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Beer in New York City: A Social History

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Introduction

In 1937 the New York branch of the Brewers Board of Trade listed seventeen affiliated breweries in the New York metropolitan area (including northern New Jersey). With strong Irish, German, and Dutch traditions, and a predominantly working class composition, beer was as much a part of New York as the Yankees. And because of the generally localized nature of the industry at that time, and the pride that the city's residents took in all things New York, New Yorkers drank New York beer almost exclusively. Reciprocally, New York brewing companies took much pride in serving New York residents, and played an active and influential role in New York's cultural life. But less than forty years later, the Schaefer Brewing Company announced that, after 144 years of operation in New York City, it was closing its doors and moving to Allentown, Pennsylvania. At the time, this was the last functioning brewery in the city proper, and the only brewing company in the metropolitan area that was originally from New York. For the first time in hundreds of years, the city was without a home-grown brewery.

New York City remained without a beer to call its own for approximately eleven years, when two ambitious beer lovers opened their own brewery in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. Appropriately called the "Brooklyn Brewery", this company returned an important cultural item to the city that had been missing since Schaefer closed its doors. This marked the beginning of the rebirth of the brewing industry in New York, which is now home to more than half a dozen breweries. But the New York in which these breweries are situated is a much different New York from the New York that housed so many breweries seventy years ago, and the New Yorkers to whom their product is being sold differ drastically from their ancestors. The role of New York beer as a social phenomenon, then, has evolved along with the city and its citizens.

This paper will trace the development of the brewing industry in New York City in its rise, fall, and resurrection within its broader social and economic contexts. It will demonstrate how the New York brewing industry operated in comparison with other labor intensive, goods producing industries in the city, and how its history relates to the evolution of the brewing industry across the nation. What will become evident is that, in its fall, the New York brewing industry suffered the same fate as most other manufacturing and production industries within the city—it was driven out of the region largely because of property and tax rates within the city, because of labor and other operating costs, and because of restrictions on production that came about *de facto* from a lack of space for large scale production. In addition, the brewing industry in the city followed a general trend towards consolidation in the industry that swept the nation after World War II—one that saw the number of brewing companies fall from 421 in 1947 to just 24 in 2000. But the size and population of New York, as well as the resilience of the New York market delayed this trend for some time, allowing several breweries to continue production in the city while many around the country were driven out of business. In order to provide a more complete picture of this process of consolidation, and to demonstrate how the reinvention of the industry in New York was possible, it is also necessary to understand changes in the socio-economic dynamics of the city's population in relation to beer as a cultural phenomenon. This is to say that, as the city's identity changed, so too did the beer produced and consumed in the city.

The majority of this paper will focus on the period of consolidation in the brewing industry from the end of World War II through the fall of the city's "old" brewing industry in 1976. This was period during which the transformations in the industry and the city itself were the most profound and formative of their respective statuses as they exist today. The stage will be set for this analysis by a brief discussion of the industry and the city from the repeal of

Prohibition in 1933 to the end of World War II. Finally, it will provide a brief analysis of the social conditions and the evolving "craft-beer" culture that made possible the New York beer of today. The latter portions will be necessarily cursory in their scope.

Chapter 1 – End of Prohibition

On March 23, 1933 the Federal Government repealed the Prohibition Laws that for more than twenty years had forced the creation and consumption of alcohol underground. But the stigma surrounding alcohol and its consumption remained, and the government maintained some level of control over the alcohol industry for years. During the first year of legal brewing, the government instituted a 3.2% alcohol by weight limit on all beer made and sold around the country[1]. Unsure about the social effects that the legalization of alcohol would have, the wary government considered this trial period a necessary step. It went as far as to claim that the beer was "non-intoxicating". The government mandated that states construct boards to establish procedures for allocating beer production and distribution licenses. But after enduring these processes, New York breweries distributed their first batches on April 6, 1933[2].

After the first week of production, it was clear that New Yorkers were thirsty. They drank 65,000 barrels of beer in the first seven days of sales (each barrel containing 31 gallons of beer)[3]. With this fervor surrounding the reintroduction of beer to the marketplace, breweries around the city began hiring hundreds of new workers to maximize production and distribution. And those who could afford to do so expanded. Within the first three years after legalization, the Ruppert Brewing Company, Trommers, Ehret, and Eichler all purchased new factories. The high demand for beer and the population of the city made these expansions appear worthwhile. And

[1] "Summary Of Lehman Bill To Regulate Beer Traffic." *New York Times* [New York] 25 Mar. 1933: 2.
[2] "Brewers Here Swamped." *New York Times* [New York] 8 Apr. 1933: 1-2.
[3] "City Beer Output Is 65,000 Barrels." *New York Times* [New York] 15 Apr. 1933: 14.

because the brewing companies had no point of reference for the potential size of the market, they continued to increase production. In 1935 the brewing industry in New York grew 24%, nearly doubling the 12.5% national growth average for the industry. That same year, New York produced more than four million barrels of beer, and Northern New Jersey 1.67 million barrels. This is to say that New Yorkers consumed nearly six million barrels of beer in 1935 alone—a per capita consumption of forty two gallons per person over eighteen years of age[4].

Legalization also proved to be an economic boon for the city. In the first week after Prohibition was repealed, the city earned more than one million dollars from licensing fees and a standard five dollar per barrel tax[5]. Almost overnight, between 2,000 and 2,500 jobs were created for the brewing and distribution of beer around the city. Restaurants and bars benefitted from beer sales, and supermarkets experienced a significant rise in traffic.

Despite the general success in the industry, some companies in New York were less fortunate than others. In 1937 the Kings Brewing Company filed for bankruptcy, citing a deficit of more than $700,000[6]. The following year, the Horton Brewery experienced a tragedy from which it would never recover. On March 4, the boiler room section of the Harlem brewery exploded, setting fire to the building and releasing noxious ammonia fumes into the air. The blast destroyed one of the brick walls of the factory, sending stone shards flying through the streets. Three factory employees who were eating lunch outside of the factory were killed, and seventeen were injured[7]. And in 1941 the City Brewing Company merged with the Greater New York Brewing Company (formerly the Fidelio Brewing Company)[8].

[4] "Brewers Report Gains." *New York Times* [New York] 2 Jan. 1936: 6.
[5] "City Beer Output Is 65,000 Barrels." *New York Times* [New York] 15 Apr. 1933: 14.
[6] "Kings Brewery Files Under Section 77-B." *New York Times* [New York] 8 Dec. 1937: 46.
[7] "3 Dead, 17 Injured by Blast and Fire in Harlem Brewery." *New York Times* [New York] 5 Mar. 1938: 1+.
[8] "Breweries Here Merge." *New York Times* [New York] 27 Jan. 1941: 22.

Beer distribution and consumption was carried out on a relatively small, localized scale in the years after repeal. Some of the smaller companies produced only 100,000 to 200,000 barrels in a year, with the largest producing approximately 500,000. And many of the companies limited their distribution to boroughs or neighborhoods closest to the factory. For example, the Eichler company delivered beer to stores and bars only in the Bronx and Westchester for the first four years after Prohibition. In 1937 it announced a major marketing campaign—the company would now place advertisements in six local newspapers and try to expand distribution into all five boroughs[9].

While these statistics seem absurd in light of today's brewing industry, where companies produce tens of millions of barrels each year, this localized distribution was reflective of New York demographics at the time. In the 1930's and 1940's the city was largely divided along ethnic lines. People relied heavily on local, family owned stores for their day to day necessities—from beer to food to clothing to hardware supplies. Jewish people frequented Jewish delis and bakeries in their largely Jewish communities while Italians shopped at local Italian specialty stores in Italian neighborhoods in the Bronx and Lower Manhattan. National-brand chain stores as we know them today were sparse and located only in districts of the city that were relegated primarily to commerce. Depictions of this intimate era of city life pervade literature and films of this era, where everybody in a given neighborhood knows the name of the local store owners. Essentially, the city was a congregation of neighborhoods, and the downtown workplace served as a meeting point for members of these communities. But this meant that beer companies could limit their distribution to a few neighborhoods and still sell their product successfully.

[9] "Advertising News." *New York Times* [New York] 5 Aug. 1937: 26.

The beer industry in New York and across the country continued to "test its limits" through the end of the 1930's and World War II. People by the hundreds of thousands continued to flock to the city seeking work in the burgeoning manufacturing center that was only strengthened by the necessity of wartime production. Between 1930 and 1950, the city's population increased by nearly one million people[10]. Between the novelty of beer as a consumer item still playing a role in consumption patterns and this rapidly growing population, New York breweries were still trying to figure out how much beer New Yorkers were drinking and, therefore, how much they should produce—limits and expectations were still uncertain. As mentioned earlier, companies with the capital and ambition to do so expanded until World War II, when strict regulations were instituted to control the amount of resources that companies could consume that were not devoted directly to wartime production. Machinery, metal, and gasoline were three such goods that were restricted, without which expansion and broader distribution were impossible. Some of the beer brewed in New York was relegated to soldiers stationed in the New York harbor and along the eastern seaboard. But other than that, the industry experienced a period of relative stagnation through the end of World War II.

Chapter 2 – Post War Period

By the end of World War II approximately 7.5 million people were living in New York[11]. This was the highest population that New York had seen to date, and one which would be exceeded only marginally in the sixty years leading up to the present. This is to say that New York was, for the most part, full, and further growth would be much more gradual. As growth in

[10] Gibson, Campbell. "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places In The United States: 1790 to 1990." *Census Bureau Home Page*. June 1998. Web. 20 Apr. 2010. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/twps0027.html>

[11] Gibson, Campbell. "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places In The United States: 1790 to 1990." *Census Bureau Home Page*. June 1998. Web. 20 Apr. 2010. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/twps0027.html>

the city slowed, wartime limitations on factories and production were repealed, and the novelty of "legal beer" had subsided, the beer market became relatively stable and predictable.

In the years immediately following World War II, New York was an unmistakably blue-collar city. The working class stood firm as the foundation of the New York economy and marketplace, but also exerted a profound influence over the cultural and political life within the city. And because of the sheer number of workers in New York, it could not have been otherwise. In 1946 approximately 3.3 million people were legally employed in New York, of whom less than 700,000 were owners, managers, or professionals[12]. This means that about one-third of the entire population of New York City was engaged in some kind of manual labor. And as late as 1950, about one third of the workforce was organized into unions[13]. It is safe to assume, then, that the vast majority of households in the city consisted of blue-collar families who participated in and helped define a blue-collar lifestyle.

It is important here to refrain from judging these facts from the contemporary conception of "blue-collar" workers and culture, which might cloud the blue collar image with vulgar connotations of ignorance (due lack of education) and grunginess. At that time perhaps more than any other in American history, blue-collar workers were revered for their invaluable contributions to the war effort. During the period of mandatory wartime production, factories across the country were compelled to shift their efforts away from goods to be made available to society at large towards items to be used by the armed forces. Some auto manufacturers produced military vehicles, textile factories produced uniforms, and food companies prepared foods to be shipped overseas, to name but a few examples. This conversion to wartime

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[12] Joshua M. Freeman, *Working Class New York: Life and Labor since World War II* (New York, NY: The New Press,2000), 6-7.

[13] Freeman 41

production was especially important in the New York metropolitan area which functioned as a main artery in the distribution of supplies both because of its ports and its proximity to the troops on the eastern seaboard. Those who did not have a hands-on role in the production of wartime goods played a crucial role in the war effort. Transporters, delivery-people, and porters ensured the arrival of items produced around the metropolitan area as well as those shipped in from around the country. Damaged and sea-worn Navy ships docked and were repaired and renovated by mechanics working at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. In light of all of this essential involvement in the war effort, blue collar workers were widely regarded as iconic, quintessential Americans. This was a tremendous source of pride for the working class, as well as a rallying point of solidarity—sentiments that would contribute to the shaping of New York City economic and cultural life.

