

Kentucky soda for a century

Ale-8-One marks 100 years

BY JAMES JUETT
FOR THE DAILY INDEPENDENT

Ale-8-One Bottling Company lore indicates that in the early 1900s George Lee Wainscott boarded a train at the Winchester Train Depot and became intrigued by a carbonation machine on the train and decided he should enter the soft drink industry.

The entrepreneur Wainscott was also the first cable car operator in Lexington. He was born in Owenton in 1867, the son of George W. Wainscott, a hotel keeper, and his mother Mary Elizabeth Hancock Wainscott. At some point in his childhood the family moved not too far away to Georgetown where his dad ran a hotel there.

Wainscott earned a degree in civil engineering from Kentucky University (in 1865 Transylvania University merged with Bacon College from Georgetown and was renamed Kentucky University. TU reverted to its original name in 1908).

Before becoming a soft drink pioneer Wainscott briefly worked for Lexington and Eastern Railroad. He and his cousin Joseph Lindsay operated Wainscott & Lindsay, a lumber and coal business. Lindsay later became the sheriff and a judge of Clark County. In 1896, Wainscott took over managing Rees House in Winchester because of his father’s poor health. His father passed away later in 1896 and Wainscott honored his father’s request to run the hotel for two years.

The determined Wainscott opened Wainscott Bottling House in May 1902 on property he bought on N. Main Street in Winchester and he installed a carbonation machine and began bottling distilled water, and fruit flavored sodas called “Wainscott’s Flavors.” Also, in 1902 he bought a property next door to the plant to make candy in.

In 1906, Wainscott developed Roxa-Kola, which became a popular soft drink. It’s sometimes said to be named after his wife, but neither his first or second wives were named Roxanne. Its snappy slogan was, “Roxa-Kola ... More Than Wet.” As Roxa-Kola’s fame grew a lawsuit was filed by Coca Cola saying Roxa-Kola sounded and looked too much like Coca Cola. However, the target of the lawsuit was Carlisle Bottling Works, which also

distributed Roxa-Kola in some areas. Coca Cola did this because CBW was a smaller company and didn’t realize that Wainscott would be paying for CBW’s attorney fees. Coca Cola earlier tried to have a monopoly on the word cola, but in a case against another company in 1920, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the word “cola” was the generic word for a type of drink and couldn’t be monopolized. Coca Cola also sued other cola brands.

In January 1929, CBW won the case after a District Court judge dismissed Coca Cola’s claims. Coca Cola appealed the decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit and lost the

well-known case Coca Cola Co. v. Carlisle Bottling Works.

While on a trip to Germany to visit Wainscott’s second wife’s (Jane Rogers)

great uncle, Brigadier General Henry Allen, from Sharpsburg (Bath County), Commanding General of the American Forces of Occupation in Germany during World War I, Wainscott traveled around northern Europe looking for unique flavors, and tasted ginger beer and other things that delighted his palate.

He spent years in Kentucky experimenting with carbonation equipment blending ginger with citrus lime notes and came up with a combination of tasty and exotic ingredients that comprised his legendary soft drink in 1926.

Wainscott had a contest at the Clark County Fair to name the new beverage. A young girl’s suggestion “A Late One” was chosen. It was modified to Ale-8-One (pronounced as A Late One), colloquially Ale-8. The name was a reference to the latest thing in soft drinks. Ale-8-One became the company’s calling card not long after being introduced on July 13, 1926. A hundred years later, that ginger ale soft drink is doing better than ever.

Many Kentuckians can relate with having family members or friends who move to an area where Ale-8 isn’t sold, so they buy a few cases while they’re visiting Kentucky to take home. That isn’t always necessary now for fans of Ale-8-One that crave its unforgettable lemon-lime ginger-ale taste. For decades it was only available in parts of central and eastern Kentucky.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Look for the second part of this story on Ale-8-One’s 100th Anniversary in an upcoming edition.



AP PHOTOS
ABOVE: Auctioneer Jonathan Klunk gestures to a display of personal items owned by KFC founder Harland Sanders, on July 22, in Shelbyville, Ky. BELOW: Klunk shows a black bow tie worn by Sanders. BOTTOM: A set of cutlery owned by Sanders and a large commercial stove that are up for auction are seen.

KFC founder Colonel Sanders’ signature bow tie and personal planner sell at auction

SHELBYVILLE, Ky. (AP) KFC founder Colonel Sanders’ signature black bow tie, original cash register and dozens of other personal items sold Tuesday night in a public auction, while his former home and another restaurant he owned were up for auction later in the week.

With his distinctive wardrobe and goatee, Harland Sanders built global brand recognition for the chain originally known as Kentucky Fried Chicken. He has remained the widely recognized face of the worldwide chain after his death in 1980.

“Colonel Sanders was the original celebrity chef,” said Bill Menish, whose firm, The Menish Group, is conducting the auction. “The feedback has been worldwide, so we needed to have an auction that would cater to that worldwide audience.”

The largest sale of the night was \$30,000 for Sanders’ personal 1964 planner with a handwritten list of herbs and spices that was the subject of an early 2000s lawsuit filed by the KFC Corp. to keep the contents private. KFC later dropped the legal action, saying after reviewing the planner the ingredients didn’t match Sanders’ secret blend of 11 herbs and spices and was likely for a stuffing recipe.

“What a keepsake,” said Menish, who became so enthused at one point in the auction that he knocked over the camera.

A clip-on black ribbon bow tie worn by Sanders, which he is depicted wearing in the KFC logo, sold early in the night for \$8,000.

“Not a lot of people know; he did wear clip-ons,” auctioneer Jonathan Klunk said.

Along with Sanders’ signature white



suit, glasses and goatee, the tie was among the defining elements of his public persona.

Menish called Sanders a “marketing genius” for creating the character of the colonel.

“He didn’t dress like that before he was starting to build Kentucky Fried Chicken,” Menish said. “He adopted the colonel: the clothes, the bow tie, the glasses, the goatee.”

A 1955 certificate naming Sanders as an honorary Kentucky Colonel was among the other top sales for \$23,000.

Sanders’ pressure cookers, cutlery set, a bust of him sculpted by his daughter and his 1966 patent titled “Process of Producing Fried Chicken Under Pressure” also sold Tuesday. He is credited with revolutionizing fast food through pressure frying, a combination of pressure cooking and deep frying that significantly cuts down cooking time while keeping the chicken juicy and the breading crispy.

Sanders established the Shelbyville property as the first headquarters of his restaurant business in the late 1950s. He sold the property, which included his home and the Claudia Sanders Dinner House, to Tommy and Cherry Settle in 1974, who have run the restaurant since then. Sanders sold KFC in 1964 to a group of investors, but continued as a brand ambassador for the company.

Sealed bids for the dinner house and Sanders’ former 5,000 square-foot home, which he named Blackwood Hall, where taken until Friday.

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