

H. WAGENER BREWING CO.

by Stan Sanders and Mickey Roach
Photos by Mickey Roach

One of the west's great beer breweries (the oldest in Utah) was the H. Wagener Brewing Co., established in 1864 and incorporated in 1897. The Wagener Brewery and its associated history is one of the favorites amongst Utah breweriana history buffs and bottle collectors.

Unfortunately, there are no remnants or remains of the old brewery building that once stood near where Utah's Hogle Zoo is located today. The plant burned down in 1913. Wagener produced a variety of beers and bottled them in labeled, as well as embossed, bottles. Only a very small number of the older embossed Wagener beer bottles have been found whole.

Happily, a number of advertising pieces, postcards, signs, and other historic memorabilia have survived to remind us of one of the great beer establishments in America.

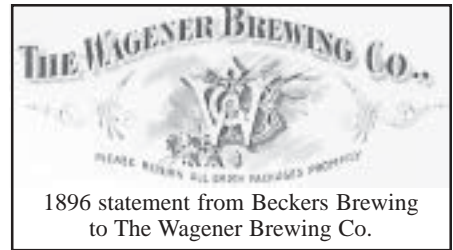
The following history is quoted from page 65 of a booklet entitled: The "Colorado Midland Railway."

"This country has fully awakened to the fact that we owe very much to our fellow citizens of German birth or extraction for leading our people into the

paths of a national practice of practical temperance by setting an example of the use of pure beer, instead of the various decoctions of rye, wheat and corn; that the advantages to the general health and morals of our people have been vast and manifold goes without saying.

"Salt Lake has the honor of being the home of a brewing establishment, which produces as fine a quality of this article as can be found on either side of the Atlantic. A fact that has been fully attested to by all who ever have had the good fortune to quaff the product of the Wagener Brewing Company. This plant was established in 1864, and is the pioneer brewery of the state of Utah; it was incorporated thirty-five years later under a charter with the ample capital of \$50,000, retaining, however, the same firm name.

"It covers in all about 152 acres of ground situated 4 1/2 miles east from the Mormon Temple in what is known as the Emigration Canon. This brewery is certainly to be congratulated on the popularity it has gained and the headway it has made with the general public, it



having from year to year added new buildings and increased its capacity, until today it is the largest plant between Denver and San Francisco.

"Its product is delightfully clear and sparkling, only the finest California, Oregon and New York hops, and the best Utah and Idaho barley being used, and the purest of mountain spring water; an exceptional care being taken to have it always of uniform quality, it is no wonder that its product leads, having no superior and very few equals. The main building is an imposing three-story brick with a 200-foot frontage by 150 feet deep, fitted out with the most improved machinery with a 150-horse-power steam engine and two immense boilers, one fifty and the other twenty-five horse power, two huge brew vats, one with a capacity for eighty barrels and the other a thirty barrel capacity, and their ware and storage houses have a stock of 2,500 barrels always on hand. The other buildings are icehouses, bottling works and office



Above Left: Early billhead, 1895.

Below Left: Front of Wagener Advertising Card.

Right: Front and back of an advertising card from H. Wagener Brewing Co.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

Fig. 1: Early die-cut advertisement piece.
 Fig. 2: Front of Wagener Advertising Card.
 Fig. 3: Another early advertising piece.
 Fig. 4: Early bottle label.
 Fig. 5: Early die-cut advertisement piece.

Fig. 6: Labeled "Brown Stout" bottle, including contents.
 Fig. 7: Extremely rare example of an embossed Henry Wagener Brewing Co. bottle.
 Fig. 8: Early advertising piece.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



buildings and the brew master's residence. The bottling works have the most improved machinery for the ready dispatch of business, their capacity being twenty-five barrels daily, having in use the improved gas system. The company puts up all its own ice, storing it in an icehouse built for that purpose right on the side of the mountain; and to show the enterprise of this concern, they have improved a magnificent natural park of 100 acres nearby as a summer resort, which is open to the public on Sundays. This park is handsomely laid out with beautiful shaded walks and drives, interspersed with trees, beautiful flowers and fountains. This company gives employment to fifty men, using twenty horses, for which they have their own stables, and eight heavy trucks and delivery wagons. This brewery is now on the high road to prosperity. It's product having gained a most enviable reputation and being sent all over the western states

and the entire inter-mountain region - their trade increasing to such an extent that they contemplate erecting a new ice plant very soon. They export pale bottle beer, and their output last year was 10,000 barrels. Their down-town office is located at 74 East First South, where they occupy the first floor and basement of a two-story brick, with a complete cold storage plant; they have the largest bottling trade in the city. This concern is decidedly a home industry and the use of their home-brewed beer is well exemplified in almost every retail establishment of this city. The president of the concern, Mr. C. H. Deere, is known from the Atlantic to the Pacific as one of the largest agricultural implement manufactures of the United States, and a prominent gentleman among eastern capitalists.

