



THE EAST TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MUSEUM of EAST TENNESSEE HISTORY

Making history personal

For Immediate Release

Press Contact: ChereL Henderson, Director

865-215-8823 | 865-933-5232

chereL@eastTNhistory.org

www.eastTNhistory.org

June 24, 2019

"It'll Tickle Yore Innards!" HILLBILLY A History of Mountain Dew

New feature exhibition opening at the
Museum of East Tennessee History

WHAT: *"It'll Tickle Yore Innards!"*: A (Hillbilly) History of Mountain Dew
a new feature exhibition at the Museum of East Tennessee History

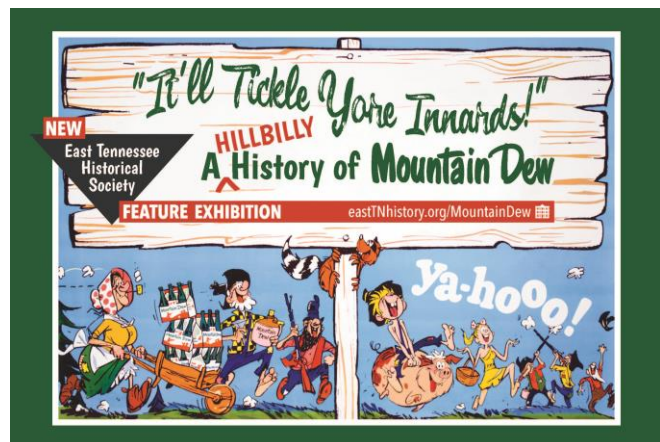
DATE: Open June 29, 2019—January 20, 2020
Special Members Preview: Thursday, June 27, 2019, from 4:00-6:00 p.m.

LOCATION: East Tennessee History Center
601 S. Gay Street
Knoxville, TN 37902

(Knoxville, TN) Mountain Dew. Today it's the soft drink of gamers and programmers. It "fuels" skateboarders, snowboarders, and racecar drivers. And for some, it's the perfect pairing for Doritos or Taco Bell fare.

High in sugar and caffeine, Mountain Dew ranks as the third most popular "liquid refreshment brand," behind only Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola. How did Mountain Dew become so popular, at a time when many Americans are looking for healthier beverage options?

In a new feature exhibition *"It'll Tickle Yore Innards!"*: A (Hillbilly) History of Mountain Dew at the Museum of East Tennessee History, you can explore the drink's storied history, which began here in the hills of Appalachia.



Mountain Dew was invented in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1946 when Barney and Ally Hartman, of the Hartman Beverage Corporation, first debuted their new soft drink at a Gatlinburg convention. The drink's trademark became official in 1953. Originally, Mountain Dew's flavor was lemon-lime similar to 7-Up or Sprite and it was created by the Hartman brothers primarily as a mixer for hard liquor. In fact, the name "Mountain Dew" came about because the brothers joked that when mixed with liquor, the drink resembled a fine Tennessee moonshine. To continue the hillbilly aura, the old Mountain Dew bottles depicted a Tennessee moonshiner shooting at a revenuer as he exits an outhouse.

Although Mountain Dew was born in Knoxville, it grew up in Johnson City, Tennessee. Sales of the lemon-lime flavored Mountain Dew were modest around Knoxville, so the Hartmans decided to expand their reach by issuing their first franchise to Charlie Gordon of Tri-City Beverage in Johnson City in 1954. Charlie Gordon used unique and aggressive advertising techniques to promote Mountain Dew and to dramatically increase the drink's hillbilly desirability. However, it was not until 1960 when Tri-City's manager, Bill Bridgforth, changed the flavor to the citrus-lemonade flavor we know today, that the drink began to soar. As Bridgforth put it, "it took off like a cat hit on the tail with a hammer."

About "It'll Tickle Yore Innards!": A Hillbilly History of Mountain Dew

The Museum of East Tennessee History will feature "It'll Tickle Yore Innards!": A (Hillbilly) History of Mountain Dew, on view from June 29, 2019 through January 20, 2020. The exhibition highlights the drink's history, from the origins of the term "mountain dew" and the development of the marketable hillbilly image that influenced media and culture, to becoming the third most popular soft drink brand.

The exhibition includes more than 200 artifacts highlighting the drink's history, moonshining, and the hillbilly image. The exhibition begins with video footage of early moonshine busts and a visit to a moonshine still in Cocke County in 1938. A variety of liquor jugs, dating from as early as the 1890s are on display with other moonshine paraphernalia. There is an assortment of artifacts reflecting the early color writers and their effects on the hillbilly image, as well as artifacts from Knoxville's 1910 Appalachian Exposition. One case contains a variety of "hillbilly" memorabilia, including *Beverly Hillbillies* dolls, comic books, *Lil' Abner* items, and a pair of *Hee Haw* overalls.



The exhibition features a 1900 carbonation machine from the Roddy Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Knoxville and a sizeable display of rare and highly collectable bottles, including a few dating to Knoxville in 1927, a progression of Mountain Dew bottles over the years, and a variety of other vintage soft drinks from around the region. Of special interest are the "Barney and Ally" bottles, which were the first Mountain Dew bottles ever produced. In 1951 and 1952, the Hartman Beverage Company produced 7 oz. green and clear bottles. The applied color

label's bare the name of the creators of Mountain Dew. In the early 1950s, green bottles were reserved for "colorless" flavors, while clear bottles were used for drinks where the color would reflect the actual flavor. Mountain Dew was originally bottled as a set of flavored drinks and not as a specific flavor like today. Also displayed are a variety of items relating to the Hartmann family.

There will be a member preview and reception at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 27, with light refreshments and, of course, Mountain Dew provided by PepsiCo Knoxville. The public opening will be on Saturday, June 29th at 10:00 a.m.

The exhibition by the East Tennessee Historical Society is made possible through a partnership with PepsiCo Knoxville. The exhibit is on view at the Museum of East Tennessee History through January 20, 2020.



The Museum of East Tennessee History is open 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Saturday; and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sunday. Museum admission is \$5.00 for adults, \$4.00 for seniors, and FREE for children under 16. Each Sunday admission is FREE to all and ETHS members always receive FREE admission. The Museum is located in the East Tennessee History Center, 601 South Gay Street, Knoxville, TN 37901. For more information about the exhibition, scheduling a school tour, or visiting the museum, call (865) 215-8824, email eths@eastTNhistory.org, or visit www.easttnhistory.org.

About East Tennessee Historical Society

Established in 1834, the East Tennessee Historical Society is widely acknowledged as one of the most active history organizations in the state and enjoys a national reputation for excellence in programming and education. For 185 years the East Tennessee Historical Society has been helping East Tennesseans hold on to our unique heritage—recording the events, collecting the artifacts, and saving the stories that comprise the history we all share.

END RELEASE