

THE ARC OF AMERICAN MUSTY ALE

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But what is it? What is ‘musty ale’? When so named and why?¹

Harold Dobbler, letter to *The Sun*, NYC (1911)

Introduction

In America between approximately 1860 and 1920, there are probably hundreds of mentions of ‘musty ale’ in restaurant menus, newspapers, books, and periodicals. In the modern vernacular, musty ale was a ‘thing’ and this despite the ostensibly unpromising name. The beer fetched a trade via advertisements of brewers, restaurants, and saloons. Musty ale was not a term used by brewing technological writers. ‘Pale ale’ and ‘stout’, say, can be found in American and British journals and texts addressed to the brewing profession. Musty ale is never mentioned other possibly than in the trade advertisement section, and setting aside mere discussion of substandard products.

Peruse any edition of Max Henius’ and Robert Wahl’s *American Handy-Book of the Brewing, Malting and Auxiliary Trades*,² the leading American brewing text before Prohibition, and there is not a single reference to musty ale. In 1897 a British brewing journal summarized the types of ale then prevalent in America.³ There were three: *lively ale*, also sometimes called present-use ale or cream ale; *still ale*, akin to today’s cask-conditioned beer and generally not long-aged; and *stock ale*, well-hopped and long-stored or vatted, as in England. This article also made no mention of musty ale. Henius’ and Wahl’s *Handy-Book* gives a similar schema for American ales except that sparkling, also called brilliant, ale is added, a type which combined

properties of ale and lager.⁴ The latter was a relatively new development, fermented and krausened like lively ale but given a period of cold aging as for lager.

In contrast, musty ale was an informal term, much as for London porter initially.⁵ The term had marketing and advertising significance but unlike for porter, never finally entered the professional lexicon. Many beer designations commonly utilized in pre-Prohibition America have returned courtesy the modern craft brewing movement. India Pale Ale is the best example, but the same is true of imperial stout, cream ale, porter, Vienna lager, and numerous other types or sub-types. Yet, few modern brewers have touted their ‘musty ale’.⁶

Below, I will discuss relevant history and etymology pertaining to musty ale, and offer thoughts on what it was albeit the sources are disparate, usually vague, and sometimes irreconcilable.⁷ Some musty ale was probably an English style of matured beer where *Brettanomyces*, or wild yeast, caused a secondary fermentation and imparted the musty flavour. An alternative or complementary musty character may have derived from the odour and flavour associated with Burton-brewed ales due to gypsum in the water used in mashing and brewing. We further consider if the 19th century use of sodium bisulphite and other ‘antiseptics’ in English-style ales, which can also lend a ‘stench’ as it was termed, contributed to the name musty. There is certainly evidence that musty ale was sometimes simply a blend of ale and lager beer. The blend would have produced a more carbonated and sweeter character than the ale typically afforded on its own while retaining some of its character. Some musty ale may have been the result of krausening, or conditioning, an ale with wort derived either from a lager or ale fermentation.

Early musty ale in America

An early reference to musty ale is contained in the Vermont newspaper *Green Mountain Freeman* on 11 June 1846 and in turn, the story credits for its source the *Charter Oak*, an early newspaper in Connecticut.⁸ It is entitled 'The Parties', with the sub-title, 'New Election Songs'. The story sets out two poems or songs, framed satirically as political rallying cries. Each lampoons respectively the Democrat and Whig political factions. The song for the Democrats portrays them as irredeemably pro-alcohol while the Whigs are shown as cynically courting both temperance and pro-booze voters. The concluding words read in part as follows:

We expect to hear the first [Democratic poem or song] reverberating among the hills from a thousand stentorian throats, while the air is laden with all odors, from bright champaign [sic] to musty ale.

No clue is given as to the nature of this musty ale, except perhaps that it was considered murky in relation to 'bright' champagne. Before 1850, Vermont and Connecticut were large consumers of distilled spirits and cider while commercial brewing was sparse.⁹ There seems no reason to think musty ale was a known commodity or even a farm or household product in these states at the time. The mention of musty ale in the two newspapers was likely of a general, literary nature, or employed for humorous intent. For example too, it seems hard to conceive that Champagne, at least the French original, would have been legion in these largely rural states at the time.

A later newspaper reference to musty ale is more revealing. In the 22 August 1859 issue of the *Penny Press*, published in Cincinnati, OH, one J.B. Hume advertised various ales and beers including 'Hume's Musty Ale', touted as the 'original and only genuine' musty ale. The ad listed other ales, a porter, and brown stout. All were stated as available only available at the 'Musty Ale Cottage' at 'No. 104, Main-street, between Third and Fourth-streets'.¹⁰ 700 barrels of beer in total were advertised as available, clearly not a small business. The Main Street location was not a brewery it seems, but rather a tavern or public house. In 1882 a newspaper letter-writer stated he was in 'Hume's 'Musty Ale' Saloon' in Cincinnati 'before the war', thus, 1859 or perhaps earlier, and described the bar as

'a quiet and gentlemanly resort, much frequented on account of the peculiar beverage from which it derived its name'.¹¹ As the term gentleman or analogous terms were not typically employed for the American pre-Prohibition saloon, including the lager beer saloon or garden, this suggests early musty ale in America had genteel associations. Indeed the image continued throughout the run of musty ale in America, as will appear below.

At least based on news ads, Hume's musty ale had a good run in Cincinnati in the early 1860s and unusually, its reach extended to New York City in the same period. Hume's Musty Ale in New York was sold at a Musty Ale House at Nassau and Beekman streets. To all appearances the New York business was a branch of, or agency for, the Cincinnati concern.¹² J.B. Hume's businesses were perhaps the first to sell musty ale in America, but as to who made his musty ale, and the explanation of the unusual name, the ads offer no assistance.

Cincinnati, due to heavy German settlement, was an early centre of lager brewing. By the Civil War, although eight ale breweries still remained to represent the older, English-inspired tradition, lager had become 'Cincinnati's beer of choice'.¹³ Hume's ales would have derived from one of the subsisting top-fermentation breweries. It seems unlikely from his advertisements that he was importing beer to the United States. An 1860 trade directory for Ohio¹⁴ confirms that J.B. Hume was selling musty ale in Cincinnati at the Musty Ale Cottage, and also that 'Hume & Co.' operated the 'Musty Ale Depot' at a different location. Presumably, this was J.B. Hume as well, possibly with others. The 1860 directory also lists numerous breweries in the state but none seems to show a connection to J.B. Hume. The *Penny Press* ads state that Hume's musty ale was only available at the Musty Ale Cottage, which presumably meant no other saloon supplied it. Indeed the ads state that other persons tried to sell their own musty ale, but went out of business. From all this it appears Hume never sought to tout musty ale as proprietary to him, but simply held out his beer as best of the type. The 1860 directory does not refer to musty ale except in connection with Hume, indeed an ad on page 227, from the Cleveland City Brewery in that city, sets out a long list of English-type beers including XX, XXX, pale ale, Kennett Ale, and porter, but no musty ale.

It is not known where Hume got the idea to sell musty ale, or how it was brewed, conditioned or perhaps blended. Whatever people thought of the musty name, it did not prevent the beer from acquiring local and indeed a form of national repute. Quite possibly Hume's beer is the one that inspired the later Northeast musty ales. It seems doubtful Hume's musty ale was bottom-fermented or wholly so because the other beers advertised by him bore names suggesting top-fermentation, except perhaps for his 'Champagne'. It seems, though, this was an ale as well, or almost certainly a beer, based on the grammar of the advertisement, but also the fact that Cleveland City Brewery advertised its own 'Champagne Ale' in the advert referred to above. These Champagne beers were probably fizzy and perhaps were lagers, or Hume's may have been. Could Hume have blended among his many barrels of beer, or perhaps obtained wort, even lager wort, to condition an ale in his inventory, and dubbed the result musty ale? Given that, as discussed later, some musty ale later in the century was a blend of lager and ale and some may have been krausened ale, these possibilities linger.¹⁵ It is also possible Hume sold beer in the style of those from Burton-on-Trent, which were associated with a 'musty' taste as appears further below.

Musty ale in the Classic Era

Musty ale really starts its American career over the next 50 years, mainly in the New England states and parts of Pennsylvania and New York. Numerous breweries in these areas sold and advertised musty ale. The inclusion of 'ale' was characteristic, i.e., it appears no 'musty stout' or 'musty lager' was advertised to the public.

Robert Smith Ale Brewing Company, Philadelphia, PA was an established brewer in the city during the 1800s and the early 1900s, and a typical producer of musty ale. In 1909 it issued a promotional volume called *Inns and Ale Houses Of Old Philadelphia*.¹⁶ An advertisement in the book reads in part as follows:

The Robert Smith Ale Brewing Company brews and bottles India Pale Ale, Burton Ale, and Musty Ale - beside Porter and Stout.

It seems evident this musty ale was not the same as the company's Burton Ale or IPA since all three types are mentioned.

In a handsome 1909 colour letterhead the company listed its wares as 'India Pale, Burton, Musty, XXX Ales, Brown Stout and Porter'.¹⁷ Two years later, in a newspaper ad¹⁸ in Glens Falls, NY, Nalod Importing House advertised Smith Cream Ale, Old Musty Ale and Old Burton Ale. These likely were all from Robert Smith of Philadelphia as it produced each type and also, Nalod was shown as an 'importer'. This suggests Robert Smith's musty ale was not the same as its cream ale, either. The fact that Robert Smith's musty ale was prefaced occasionally by 'old' suggests that, at least sometimes, it was a stock or old ale, meaning one receiving months of storage in wood barrels. Yet a further Robert Smith advertisement depicts a number of its casks in a handsome colour poster.¹⁹ Two different Burton Ales, two different India Pale Ales, a Pale Ale, a Brown Stout and an Old Musty are shown.

The weight of these ads suggests Robert Smith's musty ale was different from its other beers, not a re-badging as sometimes occurs in brewing. Perhaps the musty ale was imbued with *Brettanomyces* or 'hard water' sulphurous flavours similar to those of Bass Pale Ale. If so, it is unclear why Robert Smith dubbed one of its beers musty while, say, the India Pale Ale and Brown Stout are not so described when the latter almost certainly benefited from a long aging regimen and featured a *Brettanomyces* character. Perhaps the musty of Robert Smith was a mix of lager and its India or Burton ale.

Numerous breweries in the late 1800s and up to Prohibition produced musty ale or at least, a beer retailed under that name by a restaurant or other trade intermediary. Examples include C.H. Evans and Sons in Hudson, NY ('old musty ale'),²⁰ Burton aka Souther Brewery in Boston, MA ('old Burton musty ale'),²¹ Bunker Hill Breweries, A.G. Van Nostrand in Boston, MA ('old musty ale'),²² Christian Feigenspan in Newark, NJ ('musty ale'),²³ Robert Greenway in Syracuse, NY ('ye olde musty ale')²⁴ and Monroe Brewing in Rochester, NY ('musty ale').²⁵ These musty ales were produced by brewers who were primarily ale and porter brewers except possibly for the German-sounding Feigenspan.

Not long before National Prohibition ended in 1933 author Don Marquis recalled in the *Saturday Review of Literature* the fine ales of pre-Prohibition New York. He mentioned among these the musty ale at Farrish's

Monroe Brewing Co. \$10,000 PURE BEER

BRILLIANT STILL ALE.
LONDON PORTER.
HALF AND HALF.
HIGH HOP.

And OCTOBER ALE will be delivered in bottles Sterilized, 24 bottles for \$1.20, to any part of Plattsburgh.

We deliver our bottled goods to all parts of the city without additional cost.
Try a Glass of the Monroe Stock Ale or their India Pale or Musty Ale.
Office in the rear of the Commercial House. Phone 78-A.

