

R A N D Y M O S H E R

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

AHA San Diego, 2015

History v. Stories

- Grandma's quilt
- Our brains on stories: meaning
- Historians or journalists
- Never easy
- Connecting the dots
- We need to get this right!

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Bad Information

- Beer history very specialized
- Blame the marketing guys, too
- Internet's helping...or not
- Question authority and everything!

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

We Like Simple Answers

- Style guidelines a modern thing
- Always a lot of variability...
- ...especially the further back you go
- Styles *always* have a context that changes by time and place

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

The Literature

- Period books; many online
- Trade journals
- General journalism, too
- Technical works reliable
- Popular accounts suspect

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Research

- Academic papers
- Experimental archaeology
- Visuals can be rich, independent information source

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Kvass in Livonia, c. 1880



Un marchand de kvass, en Livonie. — Dessin de d'Henriet.

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

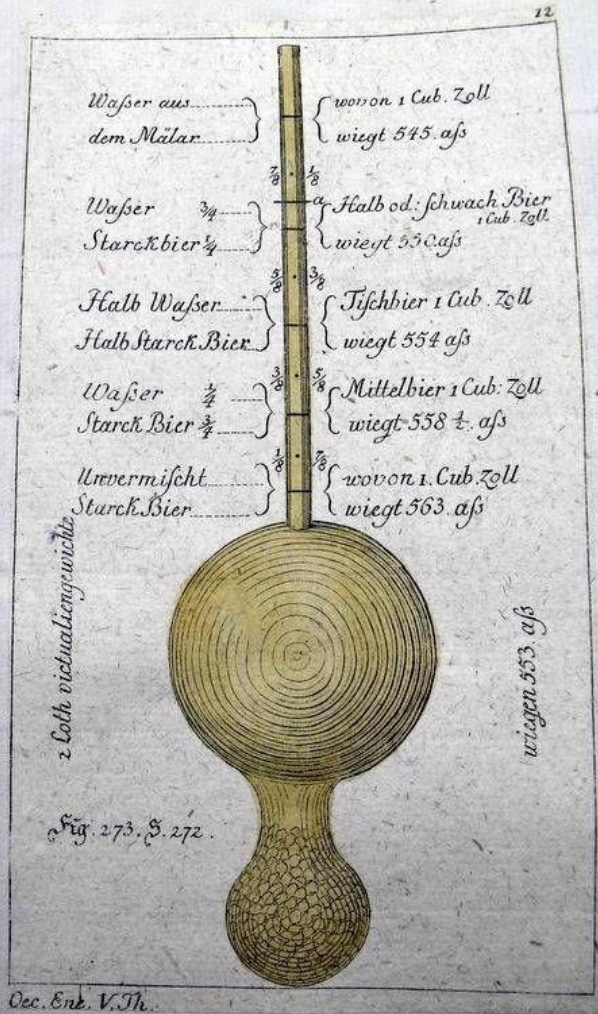
Visual Sources and Tools

- Labels and advertising materials
- Antique prints
- Illustrations in books and articles
- Paintings
- Physical objects

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Early Hydrometer

- German, c. 1800
- Shows:
 - Starckbier 1.033 (?)
 - Mittelbier
 - Tischbier
 - Schwach Bier



(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong



Ancient Boot

- Ancient Persia
- c. 500 BCE!

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Answers or Questions?

- I'll have some of each for you today
- Some of these are BIG problems
- Usually, reality more interesting anyway
- Mark Twain:
 - “History doesn't repeat, but it does rhyme.”

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Many Early Mysteries

- Hopped beer invented in Lombardy?
- What the hell was gruit?
- ...and how did people drink that stuff?
- Always: What did it taste like?

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

English Porter

- “Three threads” blends probably true
- Spurious story about R. Harwood:
 - Magazine article, c.1770
- “Porter” name 1725
- It was hoppy!
- How did biz get so big?

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Porter

- London a huge market
- Beer aged a year, so...high capital
- Moneyed families stepped in
- Eventually started brewing
- Tweaked the tax rate
 - “Wastage” differential

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Porter Questions

- Did the brown malt convert itself?
- What did it taste like?
- How “empyreumatic” was it?
- “Stale” (well aged) = *Brettanomyces*?

