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A PICTURE OF GRACE BROTHERS BREWING OF SANTA ROSA IN 1950

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On 2 April 1950 a feature article, 'Beer is Big Business', appeared in *The Press Democrat* of Santa Rosa, California. It is reproduced in full following this introduction.[1] The article focused on the operations of Grace Bros. Brewing Co. (GBB), among the smaller Californian breweries between 1897 and 1969. Its author was Milby R. (Mike) Pardee, a senior *Press Democrat* editor.[2] The article opened with a discussion of bock beer, its lore and legends. Bock was then newly reintroduced to the American beer landscape including by GBB.[3] Pardee then reviewed beer and brewing history in general, turning finally to GBB: its history, raw materials used, and current production processes. The article circles back to bock beer before concluding.

The article's length and detail are explained in that GBB was a favourite son — a longstanding industry in Santa Rosa, even during Prohibition. Hence an important employer and taxpayer. And there was more. As Pardee explains, in 1950 GBB grew its own hops in Sonoma County, and barley in different locations in California. The brewery therefore had significance in the northern California economy beyond simply the brewing operations.

Pardee's general beer discussion is clearly 'broad brush'. His business history of GBB, albeit still compressed,[4] will likely be of more interest to readers of this journal. Frank P. Grace and Joseph T. Grace were two brothers who had migrated to Santa Rosa from Oswego, New York. By the 1890s they were successful grocery merchants in the city, with Frank also a Sheriff and tax collector. In 1897 the brothers branched into brewing by purchasing the William Metzger Brewery in Santa Rosa.[5] It was then a simple wooden structure, that from its founding in 1872 brewed steam beer and lager.[6] The brewery burned not long after the sale and was soon re-built in brick, with modern refrigeration installed. The brewery was remodelled or expanded in subsequent decades, particularly in 1933-1934 and the 1940s. After purchase by the Graces the brewery, now called Grace Brothers Brewery, continued to produce lager and steam beer.[7] During Prohibition (1930-1933) the site functioned as a cold storage facility and ice supplier, and also made near beer, soft drinks, butter, and ice cream. Frank P. Grace died in 1930.

In 1933 the five sons of Frank formed a corporation, Grace Bros. Brewing Co., to restart the brewery, in which their uncle Joseph held an interest. Correlatively the five sons held an interest in brewing activities managed by Joseph in Los Angeles, Fresno, and Sacramento, established through the 1930s and early '40s. During the first half of the 1940s the business association with Joseph was progressively severed. Henceforth, his remit was the Grace Bros. brewery in Los Angeles and the brewing interests in Fresno and Sacramento. By 1945 two of the five brothers (Frank P.'s sons) had died and the three survivors continued GBB in Santa Rosa on their own. After Repeal, GBB produced lager and ale, all bottled or canned. No draught was sold, at least at the time Pardee was writing. For a time in the mid-1930s, some steam beer may have been made,[8] but likely for not more than a year or two . Indeed, Pardee refers to it as practically disappeared in California brewing generally, viewing the beer as crude and improvised, and made unnecessary due to subsequent improvements in brewing .[9]

Pardee describes well GBB's malt characteristics,[10] annual hop and grain usage, excise bill paid, the canning/bottling line, and other operations in 1950. From the discussion it appears all beers used grain adjunct, as typical in American brewing in the period. The head brewer in 1950, Len Burton, cited the familiar rationales of lending a snappier taste and enhancing stability. For standard GBB lager the malt-adjunct ratio was likely 2:1.[11] Burton, a self-described Irish-Canadian from British Columbia, had a university chemistry degree and was a graduate of a Chicago brewing school. This, with Pardee's description of the gauges, metering and other technical equipment at Burton's disposal, some U.S. Air Force war surplus, suggest GBB operated with a certain sophistication despite its regional status.

Pardee explains that GBB used between a quarter and half a pound of hops per barrel for lager, and up to an impressive sounding three pounds for ale. A 1951 news article on GBB, quoting its then-head brewer Walter Walker, stated GBB beer was 'mild, light and hoppy' in tune with the current public taste, as contrasted with the 'heavy, bitter' beer of former times.[12] It seems likely ca.1951 GBB's lager received the quarter pound of hops per barrel, at least when alpha acid levels were in a normal range. GBB's main product until 1952 was 'GB Premium Pale Beer'. In a series of 1951 ads, GBB stressed the beer was made in small quantities and that extra flavour resulted from the home-grown malt and hops. One advert stated, in tones quite at home with the modern craft ethos:

> The makers of GB Beer have been growing their own hops for over 50 years. They've been growing their own grains and making their own malts, too. But it's not what goes into a beer that counts. It's what comes out. And in the case of GB Premium, it's full strength flavor for full enjoyment.[13]

In 1952 GBB reformulated and re-named its base lager '52', relying on the advice of brewery consultant John Borger. An 'improved yeast' was substituted and half the malt bill was now brought in from Wisconsin. Also, corn replaced the earlier rice as adjunct.[14] The Sonoma County hops were retained. Their type was not named by Pardee or in subsequent press accounts for GBB but was almost certainly Cluster.[15] Despite these formulation changes GBB shut its doors only one year later, in 1953, citing poor profits and inability to compete with large-volume producers able to merchandise and advertise more effectively.[16] The planned sale of the brewery to an 'Eastern' brewery did not go through, however, and in an unlikely development, Tom Grace re-opened GBB in 1958, selling lager mainly to supermarkets and other private label retailers.

Starting in 1958, GBB also brewed malt liquor and an ale brand under the Bull Dog brand for Los Angeles-based distributor Bohemian Distributing. GBB's own regular brand was now re-styled a 'Bavarian type'.[17] Significantly, its malt ratio was increased to 80% and the flavour made 'hoppier'.[18] This shows a move to a more premium taste which some American brewers were angling for at the time. In retrospect one can view the hike in quality, especially in the contemporary small brewery context, as a proto-craft development.[19] In 1958 GBB produced 100,000 barrels, with 25% the Bull Dog beers, 25% own-brands, and 50% private labels (supermarkets, liquor stores and others).[20]

With the restart in 1958 GBB ceased to malt its own barley. Henceforth all malt came from the Eastern United States. As in 1952 corn was used as malt adjunct, specified here as from 'the corn belt'.[21] Phoenix GBB made some good money for a time but closed in 1966 due to competitive pressures, especially from national brewers with large advertising budgets who could undercut GBB's pricing.[22] After Tom Grace died in 1966 Maier Brewery in Los Angeles took ownership. Maier was owned by brewery takeover specialist Paul Kalmanovitz who later re-opened GBB but closed it permanently in 1969. The brewery was torn down soon after, and a Hyatt hotel now occupies the site.[23] With Tom Grace aging in the 1960s and younger Graces not available to carry on the business, its sale and closure later that decade seem, in retrospect foreordained.

