

ST. LOUIS'S GERMAN BREWING INDUSTRY: ITS RISE AND FALL

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Master of Arts

by
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We the undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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Presented by Eoghan P. Miller

a candidate for the degree of Masters of Arts

and hereby certify that their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Robert Collins

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PREFACE

In the weeks since my thesis defense, an unexpected and seemingly impossible saga has unfolded as Anheuser-Busch brewery, the maker of the self-proclaimed “King of Beers,” fought to stave off a hostile take-over bid from InBev, the multinational brewing giant. Now, as I add my final remarks, it appears as if the ordeal has reached its conclusion. However unlikely the outcome might have seemed only a short time ago, the headline from this evening’s paper dispels any remaining doubts: “Anheuser-Busch sells out to Belgium’s InBev.”

The announcement, which in and around St. Louis amounts to a bombshell, is tempered with reassurances from InBev that it has no plans to close any of the company’s breweries, lay off existing workers, or move the headquarters from its traditional home in St. Louis. In reality, however, time and the unrelenting desire for increased profits may ultimately prove InBev’s promises to be of little value. The prospect of St. Louis losing a company which last year alone accounted for \$17 billion in revenues, paid more than a half-billion dollars in wages to workers throughout the state as well as \$37 million in state and local taxes or fees, and employed 6,000 people in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area is almost too much to bear for a city already suffering from decades of economic despair.¹ Yet despite the magnitude of the potential loss, it would be untrue to say that the city’s inhabitants have not experienced similar disappointment. Anheuser-Busch, although the most significant, is after all only the latest in a string of prominent local companies to be bought out, downsized, and moved elsewhere. The famous

¹ “King of Beers has long ruled St. Louis,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, (June 12, 2008).

brewery may be destined to follow in the footsteps of May's and Famous-Barr department stores, McDonnell Douglas and TWA airlines, Pulitzer Inc. publishers, and the A. G. Edwards & Sons brokerage firm.

Despite the economic ramifications from the potential loss of the city's second most profitable company, the news of Anheuser-Busch's impending sale comes as perhaps an even bigger psychological blow to St. Louis and its inhabitants.² For many in St. Louis—as well as countless more throughout the nation—Anheuser-Busch brewery, its world-renowned eagle-crested trademark, and its famous Clydesdale horses have come to symbolize not only the brand or beer but the city itself. Indeed, for many St. Louisans the brewery continues to be a point of pride, one of the few remaining from an era when the city was one of the largest, most populous, and most prominent in the nation. It is perhaps the one thing in St. Louis which remains—at least until the recent turn of events—as important and highly regarded today as it was during the second half of the nineteenth century, when St. Louis's German element effectively controlled not only the prosperous brewing industry, but the city itself. Although things have changed a great deal in the last few decades with increased mechanization and computers, the 150-year old brewery also represented one of the last and best places for blue-collar union laborers to secure reliable and well-paid work, just as German immigrants and their offspring had done prior to the turn of the century.

It is hard to find anyone in city, or the state for that matter, who views the sale of the brewery as being anything less than a disaster. Yet, as is always the case, the general public had no say in the matter. Even prominent opponents of the takeover, including the governor, state and federal lawmakers, and—if the press is to be believed—the Busch

² Ibid.

family itself, could do little to prevent the sale. Instead, Anheuser-Busch's board acquiesced under pressure from the stockholders and surrendered the company's independence—not to mention its heritage—for a mere \$5 more per share. With the completion of the sale in the coming months, one of the final pieces of St. Louis's storied German-American history will—in many respects—be lost, sold to a Belgian/South American multinational conglomerate searching for greater profits in Asia's "growing markets".

In the not too distant future, the distinctive and familiar smell of hops may no longer fill the south St. Louis neighborhoods which were for many decades the homes of the German immigrants and their native-born offspring who comprised the bulk of the brewery's workforce. Anheuser-Busch's giant earthen brick brew-house may, if InBev deems it fiscally prudent, someday stand empty. It is hard to imagine that the brewery, for so long a symbol of St. Louis, could ever close its doors. Then again, many St. Louisans must have had similar thoughts in 1921, when Anheuser-Busch's rival, Lemp Brewery—the oldest and still the second most successful in the city—ceased production and sold off its imposing Soulard factory to a shoe company for pennies on the dollar. Let us hope that the same fate does not await Anheuser-Busch. But, fearing the worst, and as a sort of memorial, this manuscript is dedicated to all the immigrants and workers who helped make St. Louis the nation's "Fourth City."

I would not have been able to complete this manuscript were it not for the assistance and contributions of a great many people. My debt to those friends, colleagues, professors, librarians, and archivists who helped make this work possible is profound and too great to repay with a single acknowledgement. Nevertheless, I would

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In addition to faculty, I would also like to thank the countless professionals who offered assistance throughout the course of my research. From the exceptionally capable staff at the History Department, to the librarians and archivists at the University of Missouri's Ellis Library, The State Historical Society of Missouri, the Missouri Historical Museum's Library and Research Center, Saint Louis University's Pius XII Memorial Library, the St. Louis Mercantile Library, Washington University's Olin and West Campus Libraries, the New York Public Library, and the Anheuser-Busch Corporate Library. All were instrumental in providing me with materials and answering my research queries.

A number of other people also deserve recognition for their unfailing advice. These include Carolyn Toft and Michael Allen of the Landmark Association of St. Louis, Sharon Smith of the Missouri Historical Museum, Dr. Susan K. Appel of Illinois State University, and Dr. Andrew Hurley of the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Each of these individuals was kind enough to provide me with professional expertise. I would be remiss if I did also offer a special thanks to Henry Herbst for his generous donation of his time and his considerable knowledge of St. Louis's brewing history. To anyone else that

helped with the project and whom I have failed to mention, let me first offer my sincere apologies and second my heartfelt appreciation. Although it should be obvious that a great number of people played important roles in the completion of this work, any and all errors are the fault of the author alone, and as such, I assume full responsibility for any shortcomings contained herein.

Finally, my greatest appreciation must be reserved for my family—Kerby, Patricia, Michael, Cara and April—and for their years of loving support. It is only appropriate that I also take this opportunity to thank my father for his help on this project and the countless other lesser ones throughout the years; although he was my first editor he undoubtedly remains my best. A special thanks is also due to April; while her knowledge of St. Louis and the German language alone have proven her to be a more than capable research assistant, it is her continuing love and companionship for which I am truly appreciative.

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INTRODUCTION

Sitting between Interstate 55 to the west and the bank of the Mississippi River to the east, the Anheuser-Busch brewery in many ways remains unchanged, little different today than it was when it was founded over one-hundred and fifty years ago. The location of the city's most famous brewery remains the same as it was in 1852, although it has grown considerably in size—now spanning a full 142 acres—over the decades. The Busch family, now in its fifth generation, presides over the company in much the same way as the German immigrant Adolphus Busch did during the Civil War. Perhaps most strikingly, at least to the senses, the unmistakable smell of brewery still fills the air and wafts throughout the same nearby Soulard neighborhoods where the plant's German workers once lived. Nevertheless, the St. Louis brewery, now also the site of the brewing empire's international headquarters, continues to be a source of pride for the city's inhabitants.

However, within the shadow of Anheuser-Busch's towering brewhouse a similarly imposing edifice lies vacant, a model not of modern industry or civic pride but of failure and decline. This collection of historic brick buildings, unlike Anheuser-Busch, is no longer in use and serves only as a crumbling reminder of better times and St. Louis's storied past. The name of the complex remains prominently displayed on the outside of the long abandoned brewhouse and reads simply "Lemp." William J. Lemp's Western Brewery, as it was once famously known, was for much of the second half of the nineteenth century superior to that of Anheuser-Busch, as William Lemp and his son—also German immigrants—produced beer that was significantly more popular within the

city. Even as Anheuser-Busch overtook it at the turn of the century, Lemp remained one of the nation's leading breweries and one of the city's most important companies. This of course would all change in the second decade of the twentieth century, when World War I would help bring about the federal legislation that would cripple the industry, exacerbate the demise of the German element within the city and, in the case of Lemp's Western Brewery, close its doors forever.

It is perhaps the unfortunate fate of Lemp's brewery rather than the continued success of Anheuser-Busch which better reflects the experience of St. Louis during the twentieth century. While Anheuser-Busch endured the dark years of Prohibition, it was one of the only survivors in the city's once flourishing industry. However, the "Noble Experiment" and the resulting collapse of the city's third most important industry would be only the first of a series of setbacks that St. Louis would experience in the twentieth century, as she lost her position as the "Fourth City," suffered through the Great Depression, and, after World War II, suffered a greater degree of economic and demographic decline than almost any other city in the nation.

The city's citizens, boosters, and politicians were, perhaps understandably, reluctant to admit or recognize the city's decline during the first half of the twentieth century. However, by the middle of century the problems could no longer be ignored. A drop, albeit slight, in population in the 1940 census was only a prelude to the much greater decline to come, and despite a renewed sense of optimism created by a rise in population in the 1950, the city's 856,796 inhabitants that year would mark the historic high, after which population numbers would drop precipitously.¹ The falling population

¹ Lawrence H. Larsen, *A History of Missouri: Volume VI, 1953-2003* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 6.

would not be the only sign of the city's decline by mid-century, as a 1947 report released by the City Planning Commission detailed the terrible state of housing facilities and went on to declare that St. Louis was now no longer a "livable" city.² The report only confirmed what many of the city's inhabitants already knew. In addition to urban decay and declining population, the city's economy had struggled to keep pace, not only with its own earlier level of success but also with those of other major American cities. All of these problems, now clearly apparent and undeniable in the second half of the century, forced social scientists and historians to take notice and examine them in a way that city boosters and politicians had been unwilling to do for so long .

To some academics, St. Louis's decline was little different from that occurring throughout much of the nation in America's post-World War II cities. They asserted that the deindustrialization of St. Louis's once-vaunted manufacturing sector was similar to what occurred in places like Pittsburgh or Detroit in the 1960s or 1970s. The city's declining population after 1950 was attributed to the automobile and the extensive highway systems being built during the era, as well as to the increasing shift of affluent and middle-class—usually white—inhabitants to suburbia. All these were national urban trends, especially in the older industrial cities of the North and Midwest. Likewise, St. Louis's rapidly escalating African-American population—40 percent or more of the city's inhabitants since 1970—and the poor standard of housing to which they were usually confined, were also regarded as manifestations of a larger trend in American cities.³ A host of other municipalities, including St. Louis's cross-state rival, Kansas

² James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri* (Boulder, Col.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1981), 487.

³ Larsen, *A History of Missouri: Volume VI*, 6.

City, had experienced their own marked rise in African-American inhabitants at approximately the same time.

However, while it was certainly true that St. Louis shared many of the same basic problems with other American cities in the post-World War II era, other historians argued that some of the city's problems were at least equally tied to events or conditions unique to St. Louis. The domestic factors that resulted in St. Louis's decline ranged greatly, depending on the argument of the specific academic; however, many of the commonly held explanations linked the beginning of the city's eventual decline to post-Civil War conditions. These included the city's continued "over-reliance" on the Mississippi River, its lack of railroads, its close economic relationship with the rural South rather than with the industrial Northeast, a consequent lack of capital investment, and, perhaps most convincingly, the "Great Divorce"—that is, the city's shortsighted 1876 decision to separate from St. Louis County.

The merits of these various arguments have been debated by historians and social scientists for decades now; the historiography continues to grow, and there appear to be elements of truth in many of the theories. One cause of St. Louis's decline, however, seems to be strangely and almost completely absent from this discussion, as only a few historians have touched on its possible significance. One of these historians was Ernest Kirschten, an editorial writer for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. In 1959 Kirschten published what was for years regarded as the best general history of the city. In this book, *Catfish and Crystal*, Kirschten balances his obvious optimism with a growing recognition of the city's decline, all the while struggling to ascertain the reason or reasons behind the fall. Reflecting in his foreword on this self-imposed question, Kirschten

wrote: “After World War I St. Louis dozed off. Maybe it was tired. Maybe Prohibition was not only a shock but also a sedative to this beer city.”⁴ In their more recent but also well-received volume on Missouri history, historians Lawrence Christensen and Gary Kremer also touched fleetingly on the significance of “the prohibition amendment to the Constitution,” which “in the beer-brewing state of Missouri ... had a deep economic impact.”⁵ Most recently, historian Gary Ross Mormino, in his detailed examination of St. Louis’s Italian community on the “Hill,” has perhaps most deftly captured the effect of the Eighteenth Amendment in the city, writing, “On the eve of the jazz decade the economic bombshell called Prohibition shattered St. Louis.”⁶ Although Kirshcten, Christensen and Kremer, and Mormino touch only briefly on the Eighteenth Amendment’s negative effects, they all point to Prohibition as a significant factor in St. Louis’s decline in the twentieth century.

This study proposes to investigate, to a greater extent than have previous historians, the effects of Prohibition on St. Louis, to illustrate that the “Fourth City”—historically a major center of German civilization in the United States—was deeply affected, both economically and culturally, by the cessation of the brewing industry. The economic results of the Eighteenth Amendment are perhaps the more easily identifiable. In the span of a few short months the brewing industry—one of the city’s largest manufacturing industries—was forced to cease production and cut thousands of workers from its already depleted rolls. The vast majority of these brewery workers were German immigrants or their American sons, who had plied their unique skills in the city’s twenty-

⁴ Ernest Kirshcten, *Catfish and Crystal* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), 15.

⁵ Lawrence O. Christensen and Gary R. Kremer, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV, 1875-1919* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 44.

⁶ Gary Ross Mormino, *Immigrants on the Hill: Italian-Americans in St. Louis, 1882-1982* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 4.

plus breweries for most of their adult lives. These men shared far more than simply their vocation, as many were denizens of the same neighborhoods and members of same German clubs as well as of the local chapter of the Brewers and Maltsters Union. Despite their powerful union, the majority of the workers found themselves without a means of employment and few transferable skills.

These brewery workers would not be the only ones to suffer from the crippling federal legislation, as the actual number of St. Louisans who lost jobs related or linked to the breweries rose into the tens of thousands. In addition to the loss of employment, Prohibition also resulted in the loss of more than \$26 million which the industry produced each year.⁷ This sum had made brewing the third largest industry in St. Louis, and even more alarming was the fact that brewing was more heavily capitalized than any other industry in the city. This capital investment in factories and equipment could not be recouped, and the loss proved so great that Adolphus Busch and the other brewers, formerly some of the leading financiers in the city, found they had to focus their attention and all of what remained of their fortunes on the survival of their breweries, rather than on their other investments. The loss of the brewing industry would contribute to a decline in the larger St. Louis economy, and although the overall effects of brewing's demise would be temporarily obscured by the boom created by World War I, the troubling truth would soon be only too evident. As a result, while much of the nation prospered after World War I, during the "roaring" 1920s, St. Louis would trail behind. The situation would grow worse after the stock market crash of 1929. The fulfillment of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1932 campaign promise to repeal Prohibition would once

⁷ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1914* (Jefferson City, Mo.: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1915), 31, 33.

again make brewing legal. Nonetheless, despite the Twenty-first Amendment, the effects of Prohibition would prove to be much longer lasting, and St. Louis would never again “regain its former place as the first city of the industry.”⁸

While initially perhaps less obvious than the economic effects, Prohibition had arguably an even greater cultural effect on the city. Historically, St. Louis’s success, particularly towards the end of the nineteenth century, had been tied to its German population. Driven by political turmoil in their own country and enticed by glowing accounts of life along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, tens of thousands of German immigrants flooded into the city between 1830 and the end of the century. By the time of the Civil War, the Teutonic presence in the city was so strong that almost half of the population was composed of German immigrants or their children.⁹ Although a large proportion of these immigrants, particularly the “Forty-Eighters,” were well-educated members of the middle class, many others were skilled workers tied to their respective crafts. Brewing was one of these skilled crafts, and, within a short time of their arrival in St. Louis, German immigrants such as William Lemp, Adolphus Busch, Louis Obert, and others began brewing lager beer within the city. The industry provided not only a livelihood for thousands of German immigrants but also an avenue for the “beer barons” into the city’s socio-economic elite. Notwithstanding these significant contributions, brewing provided something even more essential for St. Louis’s German population—beer. Lager beer and the German affinity for the “Gambian liquid” were key ingredients in *gemütlichkeit*, an untranslatable term connoting conviviality, camaraderie, fellowship,

⁸ Jane Quinn, “Local Union No. 6, Brewing, Malting and General Labor Departments St. Louis, Missouri” (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1947), 1.

⁹ Selwyn K. Troen and Glen E. Holt, eds., *St. Louis* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1977), 71-72.

and celebration.¹⁰ *Gemütlichkeit* manifested itself in virtually every facet of German life in St. Louis, including the beer gardens and hundreds of German *Vereine*—clubs or societies—which, despite their diversity, drew immigrants together in a shared sense of identity and culture. It would be this *gemütlichkeit*, more than any other single element, which would unify the powerful German-American community within the city during the second half of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century. As *gemütlichkeit* prospered, so too did the German-American community and, not coincidentally, so too did the city. Some historians have argued that it was the anti-German hysteria of World War I which caused the marked decline of German community in America and destroyed the cultural significance of the German societies and *gemütlichkeit*. However, upon closer analysis—especially in the Teutonic fortress of St. Louis—it appears that it was not the war but rather Prohibition which was largely responsible for the decline of the German element within the city.

More than the war or any other factor, Prohibition was truly the largest contributing force behind the decline of the German presence in St. Louis. No other single factor could so effectively decimate not only the economic might of the German community—centered on brewing and its related industries—but also cripple the essential and cohesive spirit that bound it together. No longer tied to their traditional craft and deprived of beer and the accompanying element of *gemütlichkeit*, St. Louis Germans rapidly assimilated into the larger population. This assimilation process, although already occurring due to decreased German immigration, now proceeded more rapidly. The increasingly Americanized second- and third-generation descendants of

¹⁰ Audrey Olson, “St. Louis Germans, 1850-1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and its Relation to the Assimilation Process” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1970), 134.

German immigrants joined a growing tide of St. Louisans that moved westward out of the city. The result was that a large proportion of the working- and middle-class population—as well as their skills and taxes—increasingly resided in the sprawling suburbs of St. Louis County.

Additionally, Prohibition and the accompanying destruction of the city's German-American brewing industry occurred at a critical moment of transition, as St. Louis failed to attract sizable numbers of the so-called New Immigrants. These eastern and southern Europeans might have helped to compensate for the loss of the older, predominately German, working class. Instead, World War I, wartime prohibition, and thirteen years of Federal Prohibition helped cause a decline in the numbers of skilled working-class whites in St. Louis, at the same time as the number of poor and usually unskilled African-American rural migrants to the city began to increase markedly.

Of course, the decline of the "Fourth City" had numerous causes. Some were reflections of national trends, such as suburbanization, deindustrialization, and ghettoization. Others, like the "Great Divorce" and the city's changing relationship to its agricultural hinterland, were local or regional. Nevertheless, the long-underrated effects of Prohibition were extremely significant. Arguably, no other single factor dealt such a devastating economic and cultural blow to St. Louis's vitally important German community and in the process so rapidly accelerated the beginning of the city's twentieth century decline.

I. OLD ST. LOUIS—PRIOR TO GERMAN IMMIGRATION

To understand the importance of the German presence in St. Louis one has to understand the situation that existed prior to the massive immigration during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. What eventually would become the city of St. Louis began as a French fur trading post in 1764.¹ Pierre Liguist Laclede, the leader of a trapping expedition from New Orleans, chose the site for his outpost because of its central location between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers—both essential to the fur trade and transportation.² The site had the additional advantage of lying atop a limestone bluff and thus being less susceptible to the frequent floods which caused problems for the other frontier village of Ste. Genevieve.

However, even before Laclede and his men constructed the log and stone buildings that would form the base of the village, St. Louis, like the rest of the Louisiana territory, had—unbeknownst to its North American inhabitants—been ceded to the Spanish. Although the transaction would occur in 1762, the first Spanish official would not arrive until close to two years later, and consequently the area remained largely French.³ When the Spanish did arrive, they found that there were still only two settlements in what was to become Missouri, both located in relative proximity on the

¹ Although Laclede's fur trading outpost was the first European settlement—albeit itinerant—in what was destined to become St. Louis, groups of native Americans had occupied the surrounding area for hundreds of years, their existence and unique culture evidenced by the series of burial mounds which dotted the area on either side of the Mississippi River. These Indian burial mounds even lent St. Louis its early moniker as the city was frequently referred to as the "Mound City" prior to the Civil War. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, virtually all evidence of the mounds on the Missouri side of the River had disappeared: a result of St. Louis's relentless construction and a sadly not uncommon lack of respect for Native American culture and history. Like the mounds themselves, the formerly popular sobriquet also gradually disappeared as the city's inhabitants quickly substituted the newer moniker, "Fourth City," for the archaic one.

² William Foley, *A History of Missouri, Volume I, 1673-1820* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1971), 17.

³ Ibid, 20.

Mississippi River. These two outposts were St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve, each of which had fewer than 600 inhabitants.⁴ Over the next decade, St. Louis, now under Spanish control, made steady gains as its population slowly rose and its command of the fur trade and other commerce increased.

During the American Revolution the Spanish forces in the area lost a measure of control as the British and their Native American allies harassed the territory and its inhabitants. The Revolution was perhaps more significant, however, because it marked an increase in American westward expansion. The stream of American frontiersmen that poured into the region caused a great deal of anxiety among Spanish officials, and in 1784 Spain announced its decision to close the territory completely to further American expansion.⁵ Fortunately for St. Louis, the prohibitive policy was quickly modified so that Americans were once again free to enter the territory, provided that they paid a duty on goods transported on the river.

Spain's control over the Louisiana Territory was never particularly strong, and when the French, now under the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte, sought to reacquire their former colony, the Spanish government readily consented, signing the territory over in a secret treaty in 1800.⁶ However, Napoleon's continued engagement with the British, coupled with the Haitian Revolution, soured the idea of a French empire in the Western Hemisphere. In 1803 the Louisiana territory was once again transferred, this time to President Thomas Jefferson and the fledgling United States.

⁵ Ibid, 32.

⁶ Ibid, 45.

Between the Louisiana Purchase and Missouri's admission to statehood in 1821, St. Louis continued to grow as migrants from Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina pushed into the territory.⁷ Economically the city also flourished as the increasing population benefited the local businessmen who, in addition to the fur trade, made profits from outfitting western expeditions and from the beginning of the city's lead, iron, and manufacturing interests.⁸ Gradually the French village began to take on the appearance of an American town as the distinctly American style of brick and frame buildings slowly outnumbered the older French style of buildings. Just as the French architecture gave way, so too did the French language as evidenced by the establishment in 1808 of an English newspaper, *The Missouri Gazette*, the first published west of the Mississippi.⁹ Just prior to statehood, St. Louis—now the territorial capital—boasted over forty retail shops, two banks, three churches, a number of manufacturing concerns, a courthouse, a museum, and even a few paved streets.¹⁰ All of these amenities indicated that St. Louis had already become an affluent small city with a promising future, yet the rapid transformation that was to begin in earnest over the next few decades could hardly have been imagined at the time.

⁷ Ibid, 167.

⁸ Ibid, 139, 57.

⁹ Ibid, 136-137.

¹⁰ Ibid, 167.

II. THE RISE OF ST. LOUIS: GERMAN IMMIGRATION

By the time Missouri entered the Union in 1821, St. Louis certainly could no longer be considered simply a frontier trading post, its population having grown over the course of almost sixty years from a few migratory fur traders to 5,000 established inhabitants.¹ Two years later, Dr. William Carr Lane, a recent immigrant from Pennsylvania, was elected the first mayor of the newly incorporated city.² His inaugural address captured the sense of strident optimism shared by many of his fellow citizens for the future prospects of St. Louis:

The fortune of the inhabitants may fluctuate, you and I may sink into oblivion and even our families become extinct, but the progressive rise of our city is morally certain. The causes of its prosperity are inscribed on the very face of the earth and are as permanent as the foundations of the soil and the sources of the Mississippi.³

Lane's optimism, as time revealed, was not unfounded, and the town's respectable if not overly impressive growth prior to the 1820s paled in comparison to what the near future would bring. This growth, which witnessed St. Louis's population surge from 5,000 to 160,000 in less than four decades, was due to a number of important factors, including the city's location along the rivers and major advances in transportation.⁴ The single greatest contributor to the rise of nineteenth-century St. Louis, however, was

¹ William Foley, *A History of Missouri, Volume I, 1673-1820* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1971), 167.

² St. Louis was officially incorporated as a village in 1809 and as a city in 1822. *Guide Book and Complete Pocket Map of St. Louis* (St. Louis, Mo.: J. H. Cook, 1867), 14.

³ Walter B. Stevens, *The Building of St. Louis: From Many Points of View by Notable Persons* (St. Louis, Mo.: Lesan-Gould Company, 1908), 21.

⁴ Campbell Gibson, "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990," Population Division, (U.S. Bureau of the Census, June 1998), <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027.html> (accessed January 30, 2008).

neither its natural advantages nor technological innovations, but was instead a flood of human capital in the form of German immigrants.

Gottfried Duden arrived in Missouri in 1824, only three years after it had become a state, with the intention of farming the rich bottom lands that lay on either side of the Missouri River.⁵ To this purpose he acquired a small parcel of land, relatively near St. Louis, and embarked upon his agrarian endeavor. The effort proved largely unsuccessful, however, and it appears that Duden, a former official in the Prussian government, was not particularly suited to his recent occupational choice.⁶ Despite his failure, Duden was undeterred and, rather than becoming disillusioned, he spent a great deal of his free time writing glowing descriptions of his adopted home.⁷ These accounts were filled with enthusiastic descriptions of Missouri's farmlands and also of nearby St. Louis. Duden's literary outpouring produced letters, pamphlets, and even books, all of which he sent to German settlements back east as well as to his native Germany in an effort to encourage further immigration. This boosterism—combined with growing unrest in Germany—had an effect, and immigration to the area grew over the next decade. Duden's writings were, in fact, directly responsible for the creation of at least one group, the Giessener Emigration Society, whose members immigrated *en masse* to Missouri in 1834.⁸ Ironically, for all of Duden's praise of St. Louis and Missouri, his failures as a farmer proved to be stronger than his idealism and within a few years he returned to Germany. Notwithstanding his seemingly ignoble return, Duden continued to heap praise on the

⁵ Perry McCandless, *A History of Missouri, Volume II, 1820-1860* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 38.

⁶ E. D. Kargau, "Missouri's German Immigration," *Missouri Historical Review* (Dec. 190[6]), 23.

⁷ One has to wonder if perhaps Duden would have had better success farming had he devoted less time to his writing and more to tending his fields.

⁸ Kargau, "Missouri's German Immigration," 23.

Mound City and encourage his fellow countrymen to settle along the banks of the river in the rich Mississippi Valley.⁹

While Duden appears to have been the first German immigrant in or around St. Louis to record his experiences in any great detail, he was certainly not the first of his countrymen in the city, as earlier German immigrants had been settling in St. Louis since the turn of the century.¹⁰ A German immigrant named Habb (or Hab), for example, worked at one of the city's first breweries as early as 1810.¹¹ Nonetheless, the majority of the German immigrants to St. Louis began arriving in the 1830s—perhaps due in part to Duden's recruitment—after which time their numbers subsided slightly before the later surge at mid-century.

Many of the German settlers in this first wave of immigrants appear to have experienced much the same problems that caused Duden's failure. Consequently, many of these would-be farmers, when faced with less than successful harvests, drifted into St. Louis in hopes of finding more reliable work in the city's growing craft and manufacturing industries.¹² In addition to its burgeoning manufacturing interests, St. Louis by this time had also become a center of trade for the region, benefiting as the rivers provided the best means of transportation during the era. St. Louis's location between the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, an asset to trade since the city's founding,

⁹ Ibid, 24.

¹⁰ David Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri, 1900-1918: Prohibition, Neutrality, and Assimilation* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1985), 7.

¹¹ Walter Stevens, ed., *St. Louis: One Hundred Years in a Week* (St. Louis: St. Louis Centennial Association, 1909), 104; Hankerson, "The History of Brewing in St. Louis," *Modern Brewery* 27.

¹² Ruth Crawford, *Studies In Social Economics: The Immigrant in St. Louis* (St. Louis: St. Louis School of Social Economy, 1916), 10. These early German settlers were often referred to as "Latin farmers" by their rural neighbors. The epithet supposedly was an allusion to the fact or belief that, before immigrating, many members of the group had enjoyed the status of learned professionals. The term seems to have become something of a pejorative as it rapidly came to connote, not only a strong educational background, but also a lack of the practical agricultural skills obviously required for successful farming.

would prove even more beneficial during the 1830s and 1840s as the steamboat increasingly replaced the traditional flatboat.¹³ Although the steamboat had made its first appearance on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers as early as 1817 and 1829, respectively, it would take several years to adapt it to the rivers' shallow waters, shifting sandbanks, and strong currents.¹⁴ By the 1830s, however, the newer steamboats proved to be a tremendous advantage in passenger transportation; even more importantly, they transported freight at only a fraction of the time and cost of shipping by land or by the traditional keelboat.¹⁵

River travel, now greatly improved by the steamboat, gave St. Louis a significant advantage over other centers of commerce, as overland transportation—such as on dirt and wood plank roads or by the railroad—remained very poor or was yet underdeveloped. St. Louis merchants, including an increasing number of Germans, took advantage of the steamboat's "transportation revolution" to expand their network of trade outward. Much of this new trade was directed towards the increasing number of southern and western towns, which continued to appear as settlers seemed perpetually driven by Jacksonian beliefs in "manifest destiny." The western frontier and the market it created continued to grow and thereby provide more outlets for St. Louis goods. The expansion was such that by 1849 it was estimated that each week over one thousand settlers passed through St. Louis on their way to California and other western territories.¹⁶ Additionally, the city's businessmen also diversified their interests, and while they continued to trade traditional products like beaver pelts and buckskins, they increasingly pursued

¹³ McCandless, *A History of Missouri, Volume II*, 136.

¹⁴ Ibid, 137; William Barnaby Faherty, *Henry Shaw: His Life and Legacies* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 23, 8.

¹⁵ McCandless, *A History of Missouri, Volume II*, 137.

¹⁶ Ibid.

manufacturing interests such as the thriving wood working, shoemaking, flour milling, and lead mining in and around St. Louis.¹⁷ By 1840 many of the Mound City's inhabitants, as well as the city's newspapers, had also taken note of tobacco, "another item of our trade which is swelling every year into much greater importance."¹⁸

By the middle of the 1840s the economic growth and success of St. Louis was so great that its citizens, rather optimistically, referred to the city as the "New York of the West."¹⁹ Although the comparison of St. Louis to the eastern metropolis was a hyperbole reserved for the more ambitious locals, even eastern and European visitors, based on contemporary accounts, recognized the city's development and future promise. The evangelist Reverend Dr. Humphrey, traveling in the west in 1839, was pleasantly surprised upon arriving in the Mound City, writing that "St. Louis is larger than I supposed, and appears to be advancing more rapidly than any other town that I have seen in the west."²⁰ The good doctor's praise was not limited to the present state of the city but extended to its future. St. Louis's potential was so great, in fact, Humphrey believed it was destined to "become a very large commercial city, [there being] no prospect that any other town on the Mississippi above New Orleans will be able to compete with [it]."²¹ Another early visitor to St. Louis was the British author Charles Dickens. His memoirs of an 1842 American expedition note that St. Louis had already grown considerably, evidenced by the fact that there were "new buildings in all directions."

¹⁷ Stevens, *St. Louis: One Hundred Years in a Week*, 102-103. Despite the rapid advances in industrialization and manufacturing, the fur trade would remain an important albeit diminished aspect of St. Louis's economy into the first decades of the twentieth century. In fact, as late as 1908 the secretary of the local Merchant's Exchange reported the value of furs received and sold in St. Louis as \$7.5 million, making the city the largest primary fur market in the world.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁹ *Missouri Republican* (April, 24 1842).

²⁰ Stevens, *The Building of St. Louis*, 43.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Like Dr. Humphrey, Dickens felt the frontier city was indeed “progressing,” although he rather frankly—and, as time would reveal, incorrectly—pointed out that “it is not likely ever to vie, in point of elegance or beauty, with Cincinnati.”²²

While the physical and economic growth of the city was unmistakable during this period, surprisingly few people, whether native St. Louisans or visitors, took notice of Gottfried Duden or the steady stream of his countrymen moving into the city’s midst.²³ Nonetheless, within a few years the trend proved to be unmistakable, and the stream of German immigrants in the 1830s and early 1840s turned into a flood after 1848. Between 1830 and 1850, for example, the city’s population jumped from roughly 7,000 to almost 78,000.²⁴ Although American settlers accounted for part of this increase, the bulk of it was actually due to a massive influx of European immigrants. Their numbers were so pronounced, in fact, that by the middle of the century some 40,000 immigrants constituted over half of St. Louis’s total population.²⁵ And although these European immigrants were composed of several different nationalities, including thousands of poor Irish fleeing the Great Famine of 1846-50, a full 22,000 were German.²⁶

By mid-century St. Louis retained a rather cosmopolitan atmosphere, due to the remaining French and Spanish influences as well as to the growing native population. Nevertheless, the German presence in the city was arguably now stronger than any other.

²² Charles Dickens, *American Notes For General Circulation* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1842), 121.

²³ Gerald Holland, “The King of Beer,” *American Mercury* (Oct, 1929), 171.

²⁴ Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 7. The 78,000 recorded by the 1850 federal census is even more impressive when one considers the fact that the number would have been significantly higher had a series of disasters not occurred only a year earlier, when the effects of a cholera epidemic were compounded by a devastating fire. The fire destroyed over four hundred buildings and more than thirty river crafts, resulting in three deaths. The cholera epidemic—neither the first or last in the city’s history—proved far more deadly, killing well over 4,000 people, many of whom recent immigrants, and forcing thousands more to flee the city. Ernest Kirschten, *Catfish and Crystal* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), 157-158.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid; Faherty, *Henry Shaw*, 23.

The growth of St. Louis's German population became even more pronounced over the next decade as immigration once again increased, this time in large part due to the political unrest in Germany and the rest of continental Europe after the failed revolutions of 1848. Consequently, by 1860 and the eve of the American Civil War, the number of German-born residents in St. Louis had ballooned to 50,000, more than double what it had been only a decade earlier.²⁷ These German immigrants—now a third of the city's inhabitants— contributed to the impressive growth of St. Louis's overall population, which by 1860 had doubled in size to 160,000.²⁸ At this point the city's German population equaled or surpassed that of any other city in the nation, and in recognition St. Louis joined her neighboring Midwestern cities, Cincinnati and Milwaukee, in what would be commonly referred to as the "German triangle".²⁹

The German inhabitants of St. Louis were not only important because of their sheer numbers but also because they brought with them central elements of their own culture, which in turn would deeply affect the economic and cultural development of the city throughout the remainder of the century. And so, while the German immigrants and their influence may have escaped the attention of the city's other inhabitants only a decade or so before, by the 1850s and the 1860s that was no longer the case. One leading paper of the time, for example, now asserted that the Germans' influence was undeniable as "they maintain a constant babble as they sit around the tables in the open air,

²⁷ Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 7.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The Cincinnati Germans After the Great War* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1987), 1.

consuming the[ir] beer in unbelievable quantity.”³⁰ Another St. Louis paper, the *Republican*, was even more descriptive, writing that the:

wave of emigration [has] swept over us, and we [have] found the town inundated with breweries, beer-houses, sausage-shops, Apollo gardens, Sunday concerts, Swiss cheese, and Holland herrings. We [have] found it almost necessary to learn the German language before we could ride in an omnibus or buy a pair of breeches, and absolutely necessary to drink a beer at a Sunday concert.³¹

The contemporary newspaper accounts illustrate the degree to which formerly alien Teutonic customs and practices had become normal and integral features in the daily life of the city. However, despite the size and significance of St. Louis’s German population, it was not—as some anecdotal accounts implied—a single homogenous entity. Historian Audrey Olson in her 1970 study, “St. Louis Germans, 1850-1920,” was one of the first to challenge older misconceptions regarding the homogeneity of the city’s German community. She argued that, in actuality, the German inhabitants of St. Louis were divided by several substantial barriers, including geography, socio-economic status, religion, and politics, and that these divisions had been in existence since at least the middle of the nineteenth century. Far more recently, historian Petra DeWitt has similarly concluded that St. Louis’s German population was essentially heterogeneous.

One of the most apparent divisions, according to Olson and DeWitt, was the physical location of St. Louis’s German community, as significant proportions of the population resided not in a single self-contained geographic area—as in Milwaukee or in Cincinnati’s “Over-the-Rhine” district—but in two distinct sections of the city.³² One of

³⁰ Holland, “The King of Beer,” *American Mercury*, 171.

³¹ John Thomas Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County, From the Earliest Periods to the Present Day: Biographical Sketches of Representative Men, Volume II* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts & Co., 1883), 1331.

³² Audrey Olson, “St. Louis Germans, 1850-1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and its Relation to the Assimilation Process” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1970), 19.

these areas, Soulard, lay to the south of the central business district, while the other was located north of the business district in close proximity to Bellefontaine and Calvary cemeteries. Olson and DeWitt, however, argue that although these two distinct German areas were clearly evident during the Civil War era, this was no longer the case by the end of the century, when “all evidence of these little Germanys had disappeared from the census records and [the] Germans appear to have settled throughout the city.”³³ Olson’s and DeWitt’s analyses are based primarily on their examinations of St. Louis’s German population through census figures and ward maps. Both historians, for example, correctly contend that in 1850 over one-third—36.8 percent—of St. Louis’s German population lived in only one of the city’s six wards—the first ward, in which the German-born comprised about two-thirds of the inhabitants.³⁴ The two historians then compared the high concentrations of Germans in the 1850 wards to later census data from 1880 and 1910 to reveal a German population that had become far more evenly dispersed throughout St. Louis.³⁵ The most recent scholarship suggests that, in contrast to the views of some earlier historians, St. Louis’s German population was not in fact a single homogenous group, but rather a diverse body of immigrants which gradually spread over a larger area during the second half of the century.³⁶

³³ Petra DeWitt, “Searching For the Roots of Harassment and the Meaning of Loyalty: A Study of the German-American Experience In Missouri During World War I” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2005), 43-46.

³⁴ Olson, “St. Louis Germans,” 20. Both historians determined that German inhabitants contributed an even more stunning percentage of the first ward’s total population; however, DeWitt’s calculation—almost 67 percent—appears to be too high. Olson’s original calculation of nearly 64.6 is the correct percentage that the 8,832 Germans composed of the first ward’s 13,677 total inhabitants.

³⁵ Ibid, 50, 77; DeWitt, “Searching For the Roots of Harassment and the Meaning of Loyalty,” 44.

³⁶ Based on the evidence, it does appear that Olson and DeWitt’s general argument is correct. Nevertheless, Olson and DeWitt push their argument too far. The smaller concentrations that Olson and DeWitt found in any single ward in 1880 and in 1910, compared with the heavy concentration in the city’s first ward in 1850, are based less on the geographic dispersal of St. Louis’s Germans and more on the city’s expanding size and on the changes in the number and boundaries of the city’s wards. The city’s wards, during the second half of the nineteenth century, changed not only in shape but also in quantity and

The geographic dispersion was not the only division within the city's German community. Another divide, one which appears, initially, to be closely related to the split between the northern and southern enclaves, was a continued sense of provincial loyalty among St. Louis Germans. Until its unification in 1871, Germany remained little more than a loose confederation of principalities, kingdoms, and various other states. The inhabitants of these independent political bodies identified themselves less by their common German heritage and more by their provincial association.³⁷ These divided loyalties were not extinguished immediately after immigration, and there appears to be some evidence that, at least initially, provincial origin influenced where German immigrants settled within St. Louis. Differences, such as variations in dialect, apparently encouraged immigrants from *Plattdeutsch* or parts of northern Germany to settle in

numbering. For example, whereas there were only six wards in 1850, this number would increase to ten by 1858 and then nearly triple by 1876 to reach the more-or-less permanent number of twenty-eight. Additionally, the boundaries of St. Louis would also expand, bringing more German communities into the city between 1850 and 1876. So whereas in 1850 the first ward contained over a third of the city's German population, this did not reflect the large number of Germans then living just outside the borders of the city, in areas that would become part of the city during the next twenty-five years. The most significant of these additional German sections would be the former French settlement of Carondelet in the south and the towns of New Bremen and Baden to the north. From 1876 until the first decades of the twentieth century the city's 28 wards would remain relatively stable, shifting comparatively little, and if one examines the wards in the late 1800s, which covered the same geographic area as the first ward did in 1850, the dispersal of Germans from the area formerly covered by the first ward appears far less pronounced than either Olson or DeWitt seem to indicate. By 1880-1900, for example, the southern section of the city, originally contained within the first ward, was now made up of all or part of five wards. In 1880 the German population of these five wards, when added together, comprised almost 25 percent of all the Germans in St. Louis. In addition, this figure does include the 2.9 percent of the city's Germans living within the confines of the eleventh ward, now encompassing the Carondelet area. A similar analysis of the northern section of the city, formerly contained in the sixth ward of the 1850 census, reveals similar findings, as in 1880 the area's roughly five wards contained more than 20 percent of the city's German population. Once again, these five northern wards did not include the neighborhoods of the former town of Baden which, by 1880, contained a full 10 percent of St. Louis's German population. These findings, although far from exact, seem to indicate that, while not remaining confined to their original enclaves, St. Louis's German population during the remainder of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century did remain predominantly concentrated in certain areas in northern and southern St. Louis. The Germans do not, in actuality, "appear to have settled throughout the city," and while there was some movement westward—particularly into the twenty-first and twenty-fifth wards—relatively few Germans lived either in the central business district or on the western periphery of the city in 1880. See pp. 189-191 for comparisons of the 1850, 1880 and 1910 St. Louis ward maps.

