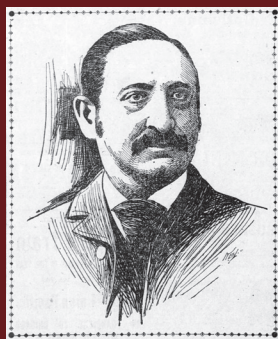


BOWMAN

{John S. Bowman} By Eric McGuire



John S. Bowman illustration from his obituary. *The San Francisco Call* (San Francisco) February 24, 1899

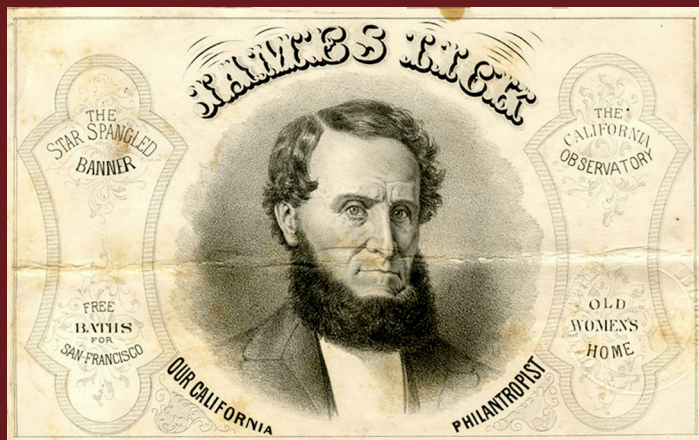
Born in Schmidmuhlen, Bavaria, Germany about 1830, John Schmerl Bowman arrived in California in the 1850s. He initially established a cigar and tobacco store in Marysville, California, sometime around 1857. He sold out about 1860 and returned to Europe where he married his wife. Bowman then returned to California about 1866 and opened another cigar and tobacco store in San Francisco at 128 Pacific Street.

By 1868, his partnership began with Louis Liebes and dissolved in November 1874. On January 1, 1877, Joseph Coblentz, formerly of the partnership of Levy & Coblentz of Los Angeles, was admitted to John S. Bowman & Co. as a partner. He undoubtedly brought his expertise in the liquor business with him, which added a new layer to Bowman's activities.

At the beginning of 1890, the partnership admitted Boaz David Pike, which also witnessed John S. Bowman's transition into a newly chosen profession. He had acquired a substantial estate and chose to become a lender of money, primarily on real estate deals where the properties to be purchased were used as collateral to secure the loans. Coblentz & Pike continued with their liquor and tobacco business until April 1897 when Coblentz died and Pike was left with a business having a \$100,000 liability. Bowman's first advertisement for lending money is noted in the *San Francisco Call* on March 28, 1892.

Bowman became a prolific brand designator in his cigar business and trademarked a number of different names for his cigars. While in partnership with Louis Liebes he chose to honor the San Francisco philanthropist, James Lick, with a cigar in his name, receiving California Trade-Mark No. 276 on July 30, 1874.

Bowman filed another California trademark (No. 808) on February 14, 1882, for his cigar trade. With this trademark, he chose to honor Lieutenant George W. DeLong. The ship *Jeannette* left San Francisco on July 8, 1879, on its quest to find a passage to the North Pole. The ship was captained by George W. DeLong, a seasoned Naval Academy graduate. Many of the expedition's thirty-three members were lost, as the *Jeannette* became ice-bound and sank on June 13, 1880. The men moved to three smaller on-board boats, and the boat containing Capt. DeLong landed at the northern mouth of the Lena River in Siberia, with most of them suffering from severe frostbite. They were not heard from again. A relief party located the graves of DeLong and shipmates



The cigar label for Bowman's James Lick cigars. James Lick (August 25, 1796–October 1, 1876) was an American real estate investor, carpenter, piano builder, land baron, and patron of the sciences. The wealthiest man in California at the time of his death, Lick left the majority of his estate to social and scientific causes.



Bowman's cigar label depicting the ship *Jeannette* and the bust of her commander, George W. DeLong, who headed the ill-fated voyage to find a passage to the North Pole.

which were excavated in March 1883 and returned to New York on February 13, 1884.

Bowman's cigar label depicting the ship *Jeannette* and the bust of her commander, George W. DeLong, who headed the ill-fated voyage to find a passage to the North Pole. It is puzzling that even though Bowman took great care to protect the trade names of his tobacco products, no record has been found that would treat Jewel Old Bourbon in the same fashion. While the embossed fifth proclaims that Bowman was the sole agent, it is not known if he owned the brand.



See page 23 this issue for two examples of Bowman-related bottles. Both are represented in the FOHBC Virtual Museum.

