Adolphus Busch — “A Most Remarkable Man” — arrived in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1857 as an unknown immigrant from German-speaking Europe. After partnering with Eberhard Anheuser in an existing brewery in 1865, Busch transformed the operation, eventually known as the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association, into the largest brewery in the world within a quarter of a century. Key to the eventual rise of Anheuser-Busch was the timely adoption of important scientific and technological innovations, an expansive sales strategy geared largely toward external domestic and international population centers, and a pioneering integrated marketing plan that focused on a single core brand, Budweiser, making it the most successful nationally-distributed beer of the pre-Prohibition era. Busch was able to lay the groundwork for his success by cultivating and catering to the extensive German-American population of St. Louis. As a primary Midwestern destination for German immigrants during the mid-nineteenth century, the city grew under their influence from 16,469 residents in 1840 to 451,770 a half-century later. In this city, a ready-made market for lager beer played to the strengths of Busch’s entrepreneurial spirit and encouraged the formulation of a farsighted vision of how beer could be made and sold beyond traditional local boundaries — most importantly, by utilizing the emerging national rail network and innovations in refrigeration to ship beer from St. Louis to distant markets.

The success of the Anheuser-Busch brewery meant that Adolphus Busch could pursue a lavish lifestyle rivaling that of Old World royalty. Several mansions, in California and New York as well as in St. Louis, were needed to maintain his collection of furniture and fine art, and to guarantee an opulent lifestyle for his family. A personal railcar, the Adolphus, transported Busch to preferred destinations across the nation, and a private spur line was built to bring the coach virtually to the back door of One Busch Place, his main family residence in St. Louis. Busch also donated millions to charitable causes both inside and outside of the German-American community and gave small but not inexpensive gifts to individuals with whom he crossed paths, in part to impress them with the wealth and success he had attained in the New World. Throughout his life, Busch made frequent return trips to his German homeland, where he maintained the ethnic bonds

1 Statement by U.S. President William McKinley, while summarizing his personal meeting with Busch on the question of alcohol and regulation (qtd. in Roland Krebs and Percy J. Orthwein, Making Friends Is Our Business: 100 Years of Anheuser-Busch [n.p., 1953], 52).
that defined much of his character.

Ultimately, Busch became one of the most high-profile German immigrants of the nineteenth century and the most successful German-American brewer baron nationwide. Upon his death, he had an estate valued at up to $60 million (approximately $1.36 billion in 2010), substantial holdings in several companies other than Anheuser-Busch, and a lengthy list of beneficiaries who gained from his propensity to give both time and money to community-minded endeavors. Although never a member of St. Louis high society, Adolphus was lauded after his death as the city’s foremost ambassador, its best-known entrepreneur. According to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, in Busch’s passing, the world “lost a singular example of successful enterprise coupled with high integrity.” “St. Louis,” the paper continued, “lost a big private citizen actively identified with a half century of its growth and thousands of men and women and children have lost a good friend.”

**Family Background and Ethnic Identity**

The birth of Adolphus Busch on July 10, 1839, in Kastel, Hesse-Darmstadt, was announced to the public the next day by his father, Ulrich Busch Sr. (1779-1852), during a visit to the city’s mayor. The formality of the gesture spoke to the societal standing of Ulrich, an elder lord of the Rhine River city. Adolphus was the twenty-first of twenty-two children fathered by Ulrich with two wives: his first wife, Catharina, bore five boys and two girls before her death on April 16, 1815, while his second wife, Barbara Busch, neé Pfeiffer (1792-1844), gave birth to eight boys and seven girls before passing away on March 12, 1844. By the end of the 1830s, Ulrich Busch had established himself as an influential member of the German merchant class, with substantial financial holdings derived from lumber harvested on his extensive wooded property, a successful inn and tavern operation, and real estate interests including vineyards, some of which had been cultivated...
since Roman times.7 A strong sense of traditional values shaped the upbringing of Adolphus and the other Busch children, and the Catholic family placed particular emphasis on discipline, thrift, loyalty, and hard work. It should be added, however, that these values were cultivated alongside practices that stressed Rhineland conviviality. For instance, one proverb governing the Busch home maintained that “eating and drinking hold body and soul together.” The Busch family’s three-story mansion, the Schützenhof, was located in a prolific wine-growing region, and drink culture, in general, and vinous spirits, in particular, played an important role in Adolphus’ early life and continued to shape his later years as well. Although he went on to become one of the most successful brewery owners in history, Busch always maintained a preference for wine over beer when it came to his own consumption.

Ulrich Busch’s economic success guaranteed superior schooling for young Adolphus. After receiving his elementary education in Mainz and Darmstadt, Adolphus attended school in Brussels, where he studied French and English among other subjects. To gain work experience, the younger Busch eventually took up employment in his father’s lumber enterprise, rafting logs down the Rhine and Main rivers. He also served briefly as an apprentice at a brewery belonging to an uncle. After Ulrich Busch died at age seventy-two in July 1852, Adolphus was forced to chart his own course in life and to channel his energies into more enduring business ventures. In 1856, at just seventeen years of age, he began working as a shipping clerk at a mercantile house in Cologne. Although he only remained in this position for a year, the experience proved formative for Busch: it was there, in Cologne, that he developed the skills and character traits (e.g., energy, enthusiasm, an eye for opportunity) needed to realize his existing ambition to make money and accrue wealth. His desire to maximize his own potential, the unlikelihood of his inheriting a substantial portion of his father’s estate as the second-youngest son, and favorable reports about immigrant life in the United States from his brothers George, Ulrich, and John, prompted Adolphus to leave Europe in 1857 and take up residence in America.8 Although Busch chose to make America his new homeland, his journey was by no means a final farewell to the Old Country. In the coming years, Busch took many trips to Europe, generally, and to Germany, specifically, including more than twenty trips to his former hometown.9

After arriving at port in New Orleans, Louisiana, eighteen-year-old Adolphus made his way to the American Midwest, where he found a hospitable environment both personally and professionally. Among
his brothers, George had already established a thriving enterprise as a hop merchant, while John, who came to America in 1849, had founded a brewing operation in Washington, Missouri, in 1854. Fifty miles to the east, St. Louis beckoned Adolphus as a rapidly emerging German settlement that was well on its way to becoming part of the famed “German Quadrangle,” an area that also included Cincinnati and Milwaukee, among other cities. Busch thrived on the immigrant culture that pervaded St. Louis, and he quickly realized that the knowledge, habits, and skills he had acquired in his Rhineland youth could help him make the most of certain business opportunities that were typical of river cities everywhere. Adolphus found early employment as a “mud clerk” and was tasked with assessing cargo aboard incoming Mississippi River steamships. Possessed of a keen eye, he also pursued private opportunities to buy and sell the commodities that these ships carried. Whereas many German immigrants of the era maintained a hardscrabble existence until becoming established, a “substantial allowance” of family money allowed Adolphus to enjoy a brief period of acclimation before getting to work. As he acknowledged later in life, his initial weeks in St. Louis were not given over to intense labor so much as to “hunting, loafing, getting acquainted and having a good time.”

To amass additional financial resources, Busch worked briefly at a St. Louis supply house owned by German immigrant William Heinrichshofen (1825-1906). Thereafter, he used his earnings and existing funds to enter into a partnership with Ernst Wattenberg (1835-1911) to sell brewing supplies. The new firm — Wattenberg, Busch & Company — was ideally situated in both time and place for success. The rapid rise in German immigration to St. Louis had spurred a population explosion: within a decade, the city’s population had more than doubled, going from 78,000 residents in 1850 to 185,000 in 1860. Many of these newcomers brought with them a taste for a relatively new style of beer — lager — which originated during the 1840s in Central Europe. The brew got its distinct character from a special bottom-fermenting strain of yeast that yielded a smoother, crisper, more refreshing flavor than traditional top-fermented ales. The unique taste also resulted from an extended aging and maturation period in a cool, subterranean environment. The spread of lager beer saw a marked increase in the number of St. Louis breweries that were eager and willing to serve a clientele accustomed to consuming copious quantities of the beverage, from twenty-four in 1854 to forty just six years later, thirty-two of which were owned and operated by individuals of German stock. Abundant natural resources also played a vital

10 Walter B. Stevens, Eleven Roads to Success (St. Louis, 1914), 21, as cited in Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 23.

