

Bever Grocery and Pop Factory

Peter Bever was born May 2, 1838 in Borg, Saarland, Prussia. As a young boy, he immigrated to Washington County with his mother, Elizabeth (Weller) Biever, and brothers, Mathias and Johannes (John), and sisters, Anna, Catharina (twin of Mathias) and Christina. They later went to Outagamie County.

About 1853, Peter changed the spelling of his last name from Biever to Bever. He married Elizabeth Hammond in Slinger, Wisconsin on May 18, 1862. There were 13 children born, eight sons and five daughters. In 1882, he moved with his family to the township of McMillan, Marathon County where he farmed his land, which is currently owned by Roman, Jr. & Kay Schaefer.

He next moved into Marshfield. In 1886, he was also the proprietor of the Marshfield Pop Factory located on Maple Street and he was also a co-owner with John Weiland, a cigar maker, in the Crystal Cafe. From 1900-1904, Peter served as the county treasurer and held other important offices of trust. He started the Peter Bever Grocery and North Side Cigar Factory in 1904. They were located at 425-427 North Central Avenue. Peter also owned two icehouses and furnished the city with ice.



New Bever Grocery and Cigar Factory on North Central Avenue

In the Great Marshfield Fire of 1887, three of his properties on Maple Street, one possibly being the pop factory was destroyed. The following is an excerpt taken from a letter sent by Elizabeth (Lizzie) Bever, daughter of Peter and Elizabeth, to relatives about the fire: "Since the fire, we stayed with Theodore until yesterday.



Inside the new Bever Cigar Factory on North Central Avenue

They built a shanty on our lot and we are living there now. Pa is going to build up right away a solid brick building. They are not allowed to build anything else. All the businessmen are going to build up again so Marshfield will be by far a better looking place then it was before the fire. You ought to see all the shanties. Everybody is in one and they are doing pretty well, too." The original letter is in the possession of Mrs. John (Phyllis) Falcao, Silver Spring, Maryland, a descendant of

Mrs. Egidius (Catherine Biever) Rehberg, sister of Peter Bever.

Peter and his sons did re-build a brick building. It was the fourth building to go up after the great fire and was located at the corner of Maple Street and East Second Street. Occupants in this new brick structure were the Marshfield Times newspaper, Peter Bever's residence and the pop factory, which occupied the basement area. This was well known as the Bever block. This building is still there and is now the home of the Elks Club.

Four of Peter's sons were also cigar makers: Anton (Tony), North Central Avenue; Nicholas (Nick), Walnut Street; Arnold, 425 North Central Avenue, he later became a chiropractor in Two Rivers; Wisconsin; and Arthur (Art), proprietor of a cigar factory at 605 North Central Avenue, he was also was a painter and operated a tavern in Rozelleville, and dry goods store and hotel in Stratford.

Other sons included: Peter Jr., a blacksmith on Central Avenue, he later moved to Duluth, Minnesota; John, clerk in his father's store on Central Avenue, he later moved to Grand Rapids (Wisconsin Rapids) where he joined Jacob in the Bever Brothers Cigar Factory in that city; Jacob (Joseph or Jack), also a cigar maker, in 1895 he was president of the Marshfield Cigar Makers Union (seven members), and later moved to Grand Rapids where he became involved in the Bever Brothers' Cigar Factory in that city; and Henry, deceased at age 12. An infant son was also deceased.



Bever Cigar Factory employees, (Left to right): Weise, William Herman, Tony Hager, John Bever, Andy Marks, Henry Beine, Arnold Bever and John Beine (North Wood County Historical Society)

Daughters of Peter and Elizabeth Bever include: Elizabeth, married Anton Hirsch; Mary, married Peter Christman; Anna, married George Hirsch; Magdalina (Lena), married Stephen Britton; and Catherine (Kate), married Fred M. Abitz.

Nicholas Bever's daughter, Fern was the telephone switchboard operator at her Uncle Arts tavern in Rozellville, where she met and married Joseph Wunsch. Joseph was a cheese maker in Rozellville. In 1939, after high school graduation, new ice-cream making equipment was purchased and Don Wunsch, son of Joseph and Fern. He started the business known as Wunsch's Ice Cream Parlor in the original Peter Bever Grocery Store. It also was the family residence. Don entered the service in 1942 during World War II. Upon his return from service, he continued to operate Wunsch's Ice Cream Parlor for a couple months. Not able to obtain supplies due to rationing during the war, in 1946, he sold the business to Francis Morrison. The business became known as Frenchy's Ice Cream which later relocated to South Central Avenue.

Don then worked for Parkin's as an ice cream maker until 1949. He married Virginia Alf, whose father operated Alf Electric on First Street next to Schreiner's Plumbing. They moved to Wausau in 1950.

*Submitted by Joe and Mary Bever
(for the Marshfield History Book, Vol. 2)*

***Marshfield Pop Factory
Bever Grocery & Cigar Store
Bever Ice Houses***

Peter Bever has for a number of years past been known to our citizens in several business enterprises. He came here seven years ago and soon engaged in the hotel business in which for one year

he was known as one of our most genial landlords. He sold out in this six years ago and is now engaged in manufacturing cigars. He is also the owner of the Marshfield Pop Factory and a dealer in ice. In the pop department he manufactures everything in that line, such as pop, birch beer, seltzer, and the popular brands of cigars made are Lily Pure, Base Hit, High Flyer and Once Again.

He has two ice houses, one 24x64 feet and the other 20x50 feet, from which comes the city's supply of ice. Mr. Bever gives employment to several persons. He was born in Germany and has that energy and thrift common to his nation. He has been assessor for the past five years, and his name is now being associated with one of our leading county offices. In closing we will say that Mr. Bever is well regarded and is, as well, known from one end of the county to the other.

*Taken from a Supplement to the Marshfield News, October 2, 1890
(for the Marshfield History Book, Vol. 2)*



The Bever Building, current site of the Elks Lodge, 113 East Second Street. By 1905 the building was the cigar factory of Paul O. Drinkowitz.

MARSHFIELD POP FACTORY,
Corner 2nd and Maple St.,
P. BEVER, Proprietor,
ORDERS FILLED PROMPTLY.

If you have any additional information (including pictures) regarding this business or location, we would really appreciate you contacting us and sharing. We will add information whenever possible.

For questions, or for sharing additional information, please contact us at schnitz1@charter.net. Please include what story the information relates to. Attach your text information in the form of a word document, please no PDF's. Photos should preferably be in jpeg format.

For additional stories on the historical sights and businesses of Marshfield, visit our website at:
<http://www.marshfieldgenealogy.com/QR-Codes-of-Historical-Marshfield.html>.