

## Illinois Brewery Company The site of the Hammel Museum

According to an oral history interview of Clarence Hammel by Helen Sickles, his grandfather Jakob Hammel emigrated from Bavaria ca. 1848 in company with (Eberhard) Anheuser and briefly considered forming a partnership with him in St. Louis, Missouri. The two men were evading conscription into the army before the War of 1849. They separated, and Anheuser established E. Anheuser & Co. (later Anheuser-Busch) in 1860 in St. Louis, Missouri, while Hammel set up the Illinois Brewing Co. (also called Illinois Brewery Co.) ca. 1870 in Lebanon, Illinois. Jakob's son, William Hammel, was born in 1857 and migrated as a young adult to Socorro in 1882. Like many other newcomers he traveled west on a doctor's recommendation to find a cleaner and healthier environment. He set up a warehouse and imported beer from Illinois until 1886 when he bought property from Pedro Montoya and started a brewery housed in adobe buildings. In 1904 the Illinois Brewery Co. moved into a new stone building which is now known as the Hammel Museum. The product was a lager beer with the label, Export, later changed to Select. The brewmaster was Francis Epele.

In 1919 the Volstead Act (18<sup>th</sup> Amendment) put an end to the brewing operation, and the company continued for almost half a century as an ice house and bottling plant. The company had a very early franchise for Pepsi-Cola to which it added Orange Crush, Dr. Pepper, and Grapette. The growing number of home electric refrigerators eventually reduced the demand for ice to an unprofitable level and the business closed in 1969. Ownership was transferred to the Socorro County Historical Society. Much of the brewing and ice-making equipment has been preserved by the Society and many items of general historic interest have been installed. Amenities such as a restroom, model railroad room, and a storage shed have been recently acquired, and the Museum on 6<sup>th</sup> Street, P.O. Box 923, tel. (505) 835 3437, is open at publicly announced times and on special request for small groups.