11 Daily Missouri Republican, May 30, 1860, as cited in Henry Herbst, Don Roussin, and Kevin Kious, St. Louis Brews: 200 Years of Brewing in St. Louis, 1809-2009 (St. Louis, 2009), 37.
role in St. Louis’ blossoming brewing trade, which benefited from an ample supply of quality water nearby in the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and from suitable hills for caverns for aging lager beer. During the hot summer of 1860, thirsty German-Americans and other residents of St. Louis combined to imbibe 212,000 barrels of beer, generating $1.5 million in revenue (approximately $40.6 million in 2010) for the brewer barons who spent one dollar to manufacture each barrel that they then sold for as much as eight dollars to area tavern keepers.

One enterprising brewer of this era was Eberhard Anheuser (1806-1880), a St. Louis resident and German immigrant who had used his profits from a prosperous soap manufacturing business to purchase the struggling Bavarian Brewery (soon renamed the Bavarian Brewery, E. Anheuser & Co.) in 1860.12 At the time, the Bavarian Brewery was fortunate in being able to market to a large number of German and Central European immigrants. This advantage, however, was more than offset by the competition that had been unleashed by the recent spike in the number of St. Louis brewers. Even more importantly, though, the Bavarian Brewery faced an extremely fundamental problem: by all accounts, its beer was mediocre, a major handicap in a city filled with experienced lager consumers and no lack of brewers who produced a consistently superior product. But if Anheuser was burdened by the challenges associated with running an underachieving brewery, the venture remained profitable for Busch, who continued providing the company with brewing supplies from his office, which was located right around the corner from the Anheuser soap works.

It soon became clear that Anheuser’s brewery wasn’t the only thing that had captured Adolphus’ attention. As he became better acquainted with the firm and with Eberhard Anheuser personally, Busch also became increasingly attracted to his sixteen-year-old daughter, Elisa (1844-1928), known among friends as Lilly or even “the curly head” [der Lockenkopf] in reference to the prominent blond curls in her hair.13 After a period of courtship, Busch proposed to Lilly. His offer was accepted, and the wedding was set for March 7, 1861 — three days after the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln — at the Holy Ghost German Evangelical Lutheran Church. The service was particularly memorable insofar as it represented the marriage of more than one Anheuser and Busch: for some time, Adolphus’ older brother, Ulrich, had been dating another daughter of Anheuser, Anna, and during the service Ulrich and Anna were wed as well. The double wedding, unique as it was, did not come off entirely without incident, as Adolphus arrived twenty minutes late, citing the need to close an important business deal beforehand.14

12 Todd Barnett, “Eberhard Anheuser,” in IE.
13 Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, January 11, 1890, as cited in Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 26.
14 St. Louis Republic, October 11, 1913, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, March 8, 1911; Alice Busch Tilton, Remembering (St. Louis, 1947), 1-2, as cited in Hernandez and Ganey, Under the Influence, 26-27.
The marriage between Adolphus and Lilly was scarcely a month old when the reality of a nation at war took priority. After the fall of Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, Busch, along with his father-in-law, willingly took up arms to help keep Missouri from coming under Confederate control. Ultimately, Busch spent three months as a corporal in Company E of the 3rd Regiment of the U.S. Reserve Corps. He served alongside some 5,000 volunteers and 1,200 reservists, including Eberhard Anheuser, who was also a corporal in Charlie Company.15 By the time the enlistments of the homeguard had expired in August 1861, both Anheuser and Busch had reprised their normal personal and professional roles. For Adolphus, that meant a return to work in the brewery supply business, as well as the beginning of what would become a sizeable family. After taking in Gustava von Kliehr, the orphaned daughter of one of Lilly’s sisters, Lilly herself gave birth to their first child, a girl, Nellie, on April 12, 1863. By the end of 1865, she had given birth to two sons as well: Edward, born in 1864, and August A., born four days after Christmas in 1865. Over the next eleven years, Lily gave birth to eight more Busch children: Adolphus Jr. (1868), Alexis (1869), Emilie (1870), Edmee (1871), Peter (1872), Martha (1873), Anna (1875), and Clara (1876), although three of the girls — Emilie, Alexis, and Martha — died shortly after birth.16

With the goal of male heirs and potential future business leaders attained, Adolphus focused more intently on entrepreneurial matters and sought out opportunities that, unbeknownst to him at the time, would make him one of the wealthiest and most admired industrialists in the United States by the end of the century.

### Business Development

The end of the Civil War marked a turning point in the life of Adolphus Busch, particularly when it came to the professional endeavors that would eventually define him. During the war years, Busch was one of the relatively few St. Louis businessmen who braved the uncertainty of the era and took a chance on dealing in cotton and other Southern products. Through the skillful and efficient buying and selling of commodities, Busch earned substantial profits and positioned himself to invest in other commercial ventures when peace returned to the nation. In 1865, the year the war ended, Busch acquired a stake in the Bavarian Brewery by buying out the interests of Eberhard Anheuser’s then-partner, William D’Oench.17 As Anheuser’s new partner for the future, Busch devoted himself to improving the fortunes of the company. To learn as much as possible
about the brewing process, Busch read industry journals and other brewery-oriented publications whenever he could, and from 1868 onward he made frequent trips to German-speaking Europe to study brewing techniques and technical innovations, in the hopes of gaining an advantage over his local competitors.

Although Busch had no hands-on experience as a brewer, he had a basic general knowledge of the brewing industry, years of commercial experience, and innate business instincts — all of which he put to good use. He quickly gained a reputation as an adept salesman who "sold the bad almost as facilely as he sold the good." No less important was Adolphus' attitude toward hard work, which he saw as "pleasure and agreeable recreation," whose payoff, beyond financial reward, was the satisfaction he felt when his efforts were "crowned with success." To improve business, Busch seized upon various gimmicks designed to give the brewery and its product greater exposure. Mindful that name recognition was critical in a crowded marketplace, he believed that any publicity, good or bad, was better than no publicity. By giving free beer to customers, paying saloonkeepers to stock Anheuser and Busch brews instead of competitors’ beer, and sending agents to existing draft accounts to buy free rounds for patrons, Adolphus put his product in the public eye, building an awareness of his beer that would persist for years to come.

In 1865, the year that Busch bought his way into the Bavarian Brewery, the firm was struggling to manufacture and sell 4,000 barrels of beer per year. Undeterred by the company’s problems, Busch surveyed the business climate and noticed a unique set of circumstances that promised to support the successful operation of a brewing enterprise on an unprecedented scale. First, the dramatic growth of the German immigrant population had created an enormously expanded customer base, and, as importantly, a ready supply of inexpensive but capable labor. Second, the advent of the Industrial Age promised new technology that would revolutionize breweries and make them more cost-effective to operate every year. Third, new transportation networks, most notably railroads, opened up distant markets and allowed beer to be shipped farther, and faster, than ever before. Fourth, government regulation was in its infancy and thus promised few impediments to profit-taking and reinvestment in the business. At the time, beer brewing seemed to offer unlimited potential to virtually anyone with ambition and energy; the challenge, however, was finding the means to ensure success.


19 Adolphus Busch, correspondence with Charles Nagel, December 8, 1909, as cited in Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 29.

20 Insight into the challenges that Busch confronted in building up the small Anheuser/D’Oench brewery can be gleaned from statistical data from the period. According to a May 30, 1860, report by the Daily Missouri Republican, just before Eberhard Anheuser purchased the Bavarian Brewery it ranked only twenty-ninth out of forty operational breweries in the city, with a meager output of 3,200 barrels per year (cited in Herbst, Roussin, and Kious, St. Louis Brews, 9).

21 Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 29.
As a first step toward expansion, Busch sought financial backing from a group of prominent French bankers in St. Louis, but was rejected for a $50,000 loan (approximately $690,000 in 2010). Apparently, Busch — whose office already possessed a level of opulence out of keeping with his business’ limited success — was deemed too extravagant and thus a poor risk as a money manager. So Busch went elsewhere and secured the requisite loan from State Bank president Robert A. Barnes (1808–1892). With an extended line of credit, Busch commenced construction of a new brew house, a malt house, and additional storage cellars. The addition boosted the brewery’s capacity to 25,000 barrels per year. The investment proved wise: Bavarian Brewery beer production grew by 300 percent between 1865 and 1870.

