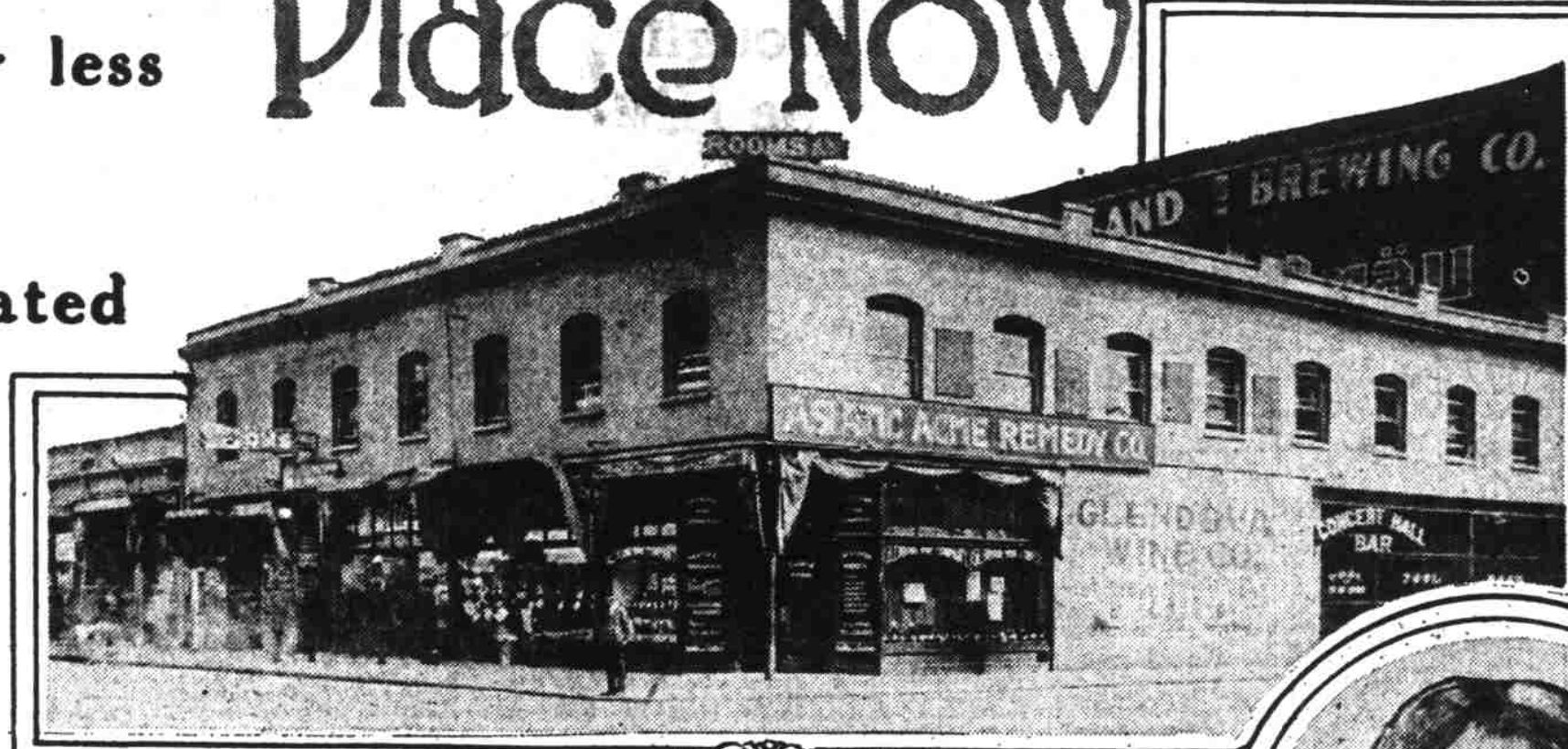


You'd Never Know the Old Place Now

Haunts more or less familiar that vanished when Oregon anticipated nation-wide prohibition by several years



CORNER, LIQUOR STORE, "CONCERT HALL," ETC AT THIRD AND ANKENY STS.

