

Name of Interviewee: Deb Carey
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Name of Interviewer: Theresa McCulla
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Theresa McCulla: It's June 15, 2018. This is Theresa McCulla of the National Museum of American History. I am interviewing Deb Carey, founder and president of New Glarus Brewing Company. And we're meeting at the brewery in New Glarus, Wisconsin. This interview is part of the American Brewing History Initiative, a project to document and collect the history of beer and brewing in America. So, Deb, when and where were you born?

Deb Carey: I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1960.

McCulla: And what were your parents' names?

Carey: Naomi and Leonard.

McCulla: And what did they do?

Carey: My dad sold insurance, and my mom, for a while, was at home. And then, she became a teacher.

McCulla: And, what neighborhood in Milwaukee did you grow up in?

Carey: I didn't grow up in a neighborhood. I, we moved, we're, three different places in Milwaukee. On Oakland Avenue, and then, I don't remember, somewhere, Hartford, I think, a little bit outside. Then I moved to Chippewa Falls. No, then I, yeah, Chip-, Eau Claire, Minneapolis, Chippewa Falls. Then Colorado Springs. Then Holland, Montana, which is where I met Dan. So, my family moved a lot.

01:11 McCulla: And, what, what do you recall about Wisconsin as a kid?

Carey: Well, I just, I mean, for me, Wisconsin is very familiar and feels comfortable. And when we, we moved around a lot within the state, but when we really moved away I was in high school. And so, to move from Wisconsin to Colorado in the seventies, you know, I have my thick Wisconsin accent. I had no clue what, I mean, I'd never had had the Mexican food they were serving for lunches. Had no idea what the difference between a burrito and an enchilada was. I mean, so, that was rough. And then, moving to Montana was by then even stranger. So, three different high schools in three different states, and I guess Wisconsin just always felt like home to me.

McCulla: What do you recall about the, what you ate and drank as a kid in Wisconsin or elsewhere?

Carey: Well, I mean, we have all the German ethnic food of brats and potatoes and lots of really great cheese and milk and, you know, casseroles and family reunions, and nothing that I think anyone would consider exotic.

02:22 McCulla: And, and was, do you recall beer and brewing being -

Carey: No.

McCulla: Part of? No.

Carey: No. It wasn't at all. I get asked, I mean, you're probably not working up to this, but I get asked pretty frequently, like, "Was it, isn't this your dream?" You know? And I'm like, "Well, yeah, seriously, like, I was a ten-year-old girl going, 'Oh, I wanna be a brewer.'" Like, no. I was a ten-year-old girl thinking about being a veterinarian or, you know, maybe a stewardess so I'd get to travel or something. I was not at all, brewing wasn't in my life for, other than when I was in Milwaukee and a kid, breweries *are* everywhere. And you would drive places and smell the brewery and I certainly know what beer is. But, it was not on my list of jobs, at all. And even after I did know, when I knew Dan, I was pretty sure I did not want to start a brewery.

03:11 McCulla: And so, where did you go to school and what did you study?

Carey: Well, so, I think you're talking about college. And I've had a year at Carroll College in Helena. And then another year in Bozeman. And I took general courses. And I do not have a college degree.

McCulla: And, so what was your path like after school?

Carey: Well, being poor, I was entrepreneurial. I did, like, every kind of work I could think of. I waitressed, I cleaned bathrooms, I started a graphics business 'cause I'm an artist, which is how I came to meet Dan. I went to the brewery and asked if they could use some help with their graphics. And, ended up getting some jobs there. So.

McCulla: And what brewery was this?

Carey: Kessler, in Helena, in 1983.

McCulla: And, when you joined the brewery, or came to work there as a designer, what, what, what did you do? What was your work like?

Carey: It was just graphics. Like, so I did, like, case cards and price things. I mean, nothing exotic. I mean, I lived in a trailer. I rode a bike. I had a little girl. And, was just struggling to get by. It was not anything interesting.

04:29 McCulla: And so, at some point, beer and brewing did become a bigger part of your like-, life, with, with Dan. How, how did that come about?

