

THE EARLY BREWING INDUSTRY IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA: THE SAN DIEGO BREWING COMPANY

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Introduction

The history of the many breweries using the San Diego Brewing Company name summarizes the development and success of brewing in San Diego, the ‘Capital of Craft’.¹

As the nation developed and expanded west, breweries were established as did other businesses and services. Based on these development patterns, California has a relatively short brewery history compared to the eastern part of the nation. Brewery openings in California was uneven in the early years of statehood (1848-1900) as the growing population concentrated in the northern half of the state due to the Gold Rush of 1849. Consequently, transportation infrastructure, such as ports and railroads, was also predominantly in this region. Those cities located further north, such as San Francisco and Sacramento, were able to establish breweries relatively early in comparison to San Diego, Los Angeles and the surrounding southern California area.

When railroads connected California to the eastern portion of the country new markets and supply sources enabled the breweries to grow and new breweries to open. Easier access also resulted in breweries from the eastern and midwestern parts of the country being attracted to the state. With the end of the Gold Rush and a desire for new opportunities the population moved south and the founding of breweries followed, first into Los Angeles and finally to San Diego. Once established, the story of San Diego brewing and the San Diego Brewing Company demonstrates patterns of success, challenges, and collaboration still seen in the city’s brewing community today.

Beer in early San Diego

Until local brewing began, the beer consumed in San Diego arrived by two routes, sea and land, and where the beer was brewed had some influence on which means of transport was used. San Francisco-brewed beers were frequently shipped via ocean-going steamer directly to San Diego. If the beer was from Los Angeles it was brought overland by wagon and later by truck. Beer from the East Coast or Midwest regions arrived via the Los Angeles rail terminus and then brought south by wagon. Wagons were the only option until 1883 when the California Southern Railroad line was completed connecting San Diego to the Los Angeles rail terminals.²

In his article ‘Craft Beer in San Diego Society’ Ernie Liwag claims seven breweries operated in San Diego prior to the enactment of Prohibition in 1920.³ This number is questionable as it also includes several non-brewery businesses that used the word ‘brewery’ in their names, such as the San Francisco Brewery and the Philadelphia Brewery, which did not produce beer. Rather, they served as distribution depots for beer, wine and hard liquor as well as bottling beers shipped from San Francisco and elsewhere. Every brewery and depot in San Diego appear to have provided for consumption on site in addition to offering carry-out or delivery services and followed the popular practice of giving free lunches to stimulate patronage.

One of these distributorships was the first to use the name San Diego Brewery as evidenced by an advertisement run by Henrique ‘Henry’ Heer in the 1871 *San Diego Union*.⁴ Beer was served on the premises along with harder liquors and the popular free lunch.

SAN DIEGO BREWERY.
 Henry Heer, Proprietor,
 On Fifth Street, opposite the Patent
 Technorama Building.

HENRIQUE WOULD RESPECTFULLY
 intimate to his thirsty fellow-citizens
 that he keeps constantly on hand the follow-
 ing choice brands of goods:

San Francisco Ale from the Eagle Brewery	
Albany " " " " " " " "	Rembrandt " "
Benicia " " " " " " " "	Frisbie " "
Barton " " " " " " " "	" and Porter.

Wines, Brandy, and Whiskies of the best
 qualities. A choice lunch daily, of Limberg
 cheese, Yarmouth Meaters, Sardines, Lob-
 sters, Pickles, Soda Crackers, &c.

Figure 1. First advertisement referring to any establishment as the San Diego Brewery. Heer was not a brewer but distributor. San Diego Union, 27 May 1871.

Early San Diego breweries

The first commercial San Diego brewery was established by an Austrian immigrant, Christian Dobler, in 1868 in the Chollas Valley. This was an agricultural area approximately six miles southeast of the city center and could only be accessed by an ill-maintained road that was especially difficult during San Diego's rainy season due to flooding. However, the location and occasional inaccessibility did not deter customers. It was well-known by a variety of names, including the 'Pioneer Brewery', 'Pioneer Chollas Valley', 'Dobler's', and 'Chollas Valley Brewery', the latter being the most common and the one used in extensive advertising in the local newspapers.

By 1870 Philip Wedel had opened a second brewery to accommodate the growing demand for beer. This demand was partially due to San Diego's population tripling from 731 in 1860 to 2300 in 1870,⁵ so providing sufficient customers for the output of two breweries. Wedel's City Brewery Saloon and Depot was situated in the city proper and was therefore more easily accessible than Dobler's brewery. Records show Dobler became a partner in the City Brewery in 1870, but just two years later Wedel ran an announcement stating that he was now its sole proprietor, signaling the end of the partnership.⁶ Wedel passed away in 1875 and Dobler entered into a new partnership with Wedel's heir, Magdalena Wedel. She sold her share in 1877 to Otto Walter, but by

SAN DIEGO BREWERY.
 Chollas Valley.
 C. DOBLER, PROPRIETOR.

