



# Beer and the Great Outdoors

Post-World War II beer advertising celebrated the enjoyment of fishing, hunting, and camping.

by Ken Quaas



Stunning 3-D die cut cardboard easel back sign, Schmidt's Light Beer, C. Schmidt & Sons Brewing Co., Philadelphia, PA, 15 x 23 in., c. early 1950s. Collection of Jim Lawley.

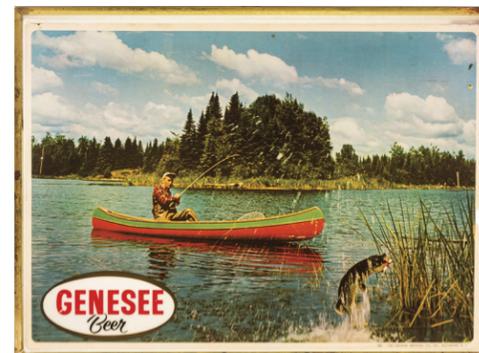
As the smoke of conflict cleared following the end of World War II, there was a generation of American GIs who yearned to return to the “normal American life” for which they had ferociously fought on the far away battlefields of Europe and the South Pacific. A life that many of their friends and relatives had tragically lost in that fight.

All photos are from the collection of the Cone Top Brewery Museum in Vicksburg, MI, unless otherwise noted.

These American servicemen returned home to a country that had changed from the one they left in 1942. The country's industries had shifted into overdrive to fuel the needs of the war, and the Great Depression was a distant memory. The economy was booming, jobs were plentiful and after enduring the restrictions and rationing during the war, Americans were eager to spend time and money on the wide variety of things they had been denied during the conflict.

### The “boom” years

During those heady post-war years and into the 1950s, young couples were marrying, having children at unprecedented rates, (the “Baby Boom”) and moving from crowded cities into rapidly growing suburbs. This generation of Americans—especially the servicemen burdened by their recent, sometimes traumatic war experiences—eagerly looked to the brighter future for which they had fought. New products and technologies abounded and helped usher in a bold, modern age of consumerism.



Lighted sign, plastic in metal box, Genesee Beer, Genesee Brewing Co., Rochester, NY, 19.75 x 14.75 in., by Price Bros. Sign Co. Chicago, IL, c. 1960.



Vacuform plastic, faux-wood-framed lighted sign by artist Les Koubo, Schmidt's Beer, Jacob Schmidt Brewing Co., St. Paul MN, 19.25 x 13 in., no mfg. mark, c. 1960s.

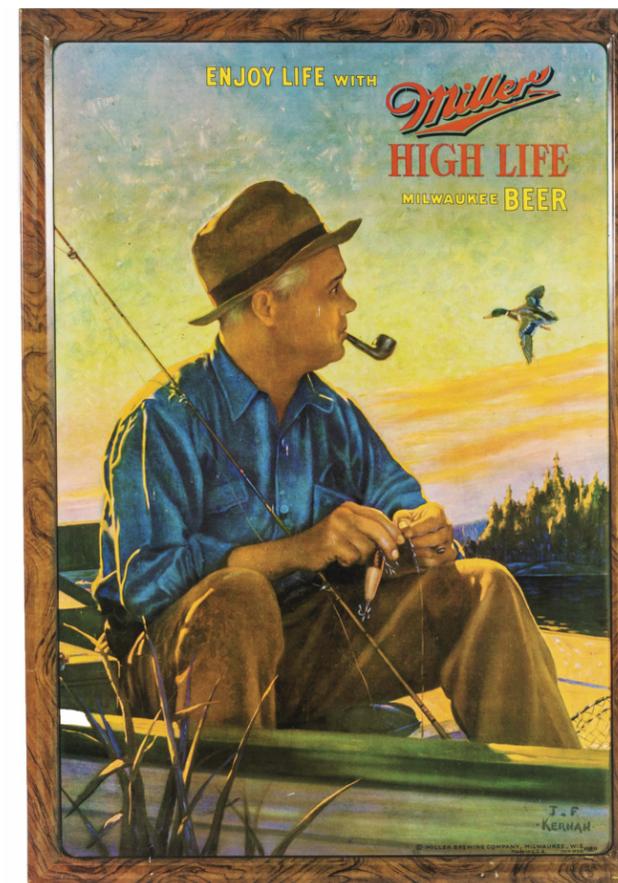


Lighted sign, plastic in metal box, Busch Bavarian Beer, Anheuser-Busch Inc., St. Louis, MO., 18.25 x 12 in., by Tela Sign Inc., Chicago, IL, dated 1959.