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Burton and Its Bitter Ale

- Myth: Unique water made Burton famous since early days for pale bitter beer
- Reality: Burton was first famous for sweet, darkish beer

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Burton and Its Bitter Ale

- Exported huge quantities north after harbor enlarged, mid 1770s
- Kicked out of Russia
- Eventually, an opportunity...

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

India Pale Ale

- Myth: Special paler, stronger hoppier beer brewed for the Indian market
- Reality: Started as a kind of home-brew that had been around for centuries

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

October Beer, Thompson: *Autumn*

Then sated Hunger bids his brother Thirst
Produce the mighty bowl; the mighty bowl,
Swell'd high with fiery juice, streams liberal round
A potent gale, delicious as the breath
Of Maia to the love-sick shepherdess
On violets diffus'd, while soft she hears
Her panting shepherd stealing to her arms.
Nor wanting is the brown October, drawn
Mature and perfect from its dark retreat
Of thirty years; and now his honest front
Flames in the light refulgent, not afraid
Ev'n with the vineyard's best to vie.

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

October Beer

- Big amber ale; barley wine-ish
- “Best beer in England”
- Home-brewed
- Often aged 2 years or more
- Massively hopped

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

India Trade

- Ships can't sail empty
- Definitely thirsty troops and others
- Porter & October beer
- Hodgson annoying the rich guys
- Burton brewers reinvented themselves

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Lager's Origin

- Myth: Lager originated by monks brewing in caves in the Alps
- Reality: Not sure what happened
- Hybridized yeast, cold-tolerant
- Maybe not in Bavaria!

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Lager's Origin

- Earliest mention:
 - Dark, hopped, bottom-fermented beer in Franconia in 1302, 1325
- Different brewing winter and summer

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Lager's Origin

- Bavarians drank wine until early 1500s.
So, late to the beer bash
- *Reinheitsgebot* a tax law, but also:
 - Set standards: ingredients, seasons
 - Allowed competition
 - Allowed juniper, caraway!

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Bock Trouble

- Strong lager, yes
- Problems with name
 - Einbeckische=>enipochische
=>pockbier=>bockbier
- Differentiation into dunkel and maibock a new thing

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Bock

- What color was it originally?
- Origin in Einbeck suggests a lighter color. *If true:*
 - Associated with Hansa white beer towns
 - Air-dried malt available