**Lager Beer, of the Best
 Brewing,**
Good Lunch Always.

**CITY DEPOT, Fifth street, next door to
 Wolfshelm's Cigar Store.**

Figure 2. First advertising for Dobler's under the name San Diego Brewery. Note additional mention of City Depot. San Diego Union, 19 May 19, 1878, p.6.

1879 Dobler was sole owner of both breweries.⁷ In 1881 an outdoor beer garden was added to the premises and it was renamed the City Brewery Saloon and Gardens.

Even though Dobler owned both the City and Chollas Valley breweries, he presented them as separate entities in his advertising. By 1878 Heer had stopped using the San Diego Brewery name and Dobler took it up to refer to his Chollas Valley operation. Use of the San Diego Brewery title was not consistent as Dobler continued to advertise under several different business names. He was also inconsistent with City brewery sometimes referring to the City Depot brewery as 'Dobler's Depot'.⁸

Since both commercial San Diego breweries operated under one owner, Dobler's death in 1882 had a significant impact on the city's brewing industry. Dobler's widow, Martha 'Martene' Dobler took over the brewery in Chollas Valley for the next three years before selling. Under the new owner, the brewery soon closed. The reason for this is unknown, but the continued access difficulties compounded by competition from increasing numbers of saloons and distributors in the city proper probably played major roles. The downtown business, City Brewery, briefly stopped production at this time, but continued to serve beer in the Gardens. It began brewing again under the ownership of John Diehl, but

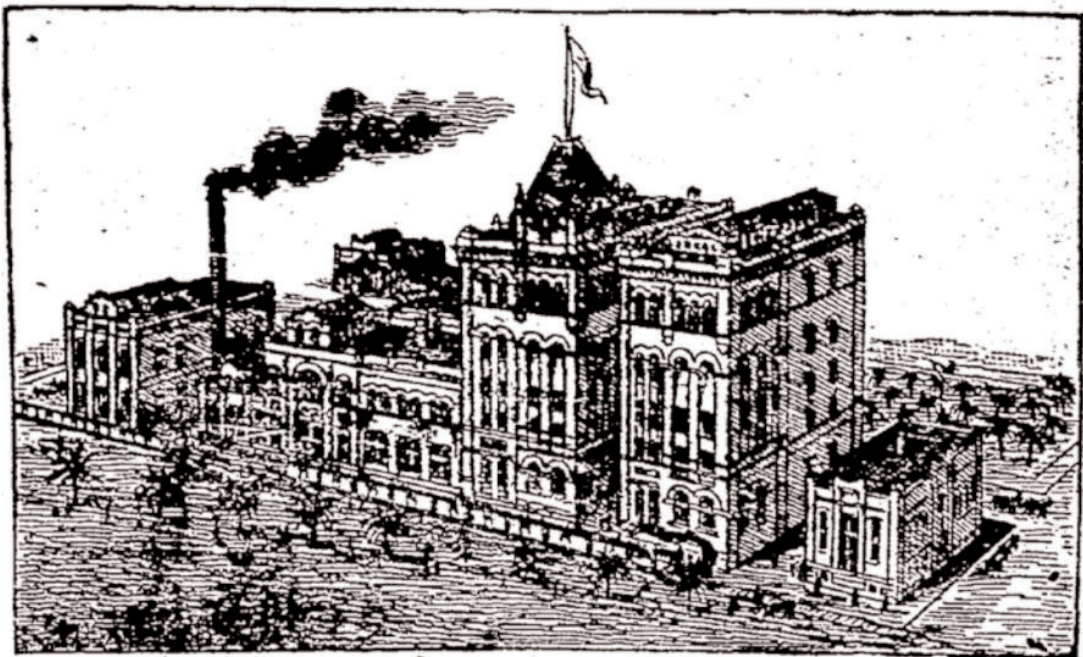
closed for the final time in 1888. These closures brought local brewing to an end although non-local beer continued to be available in saloons and other establishments.

The first San Diego Brewing Company

Plans were announced in 1895 for a new brewery in San Diego under the leadership of John G. Hinkel of St. Paul, Minnesota.⁹ Later reports revealed that it was to be called the San Diego Brewing Company (SDBC) which was the first standardized usage of the SDBC name for a brewery. Along with Hinkel, the brewery was backed by a partnership of mostly out-of-area businessmen together with a few prominent locals.¹⁰ The brewery took nearly two years to open due to difficulties in financing, a battle against a state-wide beer trust or cartel,¹¹ and changes in leadership. By 1896, while not yet open, Hinkel emphatically denied rumors of the business being sold to the San Francisco Brewery Association as part of the growing West Coast beer

trust.¹² The SDBC brewery finally opened 17 April 1897 with an extensive article in the *San Diego Union* describing the operations in great detail.¹³ At the opening ceremonies speeches were given by the then brewery president, Judge Henry Shaefer of Los Angeles, and Vice-President and General Manager, John C. Wunder. The SDBC partnership was not always amicable as evidenced by a dispute between Hinkel, Schaeffer and Wunder over the inscription on the building's cornerstone.¹⁴ One of the directors at the opening was Jacob Gruendike, a local bank president, water company owner, real estate investor, and stockholder of the brewery. Gruendike stepped into the position of SDBC president in June of 1898.