In recent decades, Grace family descendants led by Michael Grace (75 at time of writing) formed plans to restart GBB, which did not materialise.[24] GBB brewing heritage was however recognized in a modest way when craft brewery Bear Republic in Cloverdale, Sonoma County released a GBB legacy beer in the autumn of 2022.[25] Even with Grace family cooperation no GBB recipe was available to guide Bear Republic, but efforts were made from available evidence to replicate a period taste including use of Cluster hops. Plans were afoot to brew a further batch for mid-2023 but in the interim Drake Brewery of San Leandro, California purchased Bear Republic, and it is therefore unclear if more GBB legacy beer will appear.

There is a wistful irony in the fact that in 1976 the first modern American microbrewery, New Albion Brewery, took root in GBB's own back yard of Sonoma County.[26] Had GBB endured into the 1970s it might have led, with Anchor Brewery in San Francisco, the emerging craft brewing movement.[27] GBB would have been ideal for this role, a brewery that in 1950 was still growing its own hops and barley and 'premiumized' its basic lager in 1958. Still, GBB can claim a legitimate a place in craft brewing history, not just as an interesting 'near miss', but in a more direct sense. Circa 1965 Tom Grace gave Fritz Maytag of Anchor Brewery a bucket of GBB yeast to restart fermentation at Anchor, a brewery that undoubtedly formed a bridge to the craft brewery movement.[28]

In summary, journalist Mike Pardee recorded in good detail the workings of a mid-20th century regional American brewery. His folksy tone, representative of the contemporary small-town press, is just part of the charm. GBB formed part of a rapidly diminishing sub-set of American brewing, one ever threatened by national or ambitious regional brewers. Yet, small regional breweries, such as F.X. Matt in New York State and The Lion, Yuengling, and Straub in Pennsylvania, were in a not dissimilar position and did survive, benefitting ultimately from the re-valorisation of small-scale brewing in America. For a variety of reasons, of which timing was probably the cruellest factor, this future was foreclosed to GBB.

References

1. The reproduction in *Brewery History* is courtesy *The Press Democrat Archives*.
2. He died in 1970. His career was described in a *Press Democrat* obituary on 1 July 1970.
3. Malt conservation orders during World War II resulted in the suspension of most American bock beer brewing. Many brewers only re-introduced bock in 1949-1950. For further background see Gary Gillman's blogpost dated 4 July 2021, 'Early Beer Tasting by California Epicures. Part VIII', in his website Beer et Seq. (Retrieved from Early Beer Tasting by California Epicures. Part VIII. – Beer Et Seq. Accessed 17 July 2023).
4. Further helpful information on GBB history is provided by Grace family descendant Michael Grace who authored a series of notes on GBB history in 2010. See his blog, *Grace Brothers Brewing*. (Retrieved from *Grace Brothers Brewing* (gracebrosbrewing.com). Accessed 17 July 2023).
5. Some accounts render the surname as Metzgar. By 1897 Metzger, who had traded with different partners, was no longer an owner. The Graces bought the brewery from the 'Estate of Jacob Haltinner (John)' according to John C. Burton's (2017) *Grace Bros. Breweries, History and Memorabilia: Santa Rosa – Los Angeles – Sacramento – Fresno*. Santa Rosa: Aperitifs Publishing Company, see p.7. Burton adds (same page) that the brewery was founded as the Santa Rosa Steam Brewery and produced 78 barrels of beer weekly.
6. ibid.
7. Perusing adverts in Burton, J.C. (2017) op. cit. it appears only lager was bottled and steam beer remained, as steam beer classically was, draught-only.
8. In 1934 the trade journal *The American Brewer* stated that GBB added steam beer to its product line due to 'the demand for steam beer in the San Francisco Bay district'. Retrieved from The American Brewer Vol.67, No.11 (1934). (hagley.org). (Accessed 20 July 1950). However, when describing brewing operations from the re-start of GBB in 1933 no mention of steam beer is made in Burton, J.C. (2017) op. cit.
9. His description of steam beer is rather summary, but he did acknowledge its historical importance in California brewing.
10. GBB malted its own barley in 1950. Although not mentioned by Pardee the barley variety was undoubtedly the six-row type, consistent with near-universal American practice then.
11. This results from Pardee's statement that a barrel of 'beer', probably the base GB lager, required 45 pounds of grain, 30 of (barley) malt and 15 of rice or corn. On the further assumption of a 5% abv beer, we asked Berlin-based beer historian Andreas Krennmair (see his beer website *Daft Eejit*, retrieved https://dafteejit.com/, accessed 18 July 2023) what gravities this might produce. Stressing he could only estimate due to many variables not known such as brewhouse efficiency and degree of yeast attenuation, he stated in part: 'With 1/3 grits and 2/3 6-row malt, I get an OG of about 11.8°P (1.047) and a FG of about 2.5°P (1.010). When I reduce the brewhouse efficiency down so that I get to 4.7%, I end up with an OG of 11.2°P (1.045) and an FG of about 2.3°P (1.009). Either of them seem plausible'. We concur, particularly for the latter, and either way it suggests a light-bodied adjunct lager, consistent with the trends of the time.
12. *The Press Democrat*, 4 February 1951.
13. *Petaluma Argus Courier*, 9 March 1951.
14. Pardee refers at various times to both rice and corn as adjuncts in beer-making, but the tenor of the article is that in 1950 GBB used only rice, grown on Grace family estates.
15. A review of various sources, including *The Press Democrat* of the 1940s and 1950s suggests Cluster was the dominant if not the exclusive variety raised in Sonoma County. Further, it was marketed in three forms, seedless, semi-seedless and seeded, with a premium paid for the unseeded form.
16. *The Press Democrat*, 26 January 1953. Burton, J.C. (2017) op. cit., 'In the 1950s Budweiser, Miller's, Schlitz, and Pabst invaded the small California markets with inexpensive beers [this probably refers to quality] and low prices and Grace could not compete. At the same time Grace was facing union problems.' Numerous sources cited in this paper mention high labour costs as a factor in GBB's postwar decline.
17. This was clearly a pale lager. Pardee's 1950 article reflects the older understanding of the term in American brewing, i.e., for a dark Munich style.
18. Burton, J.C. (2017) op. cit., p.88.
19. For further background on this trend see Gary Gillman's blogpost dated 16 August 2022, 'The Third Taste'. Retrieved from The Third Taste. Part I. – Beer Et Seq. (Accessed 21 July 2023).
20. Burton, J.C. (2017) op. cit., p.88. Grace in *Grace Brothers Brewing* stressed that in the final period GBB made only three beers, a basic lager, ale, and malt liquor. A multitude of labels was used to brand especially the first, as common in brewing at the time.
21. See Mike Pardee's further article on GBB in *The Press Democrat*, 1 March 1959. It is a (shorter) counterpart to the 1950 article.
22. See generally on this background Grace, *Grace Brothers Brewing* (see Note 4).
23. ibid.
24. ibid.
25. See the account by Kerry Benefield in *The Press Democrat*, 16 September 2022. (Retrieved from https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/benefield-grace-bros-beer-makes-a-treasured-and-temporary-return/. Accessed 19 July 2023).
26. The origins of New Albion Brewing have been extensively documented. A good overview appears from the referenced Wikipedia entry, 'New Albion Brewing Company'. (Retrieved from New Albion Brewing Company - *Wikipedia*, Accessed 19 July 2023).
27. Michael Grace makes this point in *Grace Brothers Brewing*.
28. This affecting story is related by Michael Grace in *Grace Brothers Brewing*. Maytag drove up to GBB in his open-top sports car to fetch the yeast. On the trip back to San Francisco some flew

