

The Beverage Legacy of Will and Glenna Joyce

By Jack Sullivan

Beginning with a Columbus, Ohio, liquor house and brewery and evolving into major bottlers of soft drinks, the Joyces, Will and Glenna, over the past 57 years through their after-death trust in have distributed tens of millions of dollars toward the college education of more than 800 students at Ohio State and Notre Dame Universities (Figs. 1, 2).



Figure 1

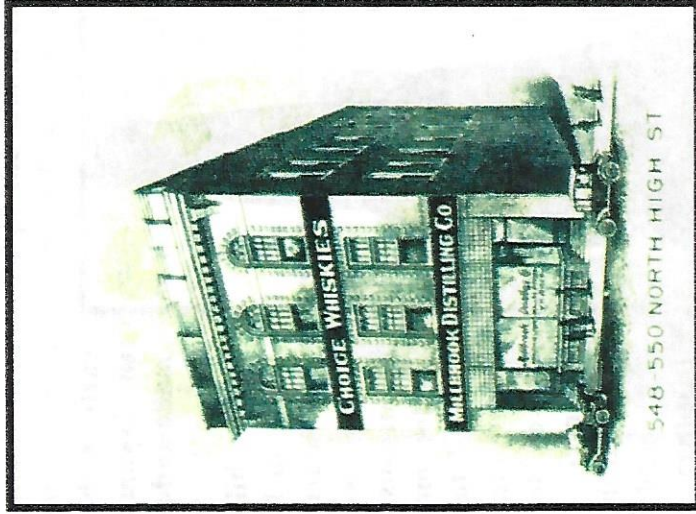
Figure 2



Figure 3

The story began in June 1873 when William Henry "Will" Joyce was born in Shawnee, Ohio. By the 1900 census the family had moved to the Ohio capital city. Will now 25 and

living at home, was recorded as a salesman. Within a few years, Joyce had established himself as an up-and-coming Columbus businessman. About 1909, with a partner, he founded the Millbrook Distilling Company, described as "Importer Distillers and Jobbers of Wines, Liquors and Fine Old Whiskey" (Fig. 3). It was headquartered in a



three-story building at 548-550 High Street (Fig. 4). His flagship brand was "Millbrook Whiskey," (Fig. 5) openly advertised as a blend.

Figure 4



Figure 5

The young entrepreneur's efforts did not end with his liquor interests. Earlier he had joined with a fellow Irishman, George Mooney, in founding a Columbus brewery, called the Washington Brewing Company. Joyce was vice president. Among the company brands were Gambrinus Beer, sold in green bottles (Fig. 6) and Washington Pilsner (Fig. 7). The canny Joyce also may have sensed the trend against alcoholic beverages in Ohio and

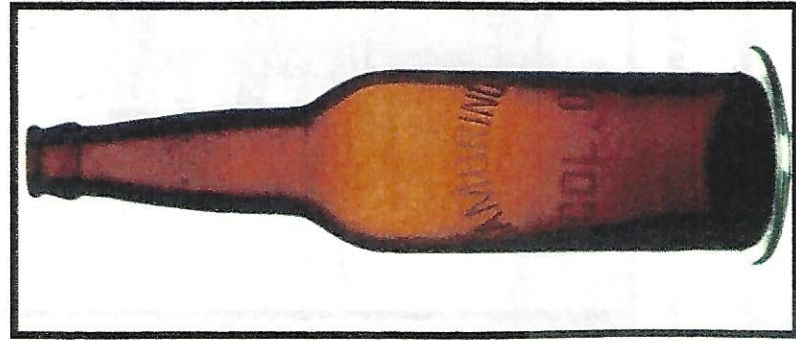


Figure 6

early in the new century created the Wyandotte Pop Company to make and sell soft drinks.

After his first wife died childless and relatively young in 1914, Joyce three years later married Glenna Stengel, a seamstress who had been born in Columbus into a family of modest means. Despite Glenna's lack of formal education, Joyce had made a good decision. She proved to have an ability for business. When the coming of Ohio prohibition in 1916 forced the shutdown of the Millbrook Distillery and Washington Brewery, Joyce started a new enterprise devoted to soft drinks, the Joyce Products Co. He brought Glenna into company management.