³⁷ Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 17.

northern St. Louis, whereas those from *Hochdeutsch* or southern Germany chose to reside in southern St. Louis.³⁸ In addition to the geographic and dialectical differences that existed between northern and southern Germans, more significant and divisive socio-economic and cultural distinctions resulted from their homeland's distinctly industrialized north and its predominantly agrarian south.³⁹

Admittedly, over the course of the nineteenth century the correlation between German origins and the immigrants' neighborhoods of settlement in St. Louis seems to have become less pronounced.⁴⁰ However, another element which divided St. Louis Germans also had its roots in German history. Since the Protestant Reformation, one of the major divisions among the numerous independent German principalities was religion. Although the Peace of Westphalia (1648) ended the Thirty Years' War, it did little to heal sectarian divisions. Nineteenth-century German immigrants to America carried with them their religious faiths and identifications as well as their (often reinforcing) provincial loyalties.⁴¹ Moreover, religious antagonisms among St. Louis Germans were not confined to Catholics and Protestants, or between members of competing Protestant denominations. The immigrants also included a sizable contingent of "Freethinkers"—their numbers greatly increasing after the failed revolutions of 1848 and in the corresponding second wave of immigration—who adhered to none of Germany's traditional churches and instead advocated secular humanism, based on Enlightenment rationalism and "Forty-Eighters" republicanism, or even atheism. Likewise, many of the

³⁸ Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 20-21.

³⁹ Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 17.

⁴⁰ Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 20-21.

⁴¹ Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 17.

Jewish immigrants in St. Louis, although fewer than in many eastern cities, also comprised a significant minority of the city's German-speaking population.

In addition to the provincial, socio-economic, cultural, and religious differentiations which German immigrants carried with them to America, the group was further divided in St. Louis itself by political affiliations. While a large percentage of the German population in the city—including, of course, the “Forty-Eighters”—were liberal, another, albeit smaller, portion of the community was more conservative. These two groups and their respective political philosophies found representation from the middle of the century onwards in the dominant American two-party system, as the more liberal forces joined the ranks of the Republicans (the dominant party within the city) and the conservative element sided with the Democrats.⁴² Both political groups were also well represented by St. Louis's two principal German daily papers. Additionally, by the early 1900s a not insignificant number of German St. Louisans supported the city's Socialist Party. The ranks of St. Louis's Socialist Party were filled primarily by the city's blue-collar workers. These included many of the laborers in the German craft industries, with brewing being one of the most evident. The strength of the city's Socialists was evident in their numerous publications, some of which, like the *St. Louis Arbeiterzeitung*, were printed in German.⁴³

Although all of these factors divided the city's German population, other aspects of life in St. Louis proved to be more unifying. One of the most obvious was the German language. In spite of their varying dialects, all German immigrants shared the same language. Whereas some immigrants had knowledge of English prior to arriving in

⁴² The Republicans would, for the most part, remain the city's dominant party until the Great Depression.

⁴³ Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 17-18.

the city, a significant proportion continued to speak their native language upon arrival, finding it almost unnecessary to speak or know English within the confines of Soulard or Baden. The persistence of the German language in the city was evidenced by the continued existence of the German press into the first part of the twentieth century. Additionally, many organizations and groups within the city officially conducted their business in German; this was the case with the local Brewers and Maltsters Union, which continued to do so until American entrance into World War I. Many St. Louis churches, especially Catholic and Lutheran ones in heavily German parishes, held services in German. The practice gradually declined, however, and by World War I Catholic officials requested that preaching no longer be conducted in German.⁴⁴ Evangelical Lutheran churches, apparently less deterred by the anti-German pressure at the time, continued German services in a number of their churches even after the war.⁴⁵

Members of St. Louis's German community worked diligently to keep the German language alive despite the inevitable passing of the founding generation. Most important, they established and maintained a German-language parochial schooling system. In fact, when the first of the city's public schools opened in 1838, a German-language school had already been in existence for two years.⁴⁶ Throughout the middle of the nineteenth century the German-language schools remained almost as successful—measured in terms of student numbers—as St. Louis's public schools. Even those Germans with no religious inclination, such as the Freethinkers, often sent their children to German-language parochial schools to ensure their continued use of German and other

⁴⁴ Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 110-112.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 16.

Teutonic customs.⁴⁷ Ironically, the beginning of the decline of the German-language schools was actually caused by their success, as the city's frustrated Public School Board chose to allow German classes in their curriculum in hopes of attracting more German-American pupils.⁴⁸

German-language newspapers were another factor which served to unify the city's German community, and their popularity was such that by the middle of the century there were at least three German-language papers published in St. Louis. By the time St. Louis had been pronounced America's "Fourth City" in 1870, the number had increased and included the two most popular German papers in the entire Midwest: the Republican-leaning *Westliche Post* and the Catholic paper *Amerika*.⁴⁹ Although the newspapers can, in one way, be viewed as a divisive element, catering to differing political or religious perspectives within the German community, they simultaneously and perhaps more importantly served to reinforce the German language and a shared sense of cultural identity. Their cohesive influence on the city's Germans was particularly evident when the community faced opposition from without. At such times the German press, even those on opposite ends of the political spectrum, demonstrated a unified front. This was certainly the case when St. Louis and its German community were confronted with important and controversial issues, such as Sunday blue laws, World War I, and Prohibition.

In addition to language, German immigrants also shared essential cultural aspects that bound the diverse community together. One of these common elements was the

⁴⁷ Selwyn K. Troen and Glen E. Holt, eds., *St. Louis* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1977), 69.

⁴⁸ Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 16.

⁴⁹ "German-Language newspapers," Newspaper Collections (The State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.), <http://shs.umsystem.edu/newspaper/guides/germannews.shtml> (accessed Feb. 2, 2008).

Germans' love of association, and, while it served as a unifying force within the immigrant community, it simultaneously marked them as distinct from other St. Louisans. Historically, all arriving immigrant groups seem to have formed clubs and ethnic organizations as a means of preserving important aspects of their native culture. Nonetheless, it was the Germans, as the historian Audrey Olson points out, who "seemed to surpass every other nationality in the number and variety of societies they formed."⁵⁰ The reason for this, according to Olson, is that "they carried this instinct to the United States from the fatherland, where it seemed to be an inherent characteristic of the German people."⁵¹ In this regard, the Germans who settled in the Mound City were no different, as their ethnic organizations flourished there. In time, the vast variety of local German organizations and events grew to include hundreds of religious and historical festivals, musical orchestras, benevolent associations, theater groups, singing societies, and *Turnvereine* clubs.⁵² The goal of the *Turnvereine* was to "redeem" the Teutonic male and promote physical fitness and intellectual well-being. This was accomplished by the practice of gymnastics, shooting, debate, and singing, all of which were considered key characteristics of German manhood.⁵³ Having founded their first society in the city in 1850, the Turners—as members of the group were called—became a powerful force

⁵⁰ Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 133. The German affinity for the *Vereine* was so great in fact that some, including the immigrant and St. Louis playwright Konrad Nies, were not above poking fun. In one of his plays, Nies observed that "...whenever ten Germans find themselves together, there they will at once found eleven *Vereine*." Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 190, footnote 50.

⁵¹ Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 133.

⁵² Not surprisingly, the first of the city's many German singing societies was formed by a group of workers from the Washington Brewery while they relaxed at one of St. Louis's ubiquitous German beer gardens. Carolyn Hewes Toft, ed., *Soulard: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood* (St. Louis, MO: Washington University, 1975), 10.

⁵³ Maureen Ogle, *Ambitious Brew: The Story of American Beer* (Orlando, Fla: Harcourt, Inc., 2006), 20; Richard O'Connor, *The German-Americans: An Informal History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), 283. The *Turnvereine* clubs originated in Prussia after the nation's humiliating defeat by Napoleon.

within St. Louis's German community.⁵⁴ Conspicuous in their dashing red and blue military uniforms, with accompanying hussars' capes, the Turners were always easily recognized during festivals and other German celebrations.⁵⁵

As with the city's German newspapers, however, the proliferation of organizations could be divisive, appealing to different elements within the immigrant community and stressing continued provincial, social, religious, and political differences. Nonetheless, as Olson concedes, "if anything can be called a cohesive factor among the German element [of the city], it was this proliferation of societies that reflected a bond of cultural unity."⁵⁶ The uniting cultural bond at the heart of all the German *Vereine* was *gemütlichkeit*, which, as noted earlier, connoted congeniality, camaraderie, celebration, exaltation of the so-called "German way of life," and love of beer.⁵⁷ The importance of the malt beverage itself cannot be overlooked, for "there was no doubt in the minds of the St. Louis Germans that beer was the essential ingredient of *gemütlichkeit*."⁵⁸ Indeed, the relationship between the Germans and their beer was neither new nor confined to the immigrants in America. Rather, the malt beverage had always been important in Germany, especially in the southern regions, which lacked the vineyards that dotted the

⁵⁴ Toft, *Soulard: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood*, 11.

⁵⁵ O'Connor, *The German-Americans*, 285.

⁵⁶ Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 134.

⁵⁷ It was this shared culture, rather than physical location or the sheer size of the community, which held St. Louis's diverse German immigrant community together, just as it would be continue to be *gemütlichkeit* which bound the subsequent generations of German-Americans to identify far more with their ethnic heritage than with the larger American society. In this sense, the German community in St. Louis was, as the ethnic historian Maxine Seller describes, far "more than [simply] a ghetto [or] a geographic area in which" they resided. Instead it was "a group of people who knew and cared about one another, enjoyed a common life, and shared common problems and concerns ... [relating] to one another in a variety of structured, or institutionalized ways—some informal like the corner grocery or saloon, others formal like the church, the school, or the fraternal lodge." Maxine Seller, *To Seek America: A History of Ethnic Life in the United States* (Englewood, N.J.: Jerome S. Ozer, 1977), 147.

⁵⁸ Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 213.

rest of the countryside.⁵⁹ The German love-affair with beer was quite naturally transferred to the shores of America with the first settlers, making its way to St. Louis by about 1800—perhaps for the first time with the early immigrant, Hab[b].

As the German presence in St. Louis grew during the first half of the nineteenth century, so too did the city's thirst for beer. Initially, many German immigrants—accustomed both to the quality of German-made beer and to the atmosphere of their native drinking establishments—found themselves frustrated not only by the inferior quality of American beer but also by the characteristics of the typical American bar or saloon. Unlike drinking establishments in Germany, the typical American tavern or saloon was devoid of amenities. Indeed, most were designed with a single purpose in mind: providing their clientele as much alcohol, usually whiskey and other hard liquors, as efficiently as possible. The native taverns, much to the German immigrants' chagrin, often lacked windows and were exceptionally dirty—even when compared to the rest of the city at the time.⁶⁰ They were certainly not places for relaxing or family enjoyment, as the Germans expected.

As a result of these inadequate native establishments and customs, the Germans concluded that they had little choice but to recreate their own drinking culture and in the process bring the festive and wholesome family atmosphere of the indoor beer hall and outdoor beer garden to their adopted home. The new German saloons, or beer halls as they were usually called, were generally quite unlike their native or Irish-American counterparts. Instead, the German beer halls were large, rather open indoor spaces, with

⁵⁹ O'Connor, *The German-Americans*, 293.

⁶⁰ Ogle, *Ambitious Brew*, 20.

windows lining the walls to allow light and air inside.⁶¹ The additional space also allowed room for tables and chairs for relaxation as well as an opening for couples and even whole families to listen to music and dance during the evenings.⁶² The family atmosphere, something completely alien to the male-dominated American establishment, is clearly evident in the happy memoirs of St. Louisian Lucille Kohler, who remembered that, “while bock beer lasted the Eltern [elders] would be gayer, kinder...[and] pretzels would be free at all beer saloon counters, and patrons, moved to song, would grow hoarse in *Sangerfests*.”⁶³ Kohler goes on to relate her pleasant experiences as part of a group of local children: “From after supper until dark we might follow a little German band from beer saloon to beer saloon in our neighborhood, listen to the singing, and reap pretzels and soda water [W]e attended charivaris, pinochle and *Klatsch* fests, a concert at *Liederkranz* Hall, and never did we see our bed before nine, even ten o’clock.”⁶⁴

When the weather became more agreeable, the open-air beer gardens provided the Germans with not only beer but also fellowship, entertainment, and relaxation—thus representing the essential elements that composed *gemütlichkeit*. These “pleasure gardens” were especially popular on the weekends, and crowds often gathered on Sunday afternoons to enjoy their park-like beauty or to partake of the entertainment provided by friends, family, music, and, of course, beer. In St. Louis’s rival city of Chicago, shortly after the Civil War, the local German-language paper *Der Westen* described a typical day at one of the city’s many beer gardens as possessing “sunshine, woodland green and

⁶¹ Ibid, 21.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ O’Connor, *The German-Americans*, 293.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Of all the *Vereine*, the *Liederkranz* was one of the oldest and most prestigious social institution in the German-American community; its social functions were of such importance that that were often reported by the city’s regular press as well as in the German-language papers. Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 15.

woodland shade, the sound of horns! On a Sunday afternoon, what more could a German heart possibly wish for?!⁶⁵ The article's author apparently knew exactly what more his fellow Germans wanted and answered his own question affirmatively with "a good mug of beer!"⁶⁶

Although the beer gardens and spirit of *gemütlichkeit* in St. Louis were immediately embraced by the local German inhabitants, their acceptance by the larger community was not initially assured. By the 1850s, however, it seems apparent that the social drinking culture of the German immigrants had indeed been well received. An 1854 issue of the *Missouri Republican*, for example, simultaneously marveled at the amount the city's Germans drank and yet the seemingly paradoxical fact that they "prosper[ed] in health, worldly goods and happiness," while also "contribut[ing] the smallest ratio to the sick list [and] the smallest number of convicts or criminals."⁶⁷ By the eve of the Civil War it appeared that the German affinity for social drinking had not only been accepted but was now enthusiastically adopted by a sizable proportion of St. Louisans. Once again it would be the *Republican* which seemed to best capture the public's sentiments at the time, asserting that "in nothing, perhaps, has the German influence been more sensibly and, we will add, more beneficially felt than in the introduction of beer as a common beverage."⁶⁸ The paper went on to praise the immigrants for the introduction of the beverage to the wider audience, claiming, "It is not only used by the Germans, but it has been well-nigh universally adopted by the English-speaking population, and the spacious beer halls and extensive gardens nightly show that

⁶⁵ Bob Skilnik, *Beer: A History of Brewing In Chicago* (Fort Lee, N.J.: Barricade Book Inc., 2006), 8-9.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ogle, *Ambitious Brew*, 30.

⁶⁸ Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County, Volume II*, 1331.

the Americans are as fond of the Gambrinian liquid.”⁶⁹ A few months prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, the paper once again addressed the city’s seemingly unquenchable propensity to drink, somehow calculating that, on average, the inhabitants of St. Louis drank a staggering 658 glasses of beer per person, per year.⁷⁰ Thus, shortly after mid-century the beer gardens had already become an iconic symbol of St. Louis, providing what the *Encyclopedia of St. Louis* would later extol as “afford[ing] a clean, simple and wholesome form of diversion among pleasant and health-giving surroundings, such as parents can take their children without fear of results.”⁷¹ St. Louisans would enjoy these amenities for the next fifty-plus years, before Prohibition would destroy the beer gardens, the breweries, and, by extension, the heart of the local German community and an important facet of the city’s economy.

⁶⁹ Ibid. “Gambrinian” comes from the name Gambrinus, a mythical figure usually represented by a bearded man, seated astride a cask, holding aloft a tankard of foaming beer. The origins of the name are unclear. One account attributes the name to a mythical Flemish king, although, it is also just as commonly attributed to a derivation of Jan Primus, the duke of Brabant (1261-1294). Primus was also the president of the Brussels guild of brewers. Whatever its origin, the name, resulting terms, and image are inextricably tied to the brewing industry. The figure of Gambrinus, for example, adorns the cover motif of the Constitution of the Brewers and Maltsters Local Union No. 6. Mary Jane Quinn, “Local Union No. 6, Brewing, Malting and General Labor Departments, St. Louis, Missouri” (M.A. Thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1947), 24.

⁷⁰ William E. Parrish. *A History of Missouri: Volume III, 1860-1875* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 201. Between 1860 and 1870 the foreign-born population in the state increased by 61,726 or 38 percent. Of the 222,267 immigrants in Missouri by 1870, half lived in St. Louis or the surrounding County. Furthermore, half of the total foreign-born population in the state at the time was German.

⁷¹ Olson, “St. Louis Germans,” 215.

III. THE POST-CIVIL WAR PERIOD: AN ERA OF OPTIMISM

Although St. Louis remained largely spared from violence, the city's experience during the Civil War period was nonetheless significant. In fact, the war and its repercussions helped shape the destiny of the city during the remainder of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. Although the war devastated parts of rural Missouri and much of the South, the Mound City suffered comparatively little during the conflict and, after the war, seemed quickly to regain and exceed its pre-war prosperity. Furthermore, no group was more responsible for St. Louis's success during the war than the city's large German population. The city's meteoric rise after the conclusion of the conflict can also be attributed in large part to the German element within the city. The symbiotic and indivisible relationship between the Germans and the larger city reached its zenith in 1870 with the federal census bureau's recognition of St. Louis as the fourth most populous city in the nation. Henceforth St. Louisans would proudly bestow the honorary moniker, the "Fourth City," on their beloved St. Louis.

When the Civil War began in April 1861, the loyalties of St. Louis's inhabitants, as in the other border cities and states, were deeply divided. As the largest city in Missouri, a slave state with a history of Southern sympathizers in state government, St. Louis had always had a small population of slaves. As early as 1815 slaves had become a central component of the city's trade, and by 1850 the number of slaves in the St. Louis reached just over 2,500 of the city's 78,000 inhabitants.¹ Although the number of slaves in the city would decrease to approximately 1,500 by 1860, many of the city's political

¹ J. A. Dacus, *A Tour of St. Louis: The Inside Life of a Great City* (St. Louis: privately printed, 1878), 23; William Barnaby Faherty, *Henry Shaw: His Life and Legacies* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 120.

and economic leaders accepted the institution with few reservations.² As early as the 1850s, social commentators aptly described the city as possessing a cosmopolitan flair but with a distinct southern atmosphere.³ One such account was by Denton Snider, an Ohioan of southern parentage living in the city at the time. Years later Snider would write that on the eve of the Civil War “the southern element was well represented in the city, and puts its decided impress upon the same, so that St. Louis might well in one sense be called a southern city.”⁴ Southern influence, he continued, “showed itself in a pervasive social character, and still more in a superior political ability,” and that within St. Louis “a strain of southern courtesy made itself pretty generally felt, not [however] without its streak of arrogance.”⁵

In spite of these southern ties, slightly over 6,000 men responded to President Lincoln’s call for volunteers and assembled to form the city’s home guard. Of the total, a full 80 percent came from the ranks of the city’s German immigrants, including many of the leading manufacturers and merchants in the city.⁶ The sheer number of German volunteers was not surprising, considering that virtually all of the city’s German population supported the Union and roundly condemned the practice of slavery. Part of this opposition to slavery was certainly due to the continuing influence of the liberal “Forty-Eighters,” who attacked the practice as the most heinous denial of human rights. Other members of the German community, however, may have been less concerned with

² Ibid, 120.

³ Ibid, 76.

⁴ Denton Snider, *The St. Louis Movement: In Philosophy, Literature, Education, Psychology with Chapters of Autobiography* (St. Louis, Mo.: Sigma Publishing Co., 1920), 20.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Peter Hernon and Terry Ganey, *Under the Influence: The Unauthorized Story of Anheuser-Busch Dynasty* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 27.

liberating their “fellow man” than protecting themselves from the economic injustice of competing with slave labor.

The Federal home guard was not the only military outfit in the St. Louis, however, and, while the Union forces gathered, another group consisting of about 900 southern sympathizers heeded a call from newly-elected Democratic Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson and assembled elsewhere in the city.⁷ For a number of weeks an uneasy stalemate persisted, as neither force seemed willing to instigate hostilities; but on May 10 the home guard, having received word that the southern sympathizers planned to attack the city’s Federal Arsenal, surrounded the Missouri militiamen and captured the smaller force without firing a shot.⁸ However, as the prisoners were escorted to the arsenal, a riot, largely attributed to hostile spectators in the gathering crowd, occurred.⁹ In the melee that ensued, fifteen people were killed and another thirteen would later succumb to their wounds.¹⁰ The riot, rather generously referred to as the “Battle of Camp Jackson,” proved to be the largest and most violent episode in St. Louis during the Civil War.

With Governor Jackson’s Confederate sympathizers disbanded and the riot suppressed, the city was secure—in no small measure due to the German-Americans. The German-aided Union victory seemed to be of little significance outside the city, yet it eventually proved crucial in the wider frame of the conflict. Winfield Scott, the North’s first general-in-chief, devised a strategy for winning the war called the “Anaconda Plan,”

⁷ Faherty, *Henry Shaw*, 120.

⁸ Hernon, *Under the Influence*, 27.

⁹ James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri* (Boulder, Col.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1981), 250-251. Although accounts vary widely in regard to the particulars of the skirmish, it does seem clear that tensions accelerated considerably after hecklers in the crowd, having grown tired of simply hurling insults such as “Damn Dutch” and the “Dutch Black-Guards” at the largely-German home guard, began throwing rocks and other missiles.

¹⁰ Hernon, *Under the Influence*, 27.

based on simultaneous Union attacks from the East and West.¹¹ German-held and Union-controlled, St. Louis became the essential base for the western constrictions of the Union Anaconda.¹² And so St. Louis's German element could ultimately claim not only to have preserved their own city but also—albeit with a sense of hyperbole—to have saved the Union. This at least was the sentiment of at least one national periodical published following the war, which argued that “it was the loyal and democratic Germans who, in 1861, saved the city from falling into the hands of the Rebels, and it is the Germans who, today, constitute the strength of the United States in the State of Missouri.”¹³ The article went on and, rather appropriately, urged its readers to “drink, at all future Union banquets, in foaming lager, to the ‘Damned Dutch of St. Louis,’ for truly we own them honor and gratitude.”¹⁴

Although St. Louis escaped major violence in the Civil War, the conflict had a profound economic effect on the city. With the city firmly under the control of Federal forces, the Confederates imposed a blockade on the lower Mississippi. The blockade succeeded in halting most southern goods—a key element in the city's past commercial success—from reaching St. Louis.¹⁵ The drop in trade was compounded by northern merchants, who increasingly preferred to market their goods in Chicago—due in part to Federal discriminatory practices against the “southern” city as well as the shipping delays caused by martial law.¹⁶ The decline of St. Louis's trade due to the outbreak of war was significant. The Boston-based *Atlantic Monthly*, in an article published two years after

¹¹ Richard O'Connor, *The German-Americans: An Informal History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), 142.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ “The City of St. Louis,” *Atlantic Monthly* (June, 1867), 659.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 270.

¹⁶ Ibid.

the war, went as far as to say that “we in the North can but faintly realize the desolation and misery of the war in Missouri and St. Louis. The blockade of the river [having] reduced the whole business of the city to about one third its former amount.” Despite these restrictions, however, sales of goods—including beer—to the Union Army, stationed in and around St. Louis, eventually made up for a significant proportion of the wartime loss.¹⁷ Thus by “the last two years of the war, the prodigious expenditures of the government in the southwest enriched many citizens of St. Louis, and employed some thousands of them.”¹⁸ By 1865, St. Louis and her business community actually “came out of the war generally prepared to resume business at the point and on the scale at which the interruption occurred.”¹⁹ As proof of this claim, the *Atlantic Monthly* enthusiastically exclaimed that in spite of it being “but two years since the war ended ... the city did more business in 1866 than in any other year of its existence.”²⁰

St. Louis's location on the Mississippi River ensured that it would be of strategic importance. Consequently, during the war years a constant flow of Union troops, federal contractors, prisoners of war, wounded soldiers, and displaced civilians passed through the city on an almost daily basis. This increased swell of humanity added to the city's already growing number of immigrants, western settlers, and merchants. Despite their diversity, all the city's itinerant wartime inhabitants apparently shared a common want—beer. A Union Army doctor stationed in the city at the time marveled at the situation, proclaiming “I never saw a city where there is as much drinking of liquor as here”; the

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ “The City of St. Louis,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 663.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

“beer shops and gardens are numerous ... [as] ... everybody—almost—drinks.”²¹

During the war, it seemed that beer became almost as essential to the wellbeing of the average soldier as his weapon, emerging as the drink of choice for hundreds of thousands of troops.²² Lager beer even received a stamp of approval from the United States Sanitary Commission, and a USSC doctor went as far as to note that beer “regulates the bowels, prevents constipation, and becomes in this way a valuable substitute for vegetables.”²³ The physician concluded his report by saying: “I encourage all the men” to drink beer.²⁴

The beverage’s importance and increasing popularity would not be confined to regular soldiers and their physicians, however, for the United States government, having observed the product’s monetary potential, decided to tax the beverage. The resulting Internal Revenue Act of 1862 imposed a one dollar tax per barrel of beer sold, as well as a licensing fee for each brewery.²⁵ The tax proved to be invaluable as the federal government struggled to fund the war effort, and even after the conclusion of the conflict the beer tax continued to be collected.²⁶

²¹ Maureen Ogle, *Ambitious Brew: The Story of American Beer* (Orlando, Fla.: Harcourt, Inc., 2006), 44.

²² There appears to have been some ambiguity at the time as to whether beer was or was not an intoxicating beverage. And so while hard liquors were banned among soldiers during the Civil War, beer was usually permitted, either being officially sanctioned or its use consciously overlooked. The policy was in stark contrast to earlier wars, when the United States’ government actually rationed beer or liquor—beer in the case of the American Revolution, liquor apparently sometime thereafter. Stanley Baron, *Brewed In America: A History of Beer and Ale in the United States* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962), 213.

²³ Ogle, *Ambitious Brew*, 44.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Baron, *Brewed in America*, 213-214.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 214, 103. Although the Internal Revenue Act of 1862 is historically significant, the United States government had attempted to impose similar taxes before, at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The colonial New Jersey legislature even imposed a tax on “brew-houses” as early as 1779. Nonetheless, what set these earlier forms of legislation apart from the 1862 act was the fact that the Civil War legislation would eventually become permanent, initiating the system of liquor taxation which continues to this day.

As the wartime demand for beer continued to rise, St. Louis's considerable brewing industry proved equal to the task. At the initial outbreak of war in 1861, the city's breweries were already well established. The exact origins of the storied industry are unknown, since relatively few records exist that shed light on the city's smaller breweries prior to the large influx of German immigrants in the middle of the century. What is known, however, is that the aforementioned German immigrant Habb (or Hab) worked at Jacques Delassus de St. Vrain's brewhouse.²⁷ St. Vrain's brewery appears to have opened sometime in 1810, the *Missouri Gazette* having announced its arrival that April; however, an advertisement for John Coon's brewery seven months earlier in the same publication may actually be the only surviving evidence of the first brewery in the city.²⁸ What became of Coon's brewery is unknown, as no further records of it exist. St. Vrain's brewery also had a relatively short existence, lasting only two years before a fire consumed it 1812.²⁹ The fate of these early establishments, however, was not uncommon for the period, and over the next two decades a host of small breweries appeared, only to collapse shortly thereafter due to limited demand, fire, mismanagement, or financial instability.

The city's brewing industry received a major boost with the German immigrants and the resulting population growth of St. Louis between 1830 and the middle of the century. In order to meet their rapidly increasing demand for beer, several St. Louisans, many of whom were recent immigrants with knowledge of the trade, established new

²⁷ Baron, *Brewed in America*, 171.

²⁸ Ibid; James Lindhurst, "History of the Brewing Industry in St. Louis, 1804-1860" (M.A. Thesis, Washington University, 1939), 10.

²⁹ Baron, *Brewed in America*, 171.

breweries.³⁰ One of these men was Adam Lemp who, shortly after his arrival in 1838, began producing a German-style lager beer.³¹

By all accounts, Lemp seems to have gained the distinction of being the first brewer in St. Louis to produce lager beer, so named because the production process required the beer be aged and placed in “lager”—the German word for “storage.”³² Lager beer, including Lemp’s brand, rapidly replaced the older British ale as the most popular style within the city.³³ The growing demand caused by German immigration in the 1840s and 1850s helped enable Lemp’s brewery and accompanying saloon—a common combination at the time—to expand on their humble beginnings, and by 1857 Lemp’s saloon was “one of the largest of [its] class,” filled with St. Louisans who gathered around the beer garden’s tables “quaffing incredible quantities of beer.”³⁴ The increased demand prompted Lemp to raise production, and within a few years the business had outgrown his original small brewery. Lemp solved this problem by obtaining another piece of property that contained a cave—as did many lots throughout the city—which Lemp put to good use, storing hundreds of barrels of beer in the cool temperatures of the underground labyrinth.³⁵ By 1864 the entire operation had been moved to the new location—a huge task carried out by William J. Lemp who, after a brief service in the

³⁰ F. P. Hankerson, “The History of Brewing in St. Louis,” *Modern Brewery* (Sept. 1934), 27.

³¹ Walter B. Stevens, *St. Louis: The Forth City, 1764-1909* (St. Louis: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1909), 629.

³² Baron, *Brewed in America*, 184.

³³ United States Brewers’ Association, *The Brewing Industry In the United States: Brewers Almanac, 1981* (Washington, D.C.: United States Brewers Association, Inc., 1981), 6.

³⁴ John Thomas Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County, From the Earliest Periods to the Present Day: Biographical Sketches of Representative Men, Volume II* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts & Co., 1883), 1331.

³⁵ *Ibid.* Lemp’s underground storage facility was neither unique nor innovative as caves, a perennial feature of the topography around St. Louis, had been utilized for storing beer as early as 1810 when Ezra English stored small quantities of ale and malt beer in a cave on his property. The cave was later appropriately named English’s cave. Underground caves, often enlarged by excavation, continued to be used throughout the middle of the century. Walter Stevens, ed. *St. Louis: One Hundred Years in a Week* (St. Louis: St. Louis Centennial Association, 1909), 104.

city's home guard, took over the brewery after his father's death in 1862.³⁶ It was from these rather primitive beginnings that, during the next two decades, Lemp's brewery became one of the largest not only in the city but in the nation as well.

Many other German immigrants tried their hand at brewing, achieving various degrees of success. Recent German arrivals also created the Bavarian Brewery, which eventually became St. Louis' most famous brewery, Anheuser-Busch. It, too, began inauspiciously, struggling in the 1850s to compete with the city's two dozen or so other breweries before achieving prosperity following the war.³⁷ In 1857, after falling into bankruptcy for the second time, the Bavarian Brewery passed into the hands of its major creditor, a German named Eberhard Anheuser.³⁸ Instead of liquidating the assets to recoup some of the \$90,000 he had invested in the operation, Anheuser decided to give brewing another try.³⁹

Although a successful businessman, Anheuser—like his predecessors—found that brewing was a fickle enterprise, and by the eve of the war the brewery was once again struggling to compete with Lemp and the nearly forty other operations which now comprised the brewing industry in St. Louis.⁴⁰ After several trying years managing both

³⁶ Dacus, *A Tour of St. Louis*, 276; William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, eds. *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis, A Compendium of History and Biography For Ready Reference, Volume III* (New York, Louisville, St. Louis: The Southern History Company, 1899), 1255. Lemp's death, recorded by the city's coroner as being caused by "disease of the liver," may have, in a sense, been the result of an occupational hazard of the brewing industry—that is, the continuous "testing" of the product. City of St. Louis Certified Copy of Death, Folder 2 of 3, Immigration and Military Records, 1844-1865, Lemp Family Papers (Missouri Historical Society, Archives Collection).

³⁷ Hankerson, "The History of Brewing in St. Louis," 28. In 1854 the city's twenty-four breweries produced a relatively modest sum of 60,000 barrels of beer a year. This number would be dwarfed by the level of production after the Civil War.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune* (July, 1932), 46.

⁴⁰ Hankerson, "The History of Brewing in St. Louis," 28. Prior to and during the Civil War the brewing industry was becoming increasingly competitive as an increasing number of breweries were established. In the four year period from 1854 to 1858, for example, the number of breweries in St. Louis rose from

his soap business and the brewery, Anheuser came to the conclusion that he needed assistance.⁴¹ Fortunately, he had already befriended another German immigrant, Adolphus Busch, who had served alongside both Anheuser and the younger Lemp in the city's home guard. In 1862 Anheuser hired Busch to oversee his brewery. The two men became partners in 1865, and their brewery rapidly became one of the largest in St. Louis.⁴²

Busch's upward mobility was not unique; however, the rapidity of his rise was unusual, as he gained control of a major brewing operation little more than five years after arriving in St. Louis. Busch had immigrated to the city in 1857. Unlike many of the "Forty-Eighters," Busch primarily sought financial opportunity, rather than political freedom, just as Anheuser—his future partner and eventual father-in-law—had done twelve years earlier. As the youngest of twenty-one children, Busch knew he had few opportunities for advancement in his family's supply business in Germany.⁴³ Moreover, three of his brothers had already preceded him to St. Louis and had established themselves in different enterprises, including brewing.⁴⁴ Hence, following his siblings' advice and examples, Augustus Busch had joined thousands of other German immigrants who arrived in the Mound City on the eve of the Civil War.⁴⁵

twenty-four to forty. By about 1860 the city's approximately forty breweries produced 200,000 barrels of beer worth an estimated \$1.25 million.

⁴¹ Roland Krebs, *Making Friends Is Our Business: 100 Years of Anheuser-Busch* (St. Louis: Anheuser-Busch, Inc., 1953), 18.

⁴² "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune*, 46. The bonds between the two men were actually much stronger than their simple working relationship might have suggested, as both Busch and his older brother courted and wed two of Anheuser's four daughters.

⁴³ There appears to be some debate as to whether Adolphus was the youngest or second-youngest of the Busch siblings. Anheuser-Busch historian Roland Krebs and a number of periodicals contend Busch was the youngest, but journalists Peter Hernon and Terry Ganey argue that Adolphus was in fact the second-youngest—three years the senior of Peter August—of the children of Ulrich and his second wife Barbra.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* Adolphus' older brother John, was in fact the first of the Busch dynasty to establish a brewery in the United States, beginning the John B. Busch Brewing Company in nearby Washington, Missouri, in 1854.

⁴⁵ "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune*, 46.

Although Anheuser's Bavarian Brewery benefited from the increased demand created by wartime conditions, it was after the conflict ended in 1865 that the brewery really rose in prominence. Busch, now the driving force behind the brewery, was determined to take advantage of St. Louisans' passion for beer and in the process carve out a greater share of the local market. The task was a daunting one for a number of reasons. The Bavarian Brewery, throughout the eight years Anheuser had owned it, never sold more than the 8,000 barrels per year which the previous owners, Hammer & Urban, had sold in 1857.⁴⁶ One of the major reasons for the stagnant sales appears to have been the quality of the beer. Perhaps due to the frequent changes in ownership or Anheuser's lack of experience in the brewing industry, the quality of the beer produced by the brewery had traditionally been poor. The product was considered so poor; in fact, it gained a reputation for being thrown or spit back over the bar by unhappy St. Louisans.⁴⁷ Although Busch hoped to improve the beer's taste, during the first few years after the war he was initially more concerned with simply selling more inferior beer. In this regard, Busch proved remarkably successful, increasing the number of barrels sold annually to 16,000 by about 1870.⁴⁸

Another problem was increased competition, the number of breweries increasing to more than fifty by 1870, their combined value estimated at \$5 million.⁴⁹ These breweries were an important source of employment in the city, providing work for more than 750 people by 1870.⁵⁰ The city's brewing interests rose so rapidly that by the end of the 1870s their total yearly production reached almost 630,000 barrels, ranking St.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 47.

⁴⁷ Gerald Holland, "The King of Beer," *American Mercury* (Oct, 1929), 171.

⁴⁸ Krebs, *Making Friends is Our Business*, 20.

⁴⁹ Hankerson, "The History of Brewing in St. Louis," 28.

⁵⁰ William E. Parrish. *A History of Missouri: Volume III, 1860-1875* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 224.

Louis's breweries behind only those of Philadelphia and New York.⁵¹ In part, the success of the St. Louis breweries reflected larger national trends. Between 1870 and 1880 the average per capita consumption of beer in the United States rose from 5.31 to 8.26 gallons a year.⁵² The increased number of breweries in St. Louis, steadily rising since the end of the Civil War, also reflected the national increase, which jumped from 1,972 in 1870 to 2,272 a decade later.⁵³ In addition, breweries and their proprietors increasingly gained support and influence in national politics. The government's wartime decision to impose a tax on both hard liquor and beer helped bring about this new relationship between brewing and politics.⁵⁴ Paradoxically, although both hard liquors and beer were taxed, the economic imposition proved far more detrimental to the manufacturers and retailers of hard liquor, increasing its cost and making it more expensive than beer.⁵⁵ Also, while hard liquors like whiskey became a symbol of social ills and vice, beer was increasingly touted as a "temperance drink."⁵⁶ Hard liquor's negative associations, whether fair or not, and beer's positive connotations, became increasingly important as the rise of industrialism during the era forced men into regimented and often hazardous factory work. However, while these larger developments had a role in the unprecedented success of St. Louis's brewing interests, a great degree of credit must be attributed to the city's German brewers themselves, particularly to William J. Lemp and to the partnership

⁵¹ Thomas Cochran, *The Pabst Brewing Company: The History of an American Business* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 79.

⁵² William Downard, *The Cincinnati Brewing Industry: A Social and Economic History* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1973), 46.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Baron, *Brewed In America*, 213-214.

⁵⁵ Cochran, *The Pabst Brewing Company*, 71.

⁵⁶ While the industrious German immigrants were characterized by their love of beer and social drinking habits, the city's other large immigrant group, the Irish, were associated with whiskey and the social ills it supposedly caused.

of Anheuser and Busch, owners of the city's two most successful breweries during the 1870s.

By 1870, for example, Lemp's Western Brewery had become so successful that it surpassed \$1.5 million in its yearly business transactions.⁵⁷ The size of the factory had also steadily increased, covering several city blocks in the German area of Soulard, located to the south of the city's central business district. The factory was so large that it was credited by at least one commentator as being "the largest manufactory of any character under a single proprietor west of New York."⁵⁸ The success of Lemp's brewery was such that by 1877 it had become one the twenty largest breweries in the United States, producing over 60,000 barrels a year.⁵⁹ By the end of the decade its output had increased to over 100,000 barrels, a figure which only a handful of the nation's breweries could match. One major reason for this steep rise in production was the introduction of bottled beer. Taking a cue from his growing rival, Anheuser-Busch, Lemp added a bottling department to his plant, enabling him to ship beer throughout the United States, and even abroad, using 125 specially-made refrigerator cars.⁶⁰

Although Lemp remained the unqualified leader in brewing during the 1870s, Anheuser & Co. Brewery—formerly the Bavarian Brewery and soon to be renamed the Anheuser-Busch Brewery—was making gigantic strides.⁶¹ Since taking over the operations of the brewery in 1865, Adolphus Busch had proved his worth, raising production and sales first to 16,000 barrels in 1870 and then to 25,000 by 1873.⁶² Most

⁵⁷ Dacus, *Tour of St. Louis*, 277.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ William L. Downard, *Dictionary of the History of the American Brewing and Distilling Industries* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), 240.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Krebs, *Making Friends Is Our Business*, 20.

⁶² Ibid.

important, perhaps, was Busch's entry in 1873 into the bottled beer business.⁶³ Bottled beer, a recent innovation, provided breweries with the ability to ship beer over greater distances while maintaining its quality. Having perfected the brewery's re-icing refrigerator cars, Busch was now able to take advantage of the southern U.S. market.⁶⁴ Prior to this point the Southwest had been relatively unexploited, lacking both the cool climate or caves conducive to production and the large cities where breweries were usually established.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Busch saw the untapped potential to expand his growing brewing empire, and in the postwar decades the Southwest emerged as the largest market for St. Louis's manufacturers and merchants.

In 1876 the brewery introduced what would come to be its hallmark beer, Budweiser. The beer, originating in Germany, became famous for its superior taste—vastly superior, apparently, to the beverage which had gained such a dubious reputation over a decade before—and within a short time Budweiser was being bottled and shipped across the nation. The beer proved to be a success not only for its taste but also because it gained the distinction of being one of the first beers to be pasteurized, a process which preserved the quality.⁶⁶ With the success of Budweiser and bottled beer, Busch made the unprecedented decision to focus less on the local market in St. Louis—still dominated by Lemp beer—and instead to utilize the city's excellent transportation network to establish a national distribution.⁶⁷

The success of Busch's business plan, bottled beer, and Budweiser was such that the brewery's output increased from 34,797 barrels in 1875 to 131,797 at the time of

⁶³ Ernest Kirschten, *Catfish and Crystal* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), 351.

⁶⁴ "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune*, 48.

⁶⁵ John Arnold and Frank Penman, *History of the Brewing Industry and Brewing Science in America* (Chicago: privately printed, 1933), 55.

⁶⁶ Holland, "The King of Beer," *American Mercury*, 174.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

Eberhard Anheuser's death in 1880.⁶⁸ By 1878 sales had reached \$1 million per year, and the same amount had been permanently invested in the brewery, which had grown so much that close to 300 employees—mostly other German immigrants—were required.⁶⁹ The expansion of Anheuser-Busch Brewery was so great that in 1878 the local historian and city booster, J. A. Dacus, was remarkably close to the mark when he conjectured that, “at the present ratio of increase, the indications point strongly towards Anheuser[-Busch]’s being the largest brewery in the world in the next five years.”⁷⁰

With Lemp and Anheuser-Busch at the head, St. Louis's brewing industry rose faster than virtually any other in the city during the decade of the 1870s, and by 1874 brewing trailed in value behind only the local iron and flour production.⁷¹ Moreover, St. Louis's postwar economy generally experienced similar growth. By 1870, for example, the city ranked behind only New York and Philadelphia in the number of manufacturing establishments and total value produced.⁷² St. Louis and its surrounding county accounted for three-fourths of the state's total manufacturing production, valued at \$206,213,429.⁷³ Despite the detrimental effects of war and blockade, St. Louis rapidly regained its position of dominance as a trade center on the Mississippi, and its merchants aggressively pursued old and new markets to the city's south and west. For instance, St. Louis traders capitalized on their prewar entrance into the cotton market, establishing a cotton exchange and vying with the traditional markets of Memphis and New Orleans for

⁶⁸ 44; “King of Bottled Beer,” *Fortune*, 47.