out onto the expressway, but enough remained to put Anchor back in business. Maytag recites the same story in interviews. However, GBB's 'D.N.A.' did not permanently feature in Anchor Steam Beer as, in the early Maytag years, yeast was continually sourced from area breweries such as Lucky Lager, Burgermeister, and GBB to refresh fermentation. See Burkhart, D. (2022) *The Anchor Brewing Story*. Emeryville: Ten Speed Press, pp.94, 115. Still, the flowing bucket story provides a satisfying connection between old- and new-generation brewing.

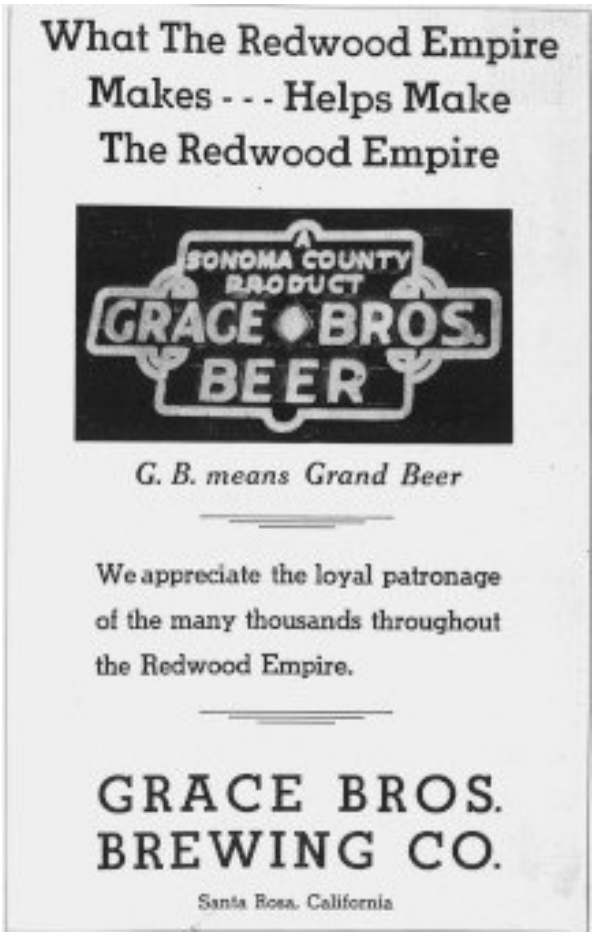


Figure 1. Grace Brothers advertisement printed in *The Press Democrat* of Santa Rosa, California, 2 April 1950.

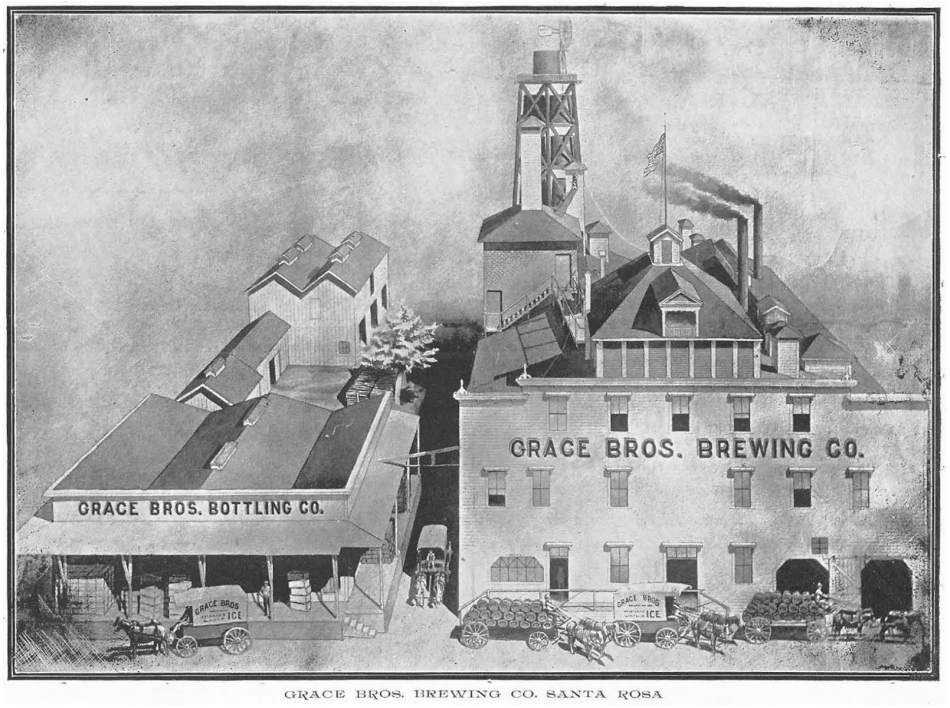


Figure 2. Grace Brothers Brewery, c.1902. From the Santa Rosa Fire Department Souvenir, 1902. Source: Elliott, J. (2013) 'Hear that Pavlovian whistle blow', SantaRosaHistory.com. 28 April.



Figure 3. Grace Brothers Brewing Company, Santa Rosa, California, 1964. Don Meacham photography collection, 1934-1985, SPC.00012.01.016677 (Photo 16677, Sonoma County Library Digital Collections), History and Genealogy Library, Sonoma County Library, Santa Rosa, CA.

BEER IS BIG BUSINESS

By MIKE PARDEE

Sure signs of spring — Kites tangled in telephone wires — billowy clouds of fragrant blossoms in the apple orchards — daffodils and iris nodding along the garden paths — the clatter of lawnmowers — ladies wearing straw hats looking at next fall's felt hats and men wearing last fall's felt hats looking at next summer's straw hats — touring maps in demand at gasoline service stations. —

And — to a big segment of the male population — an omen as portentious as ever was the first crocus or the first robin yanking a night crawler from a damp lawn — a picture of a billy goat with curling horns — the symbol since time immemorial of bock beer. Hung up on mirrored back bars and in windows of thirst emporiums this symbol of spring may be depicted many poses.

He may be harnessed to a beer wagon. He may be frisking in a field of flowers. He may be garlanded with hops. Or he may just be standing still and looking as sedate and noble as it is possible for a billy goat to look.

But whatever he's doing he heralds the springtime sale of bock beer, a delectible beverage, brewed entirely from fruit of the soil — a dark brown, white-collared beer that traditionally hits the market on St. Patrick's Day and continues to be sold for most of the spring months.