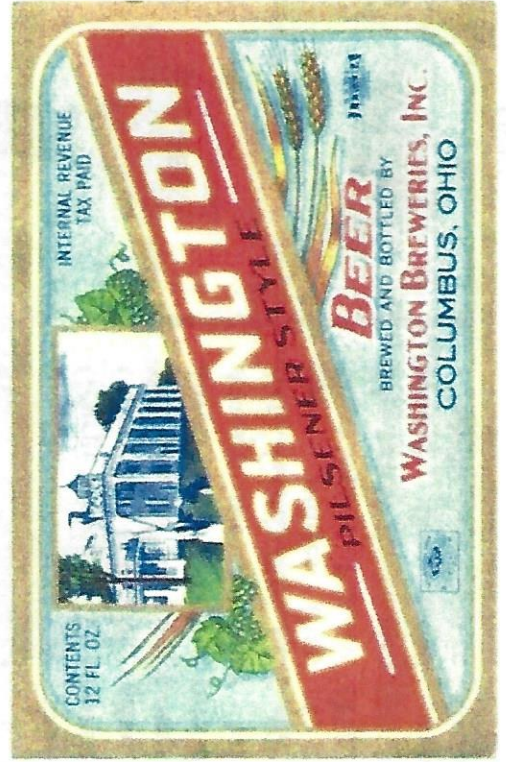


Figure 7

Now the Joyces' emphasis became 7-Up, the lemon-lime-flavored soft drink, owning bottling plants in Columbus and Norwalk. Shown here are green 7-Up bottles (Figs. 8, 9) from Joyce Products Co. Like the liquor business, the venture into soft drinks proved very profitable. After Will Joyce died at the age of 60 in November 1933, his multi-million-dollar estate went entirely to Glenna.

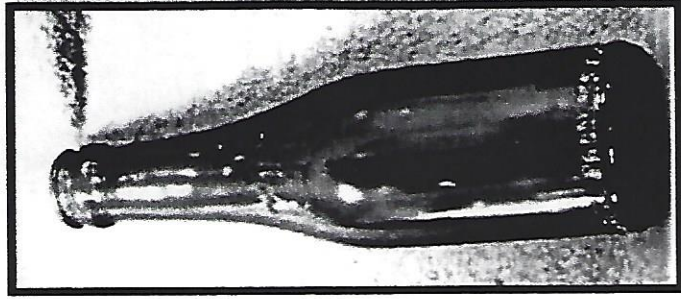


Figure 8

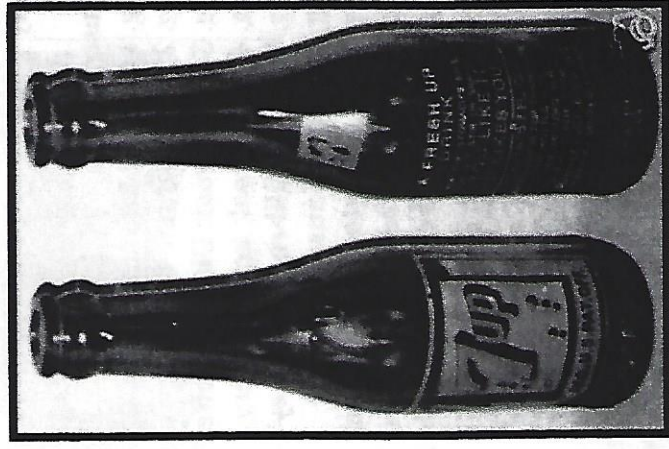


Figure 9

Over time Glenna developed the idea of putting the money into an educational trust. Why she selected Ohio State and Notre Dame is not entirely clear since the Joyces had no direct ties to either university. Scholarship candidates are limited to residents of Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union Counties, Ohio. In addition, they "must exemplify superior academic potential, potential contribution to the university, and high character; must demonstrate financial need." Scholarships are split evenly between the two universities and pay the full cost of attendance for four years.

After Will's death Glenna moved to Upper Arlington. She died at home there on the day before Christmas in 1960. Following the dictates of her will, the trust and scholarships were established the following year. As of 2017 assets were in excess of \$28 million and the number of scholarships was increasing. The Joyce Trust is administered by the National City Bank of Columbus and can provide further information.

Illustrations:

Fig. 1: Ohio State University logo

Fig. 2: Notre Dame University logo

Fig. 3: Millbrook Distillery letterhead

Fig. 4: Millbrook headquarters

Fig. 5: "Old Millbrook Whiskey" bottle

Fig. 6: Gambrinus Beer bottle

Fig. 7: Washington Pilsner label

Fig. 8: Joyce Products embossed "7 Up" bottle

Fig. 9: Two views of painted label "7 Up" bottle