During the war there was little dispute among workers and employers regarding their relationship with one another. With the future of the United States at stake, complaints about weekly work hours, wages, and benefits would have seemed trivial at best, inappropriate or nonsensical at worst. At the same time, employers sought to avoid conflict with workers in order to maintain production levels. And looming always over both parties was the federal government's National War Labor Board who, under wartime provisions, bore the power to order strike breaks and factory re-openings. Under these unique circumstances consistent, unfettered production was the *via optima* for all parties involved. The New York-metropolitan brewing industry is an excellent example of this situation. A single strike by bottling and delivery unions in June of 1944 marred the record of otherwise continuous production during the years of America's involvement in the war. The 1,800 hundred or so involved were workers from North Jersey breweries, including the three largest in the area: Trommers, Krueger, and

Ballantine[14]. Their primary concerns were achieving a forty-hour work week and eliminating a contractual physical fitness clause that might prevent injured servicemen from regaining their jobs upon returning from war. The strike lasted only three weeks, as the NWLB quickly intervened upon discovering that armed forces personnel in the local Navy yards as well as those offshore were becoming restless without beer shipments[15]. For the most part, then, workers and factory owners managed to balance reciprocal expectations throughout the war period.

The respect garnered by and shared among blue-collar workers by the end of the war, and the termination of the National War Labor Board set the stage for what would be a decade of contestation between workers and company owners throughout the city. The strikes that had subsided during the war period reemerged. As the quintessential "Americans" who had helped to win the war, blue collar workers and their potent symbolic status could now address (or invent) what they saw to be injustices in the workplace with newfound agency—agency made possible by the lack of threat of government intervention, by a newly sympathetic populous (for who could grow frustrated with or challenge war heroes?), and by a numerical majority of the city.

The brewing industry was no exception to this larger trend. In the first full year after the end of the war, brewery worker unions in the New York metropolitan area staged two separate strikes. The first of these was carried out by 1,900 employees of the Ballantine Brewery in Newark during April 1946, who accused the brewery of using non-union supervisors to complete tasks that should be done by union laborers[16]. This strike lasted only one week. The second of these was much larger and more dramatic. On September 10, 1946, beer shipments to more than

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[14] "Beer Truck Drivers Strike in New Jersey." *New York Times* [New York] 8 June 1944: 16.

[15] "Brewery Workers End Two-Week Strike Following Army and Navy Complaints." *New York Times* [New York] 23 June 1944: 21.

[16] "Strike at Ballantine Plants." *New York Times* [New York] 20 Apr. 1946: 14.

10,000 New York City bars and 12,000 stores were cut off by striking Teamsters[17]. When non-striking members of another union (the United Brewery Workers) attempted to continue deliveries, they were confronted by angry Teamsters with baseball bats in-hand. The following year, the city was again faced with the possibility of a dry-spell when 6,000 unionized workers at all levels of beer production and distribution from fifteen breweries threatened to walk out. As labor contracts reached the end of their term, union workers were expecting dramatic improvements for the upcoming year[18]. Because of the number of companies and workers involved, this situation was ultimately resolved after unions decided to negotiate with individual breweries rather than the Brewer's Board of Trade through whom arbitration would typically take place. On October 14, 1948, 2,687 beer delivery drivers employed by fourteen companies launched a "wildcat strike" (one carried out against union orders)[19]. The strike was conducted as a reaction to the suspension of several hundred workers who were accused of failing to meet delivery schedules—schedules which workers claimed to be excessively demanding, or even impossible to complete. Collectively, these breweries accounted for approximately 75% of the beer consumed in New York City (the majority of the other 25% came from breweries in North Jersey). This strike lasted four weeks, during which time distribution nearly came to a halt, as even workers who were more loyal to their unions refused to break ranks with their colleagues. Ending the strike required breweries to create a panel to review and monitor the delivery schedules in question in order to achieve a balance that would be agreeable to both parties.

[17] "Beer Deliveries Off, CIO Bows to Bats." *New York Times* [New York] 11 Sept. 1946: 1.
[18] "Strike Is Called Off by Brewery Union." *New York Times* [New York] 27 Apr. 1947: 3.
[19] "City Beer Supply Cut in Half By a Wildcat Strike of 2,687." *New York Times* [New York] 15 Oct. 1948: 1.

Around this same time, a much smaller walkout was carried out by factory workers at one Rheingold plant[20].

The following year, another large scale strike was carried out, this time by the International Union of Brewers, Soft Drink, Cereal, Distillery, and Grain Workers of America[21]. This strike, which began at the Rheingold factory, saw 7,000 workers involved in all stages of the brewing process walked out from their jobs. For the first two weeks striking workers stood in and around tunnels connecting New York to North Jersey and effectively prevented the delivery of beer from Jersey breweries[22]. From then on, the unions agreed to allow beer from the Krueger and Ballantine breweries to enter the city. This decision was made in order to prevent significant job loss for distribution companies, stores, and bars. This strike lasted for 72 days, with the workers achieving a pay raise (they would now make $73 per week), improved benefits, more vacation time, and a pension plan[23]. But this would prove to be something of a Pyrrhic victory in the long run. The magnitude and duration of this strike created a void in the beer market, which was in part filled by beer imported from large breweries outside the New York metropolitan area. Distributors, stores, and bars were suffering financially because of this strike, and were forced to look to these non-New York companies in order to stay in business. (The effects of this exposure to national brand beer will be elaborated on later.) For the first time in the city's history, national-brand "premium" beer had established a customer base.

Several years of relative stability followed this somewhat tumultuous period in the industry. In 1950, the workers of the Brewery Workers Union were granted wide ranging

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[20] "Loewer's Accedes to Beer Strikers." *New York Times* [New York Times] 27 Oct. 1948: 29.
[21] "Brewery Workers Ordered to Strike." *New York Times* [New York] 1 Apr. 1949: 20.
[22] Levey, Stanley. "Beer Coming From Jersey Today As City Supplies Nearly Gone." *New York Times* [New York] 14 Apr. 1949: 27.
[23] Feinberg, Alexander. "Beer Strike Ended In 30-Hour Session." *New York Times* [New York] 12 June 1949: 1.

benefits for themselves and their families without any strike or conflict[24], which help keep thousands of industry employees content. But on May 3, 1953 a three week long strike began as five of the area's largest breweries (Liebmann, Schlitz, Piels, Schaefer, and Ruppert) shut their doors to contest an ongoing worker slowdown[25]. This move was despised by the unions who both denied the slowdown and questioned the legality of such drastic action. It also garnered much dissent from distributors and establishment owners, who were concerned about having no beer available—a justifiable concern in light of the fact that, by this time, these five breweries produced approximately 90% of the beer consumed in the city. A settlement was finally reached on May 27 whereby workers would now receive $93.10 for a 35 hour work week. This was a source of discontent for workers in North Jersey Breweries, who earned the same amount for a longer work week. They started a strike of their own the following week, which won them a 7% pay raise[26].

The following few years passed strike free. In 1954, New York unions demanded that their employers raise wages above those of their New Jersey counterparts[27]. Eager to avoid another lull in production, the breweries complied and raised wages to just over $100 per week (the $3 per hour pay became the highest in the industry) for more than 6,000 workers. This deal involved only the largest breweries in the city, namely Liebmann (Rheingold), Schaefer, Schlitz Ruppert, Piels. Two years later, another raise and an expanded benefits package were granted to

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24 "Brewers Win Benefits." *New York Times* [New York] 4 Feb. 1950: 6.
25 "Rejects Brewers' Offer." *New York Times* [New York] 12 May 1953: 41.
26 "City Beer Workers Get Wage Increases: Brewery Strike in New Jersey Is Now Official." *New York Times* [New York] 27 May 1953: 24.
27 "Beer Pact Accepted." *New York Times* [New York] 7 June 1954: 41.

seven Teamsters unions, a move that benefited approximately 7,000 workers for Ruppert, Liebmann (Rheingold), Schaefer, Piels, and Schlitz[28].

These strikes within the brewing industry were consistent with a general rise in the number of strikes among manufacturing companies throughout the city. In the year following the end of the war, approximately 250,000 workers walked off of their jobs[29]. Furthermore, workers in New York accounted for approximately 10% of strikes across the entire country in 1946. Only in the immediate aftermath of World War I had strikes been carried out with such frequency and size. This was not a uniquely New York phenomenon, but the structure and composition of the manufacturing industry in New York gave labor operations there a distinct character. Because of extremely high property rates and strict zoning regulations within the city, factories and firms within New York tended to be much smaller than their counterparts in other cities. The average manufacturing company in New York employed less than half of the workers of similar factories elsewhere. Only 348 factories had more than 500 workers (most of which lay outside the city proper) and almost 12,000 shops had fewer than 4 employees[30]. This meant that laborers worked in closer proximity to one another as well as with their employers. In general, this contributed to a strong sense of solidarity that thrived among co-workers—solidarity that helped make strikes less contentious, easier to organize, and effective in practice. Further, because this working environment was typical of the vast majority of factories, people were less likely to step in as strike breakers when they did in fact occur, as if some unspoken agreement existed among laborers that strikes were just and necessary for maintaining proper labor relations. Breaking strikes was considered something of a taboo whose transgression was a

[28] "Teamsters Ratify Pact In Breweries." *New York Times* [New York] 26 June 1956: 13.
[29] Freeman 6
[30] Freeman 10

threat to the well being of workers, and was therefore punishable (the example of the bat-bearing union workers discussed above is but one example).

The relatively small size of New York factories and their location within the largest, most densely populated city in America also made strikes and union activity in general possible in another regard. Small factory size necessarily meant small-scale production and distribution among a small, typically local clientele. Very few factories controlled what would be considered a significant portion of the total market for their product (there was not just one or even two breweries, for example, that supply all of the beer to New York). Similarly, small production meant that relatively few people depended on a particular company for their goods and services. Strikes could be carried out, then with relatively little detriment to the society at large, for it was always possible for consumers to look elsewhere for whatever they needed. They could and would settle for another brand, another contractor, or another location whenever necessary. Because markets were localized within the city, firms could endure more easily more frequent lapses in production—there were always people nearby willing to pay for a given product or service. This is not meant to say that strikes became the rule and consistent work the exception, but rather to point out how in this city and during this period in time, consumer markets were relatively forgiving, allowing workers to strike without fear of running themselves and their company out of business. (In the long run this fact would prove to be fatal for many of these small firms, as unreliable production allowed name-brand products from larger firms to gain a strong footing in these previously localized markets. This phenomenon will be elaborated on more fully later.)

For the most part, working class members of the city chose to drink beer, and reciprocally, beer continued to be a primarily working class drink. (Perhaps the most telling support for this claim presented itself through actually conducting this research: a New York Times database search for "Ballantine" yields hundreds of beer advertisements, while a Wall Street Journal search shows hundreds of adds for Ballantine's Scotch Whiskey, and few if any Ballantine Ale advertisements.) It is no surprise, then, that during this time when the city was predominantly blue-collar that beer companies played an integral role in New York City social life. Perhaps the most significant and well known involvement of any beer company in New York was Ballantine's affiliation with the New York Yankees. The relationship began in 1947 when Ballantine took over exclusive rights to broadcast Yankees games on the radio and, for the first time, on television. It was during this time that legendary broadcaster and longtime voice of the Yankees coined the term "Ballantine Blast" which he would announce every time a Yankee hit a home run. Ballantine beer was the official beer of Yankee stadium, and every newspaper ad announcing a broadcast had a Ballantine stamp at the end. The Brooklyn Dodgers had exclusive sponsorship deals with beer companies as well. Rheingold remained the Dodgers' sponsor after the end of the war until 1951, when Schaefer signed multi-million dollar deal with the Dodgers for exclusive television broadcast rights[31]. Schaefer maintained its relationship with the Dodgers until the team left Brooklyn after finishing the 1957 season.

