

Maureen and Mike

# Mansfield Library

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## **Archives and Special Collections**

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: [library.archives@umontana.edu](mailto:library.archives@umontana.edu)

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

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**Oral History 273-01**

**Interviewer: Dale Johnson**

**Interviewee: Dr. Mabel Tuchscherer**

**April 2, 1992.**

Dale Johnson: Maybe first a little bit about how your family came out here.

Mabel Tuchscherer: My grandfather, Adam Tuchscherer, came out because back in the late 1800s he had a general business store in Menasha, Wisconsin and had it longer. He had various stores, that is, as he did better it got bigger, you see. And so finally he went into business with a man whose name I have forgotten and in about 1898 or 1899 [they had] a general store in a big building that they built or used. They had a mill. The other man ran the mill and my grandfather was [in charge of the general] business. This man at the mill, the other department, absconded with all the money. In those days apparently they did not have laws from state [to state]. He went to Chicago, and between the two states, there was no way to do anything about it, so he went bankrupt. And there he was, he was 43 or so and I think they had maybe the seven children at that time. You see, this is why Henry Mueller was already out here. (He had come out - in the little history that you'll find there [in the collection]), I think he even became mayor of Butte in about 1885 or 1886, somewhere back there for a year. They had the open furnaces for the copper over in Butte [and] he fought against that you know for the people. It is a part of the history that I have there. But then he [Adam] bought out Mr. Gamer. It was Leopold Schmidt [who] owned the Centennial Brewery in Butte -- I don't know whether it was called that at that time. But he bought Mr. Gamer's [interest]. There is still a Gamer Confectionery in Butte, but that is the family he bought part of the brewery business from. And then later he bought the rest of it from Mr. Schmidt who went out to form the Olympia Brewery. I remember visiting in about 1952 out at

the Olympia Brewery. My Dad and I, before I started practice, took a ride out to the coast and [visited] with the family and went down there because Peter Schmidt was still living and we visited at Tumwater, he must have been the president of the company then. My father knew him well. And so all of these breweries they were sort of -- the people knew one another -- and they were small breweries. When I was in medical school, my father was attending a small brewery convention in Chicago. I went down with him to this. They were deeply concerned because the larger - that was in the 50s - the larger breweries were pushing out all of the small breweries. And of course this eventually did happen. In fact this was always a concern and this was why our family closed in 1958. There was nobody in my generation that was interested in continuing.

So indeed as I say, in 1901 they came out and my grandfather became the bookkeeper first, and this Mr. Haltenhof at the time was probably the manager. While they didn't start the brewery down here [Anaconda], people by the name of Petritz I think, started it about 1895, but in the books it is recorded that in 1898 Henry Mueller comes on the scene. He must have put in a good deal of money and expertise about running it. Gradually then by 1901 he brings my grandfather out with the circumstances that had occurred. As a result there apparently was a feeling that this Mr. Haltenhof [had about] another family coming into the business. It doesn't say exactly about when (it refers to Mr. Haltenhof), but that's when he then over the next couple of years makes the decision to build the Washoe Brewery which is the one remaining brewery building that we have here. And this is the building that was used after prohibition by my father's family. And so Henry Mueller with his expertise within one year after this brewery [Washoe] was built, they buy it out. And my grandfather has been the manager and the secretary. Then by 1908 Henry Mueller died, I think he had high blood pressure, stroke or something happened to him and they just recorded [the death] in the minutes. And then his son Arthur, becomes the president and Walter, the second son, becomes the vice-president and my grandfather becomes the secretary.

So it moves on through the history of the corporation books there. Parts of the family did come into Billings, like Ray Wise. He was the son of another sister of Mrs. Mueller and my grandmother. My grandmother was probably next in line to Mrs. Mueller. I will get this history of that family because it was the - my great grandmother, Mrs. Mueller, and my grandmother's mother was a Schubert. And we believe that - we are told - that when my great grandmother's brother, Louis Schubert, visited Vienna they discovered that Franz Schubert was related - from the same family. Franz Schubert never married, but nevertheless he is somehow related and I think that this is where the musical portion comes down to - I have an aunt, my father's sister, who played by ear from childhood, age 2. [She could] go to the theater and come out and go home and could play what was played. All through the years she could play by ear. She just died a few years ago in the 90s. But my father also played by ear. She would play for him and if he had a cold or something, he would just say, "You had better lower it a note, I have a head cold," or something. He sang for all of the weddings and funerals and for the Elks Club and for any other organization that wanted him to sing, he'd rather sing than do anything.

DJ: When did the Walnut Street brewery close? Did that close for good at prohibition?