Carey: Well, Dan is a very talented brewer, and it was obvious to me from the very beginning that he has a special gift, a real passion that is, I think, really unique and interesting. And, I think people have gifts for a reason. But, I went, after Dan and I were together and he left Kessler, then we moved to Aurora, Oregon, and he built breweries for other people with an equipment manufacturer. I had a business where I imported German furniture, and I had regional artists, in a historic district, in Aurora, Oregon. And that was really interesting. And, I liked that. But, it was hard because the girls were very small and he's traveling and I'm working. And, so then Anheuser-Busch offered him a job and we thought, "Oh good. You know. Some stability. We'll have health insurance, you know. Make a good wage." And so, then we moved to Fort Collins, Colorado. And, really the problem there is that neither of us are very corporate, and they still, you know, he was working rotating shifts. He worked through the holidays. I had to take the kids out of school to see him. And, there just isn't, I mean, it wasn't *that* much money, and the, what is the price of your family? So, at a certain point, we were just really desperate. And so, all the while, I had my other businesses. I, you know, Dan's working for breweries, so I would hear, you know, 'cause they would bring me, like, the young wife to an equipment meeting, like, for dinner, to be charming. And, so I'm always hearing stories of what were happening with the guys at Full Sail and Widmer and, all these, you know, at that time, that was brewery startups, and it sounded really awful. And, when Dan would get home, these projects he'd be on, there was a multitude of times where I would pick him up at the airport very late at night. We would get home and it would be like a little after midnight, and he'd just fall asleep. And somebody'd be on the phone, and, you, hearing grown men like cry and scream, you know, at, 'cause they have landlines and we could hear people, you could tell the desperation and fear and real serious problems that people have starting breweries. So, it wasn't something I was wanting to do. But I just felt like I couldn't figure out where we could get some stability and be together. And, so, I said, "How about I start a brewery and you come work for me?"

McCulla: That's, a, an offer he could not refuse, perhaps.

Carey: I don't know. I think that he thought it was like, I think both of us thought it would never happen. And, I started to write the business plan and he had, was doing some research, like, on costs, 'cause we wanted to be accurate. And he called a malt supplier in Wisconsin and I remember his face turning really white in the kitchen, and he's like, "What? What?" And so, I said, "What do you, what happened?" "Well, Penny at Briess said, 'Are you bidding on the equipment?'" You know, "What equipment?" "Well, there's an SBA for closure sale for a brewpub in Appleton." And I said, "I'm gonna bid on it." And he goes, "You can't. We don't have any money." And I said, "I'm gonna sell the house." And he's, like, "What? We're living in it." And I said, "Well, by the time the auction's done, I'll have sold it." And I just felt really clear about it. And that's what I went about doing.

08:00 McCulla: And so, could you talk a bit more about the process of writing the business plan and, and putting together the...?