THERE ARE MORE stories and traditions built up around this herald of spring than almost any other beverage.

It is traditionally the oldest, and as far as countless thousands of people are concerned, the best loved, spring tonic.

Actually bock beer could be brewed at any time of year and sold at any time of year.

But, for that matter, hardboiled eggs could be tinted any color at Christmas time, too — and there's nothing to keep anyone from hollowing out a pumpkin, cutting a face on it and hanging a light inside on the Fourth of July either — if he could find a pumpkin then. But no one ever does it. So why should the bock beer tradition be tampered with?

That appears, at any rate, to be the way of thinking of the beer industry. Beer drinkers and brewers are a sentimental lot and cling to tradition — bless 'em. So we have bock in the spring.

Tradition insists that it go on sale first on St. Patrick's Day, or thereabouts, and it isn't considered cricket to jump the gun.

THERE ARE many theories as to its origin.

The one most generally accepted is that bock first made its appearance in Germany, where the finest grains of the fall harvest went into the brew and the cold winters permitted a longer "lagering" (storing) of the resultant beverage. Come spring, it was ready — a dark, fragrant, heady brew.

Then along came a misconception that holds today in spite of anything that the brewing industry can do to dispell it.

It was that before the days of refrigeration in this country bock was made from the heavy, winter-long accumulation which was found in the bottom of the brewery vats in the spring.

Along about the time salesmen were unpacking the first bock beer signs in the Redwood Empire this spring we got to pondering about the dark brew and the many misconceptions that are built up around it and decided to look into the matter.

There must be a sizeable story in the brewing industry itself. It is a highly important industry, certainly closely allied to agriculture since beer is made entirely of agricultural products — the fruits of the soil.

What better place to get first hand information than at the Grace Brothers Brewing Co. plant here in Santa Rosa.

ONE OF THE last breweries left, out of hundreds originally, outside of large metropolitan areas and the only brewery in the entire Redwood Empire county, it is in a position to answer the many questions about this noble and ancient art of transmuting grains, hops, yeasts and water into a delightful zestful beverage.

There in the midst of gleaming copper kettles, pipes and filters, shining white tanks housed within snowy walls, and glass-fronted tile lined rooms where automatic machinery fills bottles at the rate of 240 a minute, brewing has been brought to a fine art without the loss of any of the personal touch that has so characterized the industry throughout its long development.

Beer is an ancient beverage and brewing is an ancient art — profession, the brewmasters call it. And with their knowledge of biology, chemistry and a dozen allied subjects, who is there to gainsay them?

It's perhaps about a toss-up as to which came first — wine or beer. It doesn't appear to be a matter of current record which beverage, the juice of the sugary purple grape or the

extract of fully ripened grains first helped man to forget his woes and to provide another outlet for his agricultural endeavors.

BOTH THE BREWMASTER and the vintner can trace the ancestry of their respective arts back into the dimness of antiquity to a time when men weren't troubled with such things as H-bombs, income taxes, next month's payment on the automobile, the rent, high cost of living or the glib promises of an election year.

Both arts are still exemplified in Sonoma County where the products necessary for their production grow in lavish abundance.

Beer may have been known to the Neolithic man.

Scientists know that our prognathous-jawed ancestors of the stone age, 10,000 to 12,000 years ago, cultivated barley and wheat and made bread. Presumably he also made beer. No actual proof of this, however, has come to light. But it's a good theory.

The earliest positive proof so far marks beer and the brewing industry about 6,000 years old.

In Mesopotamia archeologists have unearthed pottery drawings made about 4,200 B.C. that show brew workers stirring a. brew vat with poles. At that remote time beer was made from a specially baked bread — a process that would appear crude in the extreme to today's highly scientifically trained brewmaster.

Other scientists have excavated pottery jugs dating back around 3,300 B.C. that contained dried beer sediments.

THE OLDEST actual sample of beer mash was found in Germany.

It was in a tightly closed jug, found in a house that had been destroyed about 300 A.D. The substance in the jug was proved by chemical analysis to have been mash. After 1600 years it probably wasn't palatable even to a non-discriminating drinker — but its character was definitely proved.

The oldest actual brewery found to date goes back to around 2,000 B.C. It is a small model brewery unearthed in a tomb at Thebes in the Valley of the Kings and now reposes at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In the Egyptian process, as told by hieroglyphics "women grind flour, which is worked into dough by a man. The dough is trodden into a tall vat and there left to ferment in four tall crocks. When fermentation is completed it is poured off into round jugs with black clay stoppers."

Cleopatra herself, when she wasn't dissolving pearls in wine, may have sipped a beaker of this type of brew on days when the wind blew warm across the Nile and the air conditioning in the palace was out of kilter.

Beer was known, too, to the ancient Greeks, to the Romans and to the Chinese at least as early as 2,300 B.C.

The Kaffirs of South Africa brewed palm beer of high authority.

The Vikings knew — and loved — the beverage, using silver and gold decorated cattle horns to drink it from.

For hundreds of years before Columbus hocked the queen's jewels to make the first trans-Atlantic trip, aborigines of North and South America made beer. In fact, beer was known just about every place in the world so far as scientists can determine.

NOR WAS BEER ever an unusual beverage to be enjoyed only by the few, wealthy and royal. It has been the subject of many ancient laws and is mentioned in many of the great classical writings quite casually as though it were a well-known and widely-accepted part of ordinary life.

Beer figured prominently in early European history. There we find royalty and nobility were fond of it and the clergy was vitally interested in its production.

Almost all of the medieval breweries in Europe were operated in monasteries.

Brewing of beer and ale were important businesses in early England with most of the British monarchs finding room for it on their tables.

There were laws regulating the price and quality of beer, with ale-tasters appointed by the Crown to act as watchdogs of quality. Ale Taster was a public office created by William The Conqueror as one of the oldest of English public offices.

Every town had its ale-taster. Shakespeare's father was said to have filled such an office.

IF IT HADN'T been for beer the course of our own country's history might have been changed.

Virginia was the original destination of the intrepid little band of rugged, individualists who set sail from England, on

the Mayflower. The crossing was slowed by storms. So the Pilgrims decided to land at the nearest harbor — Plymouth — because "our victuals being much spent, especially our beer," according to a journal written in 1622.

It's a different story today. If any traveler runs out of beer all he has to do is stop at the average corner grocery and replenish his supply.

Beer ranked in importance with bread in Colonial days.

It appeared at almost every meal. It was not only a beverage, it was a liquid food, and was used abundantly in cooking.

Now almost a lost art, beer in cookery was then taken for granted.

Many households in Colonial America had their own brewhouses. Every household had its own recipe for brewing and every recipe was a closely-guarded secret.

For example, George Washington, had a brew house at Mount Vernon and had his own recipe for making beer. Today this recipe is a priceless document, in Washington's own handwriting.

