

Whiskey, Beer, and Moonshine

Collectibles & Memorabilia at Allegany Museum

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One of the Allegany Museum's displays highlights over 200 years of whiskey, beer and moonshine. From the Whiskey Rebellion, through industrial growth, prohibition, the Great Depression, and post-war production, the focus on assorted libations has undergone many changes in Cumberland's history.

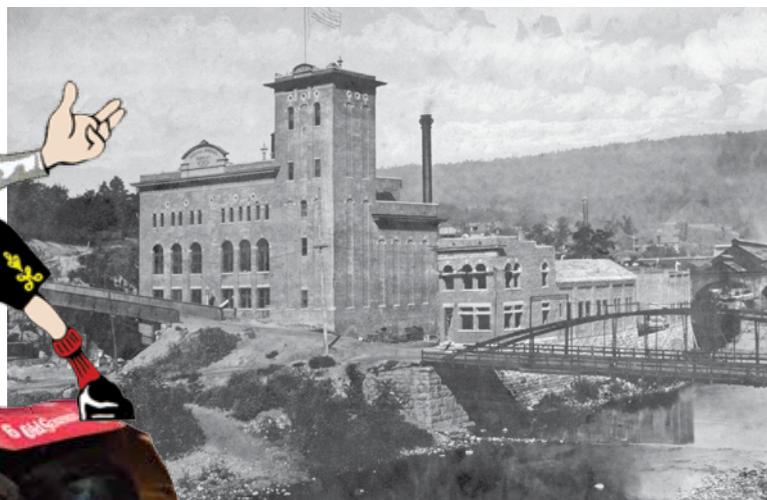


During the 1790s, in order to help fund the National Debt, Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton proposed placing an excise tax on domestically distilled spirits. The tax was unpopular with frontier farmers who often supplemented their income by operating small stills. In 1794, rioting was taking place in Pennsylvania, and farmers in Western Maryland attempted to force the tax collector to surrender his office. On July 16, 1794 George Washington came to Fort Cumberland calling up militia to suppress the rebellion. A force of 12,000 loyal troops gathered at Fort Cumberland and Fort Bedford. The rebellion collapsed as the army marched into Western Pennsylvania, and the Whiskey Rebels fled westward.

During the mid to late 1800s, industrial growth established several breweries that would become successful. The Cumberland Brewery and the German Brewing Company (later known as the Queen City Brewery) managed to survive Prohibition through innovation and adaptability by producing a "near-beer,"



Located at 3 Pershing Street in Cumberland, Maryland, Allegany Museum is dedicated to preserving the heritage, culture and collections of the Cumberland area.



Top: Cumberland Brewing Company (1890-1969), North Centre Street, Cumberland, MD.

Above: Queen City Brewing Company (1901-1974), located on Market Street, Cumberland, MD, was also known as The German Brewing Company.

Inset: Mascot "Herman" and Old German beer brewed at Queen City Brewing Co.



Above and left: Old Export memorabilia displayed at Allegany Museum. Old Export was one of the beers brewed at the Cumberland Brewing Company.

Below: Prohibition era original still found in the 1960s and on display at Allegany Museum.

along with soft drinks and utilizing their capabilities as ice houses. The Cumberland Brewery was founded in 1890 by James Clark, John Keating, Andrew Fesenmeier, Michael Fesenmeier, W.A. Bucholtz, and Isman L. Eisemen. Located on North Centre Street, the brewery was known for such brands as Old Export Beer, Gamecock Ale, and Carousel Soft Drinks. “Mountain Water Makes the Difference” was a popular slogan. The Queen City Brewing Company was founded in 1901 by Warren C. White as the German Brewing Company. Periodic name changes reflected the political mood of the era. Located on Market Street, the company was best known for its Old German Beer Premium Lager. Competition from national brands finally caused its demise in November 1974.



In 1920 the 18th amendment to the U.S. Constitution outlawed alcoholic beverages, forbidding their manufacture, distribution and sale. When the Depression hit in 1929, the number of stills increased dramatically. Many farmers turned to Moonshine as a way to put food on the table. Locally, the Green Ridge and George’s Creek areas were favorite still locations. Some of the mansions on Washington Street in Cumberland had their own private stills.

The still displayed at the Allegany Museum was donated by the late George W. Walker of Frostburg, MD. In the 1960s, Mr. Walker was rabbit hunting on property located along the “Long Stretch” section of old Route 40, west of Frostburg. The main tank section and the top hood section were found about one half mile from each other. No restoration was done to the still since it was found, which indicates by the earlier repairs that this was not the first time it was destroyed.

Cumberland’s history of whiskey and beer production is showcased at the Allegany Museum along with many varied displays highlighting the Crossroads of American History.