Figure 1. Musty ale and various beers of English heritage were advertised as available in Plattsburgh, a small town in the northeast of New York State. Monroe Brewing Co. was located to the southeast in the same state, in Rochester. The brewery focused on ale and porter in contrast to most Rochester brewers who brewed lager. Some of the styles, e.g., October Ale, are old-fashioned even by contemporary English standards. Brilliant still ale was probably similar to some modern cask-conditioned beer. Source: Plattsburgh Daily Press. 8 January 1904, p.1. Courtesy of New York State Historic Newspapers, www.nysnewspapers.org and believed in public domain..

Chop House, a reputed English-style restaurant in Manhattan.²⁶ Marquis also praised the Evans he drank in Brooklyn and stated it was sold from a wooden cask and spigot. From the article:

A good place for ale at that time was Farrish's Chop House, which used to stand at the corner of ... I forget. I used to go there for the musty ale served in pewter mugs with glass bottoms, for the lush mutton chops, and, now and then, following a substantial lunch with a quart or two of ale, a delicate dessert consisting of a Welsh rarebit poured over a wedge of hot mince pie. But the best ale served anywhere in the greater city in those days was set before you in the barroom of the old Clarendon Hotel, in Brooklyn, just across the street from the Post Office building. It was Evans's ale, and it was drawn from wooden casks, through wooden spigots. A great deal of it was sold there, so it was always running fresh and cool-never very cold, only cool. It was, to my mind, better than Bass's.

Marquis doesn't state that the Evans ale at Clarendon Hotel was musty ale, but given that Lane Bros. Café and Restaurant (in Brooklyn) sold 'Evans' musty ale' and Marquis' liking for the type, some Evans ale at the hotel was probably musty ale.

A ROYAL SMILE 15 c.		BAR	
		Musty Ale -	.10
		Cream " -	.10
		Burton " -	.15
		Bass " -	.15
		Pilsner -	.10
		Munchner -	.10
		Knickerbocker -	.05
		WHISKEY	
		Our Private Rye '66	.15
		" " Scotch	.15
VEGETABLES		COCKTAILS	
Lyonnaise Potatoes	.15	Farrish's Appetizer	.20
Hashbrown "	.15	Chinese -	.25
French Peas -	.25	Clover Club "	.20
Asparagus -	.25	New Orleans Fizz	.20
Combination Salad	.30		



Figure 2. Farrish's Chop House menu (1913). Farrish's was a British-style chop house in New York City, a type popular in the northeast before Prohibition. It was founded in 1854 and advertised various steaks, mutton chops, 'Irish' bacon and ham, Stilton cheese and other dishes which John Bull evoked in the American imagination. In addition to its draught musty ale, Cream Ale, Burton Ale, and Bass Ale were offered, suggesting the musty ale was a different type. Courtesy of New York Public Library, www.nypl.org and believed in public domain.

H.L. Mencken, the bumptious American writer and critic known for his beer savvy, wrote in 1920s dry



*Figure 3. An 1893 photograph of the interior of Park House, aka Billy Park's Chop House, Boston, MA. The figure seated is William D. (Billy) Park, son of the English immigrant founder, Thomas Park. Billy Park's closed two years later. No beer or beer dispensing equipment can be seen. The liquor, wine and beer bar was probably in another part of the restaurant. The area shown where the younger man is standing appears to be the 'cash', near the entrance. Note what appear to be cigar boxes in a glass case, to the left of the standing figure. Source: Philip Bergen (1990) *Old Boston in Early Photographs, 1850-1918*: 174 Prints from the Collection of the Bostonian Society. New York: Dover Publications. Reproduced with kind permission, Dover Publications and the Bostonian Society.*

America of the pre-Prohibition 'musty ale of Losekam's in Washington [D.C.]'.²⁷ Many in *belle lettres* appreciated the older, English-inspired ale and porter tradition and musty ale was of a piece with this. Mencken, in contrast, was a lager partisan so his inclusion of musty ale in the pantheon of pre-Prohibition beer experiences testifies that the drink had a certain cachet.

The spiritual centre of musty ale was surely the restaurant in Boston called Park House, known familiarly as Billy Park's. It was founded in 1842 by an English immigrant and closed in 1895.²⁸ Its advertise-

ments often stressed its specialty of musty ale and Park House claimed to originate it, which is unlikely for the U.S. as a whole but possible for the Boston area at least. In line with many restaurants which offered musty ale Billy Park's served British and American dishes such as mutton chops, Welsh rarebit, golden buck, and broiled lobster. Musty ale was not typically associated with German-style eating or lager haunts although its Britannic aura later dimmed.

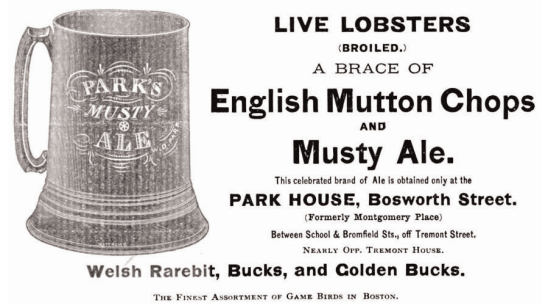
Musty ale had Ivy League and generally higher-rank associations than lager and other beer at the time. Park

House advertised its ‘celebrated’ musty ale and some of its specialty foods in a handsome ad in *The Harvard Advocate*.²⁹ The ad pictured a pewter mug and mentioned cheese dishes such as Welsh Rarebit and Golden Buck, signature accompaniments to musty ale. Pewter was frequently mentioned in connection with musty ale which enhanced its Anglophile image as pewter vessels for beer were common in this period in England. The closing of Park House in 1895 resulted in elegiac articles in the Northeast press and beyond. That is saying something since anti-alcohol sentiment was cresting in the country.³⁰ The following lines, published in *The Sun* in New York, were typical:

We print this morning a melancholy bit of news from Boston. Billy Parks is going to close next Monday. Who that knows Boston knows not Billy Park’s? The broiled live lobsters that have been eaten there would make a red cravat of their own width around the world. The musty ale that has kissed pewter there would be an adequate and improving substitute for the Gulf of Mexico. All the fowls of the air and the coop, every aligerent edible from roe to reedbird, was to be had at Billy’s. Oliver Wendell Holmes used to live on the street since made more memorable by Billy’s.³¹

Park House was founded years before J.B. Hume advertised his musty ale in Cincinnati and New York, but it is unclear when the musty ale was introduced. 20 years after Billy Park’s closed a Maryland newspaper reported that when students had finished a keg of musty ale in a saloon near Harvard - it well have been Billy Park’s - the ‘boniface’ ordered a new supply of ale ‘made musty in brewing’.³² This admittedly vague formulation may suggest Boston’s musty ale was a mixture, or the result of a special process. It is possible to read the story as reporting or trying to create an origin-myth, with the implication youthful ‘connoisseurs’ incorrectly prized inferior ale giving rise comically to a gastronomic specialty of Massachusetts. While unclear in some respects, the account does confirm the haute associations of musty ale.

Nonetheless, musty ale was also consumed by a wider public. It was an accompaniment to some of the beef-steak dinners held by fraternal associations at the turn of the century in New York and New Jersey. Musty ale was featured at The Masonic Club of Brooklyn’s annual beefsteak dinner on 12 March 1910.³³ ‘Dutch steins’



LIVE LOBSTERS
(BROILED.)
A BRACE OF
English Mutton Chops
AND
Musty Ale.
This celebrated brand of Ale is obtained only at the
PARK HOUSE, Bosworth Street.
(Formerly Montgomery Place)
Between School & Bromfield Sts., off Tremont Street.
NEARLY OPP. TREMONT HOUSE.
Welsh Rarebit, Bucks, and Golden Bucks.
THE FINEST ASSORTMENT OF GAME BIRDS IN BOSTON.

Figure 4. This handsome, prominent ad of Billy Park’s chop house in a premier arts and literary journal testified to the popularity of musty ale and its Britannic fare, not just in Academe, but its commanding heights. If any beer of America in the late 1800s enjoyed social cachet, it was musty ale. Perhaps the elite university connection reflected, or was a conscious borrowing from, the venerable tradition in England of college ales and college brewing. (Thanks to Tim Holt for suggesting this dimension). Source: *The Harvard Advocate*. Vols. 37-38 (1884-1885). No page number. Reproduced with the kind permission of the Harvard Advocate of Harvard University.

were given to the masons as souvenirs. The reference to Dutch may have meant German, but in any case one can see that musty ale had reached beyond upper middle class WASP precincts.

Certainly, the Dutch-founded, British-conquered, and finally American and ethnically diverse New York had numerous haunts for musty ale. The beer’s reputation in the William Taft era is attested by an amusing series of letters in the *New York Sun* between 29 September and 6 October 1911. Opinions were offered where good musty ale could be found and the pubs that served it. Read as a whole, the letters have a memorial note, in a word, musty ale was getting hard to find.³⁴

The letter from James Dewell, Jr. of New Haven, CT lyricized the musty ale of Mory’s Temple Bar of New Haven. Even in 1911 ‘Mory’s’ was a long-established haunt of Yale students. Dewell wrote:

‘What is musty ale?’ Ah, as you sit sipping a mug of musty on an autumn afternoon in the corner of the fireplace with Louis Linder [the contemporary owner] in his gemuthlich old Mory’s inn watching the dying day cast her golden shadows through the little window-panes, it is music, poetry, art.³⁵

The use of a German term to denote comfort and complaisance is further evidence that by 1911, and even in preppy surroundings, musty ale's Britannic image was blurring. This levelling tendency did not, however, prevent the beer from exiting the market after Prohibition, or at least the name did. 'Mory's' was short for Moriarty, surname of the original owner, and still exists as a private club with close associations to Yale.³⁶ Some of its menu recalls the classic era of musty ale but there is no musty ale on the current drinks section, sadly. In 1909, the Whiffenpoofs, the famed Yale senior men's musical ensemble, was formed and has sung ever since at Mory's including their signature Whiffenpoof song.³⁷ The lyric does not reference beer or other alcohol directly but there can be little doubt that 'glasses raised on high' signalled to many the famous ale of the house:

To the tables down at Mory's, to the place where Louie
Lindner dwells
To the dear old Temple bar we love so well
Sing the Whiffenpoofs assembled, with their glasses raised
on high
And the magic of their singing casts its spell.

In the *Sun's* correspondence, a 'G.G.' expressed sorrow at the disappearance of a bar on Thames Street, Manhattan, Jimmy Hartigan's, which had sold musty ale.³⁸ It was, he said, 'far from pretentious' yet for the 'elect' including 'bankers and brokers'. G.G. wrote that Hartigan's musty ale was a 'black' beverage from Ireland with a 'creamy froth'. This suggests it was a stout or porter, quite possibly Guinness which had long been available in New York.³⁹ The black beer reference appears unique in a musty ale context as musty ale has not, unlike for England as will appear below, been documented for Ireland. Still, if musty ale relied for its essence on a process of conditioning, or had a top-note of *Brettanomyces* taste, a black beer might be consistent with this.

In Ireland⁴⁰ and apparently in parts of Scotland and England⁴¹ some beer in this period was conditioned by blending in partly-fermented wort. It stimulated a renewal of fermentation and produced a close, creamy head liked in certain parts of Britain. If the wort was viewed as 'musty' due, counter-intuitively, to its "new" character.⁴² A creamy porter or stout could be termed musty. We incline, however, that *Brettanomyces* is a more persuasive explanation for a musty Irish stout of c. 1900. The Burton snatch theory is unlikely to apply

here since porter and stout were typically made with soft water which lacked the necessary minerals to cause the characteristic taste.

The musty name posed a conundrum for Harold Dobbler, a participant in the *Sun's* beerological confab. His etymological curiosity is commendable and to all appearances was unique in the era of musty ale. Dobbler wrote this doggerel to salute his favoured beverage:

They drink and love you, musty ale, but de'll [sic] a one
can tell,
Where you in blazes first did get your name,
What caused you to be 'musty' though you look clear as
a bell
Well, musty, here is to you just the same.⁴³

Not all restaurants and saloons affecting an English mien sold an ale styled musty. The Bell In Hand in Pi Alley, Boston was noted for its ale served in pewter, but evidence that it sold musty ale as such is contradictory.⁴⁴ Joseph Mitchell's 1940 paean⁴⁵ to the venerable McSorley's Old Ale House on East 7th Street in Manhattan makes no reference to musty ale.