Samuel Adams, General Israel Putnam, James Oglethorpe, William Penn — all these and many more famous in the history of this country were among the names linked with beer.

William Penn introduced beer into Pennsylvania and built a brewery on his estate in 1683. It still remains, in restored form.

John Alden, who had to be urged by Priscilla to "speak for himself," was a cooper by trade. This was an important trade in any industry depending upon kegs for its product.

Paul Revere, who rose to fame because of a certain horseback ride at a time when our country's history trembled in the balance, specialized in silver beer tankards. So, too, did Nicholas Roosevelt, forebear of two presidents.
The early Colonials did a great deal to encourage the brewing industry, not only through setting personal examples, by public pronouncements and education, but also by legislative action.

In 1789 Massachusetts passed a bill exempting brewers from taxation for a period of five years. James Madison, the same year, sponsored federal action on a protective tariff to protect domestic brewing.

ALL THOSE early brews, however, were not the beer we drink today. It wasn't the foamy dark-bodied "bock" or "Bavarian", nor was it the pale golden "Pilsner", nor yet the almost gone, but not forgotten, tongue-biting "steam" — Pioneer California's contribution to the brewing industry.

Today's beer is light, clear, sparkling, with a slightly bitter flavor, a creamy "collar" and an exhilarating effect.

Then, and as far back into antiquity as it can be traced, beer was a still (not carbonated) liquid, heavy, dark in color and fairly sweet. Some types were sour rather than sweet. In ancient Egypt the beer was unfiltered and contained the hulls of grains used.

It took thousands of years for a few basic improvements to be. made in the process of brewing.

One of these few was the introduction of hops around 900 A.D.

This changed beer from a sweet to a bitter drink and greatly improved its keeping qualities.

Only a few improvements could be made in those days for no one knew just what went on in the vats. Beer making was a sort of "catch-as-catch-can" affair. Brewmasters weren't trained to the high degree they are today.

It was popularly supposed that "the little people," ancient counterparts of gremlins — which had their birth in World War II — governed the process of transmuting the crude bread dough into a palatable beverage.

And no one was able to find out how to control the ancient leprechauns.

BREWERS tried all sorts of things some weird beyond belief.

One New York bartender of Irish descent, in trying to explain the origin of bock — which is what we were after, too, when we went to the big Grace plant not long back — was authority for the statement that in the days of the Irish kings "they used to boil a live ox in the beer to make it a fit drink for the fightin' man."

The first scientific approach to the brewing industry came in the 17th century when brewer's yeast was subjected to the searching of a microscope. That was the beginning.

But it was not until 1876 when Louis Pasteur's studies were published to form the basis of today's control and biological cleanliness that the most important advance was made in the brewing industry.

Pasteur proved beyond any doubt that yeast — not leprechauns or gremlins or any other "little people" — was the cause of the fermentation and that the effect of the yeast could be controlled.

This marked beginning of a new era in beer production.

With the start of scientific approach made by Louis Pasteur's studies the brewing industry today relies heavily on science. Such technical men as agronomists, chemists, bacteriologists, biologists, and scientific researchers in a multitude of industry all play an important part in beer making.

Now the brewmaster knows exactly what goes on and exactly how to control every phase of the production.

He knows that the only "leprechaun" or "gremlin" that can effect the beer is carelessness.

He knows that beer is made from only the finest of ingredients, and that only the finest of equipment is used in its production.

He knows that bock beer is no more made from the settlings and "leavings" of regular brewing than that any beer is made from castoff by-products of agriculture.

JUST TO SETTLE for once and for all this matter of that noble springtime beverage that is "trademarked" by a billy goat — bock beer — we hunted up L.H. (Len) Burton, brewmaster of the Grace Brothers Brewing Company.

Now the average person might be led, by romantic tales, movies and what the navy boys call "scuttlebutt" to think of a brewmaster as an overstuffed, walrus-mustached person of Germanic extraction. Maybe there have been such brewmasters. There must have been a foundation for such a mind's eye picture.

But when we found Len Burton sitting behind a littered desk on the second floor of the brewhouse at the Grace plant, a lot of mind's-eye pictures were blasted.
He is a smiling, grey-haired, sparkling-eyed Irishman. "Irish -Canadian," he said. "Born in British Columbia."

He has been brewmaster — and that means "kingfish" as far as brewing operations are concerned — of the Grace plant for 13 years. Before that he was in a similar capacity in the Marx Brewery in Detroit.

A graduate of UBC (University of British Columbia), where he majored in chemistry, he took a special brewmasters' course, of nine months of intensive study in biology in Chicago before he started on his career of changing grains into beverages.

"Beer in the main," he said, "is a mixture of malt, grain, hop for flavor, yeast to start, fermentation and water."

He pointed to a slogan that hung over his desk and over a series of three charts and electronic dials that told him exactly what was going on in all parts of the plant at a glance.

It read:

"MALT is the soul of good beer and barley the heart of good malt."

"That's something to remember in this industry," he said. "Only the finest ingredients are used. It takes good barley to make good malt and without good malt you can't have good beer."

We went immediately into the bock beer question, what with this being the spring season and all.

He showed a letter he had received from a Los Angeles man asking if the story he had heard from a bartender — that bock is made from dregs and refuse in the beer vat — was true.

Then he showed his reply. It read, in part:

"There is no such thing as 'dregs and refuse' in the brewing of any type of beer. The processing of beer is conducted in a scientific manner and under extremely sanitary conditions, requiring the constant vigilance and care that all the specially trained personnel give it to assure the consumer of a clean, fresh, biologically pure beverage.

"Nothing but the finest of equipment and the choicest of materials are used in its production.

"Bock beer is traditionally sold in the spring. It also is made from nothing but the choicest materials — barley malt, together with rice and corn and carefully selected blends of hops."
"Dark malts, carameled and roasted, are employed. It is usually brewed in December and marketed in March.

'The same technical and practical care is employed as in the manufacture of any like beverage."

Then he went on to explain that after every brewing — after each emptying of the big gleaming copper 300-barrel brew kettle — the kettle, the lines, the tanks, the filters, coolers and a dozen and one other pieces of copper, stainless steel

or glass lined concrete equipment used are thoroughly and completely steam cleaned.

"There couldn't be any 'dregs and refuse'," he said. "There aren't any left to make bock or anything else."

That certainly should end the bock beer matter as far as it being the "leavings found in the springtime" is concerned.

But come next March 17 and for the period thereafter that the dark brew is eagerly quaffed by the thirsty in search of a general toning up and you'll hear the story. For it's all a part of the tradition.

THE REDWOOD Empire has had its breweries ever since it has had white population.

Pick up any history dealing with the communities in the rich agricultural area that started its amazing growth with the arrival of the first ox-teams from the east bringing argonauts in search of gold and you'll find that a brewery was among the first industries.

Sonoma had a brewery way back in its history. Lakeport had one, at the base of "Brewery Hill" that marks the eastern gateway to Scotts' Valley.