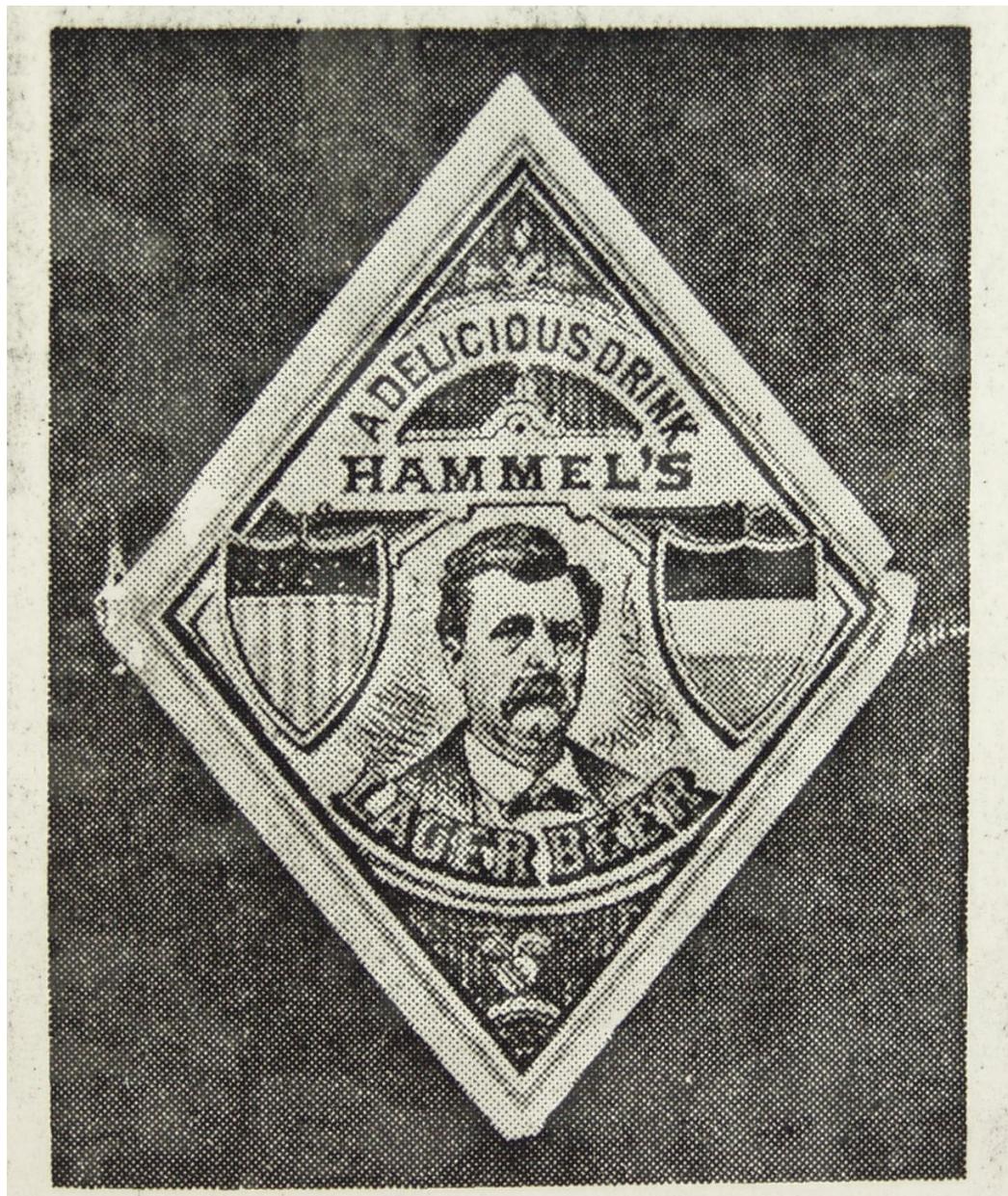
Illinois Brewing Company delivery wagon



William Hammel and employees (no caption supplied)



The Illinois Brewing Company building



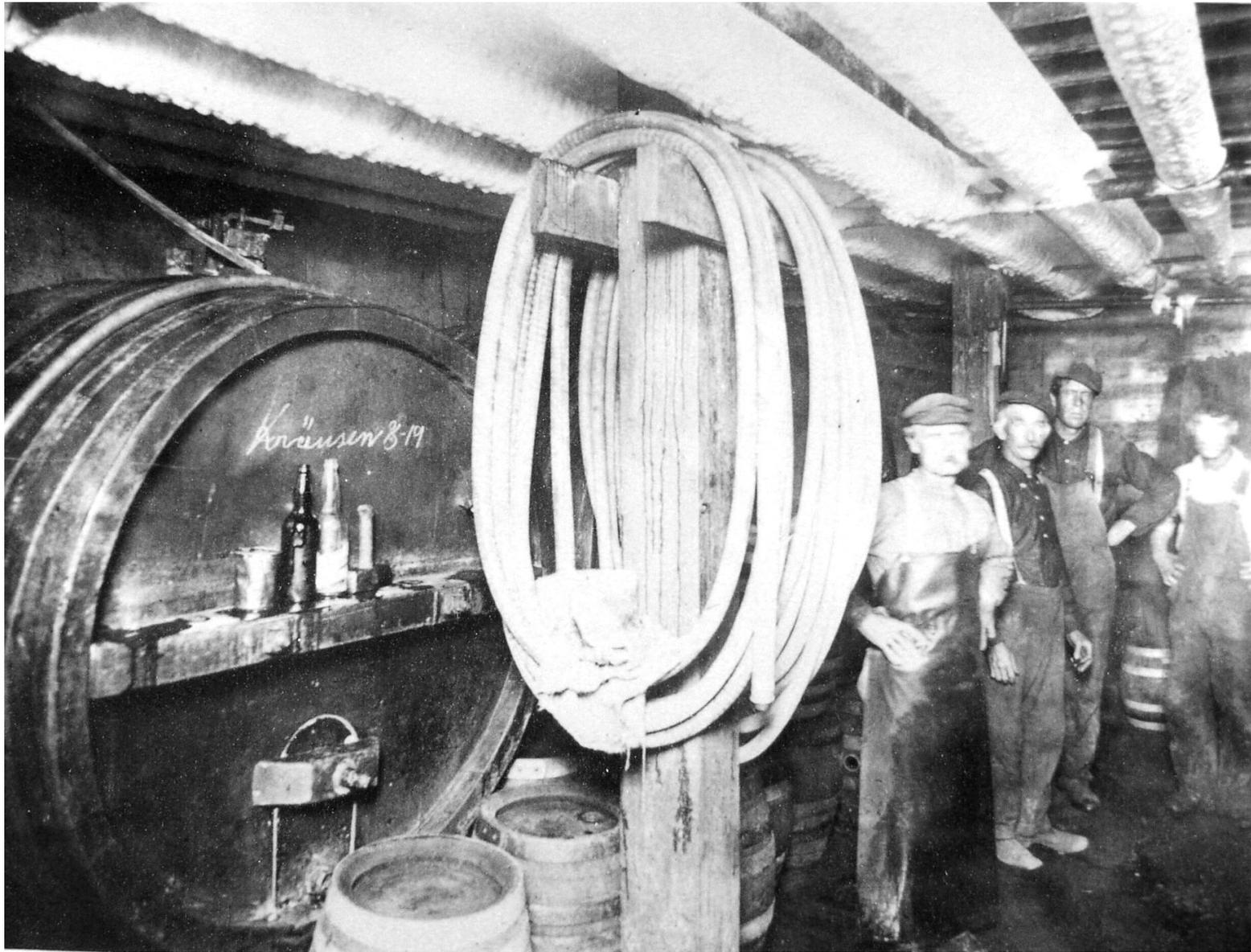
One of the labels used for Hammel's beer



The Ice House in the 1960's



Rear view of the Ice House, 1971



Brewery interior. Kräusen refers to a process of adding wort to a new beer.



Conversion to Pepsi-Cola bottling operation. Clarence Hammel on right.



The Ice House in 1965



The Hammel Museum, 2001



Oktoberfest 2000 at the Hammel Museum