But Busch realized that unless the quality of the Anheuser and Busch beverages could be greatly improved, the expansion would only result in the production of greater volumes of subpar beer. To address this problem, Adolphus took a series of trips to Europe, where he stopped in Paris, Bohemia, and Bavaria. He benefitted from private guided tours of numerous breweries and gained much useful knowledge through first-hand observation of important innovations that had yet to reach the United States. Busch’s improved understanding of the brewing process, together with the hiring of greater numbers of skilled brewmasters, helped the company’s beers achieve the desired level of quality. More important, still, was the company’s introduction of pasteurization, a process whereby finished beer slated for bottling and shipping to external markets was subjected to heat in order to kill harmful bacteria that caused spoilage. During a trip abroad, the marketing-minded Busch had taken note of the scientific advances made by Louis Pasteur in the area of wine stabilization, and he returned to Missouri with the idea of applying them to his bottled beer trade.

22 An 1878 descriptive account revealed the extent to which Busch decorated the brewery offices generally, and his office specifically, in an effort to leave visitors with a profound impression of success and prosperity: “The office is one of the finest and most tastefully appointed of any in the city, and bears the characteristics of the president’s office of a large bank. It is Gothic in the exterior, with small Doric Skylights and modern windows, and antique decorations. The floor is of tesselated marble, and the furniture is of the most exquisite workmanship, and elegantly veneered. The private office of Mr. Adolphus Busch, the Secretary and Manager of the Association, is simply sumptuous, with its beautifully designed and immaculate marble mantel, Axminster carpets, ornamented French plate glass, luxurious chairs, elegant paintings, etc. In addition to its handsome appointment, the office is provided with every possible convenience, including a large iron vault for valuables, lavatories, toilet rooms, etc., with an arrangement for expediting business unsurpassed.” See “75 Years Ago . . . In Spirit the Same Today,” Brewers Digest (September 1952), 70.

23 Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 30–31. See also Stevens, Eleven Roads to Success, 26.

24 In subsequent years, Anheuser-Busch advertisements stressed the company’s role as the first brewery in America to introduce pasteurized bottled beer. Under the slogan “Not How Cheap but How Good,” advertisements also emphasized various attributes of the company’s beers. With regard to product quality, specific emphasis was placed on the absence of corn as a fermentable article. With the typical hyperbole of the era, one company advertisement of the 1890s maintained that “the difference between corn beer and fine barley-malt beer is the difference between corn bread and fine white bread. . . . Of corn beer you can drink but little without a protest from the stomach, and the effect is a loss of energy, weariness, stupidity, and drowsiness. The barley-malt beer, however, is a sparkly, spunky, healthy, quickly assimilating drink, with a body and a character smacking and vigorous. Its effect is buoyant, refreshing, and invigorating. ANHEUSER-BUSCH brands are absolutely free from corn or corn preparation. Nothing but highest grade malt and hops are used in its preparation.” See “Anheuser-Busch Brewing Ass’n, St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A., Brewers of Fine Beer Exclusively” (advertisement), in Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly, November 17, 1892, 353.
The introduction of pasteurization was part of Busch’s plan to circumvent St. Louis’ intense local competition by shipping his beer to ever-distant markets with greater sales potential. In 1872, after becoming the first brewer in the United States to produce pasteurized bottled beer, Busch was poised to take the lead in the race among brewers to tap into the increasingly lucrative southern and western markets. Bolstered by the establishment of icehouses and warehouses strategically placed along key railroad lines, the company enjoyed significant business growth during the 1870s, boosting its beer output to 44,961 barrels by the end of 1877 — a production level that transformed this once-miniscule operation into the thirty-second largest brewer in the nation. In 1882, in recognition of this achievement, industry observers dubbed Adolphus Busch the “father” of lager beer bottling. In truth, bottled beer had existed for over a century, and its national market share, at less than ten percent, was tiny in comparison with draft beer as sold by the tavern trade. For his part, Busch was not shy about taking credit for his innovations. In a brewery promotional pamphlet dating from around 1887, he claimed that Anheuser-Busch could “point with honest pride to the marvelous change wrought by it in a few short years by virtually creating a new and important industry, a source of national wealth, giving employment to many thousand citizens, and proving the main factor in stimulating and developing the manufacture of bottles, corks, labels, wires, etc., to such extensive dimensions as the most sanguine and hopeful never dreamed of.”

Professional Innovation and Market Dominance

During the 1870s, Adolphus Busch began to reap the personal rewards of his business success. In 1873, he became a full partner in the brewery, which in 1875 was renamed the E. Anheuser Co.’s Brewing Association. The brewery was incorporated that same year, with 480 shares of stock issued at a value of $240,000 (approximately $4.92 million in 2010). As president of the company, Eberhard Anheuser received 140 of them, with another 100 held in trust for his daughter Lilly and, by extension, Adolphus. Brewmaster Erwin Spraul held two shares in honor of his vital role in the business, but the remaining 238 — just slightly under an outright majority — went to Adolphus in recognition of the services he had rendered in the past and his potential for leadership in the future. That the firm’s future would ultimately depend on Busch was obvious to insiders and outsiders alike. For example, in 1878, a group of local commentators described

25 Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 32; Herbst, Roussin, and Kious, St. Louis Brews, 34; Stanley Baron, Brewed in America: The History of Beer and Ale in the United States (Boston, 1962), 59, 242-46. The fact that beer production rose seventeen percent from 1876 to 1877 suggests that Anheuser-Busch rail shipments of beer to locations outside of St. Louis had a big impact on the company. See “75 Years Ago . . . In Spirit the Same Today,” Brewers Digest (September 1952), 63. While Adolphus Busch was by no means the first brewer to bottle beer, he is widely recognized as the first American brewer to do most of his own bottling. The more standard practice of the day was to keg draft beer and ship it to external markets, where local bottlers poured the beer into glass bottles and, when applicable, labeled them before sending them off for distribution and retail sale.

26 Herbst, Roussin, and Kious, St. Louis Brews, 34; Dale P. Van Wieren, American Breweries II (West Point, 1995), 188.

Adolphus Busch and his rapid rise to prominence within St. Louis business circles:

Mr. Busch, who is the representative head of the Anheuser Brewing Company, is a comparatively young man and a gentleman of the most affable disposition, but his ability as a business man ranks as high as that of any in St. Louis. He not only thoroughly understands the brewing business, but also combines a practical and original knowledge which, in its utility, places him in the advance of his competitors, and makes them his imitators. He has entire control of the brewery, directs its business, makes all the contracts, handles its funds and carries all its responsibilities on his own shoulders. The success of his management . . . ranks him among the best commercial men of the West.28

In 1879, the name of the company was changed to the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association in honor of Adolphus’ contributions to the firm, and any remaining questions about the power structure at the brewery were settled on May 2, 1880, when Anheuser passed away after a three-year illness. His stock shares were transferred to his five surviving children, but none of them was suited to a position of responsibility at the brewery. With the additional shares that accrued to Lilly, Adolphus Busch obtained full control of the company, and for the next 128 years, Anheuser-Busch remained firmly within the Busch family.29

Steadily increasing beer sales gave Busch the freedom to improve and expand the physical structure of the brewery, which he did, knowing that reinvesting a substantial portion of the company’s profits would lead to an even greater return later on. Faced with a brew house that was functionally obsolete relative to the expansive goals of the firm, Adolphus approved the construction of a new facility that was capable of significantly higher production. With an eye toward public relations, he settled upon a design resembling a castle. Large and imposing on the outside, the facility possessed an interior opulence that partially belied its industrial purposes and conveyed a grandiose impression of importance and authority. Busch also ordered the construction of a bottling plant that soon produced 100,000 bottles per day, the largest capacity in the nation. Another significant improvement to the physical plant was the addition of an ice house featuring a mechanized refrigeration system, one of the first

28 J.A. Dacus and James W. Buel, A Tour of St. Louis (St. Louis, 1878), as cited in “75 Years Ago . . . In Spirit the Same Today,” Brewers Digest (September 1952), 71. The fulsome praise heaped upon Adolphus Busch in the original publication was typical of the era; flattering portrayals of successful business magnates were often penned by writers and editors with financial interests in the success of various firms. Occasionally, such copy was even provided by the firms themselves, as a paid promotional effort to craft its image within the local community.