### Aspirational advertising

Advertising agencies were busier than ever and helped drive this train of change. The “we can do this” themes of the war years were replaced by “you can have this” messaging. Post-war advertising presented an array of aspirational imagery, conveying a positive peacetime world that would provide not only the latest and greatest consumer goods, but also the benefits of leisure time in which to relax and enjoy them.

The notion of leisure was often conveyed in advertising—especially for those products that could be best enjoyed during times of relaxation. Many ads showed scenes of “the great outdoors” and featured people enjoying fishing, hunting, and camping. To understand why this came about, it is valuable to first examine beer marketing before the war and then assess what drove the significant changes once the war had ended.



Self-framed tin sign, Miller High Life Beer, Miller Brewing Co., Milwaukee, WI., with scene by artist J.F. Kernan, 26.5 x 18.5, no mfg. mark, c. late 1940s.

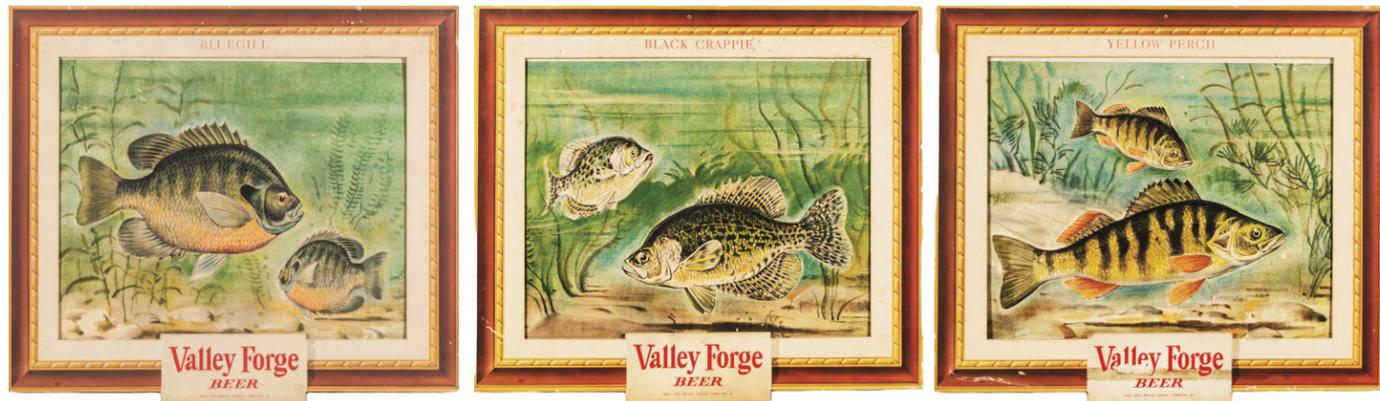
### Beer marketing pre-war

National Prohibition ended in December 1933 and by 1934, breweries were making “real beer” again and pumping significant dollars into advertising and promotional efforts to relaunch the industry. Once Prohibition had ended, beer marketing had to introduce the product to a new generation of drinkers who came of age during and immediately following the 14-year drought of national Prohibition.

To regain a foothold in the market, the brewing industry had several tasks to accomplish with its marketing and advertising. It needed to convey that full-strength beer was again being made in the traditional manner that had made it so popular before Prohibition. In doing so, it also had to promise purity, quality, and good taste. These were customary and perhaps even expected reassurances. Importantly, beer marketing needed to persuade potential new consumers that beer was an everyday drink that added value to life.

