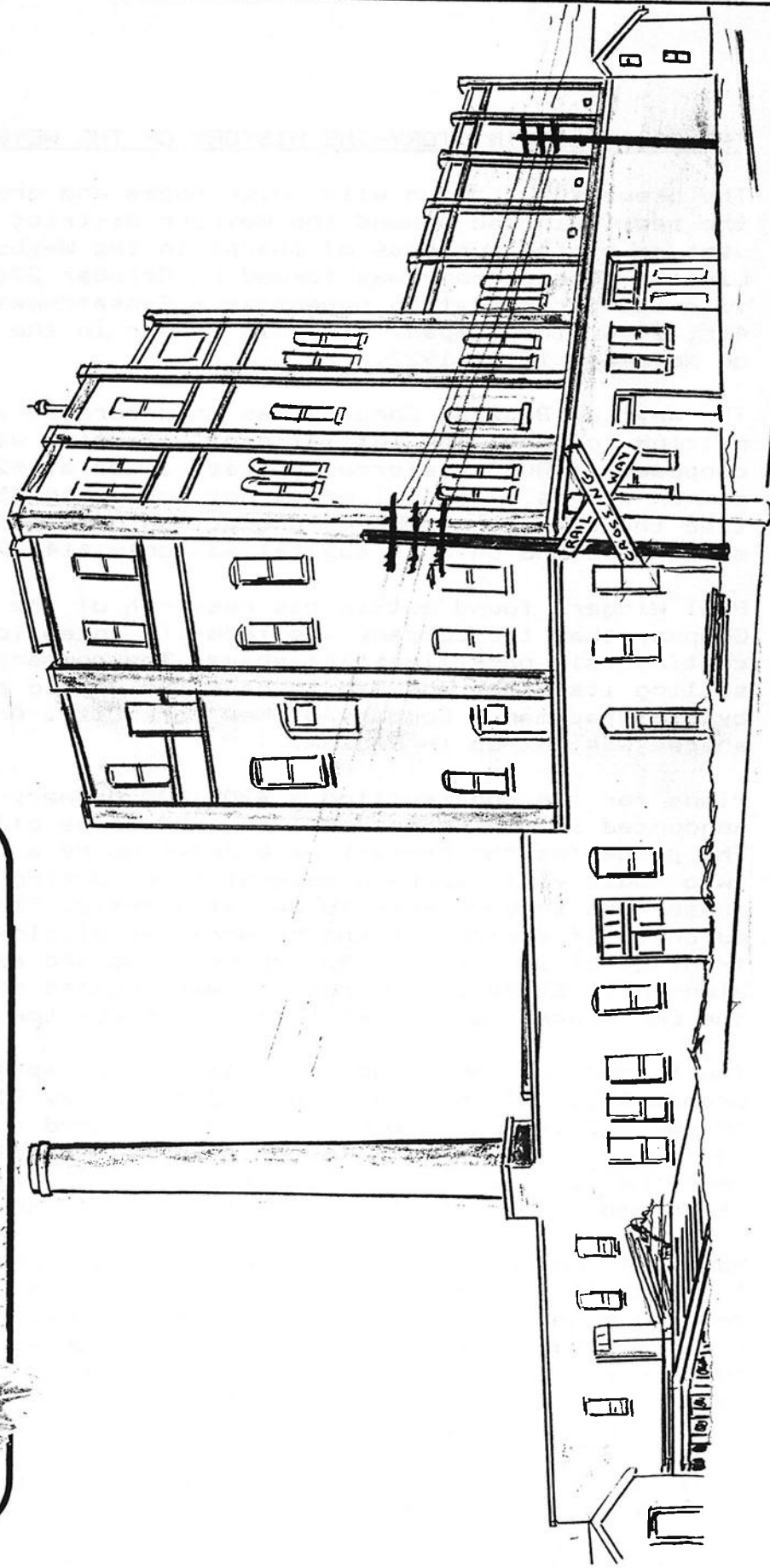




# BIG CHIEF

## BREWERIANIST

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Weyburn Brewing Company Limited

PRODUCERS OF

GOLDEN GRAIN BEER ♦ GOLDEN GRAIN ALE

1930

1930

## THE GOLDEN GRAIN STORY-THE HISTORY OF THE WEYBURN BREWING CO.

The brewery was begun with high hopes and great expectations by the people in and around the Weyburn district who financed the venture by the purchase of shares in the Weyburn Brewing Company Limited. The company was formed on October 27th 1927; but did not file its incorporation papers as a Saskatchewan company until May 4th, 1936. The company name did appear in the Saskatchewan Gazette on November 12th, 1927.