DR. JOHN McLOUGHLIN "FATHER OF OREGON"



WHEN THERE WAS MORE WATER THAN WHISKY IN THE NOTORIOUS OLD CRYSTAL PALACE - 104 1ST ST. - HIGH WATER OF 1884



by Earl C. Brownlee

"DRAW ONE!"

A white coated attendant at the lunch counter thunders the order. He means buttermilk. He's kidding someone who knew him before the drouth.

"Two fingers and a little ginger ale" has been stricken from the lexicon as obsolete. There ain't no such thing!

Evil ways engulf the rickety of those merry days. It is now a decoction of ice cream and insipid soda water, obtainable at the nearest drug store—without gin.

An innocuous little grocery store at the corner conceals every identifying mark of the favorite haunt of the imbiber. His solace comes nowadays as lemon extract or plain moonshine.

Masquerading as a "gentle" furnishing store," the space once devoted to an interior of shining crystal and costly mahogany, brass rail and brilliant bottles, recalls a vision that taxes the memory of the "wet" clientele.

Meantime the mahogany has been transformed into hope chests and tabourets; the brass rail has been melted to mold statues of "Pussyfoot" Johnson.

Could some miracle restore the wet regime that vanished in Oregon with the adoption of state-wide prohibition and disintegrated with the advent of the national "dry" law, the old order would find in the new some wondrous things. The old dive keeper would find

his hacked bar a display place for the fruit vender's wares or for the grocer's "staple and fancy" viands.

Seeking the \$65,000 interior that drew almost as many curious inspectors as patrons, the former owner of a leading saloon would find his solid mahogany panels, bar and furnishings cut and shaped into the form of 25 soda fountains scattered throughout Portland.

The goblets that once held the wicked fluids have been transferred to the soda fountains, too—those which did not find placement on the shelves of second rate restaurants.

When Portland was a wide space on the path through the wilderness, the first bottle of strong liquor was in the offing. And close behind, his stealthy eye peeled to observe every movement, stalked the first prohibitionist.

As a matter of fact, it is reliably recorded by the chroniclers of pioneer days (and nights) that Dr. John McLoughlin, "father of the Oregon country," was the first prohibitionist to assert himself in this neck of the woods. The courage of Father McLoughlin's convictions was handed down year after year to an increasing number of Oregon folk.

Who the first "wet" advocate may have been must remain a secret of history. Early records of the liquor traffic are not in the files of the Oregon Historical society. However, in 1862 there were 42 saloons in Portland, including 19 installed in pioneer hotels, in

addition to five wholesale liquor dealers.

What a contrast to that fateful day, December 31, 1915, when the Oregon prohibition law legislated out of remunerative business 287 class "A" saloons, 17 class "B," 15 wholesalers, 4 wholesalers and rectifiers, 15 groceries selling intoxicants, 10 restaurants with "liquid" attachments and 3 breweries, and at one fell swoop cut off annual municipal revenues totaling \$391,213.50 in license fees.

In place of the saloon revenues today the city treasurer levies license fees on eating places, fruit stands, soft drink stands—in fact, on every enterprise dispensing food or beverage. In this class of business are 7581 establishments, paying license fees which totaled last year \$15,757.50.

The saloon was the rendezvous for all kinds. Mariners found congenial headquarters at one place; the baseball crowd—players and fans as well—at another.

One of the city's most notorious dives today finds itself off the beaten path, occupied by a struggling poorly supplied grocery store. A north end "institution" which was in Portland's wide open days a clearing house for Chinese lottery players, the scene of many big "killings" with the mysterious tickets and equally overwhelming losses, is utilizing its battered bar as a lunch counter, where the blanket roll brigade finds "coffee and" at a minimum price.

Another \$30,000 interior, of Circassian walnut, was torn out to become part of the interior of a present day billiard parlor. A downtown grill, elaborately outfitted to attract a high class patronage, failed in business before the prohibition law came. The same interior at the same location houses a refreshment place that is making a big go of it.

Withal, none of the former successful saloon sites are unoccupied today. In most cases the business that has taken the place of the saloon is vastly more profitable than was the traffic in rum.