29 Edwin Kalbfleisch, “Anheuser-Busch Financial History,” September 18, 1951, Charles Siton Collection, as cited in Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 33; Krebs and Orthwein, Making Friends Is Our Business, 20. In subsequent years, Adolphus and Lilly Busch consolidated their control over the business by acquiring as much stock as they could, sometimes going to considerable lengths to do so: in one case, for instance, they paid a family member $60,000 for a single share. Ultimately, Busch was able to increase his stake in the business from 238 to 267 shares, while Lilly boosted her holdings from 100 to 116. See Maxine Sylvia Sandberg, “The Life and Career of Adolphus Busch,” Master’s thesis, University of Texas, 1952, 68, as cited in Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 34.
in the nation to be installed on such a large scale. It was an expensive venture, but Busch correctly foresaw the advantages of artificial cooling. Buildings outfitted with such equipment freed the brewery from using caves, with their limited space, for aging and storing lager beer for extended periods. Likewise, mechanized refrigeration spared the brewery the trouble and expense of harvesting, shipping, and storing large, unwieldy chunks of ice. Construction and maintenance costs were reduced, and more accurate temperature levels could be achieved, allowing for better quality control within the brewery setting.30 In 1876, Busch expanded his use of artificial cooling through the purchase of five refrigerated railcars for export shipments, the first such fleet of refrigerated shipping units for beer in the nation.31 Up to that point, “refrigeration” usually entailed packing ice blocks into boxcars — a process that sometimes left perishable meats and dairy products insufficiently chilled and often rotted the wooden floors over time, leading to higher maintenance and replacement costs. In the new Busch cars, however, ice and other coolants such as ammonia were stored in special containers and tubing, which meant that the refrigeration was both more uniform and longer-lasting for extended trips to distant markets. The idea proved highly successful: by the end of the next year, Busch operated forty refrigerated railcars, and by 1888 the fleet had expanded to 850.32

At the same time that Busch acquired his first refrigerated rail cars, the beer that would revolutionize the fortunes of the brewery — and, by extension, the entire American brewing industry — was added to the company product line.33 At the beginning of 1876, the E. Anheuser Co.’s Brewing Association marketed sixteen different beers, including Standard, Pilsener, Pale Lager, Burgundy, Liebotschaner, Erlanger, and Faust, the last being named after Tony Faust, a St. Louis saloonkeeper and personal friend of Eberhard Anheuser in the 1850s. None was able to occupy a distinct niche in the marketplace — and to a certain extent, they actually cut into each other’s sales and

30 William J. Vollmar, Budweiser: The Early Years (St. Louis, n.d.), 3; Herbon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 34.

31 In the parlance of the times, “export” shipments were those of beer sent to markets outside of the customary sales range of the brewery on a local or regional basis, but not necessarily to foreign nations or territories. Such markets for Anheuser-Busch during the mid- to late- nineteenth century included Texas and New Orleans to the south, San Francisco to the west, and New York and Philadelphia to the east, among others. Over time, Anheuser-Busch successfully extended its market presence abroad as well — by 1895, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, and England were among those countries receiving regular shipments of Budweiser beer. See Krebs and Orthwein, Making Friends Is Our Business, 33.

32 Vollmar, Budweiser: The Early Years, 4. See also Herbst, Roussin, and Kious, St. Louis Brews, 37.

33 The concept of brand marketing is understood much differently today than it was in the years prior to Prohibition, when the product line of a given brewery was defined by the style of the brew — such as Kulmbacher, Wiener, Bohemian, Pilsener, Dortmunder, and of course Budweiser — rather than by a specific name. Only in the post-Prohibition era did the concept of distinct product names emerge for the various beers and ales made by American breweries. In the case of Anheuser-Busch, Budweiser output was augmented during the first fifty years after repeal by the introduction of the popular brands Michelob and Michelob Light, Busch, and Anheuser-Busch Natural Light (later simply Natural Light). Additionally, there were also line extensions of the Budweiser name, including Budweiser Bock, Budweiser Malt Liquor, and Budweiser (Bud) Light, as well as later (and occasionally short-lived) entries such as Bud Dry, Bud Ice, Budweiser Select, and Budweiser American Ale.
prevented the development of a comprehensive marketing effort geared toward a single dominant brand. In search of a distinctive beer that would achieve widespread public appeal, Busch looked toward Central Europe to a brewing style that he had come to know in the course of his travels. For years, Bohemian brewers had produced Pilsener beer, as crafted in the city of Pilsen. Made with the region’s characteristically soft water and with specially-chosen area grains and hops, Pilsener was carefully aged in cool underground cellars that allowed for kräusening, a secondary fermentation process that naturally carbonated the beer. The result was a crisp, clean, lightly bitter brew of refreshing and pleasing character. During a trip to the region with his good friend, the liquor importer/bottler Carl Conrad, one particular brand caught Adolphus Busch’s attention: Budweiser, which was made by a brewery in the town after which it was named — Budweis — approximately eighty-five miles southeast of Pilsen. The beer was sold in many parts of German-speaking Europe and even on a limited basis in the United States, where it was marketed in New York on import under the Budweiser moniker.

Back in America, later in 1876, Conrad contracted with the E. Anheuser & Company brewery to make and sell Budweiser for his distribution as an upscale product. They decided to package it for shipment in bottles with foil covering a wire-wrapped cork closure, the idea being to invoke the image of fine champagne. They also used the most desirable ingredients they could procure to brew it. The result, according to Busch, was a “very pale, fine beer, paler than in ordinary use and made from German malt and hops.”

Marketing played a key role in establishing the brand, with Busch choosing the name Budweiser in the United States in the pre-Prohibition era, most notably one by Busch’s Milwaukee-based archivial Schlitz. The vast majority of these failed to endure the dry years, and after repeal only one such beer — DuBois Budweiser, brewed by the tiny DuBois Brewing Company of DuBois, Pennsylvania — survived legal challenges from Anheuser-Busch and lasted into the modern era, at least until September 30, 1970, when a judge brought a sixty-five-year legal battle between the two firms to an end with an exclusivity ruling in favor of the St. Louis corporation. See “Budweiser Trade Name Fight Ended,” Greeley Daily Tribune, October 1, 1970, 23.
because of its familiarity to native speakers of German but also because of its ease of pronunciation for non-Germans. Thus, the name was chosen to appeal to German immigrants, native-born Americans, and immigrants from other countries. Recognition came quickly for the brand, which was referred to early on as the "world renowned Conrad’s Budweiser Beer" and was shipped from its St. Louis base of manufacture to restaurants as far away as Denver and New York. In its first year of production, Budweiser sales amounted to 225,342 bottles, a figure that grew tenfold to 2.3 million bottles in 1880.36

Despite Budweiser’s success, by the end of 1882, Conrad was facing severe financial difficulties and had to declare bankruptcy; among his outstanding debts was $94,000 (approximately $2.07 million in 2010), payable to the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association. Keenly aware of the business opportunity in front of him, Busch negotiated the acquisition of the Budweiser brand from Conrad, under the premise that the Budweiser name and the established reputation of the product far outweighed the debt that he owed to the brewery.37 It would prove to be one of the most foresighted transactions in American business history: in Budweiser, Busch obtained the signature brand that catapulted his brewery to national dominance and international fame.38

35 Although Budweiser was the flagship beer of Anheuser-Busch for over a century, it is interesting to note that, unlike some other Anheuser-Busch brews, it was never advertised with a specific emphasis on its St. Louis origins. This suggests that it was always intended more for national and international distribution than local consumption. In fact, by the 1880s, the Budweiser brand had replaced another beer, St. Louis Lager, as the brewery’s principle product. The replacement was made in recognition of Budweiser’s initial sales success, but also in the knowledge that a generically-named beverage like St. Louis Lager could be made by any St. Louis brewer. This being the case, it lacked the distinctiveness that Adolphus Busch needed to realize his goals of widespread brand name recognition for the brewery in external markets. See Herbst, Roussin, and Kious, St. Louis Brews, 37.

36 Vollmar, Budweiser: The Early Years, 7.

37 Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 37. The bankruptcy forced Conrad from his business as a distributor, but his close personal relationship with Adolphus Busch guaranteed his employment at the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association for the next four decades, until his death in 1922. See also Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 37.

