

# San Diego Brewery Timeline

## The First Wave, 1868-1919

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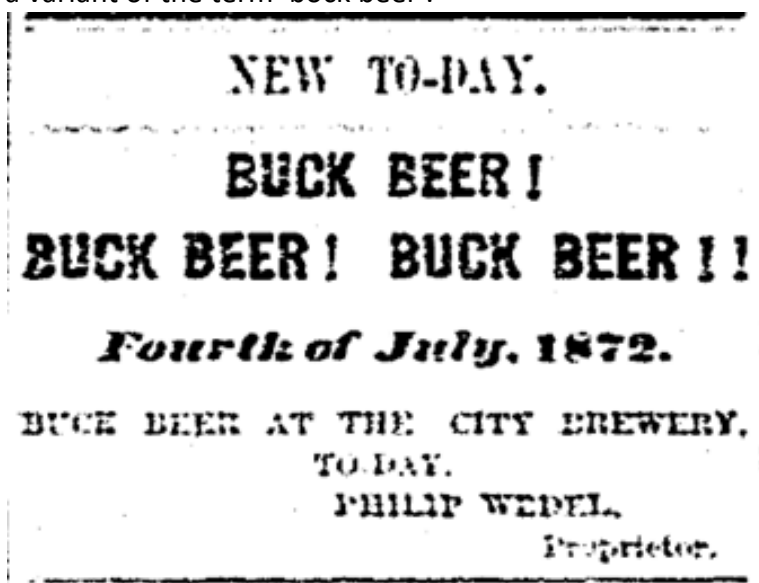
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### 1868

**Chollas Valley Brewery** [AKA Pioneer, San Diego and Dobler's Brewery] was the first recorded San Diego area brewery. Founded by Christian Dobler (his name was alternately spelled Doubler or Doblier.)

### 1870

**City Brewery & Depot** was the second brewery, founded by Philip Wedel. Buck Beer was featured which may have been a variant of the term 'bock beer'.



From: *Daily Union* (San Diego), July 4, 1872, pg. 2

### 1871

Wedel shipped in a malt grinding mill which freed City Brewery from dependence on malt prepared in San Francisco.

In advertising, the use of the word 'brewery' can mean either a brewing operation OR a distribution/repackaging/sales-only site. Several non-breweries existed such as San Francisco Brewery that operated near Horton's Wharf, Philadelphia Brewery and Weidel's. A business calling itself 'San Diego Brewery' advertised beer for sale that they did not brew.

## 1872

City Brewery is noted in the *San Diego Union* as having a beer garden. This was the first beer garden in San Diego.

The local newspaper ran a notice that a new ale brewery would be opening near the existing Chollas Valley brewery. The piece referred to two other breweries currently in operation (Dobler's in Cholla Valley and Wedel's in the city proper.) Nothing came of this unnamed brewery.

**ALE BREWERY.**—A brewery will be erected shortly in the Chollas Valley, near to the one already in operation at that place. Nothing but ale and porter will be brewed at the new establishment. San Diego has two breweries at present, both of which make first-class malt liquors, which are pronounced by many to be superior to those turned out of the San Francisco establishments.

From *Daily San Diego Union*, February 16, Pg. 3

## 1875

City Brewery founder Wedel died and his wife Magdalena briefly continued operations in partnership with Dobler.

Dobler is the pioneer brewer of San Diego. He has been here six years and has made the best of lager beer at his widely known Brewery in the Chollas Valley. He is now about to open a Depot for his Brewery in town, on Fifth street, opposite Ginnochio's store, where he will be prepared to furnish families, hotels, shipping, etc. He will also keep a nice free lunch constantly spread. Dobler's Depot will be opened to-morrow (Monday). The Harmonia Brass Band will be in attendance in the evening. All are invited.

From *San Diego Union*, May 28, 1876 pg. 3

## 1876

Otto Walter purchased City Brewery from Magdalena Wedel. He increased advertising with an emphasis on free lunches, added holiday meal hours, and featured entertainment such as bands.

## 1878

Walter added a shooting gallery for customer entertainment and entered a brief partnership with Dobler of Chollas Valley Brewery (lasted less than a year).

## 1882

Christian Dobler died and his widow Martha continued the business for a few years with Peter Clever as brewery manager. Later, the ownership changed at least once but did not do well. The actual closure of the brewery is unknown.

City Brewery & Depot sold to John Diehl. He renamed the business **City Brewery, Saloon and Beer Gardens**.

## 1885

City Brewery beer, as well as beer produced in San Francisco, was distributed in San Diego by Chicago Brewery Depot.