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Bock in Paintings

c. 1900

1830

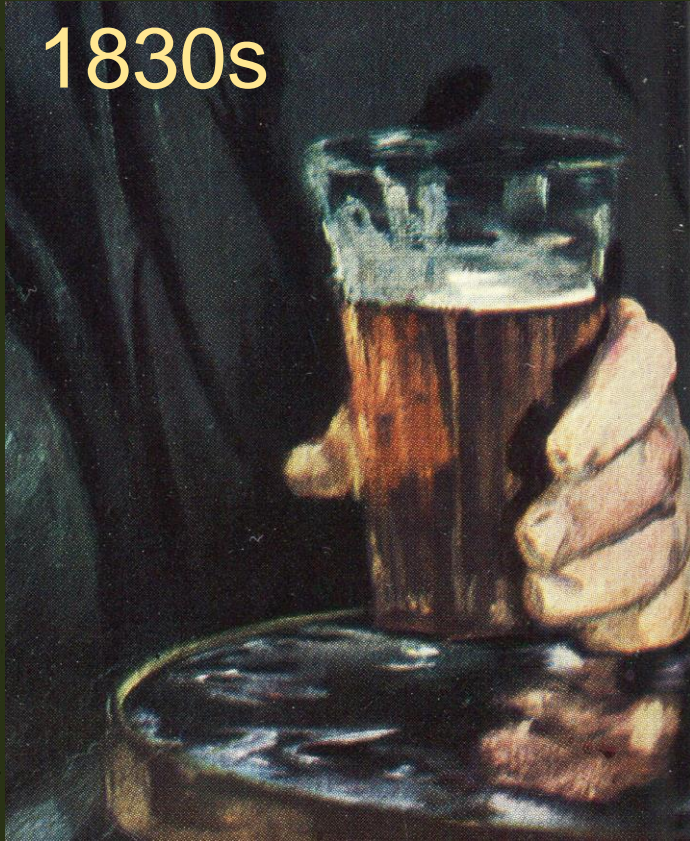


Pre-1846



Bock in Paintings - Manet

1830s



1878



RYTHING
KNOW
BEER
IS Wrong

Les Problèmes Belgique

- Oh, man, where do we start?
- So many silly stories
- No great written history
- Witbiers, wild/sours truly ancient
- Much of the rest: 20th century inventions

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Sources, 1830–1919

- G. Lacambre, 1851
- Cartuyvels & Stammers, 1888
- Journal of the Institute of Brewers
 - GM Johnson
 - Thatcher
 - Evans (Nord, France)

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

NETHERLANDS

c. 1850
(GL)



EVERYTHING
KNOW
BEER
S Wrong

What's in the Books?

- “English” spices (GL, 1851?)
- 13 local & regional styles
- Most in two strengths + small beer
- Strongest beer: 1.063 (GMJ, 1895)
 - “Spontaneous method”
- Blended old + new beers

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

What *Not* in there?

- Any mention of abbey/Trappist
- Any description of “Farmhouse”
- “Triple/tripel”
- No use of spices in any particular beer

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS *Wrong*

Decline by Late 1800s

Cartuyvels & Stammer, 1883:

" It has been thirty years since Belgian beers were considered among the best of Europe. No one would dare say the same today. Whether through ignorance or negligence of the manufacturers, or vice of the law and exaggerated taxes, the reputation and even the consumption of Belgian beers have declined, and foreign beers are preferred to them, at least in the larger cities."

©Imagery
EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Low and Lower

- “dirty” and in disarray...(GMJ)
- Quality foreign beers sold cheap
- Gin preferred in many areas (C&S)
- Van Laer’s contest, 1902–1903
- WWI: country trashed
- Avg. Gravity 1919: 2°P

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

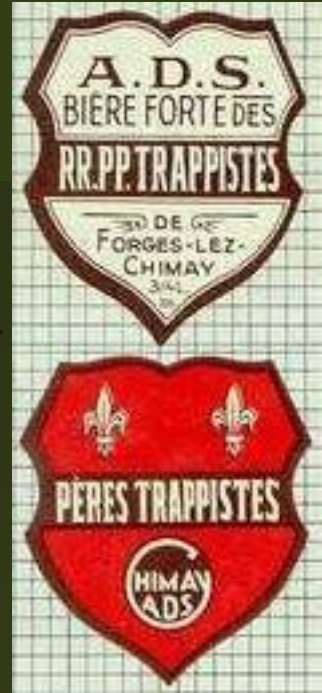
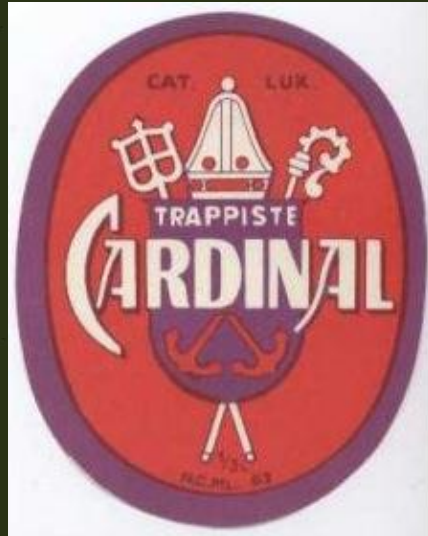
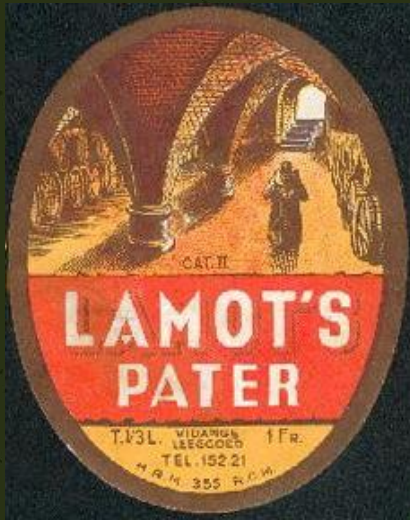
The Trappist Problem

