What do Ohio Northern and a certain well-known beverage have in common?
Read on and see.
This chapter in Northern’s history began innocuously in 1892 when a communication was received from the U.S. Commissioner of Education, William Harris, soliciting an exhibit for the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The work submitted was to be prepared by students and not to consist of museum exhibits.
As Northern’s president H.S. Lehr observed, these conditions were satisfactory since “... we were “short” in the line of museum exhibits, but we could do something in the line of student work.”

The opportunity to advertise his school before a mass audience was too good to miss.

(Attendance was later Estimated at 27,300,000).
Considering the possible competition from wealthier schools, some faculty members suggested that the university should not participate, but, in the end, a creditable showing was assembled.

English classes submitted essays while geography classes prepared maps.
Prof. Rogall assembled samples of his students' artwork.
Mrs. Eva Maglott, teacher of higher mathematics, had her students to prepare under her supervision intricate figures in analytics worked out by silk threads and fine steel wires.

The teachers of engineering had their students to prepare blue prints and fine specimens in projection drawing.
And a collection of dried medicinal herbs was prepared by a pharmacy student. (In ONU Archives).
Manufacturers & Liberal Arts Building – Site of Education Exhibits
Northern was awarded a medal in recognition of the school’s efforts.

In ONU archives,
Heterick Mem. Library
Northern’s medal was also accompanied by a blue ribbon which appeared on university catalogs for several years.
There also was a competition for the best beer, but the judges, perhaps after intense sampling, were unable to choose a finalist.

It appears that one brewer took matters in his own hands, and, as the saying goes “.... The rest is history.”
Meanwhile - The Exposition was the first large-scale use of electric lighting.

That, plus the white surfaces of most buildings, gave the fair the nickname of "The White City."
The most visible element was George Washington Gale Ferris’ wheel, first of its kind.
On a gastronomic level, the Exposition brought the world:

- Cream of Wheat
- Hershey chocolate - Milton Hershey bought a European exhibitor's chocolate manufacturing equipment and added chocolate products to his caramel manufacturing business
- Juicy Fruit gum
- Quaker Oats
- Shredded Wheat
- Aunt Jemima pancake mix
In retrospect, Lehr’s decision to participate in the World’s Columbian Exposition was a wise one.

For minimal cost, he was able to showcase his school at an event which was, itself, a stage for a host of technical and commercial innovations.

This is all the most impressive since some 27,300,000 visitors attended the Exposition at a time when the U.S. population was not quite 63 million.