

A LOCAL LANDMARK, THE BREWERY, MAKES THE NEWS

Researched by John Knox Written by Carol Cramer

One of Auburn's landmarks has been in the news lately, because the city is exploring the possibility of using the site of the brewery for parking.

Shortly after the June fire of 1855, the brewery was erected by Samuel Kaiser. The newspaper reported, *"The capacity of the establishment is sufficient for the manufacture of four hundred gallons of ale and beer per day, a market for which is found through all the borders of Placer."*

In 1868 the Kaiser brothers, Samuel and Frank, sold the business to Frank Lux, who in turn sold the brewery to Fred Grohs in 1874. Then in the June 5, 1880 Placer Herald, it was reported that *"The old Auburn Brewery, long noted for the superior excellence of its product, has changed, F. Grohs, for a long time the popular proprietor, having sold out to Mr. John Krauss and Mr. Jacob Roll. The purchasers are both first class men, and are both old and experienced brewers, the former, Mr. Krauss, having served for some years as head brewer of this same establishment ..."* They paid \$10,500 as recorded in Placer County Deed Book, May 23, 1880. Krauss was known as the man, who had rescued a child from a hot vat of liquid at the brewery. Soon Krauss and Roll had ads appearing in the *Placer Herald* (June 5, 1880) and the *Placer Argus* (June 6, 1880).

A year later Krauss sold his share to Jacob Roll for \$6500 as recorded in Placer County Deed Book, June 8, 1881. Earlier, Krauss and Roll had a physical altercation and Krauss sustained various injuries including a broken collar bone. The verdict reached at the November 7, 1881 trial for the incident that had occurred on May 31, 1881 was that Jacob Roll would pay John Krauss \$500 damages in addition to costs.

John Krauss and his wife, Elizabeth Bernhard Krauss moved to Red Bluff, where *"John Krauss, late of Auburn, has purchased an interest in a brewery at Red Bluff...(Placer Herald, December 24, 1881)."*

The *Placer Herald*, April 22, 1882 noted that Julius Weber, who later would be murdered by his son, paid \$7,000 to become a partner with Jacob Roll. Soon after Weber would buy out Roll's share.

Finally, as recorded on January 2, 1896, Fred Rechenmacher acquired the brewery from Julius Weber. Lillian Rechenmacher, his daughter, recounted in her oral history that *"My father, Ferdinand Rechenmacher, won two World Prizes from his steam beer.."* He advertised that Placer barley, Russian River hops, and spring water at the site made the beer special. In Lillian's descriptions of the brewery building and its operation, she had a very intriguing description of what occurred on the third floor. *"We used the third floor as children as a skating rink, also (for) riding of baby buggies and tricycles. Also used (the) building for games of hide and seek, also run-sheep-run."*

Bill Wilson wrote in his article on the history of the Auburn Brewery *"In about 1908, when lager beer began to be produced, Rechenmacher felt it would be too expensive to compete and sold the brewery and went to produce beer in Truckee. He died in 1910."*

In Old Town Auburn take a stroll down Brewery Lane and you can view the historical marker and a few brick ruins on the city owned property. **Will the long-ago brewery aromas be replaced with car fumes?**

PLACER HERALD
Auburn, April 2, 1881
Local and County Matters
Fall Into a Tank of Hot Water

Frankie, the little six-year-old son of S. Betton, fell in to a vat of hot water at the Auburn Brewery, last Monday morning, but fortunately and almost miraculously escaped with his life. It seems that he went to the brewery on an errand; reaching there and seeing no one he called John Krauss, one of the proprietors, with whom the little fellow is quite a pet. John, recognizing the voice, replied from an adjoining room, "Here, here! Frankie." The boy thinking the sound came from up stairs immediately started on a run to the steps, at the same time looking up. The rim of the vat, in which a lot of water was being heated, is nearly level with the floor, and not for the time observing it, the little fellow stepped across the edge and into the water over his head before he was aware. At that instant, almost, Mr. Krauss came out of the room to find out what his little friend wanted. Seeing, with horror, the child fall into the vat, as quick as thought he ran to his assistance, and by reaching his arm in to the elbow, got hold of his clothes and drew him out. His clothes were taken off and he was carried home as quick as possible. The doctor being called in an examination showed that except where his clothes bandaged the body or limbs closely, holding the heat to the flesh, he was not scalded so bad as to cause the removal of the cuticle. About the head, face and hands no scald is discernible, and we can state with gratification that his condition is not considered dangerous or his injuries permanent. There was a hot fire under the tank in which he fell, though at the time the water had only reached a temperature of a little over 130 degrees. A few minutes later the water would have been boiling, and in such case death would have been inevitable; or had not Mr. Krauss been immediately on hand, a fatal result must have followed. All things considered we feel to congratulate both the parents and the boy that the accident, so horrible to contemplate, resulted no worse than it did.

Note: I love the detail in the newspaper accounts of yore.

Here's a bit more information. Frankie was born in Auburn May 26, 1875 and died in Emeryville November 14, 1971 at the age of 96. His father and later his mother were saloon keepers in Auburn.