Carey: Yeah, sure. I think that people often, it seems like a big mystery and I think it's an important piece of the puzzle, because when you're poor it's hard to understand if you can't afford an education and you don't have people in your life that can help you in any way, how does that happen? And, the first thing that, we had a little book. And it's just like basic, you know, know your competition, what is your market, who's your consumer, you know, to research it and write those things down. And I'd taken a course that was just like a six-month course with a small business administration in the Clackamas Community College in Portland, Oregon. For my other business, actually, for my antique store. And it was called the Greenhouse Program. And they were really ruthless about kinda cutting through the crap. And that you have to get to the bottom of, like, what are you doing? What are you doing? So, when I started to write the business plan, I had researched a lot of different areas in the United States, and I thought Wisconsin still fit really well. And, you know, there were things going on here with craft brewing, but nothing that spectacular. No one was being wildly successful. I felt like I understood the market here and that I was just convinced that people would, you know, enjoy Dan's beer and they would understand that we were really all about quality and we would have the possibility of kind of growing things through word of mouth rather than commercial advertising. So, I, it didn't take me very long. Like, I just, I was writing it and I would give it to Dan to read. He would type, we had a neighbor help, we hired a secretary. And, it, you know, I just did month by month the first year, then year by year for five years, of the costs. And then, why I felt we'd do okay. And, in the meantime, one of my pieces of knowledge from this class was call competi-, you know, people in the same industry that aren't direct competitors, and ask advice. So, I called to Catamount and I spoke with Steve and I said, "Hey, you know, I'm writing this business plan," and, you know, like, I, it was a mystery to me. Where do you find people with money? I didn't know people with money. And, he said to me, "Well, Deb, there's people out there that have money, like more money than you can believe. And, they're looking for people like you and Dan. And they'll find you." And I was really mad, 'cause I thought, "Really, buddy? Like, you can't, like, give me an address or point me to a meeting or, like, where I should take out an ad? Like, this is, that's it? They'll find you?" Like, I was mad. And, so, I hung up the phone and I called Jamie Emmerson out at Full Sail, and Jamie goes down the exact same path of conversation. And so, now I'm thinking, "Wait a minute. I've heard the exact same thing from two people that don't know anything about this. And, so, this must be true." And then I called Ed out at Stoudt Brewery, and he said the same thing. And he said, "I also have the name of an attorney who would be, help you, with a private placement memorandum." And so, then that was that. That's how I did it. And then, so, what we, it really was just a leap of faith. So, I wrote the business plan. We didn't have any investors, not a single one. Zero family money. All we had was the money we'd had from flipping houses, like, beginning with my trailer that was five thousand dollars, and then the house that Dan referred to as Green Acres. And we moved up here. I got the equipment. I got the warehouse in town, on the other end of town. The man, his name is Rudy Rohner, he came on as my first investor and traded me stock for occupation of the building for a year. I went to the bank and negotiated a loan with no payments and no interest for six months. And so, I came back here, I was on the train with the kids, we got food poisoning. I came back to Fort Collins and I said to Dan, "Okay, I have it set. You need

to go put in your notice." And we packed the house. I had open houses in between my train ride and sold the house, and that was that.

12:23 McCulla: You mentioned that you were aware of how challenging the -

Carey: Yes.

McCulla: Brewing industry.

Carey: Bad.

McCulla: Was at the time.

Carey: I don't recommend it. [Chuckles]

McCulla: What gave you confidence aside from Dan's brewing ability? Or perhaps that, that was the confidence you did, that, that this is something that could work?

Carey: I, I can't explain that. I can only say, I've always worked really hard and I don't expect life to be very easy. And, I just felt like we were kind of at a dead end. I mean, obviously, the corporate world was not working. I mean, they thought he was great. But we're, you know, we're not gonna do more years of rotating shifts. And then they want him to go fix problems at breweries and travel all the time. And, I wasn't a fan of Colorado. And, I just, the only thing I could figure out to do. So, it isn't the thing of I felt super confident. I just felt like, well, we should try this, and if we fall on our faces, well, then, I can go back to waitressing and, you know, pump gas, and you know, we're thirty-three, so, we'll, I felt like we were young enough that we could start over. So, I wasn't certain I could do it.

13:34 McCulla: And so, what were the early days like at New Glarus?

Carey: Really horrific. [Laughs] We often referred to our days as running the gauntlet, and just figured if we could get through it and be standing, that'd be okay. We, neither of us had a day off for two years. We worked really long hours from, like, easily five or six in the morning until, regularly, nine or ten at night, sometimes later. Equipment broke down. The bank tried to take the brewery away from me. And, the village at one point decided they'd have a thousand-dollar surcharge for water usage. I had wholesalers order beer and cancel orders after we'd made the beer. Employees do things. I mean, competitors. It's like, and then, you know, there's the day-to-day grind of going in and out of bars selling beer while people say to you, "How'd you get your job?" "Well, what kind of beer is it?" "Well, are you cheaper than the cheapest discount beer with returnable bottles?" Like, "I don't have time for you. And what do you, what do you mean it's unfiltered?" I mean, so, there was just nothing. It was, it was just, it's tough.

14:42 McCulla: And Dan mentioned you were, were responsible for virtually a hundred percent of sales.

Carey: Yeah.

McCulla: When you, when you had con-, you know, introductory conversations with bar owners.

Carey: Yes.

McCulla: How would you talk about the beer?