38 Although total Anheuser-Busch market share nationwide only stood at around four percent during the period immediately before Prohibition, the rapid growth of the firm (and »

Figure 3: Anheuser-Busch Eagle Logo, introduced in 1872. Courtesy of Anheuser-Busch Archives.

»the Budweiser label set it apart from other brewing operations of the day. From 1875 to 1880, roughly the period when Anheuser-Busch began making Budweiser and saw company production grow almost sixfold to well over 100,000 barrels per year, beer output nationwide rose by only 28.6 percent, with the average brewery growing from just 3,414 barrels manufactured (1875) to 4,852 (1880). The small market share for Anheuser-Busch beers generally and Budweiser specifically is best explained by the total output of the large number of competing breweries scattered across the country at that time. The number thereof — despite being in slight decline, from 2,783 (1875) to 2,741 (1880) — still dwarfed the number a century later. For instance, in 1980, near the peak of Anheuser-Busch’s market dominance, just 101 breweries, under the control of forty-nine different firms, operated nationwide. See United States Brewers Association, 1979 Brewers Almanac, as cited in Stack, A Concise History of America’s Brewing Industry.
Bolstered by Budweiser’s initial success, Busch focused his attention on marketing both it and the brewery to a wider audience. The effort to establish a corporate identity had already been launched a decade earlier, in 1872, when the company introduced the Anheuser-Busch logo, an intertwined A and eagle. In the early 1880s, Adolphus Busch put together a four-pronged strategy to make Budweiser the most celebrated beer in the nation. First, Busch planned to distribute traditional, saloon-based point-of-sale advertisements on a massive scale. As part of this, he aimed to produce first-rate advertisements, and he succeeded in achieving a level of quality — and cost — unheard of among most brewers. Second, Busch planned to hire and dispatch a large group of trained and motivated salesmen, each of whom would represent a specific territory under the supervision of regional managers and would work closely with local distributors. Third, in addition to the customary promotional posters and printed matter, Busch planned to outfit his salesmen with small but innovative giveaway items — most notably an Anheuser-Busch combination pocketknife/corkscrew with a small peephole directing the viewer’s gaze to a likeness of Busch himself. The idea was to make the Budweiser name more memorable to those who encountered it. Fourth, he focused on mass-saturation advertising in the media outlets of the day, including magazines, newspapers, literary journals, playbills, and billboards across the country. The ultimate purpose of these efforts was to ensure that there was virtually no important place in the United States where the Anheuser-Busch and Budweiser names were not on prominent display on a nearly constant basis.

While Busch maintained cordial relations with other St. Louis brewers, few of whom presented any serious threat to his business supremacy in the area, his dealings with out-of-town brewers occasionally...
assumed a less congenial tone. In some cases, practicality governed their relations and helped keep the peace — as, for instance, during the 1880s, when Busch contacted Milwaukee beer magnate Frederick Pabst (1836-1904) on multiple occasions to suggest fixing beer prices within the saloon trade (a legal activity at the time) in an attempt to ensure healthy profits and to prevent saloonkeepers from playing the brewers off against each other. But outside of major urban centers, particularly in Midwestern regions and in rural areas and smaller towns and cities with fewer breweries and less competition, the story was different. For example, a less than amicable arrangement marked the end of one economic disagreement in New Orleans, where local breweries engaged in a price war to the detriment of Anheuser-Busch products there. When the local brewers eventually upped their prices, believing that the external competition had been tamed, Adolphus cut the price of his beers, and continued to do so until the locals capitulated and agreed to Busch’s demand that he alone would determine the price of beer in the city for the next two decades. On other occasions, Busch opted to forego negotiations and simply acquired breweries of strategic interest to him. Through his early rail shipping activity, Busch had already built up a strong presence in Texas in the 1880s, and by the end of the nineteenth century, he had managed to obtain an interest in the Lone Star Brewing Company of San Antonio and the Texas Brewing Company in Fort Worth. Then, in 1895, Busch purchased another San Antonio operation, the Alamo Brewery, with plans to close it in order to minimize Lone Star’s competition in the city and the southern part of the state.

42 Contemporary sources corroborate the idea that St. Louis’ German-American brewers enjoyed cordial relations, seeing each other as friendly competitors both personally and professionally — a situation that resulted, in no small measure, from their shared ethnic and immigrant bonds. At the same time, however, these sources also indicate that local rival firms were often unable to compete with the steadily increasing sales figures posted by Anheuser-Busch. Among St. Louis brewers, only the Lemp Western Brewery was able to match the early growth of the E. Anheuser Co.’s Brewing Association: in 1877, it registered the production of 61,299 barrels of beer, compared to the 44,961 barrels logged by Anheuser-Busch, which claimed second place in the city. See Herbst, Roussin, and Kious, *St. Louis Brew*, 12, for a list of the largest operating breweries in St. Louis for 1877, as culled from the trade publication *The Western Brewer.*

43 Hernon and Ganey, *Under the Influence*, 40-41. While Adolphus had considerable success in influencing beer prices in conjunction with his competitors, he was not always able to secure a desirable outcome. In early 1895, Anheuser-Busch, the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company of Milwaukee, and the United Breweries of Davenport, made an attempt to manipulate the market in Davenport, Iowa. Schlitz proposed raising the price per barrel from $6.00 to $7.00 if Anheuser-Busch and United Breweries followed suit. When they failed to reach a consensus, a price war broke out that quickly lowered the cost per barrel to only $4.00. See “Notes From Home and Abroad,” *American Brewer* 28: 3 (March 1895): 124.

44 The Lone Star Brewery Operation that was partly owned by Adolphus Busch should not be confused with the Lone Star Brewing Company that operated in the same city after the repeal of Prohibition. The latter firm opened under independent ownership in 1940 and produced several different brews, including its flagship Lone Star Beer, under different corporate owners until it closed in 1996, shortly after being acquired by the Stroh Brewing Company.

Vertical integration was essential to Anheuser-Busch’s ability to maximize profits and streamline its production process, and company possession of many of its own subsidiary operations translated into considerable cost savings for the brewery over time. After launching the first fleet of refrigerated rail cars in 1876, Busch founded the St. Louis-based Refrigerator Car Company a few years later. The company manufactured units for its parent firm as well as other brewers and interested businesses. In 1887, Adolphus established the Manufacturers Railway Company to address the need to switch brewery boxcars from spur tracks to the main rail lines used for export shipments. Over time, Busch also established an on-site malt house to process the grain needed for brewing, created the Adolphus Busch Glass Manufacturing Company to make the bottles that he needed to ship to distant markets, and launched a similar firm to make the wooden barrels required for unpasteurized draft beer.46

Well before the end of the nineteenth century, Adolphus Busch’s expansive sales strategies, innovative promotional efforts, and systematic expansion of the Anheuser-Busch network of businesses helped his brewery achieve a level of growth largely unmatched by his rivals.47 Over a six-year period beginning in 1875, production and distribution rose over sixfold: from 31,545 barrels per year in 1875 to 44,961 in 1877; then to 105,234 barrels in 1879; and finally to over 200,000 barrels in 1881. Another six years of growth took the company to 456,511 barrels in 1887, making it the largest beer producer in the world at the time. Production only continued rising, reaching 702,075 barrels in 1890.48 Above and beyond the market share loss demonstrated by Anheuser-Busch, from 1889 to 1894, the barrelage of St. Louis Breweries, Ltd., a syndicate of British-owned brewers in the city, fell from 775,936 to 694,623 in total, and 11.4 percent from 1893 to 1894 specifically. See “The Syndicate Breweries of America,” The American Brewer 28.2 (February 1895): 60. For a more extensive discussion of the factors influencing beer production and market share, particularly during the 1890s, see Timothy J. Holian, Over the Barrel: The Brewing History and Beer Culture of Cincinnati, Volume One, 1800-Prohibition (St. Joseph, 2000), 207-12.