⁶⁹ Dacus, *A Tour of St. Louis*, 281. The number of employees at Anheuser-Busch and Lemp Brewery at this time is staggering when contrasted with the average number of workers—merely six—employed by all American breweries during the 1870s. Although that national average would double by the next decade, Anheuser-Busch and Lemp breweries employed far more workers than most breweries or, indeed, any other manufacturers during the period. Quinn, “Local Union No. 6,” 3.

⁷⁰ Dacus, *A Tour of St. Louis*, 281.

⁷¹ Selwyn K. Troen and Glen E. Holt, eds., *St. Louis* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1977), 73.

⁷² Parrish, *A History of Missouri: Volume III*, 223.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

supremacy in the South's principal product. Beginning with receipts for only 19,838 bales of cotton in 1867, the market would grow, and within a decade receipts had reached 217,734 bales.⁷⁴ Other southern goods, such as tobacco, once again flooded into the city, brought primarily by the river but increasingly by railways.

The Mississippi and Missouri rivers traditionally had been the source of the city's economic prowess, but by 1870 railroads had become a vital component of St. Louis's (and the nation's) remarkable economic growth. Although railroads were not new to the state, first appearing in Missouri during the early 1850s, by the 1870s they crisscrossed most of the state with approximately 2,000 miles of tracks.⁷⁵ The "railroad mania" that gripped Missouri during the postwar decade was so fevered that cities and counties spent \$17.2 million on in-state railways.⁷⁶ Although railroads benefited the population of the entire state, allowing people to enjoy much greater mobility and speed of travel, their greatest benefits accrued to major urban centers such as St. Louis. The railroads now allowed raw materials and manufactured goods to be shipped to and from St. Louis without having to be transported via the rivers.⁷⁷ By the late 1860s St. Louis's manufactures controlled several lucrative routes, stretching west into Nebraska and as far

⁷⁴ Dacus, *Tour of St. Louis*, 25.

⁷⁵ Lawrence O. Christensen and Gary R. Kremer, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV, 1875-1919* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 29. Interest in railroad construction within the state actually began as early as the end of the 1830s. The Panic of 1837 caused financing and construction plans to be delayed indefinitely, however, but by the mid-1840s a renewed interest among the state's major papers, its citizens, and the lawmakers in Jefferson City spurred investment. By 1851, the state's General Assembly went so far as to launch a program of state aid, passing a multi-million dollar bond issue. Missouri's first railway was built between 1849 and 1851, connecting the village of Farmville to the Missouri River. This initial route proved largely inefficient and did little to aid the state's economic concerns. Perry McCandless, *A History of Missouri, Volume II, 1820-1860* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 144-146.

⁷⁶ Parrish, *A History of Missouri: Volume III*, 222.

⁷⁷ Railroads quickly came to be the preferred means of shipping most goods, especially north of St. Louis. This was because a series of rapids made shipping goods northward on the Mississippi River much more hazardous and thus more time consuming and costly. In general, rail proved to be faster and more predictable than transportation by river. It had the additional benefit of remaining a viable option year round, a distinct advantage over icy and impassible water routes. William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1991), 296-297.

south as Texas, and at the beginning of the 1870s a group of the city's businessmen, having pooled their considerable funds, built yet another line across the state and through Kansas and Oklahoma.⁷⁸ A number of industries took advantage of the opportunities presented by the "iron horse," and St. Louis—as the leading manufacturing center in the Mississippi Valley—reaped the rewards. In addition to brewing, iron and lead manufacturing were two industries that benefited greatly from the transportation revolution.⁷⁹ The benefits of rail coupled with the increased quality—due mainly to the invention of the coking process—allowed the state's iron industry to grow to a value of nearly \$9 million, with 2,300 workers, most of whom were located around St. Louis.⁸⁰ The metal's availability in St. Louis facilitated construction of the Eads Bridge. Completed in 1874, the bridge spanned the Mississippi and provided the city with an essential and belated direct link to eastern cities and markets.⁸¹

St. Louis' flour industry, comprising thirty-one mills throughout the county, also benefited directly from the railways and the new connection to the East.⁸² By the late 1870s, St. Louis was "the first city of the nation in the production of flour," representing a capital investment worth at least \$3.8 million and employing over 600 workers.⁸³ In addition, during the 1870s St. Louis also increased its production of, and reputation for, other manufactured goods, such as furniture, woodenware, tobacco products, shoes, and

⁷⁸ Ogle, *Ambitious Brew*, 44.

⁷⁹ Parrish, *A History of Missouri: Volume III*, 224, 228.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 224.

⁸¹ Christensen, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV*, 43

⁸² Parrish, *A History of Missouri: Volume III*, 224.

⁸³ Stevens, *St. Louis One Hundred Years in a Week*, 104; Parrish, *A History of Missouri: Volume III*, 224.

clothing—all of which became important industries.⁸⁴ The production of clothing alone accounted for nearly 500 manufactories and close to 4,000 employees during the era.⁸⁵

Thus, despite the Civil War's immediate effects, St. Louis's economy not only survived but flourished in the postwar decades, as both the traditional river and new railroad links enabled the city to regain distinction as one of the nation's largest distribution points. The late 1860s and 1870s witnessed the growth of St. Louis's market, which now stretched beyond the traditional Mississippi Valley to the Rocky Mountains in the West and to Texas in the Southwest. In addition to traditional goods such as fur, St. Louis became a national leader in the production of flour, lead, iron, clothing, shoes, cotton, and tobacco, as well as of beer. The city's German-dominated brewing industry—having been boosted rather than retarded by the wartime conditions—had also become one of St. Louis's fastest growing industries, its total output now only trailing that New York and Philadelphia.

Accompanying postwar economic development was St. Louis's physical growth, both in geographic area and in population. To the inhabitants, these were perhaps the two greatest indicators that the city was undergoing a rapid transformation which, according to some, would soon lead to St. Louis's greatness. St. Louis's postwar population was augmented not only by a continued flood of immigrants but also by thousands of soldiers, settlers, and merchants who, seeking opportunity and fortune in the West, decided to remain in the city. The exact increase would be unknown until the federal census of 1870. However, expectations ran high, and many suspected that St. Louis now had

⁸⁴ Stevens, *St. Louis One Hundred Years in a Week*, 104-105.

⁸⁵ Parrish, *A History of Missouri: Volume III*, 224.

significantly more than the 160,000 or so inhabitants recorded in 1860.⁸⁶ Further evidence of St. Louis's growth could be found in its physical expansion. Shortly before the war and again in the late 1860s and 1870s the city incorporated several outlying areas, including the predominantly German area of Carondelet on the city's southern periphery.⁸⁷ In addition to annexing formerly independent towns such as Carondelet, in the 1870s St. Louis also added several significant portions of land that would be set aside as recreational areas, the largest of which would become Forest, O'Fallon and Carondelet parks.⁸⁸

Economic, geographic, and demographic expansion all generated a great sense of optimism among the city's inhabitants. The city's success and the citizens' optimism at the time were not lost on outside observers.⁸⁹ The former Union general, member of Congress, and future Governor of Massachusetts, Benjamin F. Butler, for example, in a rousing speech delivered only a few years after the war, declared that "St. Louis, from its central location, and through the vigor, the energy, the industry, and enterprise of its inhabitants, shall become the very first city of the United States of America, now and

⁸⁶ Gibson, "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990," U.S. Bureau of the Census, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027.html> (accessed February 22, 2008).

⁸⁷ Petra DeWitt, "Searching For the Roots of Harassment and the Meaning of Loyalty: A Study of the German-American Experience In Missouri During World War I" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2005), 29.

⁸⁸ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 322-324.

⁸⁹ It is difficult to see how the spirit of optimism could have gone unnoticed, as it appears virtually every inhabitant, paper, periodical and pundit residing or produced in the city unabashedly proclaimed St. Louis's current superiority and even greater potential. The various guides and pocket maps for the city, of which there were countless varieties and editions, provide some of the best examples of this enthusiasm. One can not help but wonder if visitors such as Butler and Greeley found their way around the city with the use of these aids, and to what degree statements such as that contained in an 1867 *St. Louis Guide*—proclaiming the city's destiny "to become the Western Metropolis of the United States, second to no other city in the Union, save New York"—might have conveyed an exaggerated and overly optimistic portrayal of St. Louis. *Guide Book and Complete Pocket Map of St. Louis* (St. Louis: J. H. Cook, 1867), 34.

hereafter destined to be the great republican nation of the world.”⁹⁰ Horace Greeley, the founder of the *New York Tribune*, similarly described his impression of the city’s potential, writing in 1870 that St. Louis was surrounded by “the most fertile land of the globe,” and that “man will soon accomplish her [St. Louis’s] destiny by rendering her the seat of an immense industry, [and] the home of the far-reaching, ever-expanding commerce.”⁹¹ Greeley concluded his assessment by noting that, although “her gait is not so rapid as that of some of her western sisters ... she [nonetheless] advances steadily and surely to her predestined station of first inland city of the globe.”⁹²

Notwithstanding the praise of men such as Butler or Greeley, the real champions of the city were her own citizens, and perhaps no one exhibited the city’s unfailing optimism to a greater degree than Logan U. Reavis. Like so many other postwar residents, Reavis was not a native of St. Louis, but that did not deter the part-time newspaper man, real estate speculator, and amateur historian from becoming one of the city’s most influential and persistent boosters. Reavis’s enthusiasm led him to publish numerous books and pamphlets designed to advertise the historic significance of St. Louis and, just as important, her “future [status as the] great city of the world.”⁹³ Perhaps the largest and most widely distributed of these works devoted to St. Louis left little doubt as to Reavis’s objective. His 1875 book, aptly titled *St. Louis, The Future Great City of the World*, clearly articulated Reavis’s sanguine view of the city which, as the title page declared, must “henceforth ... be viewed in the light of her future—her mightiness

⁹⁰ Walter B. Stevens, *The Building of St. Louis: From Many Points of View by Notable Persons* (St. Louis: Lesan-Gould Company, 1908), 60.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Taken from the title of his book, *St. Louis, The Future Great City of the World*.

in the empire of the world—her sway in the rule of states and nations.”⁹⁴ The book's central argument was that St. Louis's location not only provided a vast array of raw materials but also placed it in the pantheon of other great cities and civilizations throughout history, including Babylon and Rome.⁹⁵ The book also addressed another theme that ran throughout Reavis's writings—his campaign to move the nation's capital to St. Louis. As early as the 1860s, Reavis had contended that the city's central location and ease of transportation, provided by the nearby waterways, made it an ideal capital of the United States.⁹⁶

Although this idea had been offered before—as early as 1848 by the *Western Journal*—it was not until after the Civil War, during the height of the optimism in late 1860s and 1870s, that the proposal gained significant attention and adherents.⁹⁷ Reavis's ambitious visions flourished during this period, encouraging others, such as the editors of the St. Louis *Republican* and other major papers, to lend their support.⁹⁸ The movement was so strong at one point that even newspapers in St. Louis's bitter rival, Chicago, backed the plan, as the inhabitants of the Illinois city recognized the benefits of having the nation's capital located within close proximity.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the proposal lost momentum, and although Reavis and other boosters continued their advocacy, nothing more came of the idea. By 1883 fellow St. Louis booster and historian John Thomas

⁹⁴ L. U. Reavis, *Saint Louis: The Future Great City of the World* (St. Louis: Gray, Baker & Co., 1875), title page; Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 288. Reavis's book gained wide circulation in both the United States and Europe after the St. Louis County Court assiduously distributed copies in both English and German.

⁹⁵ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 288. Overzealous praise was not unique to St. Louis or Reavis, as other boosters, such as William Gilpin, similarly touted Cairo, Illinois, Independence, and Kansas City, as well as the Mound City.

⁹⁶ George Lipsitz, *The Sidewalks of St. Louis: Places, People, and Politics in an American City* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 94.

⁹⁷ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 288.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 288-289.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

Scharf was forced to concede that “at present it [the idea of relocating the capital to St. Louis] may be said to sleep”; however, he still resolutely believed that “no one can pronounce it dead while the power, population, and wealth of the United States continue to gravitate so strongly towards the heart and centre of the valley of the Mississippi.”¹⁰⁰ However diminished, the vision remained, and as late as 1896, Senator Benjamin R. Tillman, after experiencing the city and its many virtues firsthand, commented in a speech given before a rapt crowd of St. Louisans, “I can understand more readily than ever before why you people want to remove the capital of the country to St. Louis.”¹⁰¹

Despite failing to relocate the capital, the postwar optimism exhibited by Reavis, Scharf, and thousands of other St. Louisans appeared justified by the release of the 1870 federal census. To the joy of the city’s inhabitants, the Ninth Census of the United States declared St. Louis to be the fourth most populous city in the nation.¹⁰² Although widely questioned, perhaps most acerbically by the Chicago newspapers of the day, the census data exceeded even the most optimistic predictions of Reavis and the city’s other boosters. The census revealed that St. Louis had virtually doubled in population over the course of the previous decade, reaching 310,000 inhabitants in 1870 and retaining a slim advantage over its Midwestern rival.¹⁰³ Although the inaccuracy—or, more precisely, the fraudulent nature—of the 1870 statistics would be fully realized a decade later, for the time being St. Louis’s alleged population growth would be a source of great pride for the city’s inhabitants.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County, Volume II*, 1005.

¹⁰¹ Stevens, *The Building of St. Louis*, 73.

¹⁰² Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 287-288.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Little over a year later, the citizens of St. Louis appeared to receive another boost as they awoke on Monday, October 9, 1871, to hear the news of Chicago's great fire. By the time the fire was extinguished it had blazed a path through 2,000 acres and destroyed 13,500 buildings or one third of all the property in Chicago, in the process leaving approximately 100,000 people homeless.¹⁰⁵ Many St. Louisians reveled in the misfortune of their Midwestern neighbor, and, for some time after the fire, word of Chicago's new business triumph as a crematorium became a frequent and especially cruel joke.¹⁰⁶ Reavis himself, according to one contemporary, while "too kind-hearted to exult openly in the misfortune even of his enemy," could not help but feel vindicated by the turn of events and, addressing a gathering of the city's citizens, he exclaimed: "I told you so; the Lord is on the side of St. Louis."¹⁰⁷ The results of the 1870 census and the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 served to justify the already firmly held belief of many St. Louisans that their city had virtually unlimited potential and was destined to become not only the major metropolis of the Midwest but also "the future great city of the world."

St. Louis's German community, having been largely responsible for preserving the city's loyalty during the war, assumed a similar responsibility after the conflict, providing many of St. Louis's economic, social, and cultural leaders. The German presence in the postwar city was impossible to ignore, comprising, as one contemporary commentator described it, "the strongest, most emphatic ... of all [the elements in St. Louis] ... high in the ascendant on account of its numbers, its aggressiveness, its general

¹⁰⁵ Wyatt Winton Belcher, *The Economic Rivalry Between St. Louis and Chicago, 1850-1880* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 181.

¹⁰⁶ Snider, *The St. Louis Movement*, 133.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

intelligence, and its unity of spirit.”¹⁰⁸ Indeed, the sheer size of the German population in St. Louis made it an undeniable force in almost every aspect of urban life. Of the city's approximately 310,000 inhabitants in 1870, almost 50,000 were native Germans, and the entire German-American community—including the immigrants' American-born children—composed nearly half of St. Louis's entire population.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, while the German presence in the city grew, the role of other, formerly influential groups declined. St. Louis transplant Denton Snider observed, for example, that although white southerners had enjoyed a strong influence on St. Louis society and culture before 1861, they had been “hopelessly divided and crippled by the Civil War,” never regaining their earlier influence.¹¹⁰ While the city's southern contingent had declined rapidly because of the war, other traditional influences had eroded more gradually. Such was the case with the French, the original founders of the city. St. Louis's traditionally French areas like Soulard and Carondelet had long since been overwhelmed by German, Irish, or native newcomers. Reflecting on the period, one inhabitant of the city acknowledged that while some of the wealthiest people of St. Louis still bore French names, the German element was swamping the city's original inhabitants in a wave of immigrants.¹¹¹

This Teutonic tide was so great that in 1874 one contemporary periodical described St. Louis as being like a European city, and that in the “populous quarters, the Irish and Germans throng the sidewalks, marketing and amusing themselves until midnight [while] at the more aristocratic and elegant of the German beer gardens, such as Uhrig's and Schneider's, the representatives of many prominent American families may

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 21.

¹⁰⁹ Troen, *St. Louis*, 71-72.

¹¹⁰ Snider, *The St. Louis Movement*, 21.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 23.

be seen on the concert evenings, drinking the amber fluid, and listening to the music of Strauss, of Gengl, or Meyerbeer.”¹¹² The article went on to emphasize the integration of the German and native cultures, describing how “groups of elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen resort to the gardens in the same manner as do the denizens of Dresden and Berlin, and no longer regard the custom as a dangerous German innovation.”¹¹³ The reason for this integration, the author concluded, was that “the German element in St. Louis ... ha[d] for the last thirty years been merging in the American, giving to it many of the hearty features and graces of European life.”¹¹⁴ By the 1870s, the German cultural and social customs were so imbedded in St. Louis that the beer halls, market gardens, breweries, and hundreds of musical, literary, and *Turnvereine* clubs seemed almost ubiquitous. The Germans of St. Louis also had gained a prominent political position, sending one of their own to the state constitutional convention as its president, and electing as city mayor the former banker and insurance company president Henry Overstolz.¹¹⁵ Overstolz, a man of distinguished Westphalian descent, became the first German to hold the prestigious office. He proved to be a capable leader, despite having to deal with some of the most trying problems of day, including election fraud, the

¹¹² Troen, *St. Louis*, 71. One of the many guide books to St. Louis at the time provided visitors with an extravagant account of Schnaider’s, describing it as being “brilliantly illuminated and gushing with variegated fountains”. Furthermore, the author said the south side beer garden’s appearance was so spectacular that it “reminds one of youthful conceptions of Khublai Khan’s pleasure dome in Xanadu and the fairy spectacles prepared for the faithful odalisques by caliph Haroun-al-Raschid.” Horace H. Morgan, *The historical World’s Columbian Exposition and guide to Chicago and St. Louis, the carnival city of the world*. St. Louis: Pacific Publishing Co., 1892.

¹¹³ Another contemporary account similarly described Anthony and Kuhn’s, another of the city’s beer gardens, as “one of the most attractive places of resort for ladies and gentleman in the city.” What set Anthony and Kuhn’s apart, at least according to the account, was its amenities, which included a forty-foot grand pavilion, a live band, and seating capable of accommodating upwards of 3,000. “What’s Brewing In Souland: Historic Brewing Sites Tour and Breweriana Market” (May 17, 1987).

¹¹⁴ Troen, *St. Louis*, 71.

¹¹⁵ Snider, *The St. Louis Movement*, 142; Kirschten, *Catfish and Crystal*, 363.

Whiskey Ring scandal of the Grant administration, the 1876 separation of the city and county, and one of the first large-scale general strikes in the country's history.¹¹⁶

The preponderance of "Forty-Eighters" and other German intellectuals in the city even spawned a branch of Hegelian philosophy called the "St. Louis Movement." The city's influential public school superintendent, William Torrey Harris, and the German immigrant and intellectual, Henry C. Brokmeyer, were the leading figures in the philosophical movement.¹¹⁷ Indeed, it appeared to Denton Snider and many of the other denizens of St. Louis at the time that "the whole community was borne along in the floodtide of German spirit."¹¹⁸ Snider would go even further, pondering years later in his memoirs whether "the burst of Teutonic Spirit" engulfing St. Louis during the 1870s and that "taking place on the other side of the earth," in the newly unified Germany, were not the result of some unconscious Teutonic "globe-encircling world movement".¹¹⁹ Although Snider may have been naïve in his vision of pan-German nationalism, the Germans of St. Louis celebrated the news of German unification and victory in the Franco-Prussian War with almost as much enthusiasm as displayed by their countrymen in Europe. The *Missouri Republican* newspaper described how the city's German community gathered on the street corners of Soulard and Baden to celebrate the momentous occasions with healthy doses of good lager beer.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 317-326. Of all the issues presided over by Overstolz, the creation of the new charter and subsequent separation of the city and county, or "Great Divorce" as it eventually became known, would have the most lasting consequences, its unintended and decidedly negative repercussions affecting St. Louis throughout the twentieth century.

¹¹⁷ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 338-339. Denton Snider was also a slightly less influential member of the movement.

¹¹⁸ Snider, *The St. Louis Movement*, 144.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 23.

¹²⁰ Audrey Olson, "St. Louis Germans, 1850-1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and its Relation to the Assimilation Process" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1970), 158.

Thus, the decade or so after the culmination of the Civil War was a period of almost unchecked success for both St. Louis and for the city's increasingly influential German community. The economic, cultural, and political success of the latter had a great deal to do with the ascension of the former to its position of national prominence. The relationship between the German element and the city of St. Louis would remain bound together for the remainder of the century, and in 1876, just over a decade after the most trying chapter in American history, the citizens of the recently separated city of St. Louis would toast the nation's centennial with a raised bottle of German St. Louis-made Budweiser and an ardent belief that the height of the "Fourth City's" prosperity was yet to come.¹²¹

¹²¹ St. Louis's German community and the larger city had yet another reason for a shared sense of pride when the National Turnvereine Convention transferred the seat of its National Board of Directors from Chicago to St. Louis in 1878. Toft, Carolyn Hewes ed., *Soulard: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood* (St. Louis: Washington University Press, 1975), 11.

IV. 1880 CENSUS: CHICAGO SURPASSES ST. LOUIS

The 1880 census came as a great blow to Reavis and other inhabitants of St. Louis. When the Census Bureau released its preliminary findings early in the summer, many people in St. Louis must not have been entirely surprised, as the allegations of fraud occurring ten years prior were apparently proven true. The results were unsettling nonetheless, and even years later Denton Snider vividly recalled the collective shock felt by all in St. Louis at the time: “That morning,” he wrote, “when the first report of the census of 1880 fell from the newspaper skies down into the city, there rose and rolled through it a huge wave or rather a seismic convulsion of dismay, a tidal deluge of mortal disappointment overpowering us somewhere from the dismal chaos of the Beyond.”¹ The dismay was an understandable reaction because the initial Census statistics revealed St. Louis’s population had grown by a mere 25,000 over the decade and was now only about 340,000. Worse still, St. Louis had been left far behind its primary regional rival, Chicago, as the latter’s population, counted as only 298,000 in 1870, had recovered from the Great Fire and in 1880 exceeded a half-million people.²

The results were greeted by the citizens of St. Louis with a mixture of disbelief and grave concern. The concerns were understandable, since, at the time, population figures were almost universally recognized as the best indicator of a city’s strength. An editorial for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* summed up the dour prognostications of many in the city during the summer of 1880. The census made St. Louis “appear as [a] decaying,

¹ Denton Snider, *The St. Louis Movement: In Philosophy, Literature, Education, Psychology with Chapters of Autobiography* (St. Louis: Sigma Publishing Co., 1920), 129.

² James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri* (Boulder, Col.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1981), 288; Jeanette C. Lauer & Robert H. Lauer, “St. Louis and the 1880 Census: The Shock of Collective Failure,” *Missouri Historical Review* (Jan., 1982), 161.

retrograding city [and] will dishearten our people. It will discourage capital. It will decrease the value of real property and choke up our prosperous industries.”³ However, the demoralizing census figures were not accepted complacently; instead, many St. Louisans openly attacked their validity. Nor, as it turned out, was their skepticism unfounded. Several indicators—such as voting records, building permits, and school attendance records—appeared to reveal thousands of uncounted St. Louisans.⁴ The protests from St. Louis eventually became so great that the Census Bureau acquiesced and conducted another census of the city later in the summer. The revised census was released in the fall to much anticipation; however, the results proved mixed. Although St. Louisans could take some solace in an upward revision of the original figures, complete vindication was not forthcoming, and the finalized 1880 Census only increased the city’s total population to slightly over 350,000, a number still more than 150,000 below that of Chicago.⁵ Indeed, it appeared that the 1880 census amply avenged the city of Chicago, dealing St. Louis a cruel but perhaps fitting retribution for the fraudulent census of 1870 and the unmerciful celebration of Chicago’s conflagration. In his biography years later, a resigned Snider would acknowledge that 1880 marked the date that St. Louis was officially overtaken by the “Windy City”, from whose ashes, Snider wrote, rose “the Phoenix [which] became a Chicago bird, perched alongside the American eagle.”⁶

Gradually, the disbelief that St. Louisans initially felt regarding the census gave way to grudging acceptance of the findings, and, instead of challenging the ineptness of

³ Lauer, “St. Louis and the 1880 Census,” 154.

⁴ Ibid, 157-159.

⁵ Ibid, 161.

⁶ Snider, *The St. Louis Movement*, 137.

the enumerators, the citizens sought an explanation, a reason why their city's fortune appeared to diverge so greatly from that of their Midwestern rival. A commission of St. Louis civic leaders, assembled in the aftermath of the controversy, attempted to answer this very question. Ironically, after considerable study, the commission proclaimed that part of the problem was that the citizens of St. Louis had for years been "deceived by windy statements and publications of our wealth and importance made from time to time by frothy enthusiasts and capital-moving agitators."⁷ In other words, the commission concluded that Reavis and the city's other boosters were actually at fault for instilling a false sense of confidence among the populace. Notwithstanding the merits of this "blame-the-boosters" theory, two other explanations slowly took precedence. One placed the blame on the very same civic leaders who attacked St. Louis's boosters. According to this theory, the city's businessmen were actually responsible, having become overconfident and too satisfied with St. Louis's natural advantages, while at the same time failing to heed the warnings of Chicago's spectacular growth. The other explanation, which gradually gained widespread acceptance, placed significantly less blame on individuals and more on the destiny of the city itself. This argument maintained that, although the rivers had initially aided the city, they eventually had become a hindrance, effectively cutting St. Louis off from the east and the increasingly important railway system spreading throughout the country.⁸ All of these explanations were, to varying

⁷ Lauer, "St. Louis and the 1880 Census," 162.

⁸ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1991), 302. George Frazee espoused this belief, and as early as 1879 he wrote that "the men of St. Louis ... are deceived" by their optimism, "the laws of trade are against them" and will result in Chicago's eventual prominence. Forty-five years later, H. Paul Douglass in his book, *The St. Louis Church Survey*, advanced very much the same theory—with little new support—for the city's decline. H. Paul Douglass, *The St. Louis Church Survey: A Religious Investigation with a Social Background* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1924), 32.

degrees, adopted by the citizens of the city, eventually winning acceptance even by later historians.

Although late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century histories of St. Louis touched briefly on St. Louis's relative decline *vis-à-vis* Chicago, the accounts generally failed to provide a detailed examination of the causes. The oversight is understandable, considering that most of the studies were conducted by amateur historians—such as Reavis or Scharf—men who were focused primarily on advertising St. Louis's civic and economic might. This would change, however, with Wyatt Winton Belcher's 1947 publication, *The Economic Rivalry between St. Louis and Chicago*. For years Belcher's book was considered the definitive interpretation of St. Louis and her decline. In recent years, however, the historiography has grown considerably, and several contemporary historians have reexamined the relationship between the two cities. Perhaps the most in-depth analysis comes from Jeffery S. Adler's *Yankee Merchants and the Making of the Urban West: The Rise and Fall of Antebellum St. Louis* (1991). Adler's book has, in large part, supplanted Belcher's earlier work and is now considered the standard interpretation. Whereas Belcher argued that St. Louis and its merchants relied too heavily on the rivers and, unlike Chicago, neglected railroad development, Adler contends that from the 1850s St. Louis's decline was tied intrinsically to its position as a "southern city."⁹

⁹ Wyatt Winton Belcher, *The Economic Rivalry Between St. Louis and Chicago, 1850-1880* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 200-203. Based on contemporary newspaper accounts, Belcher argued that the conservative business atmosphere in St. Louis retarded the economic development of the city, which in turn was partly responsible for the severity of the Panic of 1873 in the Mound City compared to its effect on St. Louis's more speculative northern neighbor.

The debate is not limited to Belcher and Adler, however, and a number of other historians have drawn their own conclusions.¹⁰ William Cronon, in his book *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (1991), also devotes a section and considerable analysis to the "Gateway" rivalry. Like Belcher, Cronon also points to St. Louis's inferior rail system—especially prior to the Civil War—as well as the city's over-reliance on trade with Philadelphia and New Orleans—relationships that proved markedly inferior to Chicago's partnership with New York. Nevertheless, Cronon's findings seem more closely to resemble Adler's. For Cronon, like Adler, the crux of the matter is not St. Louis merchants' preference for the rivers over the railroad but the city's actual market. Studying bankruptcy maps, among other evidence, Cronon clearly demonstrates that, by the 1870s, Chicago had a much wider and richer market than St. Louis—one that extended much further north and east. And although St. Louis's market did range considerably further south than Chicago's, this was not a major advantage following the Civil War, when the South was impoverished. Thus, according to Cronon, Belcher's conclusions place too much emphasis on the preferences and attitudes of cities' merchants. In contrast, Cronon contends that "given the forces arrayed against them [including the Civil War, eastern investment, geography, and market orientation], it is hard to see how the St. Louis merchants could have held their own relative to Chicago."¹¹

In the aftermath of the 1880 Federal Census, Denton Snider, like the majority of St. Louis's inhabitants, unhappily resigned himself to the fact Chicago had indeed

¹⁰ Another recent St. Louis historian, George Lipsitz, offers yet another reason for the rise of Chicago and the subsequent, relative decline of St. Louis. In *The Sidewalks of St. Louis*—also published in 1991—Lipsitz provocatively concludes that the single greatest factor in the rise of Chicago was the invention of John Deere's improved plow. The new plow, Lipsitz argues, made it possible to till the thick Illinois prairie and open the superior farmlands of central Illinois. This in turn spurred growth in the direction of the northern city, leading to its eventual Midwestern dominance.

¹¹ Ibid, 451.

surpassed the former Mound City—at least with respect to population if not prominence. Some St. Louisans, like the members of the editorial staff of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, even made the half-hearted argument that, in a sense, the census was a good thing, since now, the editors wrote, “the agony is over, and there is no longer the slightest doubt that the [final] census will show Chicago to have at least 150,000 more people than St. Louis.”¹² The sentiments of the *Post* were surely those of many in the city who hoped that henceforth St. Louis could concentrate all of her efforts and achieve success in her own right, now that she was finally freed from the constant competition with Chicago. Others, however, including the partly discredited yet firmly resolute boosters like Reavis and Scharf, remained defiant and continued to predict St. Louis’s future preeminence throughout the 1880s and into the 1890’s. Scharf, for example, while willing to admit—at least for the time being—that St. Louis would not become the nation’s new capital, remained confident enough in his assessment of the city’s grandeur to assert that, “from the very beginning the people of St. Louis have been conscious of its transcendent natural advantages and confident of its destinies as the trade centre of the America of the future.”¹³ Like many others in the city, Scharf held out hope for St. Louis’s economic greatness.

Although the boosterism of Reavis and Scharf had never been grounded in empirical evidence, their prognostications did prove true to a degree. Despite Chicago’s confirmation as the foremost Midwestern city, St. Louis would remain the “Fourth City,” continuing to prosper during the last two decades of the century. Although the remarkable population growth of the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s would not occur again, the

¹² Lauer, “St. Louis and the 1880 Census,” *Missouri Historical Review*, 157.

¹³ Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County, Volume II*, 1005.

1890 census revealed that since 1880 the city had grown by just over 100,000, reaching 451,770.¹⁴ In addition to the rebound in population figures, the censuses for 1880 and 1890 also revealed that the state of the city's manufacturing remained relatively strong, falling only one place from its highest rank in 1870, to fourth among the nation's urban-industrial centers. The number of industrial establishments in the city rose significantly, from 2,984 shortly after 1880 to 6,148 at the end of the decade.¹⁵ The number of employees during in this period also doubled from 41,825 to 82,911.¹⁶ The continued growth of the city's trade during the 1880s was so great that St. Louis constructed a new and imposing merchant exchange. The building's size and grandeur rivaled those of many cities, while the ornate interior was, as one contemporary periodical described, unsurpassed both domestically and abroad.¹⁷

Much of the economic growth of the period could be attributed to the continued importance and strength of the city's primary industries, including tobacco, shoe-making, and brewing. By 1880 the city also gained the distinction as the foremost producer of flour in the country.¹⁸ A year later, St. Louis similarly became the largest market for wheat in the nation and, according to some sources, the world.¹⁹ The city's continued success in the cotton trade had by the 1880s made the "Fourth City" the largest inland market in the world.²⁰ The booming economy of the 1880s spurred financial investment in the city's rather stagnant railway system. The impetus was such that by 1884 26,679

¹⁴ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 345.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "St. Louis," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (March, 1884), 502.

¹⁸ Lawrence O. Christensen and Gary R. Kremer, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV, 1875-1919* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 86.

¹⁹ "St. Louis," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 506.

²⁰ Ibid.

miles of railroads extended from the city—a figure second only to Chicago’s 33,199.²¹

What made this rapid rail expansion even more remarkable was the lack of investment or serious interest in rail transportation shown by St. Louis businessmen prior to, during, and even immediately after the Civil War. As late as 1876, for example, when St. Louis was still suffering from the recession of 1873, only one of the city’s fifteen railroads was paying dividends while another five remained mired in receivership.²²

As for brewing, the 1880s would mark a period of tremendous growth as the city’s breweries combined to place St. Louis as the third leading production center in the nation.²³ Part of the reason for this growth would continue to be the size of St. Louis’ European immigrant population. Although German immigration to St. Louis in the 1870s and 1880s no longer kept pace with the growth of the city’s native inhabitants, the German-born still comprised a significant minority of the city’s total population. The Irish, still the second-largest immigrant group in the city, also maintained a significant presence in St. Louis during the period. One early twentieth-century periodical contended that “there was perhaps more beer consumed in St. Louis while the breweries were running full blast than in any other city of its size in the world. Carondelet [a German section of the city since the 1840s] drank constantly, and Kerry Patch [the Irish enclave] spent its evenings indulging the now lost art of rushing the can.”²⁴

In addition to the substantial numbers of German and Irish inhabitants in St. Louis, an increasing number of rural Missourians also moved to the city. Missouri, like the rest of the nation during the 1880s, was experiencing a shift in population from rural

²¹ Ibid, 507.

²² Belcher, *The Economic Rivalry Between St. Louis and Chicago*, 203.

²³ William Downard, *The Cincinnati Brewing Industry: A Social and Economic History* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1973), 29.

²⁴ Gerald Holland, “The King of Beer,” *American Mercury* (Oct, 1929), 173.

to urban areas, as people increasingly abandoned agriculture and moved to cities in search of work. This gradual population shift—a trend which would continue throughout the twentieth century—was clearly visible between 1880 and 1890, when 10 percent of the state’s inhabitants moved from rural to urban areas.²⁵ As cities such as St. Louis grew, so too did the demand for beer.²⁶

The demand for the golden brew during the period was matched by the supply, as saloons now appeared on every block. Many of these saloons were either operated or at least provided credit by large breweries that were happy to loan the start-up costs for an establishment in exchange for an additional fee per barrel of beer.²⁷ These late nineteenth century saloons, in addition to providing a place to socialize and drink, also served several other important functions. Usually a nickel provided a patron not only a pint of beer and a bit of food but also notice of possible positions at the nearby breweries.²⁸ Those saloons owned or operated by the breweries afforded immigrant workers a place to cash their checks, an operation which clearly benefited each saloon by providing it with a constant flow of thirsty patrons on pay day.²⁹ The German saloons, although lacking the atmosphere of the beer halls or gardens, also provided a similar social function, as their backrooms frequently served as community gathering places for weddings and funerals.³⁰

The almost constant flow of beer in the city was due in large part to the beverage’s affordability. In an era when water still remained suspect and relatively few other options existed, the price of beer—usually around five cents a pint—was yet

²⁵ Christensen, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV*, 34.

²⁶ Thomas Cochran, *The Pabst Brewing Company: The History of an American Business* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), 71.

²⁷ Holland, “The King of Beer,” *American Mercury*, 173.

²⁸ Bob Skilnik, *Beer: A History of Brewing In Chicago* (Fort Lee, N.J.: Barricade Book Inc., 2006), 88.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

another incentive to consumption.³¹ Towards the end of the decade, even that rather minimal price declined considerably after a consortium of British backers, known as the English Syndicate, purchased many of the nation's breweries, including eighteen small ones in St. Louis.³² The increased competition spurred a price war during the late 1880s and into the 1890s, the result of which dropped the cost of beer by half in many instances.³³

While St. Louis's saloons and beer gardens offered a constant and growing local market for the city's beer, both William Lemp and Adolphus Busch by this point had set their sights on the national market. The first step in this process had been their efforts making and selling bottled beer in the late 1870s. However, the decision to truly "go national" in the 1880s required both the Lemp and Anheuser-Busch breweries to set up distribution systems throughout the country, employing the railroad and advertising campaigns in ways that had never been done before.³⁴ In pursuit of national distribution, the two competitors set up "agencies" in other leading cities during the 1880s. Certain areas, particularly along the rail lines stretching into the South and West, were especially sought after.³⁵ The efforts paid off, and by 1888 the sales of Anheuser-Busch beer alone exceeded 500,000 barrels.³⁶ Anheuser-Busch still trailed its local rival, Lemp, in total production, nevertheless, the former brewery's 25 million bottles a year was said to be

³¹ Holland, "The King of Beer," *American Mercury*, 173.

³² Stanley Baron, *Brewed In America: A History of Beer and Ale in the United States* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962), 269. The English Syndicate purchased all eighteen breweries for a combined \$12 million; the Syndicate also offered Lemp and Anheuser-Busch Breweries \$8 million each to buy their breweries, but Lemp and Busch refused to sell.

³³ Holland, "The King of Beer," *American Mercury*, 173.

³⁴ Baron, *Brewed In America*, 258.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Roland Krebs, *Making Friends Is Our Business: 100 Years of Anheuser-Busch* (St. Louis: Anheuser-Busch, Inc., 1953), 32.

the highest output in the nation.³⁷ The huge volume of beer that the brewery produced annually required an equally large amount of raw materials, including over a million bushels of barley, 700,000 pounds of hops, 500,000 bushels of coal, 250 million gallons of water, and 400,000 boxes and barrels per year.³⁸ By this time Anheuser-Busch, finding the city's rail network inadequate to transport goods, even purchased its own line of tracks, followed shortly thereafter by the company's acquisition of its own local coal mines.³⁹ Based on the size of Anheuser-Busch and Lemp's Western Brewery, it is little wonder that in 1883, when the value of all the state's breweries—of which St. Louis contained the vast majority—were combined with their related industries, such as the barrel makers, bottlers, and label makers, the total amount of commerce generated was over \$20 million.⁴⁰ In addition, by these same calculations the breweries and their related fields employed over 16,000 Missourians.⁴¹ All told, by the 1880s brewing, according to the historian and booster J. Thomas Scharf was “the most important industry in the state.”⁴²

Although the push to bottle beer and the decision “to go national” departed from the traditional methods of brewing in St. Louis, other elements of the business, including the work force, remained relatively unaltered. For example, although Anheuser-Busch increased its workforce from 300 to around 1,200 employees between the beginning of the 1870s and the end of the 1880s, the ethnic makeup of the company's workers

³⁷ Ibid. Total amount of beer produced included both the traditional barrels as well as the newer bottled beer.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Holland, “The King of Beer,” *American Mercury*, 174.

⁴⁰ Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County, Volume II*, 1332.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

remained unchanged.⁴³ The blue-collar workers at Anheuser-Busch and at the city's other brewers were almost entirely German immigrants or their American-born offspring, many of whom had followed their fathers or other relatives into the same line of work. Brewing was one of a number of industries in St. Louis during the period that could be described as ethnic enclaves—dominated by the members of a specific immigrant group and their children. Thus, whereas the Irish frequently occupied positions in construction labor and the Italians dominated the ranks of the city's clay miners, the Germans were firmly in control of brewing. Moreover, St. Louis Germans not only made up the overwhelming majority of the breweries' workforces, they dominated the ownership and managerial positions as well. Thus, from top to bottom the business became almost synonymous with the nineteenth-century German immigrants who owned, operated and worked in the breweries in the "Fourth City" and throughout urban America.

The vast majority of the brewery workers lived within a short distance of their place of work. Some workers—particularly those who were older, better off, and/or long-resident immigrants—owned or rented modest homes in Soulard and other ethnic areas. Some of these brewery workers were fortunate enough to offset their own rents or mortgages by renting rooms to other workers, the latter group usually consisting of more recent, single immigrants. The typical worker's home was usually one or two stories, made of brick, often sharing at least one wall and sometimes both with the adjacent houses, and thus differing little from the European-style row housing.⁴⁴ Indeed, the domestic architecture found in parts of south St. Louis was so similar to that in Germany that an outsider might be forgiven for mistaking a section of Carondelet for Berlin.

⁴³ Krebs, *Making Friends Is Our Business*, 32.

⁴⁴ Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 58.