Eager to re-establish themselves, breweries produced a proliferation of brands and brought back

continued on page 20



Brewers often put out a series of scenes, hoping bars or taverns would display multiple signs in the series and increase their brand's visibility on premise. These three feature three different fish species, (Blue Gill, Black Crappie, and Yellow Perch). Cardboard self-framed signs, Valley Forge Beer, Valley Forge Brewing Co., Norristown, PA, 19.5 x 17.5 in., c. early 1960s.

many of the old names and styles that were once popular, like brown ales, porters, stouts, and sometimes more obscure (and decidedly Germanic-based) styles, like Wiener, Muenchener, and Culmbacher.

### The war changes beer

The advent of World War II caused a seismic shift in the American brewing industry. There was a forced reformulation of beer itself. Wartime rationing of barley malt meant it was often replaced in part or full by comparably lighter grains like corn or rice. There also was a mandate to limit alcohol content to 3.2% to avoid inebriating soldiers.

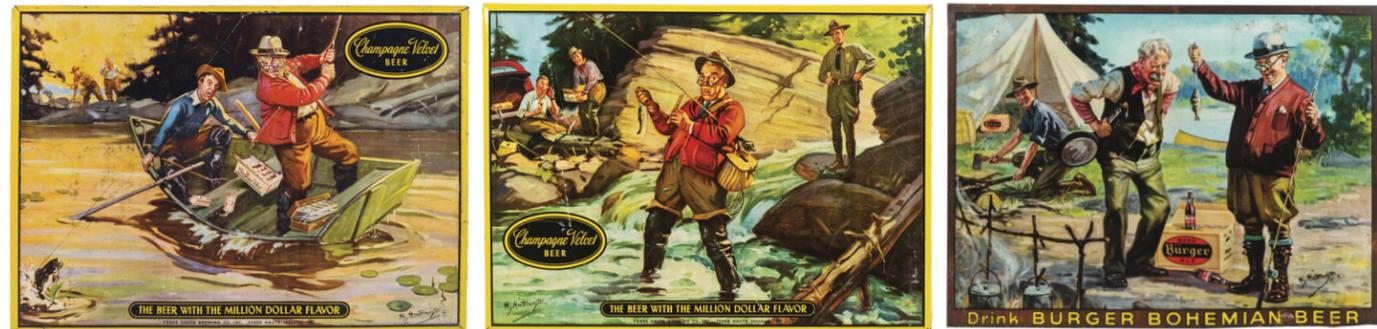
As a result, during the short span of the war years (1942-1945), beer was turned into a more bland, uniform



3-D Vacuform plastic sign, Koehler Beer, Erie Brewing Co., Erie, PA, 14.5 x 7.25 in., no mfg. mark, c. 1960.

product. The lack of malt also impacted beer style offerings. There was little variety beyond basic lagers, less complex ales, and the occasional, seasonal bock. The generation of beer drinkers who came of age during the war grew accustomed to lighter, less flavorful, and lower alcohol beers.

Beer advertising of the post-war era had a new mission. Beer was no longer encumbered by the need to re-establish its relevance, quality, value, and variety, as it had to do after Repeal. The years after the war had ushered in a new world of optimism, and consumerism. This meant that to stay relevant, beer had to associate itself with the modern lifestyle's pleasurable pastimes.



Three tin-over-cardboard signs, each 21 x 16 in., from the same series but for two different breweries, showing comical scenes featuring a bumbling fisherman character. These were created by famed illustrator Hy Hintermeister. At left and center, for Champagne Velvet Beer, Terra Haute Brewing Co., Terra Haute, IN. At right, for Burger Bohemian Beer, Burger Brewing Co., Cincinnati, OH. All three signs by American Art Works, Inc., Coshocton, OH, c. late 1940s



Unusual papier mâché composite bucket with metal handle, Schmidt Beer, Jacob Schmidt Brewing Co., St. Paul MN, 9 in. tall with 11 in. diameter, by Jardien Co., Milwaukee, WI, c. 1950.



Large self-framed cardboard sign with 3-D Vacuform fish, Wiedemann Fine Beer, Geo. Wiedemann Brewing Co., Newport, KY, 26.5 x 40 in., c. 1950s.