MT: Well, that was prohibition. And it was taken down in the 20s because of taxes, you know, the brewery building proper, but there was the Anaconda Products Company was still there in that block. That was where they made the soft drinks and that was allowed to go [on]. My uncle, Arthur Tuchscherer, supervised that since my father had much more education than my uncle did and so, indeed my uncle was there as part of it. My father then, after the prohibition, (my father had been away for several years). And so I'll come back [to that]. I want to say something more about the brewery: all the contents of that brewery were sold to the Canadian breweries. They didn't have prohibition at that time. One of the librarians was telling me that her mother

remembers, (they lived downtown and they had the Chrysler garage here) that they could watch as all of this stuff was being taken out to Canada from the brewery. The brewery office is still up there on the corner and the long extension that had bowling alleys at one time and there was a beer garden and this was for a period of time, [and] there was another man that had a garage there and lived in the corner there, he died not so long ago. It's been resold to somebody who is...I've forgotten what they're doing there now. And there is, in the alley between Walnut and Spruce I guess it is -- it's the next street there -- there is a brick building in which I think horses were kept. [It's] still there and other homes were built around it. Some of the homes that are in that area were lived in by people who worked at the brewery. This little house that I am in now, 103 Madison, was also lived in by people who worked at the brewery.

When the brewery was dissolved and they paid off all of the stockholders, my grandfather then was given the assets, it was all divided [up] or whatever was right. All of the buildings, there were buildings that were owned here [at the Washoe brewery]. That was one thing in order [to deal with] competition, if somebody put up a bar here and brought in out of state beer or other things in competition, in the manner of Henry Mueller they quickly bought them out and put in their own beer. And they even had agreements between the two towns that Butte beer would not be sold in Anaconda nor Anaconda beer be sold in Butte because they had to watch this. You see, they knew that Anaconda, (I think it's in the minutes there), that with the smelters growing and all that they might be able to stand more than one brewery, but two breweries could not compete here. That was why they kept this brewery building with all of its contents, and it was newer equipment than the other one, so that at any time they could start it up.

I think somewhere before prohibition they had what they called the Kentucky Liquor Store, and that is hard liquor and I think that my grandfather had something to do with that with a Mr.

Johnson. That was housed for a period of time over in the bottom of this brewery. And then the house where I had my office where the group family home is now, that was apartments. And in fact, Archbishop Hunthausen, retired from Seattle, reminds us that he was born in one of the apartments that were in this building next door here on Madison Street.

DJ: Did they leave the equipment in this Washoe Brewery during prohibition?

MT: Yes.

DJ: They just kind of boarded it up?

MT: Yes. They sold all of the beer and stuff that was there, grain I suppose, all that kind of stuff. Oh yes, that was all there because when it officially started they had everything that they needed. I believe that my father tells in one of the articles how they put in a new ice machine so that if one failed it wouldn't upset beer that was already in the vats you see. And he explains in that article that I kept, he speaks to the Actor Club, describes the whole process of making the beer which is very very well done.

DJ: And then this brewery closed down in 1958?

MT: No, it closed in 55, the brewery part. They stopped making beer in 55. My father left and went back up to the drug store and helped my mother because they had kept it all through the years, but the bottling works part for the soft drinks they kept. You see, my uncle had the Anaconda Products Company prior to prohibition so he was given it. They lived on the top of this building next door here, had an apartment and, well they lived down here. Joe Francisco who was the beer

man towards the end, (Mr. Scheuch retired and Joe Francisco became the brew master here) and then about that time he moved and went to Cincinnati, I think, and became a brew master back there after it ended here.

DJ: You mentioned before, but it's not on tape, about your father going into the drug store business as a result of prohibition.

MT: Oh yes, right after, when he came back from ... there was no business for him to go in to and for a while he became a partner of my uncle -- his sister's husband -- in what they call the Washoe Coal business here, [and] they were involved in real estate for a few years. They were in partnership, but my father did not work with them. He was employed as a time keeper up at the smelters. And it's interesting, the others had...some had gone in the grocery business, others had bought out the gasoline [business] -- they had a gas station and the wholesale portion of the gasoline, (Shell was the kind that they used at that time.) This "Peppermint Patty" area over here which is a whole square block, you see belonged to them, was where one of the Shell stations was [located] and one other on the western end of town at that time. And another sister lived in Helena and she was married to a man, Hugh Campbell who was in the internal revenue department and he is listed, the final one when the brewery finally closes. My father had become ill: he had had rheumatic fever as a child and he was beginning to get what we called ... strokes attack, or actually, they were heart arrhythmia and he would collapse. He had three attacks, the third attack was when he died in 1960. Hugh Campbell became a trustee then until all of the properties were divided, you see.