- French Revolution, 1789
- Westmalle reopens: 1836
- First monastery brewing: 1860s
- First monastery selling beer: 1920
- “Trappistenbier”™: 1932
- First “Tripel”: 1934

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Abbey Rebirth: 1930s

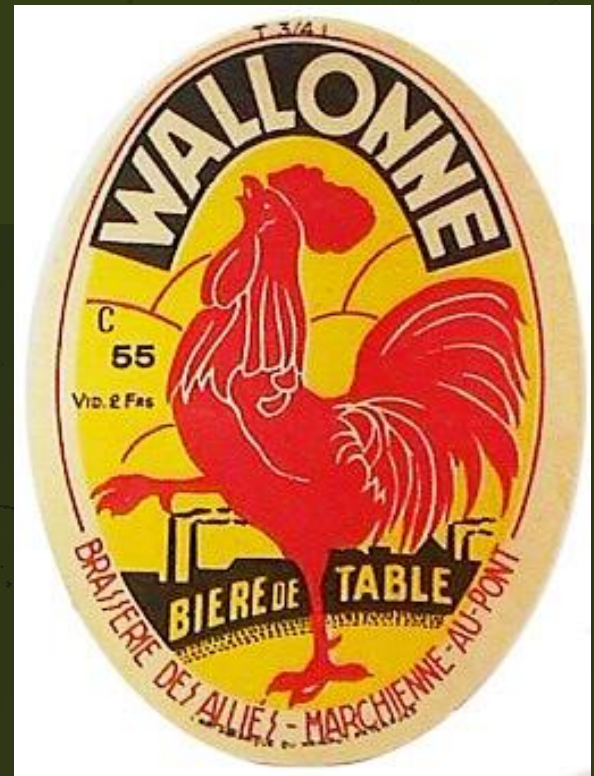
- Westmalle “Tripel” 1935
- Orval, 1926



(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Abbey Influences

- England: pale ales
- Scotland: “Scotch Ales” (fad, 1920s) + IPA
- Fondness for UK troops
- Lager: Pils, bock



(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Saison & Farmhouse

- A beautiful fiction
- Saison = summer?
- Saisonniers = migrant workers?
- What does “farmhouse” mean?
- What’s the beer?

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Saison & Farmhouse

- “Farmhouse” beer scarce in history
- Brewing a demanding enterprise



Saison & Farmhouse



Nord (all)

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Saison & Farmhouse



Ardennes

House: 1700-50

Brewery:

1900

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Before WWI: “Saison” = Liège

- “Bière jeune” and “Bière de saison”
- 1.028–1.033; 1.043–1.051
- Malted spelt, oats, buckwheat/beans
- Saison: 3–4.5 oz hops/5 gal
- “Quite amber” (GL)

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

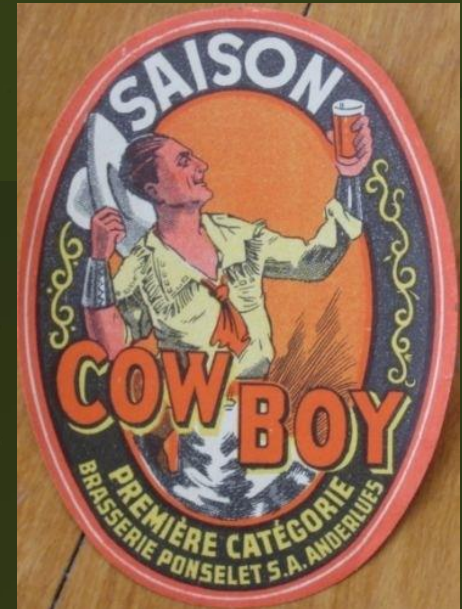
Liège Saison

- “En Saison” = brewing season = winter = “strong”
- 50% attenuated; special yeast
- “a harsh drink, only just held its own”
- Aged a few months

