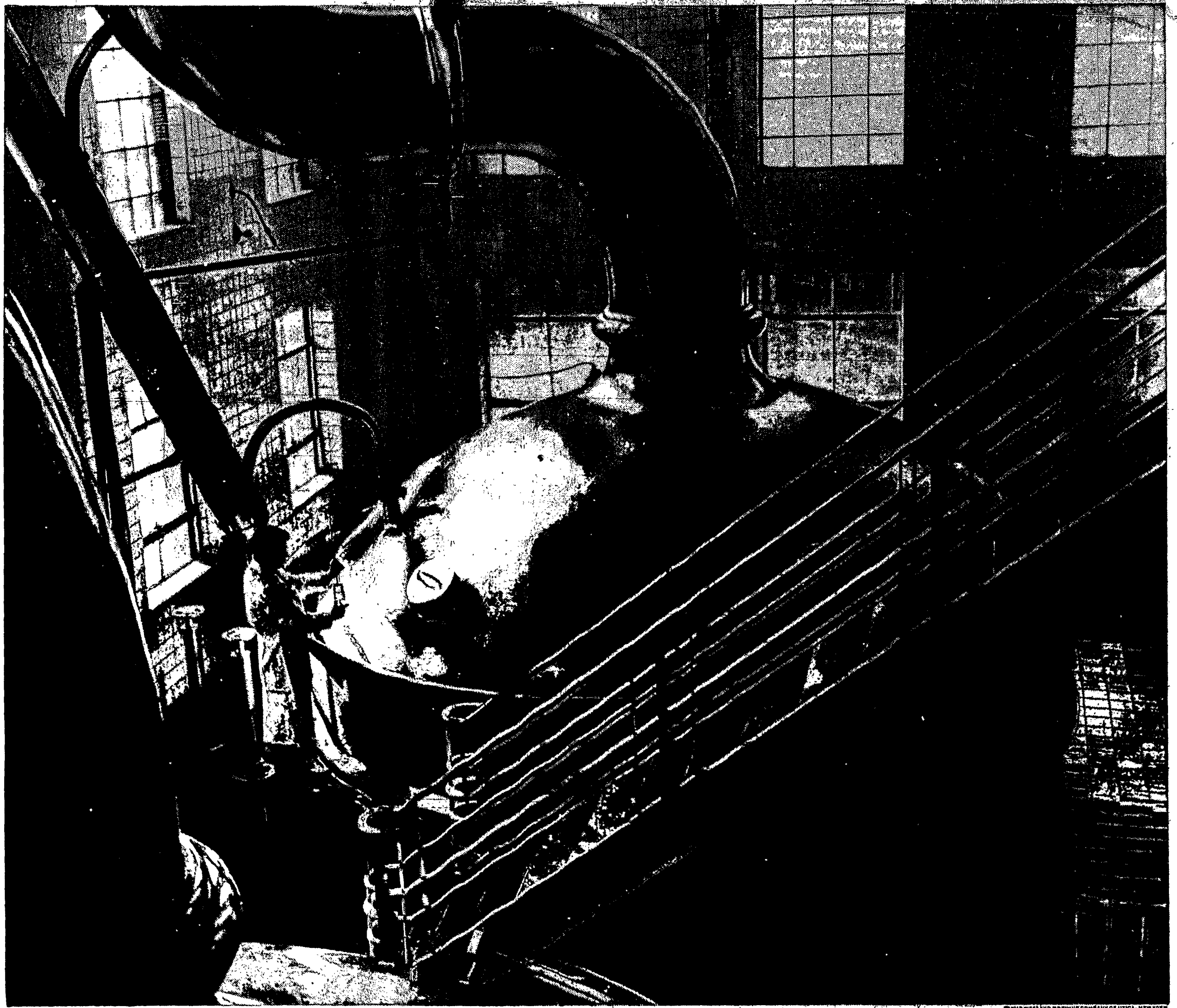


"I don't get it, Mr. Matt."



"I thought your beer was 50 years behind the times."

That's what some gentleman said to me the other day when I was showing him through the brewery.

Since our beer is 50 years behind the times, he expected to find a brewery that was 50 years behind the times too.

I got quite a kick out of that. Because ours happens to be one of the most beautiful and up-to-date breweries in the whole country.

The photograph will give you an idea of what it looks like inside.

This shows you a small part of the brew house.

It was my father's pride and joy.

He spent much of the last years of his life planning this new brew house, and personally overseeing its construction. (And I mean personally.) I have a hunch that this is what kept him going until the age of 99. He felt that his life's work wouldn't be done until that brew house was.

My father had some strong convictions about beer.

He had learned the trade in the celebrated brewery of the Duke of Baden in the Black Forest of Germany. And the methods he learned were the methods that had been handed down from the Benedictine monks of St. Blasien who had originally founded the brewery.

Up to the day he died, my father felt that many of the old ways were still the best ways to make beer (although they were certainly not the fastest).

He believed in the natural way of making beer. He felt that beer should be made only from the harvest.

In later years, when many breweries turned to using syrups and extracts as a convenience, my father would have none of it, because he would never put anything into his beer that he could not personally check the quality of. To this day, only whole grain is ever used in Utica Club beer. No commercial syrups or extracts.

But my father was not an impractical man. He realized that it was no longer necessary to have men trudging up the stairs with sacks of barley-malt on their backs, the way they used to do it in the old days.

He could see no reason why things like this couldn't be handled efficiently in a modern brewery, as long as it didn't sacrifice the integrity of the beer.

That was his whole idea when he designed our new brew house.

What a field day he had.

He started from scratch, and laid out the brew house just the way he wanted to, incorporating the best methods he had learned over

a lifetime, from the old world and the new.

It has the finest equipment that money can buy. It gleams with polished brass and copper and stainless steel and tile, and it is a joy to keep spotless. It has every scientific control to help us turn out a beer that tastes exactly the same from month to month.

But it is based on the old way of making beer.

Let me elaborate.

Natural beer vs. artificial bubbles.

It may surprise you to learn that many of the beers in the U.S. today are artificially carbonated. (What they do is inject carbon dioxide under pressure into the beer while it is in the storage tank.) This makes it possible for a brewer to reduce the aging time to 2 or 3 weeks and still turn out a beer with "life."

When you see Utica Club on the label, you can rest assured that your bottle of beer has a natural life of its own—not artificial bubbles.

To create this natural life, our beer must be aged for months instead of for weeks. Not in a bottle in a warehouse, you understand, but in glass-lined refrigerated tanks, under close supervision.

Natural aging is a very expensive proposition, requiring 3 or 4 times as much storage space, 3 or 4 times as many of the huge glass-

lined tanks, and 3 or 4 times as much refrigeration capacity. (In other words, a very substantial investment in extra equipment to turn out the same quantity of beer.)

Even more important, the extra aging ties up thousands of barrels of beer (representing a big chunk of the brewer's working capital).

Does all this trouble really pay?

You have to be something of a saint to do it. Especially during the warm weather months, when the dealers are hollering for their beer. It takes a very stubborn man to tell them they can't have their beer because it hasn't been aged enough yet. But my father was a very stubborn man.

And my wife tells me I take after him.

What a difference it makes in the taste of a glass of beer when it's made like this.

It has mellowness and it has character. There is absolutely no bitterness. The head is thick and creamy, and it leaves a nice lace collar on the side of the glass going down. The aftertaste is clean and pleasant.

Perhaps now you can understand how we can make a beer that's "50 years behind the times," sell it at a reasonable price, and still afford to stay in business.

Walter J. Matt, President, The West End Brewing Company of Utica, New York

