

Name of Interviewee: Carol Stoudt
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Name of Interviewer: Theresa McCulla
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Theresa McCulla: It's August 8th, 2018. This is Theresa McCulla of the National Museum of American History. I am interviewing Carol Stoudt, founder and president of Stoudts Brewing Company. We are meeting at the Wagner Hotel in New York City, New York, in conjunction with *Hop Culture Magazine's* "Beers With(out) Beards" Festival. This interview is part of the American Brewing History Initiative, a project to document and collect the history of beer and brewing in America. So, Carol, when and where were you born?

Carol Stoudt: I was born in Adamstown, Pennsylvania, July 18, 1949.

McCulla: And, what were your parents' names?

Stoudt: My parents, Lawrence and Betty Techster.

McCulla: And what did they do?

Stoudt: My mother worked at the factory, Bollman's Hat Factory, a part of her life. And also a homemaker. And my father worked at Bollman's Hat Factory and also worked for Penn Dairies, delivering milk. In those days, you delivered milk in a truck.

McCulla: What were their roles at the hat factory?

Stoudt: My mother worked in production, and same, my father worked in taking care of machines.

McCulla: And did you grow up in Adamstown?

Stoudt: I was born and raised in Adamstown.

McCulla: And, what are your memories of the neighborhood where you grew up?

Stoudt: Well, everyone knew everyone. And thank goodness, to the benef-, all the money that George Bollman gave to the town, we had a YMCA, we had a large playground, we had a park, we had a swimming pool. So, that was a lot for a town of eleven-, twelve-hundred people.

01:35 McCulla: And, what do you remember about the, the food and drink culture of your childhood? What you ate and drank?

Stoudt: [Laughs] A lot of, obviously, my parents had a large garden, so in the summertime a lot of our food came from the garden. Tomatoes, corn, broccoli, onions, potatoes, etc. And there were five butchers in Adamstown. And we got our, our meat from the local butcher, Fritz's company, which unfortunately they're not, there aren't any in Adamstown anymore.

McCulla: And was beer present in your family?

Stoudt: No, my family did not-, they only had a little, my father made homemade wine. So, at the holidays, he would bring out his dandelion and blackberry wine. But, no, beer was not present. And my Grandmother Lescher, if she knew I was making and drinking beer, I think she would roll over in her grave. She was very opposed to drinking, 'cause my grandfather Solomon, they also worked at the Bollman's Hat Factory, he'd take his paycheck and go to the local VFW and unfortunately he-, she'd have to go down there many times and just drag him home, and. He did eventually stop drinking, totally. So, and it was just not part of, beer was not part of my life growing up.

02:57 McCulla: What do you remember about your dad's winemaking process, though?

Stoudt: Well, it was so much fun picking dandelions with him. And, and going up to the, in the woods behind us and picking the berries. And that was just a lot of fun. And he'd have, have it down in the basement, in these big earthen jars, and have cheesecloth over it, and he'd go down and sample it periodically. And, and it was always spe-, it was really a highlight when he, you know, finished it and bottled it and then brought it out at the holidays for everyone to take, sample. And of course, since I was under twenty-one, I could have a little bit of wine mixed with soda, with club soda.

McCulla: Do you recall the tastes of the, of the wines that he made?

McCulla: Well, the dandelion wine was really interesting. I liked it. It was, it was very dry, earthy tasting. A little bit bitter, perhaps. And if I can remember it, I know the berry wine was a lot sweeter. And as I became older, I learned to appreciate the dandelion wine a lot more than the sweet blackberry wine. And berry wine.

04:10 McCulla: What impression do you think it made or, or what result did it have to be in a family that grew their own food or made their own wine?

Stoudt: Well, food is very important to me. Cooking's very important to me. My parents, my grandparents, we always made everything from scratch, including pot pie, pie dough, soups, you name it. And, that was just, you know, it was part of my life. We never had processed food. It didn't exist. We didn't have sodas. Yeah, so, you know, when I of course started with my being married and with my family, I did the same thing. And now, today, I do have five children and they all

can cook fabulously. And they have a love for, for local food, for healthy food, for organic, you know, knowing where their food comes from.