The Old Grapevine was another ancient watering hole, reputed for its mutton pies and ale until it closed in 1915. The *New York Times*, in a long memorial story, used the term musty ale once but the former owner interviewed in the story, Scots-born Alec McLelland, didn't use the term or discuss his beer in any detail.⁴⁶ A handsome image of the Grapevine, probably late-1800s vintage, survives showing a Ballantine Brewery sign on the wall.⁴⁷ No reference to musty ale is made, and the well-known Ballantine Brewery (of Newark, NJ at the time) is not known to have marketed a 'musty' ale although it did produce an India Pale Ale and other ales.⁴⁸ Possibly, the *Times* journalist used the term musty ale in a loose sense. This is perhaps additional evidence that musty ale, or some musty ale, was an optional term for English pale or Burton ale or similar ales as brewed in America.

Musty ale in England

British professional brewing publications in the Victorian and Edwardian eras do not to our knowledge mention musty ale as a type-description of beer. Still,

there is a connection of musty ale to England between 1859 and 1885 at least. A number of 'musty ale stores' and other retail outlets for musty ale existed in Liverpool, Birkenhead and Bristol in this period. Indeed, a location in Liverpool sold 'prime seven-year-old musty ale'.⁴⁹ It appears the Liverpool pubs were public houses, not breweries, but perhaps they also brewed beer or sold beer at depots for drinking off-premises.

The fact that musty ale was sold in England aged seven years - if it really was that old - suggests it could have been simply a very old stock ale without any mixing or special brewing process being involved, although a seven year old beer likely would have been flat and needed treatment in some way to make it saleable. While American porter, stout and ale before 1900 were broadly similar to British originals, it is not clear whether English musty ale of the 1800s inspired the American ones, or *vice versa*. An American newspaper account in 1889 referred to 'Bass's old musty ale'.⁵⁰ The musty moniker was probably an American interpolation, as it is doubtful Bass in Burton-on-Trent branded its beer in this way, even for its strong ales.⁵¹ It is noteworthy though that in 1939 in a book on cocktails and other drinks, the American Charles H. Baker, Jr. wrote:

In all receipts for heated, mulled, or otherwise spiced ale, again we recommend English Bass, or any English Musty Ale, most heartily in preference to our present list of domestic products ...⁵²

Baker, Jr. was born in 1892 and probably had little experience with musty ale before Prohibition. Still, as a drinks writer and albeit writing late in the story of musty ale, his statement seems to conflate musty ale and English ale, especially Bass Pale Ale, a famed export from the days of the India trade. Baker's statement is the more interesting as, during Congressional hearings on proposed pure food laws held in 1902, Bass ale was said to have the 'Bass stink', which I discuss further below.

American tourists describing their experiences in England occasionally mentioned drinking musty ale or observing its consumption. Probably they used the musty term from experience at home, not from something they had seen or heard in Britain. In a 1914 story discussing typical English foods *in situ* an American

described 'old musty ale' as a good accompaniment to mutton chops and pickled walnuts.⁵³ Perhaps English waiters were used to hearing Americans request musty ale, but demurred from discussing the name with them out of deference.

The fact that musty ale was retailed in England in the later 1800s does suggest perhaps that even after 1900 some publicans knew it was an old-fashioned name for a draft beer typically offered in the pub.

Musty ale - some literature and etymology

'Musty' generally connotes mouldy, stale, antiquated, while moist means lightly wet, damp, rainy.⁵⁴ 'Must', however, has a specialised meaning in wine-making, it refers to grape juice before fermentation is complete, and derives from *mustum*, Latin for new.⁵⁵

A number of references to musty ale or moisty ale exists in general literature, of some antiquity. The earliest appears to be in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Manciple's Prologue and Tale*. The following extract from the Prologue with interlinear translation is instructive:

And to the Manciple thanne spak oure Hoost:
And to the Manciple then spoke our Host:
 57 'By cause drynke hath dominacioun
'Because drink has domination
 58 Upon this man, by my savacioun,
Upon this man, by my salvation,
 59 I trowe he lewedly wolde telle his tale.
I believe he would tell his tale badly.
 60 For, were it wyn or oold or moysty ale
For, were it wine or old or new ale
 61 That he hath dronke, he spekeþ in his nose,
That he has drunk, he speaks in his nose,
 62 And fneseth faste, and eek he hath the pose.
*And sneezes fast, and also he has a head cold'*⁵⁶

The variant spelling 'moysty', rendered in some editions as moisty, seems even without recourse to specialist sources to mean 'new', given it is separated disjunctively from the term 'oold' (old) and also the general sense of moist as fresh. The impression is confirmed by Walter Skeat in *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* where he states that Chaucer's use of 'moisty' for ale really meant 'musty', i.e., new.⁵⁷

Charles Clarke, in *The Riches of Chaucer*, interprets 'moist' in 'shoes full moist and new' (*The Canterbury Tales*) as from Latin's *mustus*, meaning young, new, fresh, and further notes 'in Manciples Prologue, moisty ale is opposed to old - Tyr'.⁵⁸ It seems arguable Chaucer's use of moisty was a cognate or corruption of musty as used in the sense of new or fresh.

In contrast, later literary usages, even of some antiquity, clearly use 'musty' in the modern sense, even in a drink context. Dr. William King's (1663-1712) *The Old Cheese* describes a litany of characteristics for beer as follows:

This beer is sour - this musty, thick, and stale
And worse than anything, except the ale.⁵⁹

Clearly the beer(s) referred to were sour or fetid, turbid, and too old. Musty cannot mean here fresh and new. Similarly, the playwright Philip Massinger, in *A New Way To Pay Old Debts*, published in 1633, has the character Greedy state:

... besides thy musty ale, That hath destroy'd many
of the king's liege people,
Thou never hadst in thy house, to stay men's stomachs,
A piece of Suffolk cheese,
or gammon of bacon ...⁶⁰

Again, musty ale is seen as bad ale, something inferior and even dangerous. This is consistent with the conventional meaning of musty as stale or mouldy in that a comestible which is too old can be dangerous to health. One can read the passage as referring simply to over-serving any beer, new or old, but the sense of old and spoiled is more logical as the context is an ale-house licensee being deprived of his license due to abuse of privilege.

From Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1600):

How like a new cartwheel my dame speaks! And she looks
like an old musty ale-bottle going to scalding.⁶¹

An ale-bottle was a wood or leather bottle for beer - the scalding was obviously to cleanse out the must and decay. The similes make it evident nothing connoting a new or fresh quality can be inferred from Dekker's use of musty.

Shakespeare uses the term musty albeit not in an ale context. In *Hamlet*, the protagonist states of the proverb '... while the grass grows- [the horse starves]...' that it is 'something musty'.⁶² In other words, old, hackneyed. Certainly, nothing in the sense of new or fresh arises.

Such literary instances maintain a kind of separate existence in the history of musty ale, the case of musty ale in Victorian England apart. They prompt the notion that musty ale functioned much like 'English brown ale' did, as a literary datum more than anything connected to daily life.⁶³

The sense of musty in Anglo-American discourse in the mid-1800s was well put by George Whitefield Samson (an American) in *The Divine Law as to Wines*:

The English, living outside the wine region, give a precisely opposite meaning to the Latin term 'musty'.⁶⁴

Chaucer's usage of moisty/musty reflects a sense still understood in the wine world, but too many later usages in the 'opposite' sense, even pertaining to beer, suggest the old sense was outmoded certainly by the 1800s. Still, the possibility that the Chaucerian sense illuminates the term 'musty' for at least some musty ale of the 1800s cannot be rejected with certainty.

Musty ale in the sense of spoiled, inferior beer

The sense of a musty beer or musty cask as spoiled and substandard is probably immemorial. Many examples can be given from the heyday of musty ale in America, all directed to how to cure these ills.⁶⁵

In 1832 a resident of Lowville, NY, Moses Granger, registered a patent to re-use in brewing 'sour or musty' ale.⁶⁶ It seems he used beer not drinkable on its own as the mashing liquor for new malt. This appears to be a variant of the traditional nostrums⁶⁷ to cure bad beer of its ills and probably bears no connection to the musty ale of the marketplace later in the century.

Musty ale -the lager connection

In 1891 John Hartin of Boston, MA - musty ale country - was issued a patent for an improved beer dispense

system.⁶⁸ The ‘specifications’ for the patent read in part as follows:

The apparatus here shown is also useful in mixing liquors as, for instance, lager and ale to form what is known as musty ale. In this case one supply-pipe 1:3 connects with a barrel of lager-beer, while the other connects with a barrel of ale. Both faucets 1) 1) are opened more or less, as desired, allowing the two liquors to mingle in any desired proportion in the reservoir A, from which it may flow through any number of distributing-pipes to various parts of the bar.

This is a bald statement that American musty ale was a mix of lager and ale. Here, the ale is not specified as any specific type.

At least three other sources, also pertaining to the retail beer environment, state that musty ale was a mix of lager and ale. The first, from 1903, is from bartender Tim Daly who wrote a manual of recipes for cocktails and other drinks.⁶⁹ The second appears just after Prohibition, in connection with the ale served at Keen’s, a New York chophouse founded in the 1800s. The third is very late, 1980, in Washington, D.C.

In Daly’s *Bartenders’ Encyclopedia*, published in Massachusetts, this recipe for musty ale appears:

Musty Ale.
Use large glass or pewter mug.
Two-thirds fill with old ale.
One-third fill with lager beer.

These simple directions are very clear. American old or stock ale⁷⁰ would often have been tart from prolonged age⁷¹ and often in practice was drawn too flat.⁷² Lager would have been fizzy and rich-bodied, as lager in this period had a high final gravity compared to the mass market norm today.⁷³ These traits would have off-set over-dryness and stillness in the old ales. Daly’s specification for the ale to be old prompts one to think he didn’t think new - lively or present use - ale needed ‘correction’, but this doesn’t mean some new ale wasn’t also blended with lager.

In 1934, a Brooklyn news story on Keen’s chophouse in New York referred to its ale as a mixture of a ‘special still ale’ and ‘beer’ (meaning lager).⁷⁴ This is an

Malt Beverages			
		HARVEY'S Famous Musty Ale stein	45
95	1.10	<i>A house specialty, this unique beverage, made from a 50 year old secret formula, has delighted our guests for as many years. Try this distinctively different drink.</i>	
	1.10		
	1.10		
1.00	1.15		
1.00	1.15		
95	1.10	Budweiser, Schlitz	50
95	1.10	Ballantine Ale	50
95	1.10	Blatz, Miller's High Life	50
95	1.10	Pabst Blue Ribbon	50
1.10			
Imported Beer, Bottled			
		Heineken	75
70		Carlsberg	75
95		Guinness Stout	75
75		Bass Ale	75
95			
80			
Draught Beer			
90		Glass Stein	
		Ballantine Ale 25	40
		Harvey's Famous Musty Ale	45
		Michelob Beer 25	40
		Wurzburger	50

Figure 5. 'Harvey's Famous Restaurant menu' (1961). The extract shown of the stylish, 1960s menu advertises musty ale as a 50 year old specialty. This rare survival of musty ale post-Prohibition was, no doubt, a throwback due to Harvey's 19th century origins as a premier fish house in Washington, D.C. The pre-Prohibition fish and oyster house was another typical venue where musty ale could be enjoyed. Like the chop house, it evoked English and old stock American associations. Courtesy of New York Public Library, www.nypl.org and believed in the public domain.

obvious reference to musty ale albeit the term was not used (below we cite two Keen’s menu appearances for ‘musty ale’ in the 1900s).