While these were the most visible and prolific instances, there are countless other examples that demonstrate the industry's deep involvement with New York cultural life. Throughout the late 1940's, for example, Ballantine was a consistent sponsor of large, highly publicized boxing matches held at venues such as Madison Square Garden and the polo matches[32]. To aid a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic marketing campaign in the late 1950's,

[31] "Dodgers Sign Pact for Air-TV Rights." *New York Times* [New York] 28 Feb. 1951: 37.
[32] "Garden Arranges for Boxing Bouts to Be Covered-Networks Will Split Coverage." *New York Times* [New York] 8 July 1949: 36.

Ballantine sponsored the filming of Puerto Rican league baseball games and their broadcast within the city[33]. The Ruppert company also sponsored a host of events, ranging from banquets for the Yale crew[34] team to Opera fundraisers[35] to art exhibits at museums across the city. Schaefer sponsored a long running "Noontime Concert Series" that provided free music to New Yorkers throughout the summertime months at Madison Square Park[36]. Again these are but a few examples that only gesture at the breadth involvement with most aspects of the New York cultural scene—from sports to music to art. And while they were certainly investments for the company in terms of gaining widespread recognition for their products, these were not necessary routes for these companies to take, and often, these sponsorships came at great expense. On several occasions, these companies preferred to take a financial hit rather than raise prices of events (or start charging in the case of free events), which would make these events inaccessible to working class New Yorkers.

This post-war period also marked the beginning of what later became known as the "beer wars". In general, this can be understood as a nationwide consolidation of the beer industry, as a handful of companies grew increasingly efficient, moneyed, and widely recognized by name. Several factors contributed to the possibility of this phenomenon. The first of these, again, was the fact beer tastes had changed significantly following prohibition. The legacy of the 3.2% beer that was produced immediately after prohibition acclimated the beer drinking population to a "lighter" tasting beer—one that was less potent, less bitter, and ultimately, less flavorful. This also meant that the variety of tastes was much narrower, and the taste difference between brands was less pronounced. Advertising then became all the more important in a company's success—

[33] Spielvogel, Carl. "Advertising: The Multilingual Sales Pitch." *New York Times* [New York] 30 Mar. 1958: F18.
[34] "Yale Crews Honored." *New York Times* [New York] 12 Feb. 1948: 32.
[35] "George E. Ruppert Gives Party." *New York Times* [New York] 27 May 1942: 28.
[36] "Popular Concerts at Noon Begin In Madison Sq. Park." *New York Times* [New York] 31 July 1958: 25.

newspaper, television, and radio advertisements, and name recognition through sponsorships could account for the success of a product given these minimal differences in taste. Larger companies with more money to invest in advertising, then, had an unprecedented advantage during this time. (This is also when advertising in general increased dramatically across the country.)

The improved financial statuses of most Americans that ushered in a new era of consumerism in general also improved conditions for the beer industry. With the high level of job availability that came about during wartime production and continued on afterwards, people sighed in relief as the Depression seemed to have receded into history—there were now jobs to be worked and money to be made. The frugality that was both encouraged and enforced during the wartime left those employed during the war with substantial sums of money in savings (more than $100 billion nationwide)[37]. This is all to say that Americans in the latter half of the 1940's had money to spend for the first time in about 15 years. And not only did they spend, they drank—a lot. In 1948 alone, Americans purchased and consumed 86.9 million barrels of beer, which corresponds to a consumption rate of 18.5 gallons per person[38]. These were the highest levels since repeal. This sudden jump in consumption was an impetus for companies around the country to increase production.

Next, the end of wartime restrictions on machinery and metal usage as well as gasoline consumption allowed brewing companies to increase production[39]. This happened in several ways. First, companies wanting to expand could now do so either by purchasing and refurbishing old factories, or by enlarging the factories which they already owned. The ability to

[37] Maureen Ogle, *Ambitious Brew* (Harcourt Inc., New York 2006) 225.
[38] Ogle 225
[39] "Shortages Retard Brewery Changes." *New York Times* [New York] 4 Feb. 1946: 33.

purchase and use gasoline without restriction also made it possible for companies to extend their region of distribution. Because of the greater capacity for production and incentive to increase production (from the ability to reach more people), efficiency became an essential principle in beer production. This became especially true because of changes in agricultural markets. As early as 1947, essential ingredients for beer production, such as wheat, corn (now an ingredient in beer which is indicative of lighter taste), and barley, began to rise dramatically[40]. Only companies who could absorb this capital cost and produce enough beer to minimize the financial stress these rising prices would place on gross income would be able to succeed. Similarly, companies had to be large enough and wealthy enough to sustain production whenever price fluctuations would occur, both seasonally and over extended periods of time.

Several burdens unique to the New York industry made survival even more difficult. Because of the strength and prevalence of New York Unions, New York breweries paid the highest wages in the industry (as mentioned earlier). Because of the vicious competition for land in the city, New York breweries also paid significantly higher property taxes than companies elsewhere. Water, electricity, and maintenance work all cost more in New York. It was the most expensive place to brew beer. (The consequences of these factors will prove to be of utmost importance later.)

The consolidation of the beer industry was nothing new—as has been shown, companies came and went for as long as the industry had been functioning. But this new phenomenon expedited the process with never before seen speed and severity. In 1946, Pabst began production in Newark after buying out Hoffman Beverages, which was the first entry of a "big

[40] "Fewer Brewers: Small Beer Firms Fight Soaring Costs But Fear Price Rise; Many Close." *Wall Street Journal* [New York] 16 Dec. 1947: 1.

beer" company into the New York metropolitan area[41]. In 1947, Anheuser-Busch purchased fifty acres of land in Newark where they planned to place a brand new, state of the art brewery at a cost of $20 million[42]. The moves by these two major companies (ranked third and second respectively in terms of national total production) marked the first major entries of "big beer" into the New York metropolitan area. Two years later, in 1949, the Ehret Brewing Company was purchased by Schlitz, which, significantly, marked the first entry of a national brand into the city proper[43]. Schlitz also spent approximately $6 million to modernize and enlarge the plant, which increased the company's total production by 500,000 barrels per year[44]. Sensing the danger in this sudden influx of "big beer" into the local market, Liebmann (Rheingold) purchased the Eichler Brewing Company in 1947, which added an additional 500,000 barrels to its yearly production[45]. Around the same time, the Schaefer brewing company invested $2 million dollars in expanding its plant in Brooklyn[46]. Away from the city (in terms of distance but not necessarily local market involvement), Miller cut the rope on its enormous new production, bottling, and storage plant in Milwaukee in July 1949[47]. The Trommers company was bought out by Piels two years later. In 1953 the Ruppert Brewing Company spent $2 million to expand its plant in order to increase production of Knickerbocker and Ruppiner (its lightest product)[48]. And perhaps the most important, definitive expansion of the early stages of the "beer wars" occurred during this same year. In November of 1953 Pabst opened a production plant in Los

[41] Ogle 224.
[42] Ogle, 224
[43] "Millions To Be Spent on Ehret Brewery." *New York Times* [New York] 18 Mar. 1949: 29.
[44] Ogle 224
[45] "Liebmann Breweriess Acquires Eichler Plant to Expand Output." *New York Times* [New York] 28 May 1947: 37.
[46] Ogle 224
[47] Ogle 225
[48] "Ruppert to Expand." *New York Times* [New York] 23 Jan. 1953: 32. The production and marketing of Ruppiner quite literally saved the Ruppert Company from bankruptcy. Ruppert lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in 1951 and achieved more than a million dollars in profits after introducing the Ruppiner brand.

Angeles, making it the first Midwestern brewing company to operate facilities on the west coast, and thus, to be the first brewing company to have access to the largest three, most densely populated markets in the country[49] (the east coast, middle America, and the West). Needless to say, Anheuser-Busch and Schlitz followed soon after, both of whom opened plants in California.

Beyond increased production capacity and the ability to reach millions more people, these new factories being constructed across the nation helped these companies establish an elite, sophisticated, "national" identity. This image was largely created and reinforced through advertising. In 1952 the four largest national brewing companies, Anheuser-Busch, Pabst, Schlitz, and Miller paid for 84% of all television advertisements, and were responsible for about 25% of beer sold nationwide. The effect of these commercials was, as always, reproduced socially. People saw these commercials and bought national brands. Other people saw these commercials, saw strangers buying and drinking these beers, and felt compelled to do the same. Further, as the American economy continued to strengthen and people came to have new levels of disposable income. Between 1950 and 1960 alone the average per capita income increased by approximately 35%[50]. Thus, Americans exposed to these new products had the financial freedom to spend money to participate in this national image building process.

It is possible that consolidation would not have been fatal to so many breweries had the market continued to expand so rapidly. But just the opposite happened in reality. Beer consumption dropped in 1949 by more than one million barrels from its record high the year before, and another two million barrels the following year[51]. Through the remainder of the decade, total yearly consumption never exceeded 84 million barrels (a little over 15 gallons per

[49] Clark, William. "Beer War: Country's Top Three Brewers Extend Sales Battle to The West." *Wall Street Journal* [New York] 23 Nov. 1953: 1.
[50] Ogle 225
[51] Ogle 225

person)[52]. Evidenced in these statistics is the fact that the beer market was over-saturated and could no longer support the number of breweries and the volume of beer that they were equipped to produce. The industry needed to scale itself back, and only the strongest would survive. During this ten year post war period, the number of breweries dropped from approximately 425 to approximately 175—a two thirds reduction in industry size[53].

Chapter 3

In 1957 the Brooklyn Dodgers played their last game at their longtime home at Ebbets Field. Their owner, the powerful real estate mogul Walter O'Malley, was a businessman in the truest sense—his vision for the team did not involve remaining a "cultural icon" of pluralism and hard work, or a shared point of pride "for the people" of the city, but rather as an enterprise from which he could profit greatly. While at the end of the day this was merely the move of a baseball team like any other, this move was indicative of the course that New York would take over the next two decades. The solidarity among people in the workplace and in their communities would slowly start to dissolve and recede in to disjointed pockets of the city, or diffuse out of the city altogether. Liberal blue collar workers, once revered for their patriotism, work ethic, and constitutive role in city culture came to be viewed scornfully as menaces who inhibited the progress of the city at least, or drove the city into crisis at worst. City employment expanded and the working class public sector shrank annually. At the same time, politicians, businessmen, and real estate owners redefined Manhattan as a space for public and private life, transforming the borough both aesthetically and functionally. Jobs began to disappear, especially for those with sub-standard high-school educations and without college degrees. Underlying many of these

[52] Ogle 225
[53] Victor J. Tremblay, Carol Horton Tremblay, *The U.S. Brewing Industry* (MIT Press, Cambridge 2005) 42.

issues was the issue of race, which surfaced with an unbefore seen vigor in the midst of these transformations and problematized contentious issues even further. In the midst of all of this, the New York beer industry was suffering in its own right. One by one companies began to concede to bids from larger, more profitable breweries or close altogether. Rising pressure from the top national breweries left these companies who, for the longest time, could rely on a supportive New York market as their consumer base, with little choice. And rising wages, operating and production costs made it even more difficult for these companies to survive. By the beginning of 1976, the city that once produced more beer than any other in the United States found itself without a brewery to call its own. For both the industry and the city at large, this was a tumultuous twenty years.