Carey: Well, what I would say to them. [Chuckles] So, I'd introduce myself and then I'd say that my husband makes really great beer and I would describe the flavors of it at the time. We had Edel Pils and Uff-da Bock and Staghorn and, I don't remember what we made in the summer, maybe our Solstice, a wheat beer, something. Dan was very much into doing traditional beer styles, and so I would try to talk to them about the beers. Sometimes bring things for them to sample. And, it was interesting because, areas where you think you'd do really well, like, downtown areas of big cities, we got shut out, because I wasn't giving away product. And they would say things like, "Well, I could put your beer on if you can make it say 'Joe's Bar Beer.'" And I'm like, "Why would I do that? Because I need people to know *my* name. If I give you beer, and you sell it as 'Joe's Bar,' no one will ever know who I am. And, actually, that's illegal." Or, "Well, I could put it on if you give me one." "Well, if I'm gonna give away beer, I might as well just stand on the corner and give away money, and it'd be a lot more fun." So, I mean, it was just a uphill battle. But what occurred was, I mean, if you show up over and over again, and I think that's a lot of it that people don't understand now. Like, I was literally working on the bottling line, and then selling beer, so, it was me personally showing up over and over again. Pretty soon it just is intriguing. Like, "Well, okay, you know, I guess I'll put it on." And so, we had a little bit of success kind of in the surrounding areas. And then, eventually, it's probably within the last ten years that really we're doing well in the bigger metropolitan areas.

16:31 McCulla: And, how did consumers react to the flavor profile [unintelligible]?

Carey: Well, that was the thing. That was the key point. Because on the weekends another thing I did was give tours. And, so I would be, you know, take them around the brewery and then sample the beer. And the thing is, they did taste really good. And so, I've always seen the way that I market is more like pulling than pushing. Like, I'm not buying commercials and trying to talk somebody into drinking beer. People who are interested, we give 'em the beer to sample. And make really great beer at a fair price that, I feel like I did a really outstanding job with the label. Like, I draw the labels. I write the schmutz. So, I felt like I had done a good job of creating a visual image that reflected who we were and what we're about. So, that the story was, you know, consistent, and had integrity, which I think is another thing that a lot of brewers struggle with. That they just don't, you know, they kind of make up stuff or go for a fad rather than be who you really are. And, that resonated with people. And so, people were the ones who first noticed us and started to drink the beer. It was just people.

17:45 McCulla: And I wanted to ask about the, the design of, the look of your brand.

Carey: Uh huh.

McCulla: How that idea came about?

Carey: Yeah. Sure.

McCulla: And about the label art.

Carey: Well, it's hysterical because now there's a ton of people doing this kind of stuff, but at the time it was pretty far out. And, I knew that I would not be able to afford, like, four-color labels. Somebody had told me about this great new printing on foil, which is really pretty. And they're, like, we just didn't have the money. So, I, back to, I'm an artist. So, I'm drawing pictures, writing these little stories, which I'm thinking, well, once somebody gets around to picking up the bottle and reading this story, then there's a pretty good chance you're gonna buy it. And I just used one or two colors, because I was doing, I still do, I just did a label the other day, I do my own color separations by hand. They're not on computer. And that is what I could do. And, I felt like that looked like something that's interesting and local. And, I went to a great deal of trouble to do things like hunt down wine label paper so that it's a laid paper with a finish on it, which nobody did, and everybody thought I was insane. I also went to a great deal of trouble to get the six-pack carriers printed inside out so I didn't have to pay for a lot of color on the outside, and it was like the raw paper, which, again, everybody thought was insane. I mean, the wholesalers just flat out offended. They're like, "This is, really? This is it? I mean, we thought this was your, like, concept. Like, we can't sell this." I mean, that's what I was getting. "Really? You think this is gonna sell? This isn't gonna sell, like...." They, it was not. Now people come in with ideas that are a little out of the ordinary. And, I think wholesalers would, like, embrace it and think it's interesting or exciting. But, at the time, they were, they were pretty disgusted with me wasting their time.

19:48 McCulla: And, perhaps related to the design of, of the labels, how did the names of particular styles come about?