### Outdoors is "in"

There is no doubt that once World War II had ended, former servicemen were keen to return to the outdoor escapes they had cherished before the conflict—like fishing, hunting, and camping. Now in peacetime, they sought these pastimes to help gain peace of mind. Partaking in the primal outdoor pursuits of fishing, hunting, and convening around a campfire was the ideal salve for many to soothe their painful memories of war.

And what was the perfect beverage to accompany these good times? Why, beer of course. And breweries often focused their advertising to suggest that their brands facilitated further enjoyment of these outdoor activities. Beer advertising of the day heavily reflects this. Between the end of the war in

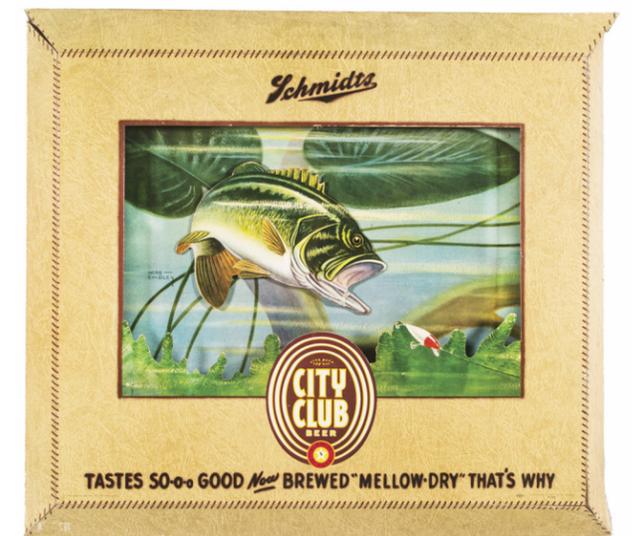
1945 and into the 1960s, there was a preponderance—especially with point-of-sale materials—of fishing, hunting, and camping imagery and their direct association with the enjoyment of beer.

**A new series of articles will extend across the next few issues of the *Breweriana Collector* and will examine some outstanding examples of fishing, hunting, and camping scenes portrayed in beer advertising. We are especially pleased to feature some of the extensive collection of breweriana on these subjects from NABA's partner, the Cone Top Museum.**

More ConeTop on page 22



Self-framed tin sign, Falls City Beer, Falls City Brewing Co., Louisville, KY, 19.25 x 13.5 in., no mfg. mark, c. late 1940s.



3-D self-framed cardboard sign, City Club Beer, Jacob Schmidt Brewing Co., St. Paul, MN, 26 x 22.5 in., by Advance Lithographing Co., Chicago, IL, c. early 1950s.



# The Cone Top Brewery Museum & NABA Present: "NORTHERN LIGHTS"

by Chris Moore  
Developer of  
The Mill and its  
Cone Top Brewery  
Museum

The Cone Top Brewery Museum is thrilled to partner with NABA to produce a breweriana series inspired by the great outdoors. Anyone who has an appreciation for the era spanning 1945-1965—the beer, the advertising, the camaraderie between men who lived through monumental times—will surely love the artifacts and experiences we'll be sharing over the next few months during our exhibit, "Northern Lights." But before we get into that, reminisce with me about the origins of my deep appreciation for this era of breweriana.

### Family heritage

My interest in breweriana began with my grandpa, Gordon Moore, who served in the Navy during WWII as a Captain of an LST ship (a landing ship for troops and tanks) that took part in D-Day. He was among the lucky ones who made it back. Shortly after he arrived home to Vicksburg, MI, he resumed his job as Mill Engineer at the Lee Paper Mill, Vicksburg's largest industry and local employer.

Grandpa Moore loved Michigan's Upper Peninsula, known simply as the "UP." It was his place to get away from a bustling village and into the serenity of nature to enjoy fishing, hunting and good beer with his buddies. Eventually, in the early

1950s, Grandpa and his friends found themselves travelling even farther north to a remote fishing and hunting lodge in Canada, far up in northern Ontario. Shortly after finding this gem, property in the surrounding area became available for purchase for a very small window of time. The Moores were one of two families who bought property, and the remaining land was converted into a provincial park. As a nod to the colloquialisms of the local Canadian trappers and hunters, we refer to this off-grid land and experience as "The Bush."