While crisis that resulted largely from the lack of blue-collar jobs in the city did not hit until the late 1960's, the trend towards deindustrialization began ten to fifteen years earlier, when manufacturing companies and large corporations began to leave the city. The general mentality among these companies was that New York was too expensive and too stressful of a place to run an efficient business. Union workers upon whom many of these factories relied for their labor were growing increasingly powerful and increasingly demanding. Union workers in New York in New York earned more than their counterparts in surrounding areas in New York and New Jersey, and significantly more than workers in other parts of the country (especially the South)[54]. Relatively low unemployment rates also meant that it would not be easy for firms to find replacement workers in the event of a strike or unmanageable demands. This low rate of unemployment also encouraged many workers to follow their companies out of the city, lest they be left to search for work in a job market that was, for the most part, full. Property rates, rents,

[54] Freeman 146

and the limited availability of large industrial space also encouraged companies to relocate. Companies that wished to expand or to integrate their production (to have several stages of the production process available in one location) could not find the space to do so within the city proper at manageable rates. Even smaller companies wanting to operate on multiple floors of a loft building could not afford to do so. This issue prevented the city from participating in rapidly growing industries that required vast plots of land for production, such as the aircraft and electronics industries, which would have brought thousands of jobs to the city[55]. (These industries opted instead for locations near the city, such as Nassau County.) Ultimately, during mayor Wagner's three terms as mayor of New York (from 1955 to 1964), the city lost more than 200,000 manufacturing jobs to outlying areas[56].

There was little help to be found for protecting the livelihood of blue-collar industries within the city. Real estate owners and the corporate businessmen, who had an increasing amount of political sway, were not concerned with the well being of the manufacturing industry in the city (the Rockefellers being iconic examples). In their minds, the city would be better off without the noise and pollution created by factories, as well as the uneducated masses who toiled in them. Real estate owners saw great opportunity for profits in converting factories into living space or corporate office centers stacked as high as possible. Perhaps the most decisive example of their influence on politics during this time came about in 1961 when the city government was in the midst of debate surrounding a city wide zoning bill. Manhattan real estate owners lobbied hard with the Commerce and Industry Association and the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association, who were two key parties in informing the government's decision. The bill ultimately cut down on the areas reserved for manufacturing, called for clearer demarcations

[55] Freeman 144
[56] Freeman 150

between residential and manufacturing areas, and created "performance standards" which limited noise, fumes, and bad smells created during production[57]. It was policies such as this and the attitudes that informed them among the wealthiest and most influential people in New York that shaped the structural and functional transformation of the city that would follow. A liberal minded mayor, Wagner attempted to some degree to protect the manufacturing industry by relegating space throughout the city specifically for manufacturing. His most ambitious plans involved setting aside 96 acres in Flatbush for an industrial park, and creating four million square feet of industrial loft space in Midtown Manhattan[58]. Both of these plans received little support, especially given the expense of the projects, and were tied up in litigation indefinitely. Neither project materialized.

The vision of a deindustrialized, renovated and built up city received much support from construction unions. For them, converting New York into a city driven by real estate and business meant years of steady building contracts. This was an appealing proposition for workers, who, because of the high turnover rate of their work, relied on the availability of new housing projects for their job security, which was never stable or predictable. It was because of this high turnover rate that construction unions tended to be more active and strongly organized (whereas other unions would come together occasionally, and only out of necessity). When the 1961 zoning act was up for consideration, only the building trade unions participated in the discussion[59]. Thus, with bankers, financiers, businessmen, and a large worker constituency, there was much pressure to rebuild New York.

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[57] Freeman 150
[58] Freeman 150
[59] Freeman 151

In the early 1960's blue-collar jobs were threatened more and more by automation and technology. Because of the relatively small size characteristic of New York factories and union strength, companies either had no need to invest in new technologies or were pressured into not doing so. Blue-collar jobs in New York remained relatively insulated from the trend towards automation that was arising elsewhere in the country. But, in some industries, companies had an increasingly difficult time competing with automated factories that had lower operating costs than those in the city. Most of these companies converted to automated production, moved outside of the city, or failed. Printing industry workers and elevator operators were some of the most devastated in this sense, as tens of thousands of once viable jobs became no longer necessary[60]. Automation and technology also drove a greater part of the shipping industry out of the city, leaving the mythologized Brooklyn docks barren. The prevalence and speed of large jets shifted a great part of the shipping industry in general towards aircraft (the amount of freight that came in and out of JFK airport increased 500% between 1960 and 1966)[61]. Further, the city hesitated about updating its Brooklyn shipyards and did not consider seriously the Port Authority's proposals for expansion and modernization. This was at the time when the now ubiquitous standardized shipping containers reinvented the industry. New Jersey was more receptive to the Port Authority's offers and underwent large scale conversions during the mid-1960's. By the end of the 1970's, New Jersey was handling seven times as much freight as New York, and New York had lost approximately 20,000 shipping jobs[62].

Automation also played a role in the rapidly changing brewing industry. The new factories being built across the country by large, national companies were complete with the

[60] Freeman 155
[61] Freeman 162
[62] Freeman 163

most up-to-date technology, which made their overall production processes cheaper and more efficient, and the product easier to expedite. As in other industries, brewers resisted the move towards automation longer than their competitors across the country. But, under the pressure of competition, New York brewers also were forced to modernize, leave, find a buyer (the space and available brewing equipment were valuable assets), or fail. Without the funds to modernize or leave, the Krueger Brewing Company closed in May of 1961 (citing losses of more than $1,000,000 the year before)[63]. Ruppert Brewing Company, a longtime Yankees affiliate, was purchased by Narragansett Brewing Company during the same year. In September of 1962, the Piels Brothers company and its plants in Brooklyn and Staten Island were bought out by Dewry's, a brewery located in South Bend, IN[64]. Despite its general success on the east coast and its standing as the 11th largest brewer in the country, the owners of the Liebmann (Rheingold) company received an offer from Pepsi that could not be refused. Interested primarily in the bottling and distribution services, Pepsi paid $26 million for the company in 1964.

The five major breweries that managed to remain in business in the New York-metropolitan area (Schaefer, Schlitz, Ruppert, Liebmann, and Ballantine in Newark) had to balance relations with workers unions while automating parts of the production process. While automation made tasks such as bottling, labeling, and casing much more efficient, the brewing a product consistently and precisely required many skilled, experienced workers to conduct other aspects of the tedious brewing process. Thus, brewing companies could not afford to completely abandon the workers whose jobs were being replaced by automation, for fear of inciting discontent among workers in general—they could not afford more large scale strikes. In June of

[63] "Kings Brewery Files Under Section 77-B." *New York Times* [New York] 8 Dec. 1937: 46.
[64] "Piels Acquired By Drewrys, LTD." *New York Times* [New York] 5 Sept. 1962: 71.

1964, breweries and unions underwent negotiations in order to ease the impact that the move towards automation would have on workers[65]. (Similar negotiations had been ongoing in other parts of the country for about ten years.) The agreement that they settled upon offered retirement incentives to workers over the age of 60, which granted them continued payment for three years after retirement and generous pensions. Brewers also raised wages for workers who would remain employed. On their half, the unions agreed to contribute more money of their weekly salary to pension funds. The unions overwhelmingly agreed to these terms, understanding very well that holding up the process towards automation could prove fatal to their employers, and leave them ultimately without jobs.

In the midst of this integration of technology into the brewing process, the major five area breweries were following the national trend of expansion, both within and outside of the city. Again, this was a necessary step to take, as companies could no longer serve merely the New York-metropolitan area and hope to stay in business. In 1959, Schaefer expanded its domestic production, opening a large new plant in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn[66]. Two years later, it attempted to gain access to the Midwest market by purchasing a plant in Cleveland that added 500,000 barrels per year to its total production[67]. But the Midwestern beer market was already flooded with long established "premium" beer brands, making it almost impossible for a newcomer to succeed. After just three years of life, Schaefer put the Cleveland plant up for sale[68]. In May of 1963, Liebmann (Rheingold) began a $4 million construction for a huge new plant in Brooklyn[69]. Later that year, Ruppert purchased Esslinger, Gretz, and Keglet Beers in

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[65] Lissner, Will. "Retiring Spurred In Brewery Pact." *New York Times* [New York] 1 June 1964: 31.
[66] "New Schaefer Unit Will Be Dedicated." *New York Times* [New York] 19 Oct. 1959: 47.
[67] "Schaefer in Ohio." *New York Times* [New York] 16 July 1961: F12.
[68] "Ohio Brewery To Close." *New York Times* [New York] 8 Jan. 1964: 56.
[69] "Liebmann Is Building Plant." *New York Times* [New York] 21 May 1963: 70.

Philadelphia that would help the company reach its 2,000,000 barrel per year production goal, and into the top-ten list of producers nationwide[70]. This acquisition also gave Ruppert great access to markets in Pennsylvania, South Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia. The same day Ruppert also announced its intention to open a large production plant in Putnam County, NY. But two years of debate over whether or not the brewery could have access to New York City water ultimately put an end to this plan[71]. And in 1964, Ballantine cut the ribbon on its $10,000,000, 15 acre storage and shipping facility in Newark[72].

In expanding and modernizing, the largest New York area breweries were doing their part to keep pace with other large breweries around the country—at least on the surface. The 2,000,000 barrel per year capacity that enthused the Ruppert company was laughable to the "big 3" brewing companies. In that same year, Anheuser-Busch produced 9,379,000 barrels of beer (10.2% of the national market), Schlitz produced 7,833,000 (8.35%), and Pabst made 6,672,000 barrels[73]. As the baby-boomer generation grew old enough to drink legally nationwide consumption skyrocketed to almost 94,000,000 barrels in 1963, a nearly 10,000,000 barrel increase over five years (despite only modest increases in per capita consumption)[74]. And while this demand for beer kept many companies afloat, the havoc that the largest national brands were wreaking on the industry was becoming increasingly apparent. By 1963, the number of brewing companies had fallen to 151 nationwide, a 67% reduction since 1945, with the number of functioning breweries dropping from 468 to 211 in the same period[75]. In addition, the top twenty

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[70] "Ruppert to Buy Large Brewery." *New York Times* [New York] 12 Nov. 1963: 81.
[71] Stevens, John W. "Brewery Says Putnam Plant Is Off If City Bars The Use Of Its Water." *New York Times* [New York] 15 Jan. 1965: 39.
[72] "Ballantine Beer Opens Newark Shipping Center." *New York Times* [New York] 12 Apr. 1964: F9.
[73] "Big Brewers Add to Market Share." *New York Times* [New York] 19 Jan. 1964: 44.
[74] Nagle, James J. "Breweries Stock Drawing Investors." *New York Times* [New York] 5 Apr. 1964: F1.
[75] Nagle, James J. "Breweries Stock Drawing Investors." *New York Times* [New York] 5 Apr. 1964: F1.

five brewing companies controlled more than 82% of the market by 1963—an increase of more than 20% from ten years prior[76].

As companies began to distribute their product in new regions around the country, advertising became an increasingly important factor in the brewing industry. In order for a company to successfully crack into a new market, it was necessary that its name be as recognizable as the brands that had traditionally lined the shelves or been available in bars in that area. (This was especially true in New York, a city that preferred locally made beer and, for a long time, resisted the influx of beer from national companies.) Advertising gave companies the opportunity to do so, and to make claims about the product itself. Most of the brands that went national marketed themselves as and created an image for themselves as "premium" brands of beer through marketing campaigns that flouted quality and sophistication. This often allowed them to sell at prices slightly higher than the local brands, or, when selling at local-brand rates, to make it seem like a "bargain". But this strategy by larger breweries also pressured smaller breweries to expand their own marketing campaigns. All told, the amount of money spent on advertising in the brewing industry increased to more than $275,000,000 in 1963 from only $50,000,000 in 1946[77]. By this time, all of the New York area breweries were waging multi-million dollar a year advertising campaigns, placing adds in newspapers, magazines, and, within increasing regularity, on television. But again, these expenditures were merely fractions of those put out by national brewers. In 1960, the same year that Ruppert announced a $4,000,000 marketing campaign, Anheuser-Busch launched a $12,500,000 campaign[78]. And with some exceptions, companies that spent the most on advertising saw the highest growth in sales: that

[76] "Big Brewers Add to Market Share." *New York Times* [New York] 19 Jan. 1964: 44.
[77] [77] "Big Brewers Add to Market Share." *New York Times* [New York] 19 Jan. 1964: 44.
[78] "Schaefer in Ohio." *New York Times* [New York] 16 July 1961: F12.

year Anheuser-Busch saw a 15% increase in sales while Ballantine saw a 7.2% increase, Schaefer a 6% increase, and Liebmann a 2% increase[79]. But New York breweries, in being more familiar than national companies with the racial make-up of the city, had an advantage in local advertising. As racial issues came to the forefront of public consciousness during the 1960's New York breweries began broad ethnic marketing campaigns, targeting ethnicities that had never before been attended to directly. In 1965, Rheingold began publishing newspaper advertisements aimed at the Chinese and Italian populations of the city—two groups not normally recognized as "beer drinkers"[80]. Companies also began to recognize the growing black population in the city as a viable and yet untapped market. An iconic example of this strategy came in 1965, when Ballantine introduced the "Jazz-mobile"[81]. Throughout the summer of 1965 the "Jazz-mobile" drove through the streets of Harlem with a jazz band performing on the stage constructed in the back of the vehicle, parking occasionally in front of stores and restaurants where Ballantine was sold.