The Weyburn Brewing Company was incorporated as a brewing and malting company. The initial capitalization was to be \$200,000 composed of 8000 preferred shares valued at \$25.00 each and 24,000 common shares to be valued at not more than \$5.00 each. By the time the brewery commenced production on September 10th, 1930; the subscribed and paid up capital was only \$145,725.

Paul Wingert found out in his research of the Weyburn Brewing Company that the company was from its inception was in continuously poor financial shape. The company always had trouble selling its stock and had to have the unsold portion underwritten by D. Blackman & Company of New York City. An office to sell shares was set up in Regina.

Plans for the construction a \$200,000 brewery in Weyburn was announced in the September 12th 1928 issue of the Weyburn Review. The plans for the brewery were drawn up by a Chicago architect (who would visit Weyburn several times during the construction phase) and tenders were to be let shortly. The next week the purchase of a site for the brewery was disclosed. The site had a frontage of 140 feet on Government Road and ran back 200 feet along Hill Street. The property was located on the North side of the CNR tracks just three blocks from downtown.

The tender for the foundation was let in September 1928 to R.W. Graham & Son of Moose Jaw. According to Kay Flory, in her article "Brewery Dries Up in Dirty 30's", published in the Weyburn Review (March 3, 1964), the winter of 1928 was so cold that in order to keep the sand useable for construction, it was necessary to run steam pipes through it. The cost of the foundations was \$20,000.

Monetary concerns delayed other construction till September 1929. The contract for the bottle house was let in September 1929 to Weyburn Sash and Door and this company's manager R.A. Carlisle was named general contractor. The bottle house was to be a seventy foot square brick building, one storey in height. It was also announced that used brewery equipment had been purchased from a defunct American brewery.

On November 6th, 1929; it was announced in the Weyburn Review that R.A. Carlisle would built the entire brewery at a projected cost of \$105,000, not counting the foundations which had already been laid for \$20,000. The quoted costs did not include the cost of the heating plant, electrical, plumbing, and refrigeration (Cork



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**WEYBURN BREWING CO., LTD.**  
Weyburn, Sask.

Weyburn Review,  
Sept. 30, 1937

Weyburn Review,  
Dec. 9, 1937

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lining) contracts which were expected to run at \$15,000. As mentioned the bottle house would be the first part of the brewery completed.

The first officers were: George McCuaig, president; Oliver Black, KC, vice president and treasurer; M.E. Gendron, secretary; T.H. Hilliar, solicitor; Walter Jeffery, auditor. The directors were: Dr. D.W. Allen, J.R. Mergens, J.A. McBride, and J.H. Warren. The advisory board consisted of D.C. Gray, Ceylon; W. Bonner, Bengough; M.R. Rettman, Big River; S. Schultz, McTaggart; W. Lehane, Cupar; Dr. A. Reddick, Lang; and J. Moodie, Tompkins.

The brewery commenced brewing on September 10th, 1930. The beer hit the market on November 27th, 1930. The Weyburn Review ran a feature story on the opening of the Weyburn Brewery in its November 27th edition.

"Weyburn's Golden Grain Beer is now on the market. The product claims to be equal to, if not the peer of any beer brewed in Saskatchewan. The new brewery and equipment cost in the neighborhood of \$200,000. The beer was brewed by the natural fermentation process."

"Golden Grain Beer, the product of the Weyburn Brewing Company of Weyburn, is now on the market. The first consignment of output from the Weyburn Brewery was displayed at the provincial liquor store in Weyburn on Wednesday afternoon, and from now on Golden Grain Beer will be obtainable from this and all other government controlled liquor or beer stores in the province."

