

The First Annual Convention of the National Association Breweriana Advertising

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Submitted by Herb & Helen Haydock

On August 4-5 [1972] the first annual convention of the National Association Breweriana Advertising was held at Holiday Inn Central in Milwaukee, WI.

In attendance at the affair were almost 50 people from throughout the country whose hobbies include the collecting of early brewery advertising pieces – collections that can easily run to over five figures in value.

The convention got underway on Friday evening, August 4, with a “Gay 90’s Get-to-Gether” hosted by the Pabst Brewing Co. in the Blue Ribbon Hall of its headquarters in Milwaukee. Interspersed during the affair were amicable beer drinking, the music of a small orchestra, the meeting of new and old friends, an explanation by a Pabst representative of the decor and pictures involved in the room (styled after the famous Guild Hall of Nuremburg, Germany), and an opportunity to view a portion of the brewery’s collection of steins and mugs.

The following morning, Saturday, August 5, the NABA people were guests of the Jos. Schlitz Brewing Co. for a late breakfast in its Brown Bottle hospitality room. Here the guests also could view some of the brewery’s early advertising pieces.

During the luncheon that day at Holiday Inn Central, the convention was addressed by Wilbur Kurtz, archivist for the Coca Cola Co. of Atlanta, GA, whose presentation also included slides of the company’s early advertising.

Following the luncheon, the group’s first business meeting was held. The by-laws were adopted and the following national officers elected: president – John A. Murray,



Rear, left to right: Jack Muzio, secretary; Paul Haudrich, corresponding secretary; Herbert A. Haydock, vice-president; John A. Murray, Jr., president; and Richard Bucht, treasurer. Seated, left to right, are Mrs. Haudrich, Mrs. Haydock, and Mrs. Bucht.

Jr., Hinsdale, IL; vice-president – Herbert A. Haydock, Wisconsin Rapids, WI; recording secretary – Jack Muzio, Santa Rosa, CA; treasurer – Richard Bucht, Milwaukee, WI; and corresponding secretary – Paul L. Haudrich, Bridgeton, MO.

“Trade-Buy-Sell”

From 2:30 PM to 4 PM a “trade-buy-sell” session was held, with participation confined to NABA members. At this time, brewery advertising pieces that had been brought to the convention by the members were put on display in one of the motel’s meeting rooms. These consisted of pieces that duplicated what the exhibiting collector already had, pieces that were no longer in line with his primary collecting interest, or pieces that had been acquired originally specifically for trading purposes.

In the evening, a concluding cocktail party and dinner was held at Kalt’s Restaurant on the north side of Milwaukee.

The owner of this excellent German restaurant, Howard Kalt, is a member of the NABA, and a collector. One of the restaurant's large dining rooms is walled with old beer trays and signs, and from the beams of the ceiling of the room, hang countless old bottles and steins. As the dinner speaker, Jack Muzio, author of the beautifully illustrated, 36-page book, *Collectible Tin Advertising Trays*, showed slides of trays representative of this collection, and offered suggestions as to possible sources of "finds," types of collectible pieces, care and insuring of collections, etc.

Sharing in making the arrangements for the founding convention were Mr. Murray, Mr. and Mrs. Haydock, and Mr. and Mrs. Bucht. The next annual convention of the NABA is scheduled to be held in St. Louis, MO, according to President Murray, although the exact dates and hotel have not yet been determined.

Other Organizations

While there are a few other organized brewery advertising collectors,* the NABA is the first such national organization. Essentially, its purpose is to provide a medium through which people of like interest can share information relative to their hobby, and, through the annual convention, to provide an occasion for meet-

ing nationally to exchange such information personally, to further their friendships and to trade, buy, and sell collectible pieces. Stimulating its actual founding were primarily two events. For the previous three years, Mr. Murray had held open houses at his home in Hinsdale, a southwestern suburb of Chicago, on a Sunday afternoon



Hosted by the Pabst Brewing Co. for a "Gay 90's Get-to-Gether," the NABA people were able to view some of the Pabst's stein collection.

in August for the purpose of trading. Acquaintances – as many as 35 to 40 each year – gathered there from as far away as California, Kentucky, and New York. The other event was the attendance by many of these same people – particularly Messrs. Murray, Haydock, and Bucht – at the Antique Advertising Show, which is held semi-annually in In-

dianapolis, IN. Since this show is general in nature, the NABA founders reasoned that there was a sufficient number of people throughout the country whose interest were confined to brewing industry advertising to warrant formally organizing the association – not in competition with the more broadly-based show, but, in function, as a supplement to this type of show.**

The correctness of their reasoning was well substantiated by the success of this first convention and the St. Louis meeting is expected to attract even more people.

The breweriana collectors have little interest in contemporary beer advertising beyond recognizing, of course, that some of the pieces may become the an-

tiques of tomorrow. Rather, their interest relates to the pre-television and pre-radio days when specialty advertising and institutional identity on a variety of functional items comprised a major portion of the brewer's retail and consumer promotional effort. Quality of materials, quality in reproduction, uniqueness in design and idea, and creativity and ex-

*Of these, notable is the East Coast Breweriana Association, which has met informally since 1967, and among whose founding members is Will Anderson who, with his wife, Sonja, produced the books *Turn-of-the-Century Brewery Directory*, and *Beers, Brewer-ies, and Breweriana*.