In 1980, the restaurant reviewer Phyllis Richman covered Harvey's restaurant, an old fish house in Washington, D.C. that still carried musty ale.⁷⁵ She evidently asked what it was, and reported: 'To wash these down, try a musty ale, which is a mug of ale mixed with beer'. The use of 'beer' in the 1934 Keen's story and by Richman in 1980 to mean lager as opposed to ale is consistent with market terminology in the pre-craft beer era in the U.S.⁷⁶ In 1980, no ale would have been as 'old' (or hoppy) as Tim Daly understood in 1903. Still, given the profusion of beers sold before Prohibition and the vagaries of bar service (then no less than now), different types of lager and ale were probably mixed. The 1980 example must be accepted as authentic. It was probably a mix of Bass, or that type of English ale, and an adjunct lager.

Interesting as the lager-ale mixing is, we must be alert it does not blind us to further potential explanations of musty ale's origin. In fact, the mixing may have been an expedient adopted at retail level to mimic the brewer's musty ale, albeit ending by its own type. What can we glean of the brewer's musty ale, then?

Krausening giving rise to a 'musty' flavour

Krausening is a method of conditioning beer, derived from German practice; it involves adding beer in the first phase of fermentation to a finished batch of beer to carbonate it via a renewed fermentation.⁷⁷ Many 19th century sources explain the technique. In the United States, some ales were krausened, for example, lively ale and sparkling ale, and it can be inferred sometimes even lager wort was used.⁷⁸

The krausening caused a new fermentation due to its contribution of yeast and unfermented maltose to the finished batch. The beer became well-carbonated and acquired a lasting, creamy head. The process was similar to the English idea of priming - adding sugar to racked beer to impart a final sparkle - and also to the British practices of using heading or fillings to condition beer, as discussed above. Professional opinion was inclined against using lager-wort to krausen ale because it would impart too much lager character,⁷⁹ but it cannot be doubted the practice occurred. The following words from W.B. Keller's (1893) *Beer and Ale Bottlers' Manual* are relevant:

... for bottling, lager beer should be perfectly clear, if not brilliant, in appearance, and free from the slightest musty taste. The latter is given by the introduction of an age-accelerating material. Premature 'ripening', by using too much 'krausen' beer, leads to a rapid spoilage in bottling stock, and contributes a peculiar flavor to the beer, which should condemn it.⁸⁰

The author stated that adding krausen would cause a 'musty' taste. How could that arise?

American 6-row barley was mainly the variety used to produce brewer's malt in the U.S. in the late 1800s.⁸¹ This type, especially when lightly kilned, can result in high amounts of dimethyl sulphide (DMS), a 'green' flavour often characterised as cooked cabbage-like.⁸² The flavour can, or in our view, be a stinky note not unlike a sulphur springs.

Leopold Nathan was the German-born, Swiss inventor of the cylindro-conical fermenter. Speaking during a U.S. tour on the eve of WWI, he noted the presence of 'undesirable "green" aromas' in American lager which he said were from 'primary fermentation'. He added that these flavours were not acceptable in Europe where production and carbonation processes were designed to eliminate them.⁸³ Nathan pointed the finger at krausening as contributing to the problem and excused the practice only where a small amount of krausen was added to a bulk of well-aged beer so as to result in a 'tinge of youngishness', which he said was acceptable in Europe. Nathan argued that his new fermentation system, when used with a process of carbon dioxide 'washing', would eliminate these undesirable tastes.⁸⁴

R. Parsons in 1978, a scientist with Bass Productions in Burton, stated point-blank in the *Journal of the Institute of Brewing* that the krausening of lager beer increased the DMS level - this ties in perfectly to what Leopold Nathan said 65 years earlier.⁸⁵ If, as seems likely, some American ales were conditioned using lager-krausen, the funky-tasting DMS might have prompted the term musty ale. It would have been a way to describe ale that tasted rather like the lager Leopold Nathan said was too green. *The Beer and Ale Bottlers Manual* may have been referring obliquely to the musty ale of the marketplace, in a word.

Musty ale as related to *Brettanomyces*

Long-stored beers, lagers but especially ales and stout in the period before modern microbiological controls, were frequently infected with so-called wild yeast, or *Brettanomyces*. ‘Brett’ was famously isolated by Claussen, in the Netherlands as the 19th century closed, from the cocktail of cellular and other organisms in such beers.⁸⁶ Claussen gave the yeast (really a family of yeasts) its name, meaning the British yeast, because English pale ales, stouts and other beers which received long storage tended to exhibit particular flavours associated with this yeast. These flavours have long been characterized in brewing circles as barnyard, horse blanket, and similar epithets.

Brettanomyces was studied in the 1900s to refine the work of Claussen. The Dutch scientist Custers isolated the yeast in 1940 from numerous samples of English beer including Bass Pale Ale, the beer Charles Baker, Jr. had called musty a year earlier.⁸⁷ *Brettanomyces* is a secondary organism in that it becomes active after the primary yeast strain, the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, has converted maltose and other fermentable sugars in wort to alcohol, carbon dioxide, and other by-products. Brett has the ability to convert dextrin in beer to these by-products, which normal brewer’s yeast cannot, and thus contributes both to conditioning beer and the special flavours mentioned.

Prior to the development of pure yeast cultures, the yeast for brewing was often a mixture of ‘top’ or ‘bottom’ *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, wild yeast or brett, and bacteria, often lactic acid bacteria. The wild yeast element might reside in wood vessels or elsewhere in the brewery environment, especially before wood vessels were generally abandoned in brewing and plants converted to being technically sterile.

The term musty as applied to the sensory impact of brett is not an inapt term. Because musty ale in the United States sometimes seemed not more than a synonym for Bass Pale Ale or the type of ale in general which received months of storage in wood before being tapped or bottled, the question arises: did ‘musty’ derive from the brett?

This is almost certain, we think, for some musty ale. We mentioned earlier that the black Irish beer in Jimmy

Hartigan’s bar in New York c. 1900 may have been infected with brett since the horseblanket taste was a characteristic of porter production then, especially for exported stout.

Sodium bisulphite, the Burton Snatch, and musty ale

From 1861, the use in British brewing of sodium bisulphite, lime bisulphite, and similar agents became common.⁸⁸ These preservatives had a number of effects felt useful but the retarding of bacterial action was the most important as it prevented or delayed the souring of beer.

‘Antiseptics’ was the omnibus Victorian term to describe such chemicals which in solution form dilute compounds of sulphuric acid. These and other preservatives, especially salicylic acid, were employed at different stages of the brewing process: mashing, boiling, and when beer was transferred to casks for shipment or bottled. Antiseptics weren’t always used, it might depend on the time of year, the style of beer, or the brewer’s proclivity. Still, as can be seen from testimony in 1902 before a Congressional committee in Washington looking at food safety issues,⁸⁹ many English brewers clearly used these additives especially when beer was sent to distant markets. Some American brewers testified they used antiseptics, too. One, a top-fermentation brewer named Evans, clearly from C.H. Evans & Sons of Hudson, NY, testified he used no additives. He implied that long storage (and no doubt strong hopping) ensured stability for his beer, anywhere from eight months to eight years.⁹⁰

Sodium bisulphite can impart a sulphury ‘stench’ to beer, a disadvantage noted in an 1885 discussion⁹¹ by the English brewing writer Southby. Many contemporary,⁹² and also modern, sources state the same thing: the effect is not controversial although yeast type apparently plays a role as well.⁹³ In 1902, a tell-tale sulphury tang in beer was thought to point to the use of bisulphite or other antiseptics since their effects were poorly understood, hence the investigation by law-makers.

Could antiseptics in English models have explained the emergence of an American ale type, thenceforth

termed musty, designed to emulate a presumed authentic taste? This seems unlikely to us, as the sustained use in British brewing of antiseptics started after 1861 as stated above, and musty ale is documented in America before that. Also, use of antiseptics in exported English beer would not have been invariable - Bass in the Congressional hearing denied using them in a sworn affidavit. Probably, also, the disagreeable flavour would have varied from brewer to brewer and probably from batch to batch. Still, some witnesses at the hearing thought Bass must use antiseptics - the witness Wyatt, a chemist, stated his analyses showed that it did. The term 'Bass stink' was mentioned in the testimony, a quality immediately evident when the bottle was opened, witnesses said.

If we take Bass at its word in 1902, the 'Bass stink' likely resulted, not from the use of antiseptics, but from a brett influence during the lengthy aging of its beer and/or the 'Burton snatch', a 'spoiled egg' smell and taste characteristic (then and still) of beer made in the Trent Valley. The waters used by Bass and Allsopp had high gypsum concentrations,⁹⁴ and while these contributed positively - enhancing hop character and dryness in the beer - they had a side effect of imparting the boiled egg aroma and taste. In time the market accepted, even prized, this character - today we might call it an instance of *terroir*.

The sensory description in 1902 of a 'Bass stink' must be linked to Charles Baker, Jr. calling Bass ale 'musty' in 1939 and to Custers finding brett yeast in Bass bottles the year after. In a word, Bass was funky, and since it was an early import to the U.S. (1851 at least as shown above),⁹⁵ Bass and other Trent Valley imports were probably a powerful stimulus to development of American musty ale. The imitation could have been achieved in a number of ways: adding gypsum to the brewing liquor (Burtonization, long familiar to brewers internationally); providing long aging in wood; and possibly even adding antiseptics to copy the sulphur tang.

Reports of the musty ale palate

There is little to go on here, but one important element is that Park House placed an ad in 1884 in the *Boston Evening Transcript* in which it indicated traits of its musty ale, or rather, what the musty ale was not.⁹⁶ The

musty ale was described as, 'not sour, not strong, not old, not musty'. To add to the provocative 'not musty', these words followed: 'If it was musty, it would not be fit to drink'. Clearly, the restaurant was trying to parry the normal consumer reaction that 'musty' meant too old, mouldy, spoiled. It invited readers to apply a specialized sense to Park's Musty Ale. Few adherents of musty ale probably ever saw those lines, yet Billy Park's had no trouble selling its beer, *au contraire*.

But still, the advert only goes so far as it puts forth essentially a negative definition. It suggests a medium-strength beer, perhaps 5% ABV versus the often-stronger ales of the time, with a fresh character (not tart) and not having a taste reminiscent of old boots. But that does not tell us a great deal. Perhaps Park House's musty ale was English-style pale ale not long aged (so no brett from a secondary fermentation) and not featuring the Burton sulphury taste associated with gypsum well water. Indeed it is not without interest that Boston's public water supply is notably soft.⁹⁷ Maybe Park's musty ale was a mix of lager and an anodyne ale.

Because some musty ale bore the 'old' description, and in any case given the number of beers marketed as musty ale before Prohibition, strength and sensory qualities may have varied from brewer to brewer.

Another source, more of a piece with the Park House advertisement, suggests musty ale had a *new* ale character.⁹⁸ In 1920 in Virginia, a university professor brewed his own beer contrary to the Prohibition laws. He kept notes, and wrote of a brew that had fermented for nine days: 'This is a good musty ale with good alcoholic [sic] - but sweet'.

Why would a home brewer have likened his infant beer to pre-Prohibition musty ale? Presumably this was due to its yeasty, ale-like, character - almost all homebrewing then was technically ale, not lager. Why was the beer too sweet? The finishing gravity may have been higher than the brewer aimed for, but also a mix of old ale with lager or a krausened ale before Prohibition probably offered a better balance than the professor's tyro effort. It is possible though his beer was simply suffused with DMS, albeit an ale fermentation.⁹⁹

It is against the odds that a taste note on musty ale was written as late as 1991, but it was.¹⁰⁰ In that year, a Briton

in Washington, D.C. was dining in a restaurant unnamed but which was indubitably Harvey's, the Washington, D.C. restaurant referred to earlier. Harvey's, an old institution founded in 1858, had a long run as a resort of the powerful and famous. (It went out of business not long after the report below was written). In the February 1991 issue of the journal *New Scientist*, Ariadne (a pseudonym) wrote:

On a trip to Washington DC I was taken to a famous restaurant. It specialised in fish, I think but such was the insistence on hygiene that the prawns tasted strongly of chlorine and not much else. One of the place's attractions was that it served what it called 'musty ale'. This turned out to be a thin drink resembling a watered-down English mild. Having said that, and in an effort to ward off the inevitable letters from the US accusing me of being anti-American, I should state that I have memories of splendid meals in the US, including one at a restaurant in which it was Christmas every day of the year.