The new San Diego Brewing Company produced two brands, Prisma and Pilsner, and distributed the bottled product through various agents. The brewery demonstrated success as beer sales were not confined to the city of San Diego with one distributorship for the San Diego, Riverside and Orange county area. When this



SAN DIEGO BREWERY.

Fig. 3. Illustration of the new brewery at its opening. *San Diego Union*, 18 April 1897, p.3.

PATRONIZE YOUR HOME
Industry and drink the
product of the
SAN DIEGO BREWING CO.

The best on the market.



All first class saloons
in the city keep the fa-
vorite Beers "PRIMA and
PILSENER," made from
pure Malt and Hops and dis-
tilled water. It sparkles like
nectar, and is pure and
wholesome.

Figure 4. First illustrated advertisement for San Diego
Brewing Company. San Diego Union, 19 April 1897, p.2.

distributorship was taken over by Henry Grodzik in 1897, he announced his intention to grow sales into Lower California (the Baja California area of Mexico) in keeping with expansion plans announced at the brewery's opening.¹⁵

The brewery struggled with reduced sales in the early 1900s and the decision was made in 1904 to bring in a new head brewer, J.R. Turner, from Bavaria. On his recommendation to focus on one beer the company dropped the Prisma and Pilsner brands to produce only Corona.¹⁶ Some equipment was re-tooled and distributors were dropped in favor of self-distribution.¹⁷ In April 1905 a seasonal bock was released, Corona.

Further expansion plans ended with Gruendike's death in 1905. As majority stockholder and with no heirs, his executors chose to sell the brewery operations. George J. Stadler, a brewer from Kentucky and Illinois via Denver, Colorado, bought 812 shares from the estate to become the new majority stockholder. John Henry (J.H.) Zitt, another brewery owner from Kentucky and later Chicago, bought 650 shares from other stockholders. Stadler and Zitt had done business together before in both Kentucky and Chicago before coming to California and the two formed a partnership with their majority holdings, retaining the San Diego Brewing Company name. Stadler resided in San Diego as general manager, secretary, and treasurer. Zitt, as SDBC president and marketer, traveled down frequently from Los

THE SAN DIEGO Brewing Co.

Makers of the Famous

PRIMA
AND
PILSENER LAGER BEER

We have resolved that
no beer will be offered
for sale from our Brewery
less than three months
old.

ORDER THE
BOTTLED BEER
FROM
HENRY GRODZIK.

Fourth Street, near F.

Telephone 475 Main.

Figure 5. SDBC advertisement by Henry Grodzik, distributor.
Evening Tribune, 31 January 1898, p.2.

Angeles (about 120 miles north of San Diego) while continuing to conduct his real estate business that included brewery property sales and investments. He also became involved in a number of social and business organizations such as merchant associations and Catholic societies as well as sponsoring baseball teams.

The new owners announced grand plans for the brewery including doubling production and expanding the facilities at the G Street location. The company added new lagers branded as San Diego Dark and San Diego Light while discontinuing Corona lager in late 1905.

Zitt and Stadler leveraged stock assessments to reclaim outstanding stocks through 1905-6 in order to consoli-



A Home Industry

BLOWING

is not exactly in our line, but we have to indulge in self praise to be truthful about our beer. We know it is the best beer brewed. You will agree with us when you try it. We take every possible care in the brewing and the bottling. We deliver at \$2.50 a case of twenty-four Corona quart bottles.

San Diego Brewing Co.

GEO. J. STADLER, Manager

Main 41; Home 1041.

Fig. 6. First Advertisement under Stadler and Zitt's ownership including mention of the Corona brand. San Diego Union, 2 December 1905, p.2.

date their control over the brewery. Once the stock was reclaimed and re-sold, in many cases to their wives or family members or added to their own portfolios, the company reorganized in 1907 as the San Diego Consolidated Brewing Company (SDCBC), the two partners holding over 70% of the company stock. Additional products were added to the portfolio reflecting the 'consolidated' interests in the name. These included ice and glassware products plus cold storage and real estate services.¹⁸

Through aggressive marketing, a lack of other local competition, and railway development into San Diego, their distribution areas expanded. Eventually SDCBC shipped beer as far as Arizona and Hawai'i. It also sent beer into Northern California in a response to San Francisco breweries competing for their business in their home city. SDCBC beers were popular and production increased with the introduction of round the clock shifts and a change of location from an inconvenient site 10 blocks away from the water's edge to property on the San Diego Bay, facilitating easier transportation in and out of the brewery.

Early advertising emphasized the quality of the beer as SDCBC beer faced well-established non-local competi-

tion and trademarked the tag line 'The Quality Beer'.¹⁹ The strategy emphasized that competing beers were not brewed nearby and so could not be as fresh. Another advertising campaign, begun in 1906, promoted their beer as a health food, weight supplement, and a restorative made from pure ingredients. Services provided by the company included free home delivery with encouragement to buy the bottled product by the case in order to always have sufficient quantity on hand. A less frequent advertising theme took a patriotic tone claiming SDCBC beer was equal to or better than German beer through use of nationalistic and patriotic imagery and language.

