

Magnolia Ballroom Showcases Brewery Museum

The historic Magnolia Ballroom nestled in downtown Houston at 715 Franklin features a “stout” museum of Magnolia Brewery artifacts. The museum collection artifacts have been donated by fans of the 1893 building, purchased from collectors across the U.S., found in small Texas towns, or given to the owner of the Magnolia Brewery Building by strangers who felt the items belonged “back home” at the former brewery location.

The museum features artifacts related to the Magnolia Brewery and the signature Magnolia beers, including *Magnolia*, *Richlieu*, *Southern Select*, *Hiawatha* and *Grand Prize*, such as large tin advertising signs, beer bottles, beer cans, metal cone beer cans and poster prints. The museum also displays souvenir items, such as: dishware, tape measure, spinning top, salt shakers, logo bottle openers and matchbook covers.

The collection at the Magnolia Brewery museum began in 1980 with items provided by John Moraida, Tim Womble, Marilyn Myers and Joe Baker. Each contribution arrived back at the brewery building with its own story.

John Moraida gave a wooden Magnolia beer box, a large metal Magnolia beer sign and Magnolia beer bottle with cap. Moraida, owner of John’s Flowers and

Antiques in the Houston Heights historic area, came across the Magnolia Brewery items while frequenting antique sales around the state of Texas.

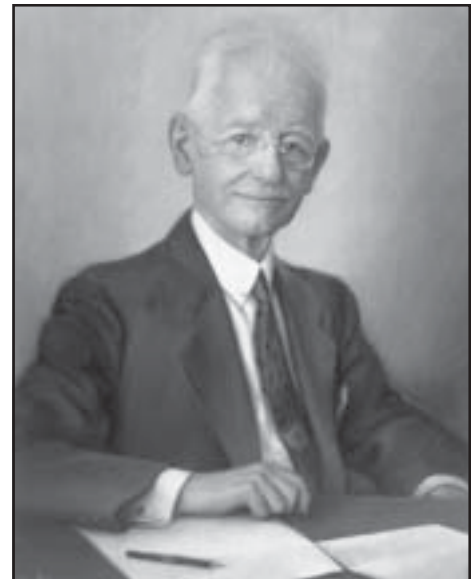
Tim Womble contributed a large colorful Magnolia Beer tray showing a seated German couple with a pitcher of beer and glass in his hands, the Magnolia flower in her hand and the Magnolia emblem in the upper left hand corner. Womble had this item for many years in his kitchen and decided to give it back to the Magnolia Brewery building because he felt it was “coming home” and that it was a part of the Magnolia history.

The beer tray reads: Houston Ice & Brewring Co. Magnolia Brewery.

Joe Baker gave a Southern Select old tin beer can with the bottle-type top. The can was found in a field on Baker’s family ranch near Somerville, Texas.

Marjorie Smith, of Bellville, Texas, called Marilyn Meyers, an associate of Bart Truxillo (current owner of the Magnolia Brewery building) to proved a framed Magnolia Brewery poster printed in 1908; the print hung in Smith’s grandfather’s store in Bellville, Texas.

Premium beer produced by the Magnolia Brewery around 1900 could only be explained by comparison to German beer, considered then as the world’s finest. The



In 1913, Frantz Brogniez, brewmaster for the brewery, was awarded grand prize at the last International Conference of Breweries, received over 4,096 competing breweries.

image on the print is a German Kaiser seated at a pastoral table and chair in a wooded glen with his loyal dogs in the background.

Housed in the Magnolia Brewery Ballroom, the Magnolia Brewery museum displays have grown tremendously as people from all over have continued to provide items that they have stumbled upon. Truxillo says the museum is forever seeking Magnolia Brewing related objects to be included in the historic collection. The Magnolia Ballroom is used today as a facility for weddings, parties and special events, and is unique in that it is one of Houston’s oldest buildings in use.

For more information, please call the museum at: (713) 223-8508.



Contributors to the Magnolia Brewery Building Museum.



Hard at work to get the barrels out each day.