### A real-life connection to Post World War II breweriana

My first visit to the cabin was in August 1974 at the age of nine. It was like nothing I had ever experienced. We had no phones, no radio, no electricity—just an old stove to cook our meals and keep us warm, and propane to light up the space. I'm proud to say the cabin is still in my family today and has remained exactly as it was when Grandpa first built it in 1957.



Captain Gordon Moore, U.S. Navy, took part in the Normandy Invasion during D-Day on June 6, 1944.

As a place where time stands still, the breweriana shared here is a heartwarming reminder of these times. They are happy, living memories of Grandpa Moore; of him and his buddies talking, fishing, hunting and drinking. Breweriana from the 1950s and early 1960s has always been my favorite to collect. Many of the items reflect my experiences at the Moore cabin. At that cabin, we passed provisions from the dock to the boat for a trek out to the lakes. I grew up using the same kind of minnow bucket featured in the Grain Belt sign shown on the next page. We had a 7.5 HP Evinrude outboard motor that is exactly like the one in the Regal sign also pictured on the next page. My dad had a metal tackle box just like the ones shown in many other fishing scenes depicted in beer signs on these pages.

This breweriana evokes a feeling of nostalgia and fond memories of my Grandpa Moore and his friends, who were part of the "Greatest Generation" that accomplished so much in their time. This is a big inspiration behind my collecting.

continued on page 24

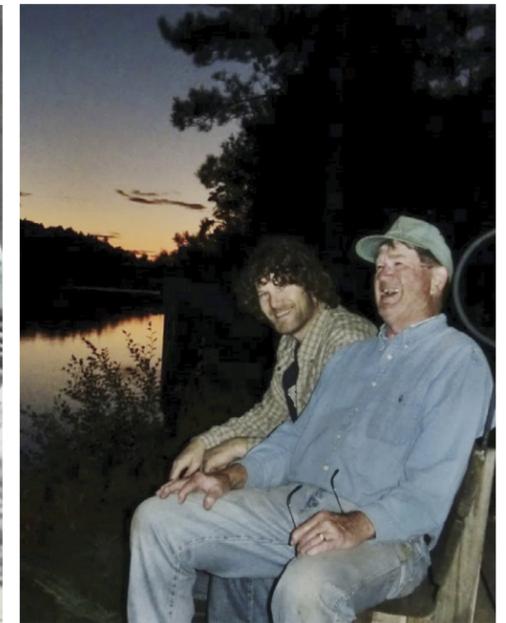
This series of Stroh's fishing scenes reminds Chris Moore of his childhood experiences fishing at his family's cabin.



Series of cardboard signs with string hanger and easel back, Stroh's Bohemian Beer, The Stroh Brewery Co., Detroit, MI, 15.25 x 20 in., illustrated by well-known character artist Harold Anderson, by Inland Lithograph Co., Chicago, IL, c. late 1940s.



In 1957 Gordon Moore built a vacation cabin in northern Ontario, where he is shown (second from left) with his fishing buddies. Vacations with his family at that cabin are where his grandson Chris developed an appreciation for beautiful scenery and outdoor life, and why Chris enjoys collecting breweriana that depicts these scenes.



Chris Moore and his dad, Tim Moore, enjoying a laugh several years ago at their family cabin in remote northern Ontario, Canada.

## “Northern Lights” in Vicksburg

On June 9–10, The Cone Top Brewery Museum and NABA will be celebrating this great era of breweriana in Vicksburg, MI with an exhibit titled “Northern Lights.” This show will celebrate Grandpa Moore’s generation and their love of venturing out into the land of sky-blue waters and skyscraping green landscapes with nothing but fishing rods and cases of beer.