**This same attitude of non-competitiveness is maintained toward other beer oriented groups – the stein collectors, bottle collectors, and can collectors. In fact, many members of the NABA also are members of the other groups and have extensive collections relating to them. The Haydocks, for example, have a collection of over 13,000 bottles in addition to their advertising collection.

pertness in execution were typical of many of the promotional pieces of those days, rendering them now not only of historical interest, but of intrinsic value as well.

While not endeavoring to be totally exhaustive, Mr. Muzio, during his talk at the convention, listed the following as collectible items:

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| knives | steins & mugs |
| pocket mirrors | rulers |
| fold-out paper fans | letter openers |
| match holders & boxes | measuring tapes |
| paper weights | pencils |
| porcelain plates | pens |
| pin backs (lapel pins) | bottle openers |
| lamps | ice picks |
| drivers' caps | skimmers |
| signs | games |
| greeting cards | lighters |
| corporate booklets | canes |
| playing cards | watch fobs |
| horse blankets & harnesses | ash trays |
| clocks | coasters |
| blotters | chairs |
| wooden cases | calling cards |
| cigar cutters | calendars |
| trays | paintings |
| thimbles | bottles |
| draught beer pumps | cans |
| etched glasses | |

Not all of the collectors are necessarily interested in all of these items. Frequently, a collector will confine his attention primarily to only one type of thing or a few types of things, and whatever accumulation of other things might occur is likely to be for trading purposes. Also, a collector might be primarily interested in only a few breweries, or in breweries of only one geographic area, or in breweries of only one era. Such specialized interest occasions specialized knowledge relative to that interest and much research is undertaken by many of the collectors. In this respect, old brewery records – vouchers and invoices, etc. – are eagerly sought as a means of substantiating dates, manufacturers, etc.



Early Jos. Schlitz Brewing Co. advertising pieces were on view for their NABA guests at a brunch in the Brown Bottle Room of the brewery.

Sources of “Finds”

What, in addition to trading, are the sources of their “finds”? Mr. Murray points out that coming to be known as a collector among one’s acquaintances and their friends is valuable. Many times, people in possession of a collectible item have no interest (sometimes for sentimental reasons) in selling it to an antique dealer whose interests are commercial, but are happy to pass it on to a dedicated collector. Antique

dealers are a significant source for the collector. But an increasingly major source are the flea markets that are becoming more popular. Occasionally, a collector will run advertisements for breweriana in newspapers in towns where breweries have been located, and many a vacation or weekend is spent in canvassing old taverns or old tavern sites, which now may be corner groceries, for the items.

In any case, the “hunt” itself is a satisfying aspect of collecting. It might be noted, too, that in most cases, collecting is an interest shared in common by husbands and wives – and well it might be, considering the amount of home space frequently necessary for housing the collection, and the care it requires. Frequently, some restoration of a newly acquired item is undertaken by the collector and, in any case, if his collecting is to be at all “professional,” numbering and cataloging is in order. The latter might include such things as date acquired, price paid, estimated value, source of “find,” some measurement of quality (so as to know if a better preserved piece of the same thing is to be sought as an ultimate replacement), some history of the producing company, and of the brewery that it represented.

Given the increasing popularity of collecting breweriana, it is only natural that a body of literature should also be developing. In addition to the books of Mr. Muzio and the Andersons, which were mentioned previously, other publications include Advertising Trays by Tom

Polansky, a NABA member of Albuquerque, NM; and a fledgling news publication, “The Brewery-Ana Gazette,” put out by Howard P. Strohn of San Ardo, CA. Some other more general antique advertising publications are *Collectible Old Advertising* by Jim Cope, a NABA member; *Advertising ‘Worth’ Collecting* by NABA member W. R. Mortimeyer of Cuba, MO; and *Antique Advertising* by Ray Klug of Akron, OH.

What kinds of people are likely to be collectors of breweriana? Very few have any direct professional interest in the brewing industry, although Douglas Bakken, full-time archivist for Anheuser-Busch, Inc., and Bernie Erf, editor and publisher of *The Brewers Digest*, are members of NABA, and both attended the first annual convention. A few of the members are employed by companies that are suppliers to the breweries or that, in one way or another, relate to the industry. A very few are antique dealers and, interestingly, none of the members are directly involved in the advertising profession.

Age – young or old – is no barrier to the pursuit of the interest, and, as has been noted, the women are



Concluding event of the first annual national convention of the NABA was a cocktail party and dinner at Kalt's Restaurant on the north side of Milwaukee. Howard Kalt, owner of the restaurant and member of the NABA, is himself a collector of brewery advertising items as well as bottles.

as much interested as their husbands – as one wife said, “It’s nice to have a hobby that we can enjoy together.” Among the NABA members will be found a great variety of occupations including an airline pilot, an engineer for a camera and film manufacturing concern, an accountant, and insurance agent, college students, an auto supply salesman, an instrument control engineer, a freelance writer, an Air Force officer, a tavern owner, a restaurateur, a corporate safety director, and the owner of a food storage locker company.

Of the NABA’s officers, Mr. Haudrich is an engineer for an aircraft engine manufacturing concern, Mr. Bucht is a tavern owner, Mr. Muzio is a history teacher, and Mr. Haydock is the production superintendent of a paper mill.