Carey: Well, like I said in the beginning, they're very traditional. So, Edel Pils, Noble Pilsner. That, like, every little town in Bavaria has a Edel Pils. So, that's how that came to be. Uff-da Bock is, Uff-da is a Norwegian expletive. I'm Norwegian. It's something my grandpa used to say. And I imagined that, you know, this big robust dark beer, that he would say that if he tasted that beer. And, then, Staghorn's pretty straight forward. I mean, it's fall. Some of the things now that we're better known for, like, Fat Squirrel and Spotted Cow, I mean, you can find it on the internet. But the, the Spotted Cow, it, we had won an award in England and we used to, 'cause the girls were here and we're running the business, so to be gone was really hard. So, we would fly like on Wednesday and come back on Friday or Saturday, kinda things. And, so, we had gone and done the award and had the evening to drive and look at England before we got back on the plane. And, it

was in the spring in lambing season, and so there were just like little lambs everywhere and they bounce around like popcorn, and really fun and interesting and, I was thinking how really sort of strangely exotic it was for me, you know, to be there. And then I thought, "Oh, I'll bet people come to Wisconsin and they feel the same way about, like, 'What is up with all these weird spotted cows?'" 'Cause there aren't spotted cows everywhere. And, I just thought it was funny. And I said, "I'm gonna name a beer Spotted Cow." And Dan was, like, "I think we need to find a hotel room and go to sleep." But that is, like, it's like that. Or Fat Squirrel. He had come home for lunch one day and, it was mid-February or March, like, snowy but a warm day. And, you know how the squirrels come out of hibernation, so they're total spazzes. And, they were really fat. So, for whatever reason. So, like, he sat down to eat lunch and he's like, "Man, did you see the squirrels?" 'Cause I like squirrels. I actually, at this moment, have a pet squirrel. And, he's getting wilder by the second. I'm sure it's only going to last another week or two. But anyway, so, he says, "Did you see all the squirrels out there? Man, they're really fat." And I was like, "Yeah, they are really fat." And then I was like, "You know, that's a good beer name." And he's like, "What?" And I said, "Fat Squirrel, that's a funny beer name." And he's like, "Oh yeah, it is. Okay." So, it's like that kind of sophisticated, deep research. That's how it occurs.

22:29 McCulla: Your logo as a company also, is it a thumbprint?

Carey: Yup.

McCulla: What's the story behind that?

Carey: Well, okay, back to I'm giving tours. And I was trying hard to think of a visual way to say that the beer was handmade, and it, that's not actually my first attempt at doing it. Because Wisconsin looks like a state, and people often say, like, we live here. This is Door County. So, I had tried some different iterations with a handprint on posters. And they were really awful. [Laughs.] And, I printed them anyway. Somebody's probably got one in their basement. Anyway, so, I still have this in my mind, this visual problem that I'm trying to solve. And I'm giving tours. And, maybe 'cause I was sick of working on a Saturday, I was thinking, Dan and I used to hike all the time. And in the olden days, you'd bring a topo map, before there was Garmin on your phone. You'd have a map with the little lines on it. And, all, all of a sudden it crossed my mind, it kind of looks like the way fingerprints are. And I thought, "Oh, maybe I can do something with that." So, in between tours, I inked up my thumb and blew it up on the Xerox, and then widened it out, to get it to not be as fuzzy, and shrunk it back down. And I was like, "Oh yeah, this works." And I just cut it into the state of Wisconsin and that's that. More intense research. [Laughs.]

23:50 McCulla: Well, related to the, this design process in a way, your beer has come to be known as very much aligned with the state of Wisconsin's identity.

Carey: Yeah.

McCulla: And, that is unique. How, how did that come about?

Carey: I, that wasn't a effort. I mean, it wasn't like a goal. I really love this state. I really do love it. And I think this is one of the best places on earth. But when we started the brewery, Leinie's was really big. Stevens Point, Point Brewery was big. Minhas was Joseph Huber at the time. City Brewery in La Crosse. Miller's here. So, the idea that we would be *the beer* of Wisconsin, no. That's not, that was never a goal. And I always think it's kinda funny when people say to me, "Oh, we're gonna do this." And I'm like, "No. Our goal was make great beer. Take care of the people around us." That was the end of it. And, it's still pretty much where my focus is. I really do not care about numbers. I don't care what other people are doing. I find the whole conversation very annoying. Like, it's, like, people are trying to take a, a right-brained, creative situation and put it into left-brain, lineal, something confined that they can understand. And I think they miss a lot of the spirit of what's happening when they do that. And it's happening, you know, around our country. And it's tragic that we have accountants, you know, running the world. But anyway, I won't go political. So, I, wasn't my idea to be the big brewery in Wisconsin. I just thought we would be who we are and, you know, we hope to maybe sell, you know, we figured we had to break even about eight thousand barrels, if we hit fifteen I thought we'd be doing pretty good. So, I know it's not a very good answer, but that's the truth.