Harvey's was not mentioned by name but there is little doubt the restaurant discussed was Harvey's. We have seen how Phyllis Richman encountered its musty ale in 1980. So rare was any sighting of musty ale by the 1990s that there can be no doubt the *New Scientist* encountered the same beer at Harvey's.

The nub of the review is 'watered down English mild'. Mild ale circa-1990 in my own memory was sweet, low-hopped, and not sour unless poorly kept. Mild ale by then was fairly weak, and the idea that Harvey's musty ale was even weaker is hard to parse, but I think Ariadne meant weak in taste, not alcohol. American standard lager of the day had a bland taste, and mixing that with Bass Ale or something similar could be viewed as producing a weak, mild ale flavour.

Given the differences in brewing between 1991 and 1903 when Tim Daly was writing, Daly's 'mixture' form of musty ale probably had more character than 'watered-down English mild' although both versions must qualify as musty ale. The mixed ale and lager at Keen's in 1934 in New York was also probably more characterful than what Harvey's served in 1991. Still, all these can be viewed as a kind of English 'light and bitter' (mixture of bottled ale or lager and draft bitter). Perhaps the original of the mix genre was intended to duplicate the fizzy character and other qualities of bottled Bass.

Musty ale - Post-National Prohibition and Repeal

Musty ale has a much attenuated, but discernible post-1919 career. The fashion to sell it died down almost completely, but beers under that name were occasionally offered, generally in old-line restaurants such as the chophouse or fish-house.

A 1941 menu of Keen's Chophouse advertised 'draught musty ale' (brewer not mentioned).¹⁰¹ On Keen's menu in 1973¹⁰² the draft beers offered were 'Keen's Musty Ale or Light Beer' and 'Bass Ale'. And we have seen how Harvey's restaurant in Washington, D.C. carried musty ale in 1980 and 1991. There are stray references to musty ale in topical literature or *belles-lettres* from the 1920s to the 1940s, no doubt a nostalgia reference for older readers.¹⁰³ Harvey's was not quite the last to vend musty ale. At the time of writing, Doyle's Cafe in Boston, MA offers a JP Musty Ale. It is a blend of draft ale and lager from craft pioneer Sam Adams, apparently blended by the bar itself.

Conclusion

Musty ale in America was primarily a phenomenon of the Northeast, an old region settled by Britons in large numbers whose cultural influence long endured. The beer carried a nimbus of Albion in that it was often served in refined saloons and relatively exclusive chop-houses or fish houses. Certain foods were associated with musty ale to the end in America, especially mutton chops and Welsh rarebit, English types again. Probably due to the British associations, musty ale enjoyed a higher social rank than lager certainly. This extended to patronage by the Ivy League and elite business circles. Nonetheless, a certain democratisation attended musty ale by the onset of WW I.

As to the vexed question of what it was, musty ale was probably often simply a brewery's stock ale whether imported English or American, which extended often to India Pale Ale. The *Brettanomyces* flavours of barnyard and decay which characterized many beers long stored in wood vats or other vessels may explain the 'musty' in musty ale.

The classic sulphury taste of Burton pale ale, of which Bass Pale Ale was avatar, may also explain it. Indeed the

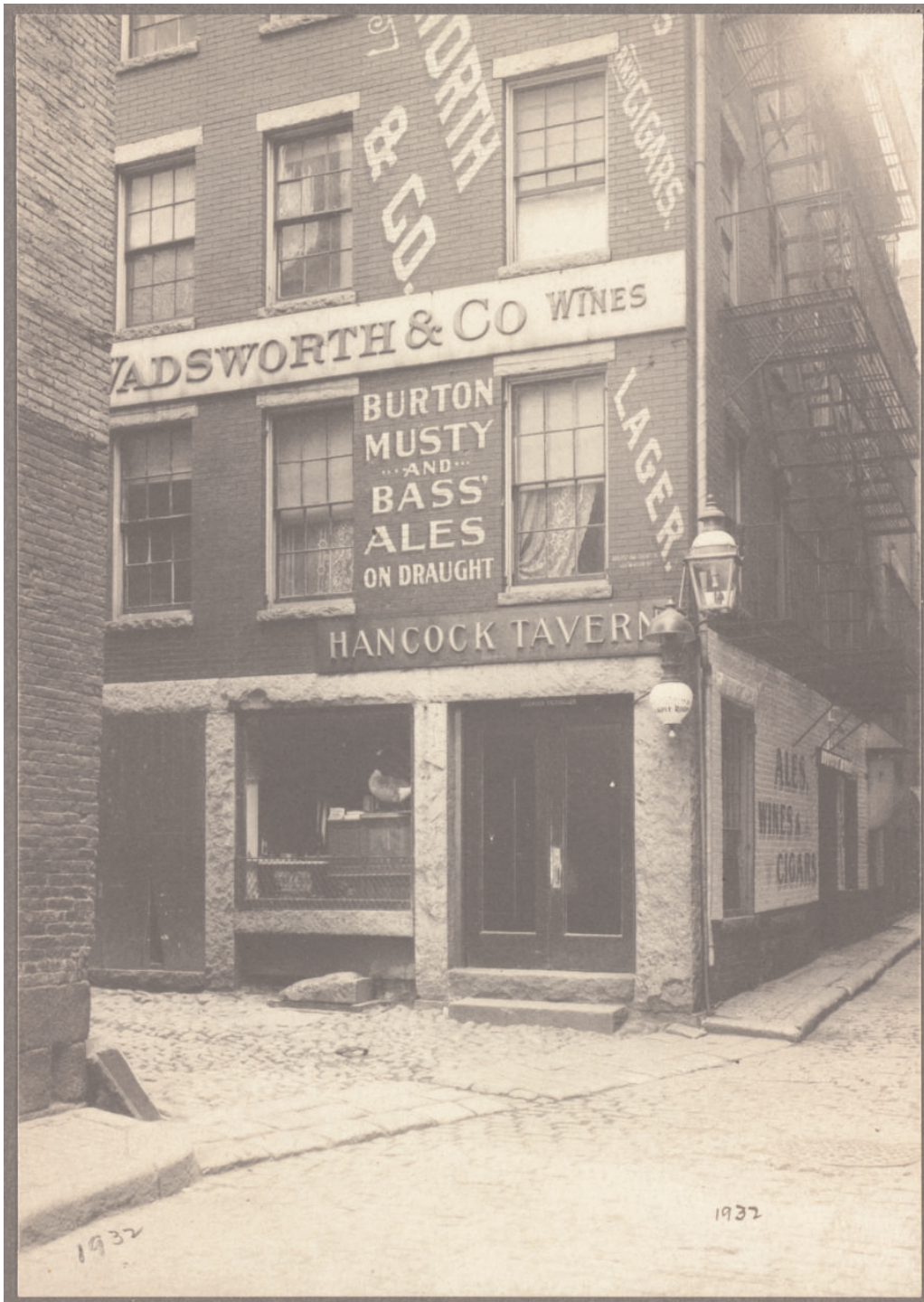


Figure 6. 'Hancock Tavern' by [unknown]. As the image of a venerable Boston, MA tavern was taken in 1932, the wall markings are surely pre-Prohibition. Available at <http://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/xp68kn09c> under a Creative Commons Attribution No. 4. Full terms at: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>.

combination of this trait with the brett character of Bass may have typified the flavour American musty ale sought to emulate. The taste of imported beer dosed with sodium bisulphite and other antispectics may, as well, have inclined some U.S. brewers to make their ale taste sulphury, hence 'musty'. These elements probably worked alone or in combination to create a 'musty ale' style in America.

A type of musty ale *known* to exist was a blend of lager and ale. The ale part was often 'old ale': sometimes tart or dry, probably brett-influenced. The lager would have been well-carbonated and sweet. For this musty ale, 'musty' perhaps came from the old ale element (brett influence) or the fact the mix was meant to emulate the Bass- and Allsopp-type product.

Some musty ale perhaps earned the term by virtue of being krausened with lager-krausen, as krausen often imparted a flavour one manual called 'musty'. This was probably the 'green' flavour, or DMS. We incline that this is a lesser explanation, but cannot rule it out.

Where the top-fermentation equivalents of krausen (heading, fillings) were used to condition ale, can the musty name be viewed as coming from the 'new' element, namely the wort or partly-fermented wort? We incline against this, as an etymology that views musty for beer as parallel to 'must' in wine vocabulary or which reaches back *simpliciter* to Chaucer seems a stretch. Still, because some musty ale clearly had a fresh character, we cannot rule this out either. Indeed, especially perhaps for the musty ale of Park House in Boston or J.B. Hume in Cincinnati and New York, maybe the long hand of Chaucer was at work.

Why did musty ale, at least so-named, disappear? Why did it not return after Repeal in 1933, setting aside a few scattered survivals in old-style restaurants? By the 1930s the dominant ale type had become sparkling ale which had gained traction from the early 1900s and displaced the old stock beers.¹⁰⁴ With its inherent mix of lager and ale attributes, sparkling ale probably rendered the mixing of different beers otiose. Also, with advances in microbiology, *Brettanomyces* was viewed as retrograde by the 1930s and the long storage of beer to encourage its gothic maturation flavours was abandoned.¹⁰⁵ To the extent brett flavours had ever characterized the musty ales, they were not destined to

return in the revamped brewing world of the 1930s.¹⁰⁶ As for the Burton snatch, it carried on in English brewing and perhaps characterized some American ales post-1933, if so the musty name at any rate was abandoned.

Withal, it is doubtful post-Repeal brewing and its associated marketing had any patience with names, whatever their origin, viewed as folksy or humorous a generation earlier. Marketing had to appeal to a post-Jazz Age generation, and also, brewing needed to be on its best behaviour given that the return of alcohol was greeted by much more business regulation than in the straw boater days.¹⁰⁷ The joke about 'good' musty ale, if joke it ever was, probably didn't wash in Thirties America.

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6. Albany Pump Station, at 1 March 2017, is a craft brewery in Albany, NY operated by a descendant of the family who owned the pre-Prohibition C.H. Evans Brewery of Hudson, NY. That brewery produced ale marketed in some media as musty ale. Albany Pump Station released an Old Musty Barleywine some years ago, at 9.50% ABV. Whether it was based on historical sources is unknown to us. Consumer

reviews can be read at the following page of the online rating service *Beer Advocate*, <https://www.beeradvocate.com/beer/profile/1619/10009/> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

7. A shorter, preliminary version of this article is contained in a series of posts on my blog, www.beeretseq.com, commencing 13 December 2016.

8. For the Vermont version, see 'F.W.G.' (11 June 1846). The Parties: New Election Songs. Green Mountain Freeman, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84023209/1846-06-11/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1789&sort=date&date2=1924&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&index=0&words=ale+musty&proxdistance=5&rows=20&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=musty+ale&andtext=&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1> (Accessed 01/03/2017). The Charter Oak's version can be read at 'F.W.G.' (7 May 1846). New Election Songs. Charter Oak, <http://cdlib.cdmhost.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15019coll9/id/17919/rec/2> (Accessed 01/03/2017). The Charter Oak piece credits an 1 April (1846) issue of the 'Waramang Roarer' as ultimate source for the 'doggerel'. This name has an Australian ring - Waramanga, near Canberra - but we have not been able to trace this apparent publication.

