

# Brewery History in Pittsburgh

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The list below illustrates the brewpubs that have opened in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County since the end of prohibition in 1933. With the repeal of prohibition breweries were once again allowed to quench the thirst of the public. But they had to be only breweries as brewing at home or in bars were still illegal. Home brewing became legal in 1977 and brewpubs in 1989 or maybe a year sooner. The information was taken from my notes when I talked to the brewer or owner of each place.

### List of Brewpubs in order of opening

#### Penn Brewery

Troy Hill Road (City-North Side), web:

Opened September 12, 1989

Original brewer Alex Demel, a German national, came over to help Tom design and build the brewery. His tenure was short lived only because he desired to open other breweries in Europe. Not directly after, but soon, Ivan became brewer until 1997 when Peter Boettcher started (he left in Aug 01). He is a Bavarian State Certified Technical brewmaster who studied at the Weihenstephan Institute and Doemens Technical College. Both are located in Munich. He has worked for several European breweries since his graduation in 1992. He is the Master Brewer. But his venture at Penn did not last and Paul (?) became HB.

The brewery opened as the Allegheny Brewery & Pub (changed in 1992) and was the first brewpub to open in Pennsylvania. Founders, Tom and Mary Beth Pastouris fought to allow the brewing of beer in a restaurant. The brewing kettles were made in Germany and assembled on site with German craftsman. They look like a work of art standing behind the glass wall separating the brewery from the restaurant. The late Michael Jackson called the brewery spectacular. Tom lived and worked in Germany so his beers are (truly) German. So is the beer hall as it is what Tom remembers and built in the same style.

The facilities of the brewery were born a brewery early on. This was the E & O Brewery until the early 1950's when they merged with other area breweries to form Pittsburgh Brewing Company. Pittsburgh Brewing, now called Iron City Brewing after its flagship beer, is just down the street from the Church Brew Works.

#### Penn-Stoudt's Connection

Pennsylvania Brewing formed in Philadelphia in 1986 as a microbrewery with no brewing operations. They contracted out to then Pittsburgh Brewing. Stoudts opened in

1987 as a microbrewery. The Pittsburgh brewing operations of Penn began September 12, 1989 and included the pub. Stoudt's pub room did not open until the fall of 1996. The dates came from Penn and Stoudt's published literature.

Unlike Penn, Stoudt's was not a brewpub, as it did not have pub to go along with the brew. The Black Angus restaurant next door belonged to Ed Stoudt. His wife Carroll owned the brewery but under the law they had to be separate.

### Church Brew Works

3525 Liberty Avenue (City-Law) web:

Opened August 1, 1996

Original brewer Brian Pearson was head brewer until 2007. He left to pursue a brewing related venture out of state. The founder of the Church is Sean Casey.

The Church has the distinction of being the first brewpub in Pennsylvania of being granted a full liquor license on December 6, 1996. When the state permitted brewpubs they could not serve wines or spirits.

Another distinction is that the building is (was) a real church. It was built as a Roman Catholic Church. Although the English Brown and Pale Ale are remarkably spot-on, the brewery leans towards continental brews. As for distinctions, I am happy to say that I was permitted to draw the first pint of cask ale. Aran Madden worked here before moving out west. I will never forgive him, as his pale ale was the best.

### Three Rivers Brewing **CLOSED**

2837 Smallman Street (City-Strip District)

Opened December 1996, closed July 31, 1997

Original, and only brewer, Mark Slater was hired while still in England. When the brewery closed he and family (wife Judy) moved to New York State. They soon moved back to the UK. Upon his return he began brewing for St. Peter's Brewery in Bungay. Did I say that Mark was an Englishman? That should be all that needs to be said. As I have been drinking in the UK for some 30 years I can say his were spot on.

### Foundry Ale Works **CLOSED**

2816 Smallman Street (City-Strip District)

Opened November 1997, closed

Original brewer Jonathan Zangwill was known throughout the region for brewing some of the most highly hopped beer ever to pass the lips of mankind. It is easy to dump tons of hops in a brew but that would make it undrinkable. Jonathan knew how to balance the hops with the malt to make beers we still talk about today.

Aran Madden came after Jonathan but he left for the Church in early January 1999.

