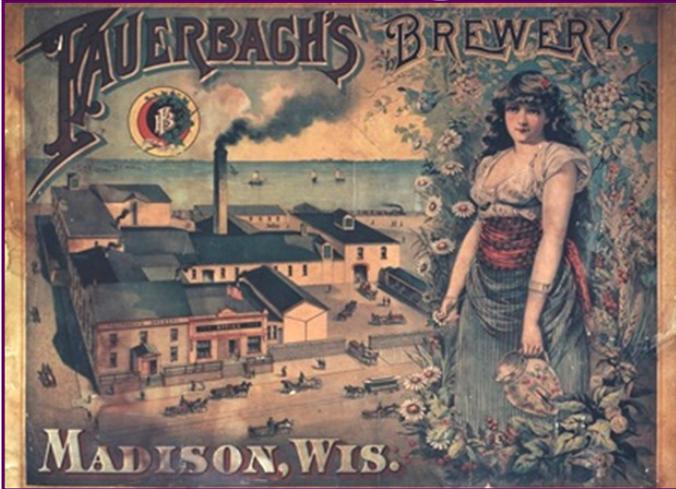


# Exploring Fauerbach Brewery



At Age 17, Peter Fauerbach came to Brooklyn, New York with Henry Bierbauer family relatives in 1848 to escape the upheaval in 19<sup>th</sup> century Bavaria. After a short stint at the Charles Bierbauer Brewery along the Erie Canal in Utica, New York, he and the Bierbauers moved to New Lisbon, Wisconsin where they opened and co-owned the H. Bierbauer Brewery. After a few years, Peter married Marie Haertel, the daughter of Karl Haertel who had opened a brewery in neighboring Portage, Wisconsin in 1851.

In 1848, Frederick Adam Sprecher started a brewery at 653 Williamson Street in Madison, Wisconsin, shown in the lithographs. This site became the home of Fauerbach Brewery. The Fauerbach, Haertel, and Sprecher families were related by marriages between members of their close knit brewing families.

Peter moved to Madison in 1868 to purchase the Sprecher brewery and rename it the Fauerbach Brewery. The family-owned brewery was operated through prohibition until 1966.

Peter concentrated on establishing the Fauerbach name in the Madison area. The brewery remained small throughout the 1870s and 1880s. Production was approximately 3000 barrels per year. Fauerbach focused on serving the Madison area and local communities. The advent of railroads allowed beer to be shipped to Prairie du Chien by 1863 in a matter of hours. Peter and his six sons built the business by providing home delivery.



He provided a variety of beers such as a lighter beer called Mensapale, a dark Salvator brew, and an export with body and a high alcohol content that helped preserve the beer and allow for better transportation. Although U.S. German brewers knew about the use of adjuncts like corn, since the common 6 row barley did not have the diastatic power of the European 2 row barley, the most popular products would have been darker, unfiltered beer with a strong reliance on all barley malt, which provided more body.

Peter died in 1886 at which time Marie became proprietress of the brewery. His sons Louis, Henry, Philip, Charles, and Emil ran the day to day operations. Continued growth increased the size to eight times their father's brewery. Two 150 horsepower boilers provided energy for the plant which employed almost 100 workers and was the only union brewery in Madison.

During prohibition the Fauerbach Brewery produced cereal beverages, sodas, and cheeses. To make ends meet the brewery was forced to sell off many of its properties. Fauerbach more than likely did not have tied houses but bought furnishings and in some cases saloons in return for serving their beer.

Post prohibition Fauerbach reestablished brewing operations. These were profitable times for the brewery. Continuing to self-distribute locally, the brewery

expanded sales to western states along the major rail lines. Promotional materials have been found from Illinois, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Nebraska.

By the 1960s however local breweries were having a difficult time competing against larger and national brands. In Wisconsin alone, 18 breweries were forced to close. At its peak Fauerbach produced about 75,000 barrels of beer per year. The Fauerbach Brewery closed in 1966, along with the company's Pepsi franchise, not being able to compete against national giants. The brewery was torn down in 1967. The Fauerbach condominiums were built on the site in 1978.

The Fauerbach beer brand was resurrected in 2005 by fifth generation Peter, Neil, David, Karl, Fred and Erik Fauerbach. Unfortunately, the Fauerbachs ended this venture in 2009 due to problems obtaining beer from the contract brewer they used.

The spirit of Fauerbach could be seen in signs displayed in their bar room that said "The largest small brewery in "Spirit", and "Over 8 million bottles sold in 1961".

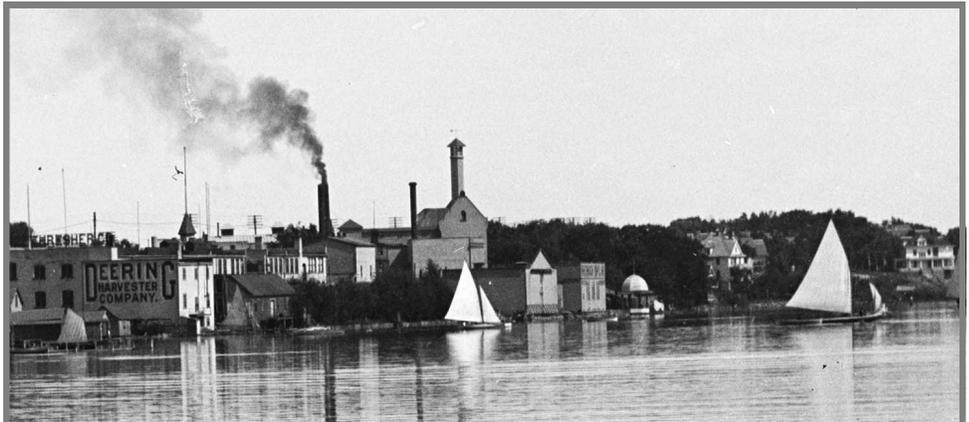
**Author's note:** the back cover of the book reviewed in the last issue of this newsletter, Roll Out the Barrels by Gary J. Hess, shows barrels being delivered to the Fauerbach Brewery. A prime example of local industries supporting each other.

For more history on the brewery go to [www.fauerbachbrewery.com](http://www.fauerbachbrewery.com).

**Special thanks to Peter Fauerbach for providing the majority of this information.**

For additional information consult:

- ◆ The Breweriana Collector published by NABA, spring 2005.
- ◆ Isthmus: Annual Manual, No. 24, 2004-2005
- ◆ Breweries of Wisconsin by Jerry Apps, copyright 1992



**1905 Lake Monona, Madison, shows the backside of the brewery after a 5 year expansion project. Shown are the steamboat landing pier, gazebo, icehouses, sailboats, malt shovel, wind vane on tower and kettle smoke.**



This article was written for Volume 24 of the Museum of Beer & Brewing Newsletter, Summer 2105, by Darrell Smith with the help and guidance of Peter Fauerbach. Visit the museum's website at [www.brewingmuseum.org](http://www.brewingmuseum.org) to find out about activities and other upcoming events.