The brewing operation experienced a setback with the death of Stadler in 1909. The cause of death was cited in the local newspaper as from 'convex meningitis of the brain which was the result of a recent attack of influenza combined with overwork'.²⁰ Subsequently, Zitt listed the brewery for sale in New York and Pittsburgh newspapers, but when it did not sell he moved to San Diego to take over its management. There is no record that he did any brewing and at the time of Stadler's death, SDCBC had grown large enough to have several brewers on staff to take over the day-to-day operations.



Figure 7. San Diego Brewing Company trademark logo 1906, Articles of Incorporation #1580, Document Archives, San Diego History Center. [Watercolor original].

Competition and collaboration

San Diego Brewing Company's success, in spite of losing the on-site partner and plant manager, inspired others to try and open breweries. Several were mentioned in the press, such as the Panama Brewery in 1911, so named to leverage the anticipated commercial opportunities linked to San Diego's Panama-California Exposition scheduled to open in 1915. Another company, Bay City Brewing, went so far as to design a California Mission-style brew plant, but eventually began production 1913 as the Mission Brewing Company. It was the only brewery to successfully open in San Diego besides SDCBC prior to Prohibition.

The principals in Bay City Brewing were Zitt's father-in-law, F.C. Lang, and brother-in-law, Augustus Lang. Zitt had partnered with F.C. Lang as co-owners of breweries in Chicago, Illinois and Lexington,

Kentucky. Augustus Lang had moved West earlier to live with his sister and brother-in-law and partnered with his father on the Bay City venture. One of the reasons put forward for the establishment of Mission Brewing was to augment SDCBC's production as the its beer was so popular, one brewery could not keep up with demand.²¹ Mission brewed SDCBC's beers alongside its own beers, Old Mission and Wurzberger, and was also noted for brewing Hopski, the only locally-made 'near-beer'.

Challenges to the brewing industry

San Diego Brewing's growth under Stadler and Zitt had its share of challenges which continued with Zitt at the head of SDCBC. Not least among these was competition from breweries outside the San Diego region many of which advertised in the local press.



“San Diego” The Quality Beer

“HANDS ACROSS THE SEA.”

It's a well-known fact that American lager beer brewing is meeting with recognition even in Germany, the home of good beer. “Made in America” will soon oust “Made in Germany” as a synonym for “good stuff.” San Diego Beer gains large credit in this respect, because it is a beer that will stand every fair test, whether of purity or palatability.

City Office, F and California.

SAN DIEGO BREWING CO.

GEORGE J. STADLER, Mgr.

Phones—Main 41; Home 1041.

Figure 8. Example of nationalist sentiment. The Evening Tribune, 29 September 1906, p.7.

Other challenges faced by the brewery were incidents including runaway beer wagons, brewers' injuries, and lawsuits. Among the legal challenges was a battle between Zitt and George Stadler's widow, Katherine. Zitt sued to block the sale of 1,500 shares of the 2,039 SDBC stock shares Stadler left in his estate. According to Zitt, at the formation of the partnership, the partners agreed to bequeath voting control of their shares to the surviving partner.²² This left the income from the shares in the possession of the heirs and allowed the estate to dispose of any property. Katherine Stadler wished to sell all the shares of SDBC stock and Zitt saw this as a potential threat to his leadership of the brewery. Anyone might have purchased the entire block of stock and gained sufficient voting rights to interfere with Zitt's management of the brewery. By retaining his voting control of the original 1,500 shares, Zitt would have sufficient stock to override any other stockholders. Confusion reigned as Stadler's will did not mention any arrangement specific to the stock and gave the estate the power to dispose of all property as deemed necessary. As the will was written before Stadler and Zitt went into partnership with the brewery, this may have been a simple omission on the part of Stadler in never updating his will.²³

In the broader brewing industry, everyone was aware of the increasing threat of Prohibition. San Diego had its

own chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.), the Anti-Saloon League, and other temperance organizations supporting various versions of Prohibition. There were failed attempts to vote in statewide Prohibition starting in 1914. California brewers and wine makers lobbied the public through advertising both against Prohibition and the products of bootleggers. San Diego Consolidated Brewing and Mission ran advertising with the claim that beer was a 'true temperance beverage for the home' as well as a means to support the local economy as opposed to harder liquors and drugs. (Fig. 10)²⁴

The neighboring state of Arizona, a major market for SDBC and Mission beers, enacted Prohibition in 1914 and went so far to ban any low-alcohol near-beer from being shipped into the state.²⁵ This negatively impacted Mission's sales as the near-beer Hopski was not popular in San Diego and was only purchased when higher alcohol products were unavailable. Mission continued brewing for a short time, but, as sales dropped, the Langs left Mission Brewing's operations and Zitt became president of both breweries. The Temperance movement continued to negatively impact alcohol consumption and eventually eliminated the need for the additional production capacity. Consequently, Zitt first tried to sell, then