Anyway, my father then because there was one of the priests here, Father Kutman, at St. Paul's Church could not understand, he said my father was much too intelligent, he had too much of a

background for my grandfather to leave him just working at the smelters, you see. And he had kept all the rest of them in a business. It just happened that Dr. St. Jean who had founded the Standard Drug Store here around 1895 had died in 1926 and so my father bought the drug store. In 1929 then he went down to Denver, Colorado, and trained in a program that was apparently acceptable to be trained as a pharmacist, and I am told he passed the State Pharmacy Boards with one of the highest grades that anyone had had because he was bright. He had done work in mathematics, he could add figures, just a long lines of figures in his head. He just had that gift. And so that was 1929 and that was the time of the shutdown too. The beginning of the depression, major depression, when Dad got the store and so in 1933 when prohibition was amended I think it was hard on my grandfather because he had worked so hard back in Menasha and then had that happen with the people taking off with all the money and forced him to bankruptcy not his own, and then prohibition come too. And so I think this is why when my father had tried to understand why prohibition occurred and finally came to the idea that maybe beer also was responsible for a lot of alcoholism. He didn't know whether he wanted to go back into the brewery, but I think for my grandfather's sake, he and his brother did join.

We have all of the drug store stuff, the collection, my mother was a saver of all this stuff because in the drug store they had all the herbs, these glass bottles with glass labels, all those things. In those early days, they compounded the prescriptions, they didn't have them sent in by companies like they do today. They hadn't advanced, you know we didn't have sulfa until 1940, nor any of the antibiotics. The old prescriptions, they compounded them in the drug store. I remember having grown up, born in 1922, being an only child, (they bought it in 26) so from [when] I was about four years of age on I spent a lot of time in that drug store. I used to fix cases, windows, stuff like that, just to keep me busy, but it was good training for me. I was exposed to all of that through the years. Also they always had pharmacists. My mother was not a pharmacist, but she was a good

businesswoman. My grandfather always said that somewhere back she did not like to do ironing or cooking or that kind of thing, and so he said, "Send the stuff to the laundry. She is too good to be kept at home like that." Her folks, her father said he wanted his son to become a physician here in Anaconda, Dr. Malloy, but he didn't want any of his daughters to be put in a position that they felt that they were not equal to others. Two of them became teachers and two were sent to business school. My grandfather [my mother's father] died in 1925, but he was foreman at one of the converters at the smelters. He had come in 1898 to work, he was a blacksmith in Nebraska, and he came out to work in the smelters out here, but he went to the old works, because it was not begun on the side of the hill where it had more recently been until the turn of the century. So that he brought his family out in 1899 and I think that one of his brothers-in-law --my grandmother's oldest sister, was married to a gambler -- he was out here and he was the one that attracted them here. I think most of the stuff out here was mining, you see. And I think Henry Mueller got involved in the brewery only after he got out here. It was not prior. Although on that side of the family, the Schubert family [earlier] had been in the alcohol or bar business.

DJ: When did the drug store close then or sell or?

MT: This drug store. My father died in 1960 and through the years when my father [was] working at the brewery, from 1933 on, they always had a pharmacist there with my mother. My mother's sister also came down and worked there with them and various people did. After he died in 1960 in 1967 my mother sold the drug store to a James Boyce who then was the pharmacist after my father died. My mother [sold it] sadly. She was a wonderful businesswoman, so very active, and my father said he didn't carry the money, he'd be giving it away to everybody, so she kept it. Yet she was so wonderful to people too. She had a good business because she would always say that they were happy people, that people looked nice for them, even if somebody said well they

don't, but they looked nice for them. That was her attitude and she just knew how to make people feel good when they'd come into the drug store. But she was starting to develop Alzheimers, and this is why we had to get out of the drug store. And then 1975 is when urban renewal came along, and the building belonged to the Schwartz family -- they owned a lot of property in town here. They had had a clothing store here and they had done very well. So the building was to be taken down in 1975. I think he [Jim Boyce] did not realize the responsibility, they didn't recognize the value of my mother as the business woman, [and] they didn't have the background to be able to do this. So he just decided he really wanted to stay strictly as a pharmacist, he went to Galen and became their pharmacist there. He sold much of the contents of the store. A few things are in the museum that they had left in the store and they personally have kept some of them. Jim died of cancer a few years ago, and so we put his picture and his life, all about him, on the display. And so we have a full history of the drug store there, you see.

**End of tape**