25:41 McCulla: No, no. Well, and, and it's, it is fascinating that you've, you are a craft brewery-

Carey: Yup.

McCulla: Dan had something to say about, not, not necessarily considering craft versus non-craft a helpful distinction always, but that you have come to be identified with the state largely because you are only available in Wisconsin.

Carey: Yeah.

McCulla: How, at what point did you make that decision?

Carey: Well, that was just an economic decision. So, back to, like, so, we'd had the brewery, like, probably seven years. And, I had distributed beer into Illinois, 'cause I'm trying to figure out how to pay the bills. But, for me, I mean, the girls are getting bigger, I've gotta get up at three or four in the morning, put clothes on, drive in a unconditioned, air-conditioned car down to Chicago with crappy traffic, try to sell beer, people are just as, ruder down there than they were up here. It, I'd always get lost on the way home. I've gotta work on the bottling line the next morning. Get up, make breakfast for the kids. I mean, it's just, was exhausting. And we'd gotten into this cycle, and I think I can see a lot of craft brewers in there, and I feel for them, where it's like farming where you get a little bigger, you buy more equipment, the bank's doing great, get a little bigger, buy more equipment, bank is still doing great, you know. There's a *Parade* magazine article where I was making twenty-seven-thousand dollars, and I don't think we had health insurance, in 1997. And both of us were working. You know, it took us ten years to get back to the same family income that Dan had made alone at Anheuser Busch. And that's sixty-five

thousand dollars. You know, so, ten years to work, both of us working now, not just him. So, there just was a point where we needed to buy more equipment, and I was tired of driving to Illinois, and I was like, "Screw it." I'm gonna just, gonna pull out. Then we'll have enough to get us this extra ten or fifteen percent. We won't have to take out more loan. We won't have to have the uncomfortableness of construction. And I am sick to death of Illinois. I just, it's a whore's market. It was then, it still is. It was not a nice place to do business. And I'm glad I pulled out. It was quite the controversy, though. I mean, people just came unglued. Wholesalers threatened me with lawsuits. All kinds of people yelled at me. There was a lot of questions about what it, you know, what are you thinking? number one. And, don't be thinking you're gonna come back here and we're gonna embrace you. You know. You are done. You're dead to us. [Laughs] And I'm like, "Whatever."

28:35 McCulla: But it, I think it's fair to say that decision eventually made an incredible result, which is that your brand is kind of an alluring product that can only be had in the state.

Carey: Yeah. It still wasn't intentional. Like, there was a long time where I thought maybe I'd sell beer in Minnesota. I mean, and, I get asked all the time, "Will you sell beer other places?" If I have to pay bills, I will. But, as it turned out, it did turn into a great discussion point. It helped propel us forward. That happened at about the same time we came out with Spotted Cow, which also consumers embraced. And I, we sort of changed from the idea of making just really traditional beers that are within, like, probably Charlie Papazian's guidelines of style into just making things that we felt like, tasted really great. And, that was a shift, too. So, those things happened at the same time.

29:32 McCulla: Do you, would you say that Wisconsin has a unique beer culture compared to other regions or places in the country?

Carey: I, I mean, I think everything about Wisconsin is the best. But, sadly, you know, I've been to Oregon and they're pretty big on their beer culture. California thinks they're way cool. New York, like, no way. So, I think that that exists a lot of places now. In the sixties, I would say that was true. You know, Milwaukee really was the place for beer, but that's long gone. And there's a lot of states that have many more breweries than us, too.

30:06 McCulla: You, so, you and Dan have both been involved in brewing for several decades now. How would you characterize consumers' tastes over time?

