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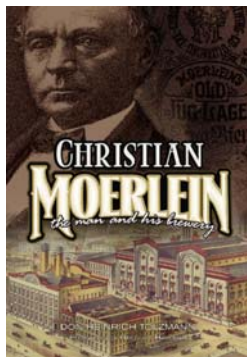
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BOOKS - BÜCHER

German Brewing history in North America

Book Review by Andreas Schumacher



Brewing culture is an important part of our German-Canadian identity. Depending on the occasion, beer is enjoyed canned or bottled, served in a glass or a mug.

It is a living custom, not only during various Oktoberfest celebrations throughout the Dominion, but also because it cheers up the sports games and brightens the "gemütliche Stammtischrunde".

But what do we really know about German brewing history in North America?

A new book, entitled "Christian Moerlein: The man and his brewery", compiled by Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann, the leading authority on Ohio's German-American culture, will further feed your level of knowledge or close existing gaps.

A native Franconian, yet of Lutheran faith, trained blacksmith and already experienced brewer Christian Moerlein (1818-1897) settled in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1842, after having lived

and worked in several places since his arrival in the United States the preceding year. In 1853, Moerlein founded a modest brewing business. When his partner Adam Dillmann died the following year, Conrad Windisch (1825-1887) joined the Cincinnati blacksmith turned brewer.

In 1866, Moerlein became the sole owner of the company he had formed thirteen years earlier. From 1890 to 1893 Christian Moerlein operated a second brewing business in Nashville, Tennessee (Moerlein-Gerst Brewing Company). This partnership was dissolved in 1893 with Gerst continuing this brewery as William Gerst Brewing Company.

By the time of Christian Moerlein's death in 1897 his brewery was a vast enterprise not only in income, but also by the number of buildings, and with a size amounting to the largest brewing house in the city, the largest brewing company within the state of Ohio, and the fifth-largest brewing business in the United States, now under the leadership of Moerlein's heirs, his sons.

Moerlein's golden quarter of a century (1897-1924) followed the lacking of will to expand in the long run on the part of the owners and the dawn of Prohibition, resulting in a disastrous destruction of an important and essential part of German culture in North America.

It was only in 1981, that the Moerlein brand got its second birth. Based on old brewing recipes, the Hudepohl Brewing Company manufactured its Christian Moerlein Select Lager for the first time. Through certification by the VLB in Berlin, Germany, in 1984, Christian Moerlein Select Lager became the first beer from the United States to satisfy the 1516 German Purity Law - a historical moment.

During the ownership of the Moerlein brand by the Hudepohl-Schoenling Brewing Company (1986-1999), Moerlein Select Lager was awarded "World Champion Munich-Helles style lager" at the 1998 World Beer Championships. In 1999, ownership of Hudepohl-Schoenling went to the Snyder International Brewing Group of Cleveland, Ohio, who closed their Cincinnati office in 2002.

In 2004, Cincinnati businessman and former President and CEO of Warsteiner North America, Gregory S. Hardman acquired the Christian Moerlein brand. By the personal efforts of Gregory Hardman, the brand Moerlein has been relocated to Cincinnati's historic "Over-the-Rhine" district and restored to its former meaning.

Dr. Tolzmann's book features images and photographs of the Moerlein company buildings - past and present - and is also enriched by a valuable appendix which contains, among other things, concise biographical sketches of other Cincinnati brewing entrepreneurs.

To learn more about Ohio's German brewing culture, please visit <http://www.christianmoerlein.com/>. To order a copy of Dr. Tolzmann's book please visit <http://www.littlemiamibooks.com/>.

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