

## Steinert's Tavern, Incorporated

Founded: 1883

Location: 301 East Oak Street, New Albany (1883–86); 96 Charlestown Road (1886–1913); 2015 Charlestown Road (1913–17); Fairmont Park (1917–18); 2015 Charlestown Road (1918–38); 2239 Charlestown Road (1938– )

Steinert's Tavern began as a small grocery store in New Albany. The store, like many throughout the country, had a barrel of whiskey in the corner of the room. After three years in its first location the owners moved the business to Charlestown Road. At the Charlestown Road location the business operated as both a grocery store and a saloon. Michael Steinert, Sr., a German immigrant, was the founder. By 1895 Michael's brother John had joined the business as a barkeeper, and Michael Jr. was the store's clerk.

In 1913 the business moved to a new location on Charlestown Road. After his father's death, Michael Jr. expanded the store into a complex of businesses, including a feed store. His sons, Michael A. and Joseph J. Steinert, became part of the tradition before 1920. In 1917 a tornado ripped through New Albany, destroying several buildings including the Steinerts' store. A picture in the city directory shows Michael Jr. standing behind a crumpled heap of glass and wood that the day before had been his saloon. The business temporarily moved to the old Fairmont Park until a new building could be erected.

In 1917 Indiana legislators outlawed the manufacture or sale of alcohol within the state's borders. In the 1920s the Steinerts operated their business as only a grocery store and restaurant, thus remaining within the law. After the repeal of Prohibition, however, the Steinerts quickly reconverted the business to a tavern. During the depression the grocery line of the business closed, but the restaurant remained. Joseph became the owner

of the tavern while his brother Michael A. opened a grocery store nearby. Joseph's brother-in-law joined him in the business for a short time, and the store's name was changed to the S & S Café. A year after Prohibition was repealed and the bar reopened, Joseph moved the tavern to 2239 Charlestown Road.

After service in World War II, Joseph's sons, Michael J. and James A. Steinert, joined the family business. In 1959 Joseph retired, handing the business to his two sons. Michael J. moved to Arizona in 1960, leaving James as the tavern's sole proprietor. A few months later James changed the business's name to Jim Steinert's Café. In the early 1970s James's son James A. Jr. joined the business.

James's other son, Joseph II, entered the business in 1976, intent on continuing the family tradition. The father-sons team incorporated the business in 1982 under the name Steinert's Tavern, Incorporated. A year later the Steinerts renovated the entire building, enlarging the bar and restaurant to three times its original size. Three dining areas, a lounge, and a horseshoe bar situated in an atrium area accommodated old friends and new customers.

The company has remained in the family for five generations. Joseph II served as vice president in 1998.