05:08 McCulla: So, where did you go to school, and what did you study?

Stoudt: I went to Kutztown University, and I had a double major, elementary education and visually handicapped, because when I was in my late teens, my mother became blind from retinitis pigmentosa. So, I really wanted to study about impaired vision so that I could help her and, you know, possibly get into a teaching career with that. However, that did not work out. I mean, I, obviously, I know how to read and write Braille. I know how to do the cane, and, and get the talking books. But, I was able to get a teaching job at our local high school, so most of my teaching career was in early childhood and kindergarten. Yeah.

05:58 McCulla: And so then what was your path like from, from there to eventually opening a brewery?

Stoudt: Well, if you would've said to me when I was in college I'd be making beer, I think I would've said, you know, you were crazy. 'Cause I would go to fraternity parties and they'd give you beer, and I'd go to the bathroom and throw it, throw it down the sink. I just really didn't have the taste for it. So, I was teaching school, I was president of our negoti-, of our teachers association, and we were nego-, negotiating a contract, and things weren't going really well. So, I happened to stop at the Black Angus Bar on my way home. It was a restaurant. And I stopped in for, for a beverage, an adult beverage, and there I met my now husband, Ed Stoudt, who was the owner proprietor. He was finishing up cooking in the kitchen and was coming out to the bar to have a beer, so I sat and talked with him. And of course, you know, the rest is history. You know, we pursued, you know, our relationship and eventually about four years later we married. 1975. We honeymooned in Germany, 'cause we're both of German background. And, and it was November, because it was a slow time for him. So, it was the only time he could get married. We took a three-week honeymoon and traveled throughout southern Germany, Austria, and also Prague or Czechoslovakia, small amount of time. My husband loves beer, always did. And we were at a guest house in a village and, you know, he ordered a pilsner, it took seven minutes for this pilsner to be poured. And I tasted it, I had ordered a club soda, something like that. And he said, "No, just try it." And I tried it, and I liked it. It was really delicious. So, I ordered one and he, then I think he ordered double bock or another type of beer. So, I just loved the, the freshness, the, I, I like the culture of beer in Europe. I like the way the different styles are represented. I like the fact that a certain beer style gets a certain glass. People weren't guzzling. Even in the beer gardens, people weren't sitting there guzzling beers. They were really enjoying it. Funny thing. We were walk-, taking a nice walk after breakfast, and it was maybe 10:30 in the morning, and there, this beer garden had about six elderly ladies and they were having a Brotweiz-, a Weisswurst, excuse me, with a tall Weizen glass.

And I just thought, there must be something about this, you know, the German culture of beer. So, that was it.

08:55 McCulla: And how, how would you describe the culture, you know, appreciation, it sounds like --

Stoudt: They take their beer seriously. I think it's a, Germany's the third largest beer consumption in the world. It's part of their life. Teenagers can, they drink the radlers, which is beer mixed with lemon juice, or lemonade, or Coke. It's not abused, I, I feel it's not abused. You know, they had beer for different traditions, different holidays. I, I love that. Yeah, there's a passion around it. And, you know, there's cooking with beer. You know, there's eating certain foods with beer, like the Weiss-, you know, the Weisswurst with the Hefeweizen. You know, which I just loved.

09:45 McCulla: But it's, it, it was a jump from tasting a pilsner and appreciating it to then actually brewing it.