Mr. Jacob Wisel, the Brew Master, is one of the most skilled master brewers in the country and he produces an article of

the very best quality as thousands of beer-drinkers will gladly testify. He is a graduate from one of the famous brewing academies of Germany, learning his profession thoroughly and scientifically, and previous to his seven years with the present company, he was connected with the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company for three years. Mr. Wisel is forty-five years of age and has been a resident of this city the past fifteen years.

The general manager, who has the direct personal supervision of the establishment, is Mr. W.P. Kiser, a native of Iowa, forty years of age and a resident of Salt Lake City one and a half years. His great executive ability is shown by the fifty-per-cent increase in their trade under his management, at last year being one of the best the brewery has seen for seven years. Altogether this is an institution of which Salt Lake may well be proud."

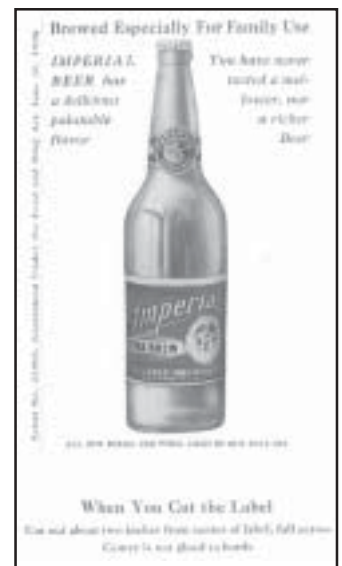


Left: Vintage Wagener Brewing Company advertising trays from Stan Sanders' collection.

Right: Close-up photo of the H. Wagener metal enamel Lager Beer sign.



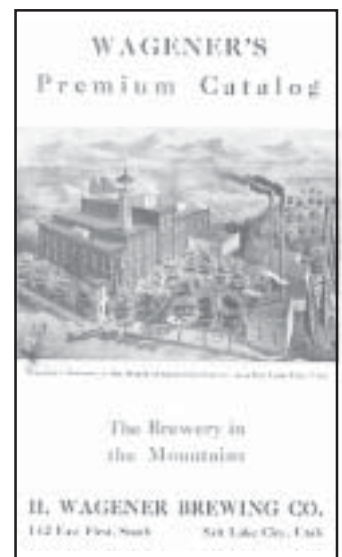
Far Left: "Wasatch Beer" label.



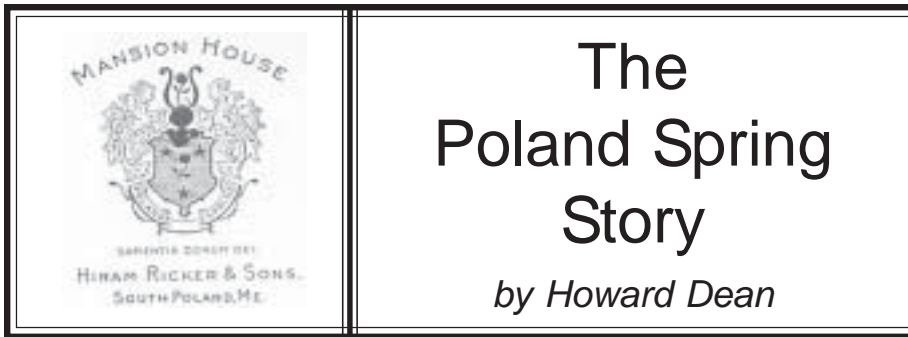
Left: "Imperial Extra Brew" label.



Below Left - Top and Bottom Right: Copies of pages from a Salt Lake City publication showing illustrations of Wagener's products. Not labels compared to actual bottles in Stan Sander's collection.