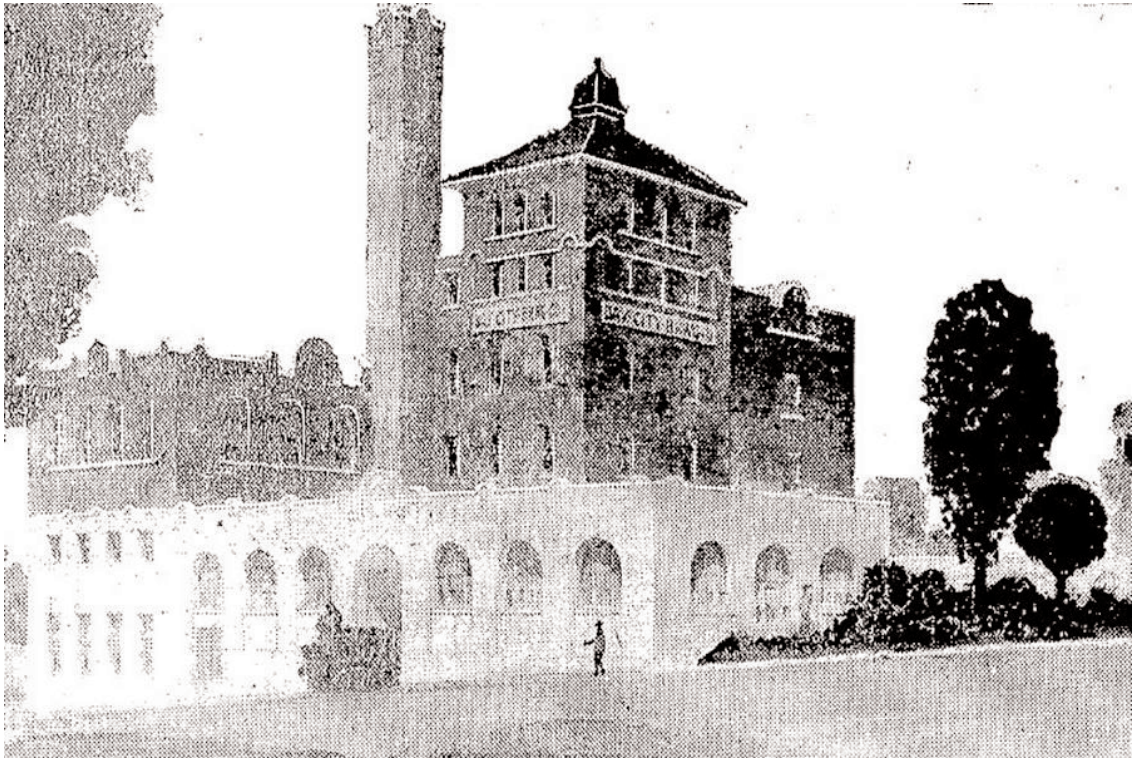


Figure 9. Illustration of the Bay City Brewing plant which opened as Mission Brewing. San Diego Union, 21 March 1912, p.6.

closed Mission Brewing in 1917, although Prohibition was not yet law.²⁶ The Mission building sat idle except for a period when it was used during the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919 as an auxiliary isolation ward.²⁷ With the closure of Mission Brewing, San Diego Brewing was once again the only brewery in the city.

Zitt made little public comment regarding the temperance movement or Prohibition except through limited advertising. He published correspondence regarding the eviction of a SDCBC employee's family from their home.²⁸ The employee, living in Fresno, California was evicted by his temperance-supporting landlord due to his employment in the alcohol industry. By publishing the letters, Zitt appealed to the public's sympathy for the employees who would be affected by the closure of the brewery and loss of their jobs. This personalized the impact of the temperance movement and impending Prohibition rather than appearing to protect his own interests and income.

The onset of World War I was another challenge to every brewery across the nation and San Diego Brewing Company was no exception. On the supply side the shortages of workers, ingredients, and resources were problems aggravated by reduced sales as consumers on the home front diverted their purchasing power to supporting the war effort. Another contemporary issue was the growth in patriotic opinions that, occasionally, were expressed in anti-German terms. Immigrants were frequently regarded with suspicion and their children continued to experience the same sentiments.²⁹ With Zitt, the son of German immigrants and the very public name associated with San Diego Brewing, negative impact on sales was possible especially if Zitt was seen to have, or was perceived to hold, German sympathies. The company revived earlier patriotic themes in their advertising and publicly participated in various government-sponsored austerity measures. San Diego Brewing survived the shortages and threats of World War I partially due to little local competition, but also due to Zitt's continual