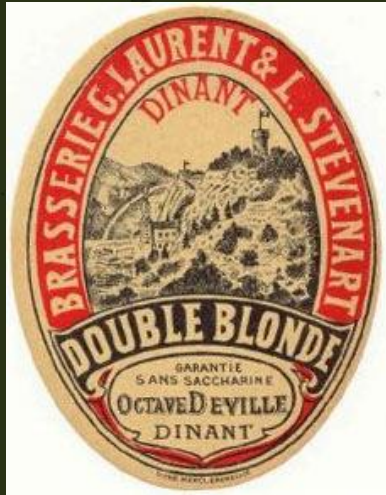
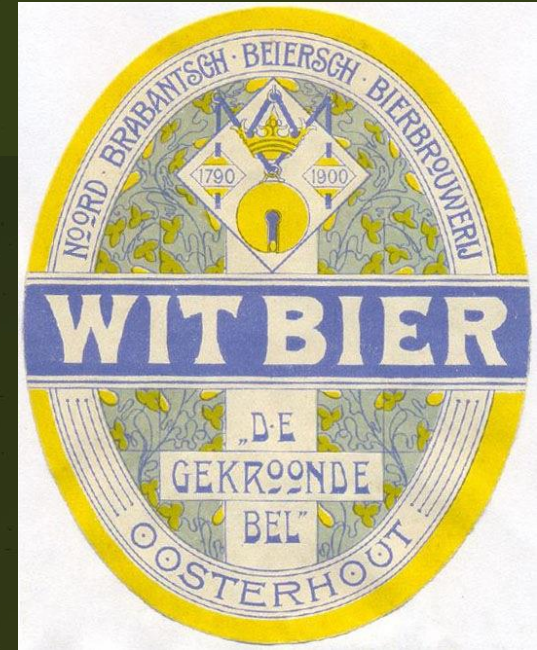
(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Saison, 1930s

- MJ, *World Guide to Beer...*



Belgian Weirdness

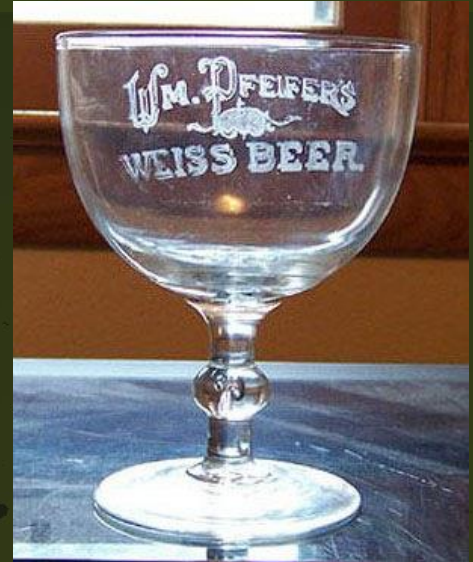
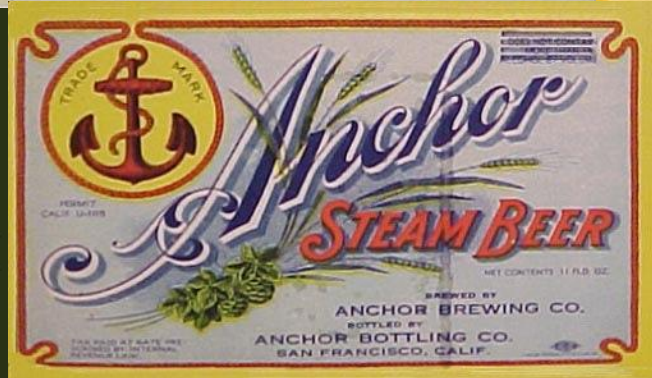
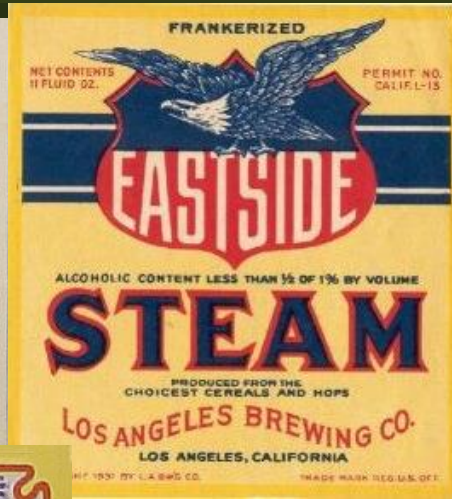
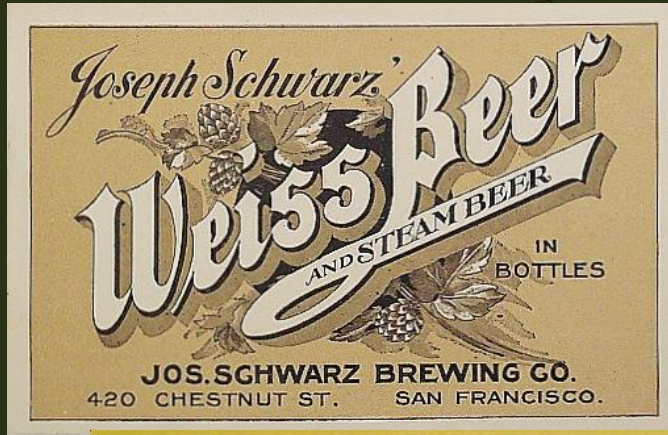