"The new beer is said by connoisseurs who have tasted it to be the best beer brewed in Saskatchewan at the present time and to be more like pre-war beer than any domestic beer now on the shelf in this province."

"Golden Grain beer is made by the natural fermentation process, and carbonation is not resorted to in any time of its manufacture, officials at Weyburn Brewing Company have stated. This process gives the beer the maximum amount of body which will have an important effect upon its popularity with the beer drinkers of this province."

"It is felt by officials of the local brewing company that the demand for Weyburn beer will be heavy once the local product becomes known throughout the province, east and west."

The article went on detail the cost of the brewery with its used brewing equipment to be in the vicinity of \$200,000. The equipment was purchased from an old established brewery in the United States, and this according to W.E. Gendron, Secretary of the Weyburn Brewery, yielded a substantial savings to the shareholders of the Weyburn Brewing Company. The steam plant was purchased from the Soo Line Power Company.

The brewery consisted of the bottle shop (70'x70'), boiler room, engine room, and the filter room in the one storey portion. The Brew cellar occupied the full two storey portion. The brew house was four stories high. The office was located on the main floor of the brew house in the south east corner of the brewery. The brewery was constructed of brick, steel and reinforced concrete.

The brewing room to the north of the office contained a large copper kettle that was 10 to 12 feet in diameter and 10 feet high. The refrigeration room was connected to the bottling room by a tunnel ten feet across and nine feet high. The brewmaster's office was on the second floor along with the storerooms for malt, hops, barley, rice, spices, and other supplies. The brewery also had Weyburn's first elevator. The cask room had 12 huge 1,000 gallon oak casks used for maturation and 4 cyprus 1,000 gallon casks used for cooling the beer before bottling. The brewing capacity was 1700 barrels and it took three months to produce Golden Grain Lager.

Right from the beginning; the Weyburn Brewing Company stressed the natural fermentation process and advertised that they secured the services of Phillip Binzel, a noted brewmaster who had brewed for Blatz Brewing Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin before Prohibition (enacted in the United States in 1920). Though Mr. Binzel never came to Weyburn; the Weyburn Brewing Company became committed to the natural fermentation process and would not use carbonation in the manufacture of beer like most Western breweries.

The first brewmaster was Alphonse Walz, who had extensive brewing experience in Germany, Canada, and the United States before coming to Weyburn. Mr. Walz was retired and living in Red Deer in 1964. Thomas Witteman replaced Mr. Walz in 1935 and left in late 1936 to manage a hotel in Montmartre.

Western Trust filed a petition of bankruptcy against the Weyburn Brewing Company in early 1936. The petition was withdrawn on April 1, 1936; when the Weyburn Brewing Company restructured and rescheduled its debts. It was discovered that the Weyburn Brewery had operated for almost nine years without registering to operate in Saskatchewan with the Company's Branch in Regina. A statement of incorporation had to be issued and also a schedule of paying back fees.

William Burton of Winnipeg was the last brewmaster of the Weyburn Brewing Company came in 1936. He had extensive brewing experience in Canada and was a veteran of World War 1 serving with the 26th Canadian Infantry Battalion. William Burton introduced Burton's Dublin Style Porter and Burton's Export Beer in 1937.

A great upsurge in the popularity of Golden Grain Beer, Golden Grain Ale, and the excellent Burton's Porter was reported in the July 1st issue of the Weyburn Review. Draught beer from the Weyburn Brewery was available in most beer parlours in Southern Saskatchewan. William Burton was credited with the improved

quality of the Weyburn Brewery's brews.

In the October 28th, 1937 issue of the Weyburn Review it was reported sales had greatly increased this year-far exceeding that of any year since the brewery opened in 1930.

James A. McBride, president, presided over the sixth shareholders meeting. He announced that the company would soon place an entirely new beer on the market which would replace Golden Grain.

The new directors elected at this meeting for 1938 were: J.A. McBride, T.H. Hilliar, K.C., J. Mergans, J.H. Warren, A.J. Onstad, E.H. Phillips, H.J. McBride. Bruce Jones was named service manager for the coming year.