We invite you to join us, free of charge, for a weekend of exploring our historic Village of Vicksburg and stepping into our re-creation of “The Bush” of northern Ontario. Throughout the weekend you can enjoy:

- An evening of beer tasting with One Well Brewing Company.
- A sneak peek at the “Northern Lights” exhibit at Cone Top Brewery Museum.
- Our favorite items from that era on display.
- A free concert with Nashville recording artists The Bootstrap Boys.
- A NABA breweriana show.
- The annual Vicksburg Old Car Festival, a popular event that draws hundreds of visitors.

And about a month later, we’ll be packing our artifacts and hitting the road, bringing the Cone Top Museum’s “Northern Lights” exhibit to NABA’s Chicago Convention, from Aug 1-5! We invite all of those members who are registered for the NABA convention to join us in suite 4321 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, as we transport you to years past with pieces that Grandpa Moore would have proudly hung in his cabin.



Above, framed cardboard sign, Grain Belt Beer, Grain Belt Brewing Co., Minneapolis, MN, 28 x 22 in., by Inland Lithograph, Chicago, IL, dated 1950. The illustration is by artist J.F. Kernan, known for his depictions of rural, middle-class American life.

At left, lighted sign, plastic in metal box, Regal Beer, American Brewing Co., New Orleans, LA, 19.25 x 13 in., c. late 1950s.

## Claim your free tickets to “Northern Lights!”

Visit our website at [www.conetopmuseum.com](http://www.conetopmuseum.com) to download free tickets to the June 9 show in Vicksburg.

Use code **NABAMEMBER** at checkout.

We look forward to seeing you in Vicksburg and displaying a wide range of breweriana items to remind you of serenity, stillness, and the Northern Lights of the great outdoors.

Chris grew up using the same kind of minnow bucket and his dad had a metal tackle box like those featured here in the Grain Belt sign. And his family had an Evinrude outboard motor just like the one in the Regal sign.

# NORTHERN

Lights

PRESENTED BY:



JUNE 9 THRU JUNE 10 2023

### THE OUTDOOR SERIES PRESENTED BY CONE TOP BREWERY MUSEUM

Step under the Northern Lights, where the great outdoors and breweriana will transport you to another moment in time when camping, fishing, hunting and brewing came together to make history.

FRIDAY, JUNE 9 | 3–9 PM

#### ONE WELL BREWING BREWERIANA EXHIBITION, TALK & TASTING

Sip beer, eat snacks and chat with One Well Brewing about their artifacts

101 E. PRAIRIE ST. | 3–4:30 PM

#### PRIVATE CONE TOP MUSEUM TOUR & SNEAK PEEK OF NORTHERN LIGHTS

View our tribute to post-WWII breweriana that reflects our vets’ return to the joys of the simple life

110 S. MAIN ST | 4:30–5:30 PM

#### DINNER

Enjoy dinner at one of the village’s many establishments

DOWNTOWN VICKSBURG | 5:30–7 PM

#### AFTERGLOW

Attend a live concert featuring Grand Rapids-based, Nashville recording artists The Bootstrap Boys

107 S. MAIN STREET | 7–9 PM

SATURDAY, JUNE 10 | 9 AM–3 PM

#### CONE TOP MUSEUM NORTHERN LIGHTS COLLECTION OPEN TO PUBLIC

Transport back in time with our outdoor breweriana collection from the 1900s on display to the public

110 S. MAIN ST

#### NABA BREWERIANA TRADING EVENT

Browse & buy items from NABA members’ personal collections; For reservations: Clayton [claytonemery32806@aol.com](mailto:claytonemery32806@aol.com), Paul [cerpaul@aol.com](mailto:cerpaul@aol.com)

KALSEE CREDIT UNION PARKING LOT  
119 N. MAIN STREET

#### VICKSBURG CAR SHOW

Admire vintage cars on display all around the village

DOWNTOWN VICKSBURG

#### LIVE MUSIC

Jam out to music from Guitar UP!

DOWNTOWN VICKSBURG | NOON–2 PM

#### FREE ADMISSION

FOR FIRST 50 NABA MEMBERS TO  
ONE WELL BEER TASTING  
USE CODE: NABAMEMBER \$10 PER  
TICKET FOR GENERAL PUBLIC.