While some of St. Louis's German brewery workers were fortunate enough to rent or own their own homes, many others lived in the many boarding houses that surrounded the city's breweries. The boarding house system gradually replaced the earlier arrangement whereby workers resided with the brewer-employer.⁴⁵ Despite the change in living arrangements, brewers still found ways of exploiting the situation. At times this was achieved by acquiring the boarding houses where the workers lived. This allowed the brewers to retain a large proportion of the workers' wages—wages that had been devoted to paying rent to others. In some cases the rent was directly taken out of the workers' wages. In other instances, breweries simply made deals with the boarding-house proprietors, agreeing to supply them—and therefore their own beer-dependent workers—exclusively with a certain brand of beer.⁴⁶ An examination of the 1880 census enumerations from south St. Louis reveals the prevalence of these living arrangements, as small clusters of German brewers and coopers resided in boarding houses or rented modest apartments within close proximity to Wainwright's and Feurbacker's breweries, while much larger numbers lived in residences located on the streets surrounding the Anheuser-Busch and Lemp breweries.⁴⁷ The situation was very similar in north St. Louis, where clusters of Germans lived near their traditional craft industries, including soap manufacturing, glass factories, pickling operations, and breweries, as well as the fledgling Mallinckrodt Chemical Company.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Hermann Schluter, *The Brewing Industry and the Brewery Workers' Movement in America* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1910, 1970), 93.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 60-61; By the late 1880s a sizable proportion of the brewery workers living and working in Souard owned or rented apartments in the recently built but modest townhouses along Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets. Toft, Carolyn Hewes ed., *Souard: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood* (St. Louis: Washington University Press, 1975), 10.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 69.

There were many reasons why, during the 1880s and 1890s, brewery workers resided so close to their places of employment and failed to experience the degree of geographical mobility that many of the city's citizens, including other Germans, were increasingly able to achieve. Although improved public transportation, such as the house-drawn omnibus and the later cable- and electric-powered streetcars, enabled a growing number of St. Louisans to reside further from their places of work, and encouraged their westward migration in pursuit of nicer neighborhoods, brewery workers generally stayed put.⁴⁹ One major reason was cost: the price of a daily streetcar fare, even one as little as a few cents a day, could be prohibitive for brewery workers and other members of the working class.⁵⁰

Furthermore, there were relatively few incentives for German immigrant workers to live elsewhere. The social and cultural institutions of their ethnic community, such as the parish church, *Vereine* clubs, beer halls, and German-language schools, were all located within walking distance of the breweries in both north and south St. Louis. In addition, the proximity of these social institutions, the breweries, and the residences of many of the city's Germans—including virtually all the brewery workers—had the additional benefit of re-investing large sums of money back into the ethnic neighborhoods. By the late 1880's, for example, Anheuser-Busch Brewery's payroll alone was more than half a million dollars, the majority of which circulated through the entire south St. Louis German-American community.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid, 70; Frederick Anthony Hodes, "The Urbanization of St. Louis: A Study In Urban Residential Patterns in the Nineteenth Century" (Ph. D. dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1973), 154.

⁵⁰ David Goldfield and Blaine Brownell, *Urban America: A History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), 190.

⁵¹ Toft, *Soulard: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood*, 10.

A final reason why brewery workers, like other members of the urban working classes, resided so close to their places of employment was simply that they had relatively little free time to undertake a lengthy commute and even less energy to do so after an extremely long and exhausting day of work. Thus, a desire for better lodging may not have been a priority for German brewery workers in the decades after the Civil War, when a prolonged commute would cut into their precious free time, away from the breweries, following a fourteen- to eighteen-hour work day.⁵² Even Sunday—traditionally a day of rest, relaxation, and religious observation—was marked by six to eight hours of work, usually beginning long before dawn and ending sometime around noon.⁵³

An account by Alfred Kolb, a freelance writer who posed as a brewery worker in Chicago sometime during the 1890s, epitomized the average brewery worker's daily schedule. "Overtime night work was almost routine," Kolb reported, and it "usually [lasted] until nine, sometimes ten in the evening." These long work days were uninterrupted except for "a half-hour break [that] was taken at six, which," according to Kolb, "would have been all right if the lunch break had not been shortened accordingly."⁵⁴ Kolb's account is perhaps even more damning in regard to the debilitating conditions the workers were forced to endure. "Within eight days" of starting at the brewery, Kolb revealed, "my hands were covered with bloody cuts and crakes. My back had become stiff, my walk and posture clumsy and heavy."⁵⁵ Mistakes or a perceived lack of effort were often remedied by repeated "cuffs and blows" delivered by

⁵² Schluter, *The Brewing Industry*, 92-93.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Skilnik, *Beer*, 53-54.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

company foremen.⁵⁶ However, physical abuse was hardly the worst thing that could befall the average brewery worker. Prior to the industry's unionization and the safety improvements made thereafter, the dangerous machinery, long hours, consequent fatigue, and large daily rations of beer made accidents common and often deadly occurrences. Kolb witnessed one such brewery accident, when a "machine operator was caught in the driving belt of a big steam engine and torn to pieces."⁵⁷ The grisly incident was apparently so commonplace that it elicited only a muted response from Kolb's fellow workers, one saying "too bad for him," another declaring with resignation that "he was a good guy! [but] now he's had it!"⁵⁸ Yet another of Kolb's workmates seemed to capture the sentiments of the group, saying, "Eat and drink, guys; because soon we'll all have had it, and that's that."⁵⁹

Harsh treatment and industrial accidents, such as befell the Chicago machinist, convinced brewery workers to join together and form mutual aid associations.⁶⁰ These organizations were far from radical: their aim was not to secure better working conditions but simply to assist fellow workers in the event of sickness, accident, or death.⁶¹ The mutual aid associations also provided companionship for the recent immigrants and were modeled after community ethnic mutual aid associations. During the late 1880s and 1890s, however, the nation's brewery workers gradually formed unions to push for better working conditions, increased pay, and shorter hours. The brewery workers of St. Louis were at the forefront of this effort, and the initial attempts at unification began as early as 1881. The first meeting, held at the Central Turner Hall,

⁵⁶ Schluter, *The Brewing Industry*, 89.

⁵⁷ Skilnik, *Beer*, 53-54.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Schluter, *The Brewing Industry*, 97.

⁶¹ Ibid.

drew as many as 200 brewery workers.⁶² After presenting their demands to the city's brewery bosses and having them quickly rebuffed, the union instigated a strike. The strike may have been doomed from the onset because only six hundred of the city's nine hundred brewery workers were members of the union; however, after many of the 600 union men left the picket line and returned to work following promises of small concessions, its failure was assured.⁶³ Although this initial effort failed, a subsequent attempt to unionize the city's brewery workers took place in 1886, and resulted in the formation of the "Gambrinus Assembly," No. 7503, as a division of the powerful Knights of Labor.⁶⁴ This time the union's organization and demands were immediately rewarded when the city's brewers agreed to the introduction of a ten-hour day. Later that year, following a more successful and prolonged strike, St. Louis's brewery workers won additional demands, including the freedom of lodging and, most important, the brewery owners' official recognition of the union.⁶⁵

Despite their resistance to their workers' demands, St. Louis's brewery owners were actually far more progressive than many others elsewhere. Adolph Coors, the patriarch of the Colorado brewing dynasty, for instance, refused to recognize any attempts by labor to organize. His managerial philosophy continued even after his death: Coors brewery maintained a strictly "open shop" into the twentieth century. In general, however, and in contrast to other Gilded Age industrialists, the nineteenth-century beer barons, in the judgment of one scholar, "distinguished themselves by real bourgeois

⁶² Jane Quinn, "Local Union No. 6, Brewing, Malting and General Labor Departments St. Louis, Missouri" (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1947), 12-13. The Hall, originally constructed by the German *Turnvereine* societies of St. Louis, eventually gained the distinction as the "old Cradle of Liberty," because so many unions and other organizations held their meetings there.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 18-19.

⁶⁴ Schluter, *The Brewing Industry*, 123.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 124.

beneficence.”⁶⁶ Although European liberal ideals, like those of the “Forty-Eighters,” may have promoted a greater acceptance and appreciation for the rights of labor, a more obvious reason was the shared ethnic heritage that continued to unite brewery owners and workers. Whereas some European immigrants and their descendants—including at least some prominent German businessmen—quickly assimilated into native-American urban society, shedding their traditional language and customs in the process, this was not the case with the sons of the first German brewers. The main reason for this, according to the pioneering brewing historian Hermann Schluter, was that “their interests demanded that they remain in the closest touch with the new German immigrant elements who formed the chief customers for their lager beer, and in whose organizations, lectures and discussions were frequently held in which the ‘cultural value of German lager beer’ ... was highly praised.”⁶⁷ In this sense, the brewing barons’ primary interest was in maintaining the spirit of *gemütlichkeit*—for example, by employing their fortunes to spread “German art and German science,” and to sponsor singing festivals (*sangerfest*) and other German cultural events.⁶⁸

Anheuser-Busch and the other St. Louis breweries competed with each other for the favor of the city’s German citizens, sending agents out to local saloons and beer gardens to buy rounds of their brew. The duties of these brewery agents were extensive, and in an era when relationships were built on personal contact, these men attended funerals and weddings, showering free drinks and gifts on the loyal customers of the Irish

⁶⁶ Ibid, 69.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 68.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 69; Maureen Ogle, *Ambitious Brew: The Story of American Beer* (Orlando, Fla.: Harcourt, Inc., 2006), 107.

Kerry Patch or the German Carondelet.⁶⁹ The agents were equally active in the *Turnvereine* and other German gatherings, and many were involved in local politics, always willing to provide a word of advice and a healthy draught of beer to ward bosses and committeemen.⁷⁰ These agents were the most popular figures in their neighborhoods, while the most respected men in the German community were their employers, the brewers.⁷¹

Even as Adolphus Busch, William Lemp, and St. Louis's other beer barons maintained their essential roles as leaders of German culture and the immigrant community, they simultaneously broadened their economic and social influence, gaining prominent positions in the larger society. By the 1880s and 1890s, the brewing barons parlayed their considerable wealth into broad social acceptance and joined the ranks of the urban elite in St. Louis and other American cities. The Gilded Age in American history ushered in a new era as economic and political power was increasingly concentrated in the hands of wealthy industrialists. Perhaps paradoxically, the growing power of *nouveau riches* businessmen had somewhat of a democratizing effect on the older social elites, especially in relatively new urban centers in the Midwest and the West. In this sense, German brewers, like other self-made millionaires, were able to ascend to the heights of upper-class society. Vast fortunes provided brewers, some of whom had just a few decades earlier been working class immigrants. Names like Anheuser, Busch, Lemp, Coors, Pabst, and Schlitz increasingly joined the ranks of Morgan, Gould, Vanderbilt, and Rockefeller in the social registers, leading

⁶⁹ Holland, "The King of Beer," *American Mercury*, 173.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Richard O'Connor, *The German-Americans: An Informal History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), 296.

businessmen's clubs, and millionaires lists of America's largest cities.⁷² In St. Louis, the success of the city's brewers was only too evident, as their names and biographies increasingly gained prominence in the copious "who's who" literature of the day, appearing in works such as Logan U. Reavis's *The Future Great City of the World* (1876), John Thomas Scharf's *History of Saint Louis City and County* (1883), James Cox's *Old and New St. Louis* (1894), William Hyde and Howard Conrad's *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis* (1899), and numerous similar works published after the turn of the century.

The historian Bob Skilnik, in his book on the history of brewing in Chicago, summed up the increased power and prestige of that city's brewers at the end of the century, writing that "the brewing community was no longer perceived as a rough and tumble group of mostly German immigrants, but one of wealth and power"; the individual brewers were now "political figures, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, millionaires, socialites and scoundrels," and, in the process, had gained entrance "into the elite social strata of the city."⁷³ The situation was no different in St. Louis, where the city's German brewing barons attained not only wealth but power. Alexander McConachie, in his unpublished 1976 dissertation, "The 'Big Cinch': A Business Elite in the Life of a City, Saint Louis, 1895-1915," analyses the "discontinuity in the business establishment" as well as the increasing role that "new" men, such as the brewing barons, played in the city.⁷⁴ As in Skilnik's Chicago, McConachie argues, the growth of brewing in the 1880s and 1890s "launched a new group of capitalists onto the St. Louis

⁷³ Skilnik, *Beer*, x.

⁷⁴ Alexander McConachie, "The 'Big Cinch': A Business Elite In The Life of a City, Saint Louis, 1895-1915" (Ph. D. dissertation, Washington University, 1976), 25.

financial scene.”⁷⁵ The “Fourth City’s” brewing barons, at least six of whom were millionaires at the turn of the century, increasingly used their wealth to diversify their holdings and invest in a host of business ventures other than brewing.⁷⁶ Adolphus Busch, the richest member of the group, used his massive personal fortune to invest in banks, railroads, hotels, and utilities throughout the city and across the country. William Lemp displayed a similar investment strategy, putting money into banks, utilities, and ice companies—the latter the only enterprise directly tied to his brewing empire. While Busch and Lemp had the most capital to invest, they were not the only members of the city’s brewing community to extend their business operations outside the traditional field. Louis Brinckworth, for example, another of the city’s brewery owners, was one of the largest stockholders in the Northwestern Savings Bank, while the leaders of the St. Louis Brewing Association, a consortium of St. Louis breweries, were intimately involved with the utilities firm, the Mississippi Valley Trust, as well as the Commonwealth Trust.⁷⁷ Many of the city’s brewers also were heavily invested in the Kinloch Company, one of a handful of national telephone companies then fighting with Bell for control of the burgeoning industry.⁷⁸

With every investment the brewing barons of St. Louis entrenched themselves as members of the economic and social elite that dominated the business life of the city. By the turn of the century the German influence in St. Louis’s ruling oligarchy was even

⁷⁵ Ibid, 27.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 277.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 56, 83, 84. The consortium was originally formed as a preemptive action to prevent a piecemeal takeover of eighteen breweries by British investors. Within a few months, however, the English Syndicate, as it became known, purchased controlling interest in the group. As it had done in other brewing cities, the Syndicate consolidated some of the smaller breweries, in the process reducing the total number in St. Louis to approximately twenty by 1890. The Wainwright, Nicolaus and Stifel families retained management positions in the Syndicate, remaining influential figures not only in the brewing business but also in the larger financial community for years to come.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 86.

more pronounced than that of the traditionally powerful Southern aristocrats and wealthy French families; by 1900 the German beer barons' influence was now matched only by that of Eastern investors. However, even as the German brewers ascended to the heights of the greater St. Louis business and social community, they continued to serve their traditional role as leaders of the immigrant community. In this capacity, brewers not only found it advantageous to encourage German cultural identity but also to promote ethnic institutions, such as neighborhood banks.

The interest in banking was born out of practical necessity for the German brewers, who, like other European immigrants prior to the 1880s, found it difficult to secure loans from traditional “downtown” banks. Following the Civil War, for example, and despite the booming demand for his beer, Adolphus Busch had found it impossible to secure a \$50,000 loan, to expand his brewery's capacity, from the old French families that still effectively controlled the city's banking industry.⁷⁹ Because of the city's restrictive financial system, members of the German community found it necessary to organize their own banking institutions and thus secure their own access to needed financial assistance. By the turn of the century, Busch owned stock in a number of local financial institutions, including the South Side Bank where he was the principal stockholder.⁸⁰ Louis Brinckworth's Northwestern Savings Bank was another of these neighborhood banks.⁸¹

By the turn of the century, the city's brewing barons and a handful of other wealthy German families—including the Nolkers, Brinckworths, and Orthweins—held

⁷⁹ Hernon, *Under the Influence*, 30-31.

⁸⁰ McConachie, “The ‘Big Cinch’”, 56.

⁸¹ Ibid.

significant amounts of stock in both neighborhood and downtown banks.⁸² Many of these same wealthy German-American families were also heavily invested in transportation, utilities, and a host of other business enterprises in the city. In a sense, Busch and his compatriots held a position at the apex of two formerly distinct but increasingly overlapping business communities in St. Louis.⁸³ The German brewing barons did not surpass the power or influence of the city's traditional West End "aristocrats," nonetheless; they did firmly carve out a place for themselves among the cadre of St. Louis's elite.⁸⁴ And even though brewers remained excluded from some of the institutions which marked social status, such as the exclusive St. Louis Country Club, they became an essential part of the city's business leadership. Busch and his fellow brewers now could claim a place alongside "old money" families like the Chouteaus, Pierces, and Turners, all of which had inherited large fortunes built upon the fur trade, banking, or real estate, as well as the wealthiest of the city's entrepreneurs, such as Walter McKittrick, William K. Bixby, and James Campbell, who had amassed their fortunes more quickly through land speculation, investment, and corporate mergers.⁸⁵ By the turn of the century, the interests of the city's financial elite—regardless of ethnic,

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid, 272. A similar situation existed with St. Louis's leading Jewish businessmen, as the distinction between the "American" and ethnic business communities gradually eroded.

⁸⁴ St. Louis's West End became synonymous with the wealthy citizens who lived in luxury among the area's mansions and private drives during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Despite the increased importance and acceptance of the *nouveau riche*, including the German brewing barons, restrictions persisted as indicated by some measures of social status. Even as late as 1912, for example, no brewers and very few Germans were members of the St. Louis Country Club, the oldest and most exclusive organization of its kind in the city. Evidence seems to suggest that the ranks of the city's elite echelon were far more open to financial mobility than to the kinds of social climbing that naturally led to familial and marital relationships. Ibid, 277-278.

⁸⁵ James Campbell, a Scots-Irish immigrant, was the one of the two richest men in St. Louis prior to the turn of the century. His stature was such that the press dubbed him "the Morgan or the West." He made his fortune following the Civil War through land speculation and railway bonds before getting into banking and utilities. Adolphus Busch, another of the city's immigrants, had the distinction of being St. Louis's other richest individual. Ibid, 81; Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 376.

cultural, or business background—were so interwoven that Busch could write with confidence to William Bixby—the founder of the American Car Company, prominent bank shareholder, and fellow rail and utilities investor—with regard to their mutual optimism about St. Louis and their business prospects: “As long as our country increases in population every year, just so long will our manufacturing capacity have to keep pace with it. There will be no end to it, at least not while we two are turning the wheels.”⁸⁶ Busch’s words were prophetic, for as long as he was “turning the wheel,” which was until his death in 1913, the fortunes of his brewing empire, the German-American community, and the “Fourth City” and its economy all remained strong.

Investments by wealthy brewers and other businessmen spurred economic development in St. Louis. At least initially, the prosperity of the 1880s carried into the 1890s, as the city’s industries continued to compete with those in the country’s other major cities. The production of furniture, for example, continued to rise.⁸⁷ By the beginning of the 1890s, St. Louis had become the leading manufacturer of tobacco products in the nation, supplying nearly one quarter of the country’s total.⁸⁸ According to one contemporary, “no place on earth can compete with it [St. Louis] as a manufacturing centre for tobacco.”⁸⁹ Not surprisingly, the industry led all St. Louis’s manufactures in 1890, with a value estimated at more than \$10 million.⁹⁰ Perhaps one of the city’s fastest growing industries was shoe manufacturing, which by 1897 had reached an annual production value of \$5 million; by 1900 St. Louis could claim to be the nation’s fifth

⁸⁶ McConachie, “The ‘Big Cinch,’” 116-117.

⁸⁷ Christensen, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV*, 86-87.

⁸⁸ *St. Louis, the Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley* (St. Louis: Acme Publishing Co., 189?), 51.

⁸⁹ Horace H. Morgan, *The Historical World's Columbian Exposition and Guide to Chicago and St. Louis, the carnival city of the world* (St. Louis: Pacific Publishing Co., 1892), 433.

⁹⁰ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Twelfth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics and Inspection State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1890* (Jefferson City, Mo.: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1890), 57.

leading producer of footwear.⁹¹ The city's flour industry was also on the rise again. Having fallen from its lofty position as the nation's leader towards the end of the previous decade, St. Louis milling rose again during the first few years of the 1890s, outstripping Milwaukee and moving into third place between 1893 and 1894.⁹² Other industries, including women's clothing and publishing, also rose in production and value during the decade.⁹³

Nonetheless, after the general success of the 1880s, the city's experience in the depression-ridden 1890s proved to be more mixed, and by the end of the decade some of the city's industries, even some of its leading industries, suffered declines. Flour once again fell, this time more dramatically, slumping to one-third of its 1890 level and forcing nearly half of the city's mills to close.⁹⁴ In addition to the disappointing drop in flour production, the city's machine production and food processing industries also declined.⁹⁵ Interestingly, while the city's women's clothing industry continued to grow during the decade, its men's clothing production declined.⁹⁶ Part of the reason for these declines, especially in the second half of the decade, was the nationwide depression between 1893 and 1897.⁹⁷ Many community leaders in the city claimed, whether disingenuously or simply incorrectly, that St. Louis suffered very little from the financial crisis.

Comparatively speaking, this was true, as older, more-established northeastern cities suffered more in the depression than St. Louis. William McKinley, the governor of Ohio

⁹¹ Christensen, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV*, 87.

⁹² *St. Louis, the Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley*, 51-54.

⁹³ Christensen, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV*, 86-87.

⁹⁴ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 346.

⁹⁵ Christensen, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV*, 86-87.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ In St. Louis, the nationwide financial crisis was compounded at the end of the decade by the great tornado of 1896. The storm, the largest and most destructive to ever hit the city, killed at least 140 people, injured over 1,000 more, destroyed as many as 8,000 buildings, and caused upwards of \$10 million worth of damage. Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 362.

and future president of the United States, echoed the overly optimistic forecast of the city's citizens, remarking in a 1894 speech: "I congratulate your city on the splendid way in which she met the financial reverses of last year. Resting as they do upon conservative principles and business integrity, your mercantile and financial institutions have survived as those of few of our cities did." However, despite this optimism and continued capital investment from Busch and the city's other elite businessmen, St. Louis was indeed adversely affected by the economic downturn. The depression caused the value of the city's formerly flourishing manufacturing to stagnate, growing by a mere two percent over the course of the entire decade.⁹⁸ Based on this telling figure, opinions such as McKinley's or the one contained in a 1897 issue of *American Magazine*, which claimed that despite "the remarkable financial crash ... St. Louis has never shown the mark of the depression to an appreciable extent," seem to have been misguided.⁹⁹

Nonetheless, as it had during the Civil War, one St. Louis industry—brewing—appeared to escape many of the difficulties associated with the depression. In fact, by the beginning of the 1890s brewing had risen so markedly that it was the second leading industry in the city, with twenty operations together producing beer with a total value of over \$10 million a year.¹⁰⁰ Based on this figure, the beverage trailed only tobacco in production value. Just as important, the city's breweries supplied over 2,500 people with employment during the 1890s.¹⁰¹ Most of these workers remained first- or second-generation Germans, and by the 1890s they occupied some of the most highly regarded

⁹⁸ Ibid, 346.

⁹⁹ Selwyn K. Troen and Glen E. Holt, eds. *St. Louis* (New York, NY: Franklin Watts, 1977), 65.

¹⁰⁰ Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Twelfth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics and Inspection State of Missouri*, 57.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

blue-collar jobs within the city, since by 1900 their union had won for them significant pay increases as well as reduced hours.

The 1890s would also witness Anheuser-Busch Brewery finally surpassing its rival Lemp to become the leading brewery in the city. The former's growth was so great that it now ranked as the second leading brewery in the nation. Lemp's Western Brewery—incorporated in 1892 under the name of William J. Lemp Brewing Co.—while having fallen behind its local rival, also increased its output and sales sufficiently to move up to eighth in the country.¹⁰² The increased production of St. Louis' breweries consumed prodigious amounts of raw materials and other products required in the manufacture of the beer. In the 1890s, for example, Anheuser-Busch alone used 15,000 carloads of coal each year to power its enormous brewery.¹⁰³ The amount of coal required was only surpassed by water, as the single operation each year used one-thirteenth of the total supplied to the entire city.¹⁰⁴ To ship the hundreds of thousands of barrels and millions of bottles each year, the brewery had its own fleet of 250 modern refrigerator cars.¹⁰⁵ Although the city's other breweries, even Lemp's, were now no match for Anheuser-Busch, the combined total of material required in the production of all the city's breweries was staggering.

Despite the apparent continued success of the industry during the decade, the census results of 1900 caused consternation similar to those of 1880, as they seemed to show that the St. Louis breweries' production had fallen from a high of \$16.2 million in

¹⁰² Stephen P. Walker, *Lemp: The Haunting History* (St. Louis: The Lemp Preservation Society, Inc., 1988), 26-27.

¹⁰³ St. Louis, *Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley*, 51.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

the 1890 census to only \$11.7 million.¹⁰⁶ Initially it appeared that the depression had caused the brewing industry to suffer a fate similar to that of the rest of the city's manufacturing sector. Once again, leading St. Louisans felt aggrieved and questioned the Census Bureau's report. Unlike the lingering debate over the 1880 findings, however, other sources of statistics were available which cast serious doubt on—perhaps even repudiated completely—the 1900 Census report. The Bureau's own findings regarding the Anheuser-Busch and Lemp breweries alone were sufficient to call into question the overall report on the city's brewing industry, as the Census recorded those two companies combined to produce nearly \$10 million worth of beer in 1900.¹⁰⁷ Statistics collected the following year, which found that the city's nineteen breweries produced approximately \$20 million worth of beer, seem to provide conclusive evidence that the census data of 1900 were indeed in error.¹⁰⁸

In general, then, the late nineteenth-century fortunes of St. Louis were mixed, although most overall trends were encouraging. To be sure, the 1880 census had been a bitter pill for St. Louisans, dashing the boosters' visions of the "future great city of the world" and forcing their awareness of Chicago's growing superiority. As a reporter for *Harper's* magazine noted four years after the 1880 census, for many of its citizens "it was not enough that St. Louis has done so incredibly well, but there is an aggrieved tone, of which a good deal is heard in the place, if it can be made out that Chicago has done

¹⁰⁶ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 347. The reasons why the value of the production in the 1890 federal census report were so much higher than the State's Bureau of Labor and Statistics is unclear. However, one cause may be the use of different categories employed in reporting production. Also, the State Bureau did not always benefit from receiving all the industries' returns. This was the case, for example, with many industries in 1890, as some industries had as few as 22 percent of the companies reporting.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

somewhat better.”¹⁰⁹ The bitterness and rivalry between the two cities would continue into the 1900s, manifesting itself every ten years with the release of new census results, through competitions such as the World’s Fairs, or simply in annual sporting contests.

Yet, although St. Louis lost the mantle of leading western city to Chicago, it remained an important center for trade and manufacturing through the remainder of the century. More important, St. Louis’s continued economic prosperity remained firmly tied to its German-American community. The German presence in St. Louis continued to be economically and culturally vital, and the German-owned breweries remained pillars of both the ethnic community and the city’s overall economy. Notwithstanding the gradual decline of German immigration after 1882, and despite some German dispersal beyond the original immigrant neighborhoods, the ethnic community continued to thrive as long as the breweries still provided the essential cultural element of *gemütlichkeit* as well as economic benefits like jobs, business, and taxes. Indeed, by the 1890s brewing was arguably the most important business in St. Louis, especially when all its related industries were taken into consideration. Moreover, by the end of the century, the local brewery employees were among the most successfully unionized and well-paid workers in the city, while the German brewing barons themselves had joined St. Louis’s economic and social elite. By 1900 the investments of men such as Adolphus Busch were as essential to the city’s economic success as the “downtown” banks of St. Louis’s old aristocracy or capital from the city’s wealthiest corporate titans.

¹⁰⁹ “St. Louis,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 504.

V. TURN OF THE CENTURY ST. LOUIS

By the turn of century St. Louis's fortunes appeared mixed. Although it still remained the "Fourth City" and continued to be regarded as one of the preeminent commercial centers in the nation, its comparative prominence was declining and had been so for at least a decade. The city's manufacturing growth had slowed, as evident by only a small increase between 1890 and 1900. The nationwide depression had much to do with this. Some of the city's older industries, flour for example, had declined, and only the city's strongest industries, such as tobacco, brewing, shoe-making, and meat packing were able to continue to grow substantially. Although St. Louis would remain one of the nation's leading producers in a handful of industries such as tobacco, brewing, and shoes, it was increasingly becoming more of a regional power, its sphere of trade now restricted to the South and Midwest.¹ Nonetheless, by the following census of 1910 St. Louis' manufacturing had made significant recoveries, as the total value of its manufactured products rose by 70 percent from \$193.7 million to \$328.5 million, with the bulk of the value coming from its leading industries.² Finding their city's economy increasingly reliant on a smaller number manufacturing industries after the turn of the century, St. Louis's businessmen gradually shifted once again to emphasize their distribution advantages.³ Consequently, the wholesale trade of supplies such as grocery and dry-goods—although now less frequently produced in St. Louis—grew considerably.⁴

¹ David Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri, 1900-1918: Prohibition, Neutrality, and Assimilation* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1985), 5.

² United States Census Bureau, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910. Abstract with Supplement for Missouri* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1913), 657.

³ James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri* (Boulder, Col.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1981) 346-347.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 347, 349-350.

Population figures, another leading indicator of a city's prominence, also yielded somewhat ambiguous findings for early twentieth century St. Louis. The census taken at the turn of the century confirmed the trend apparent a decade earlier as the steady rise in population continued. St. Louis' population rose to 575,238, an increase since 1890 of close to 125,000 people.⁵ Most importantly, however, St. Louis continued to lead Boston and Baltimore, in the process retaining its position as the fourth most populous city in the country.⁶ The results of the 1910 census, however, were slightly less encouraging because the population, no longer augmented by large numbers of European immigrants, rose by only 112,000 or 19.4 percent, as compared to the 27 percent increase between 1890 and 1900.⁷ St. Louis's total population of 687,029, including an increasingly large minority of African-Americans, was still great enough to once again hold off fifth-place Boston and the rapidly rising Cleveland; nevertheless, the growth of cities like Cleveland and Detroit must have concerned the inhabitants of St. Louis.⁸ For the time being, however, St. Louis retained the honorific title of "Fourth City" as well as the prestige the inhabitants of the city associated with the label.

In 1904 St. Louis also received another symbol of prestige, as it held the Louisiana Purchase Exposition and the accompanying World's Fair. Since its selection—over New Orleans—as the host city in 1899, the citizens of St. Louis had eagerly looked

⁵ Ibid, 345.

⁶ Gibson, "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990," U.S. Bureau of the Census, (accessed April 15, 2007).

⁷ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 418, 345.

⁸ Gibson, "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990," U.S. Bureau of the Census, (accessed February 22, 2008). Cleveland and Detroit experienced growth rates of 47 and 63 percent growth, respectively, between 1900 and 1910. St. Louis had not experienced a similar rise in population since the middle of the nineteenth century.

forward to the international event.⁹ No amount of money or detail was spared on the project in an attempt to make the 1904 exposition grander than Chicago's 1893 World's Fair.¹⁰ The fair served as an impetus for a host of urban improvements, some desperately needed. The city and various groups of concerned local citizens, including the recently formed Civic Improvement League, combined their efforts to pave the streets, install adequate lighting, purify the infamous water supply, and institute a neighborhood clean-up campaign, all with the goal of creating a "New St. Louis" or the "City Beautiful."¹¹

The fair itself grew to become the largest of its kind, including hundreds of exhibits devoted to forty-three states and over sixty foreign nations, plus a wide range of amusements and displays with themes ranging from famous events in American history to the scientific and technological marvels of tomorrow. At its conclusion, few could deny that the exposition had been a triumphant success. St. Louis had indeed achieved its goal, and to the surprise of many even turned a slight profit, coming out \$600,000 ahead, after spending an astounding \$32 million on the historic event.¹² All told, during the seven months the exposition remained open, 19.4 million people attended and, despite falling just short of the 20 million who took in Chicago's 1893 fair, Mayor Rolla Wells—in typical St. Louis fashion—announced that the 1904 event's attendance had matched that previous high.¹³

⁹ The occasion was made even more of an international event because the third Olympic Games of the modern era, the first in the United States, were also held in St. Louis so that they might coincide with the Fair. Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 6.

¹⁰ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 417.

¹¹ Ibid, 399; Audrey Olson, "St. Louis Germans, 1850-1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and its Relation to the Assimilation Process" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1970), 44.

¹² Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 415.

¹³ Ibid, 413, 415. Mayor Wells attained the inflated figure by counting the thousands of concession and pavilion workers who left and returned to their positions each day.

As one contemporary historian has aptly put it, “For seven months in 1904, St. Louis had become the most cosmopolitan city on earth.”¹⁴ During that year the city and its inhabitants reveled in the attention, as the eyes of the nation and, to a lesser extent, the world were cast on the “Fourth City.” “Meet Me in St. Louis,” a song written about the fair, became a national hit. Reflecting on the magnitude of the event years later, the former mayor, Rolla Wells, would write—with only a minimal amount of hyperbole—that it had been “in its incomparable splendor and magnitude, one of the greatest expositions ever ... [having] left an indelible impression of rare beauty and human triumph.” For St. Louis the World’s Fair was, as historian Audrey Olson has called it, “the most beneficial panacea that could have been applied to” the city.¹⁵ Indeed, closing estimates placed the additional investment in the city, caused by the event, at \$12 million, represented primarily by the great number of new buildings and infrastructural improvements.¹⁶ Nor was the fair merely an economic boon, as the massive building projects and influx of people caused St. Louis to grow, the city expanding to the limits of its boundaries.¹⁷ In the exuberant afterglow of the fair, the hopes of the city’s boosters revived. The renewed optimism of the day was embodied in the creation of the “One Million Population” club, established just days after the conclusion of the exposition.¹⁸

The city’s Civic and Businessmen’s Leagues similarly hoped to utilize the buoyed sense

¹⁴ Ibid, 418.

¹⁵ Olson, “St. Louis Germans”, 44.

¹⁶ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 417.

¹⁷ Carlos F. Hurd, “St. Louis: Boundary-Bound,” *Our Fair City*, ed. Robert S. Allen (New York: Vanguard Press, Inc., 1947), 240.

¹⁸ Hurd, “St. Louis,” *Our Fair City*, 240. The idea was not a new one; however, the setback of the 1880 census had dealt a blow to the ambitious goal. The success and enthusiasm surrounding the fair, as well as the relatively encouraging results of the 1890 and 1900 censuses, were enough to revive the belief that St. Louis could and, if things continued to improve, would surpass one million inhabitants within two decades. The belief was not unreasonable; Chicago’s population, for example, leapt above a million by 1890, reaching almost 1.7 million by the turn of the century. Gibson, “Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990,” U.S. Bureau of the Census, (accessed March 26, 2008).

of optimism and importance within St. Louis to stimulate economic growth, attract new businesses, and further reduce taxes.¹⁹

One St. Louis industry that did not need any additional assistance was brewing. The industry was now unquestionably one of the three most important in the city, producing in excess of \$20 million worth of beer per year. By 1910 even the most conservative estimates found that approximately 5,000 of the 87,000 wage earners in the city were directly involved in brewing.²⁰ These estimates, however, failed to reveal the true measure of the brewing industry's influence on the city's economy, because scores of related industries and tens of thousands of additional workers were dependent on the beverage's production. Many contemporary St. Louisans felt that the breweries were an indispensable feature of the city's prosperity. For example, local historian and booster Horace Morgan wrote that St. Louis's "now international beverage" was the single most important factor in spreading "the name of St. Louis as a manufacturing centre ... throughout civilization."²¹

The German immigrant and journalist Ernest D. Kargau came to a similar conclusion in his turn-of-the-century account of St. Louis, echoing Morgan's earlier findings and writing, "the breweries of St. Louis constitute one of the greatest industrial factors in the city."²² Moreover, Kargau continued, just as "no other branch of industry has made St. Louis as generally known as the manufacture of beer ... no other of our

¹⁹ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 419.

²⁰ G. K. Renner, "Prohibition Comes to Missouri, 1910-1919," *Missouri Historical Review*, 62 (1968), 366. The 5,000 brewery workers cited by Renner is a very low number and falls well below other figures from the pre-Prohibition area. In other accounts the total number range anywhere from 5,000 to 10,000.

²¹ Horace H. Morgan, *The Historical World's Columbian Exposition and Guide to Chicago and St. Louis, the carnival city of the world* (St. Louis: Pacific Publishing Co., 1892), 438.

²² E. D. Kargau, *Mercantile, Industrial and Professional Saint Louis* (St. Louis: Nixon-Jones, 1902?), 500.

many breweries has made our city so famous as that of the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association.”²³

Writing in 1902, Kargau—a prominent member of the city’s German-American press—was obviously aware of Anheuser-Busch’s increasing stature, not only within the confines of St. Louis but also nationally. His evaluation of the importance of the brewing industry and of Anheuser-Busch in particular was validated two years later when the Master Brewers’ Association of the United States chose St. Louis as the location of its sixteenth annual convention.²⁴ The selection of St. Louis was originally designed to coincide with the Louisiana Exposition and the 1904 World’s Fair; however, the choice proved to be especially appropriate because Anheuser-Busch, the city’s largest brewery, had recently gained the title of the nation’s leader, a distinction it would retain until Prohibition.²⁵

As the twentieth century unfolded, Adolphus Busch could take pleasure in the success of his brewery, its name now synonymous with the industry and with St. Louis, the seat of his vast empire. From the brewery’s inauspicious beginnings, the operation had risen from bankruptcy to become the largest in the nation, all in the span of less than forty years. In addition to producing more beer than any other operation—and with production now in excess of a million barrels a year—Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association also held the distinction of owning property or real estate in every state of the

²³ Ibid, 528.

²⁴ John Arnold and Frank Penman, *History of the Brewing Industry and Brewing Science in America* (Chicago: privately printed, 1933), 241. This was the second time the Master Brewers’ Association held its convention in the city, the first being in 1891. St. Louis’s importance to the brewing industry was evident by the fact that only Chicago and New York were selected to host the event more times prior to Prohibition, each entertaining the convention three times between 1887 and 1916.

²⁵ Although the exact date seems to be in dispute, the best estimate appears to be that, between the late 1890s and the first two years of the twentieth century, the St. Louis brewery overtook Pabst Brewery of Milwaukee.

nation as well as in a number of foreign countries. The brewing giant's diverse investments included saloons, ice plants, bottling works, distributorships, and coal mines.²⁶ The epicenter of the empire, the imposing St. Louis plant, had by this point grown to cover forty blocks, containing, among other things, a bottling factory, engine works, and even its own wagon shops.²⁷ The brewery made up almost half of the total production value of all the city's breweries combined, which in 1901 had reached \$15 million.²⁸ Perhaps even more impressively, in an industry with thousands of competitors and hundreds of millions of dollars at stake, the St. Louis brewery secured 2.5 percent of the nation's market.²⁹ The brewery would retain this share until Prohibition eliminated the industry.

Adolphus Busch, the man most responsible for this brewing dynasty, did not live to see the dark days that lay ahead. The king of brewers passed away in 1913, at the very zenith of the industry's success, fittingly while visiting his native Germany and celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of its liberation from Napoleon's armies.³⁰ Despite dying in the land of his birth, only a short distance from the village where he had been raised, there was never any doubt as to where Busch would be laid to rest, and on

²⁶ William Downard, *The Cincinnati Brewing Industry: A Social and Economic History* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1973), 54; "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune* (July, 1932), 47-48. Adolphus Busch alone was supposedly worth close to \$60 million upon his death in 1913. "What's Brewing In Soulard," 7.

²⁷ *St. Louis, the Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley* (St. Louis: Acme Publishing Co., 189?), 78; Ernest Kirschten, *Catfish and Crystal* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), 346.

²⁸ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Twenty-Third Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics and Inspection State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1901* (Jefferson City, Mo.: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1901), 264. Although the annual report does not provide the names of corporations, if Anheuser-Busch is accepted as the most productive brewery in the city—which seems reasonable based on the fact it was the most productive in the nation—than its share of the city's overall value of beer (\$15. million) was approximately \$7.4 million.

²⁹ "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune*, 47.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 98.

October 24, fifteen days after his death, the former immigrant was buried in St. Louis, forever enshrined in a massive mausoleum at Bellefontaine Cemetery.³¹

The St. Louis papers that day, as they had each day since the “Prince’s” death, filled their pages with stories about the beer baron’s life, as well as testimonials of admiration and sorrow from thousands of St. Louisans and others around the nation. The funeral was important enough for the Kaiser to send his personal representative and President Wilson his condolences.³² Despite the longstanding rivalry between the two cities, the inhabitants of Chicago also graciously paid their respects, sending an entire train car loaded with an estimated \$3,000 worth of flowers.³³ In addition to the services in St. Louis, the thirty-five other cities which contained branches of the Anheuser-Busch Brewery also held memorials.³⁴ The citizens of St. Louis displayed their respect for the former clerk by thronging the visitation; an estimated 30,000 people passed by Busch’s coffin as it rested in state at the family mansion, and as many as 100,000 spectators lined the streets on the way to the cemetery.³⁵ Six Anheuser-Busch’s employees carried Busch’s casket from his nearby mansion through his massive brewery one final time, while 6,000 more employees somberly followed behind.³⁶ Busch’s coffin was finally then transferred to a waiting coach, after which it and the family members then made the

³¹ Hernon, *Under the Influence*, 85-86.

³² Gerald Holland, “The King of Beer,” *American Mercury* (Oct, 1929), 177.

³³ *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (Oct. 24, 1913).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Hernon, *Under the Influence*, 85-86.

³⁶ *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (Oct. 24, 1913). The outpouring of mourning from Busch’s employees seems to have been genuine. Despite the fact that the workers and their union were, at times, at odds with the beer baron, he was generally considered a good owner. The *St. Louis Labor*, the self-described socialist newspaper for the city’s unions, went so far, upon his death, as to praise Busch for his humble beginnings, as well as to declare that “in his dealings with the employees he always tried to do the right thing.” Less surprisingly, the paper went on to describe the sometimes less than amicable relationship Busch enjoyed with his workers as being the necessary outcome of the capitalist system, for which “neither side can be blamed” but which was one day fated to be replaced by socialism. Only at that point, the *Labor* continued, will “life will be worth living and [the distinction between] master and slave ... not ... known.” *St. Louis Labor* (Oct. 18, 1913).

slow ten-mile journey north to the cemetery, accompanied by twenty-five trucks filled with floral arrangements.³⁷ As another token of respect, the recently-elected Mayor Henry Kiel ordered that all business in the city be halted at two o'clock and not be resumed for five minutes in honor of the man whose brewery had contributed so much to the larger economy.³⁸

The loss of “the first citizen of St. Louis”—as he was affectionately known—was felt nowhere more strongly than in the city’s German community. For many German Americans, Busch’s life and success represented their own fortunes in St. Louis. Arriving, like so many other European immigrants, with little more than self-belief, Busch had settled in the pre-Civil War frontier city, worked hard and built his empire, passing away at its height in the modern, industrial city of the twentieth century. Busch’s real life Horatio Alger story, although exceptional, was not entirely dissimilar to that of the larger Germany community in St. Louis. Like Busch himself, by the early twentieth century the German community had risen to occupy a prominent position in the city. However, like the city’s beer barons, the success and gradual integration that the city’s German community had achieved did not mean that cultural identity was abandoned; this was, in fact, particularly true for those still associated with traditional craft industries such as brewing.