9. For Vermont, see the first two chapters of Staudter, K. and Krakowski, A. (2014) *Vermont Beer: History of a Brewing Revolution*, https://books.google.ca/books?id=uwV3CQAAQBAJ&pg=PT10&dq=vermont+brewing&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=vermont%20brewing&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017). For Connecticut, see Siss, W. (2015) *Connecticut Beer: A History of Nutmeg State Brewing*, pp.15-16, <https://books.google.ca/books?id=p310CQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=connecticut+beer+nutmeg+state&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiD2KbLjanSAhVq9YMKHX7OBb4Q6AEIHDA#v=onepage&q=connecticut%20beer%20nutmeg%20state&f=false> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

10. 'Increased Excitement: Hume's Withington Beer', *The Penny Press*. 22 August 1859, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85025750/1859-08-22/ed-1/seq-2/#date1=1859&index=6&rows=20&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&words=ALE+Ale+MUSTY+Musty&proxdistance=5&date2=1860&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=musty+ale&andtext=&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

11. See 'The Two Villages', *Staunton Spectator*. 28 February 1882, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024718/1882-02-28/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1882&index=5&rows=20&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&words=Ale+Cincinnati+Musty+saloon&proxdistance=5&date2=1882&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=&andtext=musty+ale+saloo>

[n+Cincinnati&dateFilterType=yearRange&page](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024718/1882-02-28/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1882&index=5&rows=20&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&words=Ale+Cincinnati+Musty+saloon&proxdistance=5&date2=1882&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=&andtext=musty+ale+saloo) (Accessed 06/03/2017).

12. See the ad in 'The Large Retail Musty Ale House', *The New York Herald*. 12 January 1862, from <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030313/1862-01-12/ed-1/seq-7/#date1=1862&index=0&date2=1862&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&words=Al+ALE+MUSTY+Musty&proxdistance=5&state=New+York&rows=20&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=musty+ale&andtext=&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1> (Accessed 06/03/2017).

13. Morgan, M. (2010) 'Over-the-Rhine: When Beer was King' (un-paginated online), https://books.google.ca/books?id=-qwjCgAAQBAJ&pg=PT43&dq=cincinnati+eight+ale+breweries+before+civil+war&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

14. Hawes, G.W. (1860) *Ohio State Gazetteer and Business Directory*, for 1860-1861. p.148, https://books.google.ca/books?id=yyBEAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA1&dq=ohio+business+directory+1860&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=snippet&q=musty&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

15. A county in Ohio is named Champaign County, as it happens. Neither Cincinnati nor Cleveland is located there, the chief town is Urbana. The use of 'Champagne' and variant spellings to designate a beer was perhaps an Ohio in-joke.

16. The Robert Smith Ale Brewing Company (1909) Inns and Alehouses of Old Philadelphia, p.21, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044009668120;view=1up;seq=27> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

17. From the beer label and memorabilia website <http://www.taverntrove.com/item.php?ItemId=81703&goback=results.php?intPageNumber=1&intResults=10> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

18. 'Nalod Importing House', *The Post-star*. 22 May 1911, from http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn84031447/1911-05-22/ed-1/seq-16/#date1=01%2F01%2F1725&sort=date&date2=12%2F31%2F2015&searchType=advanced&SearchType=prox5&sequence=0&index=10&am+p=&words=Ale+Musty&proxdistance=5&to_year=2015&rows=20&ortext=&from_year=1725&proxtext=musty+ale&phrasertext=&andtext=&dateFilterType=range&page=6 (Accessed 01/03/2017). See also this ad in the same newspaper, which clinches the origin aspect: (21 December 1910) 'Special Holiday Sale', *The Post-star*. Retrieved from: http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn84031447/1910-12-21/ed-1/seq-6/#date1=01%2F01%2F1725&index=0&date2=12%2F31%2F2015&searchType=advanced&SearchType=prox10&sequence=0&words=Ale+Bass+Musty&proxdistance=10&to_year=2015&rows=20&ortext=&from_year=1725&proxtext=Bass+musty+ale&phrasertext=&andtext=&dateFilterType=range&page=1

19. See in Brookston Beer Bulletin, 10 August 2015 Beer In Ads #1644: The Robert Smith Ale Brewing Co., <http://brookstonbeerbulletin.com/beer-in-ads-1644-the-robert-smith-ale-brewing-co/> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

20. A 1914 menu of Lane Bros. Café and Restaurant in Brooklyn, NY advertised 'Evans' Cream Ale' and 'Evans' Old Musty Ale'. The full name of the brewery was C.H. Evans & Sons. While this name is not stated in the menu, there is little doubt C.H. Evans & Sons was the source. C.H. Evans was a well-known Empire State brewery which supplied the New York area downriver from its base in Hudson, NY. The menu, dated 4 July 1914, is archived at the New York Public Library Menu Collection, [www.nypl.org](http://menus.nypl.org/menu_pages/71950), from http://menus.nypl.org/menu_pages/71950 (Accessed 01/03/2017).

21. Denney, J. (1908-1909) *Annual Directory and Gazetteer of Licensed Liquor Dealers and Druggists* (unpaginated online, see opening advertising sequence), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044105524326;view=1up;seq=3> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

22. See Smith, G. (1998) *Beer in America: The Early Years, 1587-1840*. pp.149-150, https://books.google.ca/books?id=2yHSCgAAQBAJ&pg=PA149&lpg=PA149&dq=van+nostrand+musty+ale&source=bl&ots=WxO8USoFwM&sig=Qd3pCsE_HwqxmBdOcCi3FEfZQUc&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiI9KPJyanSAhVE5oMKHTIgBT0Q6AEIKjAD#v=onepage&q=musty%20ale&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017). See also the following ad, from (1892) *Clark's Boston Blue Book*, p.91, for Van Nostrand Old Musty Ale, https://books.google.ca/books?id=eHoBAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA91&dq=musty+ale&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=musty%20ale&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

23. See the lengthy enumeration of Christian Feigenspan brands in the website of Breweriana Afficionado at www.brewaf.com, from <http://www.brewaf.com/history/other-breweries/#pon> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

24. 'Wet Landmark is With Old Owner', *The Butte Daily Post*, 2 February 1917, an instance of musty ale prized in Montana, from <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85053058/1917-02-02/ed-1/seq-7/#date1=1903&index=0&rows=20&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&words=Ale+Musty&proxdistance=5&date2=1919&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=musty+ale&andtext=&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1> (Accessed 01/03/2017). The heartland of musty ale was New England and some adjoining states but apart from Montana, musty ale was also enjoyed in Chicago, see e.g., its mention in Chop Suey A Great Fad, *The Quincy Daily Herald*, 27 June 1903, <http://archive.quincylibrary.org/olive/>

[apa/qpl/SharedView.Article.aspx?href=QDH%2F1903%2F06%2F27&id=Ar00700&sk=FAF7ED68](http://archive.quincylibrary.org/olive/apa/qpl/SharedView.Article.aspx?href=QDH%2F1903%2F06%2F27&id=Ar00700&sk=FAF7ED68) (Accessed 01/03/2017). Musty ale was also appreciated in San Francisco, see in New York Public Library Menu Collection, op. cit., menu of Tait's Restaurant dated 22 May 1907, http://menus.nypl.org/menu_pages/28676/explore (Accessed 01/03/2017).

25. See 'Monroe Brewing \$10,000 Beer', *Plattsburgh Daily Press*. 7 December 1903, http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn84031094/1903-12-07/ed-1/seq-2/#date1=01%2F01%2F1900&sort=relevance&date2=12%2F31%2F1914&searchType=advanced&SearchType=phrase&sequence=0&index=8&words=Ale+Musty&proxdistance=&to_year=1914&rows=20&ortext=&from_year=1900&proxtext=&phrasertext=musty+ale&andtext=&dateFilterType=range&page=2 (Accessed 06/03/2017). This ad had a hyper-English listing of beers, including an October ale, and set its musty ale alongside its Stock Ale and India Pale beer.

26. 'Marquis, Don', *The Saturday Review of Literature*, p.306. 10 December 1932, <https://www.unz.org/Pub/SaturdayRev-1932dec10-00306> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

27. Mencken, H.L. (2009) *Prejudices: A Selection*, (ed.) James Farrell, p.191, https://books.google.ca/books?id=wd5YYZ7NBO4C&pg=PA190&lpg=PA190&dq=mencken+bilder+Michelob&source=bl&ots=4ErLnRMVtX&sig=zIjhazu1FFeFVnzOQOrNtyh8o-g&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwifmtT7y_bRAhXC34MKHV2_DWsQ6AEIL-DAD#v=onepage&q=musty&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

28. For a good sketch of Park House, its ambience and Anglo-American menu, see O'Connell, J. (2017) *Dining Out in Boston: A Culinary History*. pp.92-94, https://books.google.ca/books?id=tpjDQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=dining+in+boston+o%27connell&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=dining%20in%20boston%20o%27connell&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017). O'Connell states Park House combined an 'antebellum' atmosphere with the 'sporting' style characteristic of the late 1800s. For the founding year of 1842 and other interesting detail on Park House, including that its musty ale was sometimes served in a flip, see 'Student Resorts. Old Memories Awakened by Cheer', *Boston Daily Evening Traveller*. 10 January 1891, <https://books.google.ca/books?id=AWT4FrX82AIC&pg=PA4&dq=billy+park%27s+1842+Boston&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwip15b4u8PSAhVG04MKHTDbCvAQ6AEIJAB#v=onepage&q=billy%20park%27s%201842%20Boston&f=false> (Accessed 07/03/2017).

29. *The Harvard Advocate*, Vol. 37-38, 1884-1885 (incompletely paginated), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044107293516;view=1up;seq=26> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

30. In Crowgey, H. (1971) *Kentucky Bourbon: The Early Years of Kentucky Whiskeymaking*, the author states of the general era that ‘... [a] tidal wave of Victorian righteousness engulfed the American plains;’.

31. *The Sun*. 14 February 1895, <http://general6402.rssing.com/browser.php?indx=63625388&item=209> (Accessed 01/03/2017). *The Sun* carried, in the same issue on the next page, a second story on Billy Park’s closing in which it lauded the ‘real’ musty ale and ‘English’ atmosphere of the eatery, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030272/1895-02-14/ed-1/seq-7/#date1=1895&index=7&rows=20&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&words=ale+musty&proxdistance=5&date2=1895&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=musty+ale&andtext=&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

32. ‘Liked “Musty” Ale’, *Catoctin Clarion*. 15 December 1915, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026688/1915-12-16/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1789&index=1&rows=20&words=ale+brewing+brewing-which+commercial+inconsiderable+made+musty+today+which&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1924&proxtext=+an+ale+made+musty+in+brewing+which+today+is+no+inconsiderable+commercial+&y=16&x=12&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

33. ‘Masonic Club Beefsteak’, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. 14 March 1910, <https://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/59747123/?terms=musty%2Bale%2BMasonic> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

34. The 1903 Chicago news story, see Note 24, above, stated that musty ale and Welsh rarebit were being replaced in the affections of the smart set by chop suey and cold tea.

35. James D. Dewell, Jr. (6 October 1911) ‘The Musty Ale of Yale’, *The Sun*, http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn83030272/1911-10-06/ed-1/seq-8/#date1=01%2F01%2F1725&sort=date&date2=12%2F31%2F2015&searchType=advanced&SearchType=prox5&sequence=0&index=19&am+p=&words=Ale+Musty&proxdistance=5&to_year=2015&rows=20&ortext=&from_year=1725&proxtext=musty+ale&phrasertext=&andtext=&dateFilterType=range&page=6 (Accessed 01/03/2017). Mory’s was the subject of journalistic hagiography years before - and after - Dewell’s letter. Some accounts did not refer to the ale as ‘musty’, see e.g., this lengthy piece, which referred to the beer as ‘English ale’ or ‘English ale and porter’, ‘Making A Yale Man’, *Meriden Weekly Republican*. 4 April 1895, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2515&dat=18950404&id=p1FHAAAAIBAJ&sjid=eP4MAAAAIBAJ&p=901,29018> (Accessed 01/03/2017). The fact that the beers were called ‘English’ in this source doesn’t mean they weren’t made in America, although they might have been imported.

Bass was being imported into New York at least as early as 1851: see the advertisement for Bass ale in casks in ‘Bass’s Pale Ale’, *Evening Post*. 14 July 1851, http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn83030390/1851-07-14/ed-1/seq-2/#date1=01%2F01%2F1800&index=6&date2=12%2F31%2F1855&searchType=advanced&SearchType=phrase&sequence=0&word=s=ALE+BASS+PALE&proxdistance=&to_year=1855&rows=20&ortext=&from_year=1800&proxtext=&phrasertext=bass+pale+ale&andtext=&dateFilterType=range&page=1 (Accessed 01/03/2017).