47 While on the national level rival producers such as Pabst and Schlitz exhibited comparable growth during the period 1895 to 1915 — due to the increasing number of breweries nationwide; their rapid technological advancement and growing efficiency and higher barrelage as a result of such progress; and periods of economic stagnation, such as during the 1890s, when a pronounced recession drove down production figures in St. Louis, Cincinnati, and other cities with a large number of competing breweries. Above and beyond the market share loss demonstrated by Anheuser-Busch, from 1889 to 1894, the barrelage of St. Louis Breweries, Ltd., a syndicate of British-owned brewers in the city, fell from 775,936 to 694,623 in total, and 11.4 percent from 1893 to 1894 specifically. See “The Syndicate Breweries of America,” The American Brewer 28.2 (February 1895): 60. For a more extensive discussion of the factors influencing beer production and market share, particularly during the 1890s, see Timothy J. Holian, Over the Barrel: The Brewing History and Beer Culture of Cincinnati, Volume One, 1800-Prohibition (St. Joseph, 2000), 207-12.

48 Production figures for the period are cited in Herbst, Roussin, and Kious, St. Louis Brews, 36; Krebs and Orthwein, Making Friends Is Our Business, 22; Jack S. Blocker, Jr., David M. Fahey, and Ian R. Tyrell, Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History: A Global Encyclopedia (Santa Barbara, 2003), 44; and “75 Years Ago . . . In Spirit the Same Today,” Brewers Digest (September 1952): 71. The title of largest brewer in the world shifted several times during the 1880s and 1890s. For instance, whereas Anheuser-Busch held the leading position in 1887, by the end of 1891 the Pabst Brewing Company had assumed the crown, with a production level of 790,290 barrels. See “Pabst Brewing Co., the Largest Beer Brewery in the World,” (advertisement), in Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly, May 19, 1892, 276.
Social Status and Philanthropy

During the 1880s, the level of prosperity attained by Busch increasingly influenced his private life: eager to impress upon others his status as a German immigrant who had realized the American Dream, he spent large sums of money as a matter of custom. To arrive at his domestic destinations, he commissioned the Adolphus, a special rail car that was lavishly paneled, carpeted, and decorated with little regard for cost. Invariably, Busch wore the finest European crafted and tailored clothing; for his wife he purchased jewelry the likes of which few women in St. Louis high society possessed.

The Busch residences further demonstrated the many rewards of success reaped by Adolphus. While in St. Louis, the Busches made use of no fewer than three homes. Number One Busch Place, the former Anheuser family property, was the showplace of the group. As the primary estate, the brick-and-stone mansion stood out to casual passers-by and was decorated lavishly to maximize the impression of grandeur it made on visitors. The interior featured huge crystal chandeliers, parquet floors and stained glass windows, a treasure trove of antiques, and works of art from a wide range of American, German, and French artists. Number Two and Number Three Busch Place were built for the Busch children as they grew older and had families of their own, the former becoming the primary residence of August A. Busch as the most direct heir to Adolphus and the leadership of the brewery.49

49 Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 45. Number One Busch Place was torn down in 1929, one year after the death of Lilly Busch, and is now the site of a lagering cellar in the service of the brewery. Adolphus Busch’s private art collection included works by American artists (Browne, Bellow, Chase, Hitchcock, Lawson, Metcalf, Schufeldt, Sargent, Winslow Homer, and McNeill Whistler), German artists (Habermann, Hofmann, Kampf, Liebl, Lenbach, Menzel, Schuch, Truebner, and Schramm-Zittau), and French artists (Boudin, Blanche, Degas, Harpignies, La Touche, Manet, Monet, Menard, and Renoir). See Krebs and Orthwein, Making Friends Is Our Business, 55, for a more extensive list.
After years of enduring the cold winters and harsh summers of St. Louis, Busch took ownership of estates in Pasadena, California; Cooperstown, New York; and Bad Schwalbach, Hesse-Nassau, Germany, where he constructed an expansive residence named Villa Lilly, after his wife. Combined with a rustic lodge, the Waldfrieden, and expansive hunting grounds, the Villa Lilly added 1,200 acres of land to the Busch empire. From 1886 onward Adolphus made a habit of spending most of the winter with his family in Pasadena, where he had acquired the mansion of tobacco magnate George S. Myers (1832-1910) and renamed it Ivy Hall. He also had another home there, the Blossoms, which was reserved for visiting friends and otherwise for family members. The Blossoms alone cost $165,000 (approximately $3.95 million in 2010); from 1892 to 1897 Busch spent a half-million dollars (approximately $13.6 million) to transform the property through the addition of a series of gardens that eventually spanned thirty-five acres and included a variety of botanical treasures, fountains, and terraces whose maintenance required fifty employees.50

With his personal wealth assured through the brewery’s longtime prosperity, Busch increasingly sought to engage in charitable activity, embracing an ethic of giving back to the community that had given him the opportunity to earn his fortune.51 Frequently, Adolphus gave $1,000 to $5,000 gifts (2010 value: $23,676 to $118,382) to orphanages, hospitals, and relief societies, in St. Louis and elsewhere, including an annual $5,000 contribution to the House of the Good Shepherd every Groundhog Day. Busch regularly donated money to German-American causes, both in honor of his immigrant heritage and as a show of solidarity with the community and its core values. In 1910, Busch donated $5,000 toward the construction of a monument to Franz Daniel Pastorius, the founder of Germantown, Pennsylvania, the first permanent German settlement in America. The gesture stood out among the lagging donations by other magnates, prompting one journal at the time to ask, “Is there really only a single Adolphus Busch among the thousands of wealthy German-Americans?” [“Gibt es denn wirklich nur einen einzigen Adolphus Busch unter den Tausenden von wohlhabenden Deutschame- rikanern?”].52 In late 1911, Adolphus gave $5,000 (approximately $118,000 in 2010) to the German-American Teacher’s College in Milwaukee, describing the gift in a letter as a demonstration of his desire for greater awareness of what “the German element” had contributed to American culture:

50 Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 46-47.

51 In addition to charitable giving within the German-American community, Busch occasionally sent money back to Germany to recognize his heritage and pay homage to his roots. In one such case, Busch donated 50,000 German marks (approximately $12,500; 2010 value: $296,000) to the city of Mainz for unspecified distribution to needy individuals and/or organizations. See “Personal Notes,” American Brewer 43.2 (February 1910): 81.

52 “Umschau,” Monatsschrift für deutsche Sprache und Pädagogik 11.6 (June 1910): 185.
Whilst congratulating you on this endeavor, allow me to say that I hold it to be a sheer obligation of honor for the German element in the United States to support you in this effort and to open both heart and soul for the continuance and improvement of that wonderful educational institution. . . . I’ve always been convinced that the Milwaukee Teacher’s Seminar is a true spiritual arsenal for such battles and is therefore, alongside the great German-American Alliance, one of the most distinguished means of preservation of the German element and German cultural values in America.53

In extraordinary cases, Busch went well above and beyond anticipated levels of giving. When a major earthquake devastated San Francisco in 1906, he pledged $100,000 ($2.5 million in 2010) — $50,000 personally and another $50,000 on behalf of the brewery — to help victims, a precedent that the company followed for decades to come through monetary contributions and the distribution of supplies, most notably thousands of cases of brewery-packaged drinking water, to places affected by similar crises.54 Institutions of learning also benefitted from Busch’s generosity, most prominently Washington University in St. Louis, whose medical school was started with $850,000 (2010 value: $20.1 million) given in the name of Robert A. Barnes, the bank president who had provided the loan needed for Adolphus to expand the brewery back in the 1860s.55 At the turn of the twentieth century, Busch gave an additional $100,000 (2010 value: $2.68 million) to the university for the construction of the Busch Chemical Laboratory, a Tudor Gothic edifice made of Missouri granite and Bedford limestone that one contemporary observer described as “an enduring monument to the liberality of Mr. Busch.”56 Adolphus also partook in the kind of civic involvement that was common among wealthy German-American entrepreneurs of the period. After St. Louis received the

53 “Umschau,” Monatshfte für deutsche Sprache und Pädagogik 13.1 (January 1912): 24-25. Busch’s donation served to inspire other German-Americans to support the Milwaukee project, including the City Federation of German Societies of Evansville, Illinois, which proposed and passed a measure to take up a collection for it “according to the example of Adolphus Busch in St. Louis, with open arms and an open till.” See “Umschau,” Monatshfte für deutsche Sprache und Pädagogik 13.2 (February 1912): 60.

54 One such Anheuser-Busch initiative occurred in 1960, when the company donated 6,000 quarts of pasteurized Miami city drinking water to victims of Hurricane Donna, in the Florida Keys, as well as for those who aided the clean-up effort. The water was processed and packaged at the Regal Brewery in Miami, which was owned and operated by Anheuser-Busch at the time. See “Regal Brewery Aids Hurricane Donna Victims in Florida Keys,” Budcaster 9.10 (November 1960): 3; and “Regal Brewery’s ‘Operation Water’ Wins P.R. Award,” Budcaster 10.5 (May 1961): 5.