Although by the early 1900s brewing had become one of St. Louis’s most important industries—indeed, perhaps the single most important one—with its fortunes central to the city’s overall economy, it nonetheless remained from top to bottom almost exclusively German. In the first decade of the twentieth century, for example, the

³⁷ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Oct. 25, 1913).

³⁸ *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (Oct. 25, 1913).

membership of the St. Louis chapter of the Brewers and Maltsters Union, Local No. 6, remained 90 percent German.³⁹ The ethnic composition of the union was not unusual for the industry, and the chapters in other large American brewing cities had similarly high percentages of Germans. The continued preponderance of Germans within the industry was such that even at national level the Brewers and Maltsters Union conducted all official business—including the publication of the Union’s official organ, the *Brauer-Zeitung*—in German.⁴⁰ Although German heritage was virtually a necessity if one wished to gain entrance into either the union or the brewing industry, the trade was in fact even more exclusive. The reason for this, according to historian Mary Jane Quinn, was that, even after the dawn of the twentieth century, the industry adhered to the customary practice whereby the relatives of existing employees were given first priority when new positions became available.⁴¹ This practice, which dated back to Europe, maintained traditional old-world customs and the closed nature of the industry. Not surprisingly, based on these conditions, the industry and even more specifically the union remained the focal point in the lives of St. Louis’s brewery workers, providing both tangible benefits such as employment, out of work benefits, a death benefit program, and even no-interest

³⁹ Jane Quinn, “Local Union No. 6, Brewing, Malting and General Labor Departments St. Louis, Missouri” (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1947), 53. Local Union No. 6, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor, was the successor to the original chapter of the Knights of Labor’s Gambrinus Assembly. It became the undisputed representative of all the brewery workers in St. Louis and East St. Louis in 1899, following the resolution of a number of disputes regarding jurisdiction. It is not clear whether the 90 percent of members who were considered German included second or third generation Germans born in the United States. This would intuitively appear to be the most logical assumption, based on the declining number of German immigrants to the city after 1882 and the rising number of their American-born children. However, the issue remains unclear and is in fact further complicated by the fact that of the remaining ten percent comprising the membership in the union, the number is divided between Swiss and what are listed as “American” employees. These “Americans” could possibly have been workers whose parents or grandparents were not European immigrants; however, this is simply speculative. Regardless of their ethnic background, the “Americans” constituted 7 percent of the total membership.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid. The brewery owners and management usually accepted the practice as just one of the many concessions which facilitated better labor relations.

loans, as well as social interaction and a sense of collective identity.⁴² The union's social benefits were further heightened in 1911, after it purchased and renovated Sheppard School, an old three-story building in south St. Louis, located in close proximity to the area's breweries. The Labor Temple, as it was renamed, became a symbol of the success and solidarity of the union, as well as a significant factor in the preservation of the organization in later years.⁴³

In addition to their German heritage and union ties, brewery workers and their related craftsmen—including coopers, barrel- and bottle makers—shared reinforcing bonds based on the neighborhoods in which they lived. Although it does appear that some Germans and their American-born children followed in the footsteps of St. Louis's other white inhabitants and gradually moved westward during the last half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, this was not the case with brewery workers. Even a cursory review of the census enumerations from 1910 quickly reveals the close proximity between place of work and lodging for the majority of the city's brewery workers. In some parts of south St. Louis, particularly in the areas of Soulard and Benton Park, which surrounded the breweries, between 50 and 75 percent of the adult male residents were employed by the breweries.⁴⁴ The area's six breweries—including

⁴² Ibid, 63-65.

⁴³ Ibid, 63-64.

⁴⁴ These statistics were compiled from a survey of 1910 census enumerations. Originally the investigation was limited to approximately forty Anheuser-Busch employees who worked for the brewery, beginning in the late 1890s and the early 1900s. The names of these forty workers appear on a handwritten list, entitled "A.B. Employees; March, 1939 Service Records," was contained in the Henry Tobias Brewers and Maltsters Collection, located at the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Included on the list were employee names, their departments, and the duration of their employment. This sample proved rather limited so it was enlarged to include brewery workers residing on the same streets—and thus appearing on the same census enumeration pages—as these forty or so Anheuser-Busch employees. Their occupation and ethnic heritage are but two of the many categories enumerated in the hand-written census records. One drawback, however, is that although the census enumerations list type of work—brewer, for example—they do not list the actual company that employed them. Although my survey is by no means scientific, it does reveal compelling trends.

the two largest in the city, Anheuser-Busch and Lemp—offered employment for thousands of German-Americans.⁴⁵ To meet the needs of these workers, inexpensive residential housing lined large sections of South Broadway and of Seventh, Tenth, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Streets. Other streets further to the west, including Crittenden, Lemp, and a host of “state streets,” such as Wisconsin, Missouri, and Indiana, also provided similar lodging for brewery workers. Although it appears that many of the German-American brewery workers changed their residence relatively frequently—evident from comparisons of the 1900 and 1910 enumerations—they rarely moved more than a few blocks away from their prior dwelling.⁴⁶ The situation in south St. Louis was similar to that in other American cities at the time, as working-class immigrants and their offspring, bound by employment and cultural ties, remained within the boundaries of their ethnic enclave while still moving periodically within it.⁴⁷ Part of the reason for the frequent mobility of the workers may be due to the fact that many were renters.⁴⁸ It appears that even as brewery employees became some of the better paid blue-collar workers in the city, many still found it difficult to save enough money to purchase a home.

⁴⁵ The other breweries in the immediate vicinity were the American, Green Tree, Louis Obert, and Griesedieck Brothers. Nonetheless, many of St. Louis’s other fifteen or so breweries were also relatively close by, located within one to one and a half miles. See pages 184-185 for map and exact locations of breweries.

⁴⁶ The living arrangements of the recent German immigrant and Anheuser-Busch employee Christian Mall provide a good illustration of this trend. By using a combination of the 1900, 1910 and 1920 censuses, as well as a series of *Gould’s St. Louis Directories* for the intervening years, it appears that Mall lived in at least three different apartments. Despite his frequent moves, each time he moved no further than a few blocks, always within short walking distance of the brewery where he worked.

⁴⁷ Howard P. Chudacoff and Judith E. Smith, *The Evolution of American Urban Society* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 106-107, 141.

⁴⁸ Of the approximately forty Anheuser-Busch employees examined, sixteen rented while only eight owned their residences in 1910. The remainder of the forty employees had either no census enumeration record for 1910—at least not in the City of St. Louis—or, as occurred in a couple of instances, the record was illegible.

Based on the evidence provided by the turn-of-the-century census enumerations and the city directories, it appears that, rather than moving with relative freedom throughout St. Louis, brewery workers—as well as those Germans who worked in brewing-related occupations—lived as they had for over half a century, near the breweries.⁴⁹ Living in this manner, clustering around their place of work, had not in fact become obsolete because of new modes of transportation or the growth of the city, as some contemporary accounts and more recent historians have suggested.⁵⁰ Indeed, although developers continually touted “The Suburban Beauties of St. Louis,” claiming that life in “the rich, sweet, dew-steeped countryside,” only a “twenty-mile” trolley-car ride away from “the noise and bustle of the city,” would be “a godsend to the poor,”⁵¹ it strains credulity to imagine that more than a small minority of blue-collar workers could afford such amenities.⁵² Although the average German-American brewery worker had little opportunity and apparently little inclination to leave the ethnic neighborhoods surrounding St. Louis’s breweries, the same could not be said for the brewers themselves. Men such as Adolphus Busch had unlimited resources and, although still not as warmly

⁴⁹ Historians Audrey Olson and Petra DeWitt, for example, both stress the relative social and geographic mobility that St. Louis Germans experienced during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Part of the reason for this, at least according to DeWitt, is that by 1900 the majority of German-American men no longer fulfilled the traditional positions of skilled craft workers, many now having gained white-collar positions such as that of clerk or bookkeeper. While this may have been true, especially if the occupational figures compiled in the census reports are judged to be complete and accurate, it certainly was not the case in regards to brewing. Petra DeWitt, “Searching For the Roots of Harassment and the Meaning of Loyalty: A Study of the German-American Experience In Missouri During World War I,” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2005), 49, 459-462.

⁵⁰ Audrey Olson, for example, argues that this living arrangement, although common as late as the 1880s, became virtually unknown by the twentieth century as St. Louis continued to expand and as transportation, such as the electrified street trolley or rail line, improved. Olson, “St. Louis Germans,” 52.

⁵¹ Walter B. Stevens, *The Building of St. Louis: From Many Points of View by Notable Persons* (St. Louis: Lesan-Gould Company, 1908), 71.

⁵² In contrast to both Olson and the author of the article quoted above from the *National Magazine*, Adna F. Weber, a social scientist who examined urban population trends at the turn of the century, explained: “Even to the highly-paid skilled workman the five-cent fare is unduly burdensome, especially if he has a large family; to the lowly-paid laborer or sweatshop workers the prevailing rates are actually oppressive.” David Goldfield and Blaine Brownell, *Urban America: A History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990), 265.

welcomed as were members of the city's traditional elite, they had ample opportunity to join the city's other wealthy citizens in upper-class neighborhoods such as the West End. Some did just this, moving to the great mansions and secluded streets at the eastern edge of Forest Park. Brewing barons William D. Orthwein, William Nolker, and Ellis Wainwright resided in the Forest Park area in the years preceding World War I, owning palatial houses on Portland Plaza and Lindell Avenue.⁵³ Other members of the brewing community decided to remain closer to their places of employment, residing instead in the slightly older yet still opulent area known as Compton Heights. Hawthorne and Longfellow Boulevards were considered its principal streets, and despite the severe damage caused by the 1896 tornado, the area remained an island of luxury within the working-class city.⁵⁴ Anton and Henry Griesdieck, the president and vice president of the Griesdieck Brothers' Brewery, were just two of several brewers to make their home in Compton Heights, both residing about a mile and a half west of their brewery on Hawthorne Boulevard. Still others, such as brewer Otto Stifel and August Busch, the heir apparent to his father's empire until 1913, had decided to forsake that fashionable neighborhood and the status it conferred and instead had relocated their homes miles away from their breweries, Busch at his Grant's Farm Chateau in southern St. Louis County and Stifel in his equally distant home, located northwest of the city.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, despite their wealth and position within the city's economic and social elite, some of the brewing barons still remained within city, living as close to their

⁵³ Another member of the Orthwein family, William J., is listed in the 1914 edition of *Gould's St. Louis Directory* as "sojourning in Europe," a clear indicator of the financial and social status many in the brewing community commanded by the early 1900s.

⁵⁴ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 365-366.

⁵⁵ August Busch's decision to purchase and build the country estate was one of his few acts of open defiance against the wishes of his imposing father. In the end, however, Adolphus consented and gave not only his blessing but also a considerable sum of money for the mansion's construction. Hernon, *Under the Influence*, 79.

imposing brick breweries as did their German employees. Perhaps not surprisingly, the city's two oldest and most successful brewers, William Lemp and Adolphus Busch, were among the brewing barons who refused to move further than a block away from their businesses. In fact, both brewers, their families, and a host of servants resided in large homes on or not far from the grounds of their brew houses, at the aptly named Number One Busch Plaza and at Lemp Mansion, respectively.⁵⁶ Louis Obert, another of Soulard's successful brewers, also lived in a mansion less than fifty yards from his Twelfth Street brewery. His son, the brewery's vice president, lived only slightly further away, residing less than a mile northwest on Ann Avenue.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, there were some indicators that St. Louis's German community had begun the assimilation process and had lost some of its distinctive economic and cultural identity. For instance, some historians have correctly pointed out that a gradual dispersal of the city's German inhabitants from their traditional geographic locations in north and south St. Louis had been occurring since the last decades of the nineteenth century. Contemporary observers and more recent historians, including Olson, DeWitt and others, have attributed this shift to a number of causes, including the decline in German immigrants since the 1880s, increasingly effective and affordable transportation, and the growing assimilation of American-born members of the German community. Another indicator of change was the gradual decline of craft industries formerly dominated by Germans. DeWitt's study of the 1890 and 1900

⁵⁶ Towards the end of his life Busch actually lived only part of the year at his mansion in St. Louis, spending many of his summers in New York and his native Germany and the winters in California. In the 1910 census enumeration, Busch is joined at Number One by six extended family members and three servants. August Busch, Adolphus's forty-four year old son, and an even larger number of family members and servants still resided in Number Two Busch Plaza, a second mansion located within the brewery's grounds. William Lemp resided in his mansion, with his family and four servants, until his suicide in 1904. His son and successor, William W. Lemp, Jr., also lived within a block of his brewery, only a few houses away from the Lemp Mansion.

censuses of the city's occupations, for example, indicates that St. Louis's German population increasingly gained white-collar employment. Finally, the rise of the German brewers and their gradual acceptance into the ranks of St. Louis's economic and social elites, evidenced by their increasing political and financial importance, also promoted community assimilation. All of these changes did in at least some ways contribute to the inevitable dilution of the unique ethnic identity of St. Louis's German community by the first decade of the twentieth century. Having said this, however, it appears—at least in St. Louis—that historians such as Richard O'Connor were incorrect in arguing that assimilation was virtually complete by the early 1900s. Rather, “the ferment of the German-Americanism” did not in fact “end with the [nineteenth] century.”⁵⁷

Indeed, according to historian Don Heinrich Tolzmann, in this very period German Americans consciously resisted full assimilation and acculturation to "mainstream" America. Their spokesmen attempted to redefine American society by incorporating their own notions of diversity or cultural pluralism, thus rejecting the "melting pot" by insisting that each ethnic group could retain its distinctive characteristics and yet still be "good Americans." This concept was expressed by German-American leaders such as Carl Schurz, who declared, "As ... [U.S.] citizens, we must become Americanized, ... but this need not mean a complete abandonment of all that is German. It means that we should adopt the best traits of American character and join them to the best traits of German character." In this way, the Germans who came to the United States did not abandon their traditional customs but instead transplanted and adapted them, in a process that Tolzmann and other historians call "localization," thus creating a hybrid or

⁵⁷ Richard O'Connor, *The German-Americans: An Informal History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), 455.

synthetic German-American culture. Even the lifestyles of St. Louis's most prominent German Americans, such as Busch and Lemp, reflected this synthesis, and for ordinary immigrants and their children, who mixed less frequently with non-Germans at work (in the breweries, for instance) or at play, the retention of "family values" and cultural conservatism was more marked. Thus, according to Tolzmann, even in the late 1800s and early 1900s, German Americans—albeit "a very large and diverse group"—still "displayed an ethnocultural lifestyle based on their values, which were uniquely German-American and came to distinguish them as an ethnic group."⁵⁸

Later, of course, under the pressures of wartime hysteria and, especially, Prohibition, German-Americans would be forced to abandon efforts to reconcile their ethnic heritage and demands for "100% Americanism." Before World War I, however, it appears that part of the reason for the continued importance of the German presence in St. Louis stemmed from the continued and interrelated dependence of the ethnic community and the larger city. In actuality, the apparent changes affecting St. Louis's German community at the turn of the century were not as disruptive as some historians suggest. For instance, although it was true that German immigration, both to St. Louis and to America generally, had declined since the early 1880s, this did not have as significant an effect on the vitality of the city's German community as some have argued. Although the number of German immigrants in St. Louis had dropped by the turn of the century, both in actual number and in percentage of the city's total population, this did not reflect a real decline of the German presence in the city. A superficial review of St. Louis's demographic figures after 1900 might initially lead one to believe that—with the

⁵⁸ Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The German-American Experience* (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2000), 232-37.

increasing number of “native-white” inhabitants, African Americans, and even newer eastern and southern European immigrants residing in the city—the decline of St. Louis’s German community was inevitable. In reality, however, a more deliberate examination of the census figures reveals the continuing importance of the now increasingly German-American community within the city.

For instance, when using population to assess the degree of influence one group or another had within a city, one must be careful not simply to assume that the number of, say Germans, compared to the city’s total population, provides the best index. The reason for this is that it is really only the adults who shape a city’s economic, social, and cultural characteristics; thus, the hundreds of thousands of children and adolescents, the preponderance of whom are native born, have relatively little influence on the makeup of the city.⁵⁹ In St. Louis, for example, by the first decades of the twentieth century the older generation of inhabitants, the ones primarily involved in the shaping the city, included a far larger percentage of immigrants than the younger generation, a preponderance of whom were St. Louisans by birth.

Census figures can also be misinterpreted in other ways, providing a similarly distorted interpretation of the ethnic composition of a city. For example, historians have claimed, based on the published census figures after 1880, that in the late 1800s and early 1900s St. Louis's "German community" was declining in both absolute numbers and as a proportion of the city's overall population. However, although this claim appears justified if one focuses only on St. Louis's German-*born* inhabitants—that is, on those who were immigrants—it is much less accurate if one examines both the German-born

⁵⁹ Frederick Anthony Hodes, “The Urbanization of St. Louis: A Study In Urban Residential Patterns in the Nineteenth Century” (Ph. D. dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1973), 8.

and their American-born offspring. When both German men and their American-born sons are examined together, for example, the combined German-American workers represented almost 40 percent of the city's male labor force at the turn of the century.⁶⁰ Of these German-Americans, many if not most of those labeled "native-born" maintained the customs, traditions, and even the language of their parents, and many of them also—as in the case of the brewery workers—followed their parents' occupations. Furthermore, by the early 1900s, many—and probably a large majority—of the mid-nineteenth century immigrants' offspring were no longer themselves "children," but were adults of working and/or even of middle age. Hence, together the German-born and their adult American-born "children" can be considered as members of St. Louis's broad and multi-generational "German community"—as an "ethnic" group that comprised at least a quarter of the city's total population as late as World War I.⁶¹

A good case study of this in St. Louis can be found by moving beyond the simple printed census and examining the census enumerations. For instance, in the neighborhoods surrounding south St. Louis's breweries the vast majority of the people living there were, by 1910, either German, Austrian, Hungarian, or Swiss; these groups combined for perhaps as much as 90 percent of the total neighborhood population, with the preponderance being of German birth or descent. However, these working-class St. Louisans—including a majority of brewery workers—were, by this point, usually second generation. This would seem to indicate the degree to which the American-born children of European immigrants retained their ties to their ethnic heritage, choosing not to

⁶⁰ DeWitt, "Searching For the Roots of Harassment and the Meaning of Loyalty," 49. The actual combined percentage, according to DeWitt, was 38.4 percent.

⁶¹ Many of the early immigrants' American-born grandchildren, whom the census did not identify separately, could also be included within this broad German-American community.

integrate geographically and economically into the greater American society but to join their parents in the latter's traditional occupations, neighborhoods, and social circles. Thus, whereas in 1910 only about 48,000 St. Louisans were German immigrants—not in itself a small number—a far more impressive 186,000 were German either by birth or parentage.⁶² And although some of these cast aside the traditional German culture to join the larger society, a great many, perhaps a significant majority, continued to identify closely with their parents' traditional culture—a traditional culture which, especially for the brewery workers and their families, revolved around the industry, their union, their old neighborhoods, and a host of interrelated social institutions and organizations.

Moreover, even if the city's traditionally German enclaves in north and south St. Louis did experience a decline in the concentration of German residents, as some of their children left to follow other St. Louisans to more fashionable accommodations in the West End or even in the county, residence was not necessarily the only indicator of the ethnic community's strength. For instance, recent studies in urban history have demonstrated that, from their inception, few ethnic neighborhoods were as homogenous as some earlier social scientists or historians assumed.⁶³ Another characteristic of turn-of-the-century cities, the mobility of the immigrants within the boundaries of their ethnic enclave, also remains true for St. Louis, as indicated by the residential patterns of the city's German-American brewery workers (and even of many brewery owners). Thus in St. Louis, as in scores of other American cities, it was the ethnic institutions, more than an ethnic group's location, absolute size or its share of a city's population, that defined

⁶² John Clark Crighton, *Missouri and the World War, 1914-1917: A Study in Public Opinion* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1947), 11-13. The 186,000 St. Louisians of German birth or parentage remained a significant minority in the city, composing more than 27 percent of St. Louis's total 1910 population.

⁶³ Goldfield, *Urban America*, 212.

the immigrant community as well as its relative strength.⁶⁴ Urban historians Howard Chudacoff and Judith Smith are even more explicit in their assessment of the situation, arguing that “the ethnic community’s major importance was commercial and cultural. In most places an area’s institutions and enterprises, more than the people who actually lived there, identified it as an ethnic neighborhood.”⁶⁵ In this sense St. Louis, particularly its northern and southern quarters, remained firmly German well into the twentieth century, as evidenced by the continued support for and importance of the city’s many German clubs, churches, schools, neighborhoods, and, perhaps most important, its industries, the foremost of which was brewing.

The continuing strength of German culture in the city was no better epitomized than by the success of St. Louis’s German Day celebration. Perhaps the largest of these celebrations was, not surprisingly, held in conjunction with the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, subsequent years’ events would also be well attended. Between 1907 and 1913, hundreds of German-American organizations and thousands of St. Louisans gathered annually to celebrate their Teutonic heritage. In 1907, for example, an estimated 5,000 people assembled to watch turner exhibitions and German theater, and hear singing societies and a range of bilingual speeches praising German culture and denouncing threats to its continued presence, including prohibition.⁶⁷ The following year the celebration grew even larger and featured a parade consisting of fifteen hundred marchers, six floats, more than twenty bands, and almost one-hundred German-American

⁶⁴ Ibid, 213.

⁶⁵ Chudacoff, *The Evolution of American Urban Society*, 141.

⁶⁶ Tolzmann, *The German-American Experience*. Carl Schurz, St. Louis’s most famous and respected member of the German community gave the keynote address, as he had done a little over a decade earlier when he spoke at the First German Day celebration in Chicago, also staged to correspond with the World’s Fair.

⁶⁷ Margret Lo Piccolo Sullivan, *Hyphenism In St. Louis, 1900-1921: The View From the Outside* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 44.

organizations, including the German-American Alliance, seventeen *Turnvereine*, and twenty-five singing societies.⁶⁸ When all the groups were combined, the procession reached an estimated eight miles in length. The city's German Day celebration was such a success that in 1913 the National German American Alliance decided to hold its annual convention—made even more special because it commemorated the centennial of the German Wars of Liberation from Napoleon—in St. Louis to coincide with the local festival.⁶⁹ The weeklong celebration was a tremendous success, drawing thousands of revelers, including such honored guests as Mayor Kiel, the Catholic Archbishop, officials of the National Alliance, congressmen, and even the German and Austrian consuls.⁷⁰ Despite the myriad activities and exhibits, the entertainment and drinks provided by Anheuser-Busch and Lemp's Breweries were, not surprisingly, some of the most popular.

The changes that swept over St. Louis during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century can, and have, been viewed as representing a decline or dilution of the city's traditional German community. However, the changes, although not as great as they initially appear, also represented, perhaps paradoxically, a measure of the German success within the city. It was not simply a case of Germans-American assimilating into the larger fabric of American society, as O'Connor asserts. In St. Louis, at least, the German presence and importance had been so great that the city's other elements were in actuality forced to adopt many aspects of German life. The city's economy and culture, for instance, continued to be inseparably tied to traditional German ways of life. The continuing economic and cultural relevance of *gemütlichkeit* and of brewing—now one of the city's foremost industries—provided perhaps the best examples of the city's

⁶⁸ Ibid, 45.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 45-46.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 46

dominant German presence. Thus, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the fortunes of the city—as they had been during the Civil War, the prosperous 1870s, and the disappointing 1880s—remained bound to its German population.

VI. 1914: WATERSHED YEAR

1914 was in many ways a watershed year, not only for St. Louis but also for the nation. One of the less obvious reasons why the year proved to be historic was that it marked an all-time high in American beer production, the total increasing by almost a million barrels from the previous year to 66,189,473.¹ The reason for the increase was not only the country's rising population but more importantly the rise in the per capita consumption of beer. National beer consumption—based on the census figures from 1900 to 1910—had risen from slightly over sixteen gallons per person to more than twenty.² This increase corresponded with the general trend dating from at least 1870, when annual beer consumption was only about five gallons per person.³ In addition to consumption, the economic figures associated with the beverage's production had also peaked. Statistics from 1914 disclosed that the amount of capital invested in the nation's breweries totaled \$792.9 million and ranked as the sixth highest amount of all industries, while the total value of the product's worth had risen, during the past four years, from seventeenth to eleventh.⁴ The total amount of tax revenue from beer's production, collected by the state and federal governments, also increased by a similar percentage

¹ John Arnold and Frank Penman, *History of the Brewing Industry and Brewing Science in America* (Chicago: privately printed, 1933), 82.

² *Ibid.*, 74-75.

³ "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune* (July, 1932), 42. Interestingly, although the consumption of beer experienced a four-fold increase over the period, hard liquor consumption fell from two gallons per year to slightly less than one and one-half. Despite these facts, prohibitionists relentlessly argued that beer served as a gateway to hard liquor. David Leigh Colvin, *Prohibition In the United States: A History of the Prohibition Party and of the Prohibition Movement* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1926), 602.

⁴ Herman Feldman, *Prohibition: Its Economic and Industrial Aspects* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1927), 306; Arnold and Penman, *History of the Brewing Industry and Brewing Science in America*, 115; United States Brewers' Association, *The 1919 Year Book of the United States Brewers' Association* (New York: United States Brewers' Association, 1920), 5.

over the previous year's high, rising by 1914 to \$67,081,512.⁵ Based on these figures, beer had truly become the national beverage of choice.

The numbers for the brewing industry in St. Louis—now anchored by the nation's leading brewer, Anheuser-Busch—were even stronger, comparatively, than the national ones. The city's brewing industry ranked third in local manufacturing value, having risen from slightly more than \$23 million in 1909 to \$26.8 million in 1914.⁶ The \$26.8 million made up almost 7.5 percent of the city's total industrial production value.⁷ Many predicted that this steady growth, coupled with the continuing decline of the city's nationally renowned shoe-making industry, would mean that brewing would soon trail only meat-packing as the city's most important industry.⁸ In addition, the city's twenty-plus breweries continued to be an essential source of employment in St. Louis, supplying somewhere between 7,000 and 10,000 people with jobs, their combined wages trailing only that in shoe production.⁹ Notwithstanding the relatively low taxes of St. Louis and Missouri, the city's breweries paid almost \$5 million in combined taxes to the appropriate

⁵ Arnold and Penman, *History of the Brewing Industry and Brewing Science in America*, 74.

⁶ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1914*, (Jefferson City, Mo.: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1915), 33.

⁷ Ibid, 31, 33

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1914*, 31, 33. The State's Bureau of Labor statistics in 1914 reported that almost 5,000 people worked for the city's breweries. This figure appears to be impossibly low, considering the numerous accounts that placed employment in Anheuser-Busch's St. Louis factory alone at somewhere between 6,000 and 8,000 employees during the period from Adolphus Busch's death to the height of the brewery's sales the following year. Lemp's brewing operation, by the first decade of the twentieth century, also employed well over 1,000 workers in the brewery and various other departments. Thus, 7,000 appears to be the lowest possible number of employees in those two breweries. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch's* prewar estimate of 10,000 appears to better represent the actual number employed by all of the city's breweries. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Dec. 1, 1918); Stephen P. Walker, *Lemp: The Haunting History* (St. Louis: The Lemp Preservation Society, Inc., 1988), 34. See pp. 192-193 for a map and the locations of St. Louis's breweries prior to Prohibition.

agencies of the city, state, and federal governments, while related industries accounted for millions more.¹⁰

By the outbreak of World War I the largest share of the production value, tax revenue, employees, and wages from the city's breweries was generated by the Anheuser-Busch Brewery. Having only just succeeded his father as president of the company, August A. Busch soon proved to be more than capable of leading the brewery to further success, as by 1914 the amount of beer produced and sold by the operation rose to an all-time high of 1.6 million barrels.¹¹ At that time the company had between 6,000 and 8,000 employees working in the St. Louis factory and across the country at Anheuser-Busch's many branch offices.¹² The company's total payroll was estimated to be as high as \$10 million a year, and the total value of its assets throughout the nation was between \$40 and \$50 million.¹³ The value to the city of this single brewery, let alone of the entire industry, was undeniable.

Thus, 1914 truly marked the peak of the nation's brewing interests. In St. Louis the industry's success remained not only inextricably linked with the status and prosperity of the local German-American community but also with the city's greater fortunes. Nonetheless, even as the momentous year marked the height of the American brewing industry, two converging forces conspired to cause its demise. The first of these forces, one which had exercised a varying degree of influence for decades, was the prohibition movement.

¹⁰ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1914*, 29.

¹¹ Gerald Holland, "The King of Beer," *American Mercury* (Oct, 1929), 174.

¹² Exact figures are difficult to obtain regarding the number of employees and their location. These figures represent the high and low estimates contained in a number of sources.

¹³ Holland, "The King of Beer," *American Mercury*, 174; Neil Clark, "Salvaging \$150,000,000 In Pre-Volstead Plants: The Remarkable Come-Back of Anheuser-Busch," *Forbes* (Dec. 1, 1926), 9.

Prohibition and more moderate temperance movements were by no means new to St. Louis or the nation in 1914. There had been temperance organizations, in one form or another, warning of the evils of excess drink since the country's inception. However, the first truly organized and large-scale temperance groups or societies did not start until the beginning of the nineteenth century. These early groups, perhaps the best known of which was the American Temperance Society, established in 1826, were usually concerned with issues of Christian morality and health, both of the individual and the larger society.¹⁴ Organizations such as the American Temperance Society flourished during the following decades as their membership was swollen by hundreds of thousands of avowed Protestant evangelicals during the latter part of the Second Great Awakening.¹⁵ The growth of the American Temperance Society was so rapid that by 1836, only a decade after it was first formed, it boasted around 1.5 million members throughout the nation.¹⁶ Beginning during this period and continuing into the twentieth century, spokesmen and -women for more radical elements of the movement increasingly argued that temperance was not sufficient and that complete elimination or prohibition of alcohol was necessary.¹⁷ During the early 1850s temperance forces made significant gains as a multifaceted coalition of early feminists, abolitionists, and nativists in the Know-Nothing Party helped propel the reform effort to the forefront of national and state politics.¹⁸ In 1851 the efforts of temperance and prohibition forces were rewarded as

¹⁴ Herbert Asbury, *The Great Illusion: An Informal History of Prohibition* (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), 33; Andrew Sinclair, *Prohibition: The Era of Excess* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1962), 58.

¹⁵ Ibid. The group later changed its name to the American Temperance Union.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Sinclair, *Prohibition*, 47.

¹⁸ Ibid, 110.

Maine became the first state to ban the sale of liquor, and within another four years twelve more states followed suit.¹⁹

A similar pattern developed at the local level as city governments passed numerous laws and ordinances designed on their face to restrict drinking and its related vices. In reality, however, most of these new measures were used to justify nativist attacks on Irish and German immigrants, and the real impetus behind them was evident in their uneven application and prosecution. Know-Nothing political leaders and other nativist elements, including the police, used the restrictive city regulations as a tool to single out immigrant establishments. The Germans, despite their increasing number, were a frequent target of these politically motivated attacks, and in some cities— even heavily Teutonic ones like Cincinnati, Milwaukee, and Chicago—tensions ran so high that large-scale rioting occurred.²⁰ Chicago's 1855 Lager Beer Riot was perhaps the best example of such clashes, yet in other places frustrations over prohibition combined with deeper, more systemic cultural problems to cause greater violence.²¹ New drinking restrictions, for example, played a small role in the 1855 Bloody Monday riots in Louisville, the results of which left a deep division between the native and immigrant sections of the city as well as hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage and dozens of deaths.²²

Despite the gains made at the state and local level during the 1850s, the prohibition movement was dealt a serious setback with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. The war effectively brought to a halt or reversed the gains of temperance and

¹⁹ Ibid, 58. All of these additional states would repeal or have the measures struck down by their supreme courts before the twentieth century began.

²⁰ Maureen Ogle, *Ambitious Brew: The Story of American Beer* (Orlando, Fla.: Harcourt, Inc., 2006), 26-27.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

prohibition forces as the focus shifted away from the moral vice of drinking to the practice of slavery and the clash of North and South. The movement was further weakened during the conflict as European immigrants continued to flood into the nation, bringing with them their fondness for drink, and as the United States government became increasingly reliant on newly imposed alcohol taxes as a source of revenue.²³ Both of these developments continued for decades after the war.

The last two decades of the century, however, once again witnessed the rise of the prohibition movement, and, interestingly, this corresponded with a similar growth of the brewing industry. One organization which formed during this period proved to be particularly influential over the next three decades. Beginning in 1893, the Anti-Saloon League used a combination of education, political lobbying, letter-writing campaigns, and propaganda pamphlets to advance its cause, which initially was limited to the elimination of the saloon.²⁴

By the end of the nineteenth century the saloon had become the primary target, not only of the Anti-Saloon League but also of many other temperance and prohibition societies. Saloons had by this point become associated with excess drink and with the poor, working-class immigrants who usually frequented them. The Anti-Saloon League as well as other prohibitionists seized on these popular conceptions and, through the use of relentless propaganda, portrayed the saloon as the root cause of all social evil and moral corruption. Although clearly the Anti-Saloon League and other prohibitionists were particularly damning in their critiques of saloons, by 1900-1910 even the brewing industry was beginning to heed the criticisms; this is evident by the fact that the 1909

²³ Asbury, *The Great Illusion*, 67.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 125-127.

edition of the United States Brewers' Association yearbook devoted an entire section to the saloon problem and the efforts at internal reform.²⁵ While saloon owners and their allies verbally sparred with prohibition forces regarding the veracity of the saloons' negative image, one thing that could not be debated was their omnipresence in American cities. One study, also from 1909, found that there was approximately one saloon for every three hundred people in the nation and that the total number of saloons surpassed the number of schools, hospitals, or churches in the country.²⁶ In St. Louis, for example, there existed 2,100 licensed saloons in 1917 at the beginning of wartime prohibition.²⁷ The 1917 total represented only a slight drop from 1900 when 2,150 existed in the city.²⁸ Many of the saloons in St. Louis, like those in other large cities across the nation, continued to be owned or operated, at least in part, by breweries. The breweries, which had a longstanding tradition of saloon ownership, used them as outlets and as a type of promotional tool for their products.²⁹ Some surveys of American cities, albeit by prohibitionists, found that the percentage of such establishments owned by breweries in large cities was strikingly high: 70 percent in the Pendergast machine-dominated Kansas City; 75 percent in Toledo; and as high as 90 percent in Indianapolis and Minneapolis.³⁰ The percentage in St. Louis, while lower than its northern counterparts, was still

²⁵ Stanley Baron, *Brewed In America: A History of Beer and Ale in the United States* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962), 290.

²⁶ Sean Dennis Cashman, *Prohibition: The Lie of the Land* (New York: The Free Press, 1981), 4.

²⁷ Lawrence O. Christensen and Gary R. Kremer, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV, 1875-1919* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 200. The ratio of saloons to the city's population had by this time declined to about one for every three hundred and fifty. The ratio of saloons to population in St. Louis was as high as one to two hundred and seventy in 1900, a significantly higher ratio than the national average nine years later. The decline in St. Louis probably reflects a national trend due in part to the increasing political influence of organizations such as the Anti-Saloon League, wartime prohibition, as well as the increased consumption of beer at home—caused by the increased popularity of bottled beer.

²⁸ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Twenty-Third Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics and Inspection State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1901* (Jefferson City, Mo.: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1901), 359.

²⁹ Colvin, *Prohibition in the United States*, 548.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

estimated to be 65 percent.³¹ Anheuser-Busch was one of the many breweries to own saloons, operating them both in St. Louis and across the river in Illinois. However, for the great brewery, as for many others throughout the nation, the saloons had become less a benefit and more an embarrassment. Anheuser-Busch's establishments in East St. Louis, for example, were frequently criticized for openly flaunting Sunday blue laws.³²

Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, the Anti-Saloon League and other prohibition forces continued to gain support by attacking the moral corruption attributed to saloons and their clientele. The political pressure and public influence exerted by the League during the period were unmistakably effective, as both its critics and proponents largely credited the League for helping push eleven more states into the dry column between 1907 and the beginning of the war.³³ Prior to the League's formation and rise to national prominence, only Kansas and North Dakota had joined Maine and remained committed to statewide prohibition.³⁴ The League had far greater success at the local level, as the establishment of local option allowed individual counties or wards and precincts to take the prohibition issue to a popular vote. The local option enabled an increasing number of rural areas to go dry during the first decade of the twentieth century. Temperance forces were not limited to strictly rural areas, however, and in the early 1900s even large cities increasingly felt the conservative influence of the

³¹ Ibid.

³² Herson, *Under the Influence*, 107. The relationship of the saloons and the greater problems of urban strife during the period were not lost on prohibitionists, and United States Senator Lawrence Y. Sherman would later claim that the famous 1917 East St. Louis race riot had been due to the negative influence of the saloons and the product from which they profited. Colvin, *Prohibition in the United States*, 559.

³³ Cashman, *Prohibition*, 7.

³⁴ Ibid.

dry forces. Chicago's outlying areas, for example, by 1908 were almost entirely dry, leaving only half the city open to alcohol establishments.³⁵

In spite of the increasing political, monetary, and public support the League garnered, there were also those who staunchly opposed its efforts. Two of the largest and most important elements in the country in this regard were organized labor and the large immigrant population. These two groups were particularly prevalent in St. Louis, as a significant proportion of the population was still German or German-American. The local unions were also strong, representing most of the city's blue-collar trades, including brewing, and as early as 1901 members of the Central Trades and Labor Union declared their opposition to prohibition.³⁶ Fourteen years later, representatives of labor unions from a wide range of industries—including brewers, bartenders, tobacco workers, glass bottle-makers, steamfitters, cooks, and musicians—gathered at the Missouri State Federation of Labor Convention in Moberly, Missouri, and passed a resolution denouncing prohibition for its potentially negative impact on their respective trades.³⁷ The American Federation of Labor, in which the more radical and avowedly socialist Brewers and Maltsters International Union occupied a unique position, historically had assumed a more ambiguous stance towards the temperance movement. Prior to 1909 the AFL—with exceptions such as the brewery and wood workers—was actually in favor of the movement; this changed subsequently, however, and within a few years the majority of AFL unions viewed prohibition as little more than a plan to deprive many of their

³⁵ Howard P. Chudacoff and Judith E. Smith, *The Evolution of American Urban Society* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 182-183.

³⁶ *St. Louis Labor* (May 1, 1901).

³⁷ Jane Quinn, "Local Union No. 6, Brewing, Malting and General Labor Departments St. Louis, Missouri" (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1947), 105.

fellow unionists of jobs and a hypocritical attempt by management to control the personal habits of workers.³⁸

The Brewers and Maltsters International Union, of which Local No. 6 was the St. Louis chapter, had of course always been opposed to prohibition. However, the socialist union remained adamant that, notwithstanding their shared “struggles against prohibition and the Sunday laws, the interests of the brewery capitalists and those of the brewery workers,” although seemingly identical, were in reality distinct.³⁹ Writing in 1910, brewing historian Hermann Schluter—himself a socialist—went a step further and argued that in actuality, rather than being in opposition to each other, brewery workers and reform-minded prohibitionists actually had more in common than did the workers and their “capitalist” employers. For example, although Schluter admitted that many workers abused drink, he argued that this was understandable in the context of their employment and exploitation: “The crowding together of people in the factories ... the terrible haste, the strenuous life and nervous exhaustion to which the industrial worker is exposed ... demands and promotes the use of stimulants.” “Thus,” Schluter argued, it was only natural that “many workmen fall victims to the vice of drunkenness.”⁴⁰ For Schluter and others like him, the prohibitionist was too narrowly focused and, if sensible, would “develop from reformer to revolutionist, from Prohibitionist to Socialist,” and thus instead of “fighting drunkenness alone ... will ... come to the conclusion that the

³⁸G. K. Renner, “Prohibition Comes to Missouri, 1910-1919,” *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. 62, 1968), 369.

³⁹ Hermann Schluter, *The Brewing Industry and the Brewery Workers' Movement in America* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1910, 1970), 252-253. From a report which the then editor of the union's official publication, the *Brauer-Zeitung*, presented at the 1903 national convention held in Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 305.

destruction of the cause [the capitalist system] is far more important, far more sensible, than mere fighting against the effects.”⁴¹

In addition to the efforts of organized labor, St. Louis’s larger German community was also a strong source of opposition. Although hostility to prohibition was evident throughout the ethnic community, it was perhaps best represented by the German-American Alliance. Originally founded at the turn of the century in Pennsylvania, the German-American Alliance rapidly became the primary advocate for St. Louis’s German community in the fight that many perceived as a life or death struggle against the forces of prohibition.⁴² The Alliance’s response was not without cause, since many believed that, if successful, prohibition forces—fueled in part by xenophobia and fears of continuing immigration—would eliminate not only beer but ultimately many of the German community’s most important cultural and social institutions.⁴³ The Alliance and its supporters countered the prohibitionists’ argument that the saloon was an inherently corrupting influence, in part by pointing to the “wholesome” German experience with beer gardens, and in part by arguing that the larger issue at hand was one of personal liberty.⁴⁴

In Missouri the Alliance’s efforts would prove largely successful as cities such as St. Louis never did succumb to the pressure, and even rural counties such as Osage, Warren, and Gasconade remained wet due to their sizable German populations. Perhaps the group’s biggest victories came between 1910 and 1914 when its efforts, along with those of Missouri’s Brewers’ Association, helped persuade a significant proportion of St.