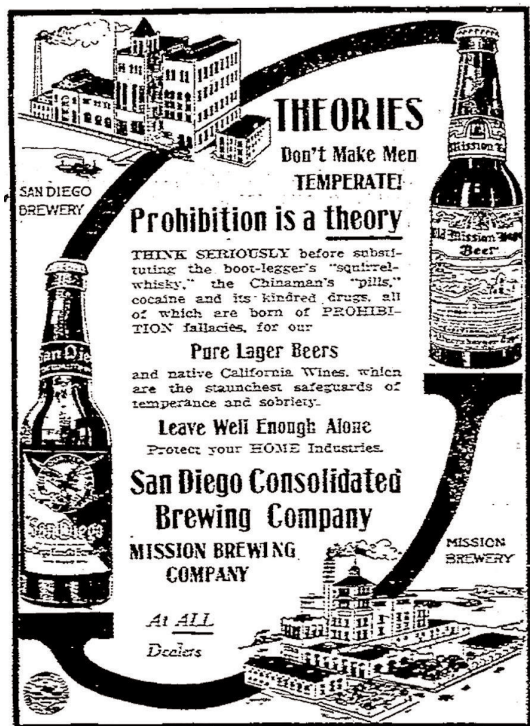


Figure 10. Joint advertising by SDBC and Mission against Prohibition and bootleggers. Evening Tribune, 12 October 1914, p.2.

efforts to promote San Diego Brewing Company beer. He did not cease the prolific advertising campaigns that distinguished SDCBC from the beginning of his ownership. He also continued his participation in personal charitable and civic causes that was well-recorded in the local newspapers.

While the end of the war eased supply issues and increased discretionary spending, the popular sentiment leading to enactment of National Prohibition in 1919 heralded the end of the San Diego Brewing Company. The Volstead Act, as the national legislation was known, was intended to end the manufacture and sale of alcohol, but not possession and had already caused the closure of Mission Brewing through reduced sales. The interpretation and enforcement of the legislation passed by various entities with conflicting standards created a chaotic period as each state struggled with enforcement of national, state and local laws. The California State Legislature and enforcement agencies not only had the Volstead Act to follow,

but voters passed supplemental legislation, titled the Wright Act,³⁰ which aimed to close perceived loopholes in the national law. Local communities worked for or against 'local option' legislation that resulted in a patchwork of 'dry' and 'drier' districts.

Contrary to popular belief, there were some options available to breweries to continue business in a limited capacity. The 'dry' faction considered them legal loopholes, but some breweries across the nation claimed exemptions to produce some alcohol for religious, medicinal or industrial purposes. However, Zitt did not take this route opting not to brew Mission's Hopski as a low-alcohol near-beer that might have sold in some districts. Instead he shuttered the SDCBC brewery operations, but retained the property. He and his wife, Kate, remained in San Diego and Zitt continued his involvement in charitable work and city boosterism. His other business activities in real estate, a linen processing plant, and Los Angeles oil exploration and development compensated for the loss of income from the brewery.

San Diego brewing revives

Prohibition was declared a failure by many consumers, law personnel, and legislators from almost its enactment. This was due to resistance from the population, difficulty in enforcement, and its impact on the economy. The legislation to end Prohibition was introduced in stages due to concerns that an immediate and total repeal would create havoc for businesses in the face of high demand for both product and employment.³¹ Beginning with the repeal in 1933, beer and wine were made available in restaurants and licensed drinking establishments. Hard liquor and package sales followed the next year. As with the application and enforcement of Prohibition, the repeal was unevenly enacted and enforced at national, state, and local levels.³² The San Diego City Council debated ways to restrict beer and wine licenses in response to some support of continued restriction.³³ With the repeal home wine making was allowed, but home beer brewing remained illegal until 1978.

With the end of Prohibition in 1933, Zitt announced plans to reopen San Diego Brewing Company. He



Figure 11. Advertisement for one of San Diego Brewing Company's distributed products. San Diego Union, 15 August 1940, p.6.

dropped the 'Consolidated' aspect of the business as the brewery was anticipated to be as successful as it was before Prohibition when three shifts a day were required to meet demand just for the beer. The plans to renovate the existing buildings to bring in new technologies and increased production required additional funding and partners. For the next two years Zitt attempted to re-establish the brewery, with different financial backers. In January 1936 the *San Diego Union* announced that SDBC would begin distribution after renovation of the old plant and begin distribution that May.³⁴ San Diego Brewing opened to the public as planned with a new president, Howard Greene, and Zitt as Chairman of the Board of Directors. SDBC added distribution of other beers such as Best's Select to augment sales.

Additional breweries opened in San Diego; Balboa Brewing in 1933, Aztec Brewing Company, which had operated in Mexico during Prohibition and relocated to the city in 1934 and produced A.B.C. Beer, and Ritz Brewing which was anticipated to open 1933, but did not do so.

End of San Diego brewing's second wave

With the outbreak of World War II the brewery continued brewing despite shortages of both ingredients and manpower. The impact of a reduced labor pool, supply restrictions, and reduced consumer demand were aggravated by competition from larger breweries with national distribution networks. Balboa Brewing moved to Los Angeles in 1935 to become Monarch Brewing and Aztec Brewing sold to Altes Brewing of Detroit as part of Altes' plan to expand nationally in 1948. Altes did continue to brew Aztec's 'Famous A.B.C. Beer'.