55 Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 70-71.

56 Edward H. Keiser, “The Busch Chemical Library,” Science 13.320 (February 15, 1901): 261. The Busch relationship with Washington University continued well into the future, as demonstrated by the sizeable gift given by Anheuser-Busch toward the construction of the Adolphus Busch III Laboratory of Biology. Dedicated on May 4, 1959, the facility served a new field of study at the school — molecular biology — and incorporated up-to-date scientific equipment such that it became “an important meeting ground where modern advances in chemistry and physics are focused on the problem of finding out how living things work.” See Barry Commoner, “Adolphus Busch III Laboratory Is Dedicated,” Budcaster 8.6 (June 1959): 4-5.
distinction of hosting the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition, he was offered, and accepted, the position of director of the World’s Fair, a role he fulfilled until his resignation in November 1904. In 1913, Busch served as the honorary president of the seventh convention of the National German-American Alliance, held in St. Louis that year, and oversaw its centenary celebration of the Battle of Leipzig (also known as the Battle of the Nations), which had led to the defeat of Napoleon and his eventual abdication and exile.

True to German-American tradition, Busch was an active supporter of fine arts institutions. Local engagement included help in “most generously” underwriting a summer loan exhibition of paintings by both American and foreign masters at the St. Louis City Art Museum in 1911. On a national level, Busch donated money as well as works of art, such as Heinrich Zügel’s painting Oxen Going through the Water, to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. By the spring of 1909, the painting had become one of the most popular pieces in the museum’s permanent exhibition of contemporary art. In 1911 and 1912, he donated $350,000 (2010 value: $8.12 million) to help fund the construction and maintenance of the Germanic Museum on the campus of Harvard University. He made the gift in the hopes of creating a museum that would spur the establishment of comparable institutions at universities in other cities. Today, the museum houses an extraordinary collection of art from German-speaking Europe, and is known as the Busch-Reisinger Museum.

In one particular case, Busch’s private love for the visual arts spilled over into his professional life, where it ultimately reached and influenced countless millions of beer consumers. In the early 1890s, Busch spent $35,000 (approximately $875,240 in 2010) to acquire a painting that he greatly admired, Custer’s Last Fight by Cassilly Adams. At the time, the painting hung on the wall of a St. Louis saloon. The American-Indian motif resonated with Adolphus, as it did with many German immigrants, some of whom had developed a fascination with Native Americans, the Wild West, and frontier life back in their homeland. Busch was so moved by the painting that

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\item [57] Herbst, Roussin, and Kiou, St. Louis Brews, 39.
\item [58] “Umschau,” Monatsshefte für deutsche Sprache und Pädagogik 14:4 (April 1913): 143.
\item [60] “Personal Notes,” The American Brewer 43:1 (January 1910): 29, and 43:6 (June 1910): 297-98, “Art in St. Louis,” Art and Progress 2:12 (October 1911): 373; Charles H. Herty, “University and Educational News,” Science 33:839 (January 27, 1911): 146. In a message Busch delivered at the cornerstone ceremony, he reiterated his hope that such efforts would prompt greater cooperation and understanding between Germany and the United States: “We have every reason to promote a venture that demonstrates our love for our adoptive Fatherland and the love which still beats within our hearts for the land of our birth. . . . In conclusion I hope that”
\item [61] This fascination had been nurtured by a variety of sources, including letters from friends and family members who had already immigrated to the United States, promotional brochures that played up the unique aspects of American frontier life, and the literary works of prominent German writers such as Karl May (1842-1912).
he commissioned a local artist to recreate the work with additional details and then arranged for the new version to be lithographed for widespread distribution. It proved to be the most successful promotion launched by Anheuser-Busch in its pre-Prohibition marketing efforts. In 1896 — the same year that Anheuser-Busch introduced the enduring Michelob brand — it placed thousands of copies of the Custer image in strategic retail accounts; in subsequent decades, the brewery printed over a million copies of the image, making it one of the most widespread art images ever used for commercial purposes and what Time magazine later called “at the turn of the century, the most famous painting in the U.S.”

Final Years

At the dawn of the twentieth century, Adolphus Busch could look back on a legacy of accomplishment rivaled by few German-American entrepreneurs, and even fewer members of the industry in which he had become an unquestioned pioneer and leader. In 1901, production at the St. Louis brewery surpassed the one million barrels-per-year mark, and Anheuser-Busch overtook Schlitz as the largest beer producer in volume in the United States. Not content to rest upon his laurels, and eager to keep pace with rapidly increasing demand, Busch authorized a $1.2 million (approximately $30.7 million in 2010) expansion of the facility in 1905 through the construction of a seven-story stock house. In 1906, Anheuser-Busch reached the 1.5 million barrel production mark, and in 1907, with an insured value of $6 million (approximately $143.6 million in 2010), the improved brewery complex was capable of producing at least 1.6 million barrels of beer per year, of which 560,000 barrels alone — some 173 million bottles — were bottled Budweiser for external markets.

62 The advertising icon most commonly associated with Anheuser-Busch — the Budweiser Clydesdale horse-and-wagon team — in fact was not introduced until 1933, with the repeal of Prohibition. For an overview of the early history of the Clydesdales and Anheuser-Busch, see “Budweiser’s Famous ‘Eight-Horse Hitch’,” Brewers Digest 27.5 (May 1952): 40–41.

63 From the beginning, Michelob was produced as a superior-quality, European-style lager beer served on draft at selected retail accounts, although starting in late 1961 it also was packaged in bottles, and later still in cans, to make it more accessible to the general public. The name of the product was chosen by Adolphus Busch personally. Additional information on the Michelob brand can be found in “The History of Michelob,” Budcaster 9.7 (July 1960): 5; and “Michelob Now Available in Bottles,” Budcaster 11.1 (January 1962): 13.

64 Herbst, Roussin, and Kious, St. Louis Brews, 38, “The Baron of Beer,” Time 66.2 (July 11, 1955): 82. According to Time, the lithographer who altered and reproduced the » Adams work “redrew most of it, adding dozens of new figures and buckets of gore (i.e., three dying soldiers being scalped) to what was once a fairly restrained, stilted scene.” In subsequent years, the original Adams painting met with an unpleasant fate. Donated by Busch to the 7th U.S. Cavalry during the mid-1890s, it went lost from around 1898 — when the group was dispatched to the Spanish-American War — until 1921, and was not recovered by the regiment until 1934, when it was removed from storage and professionally restored by the Works Progress Administration. On June 14, 1946, it was destroyed in a fire at the officers’ club at Fort Bliss, Texas. See Peter Caswell, “The Bar Room Custer,” Military Affairs 11.1 (Spring 1947): 51.


66 Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 56, 64–65; “75 Years Ago . . . In Spirit the Same Today,” Brewers Digest (September 1952): 64.
As the nineteenth century had drawn to a close, Busch had turned his attention to the threat of prohibition legislation, which was gradually making inroads across the nation at the local and state levels and was threatening established brewery markets.67 As early as 1908, the brewery marketed Bevo, a non-alcoholic brew designed to maintain an Anheuser-Busch presence in dry zones and hedge bets against the possible suspension of standard beer sales nationwide. In 1910, Busch made clear his personal belief that the dry movement was a misguided venture that was out of keeping with the German virtues long demonstrated by both brewers and their product:

> The meanest thing in the world is prohibition. If given full swing it would ruin the world. It is a maker of hypocrisy and a destroyer of moderation. We want moderation in everything. In Germany every one drinks, but it is done in moderation, and Germans are a remarkably healthy race. We want the high license and the regulation of the saloon. I do not mean to say that all those who preach prohibition are hypocrites. They mean well, but are on the wrong track.68

Transition at the company was not limited to its product line. Son August A. Busch, Sr., groomed as the eventual successor to the presidency, had begun working at the brewery in the 1880s as an apprentice and then as a scale clerk before rising to a position of leadership a decade later, assuming pro tempore command of the operation in place of his father during the out-of-town trips that Adolphus took with greater frequency.69

In the spring of 1911, Adolphus and Lilly hosted a lavish ceremony in California to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary, an occasion deemed important enough to give brewery employees in St. Louis a day off from work and each of the Busch children a new home. Congratulations came from around the world, with the well-wishers including current U.S. president William Howard Taft, former U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt, and German emperor Wilhelm II.70

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67 While the threat of Prohibition was the foremost concern of Adolphus Busch in his last years of running Anheuser-Busch, other problems arose as well for instance, on April 27, 1910, an extensive fire broke out at the St. Louis brewery, devastating bottling and storage buildings on the property and causing over $500,000 (approximately $11.8 million in 2010) in damage. See “American Notes,” American Brewer 43.5 (May 1910): 242. The prohibition movement is best understood in this context as a reactionary nativist movement against the German element and as an assertion of “American” values at their expense. The largely German ethnic character of the late-nineteenth-century brewing industry made it an easy target for such agitation; beginning primarily in rural areas and spreading over time into urban settings, anti-alcohol forces linked anti-foreign sentiment with both real (e.g., an increasingly immoral saloon trade) and perceived vices in an attempt to gain traction for their agenda. Their efforts culminated in the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment, which occurred in the wake of America’s entry into World War I against the Germans in 1917.