⁴¹ Ibid, 307.

⁴² Sinclair, *Prohibition*, 138; David Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri, 1900-1918: Prohibition, Neutrality, and Assimilation* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1985), 1.

⁴³ Arnold and Penman, *History of the Brewing Industry and Brewing Science in America*, 78; Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Louisians to help defeat two statewide prohibition measures.⁴⁵ Based on the overwhelming number of St. Louisans who voted against the measures—as well as the open opposition of the city’s English-language papers—it appears that, in addition to the city’s immigrant community, a majority of St. Louis native population was also disinclined to support prohibition.⁴⁶ Although some of these St. Louisans may have viewed statewide prohibition as an unjust restriction of their civil liberties, many others, including the influential Citizens Defense Committee, opposed the proposals based on their potentially damaging economic ramifications.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, although the majority of the citizens of St. Louis, German-American or otherwise, were deeply concerned about the economic affects of prohibition, much of the rest of the state’s population was not. And while St. Louis and the state’s other German areas remained wet, the Anti-Saloon League and the larger prohibition movement would put local option to good effect, turning 81 of the state’s 114 counties dry by 1914.⁴⁸

In addition to organized labor and German-Americans, the brewing industry for obvious reasons also opposed the advancing forces of prohibition prior to and during

⁴⁵ Christensen, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV*, 200; Richard S. Kirkendall, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV, 1919-1953* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 25.

⁴⁶ *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (Nov. 9, 1910), (Nov. 10, 1910). The results in St. Louis were decisive as more than 145,000 people voted, with more than 135,000 casting their ballot against the prohibition amendment. While the sheer strength of the victory made it clear that a vast majority—both immigrant and native—opposed the measure, the German-American sections of the city were even more hostile to the proposal. In south St. Louis, for example, in two precincts the prohibition measure received no votes, while in three more it received only one. In the tenth ward, home to Anheuser-Busch and a number of the city’s other breweries, the final tally revealed only 68 votes for prohibition compared to 5,165 against. Eight years later, on the final referendum on state prohibition, the dries made considerable gains throughout the state. Nevertheless, the measure was defeated once again, falling 291,271 to 215,977. In St. Louis the opposition remained almost as strident as it was in the past, defeating prohibition by 102,168 to 14,504. Once again the German wards were considerably more hostile to the proposal. Audrey Olson, “St. Louis Germans, 1850-1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and its Relation to the Assimilation Process” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1970), 229-231.

⁴⁷ Petra DeWitt, “Searching For the Roots of Harassment and the Meaning of Loyalty: A Study of the German-American Experience In Missouri During World War I,” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 2005), 69.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

World War I. Ironically, brewers and their national association found themselves at a distinct disadvantage despite the popularity of their product and the industry's enormous wealth. Anti-Saloon League tactics were effectively based upon pressure politics; however, brewers often opened themselves to additional scrutiny and attack when they countered, and in at least some instances they were charged with collusion to promote their own interests.⁴⁹ The brewers' undue influence in politics, a not unjustifiable charge and one frequently hurled at the industry by prohibition forces, in reality seemed to provide little assistance.⁵⁰ One attempt of this kind which did occur had the opposite effect, as seven large Texas breweries and two from Missouri, including Anheuser-Busch, were indicted and forced to plead no contest to the charge of breaching state election laws by financially supporting anti-prohibition candidates in Texas elections.⁵¹ The scandal cost Anheuser-Busch and the other breweries \$289,000 in fines and court fees, but it cost them far more in terms of public opinion. Notwithstanding this example, years later many historians and social commentators looked back on the failure of the brewing industry and argued that, despite claims of meddling in politics, the brewers actually did very little, failing to accurately gauge the political and popular strength of the dry forces.⁵²

⁴⁹ William Downard, *The Cincinnati Brewing Industry: A Social and Economic History* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1973), 130.

⁵⁰ Even in St. Louis the brewers were not immune from criticism of their undue influence. A 1905 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* piece written by the Reverend James Coffey contended that the brewers "control[ed] St. Louis," their power within the city such that they "own everything but churches." Even these were not safe, according to Coffey, for "in the near future they will own the churches" as well. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (July 9, 1905).

⁵¹ James H. Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 110.

⁵² Sinclair, *Prohibition*, 129; Downard, *The Cincinnati Brewing Industry*, 130. In reality the most accurate evaluation of the situation appears to be, not that the brewers had little or no influence—legal or otherwise—in politics, but that their influence was not strong enough to turn the rising tide of World War I and the anti-German prohibition movement.

Thus, ironically, the height of the nation's and of St. Louis's brewing industry would coincide with the Progressive reform movement and its relentless demand for alcohol prohibition. Nonetheless, without the outbreak of the First World War in July 1914 the outcome of the contest between beer and prohibition might have been very different. Instead, the conflict set in motion a series of events which provided a perfect opportunity for prohibition forces to seize the upper hand. Over the course of the next four and a half years, the embattled brewers, their workers, and the rest of the German-American community were forced on the defensive—compelled to fight not only the anti-German sentiment of the era but also to preserve the industry which provided profits, employment, and a sense of cultural identity.

VII. WORLD WAR I AND WARTIME PROHIBITION

By 1914, when World War I began in Europe, St. Louis had been in existence for more than a hundred years, and it had been over a half-century since the beginning of the massive German influx that had helped transform the frontier village into a leading American city. And although German immigration had declined since the 1880s, St. Louis yet remained what one popular periodical called the “seat of Teutonic culture” in the United States.

Anecdotal accounts well illustrated the continued strength of German culture. In her memoirs, Helen Traubel, a St. Louis native who became a prominent singer, wrote that during her early childhood just prior to the war, south St. Louis “was the part of the town that was made up mostly of Germans [and] in those days—everyone spoke German when they met. There were singing societies, *Turnvereine*, the Liederkranz clubs, and any number of festivals and places where the beer (my father told me) was wonderful.”¹ A similar picture of German cultural life in St. Louis is contained in a letter from Louis Kittlaus, the former director for physical education for the city and a leading member of the Turners. Kittlaus recounted that in the decade or so before the war:

The world was at peace and life was mellow [sic] the Turnvereins flourished in St. Louis. The gymnastic societies sponsored lectures, debates, and concerts. Their program included singing and dramatic sections, a Saturday morning German School, and an extensive library. The Turnverein was also a social center for its members. Dances and masked balls and entertainments were held at the hall. Picnics were frequent in the summer time.²

¹ Helen Traubel, *St. Louis Women* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 14.

² Carolyn Hewes Toft, ed., *Soulard: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood* (St. Louis: Washington University Press, 1975), 11. It was during this time that the Turners persuaded the St. Louis Public Schools, then headed by Richard Barthold, a prominent member Turner and later a long-serving member of the U.S. House of Representatives, to incorporate physical education into the regular curriculum. In this way, the Turner’s Golden Jubilee booklet proclaimed, “the German spirit of physical culture, ... the most essential step to bodily health and strength,” would survive indefinitely. Although the

Such accounts of German culture's continued vitality were commonplace. St. Louis remained after all one of only six American cities to boast over 100,000 citizens of German birth or parentage.³ The German-Americans represented approximately one-fourth of St. Louis's population, and in parts of south St. Louis the percentage was much higher. In addition, there remained a strong German presence throughout the city's manufacturing industries, as at least one predominantly German company usually operated in each business sector.⁴ The city's brewing industry, in particular, continued to be dominated by Germans and their descendants.⁵ The size and vitality of the German community in St. Louis was also evidenced by the continued presence of two German language papers.⁶ German cultural and social events likewise remained very popular, unifying members of the community through ethnic celebrations, clubs, and societies.

One of these ethnic organizations, the German-American Alliance of St. Louis, had formed as a branch of the national association in 1904 and was devoted to defeating the threat of prohibition.⁷ However, with the eruption of the larger conflict in Europe, the Alliance took on the additional responsibility of lobbying for strict neutrality, the position avowed by President Woodrow Wilson and his administration.⁸ While the Alliance lobbied for the United States government to remain neutral, many German-Americans were less diplomatic in regards to the war, openly supporting their ancestral homeland.

letter is credited to "Lois Kittlaus" in the book's endnotes, it appears, based on an examination of St. Louis's census enumerations, that Kittlaus's first name actually was "Louis."

³ David Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri, 1900-1918: Prohibition, Neutrality, and Assimilation* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1985), 9.

⁴ Ibid, 14.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid, 12.

⁷ Ibid, 1.

⁸ Christiansen, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV*, 200-201.

Although most people at first seemed unconcerned by this, within a short time the question of conflicted loyalties arose, as over the next three years the larger American public became increasingly agitated by the regular press's accounts of German submarine attacks on civilian ships such as the *Lusitania*, real or imagined German conspiracies such as the Zimmerman telegram, and by British stories of German barbarity.⁹ Although some German-Americans foresaw the eventual American intervention on behalf of the Allies, others, including the Alliance's leaders, remained outspoken in their support of Germany and American neutrality; in time these positions would cost them their credibility with the mainstream press.

The Alliance, like most members of the German-Americans community, linked support for neutrality with opposition to prohibition, and so, as the one cause faltered during 1916 and the early spring of 1917, so did the other, and both positions became widely attacked as unpatriotic. With American entry into the war in April 1917, the Alliance and its ability to fight prohibition were essentially crippled. By 1918 the destruction of the organization was complete after an investigation by United States Senate committee which found that the Alliance's leadership had engaged in questionable

⁹ Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri*, 84, 132. St. Louis's German-American community was very sensitive to what its members perceived as unfair criticism of Germany and her role in the war. Demands for fairness were not uncommon, and, after a series of negative editorials appeared in many of the city's major newspapers, the German-American Alliance and a host of local German societies—including the Catholic Union, the Turners, and the *Sangerbund*—met at Central Turner Hall to protest the one-sided coverage. The meeting, which occurred only weeks into the war, filled the main hall of the building to capacity and, although the actual number of participants was not recorded, estimates placed the attendance in the thousands. The German *Westliche Post* applauded the display of unity among the city's German population and made a special point to illustrate the disparate classes, religions, and ages of those who attended. The *Post* also noted the number of second- and third-generation German-Americans who, because of their cultural ties, joined older immigrants in protesting the newspapers' lack of objectivity. Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 179.

political activities—some of them involving leading brewers—and had demonstrated disloyalty to the nation.¹⁰

The increasing unpopularity of the Alliance among the native population mirrored the larger trend of opinion regarding the German community over the course of the war. Accusations by the regular press and prohibition forces exacerbated the situation, and by the time America joined the Allied Powers anything associated with the European enemy was considered suspicious if not overtly hostile. Although the whole of the German-American community in St. Louis and around the nation was viewed with considerable mistrust—sufficiently so that the Federal government kept the communities under surveillance—the brewing industry, not surprisingly, appeared to suffer from the most intense attacks.¹¹

Breweries and their owners did attempt to counter the charges of anti-Americanism and disloyalty, but their efforts seemed to have few results. August A. Busch, for example, took out full-page advertisements in the local papers to dispel hostile rumors, display his family's patriotism, and demonstrate how much his brewery was worth—in taxes, employment, and investment—to the city and the nation.¹² Busch also personally purchased over \$1 million worth of the government's liberty bonds during the war, a total which exceeded that of anyone else in the entire Eighth Federal Reserve District.¹³ In addition, he also donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to the war effort and to American charities, including \$100,000 to the Red Cross and an equal sum to the

¹⁰ Andrew Sinclair, *Prohibition: The Era of Excess* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1962), 139.

¹¹ F. P. Hankerson, "The History of Brewing in St. Louis," *Modern Brewery* (Sept. 1934), 177.

¹² *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Sept. 22, 1918), (Oct. 14, 1918).

¹³ James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri* (Boulder, Col.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1981), 461-462.

YMCA.¹⁴ Even these actions were not universally approved, as the head of Presbyterian Church criticized the latter organization for accepting the contribution of money “gotten by breaking of mothers’ hearts and the blighting of thousands of homes.”¹⁵ Clearly, a large proportion of the moralistic prohibitionists viewed any contribution by brewers like Busch, even ones to the war effort or to Christian organizations, as tainted by the evil means that had produced it. In addition to purchasing liberty bonds and donating to charities, brewers also attempted to demonstrate their patriotism by offering aid to the U.S. government. Once the United States entered the war in 1917, Anheuser-Busch turned its highly profitable St. Louis engine plant over to the government for the construction of submarine engines.¹⁶ The brewery also offered to put its manufacturing capabilities to use making munitions; this however seems to have been declined.¹⁷ Instead, Anheuser-Busch turned its manufacturing railroad over to the city’s U.S. Arsenal and also provided storage space to the Quartermaster Department in the company’s bottling plant.¹⁸

Despite their public declarations of support for the war effort after 1917, as well their financial and industrial aid, the brewery owners could do little to counter the anti-German sentiments of the public or the continued attacks by prohibitionists which damaged their reputations and sales. The wartime atmosphere allowed prohibitionists almost unlimited freedom to attack anyone even remotely connected to the distinctly German business. Even in places like Wisconsin, formerly a bastion of German culture, the climate became so hostile that prohibitionist papers acted with impunity, openly

¹⁴ Hernon, *Under the Influence*, 92-93.

¹⁵ Ibid, 93.

¹⁶ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 462.

¹⁷ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, (Sep. 22, 1918).

¹⁸ “King of Bottled Beer,” *Fortune*, 98.

condemning then Governor Emanuel Philipp for his allegedly illicit and unpatriotic relationship with “Milwaukee’s brewing industry and the beer-loving German-American voters of the state.”¹⁹ At the federal level, the widely disseminated story that the American brewing industry was controlled by German capital and composed of those disloyal to the nation gained so much credence that United States Senate, as it had done with the German-American Alliance, launched a formal investigation in the fall of 1918. Unlike the Senate's findings with regard to the Alliance, however, its investigation of the brewing industry concluded that the brewers had committed no act of impropriety.²⁰ Notwithstanding the committee’s findings, the damage had already been done to the industry’s reputation. Thus, prohibitionists such as A. Mitchell Palmer, Wilson’s Alien Property Custodian and later Attorney General and architect of the postwar "Red Scare," felt justified using his considerable authority during the war to confiscate large amounts of German-American property, including that of many of the nation’s brewers, a group which he labeled a “vicious interest.”²¹ The Senate committee’s exoneration of the brewing industry also came too late to have any impact on the decision to implement wartime prohibition.

The anti-German sentiment generated by the war proved predictably beneficial for the Anti-Saloon League and similar organizations. With both the United States government and the American public distancing themselves from anything associated with Germany, prohibition forces were free to attack notoriously "un-American" German

¹⁹ Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (De Kalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 218.

²⁰ United States Brewers’ Association, *The 1919 Year Book of the United States Brewers’ Association*, 113.

²¹ Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 256.

brewers with impunity.²² The combined forces of the wartime sentiments and prohibitionist propaganda resulted in a marked drop in beer consumption during the war. One year after the war began, the total amount of production in the nation had fallen significantly from its record high the year before to just under 60 million barrels.²³ It would remain near this mark for the next two years, until wartime prohibition caused the number to drop again by another 10 million barrels.²⁴ In September 1918, prompted by crop failures and subsequent shortages of grain, as well as by the need to increase essential industrial output, Congress passed a wartime prohibition amendment as a rider to the Food Stimulation Act.²⁵ The measure prohibited the use of grain and other products to manufacture alcohol for the duration of the war and during the process of “demobilization.”²⁶ Ironically, the legislation was not enacted until November 21, 1918, ten days after the armistice.²⁷

In addition to the drop in demand and production, the anti-German climate combined with the eventual wartime prohibition to impose additional negative effects on St. Louis. Although beer production decreased significantly during the war, in 1915 the Federal government saw fit to substantially raise the tax on the beer from \$1 per barrel to \$1.50. In 1918 the tax was again raised to \$3 per barrel, and during the last few months

²² David Leigh Colvin, *Prohibition In the United States: A History of the Prohibition Party and of the Prohibition Movement* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1926), 547.

²³ United States Brewers' Association, *The 1919 Year Book of the United States Brewers' Association*, 182.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Stanley Baron, *Brewed In America: A History of Beer and Ale in the United States* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962), 306. The 1917 Lever Act, which restricted breweries to 75 percent of their former consumption of grain and other food stuffs, had already dealt a major blow to the industry. Jane Quinn, “Local Union No. 6, Brewing, Malting and General Labor Departments St. Louis, Missouri” (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1947), 108.

²⁶ Baron, *Brewed In America*, 307. There were exceptions made if the alcohol produced had a legitimate use in wartime industries. The use of alcohol in the production of explosives, for example, was a common use and one which prohibitionists initially used as a justification for the ban of alcoholic beverages, citing potential shortages. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 217.

²⁷ Ibid, 306.

of the war the tax was once again doubled to \$6 a barrel.²⁸ The combined drop in production and increase in tax caused profits for the breweries to plummet. Anheuser-Busch's profit, for example, decreased from its prewar high of \$3.8 million to \$1.8 million in 1917, and by the time the war was over the brewery was losing money.²⁹ Other, smaller breweries in the city simply found it impossible to remain in existence as government restrictions and higher taxes siphoned off any profits. The total value of the beer manufactured by St. Louis breweries also fell during the war, dropping from its 1914 level of \$26.8 million to \$25.1 million in 1915, and, although it would improve the following year, it would fall even more significantly after the United States entered the conflict.³⁰ The state of the brewing industry during the war was accurately summarized in the 1916-1917 edition of the state's Red Book, produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which stated:

Owing to the tremendous gain in the prohibition movement, drastic legislative restrictions and the phenomenal advance in the prices of nearly all kinds of raw materials [due to war shortages], the brewing business in St. Louis suffered a falling off of fully ten per cent, although the decrease in the profits to the brewers was much larger than that.³¹

²⁸ John Arnold and Frank Penman, *History of the Brewing Industry and Brewing Science in America* (Chicago, Ill.: privately printed, 1933), 75.

²⁹ "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune*, 98.

³⁰ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1914* (Jefferson City, Mo.: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1915), 29; Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Thirty-Eighth And Thirty-Ninth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Years commencing November 5, 1915 and Ending November 5, 1917* (Jefferson City, Mo.: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1918), 388, 424, 434, 442. Figures for the value of beer manufactured in St. Louis in 1915 were obtained by subtracting the value of St. Joseph's and Kansas City's beer manufacturing from the total in the state. No data are available for the value of beer produced in St. Louis, but those three cities were the only manufacturing centers for brewing in the state.

³¹ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Thirty-Eighth And Thirty-Ninth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Years commencing November 5, 1915 and Ending November 5, 1915*, 424.

The Bureau's report concluded, "On account of the prohibition movement the outlook for the coming year is far from encouraging."³² The forecast proved accurate, and in the following twelve months—the first full year of wartime prohibition—a similar publication declared that "lager beer brewing suffered probably more than any other industry in 1918, as the result of the war, and the prohibition movement."³³

Nonetheless, despite the dramatic decline in profits suffered by St. Louis's brewing industry, the city as a whole did not endure significant financial hardship during the war. Having experienced economic depression in summer and fall 1914, at the outbreak of the war, the situation changed as an increasing number of orders from Europe reached the city. The December 1914 financial bulletin of the Mechanics-American National Bank of St. Louis captured the mood at the time, reporting "business is showing a better tone, and because of the large offers from merchandise released by the European nations engaged in war, there has been a definite revival in some industries."³⁴ The continuous state of war in Europe caused a demand for Missouri goods, and St. Louis found a ready market for everything from mules to processed meat, flour, and grain.³⁵ The war greatly benefited a number of St. Louis industries, which found their position greatly boosted by the loss of European competition. Such was the case with drugs and chemicals, as St. Louis's major chemical companies, Mallinckrodt and Monsanto, earned huge profits during the war years.³⁶ By the end of 1915 the economic boom caused by the raging war in Europe was so great that the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* was able to

³² Ibid.

³³ Eugene Smith, *Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Saint Louis For the Year 1918* (St. Louis: 1919), 40.

³⁴ Creighton, *Missouri and the World War*, 41.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid, 43.

declare, “The revival is here: prosperity has come.”³⁷ American entry into the war in 1917 only served to increase the economic prosperity of cities like St. Louis, so much so that the authors of the Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of St. Louis considered the year—in terms of economic success—to be “phenomenal.”³⁸ A year later the same publication waxed even more enthusiastic, declaring that the year 1918 “will go down in history as the most memorable since the dawn of civilization, not only for its being the closing year of the war, but also from the wonderful impetus given to trade, commerce and manufacture by the great international struggle, and its accompanying rush of orders.”³⁹ By the war's end, Missouri's state treasury enjoyed the largest balance in its history, thanks to state taxes on its citizens' burgeoning profits and incomes, and despite the lost income from liquor taxes and licenses.

Although St. Louis's economy generally fared well during the war, there were some noticeable areas of decline, the greatest of which came in brewing. The forced reduction in the brewers' production and profits naturally also affected the thousands of brewery employees in St. Louis. Some St. Louis brewery workers were laid off due to the orders of the government's Fuel Administration, which forced three or four small breweries to close.⁴⁰ Even large breweries like Anheuser-Busch were not immune from the changing economic conditions, and by 1915 Busch's brewery was forced to consider laying off some of the remaining 3,000 employees at the St. Louis plant because of the falling sales.⁴¹ Increasing unemployment among brewery workers, as well as among

³⁷ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Nov. 2, 1915).

³⁸ Eugene Smith, *Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of Saint Louis For the Year 1917* (St. Louis, 1918), 41.

³⁹ Smith, *Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce of St. Louis, 1918*, 35.

⁴⁰ *St. Louis Labor* (July 13, 1918).

⁴¹ Ronald Plavchan, “A History of Anheuser Busch, 1852-1933” (Ph. D. dissertation, St. Louis University, 1969), 136, 151. After much deliberation the company's executive committee refrained from cutting

thousands of workers in industries linked to brewing, helps to explain the relatively high level of unemployment within the city prior to the full-scale mobilization consequent on American entrance into the war.⁴² Because of its effects on unemployment, St. Louis's organized labor stridently opposed any type of wartime prohibition. In 1916 the Missouri State Federation of Labor passed a resolution against it on the grounds that it would hurt organized labor and infringe on individual rights.⁴³ The brewery workers' union was in the forefront of opposition, and all its members—as well as an estimated 20,000 dependent agricultural workers—were encouraged to help defeat the threat to the industry. Labor's opposition to prohibition remained strong after American entrance into the war and the subsequent implementation of wartime prohibition in 1917. In fact, as late as March 30, 1918, the Central Trades and Labor Union of St. Louis successfully organized a mass meeting to arouse and give voice to public sentiment against prohibition.⁴⁴ Held at the Coliseum, the event drew between 8,000 and 10,000 people to hear a series of speakers attack the federal law as “unchristian, undemocratic, hypocritical, and bad business.”⁴⁵

In spite of the troubling conditions caused by wartime prohibition, the city's organized labor put on a bold face for the duration of the conflict, asserting that “conditions will have to change sometime, and as to the prohibition wave, which is

positions or slashing wages, another proposed option. Although a patriarchal sense of responsibility—as August Busch claimed—may have had something to do with the decision, other factors seem to have been the real motivations. One of these was the committee's belief—similar to that of the brewery workers' union—that the wartime restrictions were only temporary conditions. Anheuser-Busch, both its executives and workers, expected that once the war was over they would return to their former position of dominance in the growing industry.

⁴² Creighton, *Missouri and the World War*, 42. At the conclusion of 1915 St. Louis's unemployment rate, despite the increasing demand from Europe, was about 13.5 percent.

⁴³ Quinn, “Local Union No. 6”, 107

⁴⁴ Ibid, 113.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

blowing under the rather favorable weather during the wartime, the day will come when blind fanaticism will be supplanted by reason and common sense.”⁴⁶ Unfortunately for St. Louis’s brewery workers, this optimism proved to be unfounded. Nevertheless, as the war drew closer to an end, the city’s labor unions, including the brewery workers, took consolation from the knowledge that August Busch and other local brewery owners had agreed to take back any laid-off workers as soon as the war and the wartime prohibition measures ended.⁴⁷ Even the pages of the city’s socialist paper were optimistic and laced with a surprisingly pronounced degree of patriotism, proclaiming that once the war ended and the “boys of our country come home from the battlefields of Europe a new day will come, new ideals for liberty of our people will exert themselves and the fighter for liberty and democracy will not permit a condition of prohibition of personal liberty at home to prevail.”⁴⁸

In a real sense the end of WWI occurred on November 11, 1918, the date that would forever be remembered as Armistice Day. The news of the end of the hostilities and victory for the United States and its Allies came as a mixed blessing for the large German community in the United States; on one hand it represented a victory for their adopted country, but on the other a defeat for their native “homeland.” According to historian Margaret Sullivan, the German community in St. Louis, like that in the rest of the nation, also suffered from war-generated “anti-German prejudice [which] ... struck at everything German. German names, organizations, and especially the German language came under a cloud of suspicion and hostility. The war intensified the gradual erosion of

⁴⁶ *St. Louis Labor* (July 13, 1918).

⁴⁷ *St. Louis Labor* (Oct. 12, 1918).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

the hyphenism and hastened its demise.”⁴⁹ Nevertheless, St. Louis's German-Americans still believed that neither nativism nor World War I could totally destroy their ethnic community nor completely end their considerable influence in St. Louis. Instead, they thought that, “like the old *Liederkrantz*, [their German-American way of life would] survive with tarnished splendor.”⁵⁰ With the war over, they hoped that Wilson’s “peace without victory” would bring an end to the anti-German sentiment, which had done so much to undermine their cultural, social, and economic institutions. In St. Louis this meant a return of the breweries and beer gardens.

With this goal of restoration in mind, the city’s German-language press as well as some of the native papers wasted little time in advocating the end of wartime prohibition and the return of alcohol, now that the conflict was essentially over. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in a December 1, 1918, editorial called for the end of the wartime restrictions and the continuation of state and county self-determination on the liquor question.⁵¹ The *Post* argued that this method allowed far more freedom and made far more sense than blanket prohibition, especially considering that the United States had spent the last eighteen months fighting for democracy in Europe.⁵² The argument, however strong, came too late to prevent wartime prohibition from going into effect, and ironically that very same issue of the *Post-Dispatch* carried the news of the cessation of brewing at 12:01 A.M., only a few hours prior to the paper’s release.⁵³ Despite the deadline, the *Post* and other opponents continued to condemn the alleged "wartime" measure. The following day the St. Louis paper contained another editorial addressing the same topic,

⁴⁹ Margaret Lo Piccolo Sullivan, *Hyphenism In St. Louis, 1900-1921: The View From the Outside* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 82.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Dec. 1, 1918).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid, 6.

this time titled, “Dictatorial Bureaucratic Rule,” and then on December 3 it took up the issue again with an article describing the joint efforts of the city’s brewers and Chamber of Commerce to telegram President Wilson with an appeal to end alcohol prohibition and provide much needed work for returning soldiers.⁵⁴

In spite of the editorials and arguments from St. Louis and many other large cities, the Federal Government did not consider amending the existing legislation. Instead, the prohibition movement, with the Anti-Saloon League in the lead, continued its relentless attack on the industry. Now, however, brewing had lost many of its erstwhile supporters; no longer could it count on the assistance of the government because the industry no longer provided a source of tax revenue. Much of the public’s support for the industry had also waned since beer no longer provided enjoyment for millions of Americans. Perhaps most importantly, brewers had lost the strident support of the nation’s large German population, as increasingly they were cowed by the anti-German sentiment created by the war. In May 1919, Representative Volstead of Minnesota presented the bill which, when passed by Congress over President Wilson’s veto, would make the wartime provision permanent and lead to the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Dec. 2, 1918), (Dec. 3, 1918).

⁵⁵ Baron, *Brewed in America*, 307. Missouri was the thirty-seventh state to ratify Prohibition, lagging forty-three minutes behind Nebraska, the thirty-sixth and final state required for the amendment’s ratification. Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri*, 504.

VIII. PROHIBITION

Although the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution did not officially go into effect until January 16, 1920, one year after its ratification by the required thirty-six states, the era of “bone dry” Prohibition actually became a reality over fourteen months earlier when the Volstead Act became law.¹ In the span of only a little over five years, from the outbreak of World War I to the passage of the Volstead Act in October 1919, the nation’s brewing industry had gone from the peak of its stature to near oblivion. The war and the subsequent restrictions on grain, fuel, and non-essential manufacturing, when combined with the prohibitionists’ continued attacks on the industry—not only for its production of intoxicants but also for its “German connection”—had paved the way for “wartime” prohibition to become peacetime Prohibition.²

As bad as the war had been for the interests of the brewers, the Prohibition “war baby” proved to be far worse. Despite the fact that wartime prohibition had cut the value and production of the city’s breweries by as much as 70 percent of their prewar high, the complete loss of revenue from brewing proved disastrous to the brewers, and the German-American community.³ Indeed, it is arguable that Prohibition's negative effects were so great that in several respects they set the stage for St. Louis's economic decline in mid- and late twentieth century.

¹ Ibid, 306-307.

² Peter Blum, *Brewed In Detroit: Breweries and Beers Since 1830* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 38.

³ Figures obtained by subtracting the 1914 value of St. Louis’s brewing industry from the total value of brewing in the state and then comparing the result with the decreased production levels of the state from 1914 to 1919. United States Brewers’ Association, *The 1919 Year Book of the United States Brewers’ Association*, 182; Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri “Booster” Edition Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1913* (Jefferson City, Mo.: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1914), 9

The economic hardships experienced by brewers and their employees during World War I were significant. However, many people—including August Busch and the members of the St. Louis brewery workers' local—had viewed these as only temporary conditions. As the reality and the enormity of the situation before them began to set in towards the end of 1919 and the beginning of 1920, many brewers took stock of their operations and came to difficult conclusions. One afflicted brewery was the original producer of German lager in St. Louis, William J. Lemp Brewing Company. Lemp's Brewery, like all those in the city, had struggled as wartime prohibition cut deeply into its production and sales. After initially attempting to enter the near-beer business with a non-alcoholic brew, William J. Lemp, Jr., the president of the company, decided he had had enough, and, after consulting the other stockholders—all of whom were immediate family members—Lemp closed the \$7 million operation.⁴ After four years of Prohibition, having watched his powerful empire collapse and his once mighty brewery sit idle and fall into disrepair, Lemp ultimately decided to liquidate the company's considerable assets. Upon reaching the decision, Lemp was reported to have lamented: "We have done nothing since Prohibition. I am tired of seeing all the weeds in the courtyard and the dust upon windows. I am out of the brewery business for good. I am 54 years old, and it is time to quit."⁵ Shortly thereafter, the brewery, the oldest in continuous operation in the city, was put up for public auction and sold off in parts to five companies, fetching a mere eight cents on the dollar of its pre-Prohibition appraisal.⁶

⁴ Stephen P. Walker, *Lemp: The Haunting History* (St. Louis: The Lemp Preservation Society, Inc., 1988), 74-75; Victor J. Tremblay and Carol Horton Tremblay, *The U.S. Brewing Industry: Data and Economic Analysis* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005), 1.

⁵ Walker, *Lemp*, 75.

⁶ *Ibid*, 80.

Lemp's brewery was not the only St. Louis brewery to shut its doors permanently during Prohibition.⁷ The German immigrant Otto F. Stifel's Union Brewery also failed to survive after a brief and unsuccessful attempt at selling ice and dairy products.⁸ Other well-established companies such as the City and Wainwright breweries, both members of the St. Louis Brewing Association, also folded after only a few months of Prohibition.⁹ Other breweries remained active for a brief period; the Anthony & Kuhn Brewery, for example, one of the remaining members of the English syndicate, continued until 1922 when its owners made the difficult decision to cease production.¹⁰ By the middle of the 1920s, most of the \$60 million of capital invested in breweries, the largest amount invested in any industry in the city prior to Prohibition, stood idle, or as with Lemp, was sold off for a fraction of its estimated worth.¹¹

While brewers such as William Lemp and scores of others decided to cut their losses, liquidate their assets, and retire from brewing, others decided to persevere, hoping that Prohibition would soon be repealed, since its enforcement was already proving to be a failure. Those breweries, both in St. Louis and the rest of the country, which did not get out of the business, were faced with a daunting question: what to do? The size and

⁷ Lemp's brewery was by no means the only large operation to shut down because of the "noble experiment." Across the country formerly successful regional and even national breweries such as the Christian Moerlein Brewing Company, at one time the largest in Cincinnati, and Harvard Brewery of Massachusetts, worth an estimated \$4 million prior to Prohibition, gave up and ceased production. William L. Downard, *Dictionary of the History of the American Brewing and Distilling Industries* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1980), xviii; William Downard, *The Cincinnati Brewing Industry: A Social and Economic History* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1973), 80; Trembly, *The U.S. Brewing Industry*, 1.

⁸ Jane Quinn, "Local Union No. 6, Brewing, Malting and General Labor Departments St. Louis, Missouri" (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1947), 114.

⁹ Donald Bull, Manfred Friedrich and Robert Gottschalk, *American Breweries* (Trumbull, Conn.: Bullworks, 1984), 155, 160.

¹⁰ Stanley Baron, *Brewed In America: A History of Beer and Ale in the United States* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962), 315.

¹¹ Brewers who did give up and sold their plants frequently received only a 10 percent return on the estimated pre-prohibition value of the property. Feldman, *Prohibition*, 314.

expense of many breweries precluded simply suspending operations and waiting until the tide of public sentiment changed. The high insurance and taxes placed on breweries—evidence of the enormous amount of capital invested in their physical assets—meant that, unless means were found to make some profits, most would quickly go bankrupt.¹²

Naturally, the most logical products the breweries were equipped to make, based on their existing plants and the expertise of their work force, were beverages.¹³ For this reason the most common product that the former breweries manufactured was near-beer—like the original in appearance and taste but containing less than 0.5 percent alcoholic content, as the Volstead Act prescribed.¹⁴ In addition to near-beer, breweries also produced other non-alcoholic drinks, including carbonated sodas. Companies also utilized their prior beer-making experience to manufacture related products such as malt syrup or baking yeast. While these goods had logical connections to the former brewing days, other seemingly less obvious products also became staples of the brewing industry. These varied enormously, but ice and ice cream were two common items.

Although Lemp's Brewery failed to survive, a number of the city's other breweries were able to do so, sustaining a marginal existence on a range of manufacturing goods during the dry years of Prohibition. St. Louis's Falstaff Brewing Corporation was one such brewery, which, having risen from the failures of two others during Prohibition, would carry on to become nationally successful after Repeal. Following the financial collapse of the Griesedieck Beverage Company in 1920, Joseph Griesedieck, the former president, raised the capital to buy back his brewing equipment

¹² "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune* (July, 1932), 100. In St. Louis, for example, while the brewing industry was third in value of manufacturing at its pre-war high, it continued to be the highest in terms of capital investment.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Downard, *Dictionary of the History of the American Brewing and Distilling Industries*, xviii.

and began making near-beer.¹⁵ The demise of the Lemp Brewing Co. proved beneficial for Griesedieck, as he struck a deal with the Lemp family and purchased the still-famous Falstaff brand, which he now named his new company.¹⁶ In addition to producing near-beer, Falstaff, like many breweries at the time, expanded its operations to include a wide variety of soft drinks and, more unusually, smoked ham and bacon.¹⁷ These products all combined to keep the Falstaff Beverage Corporation solvent until Repeal. A number of the city's other smaller breweries—such as the American Brewing Company, Louis Obert Brewing Co., and Schorr-Kolkschneider Brewing—also successfully made the transition in one form or another, enduring until Repeal and the return of beer.¹⁸

When August Busch succeeded his father as president of Anheuser-Busch in 1913, his brewery—the nation's largest—was estimated to be worth \$31.5 million; by 1933 when Prohibition was repealed, however, the brewery's estimated value had dropped to \$22 million.¹⁹ Despite this decline, Anheuser-Busch managed to survive the “noble experiment.” However, unlike the city's smaller breweries, Anheuser-Busch faced the task of maintaining its massive 110 building, 142-acre St. Louis factory as well as keeping its vast network of distributorships alive.²⁰ The task was daunting, since the brewery had begun losing money before the conclusion of World War I and by the end of 1919, after only one year of national Prohibition, was almost \$2.5 million in debt.²¹ This debt was partly due to the fact that, before the war began, the St. Louis factory cost

¹⁵ Alvin Griesedieck, *The Falstaff Story* (St. Louis: Simmons-Sisler Company, Inc., 1951), 31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 42, 45.

¹⁸ *Gould's St. Louis City Directory, 1929* (St. Louis: Polk-Gould Directory Co., 1929); F. P. Hankerson, “The History of Brewing in St. Louis,” *Modern Brewery* (Sept. 1934), 32.

¹⁹ “King of Bottled Beer,” *Fortune*, 102.

²⁰ Hankerson, “History of Brewing in St. Louis,” *Modern Brewery*, 174.

²¹ Ronald Plavchan, “A History of Anheuser Busch, 1852-1933” (Ph. D. dissertation, St. Louis University, 1969), 196.

\$30,000 a day simply to operate.²² Nonetheless, while Anheuser-Busch's massive size in some ways made its prospects more difficult, it could also prove beneficial. The fact that the brewery had already diversified operations to incorporate virtually every aspect of the beer-making process gave Anheuser-Busch a significant advantage over other breweries that had focused strictly on manufacturing beer.²³

Anheuser-Busch had another initial advantage over the vast majority of breweries in existence prior to Prohibition. Its new president had accurately gauged the growing sentiments of the populace and in 1916 had introduced a non-alcoholic beer called Bevo.²⁴ At the outset the decision seemed wise, and sales proved so good during the first few years that there seemed little reason to worry about impending Prohibition. Bevo's success also seemed to justify Busch's construction of a new \$10 million plant designed exclusively to produce near-beer.²⁵ However, illicit liquor soon proved more popular than near-beer, and not much more difficult to obtain, and by the time Bevo was finally removed from the market in 1929, it had accounted for a \$15 million investment and a \$4 million loss.²⁶

Although Bevo was ultimately a failure, the brewery's other experience with near-beer proved more successful. De-alcoholized Budweiser appeared on the market on January 1, 1920, and, unlike Bevo, its initial success led to good sales throughout

²² Neil Clark, "Salvaging \$150,000,000 In Pre-Volstead Plants: The Remarkable Come-Back of Anheuser-Busch," *Forbes* (Dec. 1, 1926), 10. August Busch and his staff had arrived at this figure based upon the high costs of taxes, insurance, and depreciation.

²³ Herman Feldman, *Prohibition: Its Economic and Industrial Aspects* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1927), 318.

²⁴ Roland Krebs, *Making Friends Is Our Business: 100 Years of Anheuser-Busch* (St. Louis: Anheuser-Busch, Inc., 1953), 97-98.

²⁵ Ernest Kirschten, *Catfish and Crystal* (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), 354.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 354-355.

Prohibition.²⁷ Like many other breweries at the time, Anheuser-Busch also made other beverages such as ginger and root beer, as well as grape-, chocolate-, and tea-flavored drinks.²⁸ Although some of these beverages proved successful, the brewery continued to diversify, trying to find a product that would generate significant profits. To this end, Anheuser-Busch sold ice and ice cream, and even enlarged and retooled its shops to manufacture truck bodies and refrigerators.²⁹ The brewery's most profitable product was not manufactured until 1927, when Anheuser-Busch entered the field of yeast production.³⁰ Despite competing against a near-monopoly in the market, by the time of Repeal the brewery had secured \$1.5 million in earnings a year from yeast sales.³¹ All told, throughout the course of Prohibition the brewery spent a total of \$18 million in renovations and conversions to its factories in order to survive.³²

At the beginning of national Prohibition, August A. Busch was said to have committed himself and his company to attaining three goals throughout the duration of the "noble experiment": to abide by the law, continue to provide employment for the brewery's workers, and, lastly, to do all he could for the stockholders.³³ As for the first and last of those goals, Anheuser-Busch achieved a degree of success, producing legal products that eventually allowed the company to return a small margin of profit. The second goal proved more difficult to achieve.

During World War I, while other industries in St. Louis and the nation were adding thousands of workers to keep up with wartime demands, Anheuser-Busch and the

²⁷ Krebs, *Making Friends is Our Business*, 104.

²⁸ Ibid, 104-105.

²⁹ Feldman, *Prohibition*, 311.

³⁰ "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune*, 45, 102.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Clark, "Salvaging \$150,000,000 In Pre-Volstead Plants: The Remarkable Come-Back of Anheuser-Busch." *Forbes*, 42.

³³ Ibid, 10.

other surviving breweries were forced to slash their payrolls. Despite August Busch's intentions at the onset of Prohibition, by 1921 the company's executive board had cut all non-essential personal, which appears to have been close to 1,000 employees.³⁴ The decision may not have been an easy one for the company's president, a man who, like his father, took great pride in his position as economic and cultural leader of the city's German-American community. Nonetheless, the brewery's continued losses—as high as \$1.3 million in 1921—made cutting the workforce a practical necessity.³⁵ Despite his lack of options, Busch's decision to let go so many of his employees, a sign of his failure to achieve one of his primary goals, must have weighed heavily upon him, and it surely played a role in his decision to forego his yearly salary until business improved.³⁶

By the middle of the 1920s the company had pruned its workforce down to only 2,000 employees, approximately a third of its prewar high; it would remain at this low level until yeast production became an established success at the end of the decade, when the company added 1,000 workers to its payroll.³⁷ By 1932, three years into the Great Depression, the board was once again in the unenviable position of having to decide whether to cut more jobs or slash wages.³⁸ This time they opted to reduce employee wages by 10 percent and retain the total workforce; at the same time, the board members also made the decision, however belatedly, to reduce their own salaries by the same percentage.³⁹

While Anheuser-Busch appeared at times to exhibit the type of patriarchic benevolence towards its employees that August Busch claimed, the company was also

³⁴ "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune*, 102.

³⁵ Plavchan, "A History of Anheuser-Busch," 196.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 197-198.