Carey: I think that consumers become increasingly sophisticated in their, what they're looking for. And that works to our advantage. It doesn't work to the advantage of everyone who labels themselves a craft brewer, because certainly if you're contract brewing, you know, there's not a lot of integrity there. Or, if you're treating your workers horribly, word gets out. If you are not professional enough to be consistent in your process so that the beer tastes as great in the brewery as it does in somebody's refrigerator six months later. And those things, Dan gets credit for. Those are really hard to do. And I think those, that kind of consistent quality is just table stakes, to be in the game. And, I

just gave this keynote speech not so long ago, and I think that a lot of craft brewers are attempting to jump over that. And just, they're doing exactly what the big brewers did, which is go straight to marketing. You know? Let's do a cute label and find some attractive people and do something interesting on a Friday night. You know? Like, dunk tank. [Laughs] It's like, no, that's not how you sell beer. But, I think that consumers overall, it has worked to our advantage that these generations of people, and I had an entirely different conversation, I can't remember where I was, maybe at Chamber of Commerce in Madison, somebody had a great illustration where they said, "Do you remember, have you, did you ever hear about your grandparents flying somewhere? And how old were they?" You know? May, maybe never flew somewhere. Or did for something when they were forty. And then how old were you when you flew somewhere? Well, you were probably maybe in your twenties or a teenager, even. But how old are your children when they fly? You know? My children flew when they were infants. And so, that's the thing, is that we're really connected and people are very sophisticated in what they're looking for. And so, if you happen to be the kind of person that Dan is where you're constantly seeking out the best and, you know, refining processes and, I mean, if it's difficult to do, he's gotta do it. Like, you know, we're still making decoction mashes. I don't know anybody else who does that. Beers that are aged, literally for years, before they show up, you know, in a bottle for somebody to buy. His crazy cellaring program with a coolship. You know, all of those things, I mean, they just really are a treasure.

32:48

McCulla: How, and, you've balanced family and your and Dan's relationship and, and business for a long time. How have you two found that you could do that successfully?

Carey: Well, it's really hard and I wouldn't recommend it. Everyone's, oh, somebody calls me and they're like, you know, my boyfriend or my wife or whatever, and I'm like, man, this is really, you know, the rate of divorce in the country is like fifty percent, and it's like seventy, fifty percent or seventy-five percent of people who do business together get divorced. I mean, it's much higher, much, much higher. And, it makes sense because you have good days and bad days on the exact same day. You know, like, if my day sucked, his day sucked. So, who's gonna go home and be nice to the other guy? So, I think the reason that we do so well is that we have a great deal of respect and, you know, deep caring for each other. And, we, at a certain point, started to divide out what his jobs and my jobs are, so there's not so much conflict. And, we have a interesting way of communicating where it's like, look, I don't like what you're doing, but this is yours. And so, I will let you do that. And then both of us are very good at walking away and letting the other guy do whatever it is he thinks is best. And, I think that comes from the respect. But, raising the kids was, I'm not sure anybody would do what I did, but I used to get up at five in the morning, and I would still be working at ten or eleven. I mean, and that's just what it takes. It's hard to cook and clean and show up for school things and, lot of work.

34:26

McCulla: Yes. Looking back over your career, how would you say you've also been able to blend your work as an artist and an entrepreneur?

Carey: Well, that's been another real challenge. And what I've been doing with that, because, I mean you must write, and so then you know that it's, it's not like, "Oh, I have ten minutes. I'll quick jam something out." So, I have to, like, have the space. And I also have to have the mental, like, brain power to be rested. And, clear thinking. And, so what I started to do was, like, block out time. Like, maybe take off a week. Or, you know, squeeze it in on the weekend. And, it has languished at certain points. And at other points, I've been able to do a lot of work and, not as much as I'd like to, but, that, that's how I do it. [Laughs]

35:17

McCulla: Aside, in addition to the, the labels you've designed, how has being an artist changed your role in this job, would you say?