36. See <http://www.morysclub.org/> (Accessed 01/03/2017). The club’s website appears to make no reference to musty ale, but does refer to a non-specific ‘brown ale’ in the Club’s history. The website makes more of the Club’s venerated ‘cup’, consumed ceremoniously on certain occasions. The account in *Meriden Weekly Republican* stated it was a mixture of Champagne and porter, terming it a ‘velvet’. This is the Black Velvet, which originated in London earlier in the century and underpins again the English associations in which musty ale was often found.

37. For an affecting performance of the song, see this 2012 performance by Yale’s Whiffenpoof Club: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=maFuswcp58>, (Accessed 06/03/2017).

38. ‘G.G.’ (29 September 1911). ‘The Ales of Yesteryear’, *The Sun*, http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn83030272/1911-09-29/ed-1/seq-6/#date1=01%2F01%2F1725&sort=date&date2=12%2F31%2F2015&searchType=advanced&SearchType=prox5&sequence=0&index=15&am+p=&words=ale+musty&proxdistance=5&to_year=2015&rows=20&ortext=&from_year=1725&proxtext=musty+ale&phrasertext=&andtext=&dateFilterType=range&page=6 (Accessed 01/03/2017).

39. Guinness’ U.S. office was at Battery Place in Manhattan and the beer was available in New York since the 1800s: see Hughes, D. (2006) ‘*A Bottle of Guinness Please*’: *The Colourful History of Guinness*. (unpaginated online), https://books.google.ca/books?id=_tOZQdYv9QC&printsec=frontcover&dq=hughes+guinness+new+york&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Manhattan&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017). Guinness stout in New York before the 1930s seems to have been bottled beer, sent from Dublin with some bottled in New York from Dublin-shipped casks. ‘G.G.’ does not indicate whether the musty ale of Hartigan’s was draft or bottled. Technically, ‘ale’ is not porter or stout (which are ‘beer’), but G.G. would not have been concerned with such distinctions. Possibly his Irish beer came from a different Irish brewery, or even was counterfeit Irish. Hughes explains that part of Guinness’ work in New York was to prosecute those vending bogus Guinness Stout, including in Manhattan itself.

40. See Faulkner, F. (1888) *The Theory and Practice of Modern Brewing*, 2nd ed., pp.262-263, <https://books.google.ca/books?id=3DNFAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=brewing+frank+faulkner&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjPsf63qq7SAhXExYMKHV-FDjwQ6AEIIDAB#v=onepage&q=heading&f=false> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

41. Steel, J. (1878) *Selection of the Practical Points of Malting and Brewing and Strictures Thereon*. pp.81-82, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=chi.18393230;view=1up;seq=103> (Accessed 01/03/2017). It is unclear to what extent breweries in England and Scotland used unfermented or partly fermented wort to assist in conditioning beer, however, it is expressly stated in the following brewing text that brewers in Alloa added 'half-fermented wort' or 'fillings' to casks sent to customers: Stewart, T. and Thomson, W. (1849) *Brewing and Distillation*. pp.221-222, https://books.google.ca/books?id=_VoEAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA122&dq=beer+fillings+stew-art+%26+thomson&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=fillings&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017). At a minimum, the technique was known in English-style brewing in America and is referred to by the American brewer and brewing author John Arnold, see (1902) *One Hundred Years of Brewing in America*, p.78, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31175002058397;view=1up;seq=74> (Accessed 01/03/2017). Arnold refers therein to 'new ale from the gyle tub' or even 'wort' as suitable for this purpose. Thus, the practice of using wort, or wort in a partial stage of fermentation, was understood in American ale brewing irrespective of any influence krausening had as practiced by neighboring German-American brewers.

42. An older meaning of musty means new, discussed *infra* in the text.

43. Harold Dobbler (5 October 1911) 'The Poet in Search of Musty Ale Contents Himself With Musty Verse. Ode To Musty Ale', *The Sun*, http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn83030272/1911-10-05/ed-1/seq-6/#date1=01%2F01%2F1725&sort=date&date2=12%2F31%2F2015&searchType=advanced&SearchType=prox5&sequence=0&index=18&am+p=&words=ale+musty&proxdistance=5&to_year=2015&rows=20&ortext=&from_year=1725&proxtext=musty+ale&phrasetxt=&andtext=&dateFilterType=range&page=6 (Accessed 01/03/2017). Dobbler expressed frustration that no reader had answered questions he had posed earlier on the origin of musty ale, a drink his poem seems to consider not patently musty.

44. In an 'authoritative' account of the Bell-In-Hand, no mention is made that its ale is musty, see May, R.E. (1911-1912). 'The Bell In Hand. 1795. Boston's Oldest Tavern', *The Caledonian*, pp.166-167, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/>

[pt?id=nyp.33433081753612;view=1up;seq=187](http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081753612;view=1up;seq=187) (Accessed 01/03/2017). An amusing 1909 letter to the New York *Sun* (from a 'half-mugger [mucker] by adoption') stated the Bell-In-Hand was the only tavern in Pi Alley and musty ale was 'absolutely unknown' in the Alley. He added that Park House was not in Pi Alley but close by and it sold musty ale, in fact the only authentic one. See (10 August 1909) 'Two Boston Institutions; One, Alas! No More', *The Sun*, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030272/1909-08-10/ed-1/seq-4/#date1=1908&index=0&rows=20&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&words=alley+bell+hand+hand+hands+musty+Musty+Pi+Py+py&proxdistance=5&date2=1910&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasetxt=&andtext=musty+Pi+alley+Py+Bell+In+hand&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1> (Accessed 06/04/2017). Yet, a number of news articles described the ale at the Bell-In-Hand as 'musty' or 'old musty'. See e.g., (12 January 1915) 'The Bell In Hand', *Norwich Bulletin*, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014086/1915-01-12/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1900&index=3&rows=20&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&words=al+Al+Bell+Bell-in-Hand+Hand+musty&proxdistance=5&date2=1924&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasetxt=bell+i n+hand&andtext=musty+ale&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1> (Accessed 06/04/2017). Perhaps the contra pieces reflected more a popular than a brewing trades understanding, but the matter remains unclear.

45. Mitchell, Joseph (13 April 1940) 'The Old House At Home', *The New Yorker* (online version, unpaginated), <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1940/04/13/the-old-house-at-home>. In this article, Mitchell calls the ale of McSorley's 'stock ale' or 'cream stock ale'. To our knowledge, Fidelio Brewing of New York, which made McSorley's ale before and after Prohibition, did not market a musty ale as such. The Tavern Trove website, op.cit., features in its collection no musty ale label or other paper suggesting Fidelio produced a musty ale. This does not mean in some cases a brewery's regular stock or India beer was not referred to as musty at the retail level of trade.

46. 'Passing of the Old Grapevine', *New York Times*. 8 July 1915, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9B00E6DA1739E233A2575BC1A9619C946496D6CF> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

47. See <http://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/the-old-grapevine-tavern-sixth-avenue-new-york-new-york-news-photo/174002375#the-old-grapevine-tavern-sixth-avenue-new-york-new-york-1895-picture-id174002375> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

48. See the historical Ballantine ad collection in Jess Kidden's Ballantine Pages, <https://sites.google.com/site/pbal->

lantineandsons/ (Accessed 01/03/2017).

49. My research disclosed the existence of musty ale vending in Liverpool in the mid-1800s but Martyn Cornell kindly located further details. See his comments dated 22 December 2016 on my blog post *Mystery of Musty Ale Solved*, <http://www.beeretsq.com/mystery-of-musty-ale-solved/> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

50. 'Drunkenness in Lewiston; How a Maine Firm Celebrated the Fourth With Six Barrels of Bass's Ale', *The Sun*. 6 July 1889, http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn83030272/1889-07-16/ed-1/seq-3/#date1=01%2F01%2F1850&sort=date&date2=12%2F31%2F1920&searchType=advanced&SearchType=phrase&sequence=0&index=2&am+p=&words=ale+musty&proxdistance=&to_year=1920&rows=20&ortext=&from_year=1850&proxtext=&phrasertext=musty+ale+&and-text=&dateFilterType=range&page=1 (Accessed 01/03/2017).

51. See Martyn Cornell's description of the varying strengths of Burton ale made by Bass in the second half of the 1800s, in the Burton Ale chapter of his (2010) *Amber, Gold & Black: The History of Britain's Great Beers* (unpaginated online), https://books.google.ca/books?id=xsgSDQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=bass+no.+1+martyn+cornell&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=bass%20no.%201%20&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

52. Baker, Jr., C. (1992) *Jigger, Beaker, and Glass: Drinking Around The World*, 53 (originally published 1939 as *Gentleman's Companion*), <https://books.google.ca/books?id=NcIAnEXkVg4C&pg=PA53&dq=bass+musty+ale+baker,+jr.&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjX5KuP1bXSAhWJ14MKHWQrAEoQ6AEIHDA#v=onepage&q=bass%20musty%20ale%20baker%20%20jr.&f=false> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

53. Rutherford, R. (1914) 'Things That England Eats', *The Sun*. 20 September, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030272/1914-09-20/ed-1/seq-54/#date1=1789&index=2&rows=20&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&words=ale+cheese+Cheshire+musty&proxdistance=5&date2=1924&ortext=&proxtext=&phrasertext=&andtext=musty+ale+Cheshire+Cheese&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1> (Accessed 01/03/2017). Numerous press stories can be found, late 1800s-1920s, of Americans drinking or ordering musty ale in England. We did not encounter one where the English interlocutors were reported as nonplussed.

54. Thompson, D. (ed.) (1995) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, Ninth Edition. pp.898, 876. Thanks to Tim Holt for pointing to the *Concise Oxford* as a useful source.

55. *ibid.*, 897.

56. From the website The Geoffrey Chaucer Page, which states the Middle English text is from Larry D. Benson., Gen. ed., The Riverside Chaucer, Houghton-Mifflin Company,

<https://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/manc-par.htm> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

57. Skeat, W. (1893) *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed., p.385, https://books.google.ca/books?id=OHkKAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA385&dq=walter+skeat+mosity+ale+chaucer&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=walter%20skeat%20mosity%20ale%20chaucer&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

58. Clarke, C. (1870) *The Riches of Chaucer*, 2nd ed., p.78, <https://books.google.ca/books?id=Qy5YAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA78&lpg=PA78&dq=charles+clarke+riches+of+chaucer+shoes+mosity&source=bl&ots=LbIPQmEriz&sig=xpXvVlpIOSwDi9t9PZ2DMxIcgg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjPk4eT7rDSAhVK74MKHat1Da4Q6AEIITAB#v=snippet&q=shoes&f=false> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

59. (1812) *The Spirit of Irish Wit*. p.326, https://books.google.ca/books?id=e65bAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA325&dq=the+old+cheese+dr.+king&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=musty&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017). Most editions of Dr. King's *The Old Cheese* give the spelling shown in the text but we have also seen the rendering, 'This beer is sour - 'tis musty, thick and stale'. The 'tis' better accords with the sense of the passage in our view, but we consider in any event 'musty' cannot mean new here, and has clearly negative associations.