Lower Lake had one, and for years the little town with its tiny stone jail that had as its first customers the men who built it for the town, had on its outskirts the crumbling remnants of "Old Man Link's Brewery." There is a story told by old timers in Lower Lake that each brewer's wife disliked the idea of her husband so ardently sampling his own product.

So to stop him she tossed a few handsfull of beans into the beer barrels. The beans swelled and soured, turning a brew to a vinegary-like liquid so distasteful to the palate that no one oould drink.it.

Ukiah, Healdsburg — all had their breweries.

SANTA ROSA'S was slow in getting started. The town had a wholesale liquor firm and five retail saloons before the old Santa Rosa Brewery was established at Second and Wilson Streets by William Metzgar in 1872.

An account of the day described it as being "of two stories high, 26 by 100 feet, and contains, besides the necessary brewing apparatus, a cool and commodious cellar for beer, of which they manufacture 78 barrels a week."

At the time the description was written the proprietors were Metzgar and Haltinnen.

Like the other west coast breweries of that and an earlier day, it was a steam beer brewery.

"Steam" was a long-famous brew — California's contribution to the vast brewing industry.

"Steam beer" is described by present-day brewmasters and by such old timers in the industry as Manuel Felciano, treasurer of the Grace Brothers Company, who remember the sharp, foamy beverage with longing for its return, as a "quick beer." That means a beer that could be made and matured in a hurry without the necessity of refrigeration.

THE PRINCIPAL difference between "steam" and "lager" beer is that the latter is stored to age and "ripened" under refrigeration. "Lager" is a German word that means "to store."

To store beer requires refrigeration. Probably the first "lagering" was in caverns. Later the barrels were packed with ice.

Lager beer, in the old days, was generally sold in kegs, or quarter or half barrels. Because it had aged, and stopped "working" it was necessary for the bartender to pump air into the barrel, thus creating a pressure sufficient to force the beer through the cooling coils and spigot into the customer's glass. Or lager beer could be bottled, just as it is now.

"Steam beer" is under fermentation in the barrel. It created its own "steam" or carbon-dioxide gas from the fermentation. It was a "wild" and bubbly beverage with a sharp "nip" that was greatly in demand in early day San Francisco, where it was first made in quantity.

Since early day Californians had no refrigeration and ice was unheard of, beer couldn't be "lagered."

One version of the origin of "steam" has it that an early day brewer traveling west by ox-train made a few barrels of beer in the wagon. It brewed and fermented and when he stuck a spigot into the keg it flowed out, forming a dense collar of foam at the top of the glass.

The "wildness" of the beverage gave it its popular name. "It's sure steaming," someone said when one of the first glasses of the brew was filled. From then on it was "steam beer," for generations the West's most popular beverage.

"STEAM" has almost disappeared in California now, since the state laws, governing production of beer and other alcoholic beverages since 1933 when the federal prohibition act was repealed, forbid making of barrelled beer at higher than 3.2 per cent, by weight, of alcohol.

"Steam" beer, since it is fermenting in the barrel from which it is served, cannot be held to this exact percentage without a lot of trouble and expense. "So," says Tom Grace, president of the local company, "there isn't much steam left anymore. We made it for a long time, but it proved too much trouble in recent years the — alcoholic content is unstable, and the law now makes it almost impossible to produce."

So "steam" with its trickiness that called upon all the skill the bartender had at his command to draw a "seidel" of, has gone, or nearly so, but bock is still here.

It was an annual product for many years at the Grace plant. For a few past years, however, none had been made until this year the dark, rich, brew — a Bavarian type beer, made from malt that has been toasted until the sugar to which the starches were turned by the malting process, in turn became caramelized to give it the rich mahogany color — is being turned out at the plant.

THE NAME Grace Brothers has been associated with the brewing industry in Santa Rosa for 53 years.

It was in 1897 that Joseph T. Grace, president of the Sonoma County Fair Association, and his brother, the late Frank P, Grace, bought the old Metzgar Santa Rosa Steam Beer Brewery.

The Grace brothers were young businessmen from Oswego, N.Y., who had been in the grocery business — first retail groceries at Fourth and A Street where later famous Kopf and Donovan store was operated for years — and later in the wholesale grocery business — forerunners of the present Sonoma Valley Wholesale Grocery Company.

As wholesale grocers they handled along with all lines of staple groceries, dried fruits — products of Sonoma County's orchards — and the famous Bodega Bay potatoes.

Manuel Felciano, who has been with the brewery firm continuously since 1903, recalled recently hauling 1,300 sacks of potatoes from Bodega to Santa Rosa for 45 cents a sack. "They were good spuds, too," he remembered.

With purchase of the brewery the brothers changed the name to "Grace Brothers Brewery" and became known throughout the area.

DURING THE period of national prohibition when the Grace Brothers Brewery like all the others were forced to discontinue production, the plant became an ice and cold storage plant, and specialized in carbonated beverages, butter and ice cream. Later the ice cream plant was sold to the National Ice Co.

After the death of Frank P. Grace — one-time sheriff of Sonoma County — in 1930, the Frank P. Grace Co., a separate corporation of which the five sons of the late sheriff were members, took over the brewery plant, then making soft drinks, and Joseph T. Grace took over the ice and cold storage business and the famous De Turk Winery, pioneer plant that the brothers had purchased some years before. The brewery was known as the "Second Street plant" and the winery as the "Donohue Street plant."

In 1933 when prohibition was repealed, Joseph T. Grace and the Frank P. Grace Co. formed a new corporation as the Grace Brothers Brewing Co. Inc. to reopen the brewery.

The five sons of Frank P. Grace — Frank P. Jr., Thomas, James, Jack and William, thus became the second generation of the family to enter into the brewing industry in Santa Rosa.

It was after the death of Frank Jr. that the other four brothers acquired their uncle's interest in the business, taking over the entire Santa Rosa brewing plant, while he continued operation of the Los Angeles brewing plant, acquired between 1933 and 1942 by the company and operated as "Grace Bros. Brewery Ltd."

James Grace died during World War II while he was in the army overseas.

NOW THE BREWERY Is operated by the three brothers, Tom as president and Jack and Bill — as they are known to all their friends and associates — as vice presidents. Jack is also treasurer of the corporation.

Manuel Felciano, the "old timer" of the staff, is the secretary.

He and his brother, John Felciano, are the oldest of several "old timers" who have been associated with the brewery for many years. John followed Manuel in 1904 in employ of the original Grace brothers.

He remembers when the plant, in 1903, had a 75 barrel brewing kettle. Now it is equipped with a 300-barrel kettle of polished copper that makes the mouths of copper hobbyists water when they see it.

A BREWERY'S output is measured in "barrels" even though most of the output of all of them — and 100 per cent of the Grace plant output — is marketed in bottles or cans.

A barrel is 31 gallons. Seldom, if ever, was beer sold in that size container. Most of the conventional beer kegs, that old timers recall being delivered on pipe-racked wagons pulled by shiny-coated Percherons, Belgians or Shire horses and

tossed around by husky, leather-aproned teamsters, were seven-gallon "quarter barrel" kegs. But still the output is measured in "barrels."