### Strip Brewery **CLOSED**

2106 Smallman Street (City-Strip District)

Opened 1997, closed

Original brewer Bill Ehlert came down from Buffalo Brewing. It was said that he moved south after the brewery closed. Bill did traditional ales served in wood casks and without pressure or pumping.

## Valhalla **CLOSED**

Smallman Street (City-Strip District-Convention Center area)

Opened 1997, closed 2003

Original brewer Dave Strock was a short-timer and was quickly followed by Patrick O'Neal (1997 – 1998) and finally Sean McIntyre on August 18, 1998. Patrick came up from the parent brewery in Louisiana and Seam came from John Harvard's where he was assistant brewer to Bill Bryson. When Valhalla closed, Seam moved to the original brewer spot at North County Brewing in Butler Co. English ales were featured here but their signature beer was the Pils.

Christopher Passodelis was the original owner but sold the brewpub in 2003. In September of that year they ceased brewing operations.

## John Harvard's **CLOSED**

Penn Center Shops (County-Wilkins)

Opened August 19, 1997, closed September 2008

The original head brewer was Pete Seaman until April 1999 when he left for the Two Stars Brewery in Atlanta. Sean McIntyre was Pete's assistant until he left for Valhalla in the Strip. Bill Bryson took the lead until his departure in 2001. Bill came from John Harvard's – Cleveland where he was the number 2 brewer. Andrew Maxwell became head brewer but left in 2006 to open Rivertowne in Monroeville. My beer stained notes have Erik Gruetzmacher as an assistant and I have Brad Bernas listed as a brewer but that's all I have.

## Rock Bottom Brewery

171 E. Bridge Street (County-Homestead)

Opened April 1, 2002

Original brewer Mathew Carroll was brewing for RB in Colorado when he came to Pittsburgh. The predominant beer style here is English ale but they make a nice round of German and Continental beers. The bar has a refrigerated tray running down the middle that forms an ice shelf. No need to be concerned about global warming raising the temperature of your brew here.

## Rivertowne Pour House

(County-Monroeville)

Opened June 11, 2007

Original brewers Andrew Maxwell from John Harvard's and the former brewer from Johnstown Brewing (I can't remember his name) opened this BP together. They worked separate shifts brewing so when the place opened there would be plenty of beer. The BP serves a nice range of ales, lagers and wheat beers.

## Hofbraühaus

(City-South Side)

January 20, 2009 – projected opening

Original brewer has yet to be announced. The owner of this haus is the same as the Cincinnati (Covington, Kentucky) location. When open this will serve German style beers, to be sure.

## Brewery Closures

Of all the brewpubs listed above that are closed, none did so due to lack of support from the public or my bladder. Each closed because of financial difficulties brought on by over-extended credit, major construction traffic causing traffic nightmares or simply the owners wanting to play someplace else.

## Pittsburgh's Breweries

Pittsburgh was a major brewing center before prohibition but afterwards most never returned to the craft. The Duquesne Brewery closed leaving Pittsburgh with one.

### Iron City Brewery

Formerly Pittsburgh Brewing Company  
Liberty Avenue (City-Law)

This is the last brewery of the post-prohibition era still operating in town. At one time they were one of the top 5 breweries in the country but were beset by issues late in life. After some re-organizing they continue to live as the Iron City Brewery.

They gained an influx of money when they were contracted to make Sam Adams. But they lost most of the many other brands that they produced. When the Sam Adams account moved on they fell into hard times.

### East End Brewery

6923 Susquehanna St 15208 (City-Homewood)

Homepage: [www.eastendbrewing.com](http://www.eastendbrewing.com)

Opened in 2005; not as a brewpub but as a small regional brewery

Beer Styles: English & Belgium style beers

Scott Smith, Brewer, Owner, Sales and Clean-up man

This is Pittsburgh's second brewery, along with Iron City. The Big Hop IPA is an American version of IPA. Mostly in the style of English ale Scott Smith makes a Belgian Wit. The brewery's ales can be found on tap and cask all around southwestern Pa.

### Duquesne Brewery

Mary Street (City-South Side)

Things were going well until a labor strike and a mysterious fire caused their closure in 1977. As with most post-prohibition and after war breweries, they produced German style lager beer. Major brands were Silver Top and Duquesne Pilsner. The adverts would call customers to "*Have a Duke*".