The Magnolia Brewery is one of only two remaining buildings of what was once the Houston Ice & Brewing Company.



The Houston Ice & Brewing Company founded by Hugh Hamilton in 1892 was one of Houston's largest companies at the turn of the century, and by 1910, encompassed more than twenty acres north and south of Buffalo Bayou.

Timeline facts of the Magnolia Brewery Building

Hugh Hamilton hired architect Eugene Heiner, an important Houston architect in the late nineteenth century to design and build a four-story main building for the brewery at the original site. In the spring of 1893, the new building was completed. By 1915, the company had expanded to more than ten buildings joined together physically and stylistically.

The Houston Ice & Brewing Company, dubbed the Magnolia Brewery, was well known for its beers, sold at five-cents a bottle.

In 1893, the brewery had top-of-the-line machinery, producing 100 tons of ice and 60,000 barrels of beer per year, all produced

with artesian well water. By 1910, beer production had expanded to 200,000 barrels per year.

Magnolia Building, located at the corner of Franklin and Milam Avenues, was redesigned in 1912 by H.C. Cooke and Co. The building, which still stands, was constructed in the footprint of a former structure known as the Franklin Building. It is believed that around 1915, the brewery was at its largest.

With the onset of Prohibition in 1920, the brewery began its decline and was forced to place its sole dependence on the manufacture of ice when the brewery accounted for the majority of the company's profits. It was at this time the brewery changed its name to Houston Ice & Cold Storage and began leasing, or selling, its

buildings.

In 1922, Hugh Hamilton passed away before witnessing the full demise of the company. The Houston Ice & Brewing Co. struggled to survive, but was finally shut down in 1950.

Following the shut down, the building housed many different businesses before Burt Truxillo purchased it in 1968 from a bank trust. By this time, the building was in poor condition and was being occupied by homeless people. Truxillo immediately began the building's restoration.

Despite all of its dramatic history, the Magnolia Brewery Building survived and is now a small souvenir of the company that helped make Houston the historical and industrial center of Texas at one time.

Brew Master Bio

Frantz H. Brogniez was born October 26, 1860, at Haine-Saint-Paul, in Hainaut, Belgium. His father was a noted Brew Master and for 25 consecutive years, served in the Belgian senate at Brussels.

In 1881, Brogniez entered the University of Louvain and enrolled in "Special Sciences," including engineering and biochemistry. He continued his studies at the Louis Pasteur Institute in France.

In 1882, Brogniez went to Lichterveld to work in a brewery. While there, he developed the first "blond" beer in Belgium.

With the view of following in his ancestors' steps in the brewing art, Brogniez came to America and settled in Detroit. In 1896, he established a brewery and operated it until he released his interests to develop a brewing establishment in Terre Haute, Indiana in 1904. He developed the Terre Haute establishment from a small enterprise to one of the largest in the nation.

Due to his wife becoming ill and needing to live in a warmer climate, in 1912, Brogniez and his family moved to Houston. Brogniez took charge of the Houston Ice & Brewing Company, building the establishment from a little concern to the largest brewing company south of Milwaukee.

In 1913, Brogniez' brewing art brought him into international fame. He was awarded the Grand Prize for his Southern Select beer at the International Congress of Brewers, in competition with 4,096 brewmasters from all over the world.

In the wake of prohibition, Brogniez went to El Paso in 1923 and became associated with brewing interests in Juarez.

With the repeal of Prohibition apparent, Howard Hughes was urged to get into the brewing business and agreed to do so on the condition that Frantz Brogniez be the brewmaster. Brogniez and his family arrived back in Houston, which he had adopted as his home city, in 1933 and

personally supervised construction of the large plant of the Gulf Brewing Company. He was in charge of the company's operations until June, when he underwent mandatory bed rest due to illness and exhaustion.

Frantz P. Brogniez, one of the well-known brewmaster, who throughout his lifetime had been trained in the brewing arts of the Brogniez family, took charge of operating the Gulf Brewing Company after his father's death.

Frantz H. Brogniez' career in Houston was another impressive episode in the history of the family, which for 260 years had been outstanding in the brewing arts.