Giving an idea of the output of the Santa Rosa plant are figures quoted by Tom Grace for the 1949 production. It totaled 42,000 barrels each of which means $8 in excise taxes for the government.

"When I came here," said Mr. Felciano," we paid $1 per barrel tax — now it's $8."

In those pre-earthquake days of 1903, the bottled beer sold, at brewery price, for $1.75 for a case of four dozen pints — a price equivalent to $3.66 today with the taxes multiplied eight times.

At peak production in wartime, when the beer was shipped throughout the world on government order, the brewery paid as high as $60,000 a month in government taxes.

It takes 45 pounds of grain, including. 30 pounds of malt — sprouted barley — and 15 pounds of rice or corn — to make a barrel of beer. The plant operates with an average of 65 employes and has a total annual payroll in excess of half a million dollars.

THE PLANT HAS been enlarged many times since that time in 1872, when as the Metzgar Santa Rosa Brewery, it was 26 by 100 feet with a commodious cellar.

It now covers an entire city block, with the old ice house converted into fermenting and storage cellars and a four-story brew house, as well as the newest addition, the bottling plant, completed in October of 1948.

Described as the "finest in the west," this gleaming glass tile and clear glass plant, of modern design, is the "brain child" of J. Clarence Felciano, architect, son of John Felciano, who is "boss" of the bottling plant it houses.

The almost completely automatic equipment has a capacity of 240 bottles, or cans, of beer a minute — about 300 barrels in eight hours.

A fleet of three giant 20-ton trucks haul the product from Salinas to Crescent City and, in the central valley area, as far south as Fresno.

The company's own ranches supply the raw materials for the beer.

THE FRANK P. GRACE Co., a separate corporation owned by the three brothers operates a 93-acre hop ranch three miles south of Healdsburg where hops that give the flavor to the brew are grown and processed. It's only a matter of a few hours from the vine to the cellars in the Grace plant, says Tom Grace.

"The quicker you get the bales to the brewery the better," he said. "So as soon as they're baled and cleared by certification under the hop marketing agreement, they're trucked to the plant where they're kept in storage to preserve the flavor."

Approximately 25 per cent of the Grace hopyard's production goes to the brewery.

The field has been owned by the family since 1910 when Joseph T. and his brother, Frank P. Sr. planted it.

During prohibition the original hop planting was interplanted with prune trees, which were left in after repeal and a new yard planted on adjoining ground.

Rice and a great deal of the barley used in the beer is grown on a 1,700-acre ranch four miles northwest of Maxwell, in the Sacramento Valley. In addition to this acreage a 1,300-acre farm near Fresno will be planted to a winter barley crop.

Thus the Santa Rosa plant ranks as one of the few breweries, perhaps the only one, in the United States that grows its own raw material.

IN ADDITION the plant has its own water supply — a 1,000-foot drilled well at the rear of the plant — that provides water at the rate of 285 gallons a minute to keep 70,000 gallons of water storage capacity filled.

The plant requires 450 gallons of water a minute at "peak load" — that means, Len Burton explains, "brewing, washing, and for use in the steam plant — the complete operation."

Another unique feature of the plant is the malt plant — the local plant being one of the few breweries in existence that makes its own malt.

The plant is housed in one wing of the giant plant — part of which is a remnant of the original "steam beer" plant.

Malt, in brief, is sprouted barley. Good malting barley must be mature, uniform in color and glossy in appearance. It must have the odor of clean grain, with a thin husk that encloses the grain tightly. Also it must have a germinating capacity of not less than 94 per cent.

We asked Len Burton about malt and he started talking about "enzymic action," then tossed over a booklet that gave the process in words of one syllable.

It shows the following process:

GRAIN IS STORED for 30 to 60 days — the plant has giant steel storage bins, like giant corn silos at the rear of the brew house — since freshly harvested grain does not germinate well.

Then it is steeped in fresh water for 30 to 44 hours at 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit, until the moisture content reaches about 45 per cent.

The steeped barley is placed in revolving drums — giant steel affairs that slowly turn, one revolution in 45 minutes — and allowed to germinate for five days. At that stage it is called "green malt."

Kilning follows. The green malt is spread out and heated. The first step takes 24 hours at not over 110 degrees. The second step also requires 24 hours, but with temperatures rising from 120 to 175 degrees. This stops germination and reduces moisture to four per cent and produces the proper flavor, [for] bock or other dark Bavarian type beers, the heat process is continued until the malted grain darkens — or caramelizes.

Then follows cleaning, which removes the rootlets. In malting, the grain is permitted to sprout until the leaf sprout reaches the end of the individual barley seed, or "berry" as the brewmasters call it

Meanwhile rootlets develop. These must be removed. They are sold as stock feed, as is the spent malt after the brewing, process. In the malting process the starch in the grain is converted to sugar by enzymic action that breaks down the cell walls.

AFTER CLEANING to remove the roots, the malt is stored in bins until it is needed. Malt is never used until it has a "rest period" of 20 to 30 days in the bin. To do otherwise might affect the clarity of the beer.

For several years, particularly during the war and in early postwar years malt from the Santa Rosa plant was shipped to many foreign countries. In Brazil, Portugal, Belgium, Canada, the Philippine islands and the Hawaiian islands the favorite beverage of beer drinkers was brewed from malt that was produced in the slowly revolving drums and in the heated kilns of the Grace plant.

Malt processing is a continuous process. There is no waiting nor no delay. The malt plant operates 24 hours a day when it is in operation. Beer can wait, but malt can't, says Brewmaster Burton. The malt plant has a capacity of 7,000,000 pounds of finished malt annually. That means 9,000,000 pounds of barley.

The Santa Rosa plant alone uses approximately five million pounds of malt, one and a half million pounds of rice and 75,000 pounds of hops in an average year of operation.

NOW FOR the making of beer itself.

A trip through the plant in Santa Rosa starts at the office of Brewmaster Burton. He takes a glance at a large, oblong chart behind a glass door on the wall of the office and explains that it is an "electric potentiometer," an electronic gadget developed in wartime during production of the B-29 flying fortresses.

It is an electrically controlled registering thermometer that takes and records temperatures at 16 critical stages of the brewing process every eight minutes and makes a permanent record on a 30-day chart. At a glance the brewmaster can tell just what is going on at all parts of the brewery. It also provides a record for future study.

A somewhat similar instrument is used in conjunction with the malt operations.

It is used not only to record temperatures, but also to turn the heat on and off when needed.

Outside the door of Mr. Burton's office is the giant shining copper kettle — only half of which is visible. The lower end extends through the floor to the lower story. At one side is a tall white tank labelled "lauterer" to which is connected an array of gleaming copper tubes, running into a long copper tank.