Carey: Well, I think that I come to it with a really unique perspective, and I'm a very creative problem solver. And I think that comes from being an artist, that I do not, I mean, I do know about other breweries, but I had, don't have any business background. I don't know how things are generally done. I, I will figure it out by being in it. You know? Like, I can see the problem because I'm in the market. Or, I see the problem because I can hear consumers. So, for me, creative problem solving, I think, is one of my strengths. And, also being very respectful of other people, that the people here are very important to me, and they know that. And, both of us work, we lead from the front. Like, you know, we're here working with our people. And, which is another thing a lot of people don't do, that they're, they're just away. For whatever reason, they're not, they're not in the front lines. They're not serving beer. They're not in the brew kettle. You know? When shit hits the fan, they are not grabbing a shovel. And we both do. And, I think that is, makes us very different kind of leaders. Servant-leaders, actually. Somebody called me, a few years ago after we were here, and he introduced himself and he's, rambled off a list of books that I didn't know and I didn't know his name and I felt bad about it. But, you know, it is what it is. And then he said, "I, I write about these things. What I'm writing about is servant-leaders. I think you are a servant-leader." And I, I at the time, I had no idea what he was talking about. But now that I've looked into it more I'm like, oh yeah, that is what I do.

37:08

McCulla: Related to that idea, perhaps, in this moment of change in the brewing industry, what, what do you think is coming for New Glarus and also for the brewing industry as a whole?

Carey: Well, I think it's an exciting time to be a brewer. And, there is a ton going on. And, you know, unfortunately, in this industry, everybody gets piled together, whether you're a brewpub, contract brewer, big brewer, small brewer, doesn't matter. You're like, a brewery. And for me, maybe because I'm in the center of it, I see different divisions. So, brewpubs, everybody's going out to eat. You're in charge of your beer and the experience that somebody has when they consume it. So, that's wide open. And you could see a ton of, ton of them starting. Contract brewers, I think they're gonna go by the wayside. People have had enough of being told fake stories, and you do not have the control over having somebody else make your beer as doing it yourself. And so, I think that those have, they're really gonna struggle. Big brewers, interestingly, and maybe

they'll regroup, but it appears that they have totally floundered back to this idea of the accountants taking over. And, I make fun of AB at my keynote [laughs], because they're using a nursery rhyme to sell beer, and I think that's ridiculous. And, so, I'm just, like, how do you totally abdicate the conversation about the quality of your beer, what you do? Like, would you sell a car and sell a nursery rhyme? Who would do that? Like, you of course should at least, like, mention the engine. I mean, it's just, like, I don't understand this thought process. I just think people get very isolated and ev-, you know, every piece of a business, they all think that their parts are most important. You know? The brewer thinks they're, what their energy is, or the marketing departments thinks theirs is, or gift shop thinks they are the most important, or the accountant thinks they're the most important. And, that's my job, is to get, value each of them and use them, you know, to better everybody's, you know, synergistic energies have to occur where there's some balance. And I just think the big brewers are under so much pressure from trying to keep stock prices up, and shareholders happy, that they have just caved to what the accountants say. And there really aren't any family-owned big breweries anymore. I mean, they're all international conglomerates. So, I think for people like me, who are making beer and really trying hard, I think sky's the limit.

McCulla: A big question to end on. It's a simple one.

Carey: Okay.

39:56 McCulla: But, what do you value most about what you do?

Carey: Oh, that's a very simple one for me. I absolutely, and I, I cry when people ask me this. I absolutely am honored to be part of the lives of the people who work here. Absolutely, because I have been very poor, and to have a job where you are valued as a human being and your work is respected and you have health insurance and you have a living wage, is a rare thing. And I know that that is life-changing. And, just from being here for twenty-five years now, not only is everybody very sweet to us, and super supportive, but then they come back and they'll say, "You know, my daughter graduated from college this year, and she has a great job and, you know, that's because I get to work here with you." And, I mean, a lot of stories like that. People regularly, like, just this summer, we've had three new babies in the brewery, and it's very common for them to drive home from the hospital and stop by the brewery and show off their baby. And, so, it's, I mean, I can't, can't take credit. They certainly do tons of work on their own relationships and all of those things, but, that makes life really rich. And I think we're here for a reason. And it is not, it isn't about making money.

McCulla: Fantastic. Thank you so much for your time.

Carey: Oh, good.