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My interest in Poland Spring and its mineral water bottles began in 1984. A longtime bottle collector friend and his wife, Bill and Loretta Zimmerman, suggested that we go on a week's vacation to Poland Spring. We had rooms in the Presidential Inn, built in 1913.

We did this trip for three years and while Bill and I did some bottle hunting, Lillian and Loretta enjoyed the many other pleasures available there.

The history of the spring, and the family that started it all, is very interesting, but a very long story. I can only bring out the highlights here.

It began in 1650, when George Riccar and his brother Maturin left Saxony (present-day Germany) and settled in Dover, N.H. They had 13 children, and in the course of the years, they scattered into the neighboring states. Jabez Riccar, grandson of Maturin, moved into the area of the present site of Alfred, Maine, where he became a farmer.

The story goes that one hot day, he and his horse, Emily, started for Augusta and soon they were lost, hungry and thirsty. Jabez knew to give the horse his head and he would take them to water --- so soon they were both drinking from a beautiful cold spring. Before they left that spring, Jabez vowed to make that spot his home.

It was owned by a group of Shakers. Soon a bargain was struck and Jabez owned the land that was to become the Poland Spring.

Soon they sold the farm and his family of 12 (he had married Molly, and they had a dozen children before she died in 1838 at the age of 96) moved to his new land in anticipation of developing a farm near the spring, but that land was unsuitable for farming. They built a small cabin for a home, and lived in despair.

On May 4, 1791, a stagecoach stopped at their cabin to water the horses. Mrs. Riccar invited the three passengers and the driver to have lunch. Soon the news spread of how good a cook Molly was, and how

good the water was. Soon they had a nice business going, and their fortune was made.

One day in the spring of 1795, Jabez told his oldest son, Wentworth, that he was to build an inn and tavern to accommodate guests, and by 1797, the inn was completed. On one of his trips to buy supplies, Wentworth met Polly Phipps, married her and one of their five children was Hiram Riccar, the architect and planner of Poland Spring as a resort. This inn became the famous Mansion House.

There are many stories about the curing powers of Poland Spring. Wentworth's younger brother, Joseph, was a blacksmith who made every nail, hinge, etc., that went into the Mansion House.

On Dec. 25, 1800, he became very ill and the doctor finally told them that Joseph was now in the hands of the Lord. Polly then let him drink all the spring water he wanted, and Joseph survived to live 52 more years to die at the age of 80. In 1827, Wentworth had a severe kidney ailment, and again, doctors gave up on him. Remembering his brother's recovery, he also began to drink spring water and was cured to live 10 more years until 1837.

Now we finally get to the main character of this story, Hiram, born in November of 1809 as the fourth son of Wentworth and Polly. Hiram had a nasty disposition, was quick to fight and was disliked by most people, including his family.

As Hiram grew, so did the fortunes of the Riccars. During the War of 1812, the Riccars were prime suppliers of horses, timber, etc., to the army and became very wealthy as a result. In 1820, as part of the Missouri Compromise, Maine became the 23rd state in the Union.

Prior to this time, the area was called Bakerstown. Why the name was changed to Poland is unknown. Later, when the spring became famous, that part of Poland was officially renamed Poland Spring.

Wentworth constructed the road (now Route 26) to connect that area with other nearby places. In February of 1827, Jabez died at the age of 86. Molly died in 1838 at age 96. Their graves can be seen in the Riccar cemetery, near the Mansion House. Perhaps there is something in that spring water after all.

There is a story about Hiram that needs telling here. With Jabez deceased, Wentworth was in control, and by 1833, he had enough! He made plans to leave on the 13th anniversary of Maine statehood.

Hiram saved \$6.00 to paint the town red, arrived in Portland on March 15th, and used up all his money on whiskey.

In a somewhat less than sober state, he went out into the nearby street where he bumped into a well-dressed man, high hat and all, and knocked him down in the mud. Soon a crowd had gathered to watch this "county bumpkin" try to help the "dandy" up.

As he arose and wiped his face, he asked, "Whom do I have the pleasure of addressing?" "My name is Hiram Riccar," he answered. "Well," said the man, "My name is Longfellow. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and you will hear more about this!"

Hiram didn't care about Longfellow, but he soon learned, and his father had him shipped off to Boston to avoid the pending litigation. Hiram apprenticed himself to a harness maker and soon learned to fear and hate the city.

After a year, he returned home to see