On the other side of the office room, housed in a glass room of its own is a giant sized cooler — an enlarged facsimile of tube coolers used in the dairy industry to cool milk down.

Mr. Burton explains that the giant copper kettle is the brew kettle, the "lauter" tank where the grain and malt is reduced to "wort" or extract and the cooler where the "wort" is cooled down.

BUT AHEAD of that process the stored malt is removed from the storage bin and placed in a malt mill where it is crushed. Then it is mixed with an "adjunct" — rice or corn. Normal proportions are about one bushel of malt and 14 pounds of rice or corn per barrel of finished beer.

The other grains — adjuncts — provide additional starch which is later converted into maltose, or fermentable sugar. Although some all-malt beers are produced in this country, the use of an adjunct results in the type of beer demanded by the American palate. Adjuncts provide pale color, snappier taste and better stability.

The mixed malts and grains are piped into the "lauter" tank, or mash tub, mixed with hot water and agitated. There are several mashing methods employed, lasting from two to six hours and involving different water temperatures.

The purpose of all is the same — to make the dry materials soluble and to convert starches into fermentable sugars.

The contents of the lauter is strained to remove all solid matter after the mashing is complete. The solid matter thus removed is sold for stock feed. It runs approximately 26 per cent protein as do the dried rootlets cleaned from the malt grains at an earlier stage of the process.

THE CLEAR LIQUID remaining after the straining is called "wort." It is a pure extract of the grain and is essentially a dilute sugar solution.

The wort is then piped into the giant copper brew kettle where hops are added at about the rate of one-quarter to one-half pound to the barrel.

Ale requires up to three pounds of hops.
In the brew kettle the proteins are coagulated, the wort is sterilized, the resins and oils are extracted from the hops, the composition of the wort is changed by boiling and all excess water is evaporated.

The hops contain two bitter substances called "humulon" and "lupulon." These supply a bitterness and an aroma. They are considered, too, to have a definite tonic effect on the digestion. The hops also help in clarifying the wort and assist in preserving the beer.

The work of the brew kettle is completed in from one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half hours. Then the hops are strained out. The wort is cooled, first by exposure to the air and then by refrigeration. During this cooling process is the only time the wort is not completely enclosed in a pipeline or in a vat of some kind. Special care is used to prevent any undesirable effects from exposure.

WHEN THE wort has been cooled to about 40 degrees by being run over the refrigerated coils of the giant cooler, it is placed in a starting vat. There is where the brewer's yeast — a carefully prepared special yeast is added. Approximately one pound of yeast to one barrel of wort is used.

After "starting," during which a heavy foam rises to the top and during which the cellarmen carefully check temperatures, the started wort goes to fermenting tanks. There the yeast forms a heavy foam on top of the wort and the temperature rises to about 45 degrees and drops again to around 40.

These are some of the temperatures recorded on that dial in the brewmaster's office.

The yeast produces alcohol and carbon dioxide gas during the fermentation by splitting the fermentable sugars. At the same time it feeds on proteins, mineral salts and some of the sugars.

When the amount of fermentable sugar is sufficiently decreased, the yeast settles and is removed and the beer starts to clarify.

The carbon dioxide gas liberated during fermentation is caught, compressed and stored for later use. One barrel of beer produces from eight to 10 pounds of C02 gas, but only about 75 per cent of this can be collected.

AFTER FERMENTATION the beer is placed in storage tanks for two to six weeks or longer from 30 to 34 degrees. This period is necessary to allow the beer to clarify, mature and reach the proper stability.

This is the storage period from which the beer derives its name of "lager" beer. "Lager" is a German word meaning "storage" and "lagern" means "to age." Most beers produced in this country are matured in this way. Old time "steam beer" was not.

After storage the beer is passed through a filter and is reinjected with carbon dioxide gas to give it the lively sparkle of carbonation. From one to one and a half pounds of C02 per barrel of beer is used. Then the beer is ready for bottling.

When returnable bottles are brought back to the brewery they are passed through a giant bottle washer in the new glass fronted bottling room. In a steady stream, on automatic conveyors they run into the washer and sterilizer. First they get a soaking of two to three per cent caustic soda at 160 to 180 degrees temperature. Next they are thoroughly washed and rinsed in clear water. New bottles and cans are also rinsed.

The entire operation, from the time the bottles go on the washer conveyor until they emerge filled and labelled, is automatic.

From the washer the bottles and cans go to an automatic filling machine that is almost uncanny in its operation. It pours exactly the right amount in each container, and caps the bottles — or in the case of cans — crimps the lid on.

THE FILLED, capped bottles then are carried by more conveyors into the pasteurizer. There they are subjected for 20 minutes to a spray of water heated to 140 degrees. This kills any yeast or bacteria that may still remain in the beer and is necessary for the stabilization of bottled beer. Unpasteurized beer — the familiar keg "draught" beer once so popular — must be kept at low temperatures. So it is more difficult to handle. Pasteurized beer is not affected by temperature changes and can thus be transported long distances.

In the processing from raw grain to finished, pasteurized, cased beer ready for transport to the ultimate consumer, the beer passes through many hands and comes under the supervision of many "old timers" with the Grace Brothers firm. Any day the giant bottler is in operation there in front of the glass front can be found John Felciano, the boss of the bottler.

At the other end of the giant equipment, where the bottles roll out of the pasteurizer and where the cans are carried onto a whirling automatic scale that gives them a "double check" — tossing out any that aren't the exact weight specified — can be found P.H. Pozzi, in charge of the labeling equipment.

Upstairs in the new bottling department is the Tap Room — an artistically decorated room designed for the entertainment of guests at the brewery. Main feature of the glass block walled room with its heavy tables and comfortable hardwood captains' chairs, is an outstanding collection of ancient European beer mugs — a museum in a brewery.

SOME OF THEM date back to the days when brewmasters still believed in gremlins and other "little people." Ranging from tiny mugs holding perhaps a half pint to giant pewter capped steins holding up to two gallons they are mute testimonials to the fact that the wine industry hasn't got a corner on the romance of the beverage industry

But maybe you're still wondering why they call that spring tonic "bock?"

One story has it that the dark brew was first produced in the village of Einbeck, Germany, around 1249 A.D. and became famous in Germany as "ein Einbecker bier" — an Einbeck beer. Later "Einbeck" was shortened to "bock."

Less probable, perhaps, but far more fun is the legend that it all started when the Duke of Brandenburg and the Duke of Wurtemburg — two noble tosspots of six or seven centuries ago — engaged in a prolonged drinking bout. The Duke of Brandenburg was the first to totter on his pins. But while the Duke of Wurtemberg was laughing at his plight a billy goat — "ein bock" in German — came up behind him, saw him bending over laughing and did as billy goats have done since time immemorial. He took aim and butted the duke over.

The ensuing argument was never settled — nor apparently has it to this day — whether it was strong dark beer, or the billygoat that bowled the duke over.

Anyway, it's still called "bock beer" and it's still as true a harbinger of spring as the first crocus or the first busted kite.