

## **Boening Brothers, Inc: A Century of Family Business**

Boening Brothers, Inc., located in Lindenhurst, NY, is one of the most known and respected names in the beverage distribution business. Its story is intimately tied to 20<sup>th</sup> Century American history, as well as the growth and development of Long Island. In 1901 farmer Phillip Boening frequently made trips from his farm in Rosedale, Queens to the many breweries in Brooklyn in order to purchase spent grain, a brewing by-product, with which to feed his livestock. Before he would make these trips to the breweries, his neighbors would ask him to bring back some beer for them as well. Soon Phillip found that picking up beer from the breweries and delivering it to consumers was more profitable than farming, and a business was born. Eventually Phillip brought his two sons, Phillip Jr. and Harry, the eponymous brothers, into the business as well. The business grew slowly from its one man, horse-and-wagon operation to a multiple building facility on the site of the Boening farm in Rosedale, Queens. A fleet of trucks and drivers, a sales force, and an office staff were all added to the mix, and in 1930 Phillip Sr. passed the business on to his son Harry, and Phillip joined the team later. During Prohibition, the company stayed in business as a near-beer and soft drink wholesaler, and was the first company to introduce Pepsi-cola to Long Island.

World War II brought another new challenge to the company. Throughout the duration, no new trucks could be purchased, gasoline and tires were heavily rationed, and a large number of employees were drafted into the services. Harry Boening was able to adapt to these issues, and made many deliveries and trips to the breweries himself, often bringing his son Harold "Hap" Boening along with him. A major move forward would occur in 1949 with the addition of Miller Brewing Co. to the Boening Brothers portfolio. Miller products have since become the company's flagship items, and the Boening family stands as one of the oldest Miller wholesalers in the country.

In 1962, Harry handed the business over to his son Hap. Born in 1932 in a house on the same compound as the warehouses in Rosedale, Hap spent his entire life in and around the family business. As a child he would frequently answer the phone and take orders or ride along with salesmen and truck drivers. After returning from service in the Korean War, Hap went to work for Boening Brothers full time in the sales department. As Long Island continued to grow in population, the need for a more centralized location for the warehouse and office became apparent. In 1966 under Hap's leadership, Boening Brothers moved from Rosedale, Queens to its current location in North Lindenhurst, where a new building was constructed. This new facility includes a 120,000 square-foot warehouse, and stands at the border of Nassau and Suffolk counties in order to better service all of Long Island.

In 1980 another opportunity to expand presented itself as Hap Boening opened Oak Beverages, Inc. in Blauvelt, NY, a sister company that services New York City and many of its surrounding counties, including Rockland, Putnam, Dutchess, Sullivan, Orange, and Ulster, increasing the Boening territory to 14 counties throughout New York State. (For more info on sister company Oak Beverages click [here](#).)

In 2001, the sale of distribution rights to Heineken was offset by another major change to the Boening brand portfolio—the introduction of Yuengling to the New York market. As a fifth generation family-owned operation, D.G. Yuengling and Sons, America’s oldest brewery, was a natural fit for the multi-generational family owned Boening Brothers. The Boening companies helped to grow this regional favorite into a recognized and competitive entity in the large New York market.

As Boening Brothers prepares to celebrate its 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011, the company continues to look to the future, with the introduction of wines and spirits to its portfolio in addition to beer stalwarts like Miller, Guinness, Samuel Adams, Yuengling, Brooklyn Brewery, and Bass Ale, among many other fine beers and ales. Today we employ nearly 150 individuals in various capacities such as sales, trucking, warehousing, office administration, beer plumbing, and product merchandising. We are active in our community, and look forward to a second prosperous century in the beer business.