## 1888

City Brewery ceased brewery operations but the beer gardens remained open for several more years, selling beer purchased from breweries out of the region.

**Julian Brewing Company** operated in the mountain town. Who owned the business and when it closed is unknown.

## 1895

**San Diego Brewing Company** was planned by a group of local and out-of-state investors. Expectations were that most of the \$112,000 spent on non-local beer would now remain in the local economy.

## 1897

San Diego Brewing Company opened to the public, operating on bayfront property with a rail spur to facilitate distribution. The majority partner was Jacob Gruendike (local bank president with extensive North County property holdings among other interests.) It was rumored a few months later that a major national syndicate that owned most American breweries was interested in buying SDBC, but nothing came of this.

## 1905

Gruendike passed away and ownership of San Diego Brewing was sold to George Stadler and J.H. Zitt. Both men had been active in the brewing industry in Chicago and Kentucky. Zitt would work from Los

Angeles and Stadler be the on-site manager. The new product line featured the lager beers 'Corona', 'San Diego Light' and 'San Diego Dark'.

**CORONA  
BEER**

*Positively the  
Best Beer Brewed*

**THE SAN DIEGO BREWING CO.**

With its largely improved and increased facilities  
is now putting on the market the best beer to be  
found on the coast.

**Note These Special Low Prices:**

**\$1.00 per Dozen net for Quarts**  
for all net prices there will be added for bottles, same to be re-  
paid upon return.

**67c per Dozen net for Pints**  
with 2c additional for bottles which will be repaid upon re-  
turn.

**75c per Case, net 2 dozen, Half Pints**  
with 2c additional for bottles, which will be repaid upon re-  
turn.

**Special Prices to Wholesale Trade. Beer Delivered to Any  
Part of the City.**

**CITY OFFICE AND DEPOT, 7th and G. Phone Main 41**

From *San Diego Union*, January 3, 1905, pg. 9

## 1906

Zitt and Stadler began a campaign to buy back outstanding and delinquent stock, an intense newspaper advertising campaign, and planned an expansion of the brewery's production.

## 1907

San Diego Brewing reorganized as **San Diego Consolidated Brewing Company (SDCBC.)** This not only reflected Zitt's other business interests including real estate, but took advantage of the business' production of ice, glassware, and more.

## 1909

George Stadler, the brewmaster and onsite manager for SDCBC died (attributed to meningitis, influenza, and overwork). Zitt moved from Los Angeles to lead the company.

## 1911

Competition arose between several different groups to establish additional breweries in San Diego. While not completely clear due to loss of business records, it seemed various investors reorganized at times and property intended for one brewery would open under a different name.

**Home Brewing Company of San Diego** was incorporated by San Francisco investors. This effort did not materialize but may have reorganized as **Bay City Brewing**.

**Panama Brewing Company**, with San Diego area investors, announced plans for a new brewery the same month as Home was announced. The name was a tie-in to the upcoming San Diego Panama-California Exposition but all details were kept secret. Property was purchased, but the brewery did not open under this name.

**Bay City Brewing Company** was incorporated by investors from San Francisco. All product was intended for export. The investors raised sufficient capital to begin construction on a mission-style brick building on the property originally intended for Panama Brewing near the future site of the San Diego International Airport.



From *San Diego Weekly* March 21, 1912, pg. 6

## 1912

News coverage of Bay City Brewing mentioned officers F.C. Lang and August Lang (father-in-law and brother-in-law of J.H. Zitt at SDCBC) as principals with no mention of the San Francisco investors.

## 1913

**Mission Brewing Company** opened in the planned Bay City building. The stated purpose, as reported in the *San Diego Union*, was to supplement the brewing capacity of San Diego Consolidated Brewing due to high demand for their product. Mission produced Old Mission Lager and a non-alcoholic beverage in addition to the SDCBC beers.

**Beer! More Beer Is to Be Brewed Here!**

**What Kind? Mission Brand! When? Today!**

Nothing But Up-to-the-Minute Apparatus Installed in Plant To Be Opened.

Should the Duke of Brabant, colloquially called King Gambrius, come to San Diego after his long slumber of centuries, what would interest him most?

Undoubtedly the inventor of lager beer would be most interested in the \$175,000 plant of the Mission Brewing company which was yesterday completed by the Brown & De Cew Construction company, for in this structure is installed the most up-to-date apparatus and machinery used in the brewing industry. And the first brew will be made this morning.

When the first drop of the initial brew trickles through the various processes there will be set in motion the wheels of a manufacturing enterprise which will add fame to San Diego and will flaunt to the world the advantage of this city as a home for busy industries.