60. Kemble, J. (adapted by) (1810) *Massinger's A New Way to Pay Old Debts*. p.59, <https://books.google.ca/books?id=QEUUAAAAyAAJ&pg=PA59&dq=new+way+to+pay+old+debts+musty+ale&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjx0PBgrHSAhVM74MKHeAPD9cQ6AEIHDA#v=onepage&q=new%20way%20to%20pay%20old%20debts%20musty%20ale&f=false> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

61. Lawlis, M. ed., (1979) *The Shoemaker's Holiday by Thomas Dekker*. p.39, https://books.google.ca/books?id=LnCEpN03NuWC&pg=PA39&dq=dekker%27s+shoemaker+holiday+musty&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwju4v6_iLHSAhWLSIMKHVo4CecQ6AEIHJAA#v=onepage&q=musty&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

62. Gill, R. ed., (2002) *Oxford School Shakespeare: Hamlet*. p.86, https://books.google.ca/books?id=Mfer_MFwQrKC&pg=PA86&dq=Hamlet+musty+proverb&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwir9_CanrPSAhVL0oMKHTBfAV0Q6AEIKDAC#v=onepage&q=%20proverb&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

63. See, in Martyn Cornell's Zythophile website, 'Why There's No Such Thing As "English Brown Ale"', <http://zythophile.co.uk/2011/03/31/why-theres-no-such-beer-as-english-brown-ale/> ("Nut brown ale" ... is one of those poetic clichés in use for hundreds of years') (Accessed 01/03/2017).

64. Samson, G. (1881) *The Divine Law as to Wines*. p.395, https://books.google.ca/books?id=Di0MAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA395&dq=musty+wine&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=musty%20wine&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

65. Reece, R. (1820) *The Monthly Gazette Of Health*. p.591, deals with remedying musty casks or bottle, <https://books.google.ca/books?id=Z6AEAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA591&dq=musty+casks&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjP6cKQobPSAhWG34MKHU6KADAQ6AEIGjAA#v=onepage&q=musty%20casks&f=false> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

66. (1856) Notes on Patented Inventions: No. 14. *Scientific American*, No. 45, p.358, https://books.google.ca/books?id=K141AQAAAMAAJ&pg=PA358&dq=musty+ale+patent&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=musty%20ale%20patent&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

67. See e.g., in Lawrence, J. (1830) *A Practical Treatise on Breeding, Rearing and Fattening, Etc.* p.345, https://books.google.ca/books?id=KptgAAAACAAJ&pg=PA345&dq=mash+with+old+beer&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=mash%20with%20old%20beer&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

68. Patents (Online collection of U.S. patent data), <https://www.google.com/patents/US464021> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

69. Daly, T. (1903) *Bartenders Encyclopedia*. p.107, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044004991162;view=1up;seq=114> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

70. See Wahl, R. and Henius, M. (1902) op. cit., p.816, where they explain that American stock ale was brewed on English lines and the beers should be stored for 'three to four months'. It is trite that the longer the storage, the drier and more tart the beer would become, in line with English experience for centuries.

71. *ibid.*, p.699.

72. (1881) 'The Storage of Beer'. *The Brewers Guardian*. p.195, https://books.google.ca/books?id=Y1c_AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA195&dq=storing+beer&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=storing%20beer&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017).

73. Final gravities, all from 1015-1026 except for one at 1011, are reported for seven lagers in (1884) Transactions of the Kansas Pharmaceutical Association: Annual Meeting, 57, https://books.google.ca/books?id=UxLrAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA2-PA57&dq=Budweiser+beer+gravity&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Budweiser&f=false (Accessed 01/03/2017). Many similar period analyses exist, and when compared to modern gravities for the same kind of beer - mass market lager in America - it can be seen the late-1800s range is approximately double the range today. See 'A Visual Guide To Beer Gravities: Original and Final Gravities

by Style' at the website www.homebrewmanual.com, which reports the modern range for this beer type and many others, <http://homebrewmanual.com/beer-gravity-chart/> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

74. (1 February 1934) 'Keene's', *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, <https://bklyn.newspapers.com/image/59973826/?terms=%22still%2Bale%22> (Accessed 01/03/2017). The restaurant today is called Keens Steakhouse. The 1934 story employs the name Keene's English Chop House, and the adjective 'English' is not without significance in our context.

75. Richman, P. (1980) 'Best Restaurants & Others: Washington, D.C. and Environs' (insert 'musty' in search box to see quotation), <https://books.google.ca/books?id=jZWGL0yYcOYC&dq=musty+ale+washington%2C+d.c.&focus=searchwithinvolume&q=musty+ale+> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

76. Porter, J. (1975) 'Ale is ale, beer is beer', *All About Beer*, <https://books.google.ca/books?id=IuIGPmizDQC&q=beer+%3D+lager+%2B+ale&dq=beer+%3D+lager+%2B+ale&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjT6KGyt7PSAhUm54MKHZP6CzY4ChDoAQgmMAM> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

77. For a practical explanation see this discussion, written by a brewer, on the website of Anchor Brewing of San Francisco, <https://www.anchorbrewing.com/blog/anchor-terminology-krausening/> (Accessed 01/03/2017). While the writer states that a purpose of krausening is to eliminate undesirable compounds and produce a 'cleaner flavored beer', dimethyl sulfide or DMS is not eliminated by krausening. On the contrary, as discussed *infra* in our text.

78. Wahl, R. and Henius, M. (1902), op.cit., p.815.

79. *ibid.* ('... the character of the beer then approaches too much that of lager').

80. Keller, W.B. (1893) *Beer and Ale Bottlers' Manual*. p.58, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31175015545448;view=1up;seq=76> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

81. See Wagner, J. (1901) op.cit., 38, where he explains that 2-row barley was grown successfully in some states but was not suitable for American brewing due to its high protein content and thin shell.

82. Dickenson, C.J. (1983) 'Dimethyl Sulphide - Its Origin and Control in Brewing', *Journal of the Institute of Brewing*, Vol. 89, pp.41-46. Dickenson made clear that while 6-row barley can have this effect, and cited a Canadian variety as giving 'much SMM [a DMS precursor in green malt] when malted in the same way as some Canadian or British two-row varieties', choice of raw materials was not the sole factor to determine the propensity of malts for production of DMS, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/j.2050-0416.1983.tb04142.x/pdf> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

83. See Nathan, L. (1913-1914) 'Fermentation and Finishing of the Beer', *American Society of Brewing Technology Journals*. p.48. A full review of Nathan's article is advised to seize the full import of his remarks in this regard, it commences at p.38, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b4222872;view=1up;seq=56> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

84. Whatever one thinks of DMS, and I am not a fan, based on some 40 years tasting I consider the cooked vegetable taste very much part of the modern blond lager profile both in North America and Europe.

85. See (1978) 'Section Reports - London Section', *Journal of the Institute of Brewing*. Vol. 84, p.215, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/j.2050-0416.1978.tb03872.x/epdf> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

86. See Gilliland, R.B. (1961) 'Brettanomyces - I. Occurrence, Characteristics and Effects on Beer Flavour', *Journal of the Institute of Brewing*. Vol. 67, p.257 et seq. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/j.2050-0416.1961.tb01791.x/epdf> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

87. See Ron Pattinson's 'Brettanomyces and Pale Ale' (5 April 2011) in his brewing history website www.barclayperkins.blogspot.com, <http://barclayperkins.blogspot.ca/2011/04/brettanomyces-and-pale-ale.html> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

88. Berry, A.E. and Bartripp, G.F. (1905) 'The Influence of Sulphites in the Mash-tun and Copper', *Journal of the Federated Institutes of Brewing*. Vol. 11, p.451, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/j.2050-0416.1905.tb02143.x/epdf> (Accessed 07/03/2017). The article in toto is most instructive as a period reference.

89. (1902) Hearings before the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, pp.407-410, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=iau.31858048256212;view=1up;seq=413> (Accessed 07/03/2017).

90. *ibid.*

91. Southby, E. (1885) *A Systematic Handbook of Practical Brewing*. p.262 et seq., <https://books.google.ca/books?id=IxUAAAAQAAJ&pg=PP7&dq=southby+beer&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjN-8ubisXSAhUe3YMKHX6PCrwQ6AEIHDA#v=onepage&q=antiseptics&f=false> (Accessed 07/03/2017).

92. See the discussion in Hooper, E. (1891) *The Manual of Brewing: Scientific and Technical*. p.363 et seq. ('very offensive odour'), https://books.google.ca/books?id=6_o7AQAAAJ&pg=PA363&dq=antiseptics+for+beer&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=antiseptics%20for%20beer&f=false (Accessed 07/03/2017).

93. See the comments of the brewer and brewing scientist Kristin England in (21 January 2011) 'Burton Water (Part III)', www.barclayperkins.blogspot.com, op. cit., http://barclayperkins.blogspot.ca/2011/01/burton-water-part-three_21.html (Accessed 07/03/2017).

94. Holmes, J. Ed., (1879) *Series of Articles on Practical Brewing*. pp.73-74, https://books.google.ca/books?id=Yvo7AQAAAJ&pg=PA74&dq=water+gypsum+beer&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=water%20gypsum%20beer&f=false

95. See Note 35, above.

96. (26 January 1884) 'Park's Musty Ale', *Boston Evening Transcript*, from <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=2249&dat=18840126&id=NwM0AAAAIABJ&sjid=LCMI-AAAAIABJ&pg=2282,1625852> (Accessed 01/03/2017).

97. See the article following in the media site Mass Live, [www.masslive.com](http://www.masslive.com/news/boston/index.ssf/2014/06/boston_tap_water.html), http://www.masslive.com/news/boston/index.ssf/2014/06/boston_tap_water.html (Accessed 07/03/2017).

98. See Graves, L. (2017) *Charlottesville's Beer: Brewing in Jefferson's Shadow*. p.58, https://books.google.ca/books?id=RAFuDQAAQBAJ&pg=PA58&dq=musty+ale+recipe&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=musty%20ale%20&f=false (Accessed 02/03/2017).

99. DMS generally is less characteristic of ales than lagers, but it can occur in ales too especially where very pale malt is used of the 6-row type.

100. See online reprinting of a 1991 article in the magazine *New Scientist* at its website, www.newscientist.com, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg12917547-500-ariadne/> (Accessed 02/03/2017).

101. New York Public Library Menu Collection, op. cit., 1941 menu of Keen's Chophouse, NYC, http://menus.nypl.org/menu_pages/60397 (Accessed 02/03/2017).

102. New York Public Library Menu Collection, op. cit., 1973 menu of Keen's Chophouse, NYC, <http://menus.nypl.org/menus/27939> (Accessed 02/03/2017).

103. See e.g., Wolfe, T. (1929) *Look Homeward, Angel: A Story of the Buried Life* (unpaginated online), https://books.google.ca/books?id=IAIWCwAAQBAJ&pg=PT349&dq=musty+ale+thomas+wolfe&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=musty%20ale%20&f=false (Accessed 02/03/2017). Thomas Wolfe brackets musty ale with 'porter' and 'sack' in a way to posit an English allusion, but he would not have used the term without knowing it had resonance to Americans.

104. See Nugey, A. (1937) *Brewing Formulas Practically Considered*. p.2, where Nugey places sparkling ale before stock ale and notes that sparkling ale was meant to taste like and compete with lager, an index of its importance given the dominance lager had in the American beer market since the later 1800s, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=>

coo.31924004582916;view=1up;seq=14 (Accessed 02/03/2017). See also Molson, H. (1922) 'The Brewing Industry in Canada', *Journal of the Federated Institutes of Brewing*. p.544, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/j.2050-0416.1922.tb06560.x/epdf> (Accessed 07/03/2017). Molson states that the old type of stock ale aged in cask and matured in bottle had completely disappeared in favour of a beer 'cold and sparkling with a good head'. While a Canadian reference, the situation was, *a fortiori*, similar over the border where the new type of beer was developed.

105. See Hind, H.L. (1940) *Brewing Science and Practice*. Vol. 2, p.895. ('Very little beer of the particular type is sold'), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo.31924018529945;vie>

w=1up;seq=465 (Accessed 02/03/2017).

106. What's old is new again in modern craft brewing, and many examples of brett-infused beers can be sampled today in North America and Britain. An influence in this regard was Orval Trappist Ale from Belgium, introduced in the 1930s and given a dose of brett to encourage formation of the characteristic barnyard notes.

107. See Holt, M. (ed.) (2006) *Alcohol: A Social and Cultural History*. pp.234-235, https://books.google.ca/books?id=cmKtAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA234&dq=1930s+return+of+booze+more+regulated&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=1930s%20return%20of%20booze%20more%20regulated&f=false (Accessed 02/03/2017).