In addition to these larger marketing campaigns, New York area breweries remained highly involved in the city's cultural sphere. The events that these companies hosted allowed the companies not only to advertise their product but to reinforce their association with life for the average New Yorker. In 1960 Rheingold began sponsoring a series of free outdoor concerts held in Queens[82]. The following year the company bid $5,000,000 to become the official sponsor of the newly arrived New York Mets, thus preserving the link between New York beer and New York baseball[83]. Five years later, Rheingold began a summertime "Central Park Music Festival"

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[79] "Schaefer in Ohio." *New York Times* [New York] 16 July 1961: F12.
[80] Carlson, Walter. "Advertising: Selling to the Ethnic Groups." *New York Times* [New York] 25 Apr. 1965: F18.
[81] Sloane, Leonard. "Advertising: Reaching Vast Negro Market." *New York Times* [New York] 12 Sept. 1965: F14.
[82] "Band Concerts Listed." *New York Times* [New York] 8 June 1960: 37.
[83] Shabecoff, Phillip. "Advertising: Home Run for Rheingold Beer." *New York Times* [New York] 13 Nov. 1961: 48.

series, which gave working class New Yorkers the opportunity to see artists such as Mongo Santamaria, Stan Getz, and Otis Redding[84]. In 1967, Rheingold, Schlitz and Ballantine all began to host jazz concerts around the city, hoping to appeal to a younger, "hipper" demographic[85]. Schaefer hosted several ethnic parades throughout the city during the early to mid-1960's[86]. And in 1968, when Rheingold could no longer afford to sponsor the "Central Park Music Festival" series, Schaefer took over, sacrificing hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep the tradition alive[87].

But if the cultural involvements of the New York brewing industry were indicative of its integral role in New York life, their decline was indicative of the financial hardships that began to confront these companies. Perhaps the most symbolic example came at the end of the 1966 baseball season, when Ballantine announced that it would no longer sponsor Yankees games or broadcasts[88]. The company could no longer afford the multi-million dollar contract that would have been required for them to remain the official sponsor. Further, the Pabst brewing company outbid Schaefer for sponsorship rights beginning the following year. The longtime connection between the Yankees and New York beer had finally crumbled, and big-beer was now taking over.

In the latter half of the 1960's the ubiquity and increasing sales of national brand beer began to take its toll on the smaller New York breweries. Within the city itself, part of this fact can be attributed to a seemingly inexplicable and ultimately detrimental business decision by the Schaefer Company in 1962. Lamenting the fact that they were losing between 30% and 40% of

[84] "A Festival Of Music For Central Park Planned In Summer." *New York Times* [New York] 29 Apr. 1966: 26.
[85] Nagle, James J. "No Toasts Offered At Rheingold Meeting." *New York Times* [New York] 10 May 1968: 69.
[86] Adams, Val. "Rocking And Rolling With A Message." *New York Times* [New York] 6 June 1966: X17.
[87] "Schaefer Rescues Park Jazz Series; Rheingold Out." *New York Times* [New York] 28 May 1968: 24.
[88] Adams, Val. "Ballantine Beer Drops the Yanks." *New York Times* [New York] 28 Sept 1966: 75

their profits to taxes, the company agreed to distribute Anheuser-Busch products in every borough except Staten Island and surrounding suburbs[89]. They claimed that this would cut help cut down on their own shipping costs. This may have been helpful in the short run, but the significantly greater access to the resilient New York market that this move granted Anheuser-Busch was a catalyst for the transformation of the beer market in the city. Anheuser-Busch brands became increasingly popular within the city, as did other non-New York beers.

Within a few years the ripples from this plunge into the New York beer market began to reach other companies. In November of 1965 the owners of the Ruppert Brewing Company, facing increasing financial difficulties, entered negotiations with Rheingold, hoping to be bought out. Initially the federal government condemned the transaction as a violation of anti-trust laws[90]. But a few days later, the government appealed its initial decision, allowing the buyout to pass[91]. This reduced the number of brewing companies in the New York metropolitan area to four (Rheingold, Schaefer, Ballantine, and Schlitz). And upon purchasing Ruppert, Rheingold decided to move all production of Ruppert products to Brooklyn, closing its factory on Manhattan's Upper East Side; it was the last functioning brewery in Manhattan.

In a way, the disappearance of brewing from Manhattan reflected larger socio-and economic changes were rapidly progressing throughout the city, but especially the borough of Manhattan. By the late 1960's more than two hundred new office buildings were constructed, often in areas that were once comprised of lofts and small factories (such as lower Manhattan

[89] Bedingfield, Robert. "Personality: Contributor of Competing Beer." *New York Times* [New York] 1 Apr 1962: 145
[90] "Reingold Opposed in Bid For Ruppert." *New York Times* [New York] 10 Nov 1965.
[91] Perlmutter, Emanuel. "Schaefer in Red, Union Skips Raise." *New York Times* [New York] 2 May 1973: 96

and the midtown areas). These projects added 67,000,000 square feet of office space that would provide the physical space around which economic and cultural transformations would occur[92].

These new office buildings provided space for the rapidly growing white collar economy. By 1970 the number of blue collar jobs available in the city had been reduced to approximately 1 million, and blue collar workers constituted just 29% of the workforce (down from 41% in 1946)[93]. By that time, there were just as many people working clerical and secretarial jobs. Between 1955 and 1970 the number of finance, insurance, and real estate jobs rose 36%, and the number of service industry jobs rose by 46%[94]. And by 1970, there were just as many managerial and professional workers as there were secretarial and clerical workers. This is all to say, that the majority of jobs no longer involved manual and machine labor in factories, but rather information and sales oriented work in office buildings; white collar workers outnumbered blue collar workers two to one[95]. Again, this fact largely reflected the new vision of New York as the financial center of the world which came to prominence as America's involvement in international affairs grew during and after World War II. Further, advances in the fields of technology and communication that redefined the world as an international network rather than a scattered array of isolated countries made this vision increasingly plausible.

One of the most obvious yet profound effects that this rise in white collar jobs and workspaces had on the city was making Manhattan an increasingly unlivable borough for the working class. In a sense, space in Manhattan was no longer conceived in terms of accommodating citizens but rather in terms of how much money a space could bring in. And so, real estate prices soared. This drove much of the working class to the outer boroughs, and

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[92] Freeman 167
[93] Freeman 165
[94] Freeman 168
[95] Freeman 168

consolidated the poorest citizens of New York into isolated neighborhoods in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and northern Manhattan. In correlation with this movement out of the center of the city was a dramatic decline in private sector union activity. Because workers now lived much further away from their places of work, the will to go out of their way to attend union functions dissolved. And because workers now lived further away from one another, so too did the sense of solidarity that once characterized blue collar workers; the sense that "what was good for one was good for all" was eroding.

During this same time, the city was also reaching its peak of political liberalism in terms of public institutions and employees. From the mid-1950s through 1973, the New York mayoralty was held by liberal democrats (Wagner and Lindsay) whose political convictions led them to expand the size and level of involvement of the public sector, and to give long-unseen powers to public workers unions[96]. During these twenty years, the number of public service jobs increased from approximately 347,400 in 1950, to 408,200 in 1960, to 563,200 in 1970[97]. These statistics indicate a marked increase in the number of both municipal workers (such as police officers, teachers, highway and park officials) as well as "social democracy" workers (involved with higher education, medicine, transit, and housing). As the number of public workers increased, they were gradually given more rights and received strong political backing from the mayors. This was especially true of Wagner, who in 1958 passed Executive Order 49. This bill granted public workers in the city a legal avenue for entering the collective bargaining process,

[96] While their motives were debatable, on the surface these were reactionary measures to compensate for the decline of the working class, and to win back political ground lost during McCarthy's "red terror" period.
[97] Freeman 201

making public workers unions more closely resemble private sector unions in their ability to enter contract negotiations with city departments and to strike[98].

In the midst of this rise in white collar labor and public institutions the contemporary notion of blue-collar began to evolve. White collar work put a new and growing premium on education. Even non-managerial level positions grew increasingly rigid and sophisticated[99]. They did not require the specialization or technical skills that had once characterized jobs in New York, but rather the ability to adapt to this very streamlined work atmosphere. Thus, those who had proven their abilities in the classroom were sought after more and more by employers. For many, a high-school education sufficed. But companies often considered students or graduates of schools in lower income neighborhoods to be unfit for work in an office (and more often than not, these people were minorities). Thus, an entire class of people emerged in the city that could not have access to this white-collar world. Those relegated to working more labor-intensive jobs, then, came to be associated with a lack of education and meager upbringings. The participation of blue collar workers, who were no longer guaranteed the extensive benefits they once had, in public welfare institutions (hospitals, housing, and food programs, for example) only reinforced and perpetuated these distinctions.

This separation of the blue collar class and the middle class was also a product of demographic changes within the city. In the 1970's the "white flight" process was entering its final stages. This phenomenon saw approximately two million white New Yorkers flee the city between mid 1950's and the final years of the 1970's[100]. Benefitting financially from the higher-paying white collar jobs, workers throughout the city could now afford to leave the cramped,

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[98] Freeman 203
[99] Freeman 169
[100] Freeman 171

noisy, and dangerous city and purchase larger houses in the suburbs. Escape from the city became an increasingly meaningful sign of upward mobility, and constitutive of the emerging "middle class". Neighborhoods from which large numbers of inhabitants fled experienced sharp reductions in property value, which allowed poorer residents of the city to move in—many of whom, not coincidentally, were minorities. Fear of losing money on their housing investments and racially induced fear of the corruption of their neighborhoods motivated even more white residents to flee the city, even when this was a financially risky decision. Over time, this circular process continued and helped inscribe harsh racial and class boundaries in the city's rapidly changing landscape.

By the mid 1970's, then, the demarcation between blue-collar citizens and everyone else had been hardened: blue-collar implied being relatively uneducated, working manual labor job, being unable to escape the city, and relying on public institutions, while everyone else had succeeded in a "good" city high school and maybe even gone to college, worked in an office, had disposable income, and lived either in expensive parts of Manhattan or the suburbs. The connection and interaction between the two classes became increasingly sparse, and the culture surrounding each diverged.

It is fitting, then, that beer brands traditionally associated with the New York working class approached an inevitable crisis during this period. With the rise of the white-collar class came the desire of the upwardly mobile to distinguish themselves from the classes that they had left behind. And ~~B~~esides relocating, the most visible way to do so was through consumption of products that the lower classes could not afford—whether clothing, cars, food, or alcoholic beverages. The white collar class, then, became increasingly attracted to the beer from national-brand companies, which became increasingly available during the mid to late 1960's. These large, national companies spent great sums of money on advertising to establish their products as "premium" products of the highest quality—to give the beer a personality, an identity, and an aesthetic that would effectively lure in this emergent white collar class[101]. Because the subtle yet well established air of superiority surrounding these products, the companies were able to charge more than their local competitors. And reciprocally consumers were willing to pay for the brand name that best represented them. Once this means of identification took hold in New York, the long resilient New York beer market, which had long been loyal to beer brewed within the city. This local beer represented an age and a New Yorker with whom a large part of the city and its suburbs no longer identified, and from whom they actively sought to distance themselves.