But San Diegans will not pass inspection on the new product until about July 1, when it will be placed on the market. In the manufacturing of lager beer ageing is important.

**Location Is Ideal**

This mammoth plant, built on the salt system, has an ideal location at Point Loma boulevard and Harshby

At Top is Plant of the Mission Brewing Company; in Center (Left to Right) Are Stephen Brown and L. E. De Cew, Contractors Who Built the Plant, Jacob Guhring, Brewmaster, and Fred W. Handschy, Vice President and General Manager. Below is View of Stock Cellar Showing Immense Hogsheads.



## 1914

California voters had several propositions on the ballot regarding Prohibition.

- Proposition 34. In favor of state-wide Prohibition. Failed.
- Proposition 41. Would have canceled Proposition 34 if it had passed. Failed.
- Proposition 47. To prevent votes on the issue of Prohibition for eight years. Failed.

Prohibition did pass in Arizona and resulted in a negative impact on San Diego breweries, especially Mission Brewing which was shipping Hopski to that state.

## 1915

**White Ribbon Beer Company** planned to produce a non-alcoholic beer in San Diego as a competitor to "Blue Ribbon Pabst and others of their like". Escondido Vineyard & Winery Company backed the project. The company president (D. Cozzolino) claimed to have invented a process that removed the alcohol from beer. Plans were to purchase beer from Los Angeles to use as a base for the process.

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*Non-Intoxicating Beer  
Probably Will Be Put  
On San Diego Market*

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Company With \$100,000 Cap-  
ital Stock Files Articles  
Of Incorporation.

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White Ribbon beer, a non-alcoholic beverage, intended to displace the Blue Ribbon Pabst article and others with which San Diegans slake their thirst, probably will be placed upon the market soon. A company formed for the purpose of manufacturing and selling the new drink filed its articles of incorporation with the county clerk yesterday. San Diego is fixed as the principal place of business of the company, and the capital stock is \$100,000 divided into 10,000 shares at \$10 each. The incorporators are M. V. Wright, W. E. Alexander and R. B. Alexander.

Mission Brewing produced a summertime non-alcoholic malt and hop soft drink named “Hopski”. It is described as having been “Burbanked” (a reference to the genetic manipulation of plants done by Luther Burbank for desirable characteristics.) When Hopski was blocked from being shipped into Arizona, Mission and SDCBC brought lawsuits against the railroad and Arizona. They lost the case and Mission’s sales suffered.

The City of Coronado, which leaned ‘dry’, considered a proposed ordinance to post the names and amounts of liquor purchased by residents in the local newspaper.

## **1916**

California’s Proposition 2 to ratify the Prohibition Amendment to the US Constitution failed.

Mission produced only Hopski their last 18 months in business. The Langs left Mission and Zitt became president of both Mission and San Diego Consolidated breweries leading up to Prohibition. Old Mission Lager was advertised under the SDCBC name. Zitt refused to produce non-alcoholic beer under the SDCBC name.

White Ribbon Beer is sued by Washington Brewing (Seattle) that claimed their rival, Seattle Brewing and Malting Company, was competing for the process. In October, White Ribbon bought Anaheim’s Union Brewing Company business name and plant and moved the brewery operation, but not offices, from San Diego. Their non-alcoholic beer was renamed Anaheim White Ribbon.

San Diego Consolidated Brewing quickly rebuilt after extensive fire damage to their buildings.

Other beers available in San Diego included Eastside (Los Angeles), Rainier and Maier (San Francisco), Falstaff (St. Louis), Wieland, Edelweiss, Pabst Blue Ribbon, Schlitz, Anheuser Busch, and Budweiser.

## **1917**

Zitt closed the Mission brewery site and ended production of Hopski. The equipment was sold to Mexican investors and shipped south.

## **1918**

California’s Proposition 1. Attempted to limit liquor licenses and provided power to communities to pass their own regulations. Failed.

California’s Proposition 22. Would have enacted state-wide Prohibition as of January 1, 1919 with a graduated scale of fines and punishments. Failed.

The Mission building which had been sitting vacant was used as an overflow hospital during the flu pandemic. Later it would become a seaweed processing plant for American Agar Company and portions of the property sold off.

White Ribbon Beer Company moved its offices from San Diego to Los Angeles.



## 1919

California ratified the National Prohibition Amendment (the Volstead Act) after the required three-quarters of states had already done so. This prohibited beer of more than .5% ABV and severely restricted manufacture and consumption.

--Timeline is continued with "The Second Wave, 1920-1953" at <https://archives.csusm.edu/brewchive/record/1---->

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