68 Cited in “Adolphus Busch on Prohibition,” American Brewer 43.7 (July 1910): 326.

69 The fact that Adolphus Busch was in Europe for extended periods did not prevent him from conducting brewery business as needed. Busch kept in frequent contact with St. Louis via cable while abroad, sending instructions regarding important decisions to his son and others. On average, this communication cost some $100 per day (approximate 2010 value: $2,368). See “75 Years Ago . . . In Spirit the Same Today,” Brewers Digest (September 1952): 63.

70 Herbst, Roussin, and Kious, St. Louis Brews, 39; Krebs and Orthwein, Making Friends Is Our Business, 67. A detailed overview of the opulent nature of the Busch’s fiftieth anniversary celebration can be found in Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 78-79.
It turned out to be one of the last high-profile events that Adolphus ever hosted, as the stress of prohibitionist gains seemingly exacerbated a general health decline that had been brought on by advancing years. By 1910, Busch had begun to pursue a more reclusive lifestyle, and was said to be “surrounded by doctors, nurses and guardians and never permitted to be seen at close range.”71 Despite his fading strength, political activity still occupied a good bit of Busch’s time during his last years. This included a personal visit with Theodore Roosevelt and opposition during the electoral campaign of 1912 to the candidacy of Democrat Woodrow Wilson, a man he dismissed in private correspondence the following comment: “I have a kind of feeling that the fellow is a prohibitionist and that he is leaning that way and therefore all the German orators, all the liberal men ought to accuse him of [being] an enemy to personal freedom.”72

In May 1913, Busch returned to St. Louis, but owing to his fragile health and his inability to stand or walk without assistance, his homecoming was muted compared with his previous, more celebrated arrivals. Still, Adolphus remained sharp mentally and focused on both personal responsibilities to family and professional obligations at the brewery. On June 9, 1913, he departed New York and sailed with his family to Germany for the last time. There, he engaged in hunting, albeit with help from a trusted personal assistant, corresponded extensively with friends and family, and monitored the rising tide of prohibition legislation back at home, remaining in regular contact via letter and telegraph with trusted associates on business matters. In September of that year, Adolphus accepted an award for his charitable contributions to the German people from Phillip, Duke of Hesse. Otherwise, he began to curtail many of his activities (aside from stag hunting) due to recurring feelings of illness. In early October, Busch was taken home from hunting after complaining of discomfort, and fluid was removed from his lungs. On October 10, 1913, Adolphus apparently attended to fifteen letters on his desk at Villa Lilly, smoked a cigar, and chatted freely and cheerfully with family members. By evening, Busch went to bed as usual. At approximately 8:15 p.m., he died in his sleep of what was officially reported as heart disease, though a later biography concluded that cirrhosis of the liver contributed to his death.73

In keeping with his grandiose lifestyle, the passing of Adolphus Busch occasioned one of the most extravagant funeral ceremonies of the century and demonstrated the totality of his impact on nearly

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71 Cited in Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 80.
72 Adolphus Busch to Charles Nagel, personal correspondence, July 3, 1912, Nagel Papers at the Yale University Library, as cited in Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 80.
73 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, October 11, 1913; October 12, 1913, and October 22, 1913; Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1943), 143, as cited in Hernon and Ganey, Under the Influence, 83-84.
all whom he had touched over the previous half-century. After being transported in a private rail car to port in Bremen, his body was brought back to the United States aboard his favorite steamship, the *Kronprinz Wilhelm*, and was then taken by a specially-chartered train — which included his private car, the *Adolphus* — to St. Louis for burial. One hundred hotel rooms were reserved for out-of-town guests, 180 honorary pallbearers were named, and mourners included the presidents of Harvard, the University of California, and the University of Missouri, numerous business and industrial leaders, and at least one major rival for the title of owner of the largest brewery in the world: Colonel Gustav Pabst of Milwaukee (1866-1943). Five thousand Anheuser-Busch employees attended a final viewing of their boss at the Busch mansion the day before the funeral, and when the home was opened to the public, some 30,000 additional individuals came to pay tribute. The city of St. Louis formally shut down for five minutes in honor of Busch: all business was suspended, power to the street cars was turned off, and factories came to a halt. Throughout the nation, memorial services were held in cities with Anheuser-Busch branch offices, most notably in Dallas, Texas, where the Adolphus Hotel — bought by the beer baron and renovated in 1912 for the unprecedented sum of $2.5 million (approximately $58 million in 2010) — hosted 300 people and played the same music that had been heard at the service in St. Louis. The funeral itself, held at the Busch mansion, was presided over by notable figures such as Baron Friedherr von Lesner, the attaché of the German Embassy in Washington; at the end, the casket was placed upon a truck for a final trip around the brewery, where some 25,000 people stood outside its iron gates to glimpse the proceedings. The final procession, to Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis, followed a well-publicized route with as many as 100,000 spectators lining up to pay tribute.74

**Conclusion**

The legacy of Adolphus Busch continued to be felt for decades to come, as Anheuser-Busch consolidated its status as the largest brewer in America, and as Budweiser grew to become the best-selling brand of beer in the world. August A. Busch, Sr., guided the firm through the difficult years of World War I and Prohibition until he committed suicide in February 1934 on account of extensive health problems; grandson Adolphus Busch III (born 1891) successfully navigated the choppy waters of the remainder of the Great Depression and World War II before dying of cancer in August 1946.75 Another

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74 Extensive details of the Busch funeral proceedings are available in Hernon and Ganey, *Under the Influence*, 85-86.

75 The Busch tendency to allocate large amounts of money to expand and modernize the St. Louis brewery also continued in the early post-Prohibition era. Some $68 million (2010 value: approximately $824 million) was spent on new equipment and structures for the St. Louis plant from 1933 to 1950, before a second Anheuser-Busch facility, in Newark, NJ, was put into operation in 1951 to ease production and shipping expense problems. See “The Brotherly Brewers,” *Fortune* 41.4 (April 1950): 180, 182.
grandson, August A. (Gussie) Busch, Jr. (1899-1989), saw the company through much of its golden era of growth, taking the firm from a single-site entity to one with nine separate breweries nationwide and aggregate beer sales of 26,522,000 barrels by 1973. In 1964, under his leadership, production at the St. Louis facility alone reached the ten million barrels-per-year mark. After alternating with Pabst and Schlitz as the largest brewer in the nation in the first two decades after the repeal of Prohibition, Anheuser-Busch seized the top spot for good in 1957, and remained the number one U.S. brewer until the present. In 1997, its worldwide sales volume surpassed the 100 million barrel mark for the first time, and in 2003 the company peaked in U.S. market share at 49.8 percent; virtually one of every two beers sold in the United States was brewed by Anheuser-Busch. Ultimately, the sustained success of the business made it an attractive target for takeover, and in 2008 the multinational brewing conglomerate InBev acquired Anheuser-Busch with shareholder approval, based on an all-cash offer of $70.00 per share of stock that represented a total value of $52 billion. The move, which put an end to Busch family control of the business, came 143 years after Adolphus acquired his initial stake in a struggling St. Louis brewery and set it on a path to becoming the largest and most successful brewing entity in American history.

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