By the mid-1960's it was no longer just the national brand beer companies with whom New York breweries were competing. As the economy strengthened around the country and disposable income rose, the distilled beverages industry grew rapidly, experiencing a 30% rise in sales between 1959 and 1965 alone (twice that growth rate of the beer industry). Liquor and spirits had long been identified with the upper class, largely because of their relatively high prices. As such, they were strongly associated with sophistication, eruditeness, and exclusivity—the very characteristics that the emergent white-collar class hoped to exude. Liquor, then, came into higher demand, and people became increasingly willing (or felt increasingly compelled) to pay the extra money for it. The wine industry benefitted from the same phenomenon, and experienced a 26% growth rate between 1959 and 1960. Ultimately, the rise in liquor and wine consumption contributed to an almost two gallon per person reduction in annual beer consumption during the 1950's and 1960's[102].

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[101] Tremblay and Tremblay 178-9

[102] Sloane, Leonard. "Problems Are Brewing In Beer Industry." *New York Times* [New York] 4 Dec. 1966: F1. This article also suggests other reasons for the increasingly predominant choice of beer over liquor. One of which is the

Under pressure from the strengthening liquor and wine industries and national beer companies, New York breweries were looking into a bleak future in the latter half of the 1960's. And their situation only worsened in 1966 when Falstaff, the country's fourth largest beer producer, announced that it would start distributing its products in the New York-metropolitan area[103]. Each of the top four companies (Anheuser-Busch, Pabst, Schlitz, and Falstaff, who together were responsible for more than one third of the beer sales nationwide) were operating in the New York market[104]. The first clear sign that this pressure was taking its toll on New York companies came in 1968 when the Liebmann (Rheingold) company reported losses of more than $367,000 for the 1967 business year—this after profiting more than $5,000,000 the year before[105]. Facing financial uncertainty in the 1968 business year, the company was forced to scale back its sponsorship of events around the city, as they could not predict whether the losses incurred in doing so would be sustainable[106]. Piels, too, was forced to trim its funding for cultural affairs[107]. Schaefer remained the only company stable enough to sponsor large scale events, including several music festivals throughout the summer months[108][109].

In June of 1970, the New York brewing industry experienced its first strike in years. More than 5,000 workers walked out from their jobs at the Rheingold, Piels, Schlitz, and

claim that the rising use of air conditioning made people less inclined to use beer to replenish water lost from sweating during the warm weather months. In addition, white collar work, which was less demanding physically, reduced the role of beer as a caloric supplement. Finally, the emergence of "health consciousness" and weight control gave liquor, which was lower in calories than beer, a "healthy" image.

[103] Nagle, James. "Falstaff Puts Beer On Market Here." *New York Times* [New York] 10 June 1966: 84.

[104] Tremblay, Tremblay 70.

[105] Nagle, James. "No Toasts Offered At Rheingold Meeting." *New York Times* [New York] 10 May 1968: 69.

[106] "Schaefer Rescues Park Jazz Series; Rheingold Out." *New York Times* [New York] 28 May 1968: 24.

[107] The most telling evidence of the growing inability of city breweries to sponsor events in the city comes not from announcements that events or programs were being cancelled, but the dramatic decline in publicized events. While part of this is surely due to the increase in television advertising, the number of events documented or reported on also declined significantly in the final years of the 1960's and 1970's.

[108] Wilson, John S. "Peggy Lee Sings In Central Park." *New York Times* [New York] 27 July 1970: 31.

[109] "Upbeat In Central Park." *New York Times* [New York] 28 Aug. 1970: 26.

Schaefer factories, hoping ultimately to achieve pay raises and improved benefits[110]. This halted distribution of these companies' products, while beer from Falstaff, Anheuser-Busch, and Pabst continued to flow into the city. This slowdown in production would only hurt the workers in the long run, as it allowed the larger breweries to strengthen their foothold in the New York market. Further, the aftermath of this strike would prove that, in order for these companies to compete in a largely white collar market, they would have to operate according to "white collar" principles of efficiency, productivity and consistency. The market and society at large was less willing to tolerate these systematic hold-ups, which came to be considered outdated and ultimately incompatible with the new New York that was emerging.

This growing frustration with strikes and labor demands became apparent in the public sector as well, as the 1970's witnessed a violent backlash in the face of public unionism. In general, the public opinion worked against what was considered to be an oversized, demanding, and inefficient public sector. With low but gradually rising unemployment in the city in the final years of the 1960's, municipal unions waged what seemed to be an endless series of strikes, holding that the city government was out of tune with the needs of workers. Taxi drivers, the Metropolitan Opera Company, transit workers, sanitation workers, longshoremen, and postal employees, among others, all waged strikes in the late 1960's and early 1970's[111]. In 1970 alone, the city lost 4.2 million work days to strikes waged by more than 200,000 workers[112]. These militant campaigns often left the city in a state of disarray, and New Yorkers who relied on these services increasingly frustrated. The city-wide sense of solidarity that pervaded the predominantly blue-collar city in the past was no more. And more often than not the public was

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110 "Brewery Workers Authorize A Strike." *New York Times* [New York] 2 June 1970: 31.
111 Freeman 210-12
112 Freeman 251

unwilling to support the striking workers, who were no longer grossly overworked and underpaid, but rather living comfortable working to middle class lives[113]. Further, New York's situation as a financial capital meant that slowdowns due to strikes were probably incurring huge losses on companies around the city. The city could no longer afford this union resurgence.

Recognizing very well the potential problems in allowing this rampant unionism to continue, higher levels of government began to intervene to quash labor disputes. In 1970 President Nixon sent 5,000 National Guard members to New York to put an end to a two week long strike waged by the city's postal workers[114]. This was the first time that federal government had enlisted troops to break a strike since 1894. The following year, officials in Albany took action in the wake of a walkout by sewage plant and drawbridge workers over pension plans. In leaving their posts, the 8,000 workers allowed raw sewage to runoff into city waterways, and cut off transportation throughout the city by leaving drawbridges left open[115]. While these moves were intended to demonstrate the importance of these workers to the daily operations of the city, they garnered much public discontent. The predominantly Republican legislature in Albany had little tolerance for such audacity. They refused the revised pension plan that had been agreed upon by city and municipal workers and made all further decisions regarding pensions subject to strict regulation. Further, they cut back the rights to collective bargaining that had been a catalyst for union activity over the past fifteen years[116].

While the political leverage of municipal workers was declining, working class jobs in the private sector continued to disappear. Between 1969 and 1974 approximately 52,000 jobs

[113] Freeman 213
[114] Freeman 249
[115] Freeman 252
[116] Freeman 253

in the apparel industry alone left the city[117]. Another 17,000 or so manual and administrative jobs were lost in the manufacturing sector. Port activity was declining, and longshoremen continued to lose their jobs to automation. Advancements in computer technology also displaced tens of thousands of low-level white-collar workers in the securities industry. Further, the high levels of inflation that pervaded the country and were amplified in New York, put slowed new construction projects around the city nearly to a halt. This put thousands of construction workers out of work.

These jobs losses were part of a general employment problem that crippled the city in the 1970's. Unemployment rates rose from an impressive 3.1% in 1969 to a still functional 4.8% in 1970. But they continued to skyrocket from then on, reaching 8.5% in 1974 and 12% in 1975[118]. With a growing number of people out of work, the city found itself in the midst of a crisis. As more and more citizens lost their jobs and were unable to support themselves financially, they came to rely on the city's public welfare institutions. But as unemployment surged, the tax base in the city eroded, a process that was expedited further by the mass exodus of wealthy New Yorkers from the city. As unemployment rose and people's financial situations worsened, waves of crime hit the city. Between 1965 and 1972 the number of reported crimes more than doubled, and the number of murders tripled[119]. This encouraged approximately 800,000 citizens who could afford to leave the city to do so; the city's population dropped from 7.9 million to 7.1 million in just five years, and the trend continued into the 1970's. So as the number of tax-contributing citizens fled, the percentage of people holding a municipal job or relying on municipal services grew. The city had to borrow billions of dollars in short term loans in order

[117] Freeman 251
[118] Freeman 256
[119] Freeman 254

to continue paying the large number of public workers, and to respond to the increased demand in services. As loans piled up, interest expenses and rates rose, and the city quickly approached bankruptcy. By the end of 1954, the city needed to borrow $5 billion in order to pay off loans that were reaching the end of their terms as well as its annual expenses[120]. The city was in a precarious situation.

The city's desperation gave those with money and fiscally conservative politicians a rare opportunity to undo the city's long tradition of liberalism. President Ford and others in the federal government were unwilling to support the city that they saw to be the symbolic center of mismanagement, corruption, and vice—they would rather watch the city fail than underwrite what they deemed to be a morally void and politically backwards institution[121]. Fearful of the disaster that would follow if the city went bankrupt, officials in Albany intervened. It created the Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC) to underwrite city bonds to help absorb up to $3 billion of the city's debt. But as a proviso, the city would not be granted access to these bonds unless it was making long strides towards reducing its budget. This was a necessary step to ensure the value of the bonds to potential investors. And the board created to determine the efficacy of these budget cuts was comprised primarily of bankers and leading financiers. This left the mayor with little choice. Almost over night, tens of thousands of municipal employees were laid off. Libraries and health facilities closed, and admissions to CUNY schools were slashed. Annual pay raises were withheld and working hours were cut. And for the first time in its history, CUNY began to charge tuition fees. Upheaval of all sorts ensued: from strikes to riots to barricades to slowdowns. After the air cooled a bit, the Municipal Union Board made a rare

[120] Freeman 257
[121] Freeman 258-60

but necessary concession to forego annual pay increases; they recognized that any stubbornness could make the city's predicament even worse.

But the MAC board considered these measured insufficient and pushed the mayor even further. By 1975 the MAC had effectively sold off two-thirds of the municipal bonds, but could not find buyers for the remaining $1 billion. The board members and several heavily invested bankers proposed the creation of another regulatory body, the Emergency Financial Control Board (EFCB), which would manage city revenue. This board was granted the ability to reject contracts for municipal programs and jobs that they found unfit, as well as the power to punish elected officials for violating its policies[122]. Union leaders saw this board as a necessary measure and pledged allegiance their allegiance, receiving protection of collective bargaining and a promise of attrition before layoffs. Having made what they saw to be significant progress, the city returned to the federal government in order to pay off an upcoming round of expiring loans. Many top officials had warmed to the idea of assisting the city, and increasingly saw financial aid as a necessary measure. But after a meeting with congress, the infamous newspaper headline "FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD" appeared—the federal government was hoping for bankruptcy so that it could have a strong hand in restructuring the city's policies and culture.

The immediate danger was avoided through use of city pension funds to purchase $750 million of city bonds. The state also imposed a $200 million tax hike. Following these moves, the city returned again to Washington in 1975. Having received much criticism for his earlier refusals, and having been lobbied fiercely by bank executives, Ford agreed to issue $2.3 billion in short term loans, each of which had to be approved by the treasury secretary (which gave the

[122] Freeman 265

federal government some of the oversight it wanted)[123]. While the financial situation was not good by any means, it was stable enough to encourage outside investment. The city had escaped collapse.