³⁷ "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune*, 102.

³⁸ Plavchan, "A History of Anheuser-Busch," 211.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

willing to cut workers or threaten the union with plant closings if unfavorable terms, including lower wages and decreased hours of work, were not accepted.⁴⁰ In addition, Anheuser-Busch and other breweries were at times reluctant to hire employees back, as had been agreed with the union. Part of the reason for this was the age of the average brewery worker. Many workers at Anheuser-Busch and other breweries had labored at the same tasks in the beer-making plants for years, even decades; consequently, they had a difficult time adjusting to the new fields and jobs they were now forced to accept. Even August Busch questioned the retention policy, arguing that it threatened to make his plant an “old age home.”⁴¹ Despite his reservations, Busch eventually consented, but the underlying problem would persist as older, highly specialized brewery workers found it difficult either to find other jobs or to adapt to new kinds of work.

After Prohibition had been repealed, for example, one former *Braumeister* turned conductor of a German singing society gave up that rather comfortable position to rejoin his beloved brewery, in the process sacrificing a \$75 per week job for one that paid only \$50.⁴² When questioned about the decision, he replied: “I cannot help it. What could I do without beer?”⁴³ The *Brumeister’s* remarks reveal far more than his thirst for the alcoholic beverage; instead, they give an insight into the integral part of their lives which beer and the craft of brewing represented for the German brewery workers.

Of course, some workers were able to find other forms of work and successfully made the transition. A significant number of former brewery employees were hired by the city shortly after Prohibition began; still others were fortunate enough to be rehired or

⁴⁰ Quinn, “Local Union No. 6,” 126.

⁴¹ Ibid, 135.

⁴² “King of Bottled Beer,” *Fortune*, 102.

⁴³ Ibid.

retained by the breweries for different lines of work.⁴⁴ Some two hundred union members were hired back when Anheuser-Busch's yeast and malt production became successful.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, even many of those who were able to procure work found their new jobs very challenging, both physically and, more important, psychologically. The inability of former brewery workers to adapt to their new lines of work may explain the degree of difficulty they had retaining employment. In 1921, for example, only 283 brewers and 171 freight handlers still active in St. Louis's Brewers and Maltsters Local Union No. 6 were employed, while another 239 brewers and 102 freight handlers were out of work.⁴⁶ The numbers were well short of the 800 brewers and 400 freight handlers active in the union as late as 1916.⁴⁷ Based on these figures, it appears that—contrary to prohibitionists' assertions—the highly specialized brewery workers had great difficulty finding and adapting to new occupations. Despite the prohibitionists' claims, ex-brewery workers were not rapidly “absorbed in other industries.”⁴⁸

Although Prohibition forced breweries such as Anheuser-Busch and others to cut the number of their employees dramatically, things were far worse for workers at the breweries that were forced to close their doors. The demise of the Lemp Brewery was particularly devastating, and after the company's initial attempt to survive on near-beer and through other business pursuits, the decision to close struck all those involved by

⁴⁴ Quinn, “Local Union No. 6,” 117-118. Joseph J. Hauser, a former leader in Local Union No. 6. during Prohibition, in an interview with Mary Jane Quinn, said that one of the most common sources of employment for former brewery workers was with the city. Nevertheless, within only a few years the depth of the Depression and a diminished treasury forced the City of St. Louis to slash wages and cut public employees, and thus many of the former brewery workers were once again out of work. Kirkendall, *A History of Missouri, Volume V*, 135.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 102. The 239 brewers and 102 freight handlers that were unemployed in 1921 included only active members of the union. The actual number of former union members, based for example on the 1916 total membership, was surely much higher. Often members dropped out of the union when they could no longer pay dues and had run out of benefits.

⁴⁸ Samuel Crowther, *Prohibition and Prosperity* (New York: The John Day Company, 1930), 77.

surprise. The suddenness of the decision also left the brewery's workers with few readily available alternative means of employment. One former employee recalled the manner in which the plant closed, saying, "[we] didn't have any farewell ceremonies. We just went to work one morning and found the place locked up. It never opened again."⁴⁹ Before 1914 Lemp had employed over 1,500 workers, many of them union members, but after 1920 the brewery's union workforce was reduced to a single maintenance man.⁵⁰

Even for those former brewery workers who could find and were able to work, the situation proved to be little better. For example, for many of those who continued to work in the newly converted breweries, the weekly lay-off system meant that they received only partial pay, yet their union dues—usually to the national organization—continued unabated.⁵¹ Thus, even union members fortunate enough to keep their positions at the breweries remained chronically under-employed for the duration of Prohibition.

The members of Local No. 6 and St. Louis's other 7,000 to 10,000 brewery workers were not the only ones to suffer from Prohibition, and thousands more of the city's workers also found themselves without employment. Within a few months of the start of Prohibition, the *St. Louis Labor* reported that at least 7,200 workers, from five different unions dependent on brewing, had already lost their jobs.⁵² The city's unionized

⁴⁹ Walker, *Lemp*, 75.

⁵⁰ Hankerson, "The History of Brewing In St. Louis" *Modern Brewery*, 28; Quinn, "Local Union No. 6," 118.

⁵¹ Quinn, "Local Union No. 6," 116. In an effort to save money, especially after the beginning of the Great Depression, many of the converted breweries purposely reduced production, cutting the number of days the costly plants were in operation, and using skeleton crews. The unions often succeeded in convincing the breweries to keep as many workers as possible, but this was done at the expense of reducing the number of hours worked. The weekly lay-off system was one way in which these conditions were met, allowing a greater number of union members to work part time.

⁵² *Ibid*, 112, 119. The Local Joint Executive Board for the city's unions at this point used the *St. Louis Labor* to demand that the Reverend William C. Shipp, superintendent of the Missouri Anti-Saloon League, make good on his earlier claim that displaced workers would be able to find alternative means of

laborers paid a heavy price during Prohibition; not only did thousands of union workers find themselves out of work but the resulting problems contributed to a significant decline in the number of unions affiliated with the city's Central Trades and Labor Union (CTLU), the total falling from 190 in 1920 to 125 in 1929.⁵³ Although the German-American brewery workers and their unionized compatriots suffered the most, the number of people adversely affected by the federal legislation was undoubtedly much higher. Prior to the war some sources estimated that as many as 45,000 workers in the city were dependent, directly or indirectly, on the brewing industry.⁵⁴ Further estimates concluded that when all those in the city—both workers and dependent family members—were taken into account, over 130,000 St. Louisans, or approximately one fifth of the city's population, relied on the brewing business and its related industries for their livelihoods.⁵⁵ Based on the percentage of German-Americans who worked in brewing and its related industries, it does not seem unfair to speculate that the majority of

employment with little difficulty. The local Federal Labor Bureau agent had also made similar claims in 1918 at the onset of Prohibition; however, these too went unfulfilled.

⁵³ Kirkendall, *A History of Missouri: Volume V*, 64; Rosemary Feurer, *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 4. Prohibition also weakened organized labor and the CTLU because the brewery workers' union had formerly been the largest, strongest, and consequently the most vocal local in St. Louis. During Prohibition, however, the city's Brewers and Maltsters Union struggled simply to survive.

⁵⁴ "Why State-Wide Prohibition Would Mean Missouri-Wide Stagnation", 4. The source of these statistics must be taken into account when assessing their merit. Nonetheless, while the figures may be somewhat inflated, they do provide an indication of the industry's significance within the city. In fact, these figures are considerably less than those presented by other anti-prohibition pamphlets at the time. Another pamphlet, entitled "Statewide Prohibition: Why It Should Fail," estimated that there were 195,000 persons dependent on brewing and distilling in the state, and as many as 425,000 "whose income would be either cut off wholly or seriously diminished" if Prohibition became law. Although this pamphlet was more broadly focused, assessing the damages not only to St. Louis but the entire state, the numbers are still considerably higher when one considers the vast majority of the state's brewing interests were located in the St. Louis. The additional consideration of the distilling interests would have had only a minor impact on the total number of those affected by prohibition, this, because only a relatively small number—perhaps a few thousand—were dependant on the production of hard liquor. "Statewide Prohibition: Why It Should Fail", 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* As many as 25,000 St. Louisians were supposedly dependent on Anheuser-Busch Brewery alone, the business providing the citizens either employment or their means of subsistence. *St. Louis Times* (August 10, 1931).

the St. Louisans adversely affected by Prohibition were members of the city's German-American community, a group which prior to the war continued to constitute more than 100,000 people.⁵⁶

Given brewing's importance as a source of employment, for both German-Americans and other St. Louisans, the negative effects of its demise must have been very considerable. A large number of other industries had relied on the city's breweries, as the livelihoods of thousands of saloon keepers, restaurant owners, hotel managers, pipe fitters, musicians, coopers, and others had been tied to the production or consumption of beer.⁵⁷ The city's breweries had provided business for a host of companies, many of which were predominantly German-American. These included Geisel and Co., Koenig and Sons, Feber Machine Works, John O'Brian Boiler Works Co., Seibel-Suesdorf Manufacturing Co., and E. Jungfeld and Co. The latter was an architectural firm that had specialized in designing breweries and formerly performed work for many of the city's leading companies, including Anheuser-Busch, Lemp, and Green Tree.⁵⁸

In addition to Prohibition's negative effects on the city's many restaurants and hotels, the ban on alcohol hurt St. Louis's tobacco industry. Tobacco had once been one of the city's major businesses, but its popularity and the sales of St. Louis-made cigars

⁵⁶ David Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri, 1900-1918: Prohibition, Neutrality, and Assimilation* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1985), 9.

⁵⁷ The end of the war, despite the relief it brought to embattled German-Americans, actually exacerbated the unemployment situation. By the beginning of 1919 the first of four million American troops began to come back to the States. These former soldiers now competed with the existing unemployed as well as with the three to four million Americans who lost their jobs after the wartime industries ceased or reduced production.

It is possible that "ripple effects" from the loss of brewing even helped contribute to the alarming degree of unemployment within the city during the Great Depression. After the first year of the Depression unemployment in St. Louis represented 9.8 percent of the work force, compared to the national rate of 8.7 percent. By 1931 the situation had deteriorated still further, as 92,666 St. Louisians or 24 percent of the work force found themselves unemployed—significantly above the national unemployment rate of 15.9 percent. Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 468; Kirkendall, *A History of Missouri, Volume V*, 135.

⁵⁸ "What's Brewing In Soulard: Historic Brewing Sites Tour and Breweriana Market" (May 17, 1987), 25, 42.

were severely undercut when the city's saloons were shut down, resulting in the near destruction of the industry.⁵⁹ Many of the city's other industries were also impacted as the breweries were forced to reduce dramatically their purchases of materials and supplies, formerly in excess of \$15 million annually, formerly used in the production of beer.⁶⁰ Likewise, St. Louis's rail system suffered a curtailment of the freight traffic to and from the massive breweries, which in turn deprived the city's railroads of over \$3 million worth of freight fees each year.⁶¹ Additional freight fees were also lost in the prohibition of other forms of alcohol, because St. Louis had been the nation's third leading distributing center for liquors other than beer.⁶²

Thus, the loss of brewing and the subsequent decline of its related industries had a significant impact on St. Louis's larger economy. The negative impacts of Prohibition initially remained largely unseen, however, due to the economic boom caused by World War I. Nevertheless, despite the war contracts and the healthy economic reports from the Annual Statement of the Trade and Commerce and the city's Chamber of Commerce, St. Louis experienced a far less dramatic economic boost during the war than did many other American cities. The decline of brewing may have been one reason for this. Another, more obvious, cause was that the majority of war contracts went to the nation's eastern cities where the majority of the war industries were located, due to their greater proximity to the Atlantic seaboard. Even as St. Louis's population was swollen by thousands of African Americans looking for work in local wartime industries, the ranks of the city's white industrial workers and businessmen declined, as they were increasingly lured away

⁵⁹ Quinn, "Local Union No. 6", 105.

⁶⁰ "Why State-Wide Prohibition Would Mean Missouri-Wide Stagnation", 4.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri*, 504-505.

by the incentive of higher pay in the flourishing war industries on the east coast.⁶³ The failure of St. Louis and of Missouri, generally, to benefit from the war as much as did other parts of the nation, when combined with simultaneous loss of brewing, explains the relatively minor economic growth that both city and state experienced during the late 1910s and early 1920s. As a result, by 1921 Missouri had fallen behind much of the rest of the nation in manufacturing output.⁶⁴

In addition, post-war deflation, declining prices, and the loss of the breweries as potential markets also hurt Missouri farmers.⁶⁵ Despite St. Louis's status as a major American city, the negative agricultural situation affecting the rest of the state caused considerable concern in the city. Because of its location and the importance of its commerce and distribution capabilities, the fortunes of St. Louis, more than of most major industrial cities, were intimately tied to its agricultural hinterland.⁶⁶ The lower food prices following the Armistice, when combined with the dramatically reduced demand in St. Louis for formerly essential goods—such as cotton, grain, and tobacco—produced depression-like hardships for tens of thousands of rural Missourians long before the 1929 stock-market crash began the Great Depression.⁶⁷

To be sure, for St. Louisans not involved in brewing or its related industries, and able to overlook the hardships of their rural peers, the 1920s appeared to be a period of considerable prosperity. By 1923, for example, St. Louis's economy, as measured in

⁶³ Kirkendall, *A History of Missouri: Volume V*, 24.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 25.

⁶⁵ Gibbs, *The Great Silent Majority*, 156.

⁶⁶ James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1981), 468.

⁶⁷ Gibbs, *The Great Silent Majority*, 156. Although Prohibition was solely responsible for the decreased demand for grain and tobacco, the war caused the cotton market in St. Louis and the rest of the nation to decline dramatically because of British embargos and the reduced purchasing ability of the Entente Powers. John Clark Crighton, *Missouri and the World War, 1914-1917: A Study in Public Opinion* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1947), 39.

manufacturing output, had made remarkable gains, increasing to \$989 million, more than triple what it had been a decade earlier.⁶⁸ Another frequently cited indicator of the city's economic success was the number of new factories constructed: between 1920 and 1925 the city boasted over 150 new plants.⁶⁹ As always, the local Chamber of Commerce generated optimism: despite the city's loss of one of its most important industries, the Chamber continued to promote St. Louis as one of the premier manufacturing centers in the nation. The organization also drew inspiration from the past and once again emphasized St. Louis's importance as a distribution center, urging companies to relocate to the Midwestern city in order to reap the benefits of "ship[ping] from the center—not the rim."⁷⁰

The Chamber of Commerce and a host of other business publicists even adopted a new nomenclature for the city and its surrounding municipalities, dubbing the St. Louis Metropolitan area the "Forty-ninth State" due to the size and strength of its trade territory, which covered more than fourteen states and, by 1929, accounted for \$1.54 billion worth of products.⁷¹ Thus, for many of its residents, St. Louis appeared to experience the "roaring" 1920s like the rest of the nation.⁷² Ironically, many people even

⁶⁸ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Thirty-Eighth And Thirty-Ninth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Years commencing November 5, 1915 and Ending November 5, 1915* (Jefferson City, Mo.: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1918), 385; Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Forty-Fourth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1923* (Jefferson City, Mo.: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1924), 61.

⁶⁹ Robert E. Hannon, ed., *St. Louis: Its Neighborhoods and Neighbors, Landmarks and Milestones* (St. Louis: St. Louis Regional Commerce and Growth Association, 1986), 14.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 463. The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* even proclaimed itself the official newspaper of the "Forty-ninth state" on its masterhead until 1959 and Alaska's entrance into the Union.

⁷² Despite the city's stuttering manufacturing gains and the depressed state of its hinterland trade territory, St. Louis's business interests, including the highly effective Chamber of Commerce, ceaselessly promoted the city's economic strength during the 1920s and into the 1930s. Their efforts were so successful that, even after 1929, the myth that the Great Depression was far less severe in St. Louis than elsewhere persisted and gained widespread acceptance. In support of this erroneous argument, "one-industry" cities

believed that Prohibition and its beneficial effects were one reason for the success of the decade. The law's proponents pointed to a decrease in crime, an increase in employment, and an apparent boost to the economy; Prohibition, claimed Secretary of Commerce and future president Herbert Hoover, was "putting money into the American family pocketbook."⁷³ The reality was quite different, however, and the corrupting force of the illegal manufacture of alcohol and its accompanying social ills soon became readily apparent to all but the most adamant prohibitionists. The supposed economic benefits were also thoroughly dispelled after 1929, when the market crashed; no longer could Prohibition's proponents point to the Eighteenth Amendment as a reason for a now-vanished prosperity.

A closer examination of St. Louis reveals that, even before 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression, the city's apparent economic strength during and after World War I was not nearly as great as had been assumed at the time. Despite claims to the contrary, St. Louis's economy had never been particularly diverse. Instead, both before and after World War I, the city's few major industries contributed a disproportionately large percentage of its total manufacturing output. In 1914, for example, meat packing, shoe making, and brewing were the top three manufacturing industries in the city, with a

such as Pittsburgh or Detroit were contrasted with St. Louis's more diversified economy. These worst-case comparisons failed to acknowledge that the local degree of economic depression was similar to or greater than the levels that prevailed in such prominent cities as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago, with all of which the citizens of St. Louis liked to claim equality. In reality, St. Louis's manufacturing during the Great Depression, now without the aid of either wartime industries or brewing, struggled to a greater degree than most American cities. Between 1929 and 1933, while national manufacturing output fell by 55 percent, St. Louis's actually declined by 57 percent. By 1939 and the end of the Depression, St. Louis's industry continued to languish at 70 percent of 1929's pre-crash figures, fourteen points below the national average. In reality, by 1939 even the supposedly less resilient cities of Pittsburgh and Detroit fared better than St. Louis, as their manufacturing capacity reached 78 and 75 percent, respectively, of the 1929 highs. Chicago's industries, while only producing at 77 percent of their pre-Depression level, continued to represent a large proportion of the nation's total manufacturing—over 7 percent, compared with St. Louis's less than 2 percent. Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 467; Kirkendall, *A History of Missouri, Volume V*, 226.

⁷³ Downard, *The Cincinnati Brewing Industry*, 130; Feldman, *Prohibition*, 380-381.

combined total value of \$95 million.⁷⁴ This \$95 million represented over one-fourth of the total value of all the city's manufacturing industries. The brewing industry, ranked third in manufacturing value in 1914, made up almost 7.5 percent of the city's total industrial production value.⁷⁵ Thus, the loss of brewing and of the value of its products throughout wartime and constitutional prohibition represented a significant subtraction from the city's economy. Although some historians have claimed that "other industries filled the void left by the temporary loss of the brewing giants," that does not seem to be true.⁷⁶ It is accurate that, initially, St. Louis's economy did not feel the loss of brewing due to the extraordinary wartime increase in total manufacturing output, which tripled from 1914 to 1916.⁷⁷ That rate of growth, however, would not continue. By 1923, the value of the city's manufacturing industries had only risen to \$989 million, an increase of only slightly more than 8 percent in the eight years since its 1916 high of \$905.6 million.⁷⁸ The results from the middle of the decade would prove even less positive as the total value actually fell by 6 percent to \$929.8 million.⁷⁹

In spite of the fact that the value of St. Louis's manufacturing recovered to reach \$1317.2 million in 1929, the city's lack of industrial diversity, as well as its former dependence on brewing, are evident when its industrial base is compared with that of its

⁷⁴ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1915* (Jefferson City, MO: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1916), 31, 33.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 462.

⁷⁷ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Thirty-Eighth And Thirty-Ninth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Years commencing November 5, 1915 and Ending November 5, 1915*, 385.

⁷⁸ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Forty-Fourth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Year Ending November 5, 1923*, 61.

⁷⁹ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Forty-Sixth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Years Ending November 5, 1925*, 56.

old rival, Chicago.⁸⁰ Although between 1914 and 1919 the Windy City actually suffered a greater rate of decline in beer production than did St. Louis, Chicago's economic dependence on brewing had always been relatively quite small—less than 2 percent, compared with 7.5 percent in St. Louis. As late as 1919 breweries still accounted for 2.5 percent of the Missouri city's manufacturing production, compared with only 0.5 percent in Chicago.⁸¹ Indeed, St. Louis's dependence on brewing was analogous to those of much smaller cities, such as Cincinnati and Milwaukee (also members of the "German triangle"). Thus, the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce's post-Prohibition lament—that there was "nothing to take the place" of brewing in the city's economy—was much more applicable to St. Louis than to cities, like Chicago, which had more diversified industrial bases.⁸² It is possible that St. Louis's lack of industrial diversity may always have been a systemic economic flaw. Certainly, however, any gradual decline caused thereby was expedited by the loss of brewing through Prohibition.

The demise of the brewing industry, coupled with the huge loss invested in capital goods from the devaluation of the breweries, had yet another negative effect on the city's German-American community, one that would also hinder St. Louis's larger economy. St. Louis's brewing barons—formerly the wealthiest members of the German community as well as some of the richest investors in the city—no longer had the financial means to play the major roles that they had prior to the war and Prohibition. Indeed, many of them

⁸⁰ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Fiftieth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Years Ending November 5, 1929* (Jefferson City, MO: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1930), 15.

⁸¹ United States Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920. Manufactures Statistics, Volume IX* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1923), 332, 345, 798, 799, 1626.

⁸² Timothy J. Holian, *Over the Barrel: the Brewing History and Beer Culture of Cincinnati, 1800 to the Present, Volume II* (St. Joseph, Mo.: Sudhaus Press, 2001), 42.

fell dramatically from the ranks of the city's elite.⁸³ Of course, the St. Louis economy as a whole suffered when many of the city's once-wealthiest businessmen could no longer promote local development, make major capital investments, or pay wages to thousands of employees. Formerly constituting one of the leading investor groups in St. Louis at the turn of century, the city's German-American brewing barons were effectively economic non-factors during the 1920s and the early 1930s.

Ironically, in 1933, in the depths of the Great Depression, one observer found a silver lining in Prohibition's cloud. The demise of St. Louis's brewing industry, he wrote, had obliged its citizens "to become accustomed to depression" and thus had strengthened their character in advance of the economic catastrophe of the 1930s.⁸⁴ Be that as it may, Prohibition's dire effects on St. Louis's German Americans, on their social and cultural institutions, had no such compensations.

⁸³ The extent of the decline in wealth, prestige and influence during Prohibition is evident in the decline of the brewing barons from the pages of the city's Social Register between 1916 and 1932. The Social Registrar contained a very select group of the city's most affluent and best known citizens, and so even in 1916 many of the city's most successful names in the brewing business failed to make the cut. Those who did make the list included Forster, Limberg, Koehler, Schneider, Nicolaus, Wainwright, Lemp, and of course Busch. By 1932, despite the total number of citizens in the yearly register growing by close to 20 percent, the number of brewers dropped. Formerly successful and wealthy brewing families such as Forster and Wainwright no longer made the list. And although Busch's presence in St. Louis assured his presence in the volume, the Lemps were conspicuously absent. *Social Register, St. Louis, 1916, Volume XXX, No. 7* (New York, NY: Social Register Ass., 1915); *Social Register, St. Louis, 1932, Volume XLVI, No. 6* (New York, NY: Social Register Ass., 1931).

⁸⁴ Plavchan, "A History of Anheuser-Busch," 199.

IX. CULTURAL EFFECTS

Federal Prohibition and the resulting demise of the St. Louis's brewing industry not only had significant, negative, and lasting economic repercussions but also cultural ones that affected both the local German-American community and the entire city. In some ways the gradual decline and assimilation of the city's German population, never a single homogenous group, had been occurring for decades before the start of World War I and wartime prohibition. This was only natural, as German immigration to St. Louis and the rest of the nation had been steadily declining since the beginning of the 1880s. Nevertheless, the German-American presence in St. Louis at the outbreak of war in 1914 remained a vital component of the city's economic and cultural strength. This is abundantly evident based on the German community's sheer size—approximately one-fourth of the city's total population—its representation among the city's economic and social elite, and the persistence of its numerous and varied social and cultural institutions. Based on the best evidence from St. Louis, it appears that, contrary to what some historians have claimed, the city's German-Americans had not adopted the native culture or assimilated into the larger community *en masse*. It also seems that, despite the anti-German sentiments and nativism of the period, World War I also failed to destroy the German presence in the Teutonic city of St. Louis.

Although this runs counter to the conventionally held views, other scholars have come to similar conclusions regarding other American cities with large German-American communities. The German immigration historian Don Heinrich Tolzmann, in his study of Cincinnati during World War I, similarly concluded “that the German-

American community of Cincinnati survived the war-engendered anti-German hysteria, and that it [the community] did not vanish, disappear, disintegrate, or cease to exist.”¹ In her study of Chicago’s German community between the two wars, historian Leslie Tischauser, finds evidence to suggest a similar conclusion.² Nonetheless, the war did create the conditions which led to the demise of the German community. It was Prohibition, a “war baby,” that effectively destroyed the German presence in St. Louis, a presence which—for almost three quarters of a century—had been instrumental in the larger success of the city. The war with Germany certainly played a part in the weakening of the German-American community; this was particularly evident in the heightened attacks on the German language. However, as in Cincinnati and Chicago, German-Americanism in St. Louis was weakened but not eradicated. In 1921, for example, the city’s *Gould’s Directory* revealed that at least eleven *Turnvereine* and twenty-six German singing societies remained.³ Ironically, Prohibition was the one issue which, for the heterogeneous St. Louis Germans, could unite the immigrant community. Conversely, however, once made the law of the land, Prohibition also proved the one issue powerful enough to cause its downfall.

As crippling as Prohibition was for the brewing-dependent economy of St. Louis, the anti-liquor legislation proved to be just as disruptive in its cultural effects. As historian Audrey Olson has argued, for all its negative economic effects, Prohibition—both in “wartime” and then in peacetime—was perhaps most damaging culturally

¹ Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The Cincinnati Germans After the Great War* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1987), 17.

² According to Tischauser’s findings “the German *Vereine* had little difficulty re-establishing themselves, singing in German and dancing to Strauss’ waltzes with little interference after November 11, 1918.” Leslie V. Tischauser, *The Burden of Ethnicity: The German Question in Chicago, 1914-1941* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 59.

³ Margret Lo Piccolo Sullivan, *Hyphenism In St. Louis, 1900-1921: The View From the Outside* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 79.

because “it touched the Germans where it hurt the most—in their enjoyment of *gemütlichkeit*.”⁴ *Gemütlichkeit*—or love of camaraderie, celebration, fellowship, and beer—was, and had been for centuries, an essential element of German culture. When prompted, the president of a German singing society in Lawrence, Massachusetts, attempted to explain the Teutonic affinity for beer by saying that Germans are “different from other settlers in American in regard to social life,” and that, unlike other groups, they did not “come together to have a good time by eating ice cream and drinking soda.” They found it difficult, he continued, to “have a social time without lager beer.”⁵ Beer, especially in the brewing capital of St. Louis, was an essential component of the “German way of life.” Thus, with the introduction of Prohibition and the end of beer, the spirit of *gemütlichkeit* in St. Louis suffered a crushing blow, one which the city’s German-American community could not recover.

Prohibition spelled the end not only for the breweries and for 2,000-plus saloons but also for the city’s famous beer halls and outdoor beer gardens. These institutions had served the community for decades, providing not only the alcoholic beverage but, just as importantly, a safe environment for entire families to enjoy German culture, including traditional music and theater. In an editorial written only a few years prior to the beginning of the war, the *St. Louis Times* described the dozens of saloons and accompanying beer gardens of the city as “oases in the brick and stone wastes of the settlement” and places where groups of families and friends could drink casually, get supper, and “talk away the hours before bedtime”.⁶ In this sense, Uhrig’s, Schneider’s,

⁴Audrey Olson, “St. Louis Germans, 1850-1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and its Relation to the Assimilation Process” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1970), 212.

⁵ Ibid, 313.

⁶ *St. Louis Times* (June 12, 1907).

and Weider's beer gardens, and countless similar St. Louis establishments, remained as important as they had been during the 1870s. They also continued to be as much centers of Teutonic culture as the parish church or German-language school. In the absence of beer, however, the city's German community seemed rather indifferent to the gardens or the fellowship and entertainment they provided. The return of the German theater after the war, for example, met with little enthusiasm, and despite prominent billing in the local German press, performances held throughout north and south St. Louis were poorly attended.⁷ St. Louis's German restaurants, previously some of the most popular in the city, also failed to survive the loss of beer. For example, Tony Faust's—"the restaurant that made St. Louis known all over the world" and formerly a favorite dining location for Adolphus Busch—was one of many German-American restaurants which closed their doors during the dry era.⁸

Prohibition also helped sound the death knell for the city's numerous German societies. The *Vereine*, as they were collectively known, were an incredibly varied collection of clubs, yet they frequently joined together to celebrate traditional German festivals or holidays. Likewise, they traditionally combined forces whenever their common "German way of life" was threatened—as, for example, when they mobilized to combat Sunday blue laws and, again, in 1914 to protest the unfair treatment of Germany by the city's native press. Despite their differences, the German *Vereine* also shared another common element—*gemütlichkeit*. By the time the Volstead Act and the Eighteenth Amendment were passed, the danger of Prohibition to the *Vereine* was

⁷ Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 232.

⁸ [James Allen Reid](#), *Picturesque Saint Louis: its magnificent outing points: some distinguished neighbors* (St. Louis: Finkenbiner-Reid, 1909), no pagination. Although the restaurant closed, Faust's Fulton Market remained open throughout Prohibition.

already well known. The city's *Turnvereine* societies, for example, had warned for years about the probable effects of Prohibition, pointing to the fate of the organization in Indiana after that state's earlier adoption of a statewide ban on liquor.⁹ The fears of the various societies' officers proved to be correct, and, not long after Prohibition began, many organizations were running badly in debt, as they struggled to find a means of supporting themselves now that they no longer could do so through the sale of liquor.¹⁰

After Prohibition, the *Vereine* were also forced to cope with another, perhaps even greater problem—declining attendance. The problem was not isolated to the German societies in St. Louis, however, as *Vereine* throughout the country suffered a similar decline. In St. Louis's sister city of Cincinnati, the branch of the *Pionier-Verein* and its 1919 annual review mourned the passing of “Moist-happy sessions, jovial festivities ... the live nerve for every society, without which in the long run it cannot thrive.”¹¹ Less than a year later, a local editor of the German press declared his frustration at being unable to find a good lager beer in a city that so recently was a leader in its production; without the beverage, the editor exclaimed, “the main attraction for congenial get-together no longer exists.”¹² A similar situation unfolded in St. Louis as the announcements in the city's German newspapers of *Vereine* meetings, which formerly appeared with unvarying regularity, also declined as Prohibition continued.¹³ By January 1920, on the eve of Prohibition, the city's *Bayern-Verein* took the opportunity of the group's holiday masked ball to urge all members to come, if for no other reason than to

⁹ Olson, “St. Louis Germans,” 243.

¹⁰ Carolyn Hewes Toft, ed. *Soulard: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood* (St. Louis: Washington University Press, 1975), 24.

¹¹ Tolzmann, *The Cincinnati Germans After the Great War*, 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, 42.

¹³ Olson, “St. Louis Germans,” 245.

enjoy beer and a spirit of *gemütlichkeit* one last time, before the approaching moratorium became a reality.¹⁴

Although the *Vereine* drew the majority of their members from the ranks of the city's skilled craftsmen, factory workers, clerks, petty merchants, and laborers, the loss of *gemütlichkeit* was not limited to the city's working classes, for even members of the German-American upper and upper-middle classes were involved in the groups. Men such as the city's German brewing barons provided financial support for the *Vereine*, and in exchange they benefited not only from good press but also the satisfaction of continuing to perform their paternalistic roles within their traditional community.¹⁵ Adolphus and later August Busch, for example, partnered with local *Vereine* to sponsor an annual Christmas gift-giving by Sankt Nikolas, as well as a yearly Easter egg hunt, held at Number One Busch Plaza and later at Forest Park.¹⁶ Both Buschs, along with fellow brewers Otto Stifel, Henry Griesedieck, and William Lemp, Jr., also served on various committees of the city's German Day Celebration, an event organized by St. Louis's German Alliance and involving virtually all the *Vereine*.¹⁷ For both practical and altruistic reasons, St. Louis's wealthy brewers supported these and other German social and cultural occasions and institutions. The *Vereine*, after all, had provided important markets for locally-brewed beer. With the onset of Prohibition, however, the brewers' fortunes drastically declined, and so did their financial ability to support German-American societies and festivities. Hence, lack of elite patronage no doubt led to declining popular participation, which in turn discouraged the remaining brewers'

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, 266.

¹⁶ Ernest Kirschten, *Catfish and Crystal* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), 348-349. The annual neighborhood Easter egg hunt became so popular it was moved to Forest Park to accommodate the growing number of children.

¹⁷ Olson, "St. Louis Germans," 227.

charitable impulses, and so on, thus generating a downward spiral for the entire ethnic community.

Prohibition was thus more effective than any other conceivable force in destroying the German “way of life” in St. Louis. Without the spirit and cohesion of *gemütlichkeit*, the city’s German restaurants, beer gardens, and *Vereine* suffered. Even St. Louis’s powerful German press was affected by the loss of Teutonic culture within the city, and the related decline of the German language—caused in equal parts by the aging profile of the immigrant community, the nativism of World War I, and the culturally damaging effects of Prohibition—resulted in a significant reduction in subscriptions. By 1924 the situation was such that the city’s Catholic German-language paper, *Amerika*, was forced to cease publication.¹⁸ Since the 1840s their newspapers and other ethnic institutions had united the city’s diverse German community in a shared sense of Teutonic culture. In addition, and despite the hostility they had endured at their inception, by the end of the nineteenth century German-American institutions were so well-established and widely popular that had become an accepted and welcome source of entertainment and camaraderie for all St. Louisans. Hence, the loss of *gemütlichkeit*, the beer gardens, *Vereine*, and the breweries, all as a result of Prohibition, effectively caused the demise of the German culture in the city and in the process destroyed an important and cherished part of the larger culture of St. Louis.

Years earlier, in St. Louis’s Midwestern rival Chicago, a German saloon-keeper had explained that, “when a German comes to America, he looks for just three things—a

¹⁸ Ibid, 233.

saloon, a church, and a singing society.”¹⁹ Despite the passage of time and the decline of German immigration to the United States and to St. Louis in particular, it is fair to say that for many Germans and their German-American descendents priorities had changed relatively little, and although the church’s place may have diminished somewhat, the importance of the saloon, the beer garden, and the *Vereine*—along with good union jobs—remained as important as ever. The passage of the Volstead Act and the Eighteenth Amendment, however, greatly devitalized two of the three sources of German culture and identity that the Chicago saloon-keeper had listed as essential.

Compounding and exacerbating what might have been the natural and gradual decline of some German-American institutions was, of course, the loss of the breweries. The breweries had been centripetal forces—geographically, socially, and economically—in the German community. Most brewery workers had continued to live within easy walking distance of their places of employment. Their families had patronized German-owned shops, beer gardens, schools, churches, union halls, and community institutions in the neighborhoods and streets adjacent to the breweries and their homes. Now, without the breweries, and without the social and labor institutions that had depended on the breweries, there were fewer reasons for the city’s German-Americans to remain in their traditional ethnic enclaves in north and south St. Louis. Thus, the assimilation process that had begun at the end of the nineteenth century was given even greater impetus, and St. Louis’s German-Americans—formerly the base of the city’s work force and one of the largest groups of taxpayers in the city—increasingly joined the city’s other white

¹⁹ Perry R. Duis, *The Saloon: Public Drinking in Chicago and Boston, 1880-1920* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 154.

inhabitants, moving westward and into the County in pursuit of better jobs and neighborhoods.²⁰

By 1920 the exodus of St. Louis's white population, including an increasing number of German-Americans, into the suburban County contributed to the city's fall from the fourth most populous city in the nation to its sixth.²¹ The loss of St. Louis's honorific title of "Fourth City," one which its citizens had proudly proclaimed since 1870, was not entirely unexpected; nevertheless, the decline of urban status, like that which had occurred in 1880, was difficult to bear. Unlike 1880, however, the reasons for St. Louis's relative decline were all too apparent, as the city's comparatively small size combined with the falling growth rate of its foreign-born and native white population.

Having prided itself as being one of the most ethnically diverse major American cities during the mid- to late nineteenth century, St. Louis by the first decades of the twentieth was now one of the least.²² In some quarters the change was not necessarily

²⁰ H. Paul Douglass notes similar findings in his 1924 study, *The St. Louis Church Survey*; however, he offers one caveat, explaining that although the native-born population of foreign antecedents—"within which the German-American element is by far the largest"—did move westward, they usually moved to the northwest and southwest, whereas the "American population" moved directly westward. H. Paul Douglass, *The St. Louis Church Survey: A Religious Investigation with a Social Background* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1924), 66; Toft, ed., *Soulard: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood*, 9.

²¹ The extent of this westward movement, particularly that of the city's old immigrants, was reflected in the number of churches built along the western periphery of the city and eastern edge of the county. The congregations of many of the new Catholic churches were composed of large numbers of German and Irish immigrants and their descendants. Between 1900 and America's entrance into World War I, for example, a series of churches, including Immaculate Conception, St. Andrews, St. Cecelia, St. Rita and Corpus Christi, were founded. Two years later, the church of St. Mary Magdalene was opened in St. Louis County in the area of Southhampton. Its congregation was "decidedly German." The exodus would continue unabated during the 1920s, illustrated by the fact that of all the newly incorporated towns in Missouri, approximately two thirds were suburbs of St. Louis. John Rothensteiner, *History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis: In its Various Stages of Development from A.D. 1673 to A.D. 1928* (St. Louis: Blackwell Wielandy, 1928), 693-700; Howard P. Chudacoff and Judith E. Smith, *The Evolution of American Urban Society* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 209.

²² Part of this decline had to do with the reduced numbers of members of older immigrant groups, such as the Irish or Germans, that settled in St. Louis. By 1920 the number of German-born residents in the city had fallen to just over 30,000, representing a decline of 18,000 since 1910. The sharp decline during the decade is explained by the fact that German immigration to St. Louis, already falling, was effectively halted by World War I. Thus the continuing decline of St. Louis's German and other older European immigrants

unwelcome, and in an era marked by federal immigration restrictions, several contemporary publications proudly proclaimed that St. Louis had fewer “foreigners” than any other city, and that it was therefore the nation’s “most American City.”²³ The census results from the period lent credibility to such bold, if rather xenophobic, assertions, revealing that, among major U.S. cities, by 1910 only Baltimore had fewer foreign-born inhabitants.²⁴ However, the consequent decline of St. Louis’s ethnic presence and heritage—the foundation of which had been German —eroded the base of much of city’s past economic, social, and cultural successes.

It is arguable, then, that Prohibition accelerated the dilution and suburbanization of St. Louis’s German-American community, which in turn (given the paucity of New Immigrants) eroded much of the city’s traditional working and middle classes. Likewise, that erosion resulted in economic losses both for businesses and for local tax revenue, and those of course contributed to St. Louis’s agonizing decline in the second half of the

helps explain the fall of the overall foreign-born population, which fell from 18.3 percent of the city’s total population in 1910 to 13.4 percent in 1920. Nonetheless, this is only a partial explanation for the decline.

Another factor which also contributed to the decline of the city’s ethnic population was St. Louis’s inability to attract New Immigrants from eastern and southern Europe. Unlike other large American cities—including Chicago—St. Louis failed to attract significant numbers of New Immigrants during the last decade of the nineteenth and the first two decades of the twentieth century. Those that did come to the St. Louis metropolitan area rarely resided in the city; instead, many settled across the river in the growing number of Illinois communities. These New Immigrants were drawn to the east side because of the availability of employment, finding work in the increasing number of heavy industries, including coal operations, foundries, refineries, slaughterhouses, and tanneries, all of which combined by 1910 to account for a third of the manufacturing capabilities of the entire metropolitan area. In large part it was this new wave of immigrants which propelled the dynamic and highly diversified economies of Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland at the turn of the century. The city of St. Louis, faced with a declining number of old stock European immigrants, formerly the base of the city’s blue-collar working class, largely failed to attract the eastern and southern European immigrants who were swelling the population and labor pool of its urban competitors. By 1930, when other cities had substantial New Immigrant populations, the three largest such groups in St. Louis—the Italians, Russians, and Poles, and including their American-born children—accounted for only 2.9, 2.5, and 1.6 percent, respectively, of the city’s population. James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri* (Boulder, Col.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1981), 441; Mormino, *Immigrants on the Hill*, 17, 19; Sullivan, *Hyphenism In St. Louis*, ix.

²³ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, “The St. Louis Marker: A Series of Four Surveys Analyzing the Most Profitable Market West of Chicago” (1925).

²⁴ Gary Ross Mormino, *Immigrants on the Hill: Italian-Americans in St. Louis, 1882-1982* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 18.

twentieth century. On the other hand, it is at least equally arguable that Prohibition and German-American suburbanization and cultural attrition were inevitable, and, in any case, the growing numbers of African-American migrants—poor, unskilled, and subject to far greater prejudice than German immigrants had ever experienced—would never have been allowed to compete for jobs at Anheuser-Busch or any other breweries or businesses in St. Louis's traditional German enclave.²⁵

Nevertheless, it can be said that Prohibition may have accelerated some of these processes. As historian Gary Mormino wrote, Prohibition was the "economic bombshell"

²⁵ Although St. Louis historically had a modest black population, the beginning of the Great Migration in the first decade of the twentieth century, would result in a rapid influx of African-Americans into the Mound City. African-Americans, fleeing the failing agrarian system and overtly hostile racism of rural Missouri or the Deep South, often chose to settle in large urban cities such as St. Louis. Following the outbreak of World War I, this steady stream of African-Americans coming to St. Louis turned into a flood as blacks tried to take advantage of the increased need for labor caused by the wartime industries. Not surprisingly, the rise of the city's African-American population exacerbated local white racism and resulted in an increasingly hostile environment. Life in St. Louis, for years a bastion of organized labor, became increasingly strained, as members of the city's white labor unions and non-unionized African-American laborers competed for employment. German attitudes towards blacks had also deteriorated, the radical idealism of the 1860s and 1870s having been gradually replaced by false prejudices and real insecurities over employment and housing competition.

