



Clara Harsh, Book Review of: *Christian Moerlein, the Man and his Brewery* by Don Heinrich Tolzmann. 2012. 198 pp. illus. index. Softcover. ISBN 9781932250992 Little Miami Publishing Co., P.O.Box 45150, Milford, Oh 45150. \$18.95 plus P&H.

The life of Christian Moerlein is a study of a 19th century German who emigrated to find a better life and managed to create a thriving brewery that grew until Prohibition. Christian was born in 1818 in the village of Truppach in Bavaria, the son of Conrad Moerlein. He attended the village school until he was thirteen, when he began working on his father's farm as a blacksmith apprentice in the summer and in his uncle's brewery in the winter. At the age of 18 he began his apprenticeship to a master blacksmith, but he could not accumulate any money at the pay of one thaler per year. His father gave him about \$40 and he set out on foot for Bremen, about 300 miles away. Doing odd jobs on the way he managed to get to Bremerhafen and set sail for America, landing in Baltimore in July 1841.

He went first to Pittsburgh and worked as a blacksmith and at other odd jobs he could pick up, trying to accumulate money. He wound up in Cincinnati in 1842, worked as a blacksmith, married and developed a thriving blacksmith shop where he employed as many as ten workers. His wife, Sophie Adams, and one of his children died in the cholera epidemic of 1849. He remarried later that year to Barbara Oeh and there were nine children born to that marriage.

In 1853 Christian sold his blacksmith business and, in partnership with Adam Dillman, established a brewery on the site where the blacksmith shop had been located. They sold their first beer on 1 March 1854, and planned expansion but Dillman died in 1855. Moerlein then sold a share to Conrad Windisch and their business expanded annually. Ten years later they brewed the astonishing total of 25,000 barrels of beer. In 1866 Christian Moerlein bought out his partner for \$130,000 and from that time forward all the executives in the business were family members.

The Moerlein family was always referred to as hard-working, honest, public spirited, thrifty and philanthropic. They were Evangelical-Lutheran and initially belonged to St. Matthaues Church, but later because of a schism, moved their membership to the Philippus Church. They supported the church financially and were active members.

In addition to the very prosperous brewery, Moerlein invested in the Cincinnati Cremation Company and in the Southern Granite Company, He belonged to numerous civic and German-American societies, in addition to his unfailing support of his church.

Moerlein Breweries expanded rapidly and became one of the largest breweries in Cincinnati. Its nemesis was Prohibition, for it was closed in 1920 and did not reopen in 1933. The brand name was purchased on March 1, 2004 by Gregory Hardman. By that time none of the Moerlein family interested in brewing were in Cincinnati. A German dynasty of brewing had disappeared.