Yet again, as with World War I, the nationalist fervor and 'buy American' sentiment in the period leading up to and during World War II led to boycotts across the nation to demonstrate patriotism and punish those suspected of German loyalties.³⁵ Zitt's long and public history of local civic engagement, charitable activities, and patriotic advertising worked in the brewery's favor as there was no evidence in the press of accusations that SDBC had pro-German sentiments. Advertisements for SDBC again emphasized patriotism and the brewery participated in various programs to comply with supply shortages and support the war effort.³⁶

San Diego Brewing Company paid a heavy price for the war effort when the United States Navy requisitioned the brewery and surrounding waterfront business properties to establish a shipyard in 1942,³⁷ although each business was compensated for the loss. Zitt was now 80 years old, with no children to carry the business forward, and the prospects of selling the business during war time were poor. The stockholders chose to close the brewery rather than move to another location and start anew. Zitt passed away the following year and the name of San Diego Brewing became dormant once again.

The only brewery now in operation was Altes, the successor to Aztec Brewing. Larger nation-wide breweries, such as Lucky Lager, Blatz, Pabst, Miller, and Budweiser, were selling in San Diego and beer available just across the border in Mexico, combined with the challenges of long-distance management, proved too much for Altes which closed its San Diego plant in 1953.

Altes' closure left no local breweries in San Diego until the 1980s. In spite of the lack of local brewing, San

ALTES' SAN DIEGO BREWERY CLOSES

Plant Shutdown Means Payroll Loss Of About Million Dollars Yearly in City

San Diego's only local brewery is shut down today—and with it a payroll that was running about \$1 million annually. Altes' present beer stock has been taken over by San Diego Ice & Storage Co., distributors of Lucky Lager.

Figure 12. Announcement of Altes' closure and impact on local economy. San Diego Union, 19 March 1953, a-17.

Diego continued to be a lucrative market for beer and served as a test market for the Adolph Coors Brewing Company in 1978 for a light beer, Coors Light, and again, in 1980, for the Herman Joseph's 1868 premium beer. Coors's beer became the number one selling light beer in San Diego.³⁸

The third wave of San Diego brewing

The Federal legalization of home brewing in 1978 was one factor that enabled the current explosion of craft beer. Once homebrewers were able to legally brew, the next step was to sell their product. California passed A.B. 3610 in 1982 which allowed homebrewers to sell their beer, but they were also required to provide food. This requirement led to the establishment of brewpubs with brewery tasting rooms to follow much later.

San Diego area brewpubs began in the early 1980s with Fergie's, an unlicensed business in the northern part of San Diego County. The brewery equipment was sold in 1987 to Paul Holborn who operated as Bolt Brewery and closed in 1989. The first San Diego brewpub in the city proper was Old Columbia Brewpub, launched in 1989, later renamed Karl Strauss' Old Columbia, and now called Karl Strauss Brewing. These brewpubs marked the beginning of a notable pattern in the growth of locally-brewed beer in San Diego. In just over 20 years, the number of San Diego breweries grew from nine in 1996 to 158 at the end of 2018.³⁹

In 1993, during the early period of the craft beer revival, the San Diego Brewing name was brought back under a new set of owners. Lee Doxtader and Scott Stamp

formed Ross Wheeler Enterprises and founded two breweries; San Diego Brewing (1993-present) and Callahan's Brewpub (1990-2017) in addition to a restaurant, Jose O'Reilly's (2000-2010). The city's growth and expansion provided a broad choice of locations and Doxtader and Stamp chose to open further away from the earlier waterfront location to the Mission Valley area. Callahan's served as the early meeting place for QUAFF (Quality Ale and Fermentation Fraternity), a homebrewer's club that has counted a number of award-winning home brewers among its members. Many of them have entered the brewing industry, both in San Diego and beyond. SDBC explored the feasibility of expansion with a test market tasting room in the North Park neighborhood of San Diego. While deemed proof of concept, the tasting room was closed after a year in 2018.

Summary

Much of San Diego's beer industry success stories mirror the vision and drive surrounding the establishment, growth, and revival of the San Diego Brewing Company. In spite of the early challenges of a limited market, transportation, and supplies followed by closures during Prohibition and competition from bigger beer companies, the San Diego region today lays claim to the title 'Capital of Craft'. It boasts the largest number of craft breweries in any comparable area in the United States and this does not include several brew-



Figure 13. Logo of the current San Diego Brewing Company. Used with permission, San Diego Brewing Company.

eries that are no longer classified as local craft breweries having sold out to larger conglomerates. Whether craft or not, the breweries in San Diego City and County have created a beer-tourism hub, drawing more yearly visitors than many other local attractions and providing a strong boost to the economy.⁴⁰ The region has much more besides brewery tours as seen in the numerous beer festivals and competitions, brewing collaborations, brewery-sponsored charitable events, and numerous beer-affiliated businesses. Three area universities offer brewing certificate programs where many of the local professionals participate by working as instructors or providing hands-on experience. Local homebrewer associations continue to support local brewers ‘going pro’ in established breweries or founding their own breweries.

