

## **History of beer making in Maryland**

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Craft beer brewing has a long history and tradition in Maryland. English and Dutch colonists more than 400 years ago brought along the European tradition of brewing beer at home and in the pub.

The first commercial brewery in Maryland was the Fordham Brewing Co., founded in 1703 in Annapolis by Benjamin Fordham. In Baltimore, the first brewery was built at the corner of Baltimore and Hanover streets in 1748. Later, as more Germans immigrated to the state, more breweries were established across the state.

In Frederick, men by names such as Heck, Hauser, Baer, Lipps and Kuhn founded breweries, many of which were located on Brewers' Alley along Carroll Creek, now Court Street. In Cumberland, German and Swiss immigrants named Zink, Himmler, Beck, Fersenmeier, Hodel and Gessner were instrumental in founding a brewing industry in Western Maryland. In the mid-1800s, German immigrants brought with them special yeast and recipes that created a lighter, golden-colored beer, the lager.

From the second half of the 19th century and into the next, technology advanced, and so did the process of making, storing and packaging beer. Ceramic containers led to glass bottles, and the cork and wired ceramic closures led to metallic crown corks. At the turn of the 19th century, paper labels were developed, and embossed bottles soon disappeared.

Refrigeration and the knowledge of preventing microbial infections led to the preservation of beer and its increased shelf life. Rail and then trucks helped move beer over long distances. Additionally, advances in automation made the brewing process easier and cheaper.

Suds cease

Through all this time, it became more and more difficult for the small neighborhood brewer to compete with larger more efficient brewers, many from out of state.

Then came the Volstead Act in 1920, and overnight the brewing industry ceased to exist (a moment of silence, please). The 13 years of Prohibition left an ugly mark on Maryland: Fewer than half of the pre-Prohibition breweries reopened.

By the 1940s, large brewers such as American Brewery, Arrow Brewing, Freestate Brewery and National Brewing Co. dominated the market.

At first, they produced flavor-filled brews. But, with time and particularly after World War II, the beer became thin and bland. Profits were becoming an issue as competition among local and national breweries intensified.

More local breweries went out of business. Increasingly, out-of-state beer was being trucked into Maryland. Mergers and takeovers became the predominant issue in the brewing industry in the late '60s and '70s.

The landmark event that shaped the modern-day brewing industry occurred on June 12, 1969, when cigarette giant Phillip Morris inhaled Miller Brewing Co. Within 10 years, only 40 brewing firms would exist in America, down from 750 after the repeal of Prohibition.

And as things became more consolidated, Baltimore's "old girl," National Brewing Co., closed its doors for good more than a quarter-century ago. National Brewing Co., which employed 900 in its heyday of the '50s and '60s, would be the last vestige of a locally owned brewery in the state.

About the same time, Miller Brewing Co. purchased the "Lite" trademark from the sinking Meister Brau brewery, and with the help of Madison Avenue, light beer came to dominate the domestic market. By then, a new generation was accepting the lightened American domestic beer as "beer."

#### Beer backlash

However, across the pond in England something was happening a consumer backlash against bland, mass-produced and gassy beers. The brewpub concept and the Campaign for Real Ale caught the eye of traveling Americans.

One such person was Jack McAuliffe, who became enamored with malty Scottish ales while stationed in Scotland with the U.S. Navy. In 1977, he opened New Albion Brewing Co. in Sonoma, Calif. Although it folded in 1983, the microbrew keg was tapped, and the word was out about beer with body and taste.

The Maytag family resurrected Anchor Brewery in San Francisco, and the late Bert Grant later opened the first brewpub in 1982 in Yakima, Wash. This was soon followed in 1983 by Bill Owens opening Buffalo Bill's in Hayward, Calif.

It did not take long before similar ideas were fermenting here in Maryland. In 1988, Craig Stewart-Paul and Steve Parkes opened British Brewing Co. in Linthicum as the first modern-day craft brewery in the state.

Restaurateur Hugh Sisson petitioned the state to change the law that would allow him to brew and serve beer on premise. In 1989, Sissons Restaurant in Baltimore incorporated a brewery to become the first modern-day brewpub in Maryland, introducing Baltimore to on-premise craft-brewed beer.

Soon after, Theo DeGroen from the Netherlands opened Baltimore Brewing Co., which specializes in German-style brews. In January 1993, Bill Oliver started producing authentic English ales at the Wharf Rat Brewery on Pratt Street.

In September 1996, Volker Stewart, Craig Santori and Johey Verfaillie opened Brewer's Art in Baltimore. This is one of the few breweries in the region or for that matter, in America to specialize in Belgian-style ales. In Annapolis, Allen Young and Bill Muehlhauser resurrected Fordham Brewery in 1995 after a hiatus of a couple of centuries and introduced German-style brews to the state capitol.

Out in the Piedmont, on South Carroll Street in Frederick, Frederick Brewing Co. was founded principally by Kevin Brannon and Majorie McGinnis in 1993. The small brewer went public in 1996 and built a state-of-the-art facility outside of town and soon became the largest craft brewer in the state.

On the Eastern Shore, Allan Pugsly from England opened the Wild Goose Brewery in Cambridge in October 1989. Jim Lutz, who had taken over the brewery in 1991, was instrumental in incorporating the Wild Goose brands into Frederick Brewing Co. in 1998. The demise of brewing on the Shore was short-lived, as Chris DiForte in the same year opened Brewmasters brewpub in Ocean City.

At the opposite end of the state, Deep Creek Beer Works opened in Oakland in 1996 and later moved to a new restaurant and brewing facility in McHenry, overlooking Deep Creek Lake and Wisp ski resort.

Today, Maryland's breweries brew a range of styles and flavors. The latest addition to the mix is Clay Pipe Brewery in Westminster, which was opened this March by Gregg Norris. Norris gained much of his brewing experience at Anheuser Busch, the world's largest brewer.

Today, Maryland's fledging craft brewing industry struggles. Competition from large out-of-state and foreign breweries with deep advertising pockets, along with strict state laws, make it difficult for the young industry to get a foothold on the local market.

Recently, an advocacy group, Brewers Association of Maryland, was formed to lobby for the craft brewing industry of Maryland. The mission of the association and craft brewers in Maryland is to rally more local support for their young industry by retailers, restaurants and the service industry throughout the state.

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