Back in the USA

- Very little beer until Germans came
- Rice not a cheap additive originally
 - Malt too proteinaceous
 - Climate too warm; diet too rich
 - The Pilsner juggernaut
- Race to bottom: 1950–1970

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

The Real Steam Beer



(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

The Real Steam Beer

- 9 Steam of 3,175 labels (1950 and earlier) in Bob Kay book



- Fritz's Story, 1971...

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

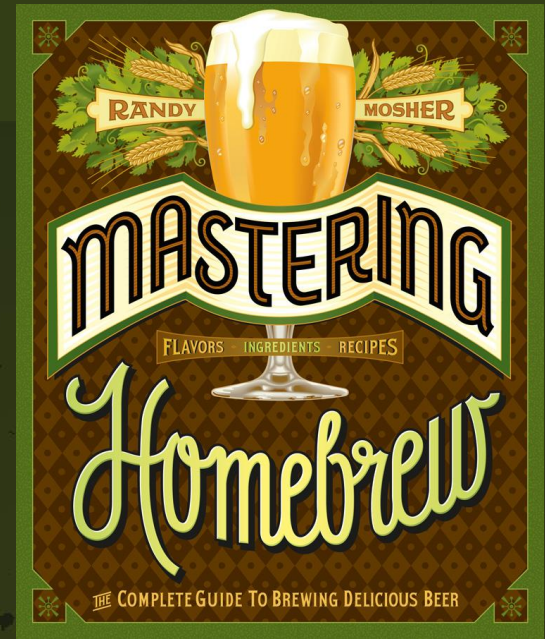
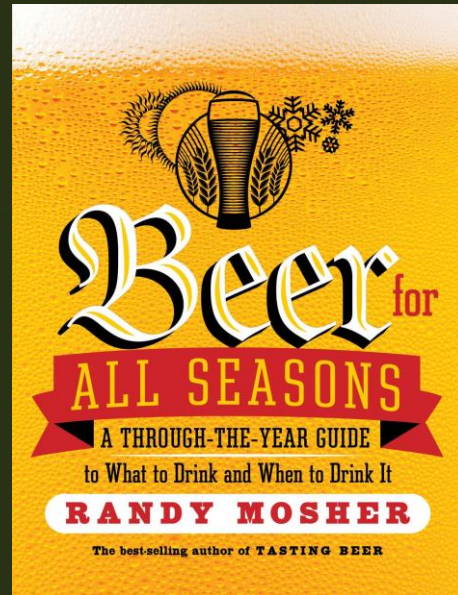
One more...



(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

New Books, 2015

- Thanks for all your support!



(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong

Thanks!



??????

(Almost) EVERYTHING
YOU KNOW
ABOUT BEER
HISTORY IS Wrong