Despite the mounting racial unease within the city, the number of African-Americans continued to grow during the war, and by 1920 St. Louis's black population had increased by 60 percent over the decade, climbing from 43,960 to 69,854. African-Americans now accounted for 9 percent of the city's total population, which was a significantly larger share than in other Midwestern cities such as Chicago, Milwaukee, or Cleveland. Indeed, with the exception of Baltimore, the African-American proportion of St. Louis's population was larger than in any other American city with more than a half-million inhabitants. The perception of St. Louis's continuing economic strength—although largely an artificial construction, created by the city's business interests—resulted in an even greater influx of African-Americans moving to the city in pursuit of employment during the 1920s and the years of the Great Depression. Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 435-438, 469; Lawrence Oland Christensen, "Black St. Louis: A Study In Race Relations, 1865-1916" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1972), 67, 178; Mormino, *Immigrants on the Hill*, 19; Douglass, *The St. Louis Church Survey*, 36.

According to Henry Herbst, a second generation Anheuser-Busch employee and amateur brewing historian, as late as the 1960s African-Americans and other minorities rarely found employment at Anheuser-Busch. This was not so much due to overtly racist hiring practices as much as it was to the fact that, like it had been since its founding, the brewery remained very much a "closed shop." Closed not only in the sense that most of the workers were members of the union, but also in the manner in which vacancies were filled. Even by the 1960s, employment at the brewery remained a highly sought after blue-collar job in St. Louis, openings were a rarity, and when they did occur they were usually reserved for family members—as was the case with Herbst—or close associates. In this sense, despite the changing attitudes or the federal legislation brought about as a result of the Civil Rights movement, the breweries continued to employ a tightly knit group of men, many of whom were the sons or grandsons of earlier German immigrants. Herbst, Henry. Interviewed by Eoghan Miller. Phone Interview. January 31, 2008.

that shattered not only the St. Louis brewing industry but also the fabric of its German-American community. And, given the degree to which *gemütlichkeit* and other aspects of German culture had become integral to life in the entire city, it is also fair to speculate the Prohibition had profound and long-lasting effects on St. Louis as a whole. The breweries had been the lynch-pin, not only of the local German community, but of its relationships to the larger urban society. Over time, the traditional German social and cultural institutions, such as the beer gardens, German-language schools and newspapers, and the ubiquitous *Vereine* had contributed greatly to—indeed, had become synonymous with—St. Louis, symbols of its national prominence and distinctiveness.

Prohibition, more than any other force, including declining immigration and the First World War, undermined those beneficial relationships. Although the gradual assimilation of the city's German-American community had been occurring for decades, Prohibition dramatically accelerated the transition, increasing the number of German-Americans who forsook their traditional "German way of life," and everything that it entailed—including *gemütlichkeit*, and the fellowship of the *Vereine*—to join their "WASP" counterparts in the County's swelling suburbs. Thus, having for decades been a seat of Teutonic strength in America, renowned for the vitality of its German community, St. Louis after Prohibition was increasingly known primarily for its increasingly bitter race relations and as one of the nation's saddest examples of urban decline.

X. REPEAL AND AFTER

As one of Prohibition's leading historians put it, "no law passed in this country since the abolition of slavery affected so vast an investment of tangible property as did the Volstead Act."¹ The assessment is certainly accurate in that it correctly illustrates the magnitude of Prohibition. What it fails to do, however, is demonstrate the enormity of Prohibition's failure. After more than a decade of illicit alcohol consumption, accompanied by a dramatic rise in crime and lawlessness, the social and moral effects of Prohibition proved to be far worse than the symptoms associated with the legal and government-regulated production of alcohol. Consequently, by the presidential election of 1932 a majority of Americans, including many politicians, publicly called for Prohibition's repeal, citing not only its failure but also the potential economic benefits of resuming alcohol production during the Great Depression. One of the politicians that pushed for Repeal was the eventual Democratic presidential nominee, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. After campaigning on a "wet" plank during the fall, Roosevelt wasted little time after taking office in March 1933, signing legislation to allow the renewed production of light wines and beers on April 7, 1933. Although Prohibition and the Eighteenth Amendment would not officially be repealed until the ratification of the Twenty-first Amendment to the Constitution in early December 1933, the return of beer—after a thirteen year absence—was greeted with joyous celebrations throughout the country, surpassing even the ones that marked the end of World War I.²

¹ Herman Feldman, *Prohibition: Its Economic and Industrial Aspects* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1927), 306.

² Peter Hernon and Terry Ganey, *Under the Influence: The Unauthorized Story of Anheuser-Busch Dynasty* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 151.

The long wait for the return of beer was considered important enough for CBS radio network to transmit a live broadcast of the merriment which accompanied the opening whistle and the first shipments of beer from the three primary and rival brewing cities in the nation, St. Louis, Chicago, and Milwaukee.³ The excitement was understandable, as the reestablishment of the industry meant not only a return for beer but also the potential for employment and economic growth at a time when the nation languished in the depths of the Great Depression. Breweries throughout the nation quickly added hundreds of employees to their payrolls to aid in the expedited production. Across the country, bars, hotels, restaurants, and saloons served hundreds of thousands of eager patrons their first taste of legal brew in over a decade. In the first few days after Repeal—before the limited supply ran dry—the nation’s thirty or so breweries in operation earned a total of \$10 million, providing a much desired boost to local economies and a needed source of tax revenue.⁴

In St. Louis, as might have been expected, the sale of beer created a carnival-like atmosphere as crowds of tens of thousands of the city’s inhabitants assembled outside Anheuser-Busch and Falstaff breweries—the only two establishments in the city licensed to manufacture beer for the opening night—anxiously awaiting the first shipments.⁵ By the close of the first day both Anheuser-Busch and Falstaff breweries had sold a sizable percentage of their entire available inventory, with the former shipping close to 3,600

³ Ibid, 153.

⁴ William L. Downard, *Dictionary of the History of the American Brewing and Distilling Industries* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980), xviii; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (April 9, 1933). The total amount purchased and consumed would most certainly have been considerably higher if it was not for the fact that only the twenty states that joined the federal government in repeal, or those, such as Missouri, which had never passed state prohibition laws, were allowed to manufacture and sell alcoholic beverages in April.

⁵ Alvin Griesedieck, *The Falstaff Story* (St. Louis: Simmons-Sisler Company, Inc., 1951), 107.

barrels of beer around the city, the state, and even the nation.⁶ By the end of the following business day, St. Louis's papers proclaimed that the city had drunk the "breweries dry in less than twenty-four hours."⁷

The flourish surrounding the event in St. Louis was understandable, since the city's inhabitants had never supported the "noble experiment," voting against it at the ballot box and, more informally, in a 1931 poll conducted by one of the city's papers, by a margin of nearly fifty to one.⁸ In the days following Repeal, Anheuser-Busch published this full-page advertisement in most of the metropolitan newspapers in the country:

Something More Than Beer is Back

Beer is back! In those three simple words a great American industry has gone back to work. Hands long idle have found new jobs. Faces empty of hope brighten to a new promise. Thousands have found honorable livelihood. A vast American market—a new frontier of industry reopens—bringing sorely needed business to farmers, transportation and to hundreds of other industries. And with it, a new fountain head of tax revenue has arisen to add its dollars gladly to a nation in need.

Although the advertisement went on to promote Budweiser, it also addressed the larger implications of Prohibition's repeal. Although perhaps overly dramatic, the argument held true, as the reestablishment of the brewing industry proved economically beneficial, especially during the Great Depression. Anheuser-Busch, for example, added 1,700 new or returning workers after Repeal became a certainty, while the workforce of Falstaff's brewery also rose quickly during the period to a new high of 150.⁹ Within a little over a year, Anheuser-Busch had increased the number of employees at its St. Louis factory to

⁶ "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune* (July, 1932), 44.

⁷ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (April 8, 1933).

⁸ *St. Louis Times* (Aug. 10, 1931). The unscientific poll found that of those city residents who responded to the question only 426 approved of the measure while 15,849 did not.

⁹ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (April 7, 1933).

the pre-Prohibition levels, around 6,000, while also providing jobs for another 1,500 at its various national branches.¹⁰ In the coming months, more breweries would come on line, and by 1934 there were ten in operation, providing employment for thousands in the city, while another nine breweries remained in the planning stages.¹¹ The workers in the breweries were not the only ones who benefited from Repeal as other related industries experienced an upturn in value and employment. Throughout the country large cities such as St. Louis benefited from an increase in employment. Estimates ranged widely, but officials in New York and Chicago projected that Repeal had added 70,000 and 40,000 employees, respectively, to the working ranks.¹² Other city estimates were more conservative but still significant; these included Los Angeles with 10,000 new workers, San Francisco with 7,000, and Boston and the twin cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul with 1,000 each.¹³

Although the immediate excitement which accompanied Repeal was understandable, the return of beer and the brewing industry in 1933 would, in a very real sense, prove too late for many of the nation's brewers and their breweries. This was perhaps especially true in St. Louis where many breweries had closed their doors forever. William J. Lemp Brewing, the city's oldest and still second-leading producer of beer at the beginning of Prohibition, was one of these failed breweries. Moreover, the loss had proved too much for the company's former president, as William J. Lemp, Jr., plagued by a sense of failure and regret, committed suicide shortly after selling his family's historic

¹⁰ F. P. Hankerson, "The History of Brewing in St. Louis," *Modern Brewery* (Sep. 1934), 29.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹² *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (April 9, 1933).

¹³ *Ibid.*

operation.¹⁴ Likewise, Otto Stifel, the president of the once flourishing Union Brewery, had killed himself two years earlier, after his family's brewery had similarly collapsed under the weight of Prohibition.¹⁵ Although Anheuser-Busch Brewery did not succumb to Prohibition's devastating effects, the stress and sense of failure experienced by its president was no less strong. Having struggled throughout the dry years not only with maintaining the brewery but also his health, Busch finally surrendered to his pain, both physical and emotional, killing himself only months after Prohibition's repeal.¹⁶

Although in a sense Prohibition had taken the lives of these three St. Louis brewers, it had had a similar effect on the city's entire brewing industry. Although Anheuser-Busch overcame the difficulties of both Prohibition and the loss of its president, and rose again to prominence after Repeal, the larger brewing industry in the city would not regain its former distinction.

The biggest reason for this—and despite the apparent thirst of St. Louis and other cities immediately following Repeal—was the nation's decreased consumption of beer. Despite brewery efforts to increase production rapidly in the months and years following Repeal, the pace of the public's consumption of beer was not sustained at pre-war levels. By 1937 the country's 720 breweries produced and sold less than fifty-nine million barrels, and the nation's breweries did not succeed in matching the pre-war high in sales until 1940.¹⁷ One reason for this decline in the public's desire for the German beverage

¹⁴ Hernon, *Under the Influence*, 163.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. In addition to these three brewers, William J. Lemp, Sr. had also committed suicide. His son and heir to the Lemp brewing empire shot himself in the same family mansion where his father had taken his own life twenty years earlier. The frequency with which St. Louis's German brewers took their own lives was so great that the phrase "the Dutch Act" became synonymous for suicide.

¹⁷ Downard, *Dictionary of the History of the American Brewing and Distilling Industries*, xviii; William Downard, *The Cincinnati Brewing Industry: A Social and Economic History* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1973), 137.

was that Americans had grown accustomed to hard liquor, one of the many negative unintended consequences of Prohibition.¹⁸ Another was the increased level of taxation, compared to 1914, which was passed on to the customers.¹⁹ Other factors that contributed to the sales slowdown included the need for modern manufacturing and advertising techniques, previously unnecessary in the tradition-steeped beer business, and restrictions on breweries and their relationships with saloons.²⁰ All of these factors combined, in the years following Repeal, meant that brewing was no longer a very profitable business.

The negative and lasting effects of Prohibition were evident in St. Louis to an even greater degree than in the nation's other cities. Although there can be little doubt that Repeal produced economic benefits for the city—as evidenced by the increased number of employees and sales of Anheuser-Busch and the other breweries—it could not bring a return to the brewing industry's pre-war levels. There are many possible reasons why the city's brewing industry did not regain its former stature. The demographics of St. Louis had changed: by the 1930s the city's German-American community was smaller than it had been at any point since the 1840s. Also, the anti-German sentiments of World War I and the loss of *gemütlichkeit* had obliged or encouraged German-Americans to assimilate more rapidly into the larger population and to abandon aspects of their

¹⁸ Hermann Schluter, *The Brewing Industry and the Brewery Workers' Movement in America* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1910, 1970), 308; "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune*, 43. Some observers estimated that this change in tastes cut the beer market by as much as 50 percent. The increased demand for soda was yet another unforeseen result of Prohibition, and although its new demand had supplied many breweries with a temporary means of subsistence during the "noble experiment," soda's popularity would detract from beer sales after Repeal. Maureen Ogle, *Ambitious Brew: The Story of American Beer* (Orlando, Fla: Harcourt, Inc., 2006), 205-206.

¹⁹ "King of Bottled Beer," *Fortune*, 106. While the 1914 tax had been only \$1 a barrel, the tax imposed in 1933 was \$5 a barrel—a considerable increase even when inflation is taken into account.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 108.

heritage, such as the beer gardens and blue-collar work in the German breweries.²¹ In addition to such demographic and cultural factors, St. Louis's natural and man-made advantages no longer were so unique or valuable. By the 1930s the city's location on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers did not provide the same manufacturing and shipping advantages as they had in the nineteenth century. The city, like the state generally, had also allowed its railroad network to fall into decline during the Prohibition years.²² Although this may have been a national trend, the success of Missouri's breweries had largely been built on its rail connections to the South and West. With the gradual decline of these older modes of transportation in favor of trucking, other cities and breweries were able to make up ground. The advent and widespread use of artificial refrigeration by the turn of the century also meant that St. Louis's breweries had lost an important advantage over those in the South.²³ For whatever reason, or perhaps for a combination of reasons, a sizable proportion of the city's \$200 million investment in breweries did not recover from Prohibition.²⁴

The economic effects of Prohibition, and the decline of the German brewing industry even after Repeal, would be more severe and long-lasting in St. Louis than in almost any other American city. St. Louis's manufacturing value, which between 1929 and 1930 fell more than \$350 million to \$963.5 million, plummeted still further the

²¹ David Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri, 1900-1918: Prohibition, Neutrality, and Assimilation* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1985), 186.

²² Richard S. Kirkendall, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV, 1919-1953* (Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 210.

²³ The advent of artificial refrigeration at the end of the nineteenth century rendered obsolete many of the natural advantages, which originally helped make St. Louis a leader in the brewing industry. The city's caves, for example, many of which had been used as early as the Civil War, now no longer provided St. Louis a superior means of temperature-controlled storage. In addition, St. Louis's location along the rivers, which initially provided access to a supply of virtually year-round ice for the breweries, was made superfluous by the new technologies of refrigeration.

²⁴ Feldman, *Prohibition*, 322.

following year to a mere \$371.3 million—the same as the city’s 1914 production level.²⁵ After 1933 the city’s manufacturing value once again began to rise, a trend that continued through the rest of the decade, and Repeal most certainly played a role in the improvement; its contribution, however, is impossible to calculate in the context of the larger benefits provided by Roosevelt’s New Deal programs. Despite the gradual return of the city’s manufacturing power, boosted as it was after 1933 by the reintroduction of brewing, St. Louis continued to fall behind other American cities.

²⁵ Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Fiftieth Annual Report Bureau of Labor Statistics State of Missouri: For the Fiscal Years Ending November 5, 1929* (Jefferson City, MO: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1930?), 9; Missouri Bureau of Labor Statistics, *The Commonwealth of Missouri 51st and 52nd Annual Reports of the Labor and Industrial Inspection Department: November 5, 1929, to November 5, 1931* (Jefferson City, MO: State of Missouri, Labor and Industrial Inspection Department, 1932), 176.

CONCLUSION

In 1909, as part of the city's official program commemorating the centennial anniversary of St. Louis's incorporation, the amateur historian and professional journalist, William Vincent Byars, composed an exhausting account of the city's rich history and its remarkable progress. Byars was nevertheless unsatisfied with the description, declaring that the city's physical characteristics failed to reveal the true grandeur of St. Louis. A city, according to Byars, "is not [simply] a collection of people and houses" but instead "is an organic whole, with its own spirit and its own mind, making it unlike itself from generation to generation, as it grows without losing its individuality."¹ It is this soul or essence which makes a city great and gives it its unique identity, Byars concluded, yet those intangibles make it almost "impossible to understand [or adequately] describe a great city."² Nine years later Byars sentiments were echoed by W. C. Bitting a well known Baptist clergyman in the city, who wrote: "a city is more than an assemblage of buildings with streets between them. It has a soul, and an atmosphere, and a social significance to which all material things should be made to minister."³

To no small degree, the purpose of the present study has been to try to do just what Byars and Bitting attempted: to provide the reader with a better understanding of what the "soul" of St. Louis was while also describing the social and historical significance of the city. Despite the passage of time, or perhaps because of it, the task has proven as difficult today as it appears to have been for Byars and Bitting at the

¹ Walter B. Stevens and William Vincent Byars. *St. Louis in the twentieth century: Centennial of the incorporation of St. Louis : official program of the celebration, October 3-9, 1909* (St. Louis: Woodward & Tiernan, 1909), 5.

² Ibid.

³ James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1981), preface i.

beginning of the century. Nevertheless, it is the author's hope that this work succeeds in at least a small measure and in the process helps illuminate some of the important factors that led to St. Louis's extraordinary success. Equally important, it is also my hope that the manuscript provides an insight into what caused the city's eventual decline.

The downfall of St. Louis, from its once mighty position as the nation's "Fourth City" and from its boosters' wildly optimistic ambition to inhabit "the future great city of the world," is not a new topic of study. In fact a host of historians, social scientists, and St. Louisans throughout the decades have attempted to answer this very topic. The conclusions they have drawn have been equally diverse, ranging from the constricting geographical features, such as the river, the city's conservative business climate, the lack of proper investment, the orientation of the city's hinterland market, the failures of local leaders, and the decision to separate city from county. The historiography on the subject has grown extensively, and although judgments about some theories have waxed and waned with each period's prevailing wisdom, few have been completely rebuked. The failure of any one theory to gain ascendance over all the rest may attest to the complexities of St. Louis's relative decline, and perhaps a synthesis of many hypotheses provides the most complete explanation. One explanation which, despite the considerable interest in the topic, has drawn little more than a passing mention over the years is the role that Prohibition played in St. Louis's fall. This seems to be a strangely ignored factor, especially when one considers St. Louis's historic and oft-referenced love of beer, and one which merits thoughtful attention.

Prohibition, both in its wartime incarnation and later after the passage of the Volstead Act and the Eighteenth Amendment, did far more than simply prevent St.

Louisians from enjoying their favorite beverage. Instead, Prohibition crippled St. Louis's manufacturing base and—along with World War I—effectively destroyed the city's German-American community. As important as are the other factors in explaining the decline of St. Louis after the turn of the century, Prohibition and its negative effects were crucial. Indeed, Prohibition was unique because its negative effects on St. Louis embraced economic, social, and cultural patterns and institutions that formerly were at the very heart of the city's German-American community and, given that community's central role in St. Louis, at the very heart of the life and spirit of the city, generally.

When assessing either the rise or the fall of St. Louis, the city's German-immigrant and later German-American community is key. The flood of German immigrants to St. Louis during the middle of the nineteenth century had more to do with the rapid rise of the former frontier trading post to the nation's "Fourth City" than any other single factor. St. Louis's German population played a pivotal role during the Civil War and in the city's post-war success. Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, two decades after the height of German immigration to the city, the German presence in St. Louis remained an integral and vital aspect of the city.

The Germans who came to St. Louis during the mid- and late nineteenth century characteristically brought with them a liberal political philosophy, considerable craft skills, and their penchant for beer. The popularity of the alcoholic beverage among the Germans spurred, perhaps even necessitated, the establishment of a host of breweries during the 1840s and 1850s. As the German habit of social drinking—initially scorned by native society—spread to St. Louis's other inhabitants, the breweries grew in size and profits. In the post Civil War era, St. Louis was a national leader in brewing, and by the

end of the century the industry was one of the most important in the city, providing tens of thousands with employment in the breweries and related industries, as well as millions of dollars in taxes and manufacturing value. During the Gilded Age the city's brewer barons became some of St. Louis's foremost business leaders, and their wealth gave them considerable political and financial power.

As important as beer and the brewing industry were to the economic wellbeing of the German community and the larger city, they also played an equally important cultural role. Beer provided the essential ingredient to German sociability or *gemütlichkeit*, and it manifested itself in virtually every facet of German life in St. Louis, especially in the beer gardens and the hundreds of German *Vereine*. For a group as heterogeneous as St. Louis's German immigrant community, *gemütlichkeit* and the related culture of social drinking would be keys to its cohesiveness and a shared sense of identity. More than other immigrant groups, the Germans were often divided by issues of religion, class, political ideology, provincial loyalty and, in the case of St. Louis, geographic location. Although some historians have argued that these divisions contributed to a greater degree of assimilation for Germans immigrants than was characteristic of other groups, much evidence—at least in the Teutonic fortress that was St. Louis—indicates that this was not the case.⁴ In fact, *gemütlichkeit* and the German relationship with beer seem to have been so strong in St. Louis that they provided a source of ethnic resilience even into the

⁴ St. Louis German historians Mary Jane Olson and Petra DeWitt, for example, both stress the heterogeneity of the German community in St. Louis. Nevertheless, both historians recognize the powerful cohesive force with *gemütlichkeit* was in the German-American community. Olson and DeWitt offer a more nuanced interpretation than observers such as H. L. Mencken or earlier historians such as Richard O'Connor, both of whom asserted that the Germans were so quickly and thoroughly assimilated in the American "melting pot" that they became "all but invisible." Petra DeWitt, "Searching For the Roots of Harassment and the Meaning of Loyalty: A Study of the German-American Experience In Missouri During World War I," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Missouri, 2005), 20; Richard O'Connor, *The German-Americans: An Informal History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), 456.

twentieth century. World War I and to a greater extent its wartime “baby,” Prohibition, changed this, however, effectively destroying *gemütlichkeit* and the “German way of life,” and thus breaking the bonds of cultural identity. Without the breweries, many German immigrants and their native-born children were deprived of their traditional, ethnic-centered employment, and although other jobs existed they did not provide the same sense of camaraderie and fulfillment. As a result of Prohibition, the beer halls and outdoor beer gardens, formerly important sources of German sociability, closed as well. The lack of beer damaged *gemütlichkeit* to the extent that the city’s *Vereine* struggled simply to survive, despite having once been one of the most distinguishing manifestations of German culture.

Perhaps initially more apparent than Prohibition’s cultural effects were its economic consequences. Prior to World War I, the importance of the industry was indisputable not only for the German-American community but for the entire city. Contrary to the claims by the city’s business community or by some more recent historians, in the early 1900s as in the past St. Louis continued to lack a truly diverse manufacturing sector. Thus, the loss of such an important industry as brewing, one which provided more than 7 percent of the city’s total manufacturing value, and on which so many other businesses were dependent, proved impossible to replace. The loss of brewing also contributed to St. Louis’s other endemic economic problems. St. Louis’s market had once stretched from southern Illinois to the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and from Iowa as far south as Texas, but by the early 1900s it had shrunk considerably. Paradoxically, St. Louis’s economic might was in a sense doomed by its own success. It was men, money, and materials from St. Louis which were largely responsible for

building much of the West, and yet, once established, western cities such as Dallas, Tulsa, Omaha, Denver, and Kansas City increasingly came to supply their own geographically dependent area.⁵ By the first decade of the twentieth century St. Louis's market had been much reduced, and what remained—southern Illinois, eastern Missouri, and Arkansas—was considerably poorer, at least relatively speaking, than what had been lost. It was this hinterland market on which St. Louis would increasingly rely. However, the cessation of brewing, plus the resulting decline of the city's once-flourishing tobacco industry, contributed significantly to St. Louis's and, indeed, the entire region's post-war economic attrition. Without the continuous demand for grain, corn, and tobacco by these industries, the state's farmers suffered heavily. Coupled with this reduced demand were significantly lower food prices in the 1920s, and, when one also considers the collapse of the cotton market, it is little wonder that many rural Midwesterners and Southerners struggled during the “roaring” 1920s.

Perhaps the most obvious negative economic effect of Prohibition was the loss of an estimated 40,000 jobs. Although many found temporary relief through employment in wartime industries, many of the older workers, particularly those who had worked their entire lives at the city's breweries, found it difficult to adjust, both physically and psychologically. For younger members of the German-American community, the close of the breweries meant they no longer had an opportunity to ply their trade in an industry which, since its inception, had been owned and operated by Germans. In a sense the brewing industry provided an economic enclave for the city's German-Americans. Without the employment in the breweries, the bonds that tied the city's German-Americans to their traditional culture were greatly weakened. The assimilation process,

⁵ Ernest Kirschten, *Catfish and Crystal* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960), 420.

which had always been an ongoing process, now accelerated without these older cultural and economic ties. Consequently, an increasing number of St. Louis's German-Americans—like other whites—joined the wave of people leaving the inner city for better homes and newer jobs on the outer periphery and in the County.

The Germans and their descendants—along with the Irish—were traditionally the base of St. Louis's working classes, and although a growing minority had joined the ranks of the city's businessmen and professionals, skilled blue-collar work—such as that in the breweries—continued to be dominated by German-Americans. Thus, Prohibition eroded the German-American community's traditional labor base, which also accelerated the decline of its cultural identity and spurred its members' assimilation and growing exodus from their old, downtown neighborhoods. Other cities did not suffer during Prohibition to the same degree as St. Louis, partly because their economies were not so heavily dependent on brewing, and partly because they had benefited in 1890-1920 from the waves of New Immigrants which had largely bypassed St. Louis. In St. Louis, the decline of the white, old-stock (German, Irish, British) industrial working class was instead offset primarily by new African-American migrants from the Missouri and Deep South countryside. However, these newcomers could not integrate with their blue-collar predecessors, and instead their poverty, skin-color, and growing presence provided whites with additional reasons to abandon the city for the suburbs. Prohibition, however, greatly accelerated German-American assimilation, to a more-or-less homogenous white, suburban society and culture.

German-American and other white out-migration were particularly harmful for St. Louis because of the city's relatively small physical size. The roots of that problem could

be traced back to the fateful decision to separate the City from the County in 1876. Initially heralded as a key to St. Louis's continued growth and success, the measure proved ultimately detrimental to both. The city's boundary, set in 1876 at what appeared to be a generous 61 square miles, was by the first decades of the twentieth century sharply restricting, and while other cities such as cross-state rival Kansas City annexed and added both land and people, St. Louis failed to do either. When the extent of the problem was realized, attempts were made to correct it by re-consolidating St. Louis city and County into a single political, administrative, and taxation unit. Consolidation proposals were taken to popular votes in 1926, 1930, and as late as 1959, and yet each time the plans met with defeat, usually due to County opposition.⁶ The failure to reverse the "Great Divorce" doomed St. Louis to a constricted area smaller than that of virtually any other major American city during the first half of the twentieth century, save Boston. By the late twentieth century, the combination of "white flight" and business disinvestment from, and de-industrialization in, the central city had left a tax base far too small to enable St. Louis's political leaders to address the massive problems associated with the poverty of the city's growing majority of African Americans.

Much has befallen St. Louis since it was first founded in the late eighteenth century, or even since it reached its height in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Since then St. Louis has declined from being the "Fourth City"—with a trading territory so large that the city was called the capital of the "Forty-ninth state"—to merely being the forty-ninth largest city in the nation.⁷ Today St. Louis leads in few things, and those

⁶ Richard S. Kirkendall, *A History of Missouri: Volume IV*, 1919-1953 (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 44; Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 474.

⁷ Gibson, "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990," U.S. Bureau of the Census (accessed April 26, 2008).

categories in which it does lead—such as urban crime and violence—are hardly desirable. Perhaps the city’s negative contemporary image should not come as a surprise, given the city’s troubled history since the early 1900s. In October 1929, only a few days prior to the stock market crash that would begin the Great Depression, a popular magazine posited that “beer made St. Louis”.⁸ Perhaps even more accurate would have been the statement that it had been the city’s German residents, their love of beer and their spirit of *gemütlichkeit*, which had been the basis for much of the city’s economic success and its unique socio-cultural identity during the nineteenth and very early twentieth century’s. Clearly, the twentieth-century city was troubled by many problems, some of them systemic. However, it was the negative effects of Prohibition which destroyed those benign and reinforcing ethnic and economic relationships and so paved the way for St. Louis’s late twentieth-century fate.

⁸ Gerald Holland, “The King of Beer,” *American Mercury* (Oct, 1929), 171.

Figure 1. St. Louis Ward Map 1850

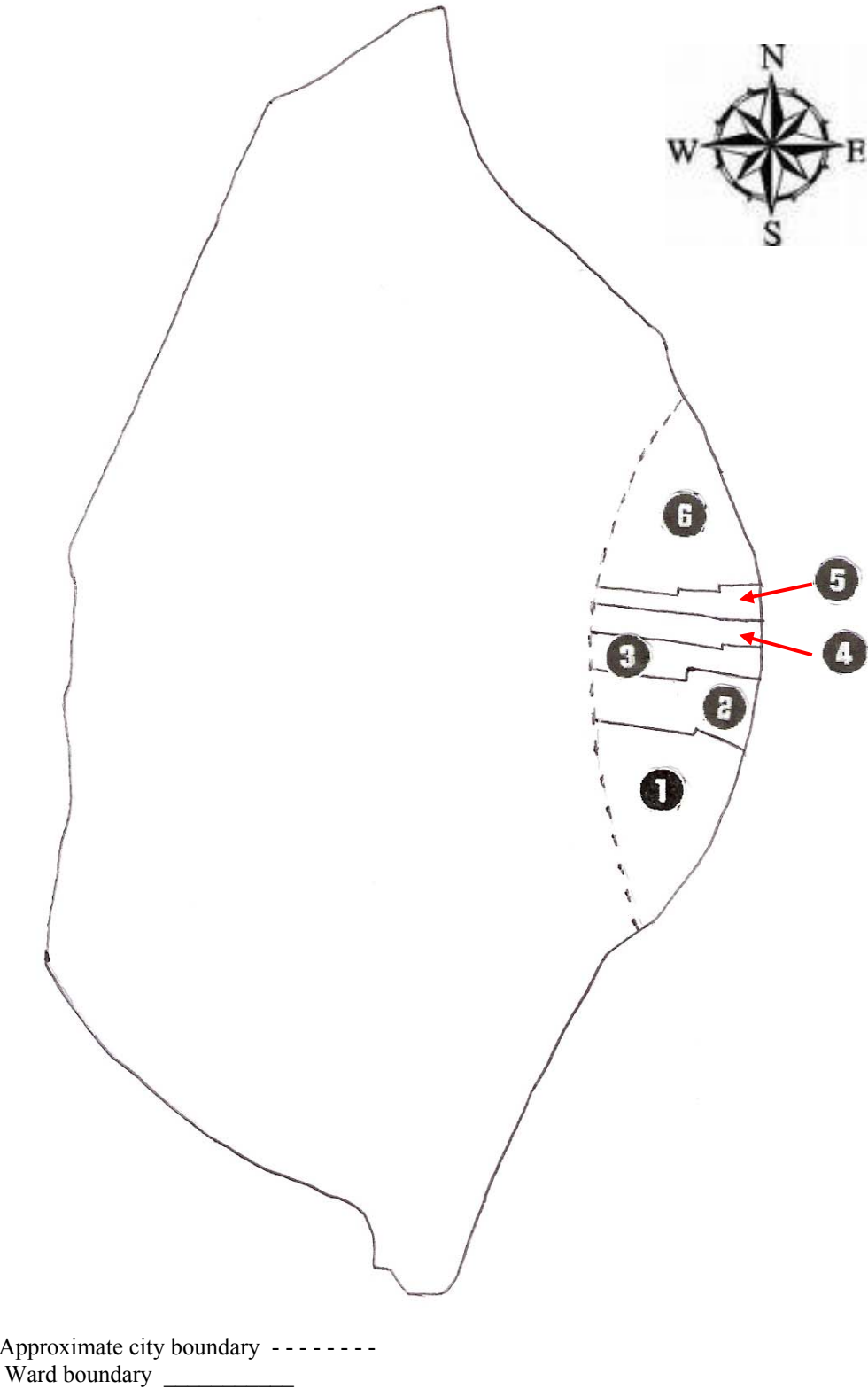


Figure 2. St. Louis Ward Map 1880

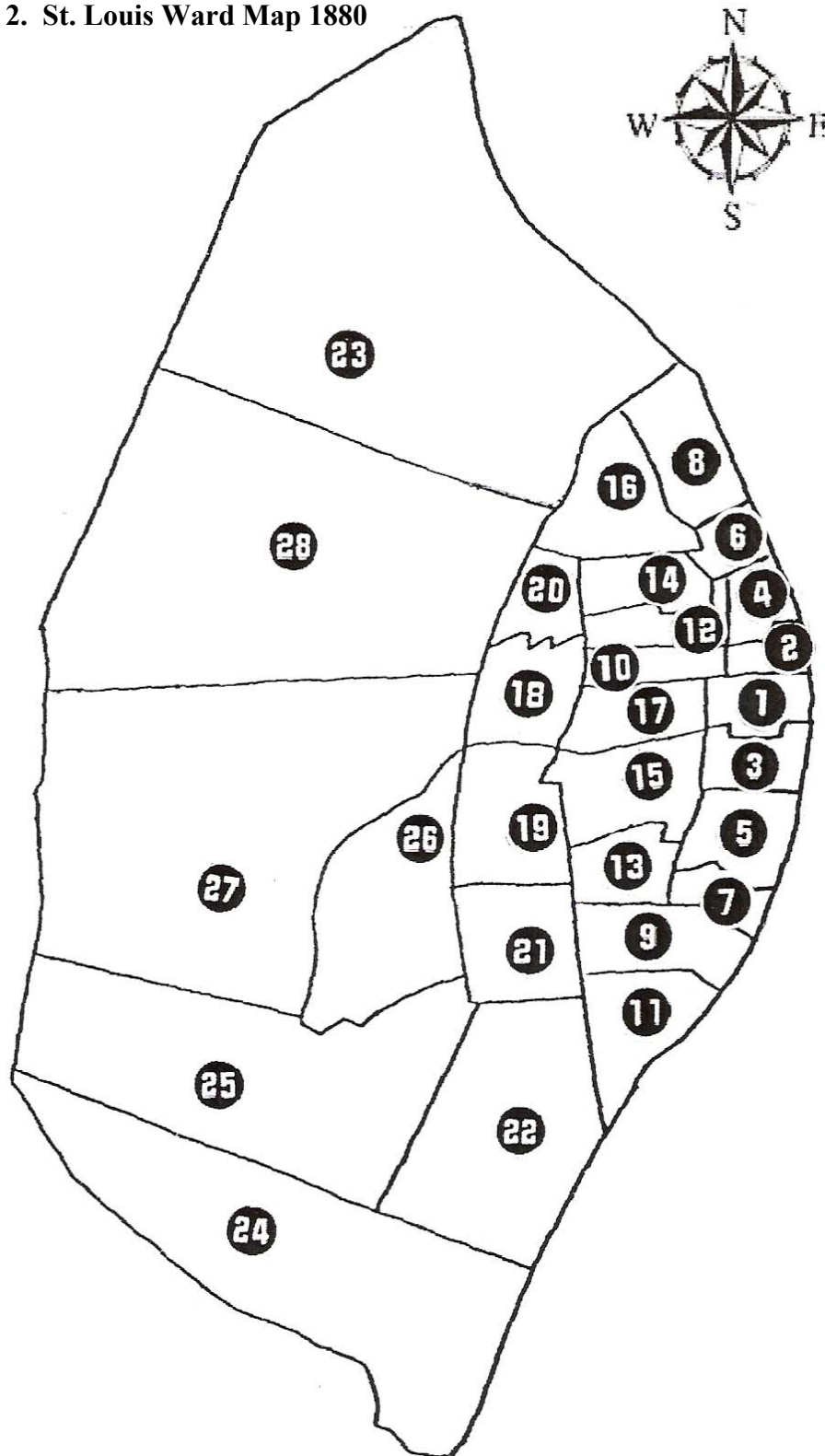


Figure 3. St. Louis Ward Map 1910

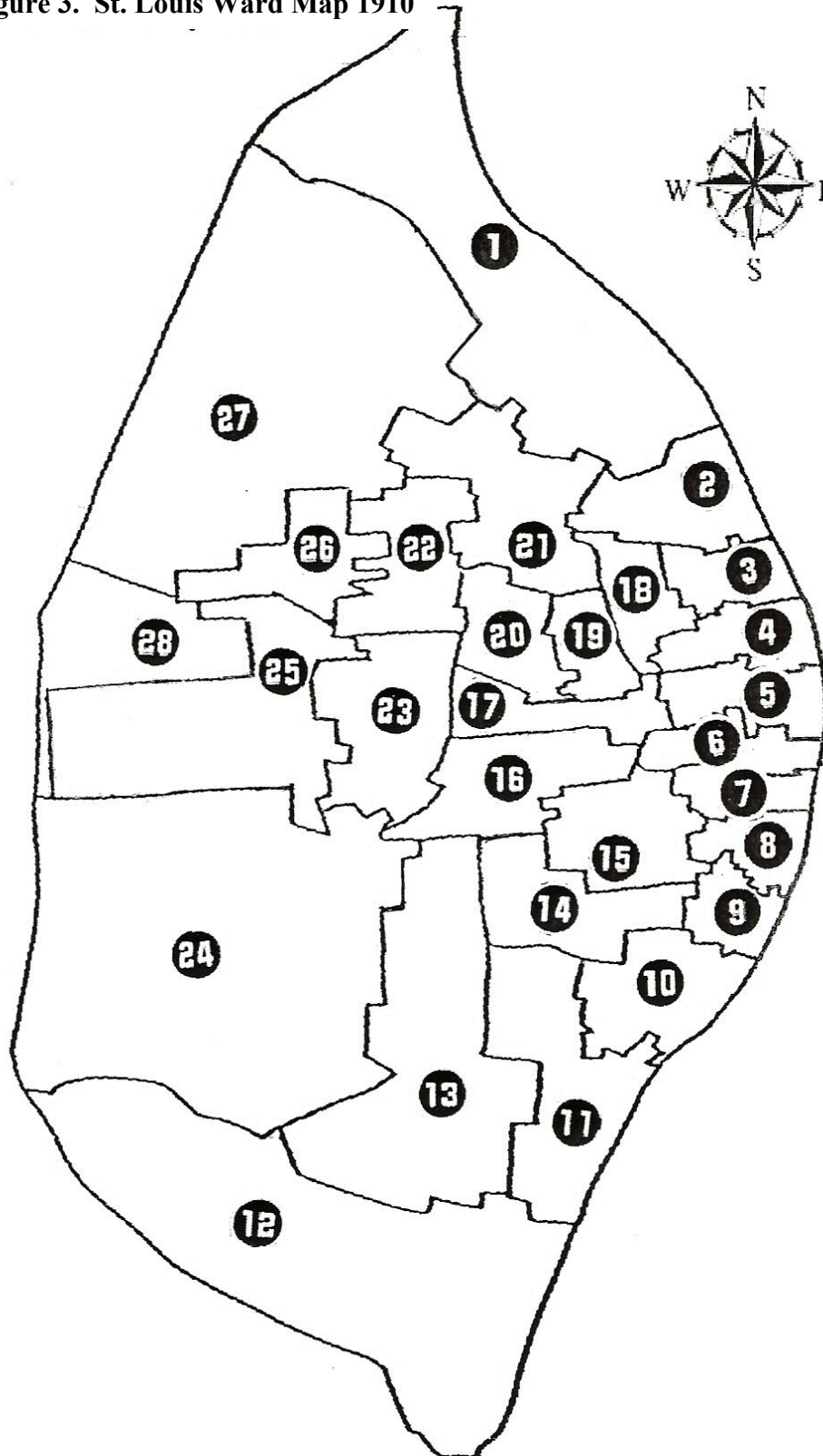


Figure 4. St. Louis's Pre-Prohibition Breweries



Map made available courtesy of The State Historical Society of Missouri

Figure 4. St. Louis's Pre-Prohibition Breweries

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) American #:
S. 7 ^h & 2814/2825 S Broadway | 12) H. Grone @:
2211/2219 Clark Ave. |
| 2) Anheuser-Busch
721 Pestalozzi St. | 13) Hyde Park @:
Florissant Ave. & Salisbury St. |
| 3) City@:
1402 Chambers St. | 14) Louis Obert:
2700 S. 12 th St. |
| 4) Columbia #:
20 th & Madison Sts. | 15) Mutual:
224/236 S Boyle Ave. |
| 5) Columbia Weiss:
2545 Dodier | 16) National #:
18 th & Gratiot Sts. |
| 6) Empire:
Sarah St. & Wabash Rye. | 17) Otto F. Stifel's Union:
3128 Gravois Ave. & 1531 Branch |
| 7) Excelsior @:
17 th & Market Sts. | 18) Schorr-Kolkschneider:
2537 Nat. Bridge Rd. & Parnell St. |
| 8) Forest Park, Griesedieck, Falstaff:
3662/3884 Forest Park Blvd. & Spring | 19) Schroeder's Berliner Weiss:
1013 Paul St. |
| 9) Gast #:
8500 N. Broadway & Hornsby Ave. | 20) Scotch Hop Ale:
729 Clark Ave. |
| 10) Green Tree @:
906 Sidney & 9 th St. | 21) Wainwright @:
1015 Papin, 10 th & 11 th Sts. |
| 11) Griesedieck Bros.:
1900 Shenandoah Ave. & 19 th St. | 22) William J. Lemp:
Cherokee St & Demenil Place |

Independent Breweries Co.
@ St. Louis Brewing Association

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