One hotel has retained its bar-room unchanged except for the removal of the brass rail. Over the bar, to patrons on high stools, is served a hot merchants' lunch.

The owner said: "We wouldn't go back to the old order under any circumstances. Our receipts from the 'bar' today are doubled. The difficulties and unpleasantness of the service and the offensive patronage have been entirely eliminated."

A brewery whose amber nectar flooded the Northwest prior to January 1, 1916, has been enlarged several times since the state was voted dry. Its owners say they cannot compare incomes, then and now, because of the expense entailed in remodeling for the manufacture of the new products, but they would be unwilling, they say, to go back to the old order.

One successful saloonkeeper known to thousands of former patrons, took the bull by the horns when he was voted out of business, and his little place is a soft drink store, where many of the same patrons are still served by the same "bartenders" with soda water, fruits, candies and tobacco. The owner, who had struggled under meager profits for years, denying the conception we may have had of his affluence, is now riding in a good automobile, contributes to his neighborhood church and holds his head higher than he ever before dared to do.

A large number of former saloonkeepers and bartenders have answered the call of the open and are successful farmers, living in many parts of the state.

An early day liquor dealer later became a banker. A contemporary went to the penitentiary for murder.

A man who was as notorious as was his joint said recently, when

asked if he would vote to restore the liquor traffic:

"It's gone now. Let it rest. My vote, if I live 10,000 years, would never approve the old business."

Portland and Oregon were trained for a prominent place in the prohibition column, however. Oregon was put in the bone dry lineup by the provisional legislature on June 25, 1844, and for several years retained a prohibition statute, while the stock "dry" arguments—the same then as now—were hurled by the orators of that day.

George Abernethy, first provisional governor of Oregon, successfully resisted every effort of the "wets" to overthrow the "dry" laws. At the annual session of the provisional legislature, held at Oregon City, December 1, 1845, the first governor's message to any legislature west of the Rocky mountains came from the quill pen of Governor Abernethy. He said: "Fellow Citizens: The duty of addressing you again presents itself."

"The duty of legislating for the welfare and happiness of the community again devolves upon you. May we be guided and directed by that wisdom that never errs. "We shall, in a few months at the farthest, be again living under and enjoying the protection of the Stars and Stripes of our loved country, and, ere long, we may reasonably hope, be added to the brilliant constellation of states."

"The act passed at the last session of the legislature, entitled, 'An act to prevent the introduction, sale and distillation of ardent spirits in Oregon,' is one I should recommend for revision; there are several points that are thought to be defective. I have no doubt if ardent spirits are kept within their proper bounds we shall continue prosperous."

"Intoxicating drink is an enormous public injury and private wrong; its effects, in every way, shape and form, are evil and therefore should be retained within the proper limits by law. Per-



A ONE TIME HOTEL BAR NOW LUNCH ROOM.

GOVERNOR GEORGE ABERNETHY EARLY PROHIBITION ADVOCATE



ENTRANCE TO THE 65,000 BAR ROOM "COULDEST IN THE WEST"

sons who have become habitually addicted to ardent spirits, hearing that we had excluded the poison from our land and believing they could never be free if they remained near its influences, have left their homes and crossed the Rocky mountains to escape the ruin that threatened them. Shall they be disappointed?"

On December 17, 1846, Governor Abernethy vetoed a bill designed "to regulate the manufacture and sale of wine and distilled spirituous liquors," which was an attempt to overthrow the law passed in 1844.

But the traffic came back when the strong hand of the first provisional governor could not stay it, and it remained until the last day

of 1915, punctuating the progress of the state at many vital points and gracing Oregon history with the record of many crimes and many criminals.

It is said that Dr. John McLoughlin, fearing the effect "ardent spirits" would have upon the Indians of the untrammeled Oregon country, of which he was so important a part in pioneer days, bought from an importer a cargo of whiskey at Astoria. Its distribution would have wrecked the works and the hopes of McLoughlin and his co-workers. The doctor transferred it to Fort Vancouver and there, under lock and guard, prevented its powers from befuddling the minds of the red men.