Stoudt: Well, okay. That was 1975. I stopped teaching and to raise our family. And I have five children, ranging in ages from forty-two down to thirty-three. So, when my youngest daughter was ready to go to kindergarten, my husband's, you know, what do I do? Do I go back to teaching? Or do I do something to help the business? At that, so, he originally started with the restaurant and a small antique market. And, of course, we progressed with putting in a beer garden that seats twelve hundred people because we loved, we wanted to share what we loved about Europe in our small town and small area. And what was missing in that beer garden was the beer that we made. So, my husband and I took a trip to Ontario, to Kitchener, visited the Brick Brewery. And this was maybe '79, '80. And I felt it was the best pilsner that I've tasted, this p-, on this part of the ocean. It was fabulous. It's like the pilsners I tasted in Germany. And my husband heard about Charlie Papazian from Boulder, Colorado, and he was having this convention and tour of small brewpubs and hop fields and malt houses in Portland, Oregon. So, we decided to go. And this was 1984. So, the trip was about a week long, and I was one of two females on the trip. And the other was a lady whose husband was interested in doing a brewpub in Ontario. And, there was a variety of ages. I was probably middle of, middle of the age compared to, there were, like, young college students and there were, you know, maybe elderly, like, maybe late sixties, early seventies. But most of the people were wanting to quit their career and get into either the manufacturing of beer, whether it's a small brewpub or whatever, packaging brewery. And there were also a few consultants, people that were hoping to, you know, hook up with potential people looking to open up a brewery and help them and guide them in their path. And one of those gentlemen was Karl Strauss. He was a retired Labatt's brewmaster. And there were several other consultants, but Karl, I could relate very well to him. And he, I, I just felt that if we pursued the brewery, he's someone that I would want by my side to help me, because I never brewed a beer. I didn't, I'm not mechanical. I've had

microbiology, I love biology, but as, and I love to cook, but as far as mechanics, that was very foreign to me. So, at the end of that week, and I always say from the, from the time I woke up until I laid my head on the pillow, all we did was talk beer, talk stainless steel, hoses, clamps, malt, hops. It was quite interesting and fun. So, when we finished the tour, we had a small convention, and there were less than fifty people there. And I'm sure you're aware of our conventions now are well over seven thousand. So, it was very intimate. And everyone there was, if they weren't into the manufacturing of equipment or hops or, or malt, was looking to get into this beer business somehow. And, and,

McCulla: Can I ask a question?

Stoudt: Sure.

13:59 McCulla: Related to that, just, you, you were already in the bus-, the restaurant business, serving beer. But all these other people who came on the tour, came to the convention, where, where did the inspiration come from? Were they inspired by early small brewers, or, or --?

Stoudt: I think they were inspired by reading Charlie Papazian's books, *Zymurgy*, maybe they did a little bit of homebrewing. Probably word of mouth. You heard a lot of buzz about the Real Ale Campaign over in England, and that it was coming over here to, you know, British Columbia, Ontario, etcetera. And it was coming into the States, you know, specifically the, the Pacific Northwest. I mean, there were nuclear physicists. It was amazing, the diversity of people. And I liked that. And I always felt, yes, teaching is very rewarding, but I feel that I've grown so much in the, as a person by being exposed to so many unique and individualistic people in the beer business. And of course, beer conven-, beer conventions are lots of fun. I mean, you don't wait until six o'clock to have a beer.

15:16 McCulla: So, I'm sorry, you said after the tour you went back to the convention.

Stoudt: Yes. And then went back and enjoyed it. And didn't know a lot about, peop-, people were speaking to us about hops and equipment and a lot of it was really foreign to me. And when we came home to Pennsylvania, my husband and I were going to do the brewery together. And we contacted an attorney from Harrisburg who also wrote a beer column. And he looked into the legality of, of brewing beer in Pennsylvania. Well, brewpubs were, were, weren't legal then. And my husband was a manu-, had a restaurant with a full bar, liquor license. So, he, it was not allowed for him to do it. So, I had to do it myself. So, he just gave me, sub-divided a small bit of his land next to the restaurant. We felt it was important to have the brewery, like in Europe, you know, you have your, your guest house, your beer garden, and your brewery. We wanted it all together. So, he sold me a small plot of land for a very nominal amount. And, of course, I didn't have it, a lot of money. I was a schoolteacher. And I, so, what we did was I took a small loan from the bank and my husband, we, we got half the value of our home,