But following the financial crisis, the city itself was almost unrecognizable. Again, the policies alterations made in the city, though justified and necessary, were conducted by the wealthy and the conservative[124]. By 1980, the government had reduced its municipal staff by approximately 25%[125]. And because of the diminishing availability of working class jobs in the public sector, many of the poorest citizens of the city were left without options. For these struggling people, there were less public-welfare benefits available, as funding on public housing, public medicine, and food programs were reduced. Cutbacks in these departments also meant that employees were forced to deal with more cases than they could manage effectively, and so the quality of public services suffered. With the education budget slashed, public schools around the city were underfunded, understaffed, and overcrowded, subjecting a generation of New York children to a lesser education. And because CUNY now demanded tuition fees, many would-be college bound high school students were effectively priced out of a higher education. The negative connotations that were attached to all things "public" encouraged the more secure citizens of New York to seek private services, which contributed to further deterioration of public services.

Ultimately, the immediate post-crisis period saw the greatest separation between the wealthy and lower classes of New York society. Under heavy influence from the city's financial

[123] Freeman 270

[124] The very fact that the MAC and the EFCB resorted to risking the pensions of hundreds of thousands of municipal workers is indicative of this. Many of those on the board were bank leaders, financiers, or real estate moguls. They just as easily could have taken money from their own corporations to help bail out the city, but instead pressured the government into risking the well being of the working class.

[125] Freeman 270

leaders, politics largely worked in favor of the wealthiest members of the city, and the effects of the policies passed during that period continue to shape the city today. But perhaps the most profound effects were cultural. The white-collar class had superseded the blue-collar class in terms of population, and sought to distance itself as much as possible. New York was now a city of two peoples who had little contact with one another.

At the same time, New York beer, which for a long time was symbolic of a largely unified and interdependent city and population, was no longer sustainable. By the end of 1976, it was a thing of the past—a piece of New York life that nostalgically reflected the "good old days" more than the conditions of the city at the time. Tradition and loyalty gave way to an image that cost millions of dollars to create and represent, but which spoke to a population seeking definition, and which gave them a means of doing so. The bond between New York beer, New Yorkers, and New York culture that had kept the industry afloat were severed beyond repair.

Just a year after the 1970 strike waged by New York brewery workers, the metropolitan area brewing industry received its next big blow—one that foreshadowed the fate of the few companies operating in the area. In March of 1971, the Ballantine Company was bought out by Falstaff (just five years after it began distribution in New York)[126]. The longtime sponsor of the New York Yankees, which was still the sixteenth largest best selling company in the country, could not sustain its multi-million dollar operation deficit. Its 2.23 million barrel annual production failed by and large to compensate for its workers' high wages, its property fees, and its utilities. Falstaff continued to produce Ballantine beer with the same name and formula, but moved production to other breweries that it owned around the country. And although it was still

[126] Sullivan, Ronald. "Newark Losing Ballantine Plant." *New York Times* [New York] 4 Mar. 1972: 1.

distributed and available throughout the metropolitan area, it was made possible only by importation.

The following year started off poorly for the Rheingold Company, which, after experiencing losses in 1971, announced first quarter losses for 1972[127]. In the report, owners and managers cited high labor costs and the growing prominence of Anheuser-Busch and Schlitz products in the local market. The next day, Rheingold filed an Anti-Trust lawsuit against Anheuser-Busch, claiming that the company was offering illegal incentives and discounts to distributors to carry their product exclusively and to sell them to stores for lower prices than competitors[128]. This, Rheingold claimed, Anheuser-Busch was able to do because its widespread distribution and high-volume production allowed them to offset lower prices in New York with higher prices elsewhere across the country. While Rheingold did not win the suit, the charges made explicit how local brewers were losing to larger, national companies.

Perhaps the most telling event of the final years of New York beer was the closing of the Schlitz plant in Brooklyn in early 1973. The company moved production of the east coast to a large, automated plant in North Carolina, hoping to increase efficiency and cut down on production costs[129]. (This closure put approximately 450 employees out of work.) Again, Schlitz was a national brand beer, but became the first national company on the scene in New York when it purchased the old Ehret plant in the 1940's. But at the time of this closing, Schlitz was still the second largest producer of beer in the country, responsible for more than 15% of sales nationwide[130]. If one of the largest, most successful brewers in the industry could not afford to continue operations in New York, there seemed to be little hope for the remaining

[127] "Rheingold Corporation." *New York Times* [New York] 26 Apr. 1972: 69.
[128] Sullivan, Ronald. "Newark Losing Ballantine Plant." *New York Times* [New York] 4 Mar. 1972: 1.
[129] Perlmutter, Emanuel. "Schlitz To Lose Brooklyn Plant." *New York Times* [New York] 13 Feb. 1973: 43.
[130] Tremblay and Tremblay 71

companies, whose production was one-third of Schlitz's. That same year saw the merger of two of New York's remaining three original breweries, as Piels was purchased by Rheingold[131]. The company planned to close the Piels factory and resume production of Piels brand beer from its own factory.

The disaster on the horizon did not go unseen. Following these two moves in the industry, two city assemblymen, Matthew Troy of Staten Island and Fred Richmond of Brooklyn, attempted to launch a campaign to save New York beer[132]. They advocated for a boycott of all beer that was not produced in the city, whether American or imported. But again, without any grounded allegiance to New York beer, their rhetoric could not compete with the economics of the industry. And despite their efforts, the city's largest producer, Schaefer, announced later in 1973 that it was in the red, losing more than $500,000 in the first quarter[133]. In an unusual act of compliance, the workers at Schaefer agreed to forego pay raises that year, and to increase productivity. They also volunteered to cut their weekly work hours in order that workers displaced from the Schlitz closing might have job opportunities. One week later, Rheingold reach a similar agreement with its own employees[134].

In January of the following year, Pepsi, the owner of Rheingold, announced its intention to stop beer production in its Brooklyn plant[135]. Pepsi's interests had always been with the bottling part of the production process, and had no desire to continue to make beer at a loss just for the sake of making beer. Pepsi also claimed that high union wages were instrumental in pushing them towards this decision. The workers at Rheingold, embittered by the potentially

[131] Holsendolph, Ernest. "Associated Brewing Sets Sale of Piels To Rheingold." *New York Times* [New York] 30 Jan. 1973: 45.
[132] "Beer Sales Proposal Promotes Home Foam." *New York Times* [New York] 11 Mar. 1973: 30.
[133] Perlmutter, Emanuel. "Schaefer Goes In Red, Two Unions Skip Raise." *New York Times* [New York] 2 May 1973: 26.
[134] "Workers At Rheingold Accept No Raise Pact." *New York Times* [New York] 10 May 1973: 48.
[135] Fowler, Glenn. "Rheingold Brewery Held Ready To Close." *New York Times* [New York] 4 Jan. 1974: 60.

forthcoming job loss, filed a lawsuit against the company. They hoped to attain an injunction from the city that would force the company to remain in production while Pepsi entertained offers from buyers, but were ultimately unsuccessful[136]. After being closed for two months, the Rheingold brand and factory were purchased by the Chock-Full-O-Nuts company[137]. But this only delayed the inevitable. Induced in part by the nationwide recession, the price of ingredients necessary for beer brewing skyrocketed in 1975: corn rose from $1.24 per hundredweight to $4.01, and barley from $1.58 to $5.00 per bushel[138]. This only added to the pressure mounting on the industry, and especially on smaller brewing companies.

After years of struggle, New York City beer finally met its match 1976. In January, Rheingold announced its intention to close its factory in Brooklyn, and to limit production to it's location in central New Jersey[139]. The relocation, alone, would allow the company to save $1.6 million each year in operating costs, as utilities, taxes, and labor fees were significantly lower there. As compensation for the 300 lost jobs this closure would bring about, Rheingold made a $1 million settlement with the workers union[140]. Just one week after Rheingold shut its doors, Schaefer, the only brewery remaining, announced its intention to end operations in New York and to move to Allentown, PA[141]. Citing $3.8 million in losses the previous year, the company claimed that high labor and energy costs, high taxes, and taxes unique to New York (machinery taxes, waste taxes, advertisement taxes), made brewing in the city fiscally impossible[142]. And

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[136] Fowler, Glenn. "Rheingold Brewery Held Ready To Close." *New York Times* [New York] 4 Jan. 1974: 60.
[137] Stetson, Damon. "Rheingold Sale Assures Future." *New York Times* [New York] 9 Mar. 1974: 65.
[138] Nagle, James. "Brewing Industry Feels Mixed Effects In Recession." *New York Times* [New York] 21 Apr. 1975: 57.
[139] "Rheingold Forsees $1.6 Million Saving by Moving Plant." *New York Times* [New York] 3 Jan. 1976: 14.
[140] Stetson, Damon. "Rheingold Workers Accept a $1 Million Settlement." *New York Times* [New York] 17 Jan. 1976: 24.
[141] Dembart, Lee. "Schaefer, the Last of City's Breweries Will Close Plant Here As Too Costly." *New York TImes* [New York] 23 Jan. 1976: 31.
[142] Sterne, Michael. "Schaefer Tells Why It's Leaving City." *New York Times* [New York] 29 Jan. 1976: 36.

with that, the several hundred year long tradition of New York beer was over. But their fate was that of others around the country as well. By 1976 there were fewer than fifty brewing companies operating around the country, and the top four companies controlled approximately 60% of the market nationwide[143].

Chapter 4

The 1960's saw the emergence of a strong countercultural movement out of a growing sentiment by young and liberal minded Americans who feared that their country was taking a turn for the worse. These disgruntled individuals sought and produced clothing, music, art, and an ethic that lashed back against the mainstream currents of mass consumerism and conservatism that homogenized daily life and culture—which sacrificed creativity and spontaneity for the blasé, the repetitive, and the convenient. Eventually, this ambitious pursuit was undertaken at the most basic levels of existence, namely, food and drink. In California, many disillusioned hippies established communes in rural areas where they could produce foods for themselves that both tasted better and were free of the impurities that came with the corporatized food industry. And in realizing that foreign brewing companies were producing tastier, more complex beers, the same individuals began to see that there was potential in beer making that Anheuser-Busch or Schlitz would never realize. Soon enough, people began to experiment with brewing their own beer on a small scale in their own homes.

For years these home-brew projects had to be carried out in relative secrecy. A lingering clause in the Prohibition law made brewing without a commercial license illegal. Ingredients were difficult to acquire, but a small market and community emerged around this movement. As

[143] Tremblay and Tremblay 42

more and more people became involved with the home brewing (and wine making) process, requests were put in to President Lyndon Johnson to repeal this seemingly antiquated and illogical law. Johnson obliged, and in 1979, home-brewing was legalized. Through word of mouth and the scattered appearance of home-brew markets in cities around the country, the home-brewing concept slowly but surely caught on, and within a few years, small clubs were being formed where members would gather, share, and discuss their recipes and techniques. But the most ambitious of the lot saw the potential for making a living in this hobby, and began building breweries from scratch.

The first of these entrepreneurial ventures was conducted by Jack McAuliffe in Sonoma, California. While traveling around the World as an enlisted naval officer[144], Jack was exposed to beers of a freshness and artistry that simply did not exist on American soil at that time. He returned with a newfound passion for beer, and a desire to make beer of that quality available in America. He raided the U.C. Davis library and visited experts at Davis and Berkeley to familiarize himself as much as possible with the brewing process. From there he purchased an old steel factory just outside of Sonoma, a town that boasted wineries, artisanal bakeries, locally made cheese shops, and specialty stores of all kinds[145]. Armed with a welder and sheets of scrap metal, McAuliffe fabricated everything he needed to brew beer. He named his company "New Albion" and opened its doors in 1977. For five years, McAuliffe brewed small batches of beer according to formulas that hearkened back to pre-prohibition era beer, using only malt, hops, yeast, and water. But ultimately his operation was too small to sustain itself. Banks and potential investors were unwilling to finance such a wildly novel project. McAuliffe was forced to close New Albion, but the spirit of his venture would live on and inspire home-brewers across

[144] Ogle 291
[145] Ogle 293

the country. And starting on the West Coast, the "Micro Brewery" movement began to creep its way across the nation.