The shareholders were loud in their commendation of William Burton the brewmaster who raised the standard of the Weyburn Brewery's product to that of the best in Western Canada. Though the beer market in Saskatchewan was poor in 1937; Mr. J.A. McBride credited Mr. Burton's ability as a brewmaster and producing first class products like Burton's Porter for improving the brewery's chance of survival. The Weyburn Brewing Company was the last independently operated brewery left in Saskatchewan.

Burton's Export Beer was placed on the Saskatchewan market the week of December 9th, 1937.

Nothing appears on the brewery till the death of brewery employee, August Steiger on January 8th, 1938. Mr. Steiger died from fumes as a result of varnishing the interior of a vat at the brewery.

Finances at the Weyburn Brewery were tight, especially after the attempted foreclosure in March 1936. The brewery was foreclosed upon on April 12th, 1938 and the Notice of Sale appeared in the Weyburn Review dated April 14, 1938. The public auction was slated for May 9th, 1938.

The brewery limped on producing till the summer of 1938. The last brewer was Herman J. Schaetzle, who started at Weyburn Brewing as an apprentice brewer in 1936 and made \$2.50 per day with no overtime. When he promoted to assistant brewer he made \$95 per month. A bottle of beer sold for 15 to 17 cents and a case went for \$1.90.

Mr. Schaetzle often said that once I became brewmaster, they would closed down the brewery. I closed three breweries: Weyburn Brewing in 1938; Lake of the Woods Brewing in Kenora in 1956; and Carling in Red Deer in 1966.

City council at their meeting on August 11, 1938 agreed to accept a sum of \$7,500 in full settlement of the city's taxes and other claims against the property of the Weyburn Brewing Company which totalled over \$11,000 including penalties.

# Weyburn Brewing Company Limited

PRODUCERS OF

GOLDEN GRAIN BEER ♦ GOLDEN GRAIN ALE

WEYBURN, SASK.  
CANADA

July 13, 1936.

After the Weyburn Brewery closed; R. Carlisle of Weyburn Sash and Door dismantled the plant equipment and sold the brewing equipment to Paul Moore, who owned the Lake of the Woods Brewing Company. Most of the brewing equipment ended up in Mr. Moore's Kenora brewery. The brewery was purchased in the summer of 1939 by the Saskatchewan Brewers' Association to house their Keg and Bottle Exchange. Part of the brewery was leased to Walker Fruit by the SBA. The top two stories were torn down and the bricks bought by Elmer Johnson, who with his wife Bea cleaned the bricks at night and used them to build Elmer's Garage (Chrysler dealer).

The SBA sold the property to Gulf Oil (Petrocan) in 1968 and the remains of the brewery were torn down to expand a bulk oil dealership.

The old phrase "Sick's closed six" breweries is wrong. The Wascana (Regina) and Red Wing (Prince Albert) Breweries were purchased by Sick interests. The Adanac Brewery (Regina), Hub City Brewery (Saskatoon), and Moose Jaw Brewery (Moose Jaw) were purchased by G.M. Black's Western Canada Breweries Limited out of Winnipeg. The Moose Jaw Brewery was closed once the Adanac Brewery in Regina was purchased. The Adanac Brewery was newer and more modern than the Moose Jaw plant which WCBL closed in 1936. The Weyburn Brewing Company closed due to poor finances not a corporate take over. Numerous letters are on file at the Saskatchewan Archives Board from Weyburn Brewing Company shareholders inquiring about getting their money back. Souris Brewing of Estevan went out of business due to the depression, the death of Matt Pitzl, the politics of the day and Jake Krivel's general loss of interest in the brewery.

I would like to thank the Saskatchewan Archives Board, The Soo Line Museum, and the Weyburn Review for the information contained herein. Paul Wingert provided a highlight sheet, xeroxed ads, a picture, and some labels for this story also thanks to Dave Craig for the additional xeroxed labels.

An article on the Weyburn Brewing Company by Ron Legin C.B. #256 appeared in the Canadian Brewerianist (Vol. 4 No. 6) Sept. 1982.

An Article on the Weyburn Brewery entitled "Brewery Dried up in Dirty 30's" by Kay Flury appeared in the Weyburn Review (March 3, 1964).