The past year has seen a number of closures balanced by about the same number of openings of new breweries. The story of continued growth and adjustment is another chapter in the history of San Diego brewing currently being written.

References

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4. ‘San Diego Brewery’, *San Diego Union*. 27 May 18171.
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6. ‘City Brewery’, *San Diego [Weekly] Union*. 25 July 1872.
7. Van Wieren, D.P. (1995) *American Brewers II*. West Point, PA: Eastern Coast Breweriana Association. p.35.
8. ‘San Diego Brewery’, *San Diego Union*. 11 June 1878; [Mention], *San Diego Union*. 5 May 1878.
9. ‘Local Intelligence’, *San Diego Union*. 23 October 1895.
10. ‘Big Brewery Coming’, *San Diego Union*. 29 October 1895.
11. British investors purchased outright or controlling interests in a number of breweries in the San Francisco area which

led to fears of a ‘beer trust’. There is evidence that some pricing controls and wars did occur, but the few San Diego breweries maintained their independence.

12. ‘Brewery Not Sold’, *San Diego [Weekly] Union*. 12 March 1896.
13. ‘The Brewery Opened’, *San Diego [Weekly] Union*. 22 April 1897.
14. ‘New Today’, *Evening Tribune*. 16 April 1897; ‘A Card’, *San Diego Union*. 17 April 1897.
15. ‘Local Intelligence: In General’, *San Diego Union*. 14 December 1897.
16. The Corona name was revived and is now made by Constellation Brands in Mexico for sale in the United States.
17. ‘More Money and New Beer’, *The Evening Tribune*. 30 May 1904.
18. A standard phrase in articles of incorporation at the time included ‘oil drilling’ but there is no evidence of this activity by the company.
19. [Trademark statement], *Evening Tribune*. 31 July 1906.
20. “Stadler Funeral Services to be Held Tomorrow,” *Evening Tribune*, August 26, 1909.
21. ‘San Diego to Have Maier Brewery is Report’, *San Diego Union*. 17 August 1913.
22. ‘Brewery Stock Sale is Blocked’, *San Diego Union*. 24 September 1910.
23. No evidence remains of any decision in the lawsuit, so it may have been settled out of court. In 1918 Kate Stadler is listed in an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation as holding 187 shares.
24. [Advertisement], *San Diego Union*. 27 September 1914.
25. ‘Court Takes Hopski Suit Under Advisement’, *San Diego Union*. 24 August 1915; ‘Court Upholds Santa Fe Road’, *Evening Tribune*. 16 September 1915; ‘Brewers Sue Railroads’, *Evening Tribune*. 16 October 1915.
26. ‘Mission Brewery Offered for Sale’, *San Diego Union*. 14 June 1917.
27. The Mission Brewing building is again a brewery. Several breweries have operated in the building since the 1980s but due to National Heritage site status and size limitations, they move elsewhere to expand.
28. [Advertisement], *Evening Tribune*. 28 September 1916.
29. Jaret, C. ‘Troubled by Newcomers: Anti-Immigrant Attitudes and Action During Two Eras of Mass Immigration to the United States’, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27502448>; Perea, J.F. (1997) ‘Introduction’ in Perea, J.F. (ed.) *Immigrants Out! The New Nativism and the Anti-Immigrant Impulse in the United States*. New York: New York University Press.
30. Allswang, J.M. (2000) *The Initiative and Referendum in*

California, 1898-1998. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

31. 'Hundreds Storm Breweries for Jobs', *San Diego Union*. 27 March 1933.

32. 'Jigsaw Puzzle Maze has Nothing on Whether Beer Will be Soft or Hard Drink When San Diego Gets It', *San Diego Union*. 20 March 1933.

33. 'Council to Take Up Problem of Beer Tomorrow', *San Diego Union*. 29 March 1933.

34. 'Alteration Work on S.D. Brewery Near Completion', *San Diego Union*. 26 January 1936.

35. Examples of discrimination against those seen as pro-German and their businesses ranged from the Federal 'Alien Registration Act of 1940' to public sentiment seen in 'Enemy Merchandise', *San Diego Union*. 12 November 1942 and 'Army Gives Marching Orders to Five San Diego Suspects',

San Diego Union. 15 December 1942.

36. Community involvement and war support included social support as in 'Good Neighbors Build America', *San Diego Union*. 12 September 1940; and bond drives as seen in 'Give Security to Your Home and Our Nation' advertisement, *San Diego Union*. 17 December 1941.

37. 'Beer Firm Agrees', *The San Diego Union*. 9 February 1943.

38. 'Coors Will Test Market Premium Beer Here', *San Diego Union*. 12 March 1980.

39. 'San Diego Brewery List 11/29/18', *The West Coaster*. <https://westcoastersd.com/san-diego-brewery-list/>

40. California State University San Marcos and San Diego Brewers Guild. *2018 Economic Impact of Craft Breweries in San Diego County*. https://www.csusm.edu/coba/obra/dashboard/craft_beer/craft_report_18.pdf.