It took several years for this entrepreneurial trend to catch on in Eastern states, but it caught its footing in the city for the first time in 1985, when the New Amsterdam Brewing Company opened its doors in the Chelsea neighborhood. Matthew Reich, the company's owner and beer enthusiast had a vision of restoring the tradition of beer to New York City back to its status in the 1880's when the city boasted 121 active breweries[146]. Reich had developed the formula for his amber beer several years prior and had it contract brewed at the F.X. Matt brewery in Utica, NY, and distributed his product throughout the city[147]. From there he raised more than three million dollars from venture capitalists to fund the conversion of an old B&O railroad terminal into a fully functioning brewery, importing brewing equipment from Germany. At maximum capacity, this small brewery could produce only 30,000 barrels of beer annually (a far cry from the multi-million barrel facilities owned by national brand companies). Despite its popularity within the community, the Reich could not afford to continue running the company for long because of high rates for Manhattan real estate, taxes, and operation costs. He sold the company to F.X. Matt in 1989, who transformed the operation into a brew pub. It ultimately closed several years later.

Despite its eventual failure, the ability of this entrepreneurial beer enterprise to stay open for even a few years with such low production rates was indicative of a relatively new and growing demographic in the city—a group that is best known by its pejorative title as the

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[146] Salmans, Sandra. "A Local Beer Not For Everyone." *New York Times* [New York] 19 Feb. 1985: D1.

[147] Contract brewing became a common phenomenon during the rise of the craft beer movement. Essentially, a small company looking to get on its feet hires a larger brewery to brew and bottle its beer. This reduces the need for the hefty capital costs required in the brewing industry, which can be overwhelming for a company that is producing only in small quantities. The smaller, contracting company handles the distribution, sales and marketing end of the process.

"yuppies". But in order to avoid the connotations that this somewhat empty term may conjure, it is necessary to examine as objectively and historically as possible the conditions from which this "group"[148] emerged. As the idealism and illusory beauty of the late 1960's and early 1970's crumbled, some of the educated, liberal minded, and often artistic youth clung to a narrow ledge of pragmatism that saved them from the absolute despair that characterized the final stages of the era. If they could not change the world, they would at least carve out a niche where they would be able to live among one another, sharing their ideas, beliefs, and talents with one another. And New York in the mid to late 1970's was the perfect place to do so. With empty warehouses and abandoned factories ubiquitous in Lower Manhattan, the open space provided structural canvasses on which artists of all sorts could work—whether painters, musicians, or chefs. Neighborhoods like SoHo and Chelsea became something of a Mecca for ambitious artists looking to create something from the ground up, resuscitating these neighborhoods from their seemingly unshakeable comas. And underlying these projects was a creative and ambitious mentality that was also meant to differentiate. These people embodied a way of life that was different from both poles of New York at the time, namely, the very rich and very poor. They rejected greed, mass culture, and mainstream everything, but also the emerging violence and lack of education that was an unfortunate by-product of urban poverty. Their community was a homegrown one, where everything they needed could be acquired locally or created.

It is not surprising, then, that the vast majority of beer produced by the New Amsterdam Brewing Company was purchased in this emergent artistic community. Beer became another

[148] I use quotation marks because of the impossibility of ever clearly delineating who would and would not belong to this group. This, as with every classificatory term, is a generalization that seems to draw on what are more or less obvious similarities among the ideals and aesthetics of a group of people that might constitute them as a "group". But, as with any other classificatory term, overlooks the nuanced differences of people within such a "group", and runs the risk of being devoid of any real meaning.

way for them to reject mass consumerism and define themselves as a unique community. Similarly, because the beer that Reich produced was a much more carefully crafted, more tasteful beer, this community considered it a work to be enjoyed as one might enjoy a painting or a song, rather than be mindlessly consumed. Ultimately, it was the quality of this new "craft beer" and its symbolic value that would help make it a fixture in New York culture.

It was in light of these socio-cultural progressions that the rebirth of New York became a possibility. And it would not take long before Steve Hindy and Tom Potter would begin working on the business model to do just that. Hindy had worked for several years in the 1980's as a foreign correspondent in countries throughout the Middle East, in many of which beer was illegal[149]. One of his colleagues there introduced him to home-brewing, a hobby that would consume Hindy upon his return to the United States in 1984. That year, Potter, a young businessman, moved into the building below Hindy in Park Slope. The two became friends, brewing companions, and eventually business partners. After many back-porch brainstorming sessions, they decided in 1987 to embark on the long entrepreneurial journey towards bringing beer back to Brooklyn. In order to pay homage to the borough and the city, they named their company the "Brooklyn Brewery"[150].

Unable to fund the capital costs necessary for brewing, Hindy and Potter contacted the F.X. Matt Company and arranged their own contract brewing operation[151]. This meant that they would be responsible for distributing and advertising their beer throughout the city. In order to facilitate this process, they purchased the former Huber-Hittleman brewery in Brooklyn in 1987,

[149] Steve Hindy, Tom Potter, "Beer School: Bottling Success at the Brooklyn Brewery", (Wiley & Sons Hoboken) 4.
[150] Hindy, Potter 26.
[151] Hindy, Potter 34.

and then moved to another, less worn and antiquated warehouse in 1989[152]. In order to maximize profits in their earliest days, they were forced to distribute their product on their own in order to cut out the middleman and have the best possible insight as to which locations were receiving their beer best. They purchased a van which they stamped with the now notorious "B" insignia on the side and hit the streets. Initially their distribution was limited to the borough of Brooklyn, but soon discovered that their product only garnered interest in a few of the wealthier neighborhoods. After a few months they began to distribute in Manhattan, signing agreements with other small beer brewers to deliver their products in order to defray costs[153]. Much to the owners' dismay, the distribution side of the process became essential to keeping the business from going broke. But eventually the Warsteiner company of Germany and Sierra Nevada, the most successful craft brew in the country, contacted the Brooklyn Brewery men about the possibility of introducing their products to the New York Metropolitan area. From then on, the Brooklyn company became the go-to distributors for micro-brewers around the country who sought to do the same[154]. But their own beer remained the best selling product of the ones they distributed.

The distribution business was difficult, and was somewhat risky for distributors in the city. Without the widespread name recognition of larger, national brands, distributors risked losing money on purchasing sizeable quantity of a company's product. On the other hand, the risk could also produce sizable profits, as the profit margin could be more than 20% higher for craft beers than other beers. But in 1990, Anheuser-Busch and Miller demanded that their distributors equalize these profit margins that made the risk involved with craft beer worth

[152] Hindy, Potter 79-80
[153] Hindy, Potter 90
[154] Hindy, Potter 98-98

while[155]. This meant that some shops were left to choose between selling exclusively national-brand beer or exclusively craft-beer. Nevertheless, Brooklyn Brewery remained heavily invested in their distribution business, and expanded to other regions in New York and Boston.

By 1993 the company was producing and distributing approximately 11,000 barrels of beer each year[156]. At this point Hindy and Potter began to think more and more seriously about opening their own brewery in New York, and to be the first successful Brewery in New York in almost twenty years. In 1994 they finally put in a bid for a warehouse in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, confident that the previously discussed SoHo phenomenon, which had already begun to move across the bridge, would continue to do so. The purchase and renovation cost more than two million dollars, but by 1996 they had a fully functional brewery to call their own. With this new brewery and their team of fifty employees, Hindy and Potter were ready to usher in a new era of beer in New York City. Through much struggle and perseverance, they overcame financial and legal obstacles to make their company a lasting success, and a symbol of the rapidly changing Williamsburg neighborhood. The growing demand for their products and the relatively small production of their brewery meant that Hindy and Potter had to continue to brew and distribute some of their total production from a larger brewery in Utica, NY. But this also allowed the company freedom to expand the variety of beers that they offer, which now numbers more than a dozen.

Being New Yorkers, Hindy and Potter knew well that their success in the city would require more than just simply stocking store shelves with their product. While there existed a demand for non-national brand beer, they were competing in a market that these national companies had dominated for almost twenty years. They needed to get their name out and, more

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[155] Hindy, Potter 104
[156] Hindy, Potter 159

importantly, reestablish some of the cultural bonds that allowed the city breweries of the past to stay alive as long as they did. And as relatively young New Yorkers with wives and families, they wanted to help contribute to the renovation of Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn. So rather than marketing, they sponsored a long list of organizations and events around the city that helped them establish an identity of belonging in the city, and especially in Brooklyn. They donated beer to fundraisers or sold beer at discounted prices for large events to the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), the Brooklyn Museum, the Brooklyn Historical Society, small art galleries, film screenings, and theater companies that were appearing left and right in the culturally burgeoning Brooklyn community[157]. They sponsored and helped pioneer the first "Brooklyn Bandsearch" as part of the annual "Celebrate Brooklyn festival"[158]. With events like the Brooklyn Beer Festival and Global Beer Night dinners, the Brooklyn Brewery not only helped to spread the word about their own products, but to encourage support for craft beer in general. Their cultural involvements opened opportunities for even more cultural involvements, and soon enough almost any cultural event in Brooklyn had Brooklyn Lager available.

While Brooklyn Brewery was not sponsoring, and never will sponsor, the New York Yankees, the particularity of their involvement, narrow as it is, is indicative of the brand of New Yorker that the company appeals to and relies on for its very existence—the relationships among company itself, its employees, those it sponsors, and its customers are necessarily more intimate and purposeful ones. They all rely on one another in ways that are completely lost on larger beer companies and the large scale events that they sponsor. Those who purchase Brooklyn Brewery products do so out of desire to support a small, local company, to drink a better tasting beer, and

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[157] Hindy, Potter, 182

[158] Hindy, Potter 190. Their partnership with the "Celebrate Brooklyn Festival" would continue for ten years until Anheuser-Busch, wary of the rising micro-brewed beer cutting into their sales, offered the festival more than twice as much money as the Brooklyn Brewery to sponsor the festival.

to portray themselves people who do these things. To do so, they must look harder to find the product (especially in the earliest days of Brooklyn Brewery's existence) and pay more for it. But their support for Brooklyn Brewery ultimately means support for concerts, exhibits, and programs happening within their community. Again, because of the relatively small size of all of these operations, every bit of support is significant. But New York and Brooklyn especially discovered more and more individuals who were willing to participate in such a tasteful and communal relationship—willing to go out of their way and spend a few extra dollars to restore a sense of character, originality, and intimacy to the city from the overly globalized, commodified mess that New York had become in the 1970's and 1980's. It seems to be something of a return to the more localized, community based mindset that characterized New York seventy to eighty years ago.

Fin

And so it began. Once Brooklyn Brewery had successfully established itself and made evident the demand for craft-beer in the city, more entrepreneurs with finely tuned beer recipes saw opportunity in the New York area. Today, the city is home to more than a half dozen micro-breweries: Brooklyn Brewery, Kelso of Brooklyn, the Harlem Brewing Company, Six Point Craft Ales in Brooklyn, Heartland Brewery, Chelsea Brewery, and Blue Point Brewery on Long Island. Each of these offers a variety of products with a range of tastes that was non-existent in New York twenty years ago. Many of these companies still rely on contract brewing to meet production needs without paying New York real estate rates, but they consider the city to be their home and continue to produce there. They are all small operations that rely on a steady flow of customers who love good beer. But they are being supported more and more by a growing number of beer enthusiasts across the nation who want exposure to new and different beers. As this demand for craft beer continues to grow, so too will the number of micro-breweries. In 2005 there were more than two thousand fully operational micro-breweries and brew pubs across the country, and these once niche-market products account for more than 10% of the beer consumed in America[159]. If nothing else, these statistics indicate something of a backlash against the industry's destruction and longtime domination by the largest, national breweries. It will be interesting to see whether or not this trend will continue into the future, and what impact craft-beer will have on the beer industry both nationally and in New York.

[159] Hindy, Potter 273.

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