkowski, J.J. (1985) '100 Years of Hudy Beers,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 17 Jan. C8, p.10.

47. Bob Pohl, interview with the author, 9 Jul. 2008.

48. *ibid.*

49. Newberry, J. (1986) 'Schoenling, Hudepohl Brewing Merger,' *Cincinnati*

Enquirer. 21 Oct. 1986: B7, p.11; Newberry, J. (1986) 'Cincinnati Brewers Announce Merger Plans,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 4 Nov. C5.

50. Ken Lichtendahl, interview with the author, 27 Jul. 2009. Lichtendahl would continue as president of the Hudepohl-Schoenling Brewing Company until 1998, when the firm was purchased by the Cleveland-based Crooked River Brewing Company. The former Schoenling brewery along Central Parkway was sold in December 1996 to the Boston Beer Company, brewer of the Samuel Adams line of beers and ales, which continues to operate the plant as of this writing. Bob Pohl took a position on the distribution side of the Hudepohl-Schoenling operation, but after a short time left the firm and eventually moved into a career in commercial real estate.

51. Validity for the viewpoint that a smaller Hudepohl brew kettle might have been a major benefit to Hudepohl in its specialty beer days is provided by Bob Pohl, from his vantage point as a company officer, in comparing the Hudepohl operation with the Schoenling facility nearby: 'They had some advantages over us, and we had some advantages over them. They had a 200-barrel brew kettle and were running 200-barrel batches throughout the brewery. When it came to bock beer, Oktoberfest beer, and maybe some [others] ... with a 600-barrel brew kettle, that's a lot of beer for a small market, which is what we were looking at. And that became a major disadvantage to us, to the brewery. The plant was not designed to do [small-scale batches of beer].' (author interview, 9 Jul. 2008) Ken Lichtendahl corroborated this observation from the

Schoenling point of view: 'Exactly right. Yeah. That was one of the areas where they reworked everything back in the 1950s, I believe, and came up with the "Big is Better" program, and we reworked it and came up with the "Versatile is Better," and [with] our 200 [barrel kettle], we did ten brews a day. Most people could put out around six, but ours was totally automated. It had all micro-processors and automated valves, and we were sequentially just working brews from the grain scale off all the way through lautering and brewing. Like I say, it got to the ten brews a day, which even at 200 barrels gave you substantial output. But yet you didn't have to brew a big 600-er and say, "What am I going to do with that stuff, all that?"' (author interview, 27 Jul. 2009)

52. 'Fire Damages Old Brewery,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 11 Sep. 1995: A1; 'Spark Caused Fire,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 15 Sep. 1995: C2.

53. Hofmeister, D. (2004) 'What Will Be Done About Old Brewery?,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 13 Mar. B2.

54. Ken Lichtendahl, interview with the author, 27 Jul. 2009.

55. The downside of the decision by Hudepohl-Schoenling to reintroduce 14-K Beer was explained by Bob Pohl based upon internal discussions dating back to the Hudepohl days: 'Our city sales manager, Ken Rippinger, when we came out with Hudy Gold and did away with 14-K, we talked about coming back with 14-K. He was the guy that said, "Look. What you're doing is trying to put another beer on that store shelf. So now you're going to split your sales between Hudepohl Gold and 14-K. You are not going to have enough of either brand to hold them on those shelves. Those scanners are going

to tell the guy that he needs to put in more Miller or more Bud." He said, "Whatever you do, pick one." Schoenling brought back 14-K while they had Hudy Gold, and it killed them. Ken was right.' (author interview, 9 Jul. 2008) Ken Lichtendahl later concurred with the sentiment: 'Yeah, that's exactly what happened. Probably we just split our existing customers, and [they said], "Oh, I like this one," [and] "Oh, I like that one." You basically had both of them, and now you've got one drinking one and one drinking the other. So it was kind of a fifty percent-fifty percent. We just sliced our pie.' (author interview, 27 Jul. 2009)

56. Newberry, J. (2007) 'Hudy Bock Beer Comes Back,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. [online edition] 28 Feb.; Holthaus, D. (2009) 'Hudepohl Relaunches Hudy 14-K Beer,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. [online edition] 9 Sep.; Holthaus, D. (2010) 'Coming Soon: New Hudy, Little Kings Beers,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. [online edition] 27 Aug.; Holthaus, D. (2010) 'Beer Baron Expands Empire With Cincy Brands,' *Cincinnati Enquirer*. [online edition] 27 Aug. Under Greg Hardman the former Hudepohl brands have been contract brewed at existing facilities in La Crosse, WI and Wilkes-Barre, PA. However, long-term plans call for production to return to Cincinnati, in the Moerlein Lager House, a large beer hall/microbrewery/restaurant combination along the Ohio River with a projected opening date of 2011, and also in part of the former Husman snack food factory in Over-the-Rhine - a portion of which had housed part of the pre-Prohibition Kauffman Brewing Company - after renovation of the facility can be completed also in 2011.