and he paid me that. So, that's kind, that's how I got started. And it was a really tough go. I started with about a quarter million dollars, and Karl Strauss was my consultant, and he helped me order my equipment. We went with JB Northwest, which, they were also at our conference. And I, shortly after we ordered the equipment, I went to New Orleans, to Covington-, not to, to Louisiana, to Covington where the, Abita Brewery was. And they had ordered, they had o-, they had, they were operating I think a year before I was, and they had the same fifteen-barrel stainless steel brew, brewhouse that I was going to have. So, Karl helped me learn to brew on that fifteen-barrel system. And it was lots of fun. The-, their first brewpub, brewery was in an old garage. And they put the garage doors up, and, you know, brewing takes a long time. So, there was a little creek there, and they would catch catfish and had a fire and we'd drink some of their beer and, and of course, the process of brewing beer. So, I, I was there a whole week and went through every part of the process, of the brewing system. They were not bottling. And the first two years, believe it or not, you could only get Stoudts Beer draft-only. I did not want to bottle. I didn't want to have anything to do with a bottling line, which I learned soon on, big mistake. So, I come back after that time, and I think this was in the fall of the year, and my equipment was slated to come in January, February. Well, that year, for whatever reason, we had a ton of snow. And unfortunately, the work on the brewery was, you know, inhibited by that. So there were days that I would get anyone I could get to help dig out the trenches so the workmen could continue. It was, was very scary. Why did I, why, what was my urgency on, I wanted to be brewing by May. And it takes a while for the equipment to be installed, and all that, 'cause my husband had a beer festival. And we have, like, at that time it was like, hundreds of people coming. And that, and I could sell the beer to him for the, for people to sample in the beer garden. So, we worked hard and managed to, I did my first batch in May, and it was released just in time for the beginning of his festival. And again, Karl helped me with three recipes. The first was my husband's favorite style of beer, is a Helles beer. Similar to the beers of Munich. Augustiner-Brau is one of our favorite Munich beers. So, we, and also, our area is settled by a lot of people from Bavaria and, and the, like, Plaut-, we call it, Plautdietsch. And so, that beer is just very, very common. So, that was the first beer ever made. The second beer was an amber beer, which eventually became my Oktoberfest beer. And then we also did a dark lager. So, those were the three beers initially that I did for the first couple of years.

20:21

McCulla: And how did the first batches go?

Stoudt: I don't remember. It was, it was really tough. People did not care for the dark beer at all. The amber beer was accepted because it was a little sweeter. But, it wasn't as, how should I say, people didn't go, "Wow, this is great. This is for-." You know, they didn't understand the concept of microbrewed beer, craft beer, fresh beer, an all-malt beer. 'Cause in my area, the beers that were available were Yuengling, which is the oldest brewery, but they don't make an all-malt product, or didn't then. I think they make one now. And Old Milwaukee and the mass marketed beers. We didn't have even Sierra Nevada or Sam Adams until several

years later. So, it was really a tough go around. So, September was, is when the beer garden would end. So, what I did was on Monday evenings, I would invite local restauranters from Berks and Lancaster county. And my goal was to sell all the beer in Berks and Lancaster county. Lancaster County is the county where I live and, and Berks county would be the adjoining county which, and, we're, we're very close to one another, logistics. And that was very strange. Well, you can imagine how many people showed up on a Monday night. Sometimes zero. It was, you know, who wanted, I mean, who wants to go to a, a, a brewery, Stoudts Brewery, never heard of before. So, my husband bought me, for my birthday, the following year, a bottle filler. 1901 bottle filler from Ohio. It had nine heads, and we had our friend that's happened to be a plumber, fix it up. And so, we started bottling. And the re-, we didn't think we could sell it. We, we basically put it in the refrigerator, the walk-in, and seeing how long it would last. And we found it lasted more than two weeks, so then I could sell retail now. Large bottles, but they had to be kept cold because they were not pasteurized. And they were 750s. I got my glassware at a local winery, and it was green glass. Not brown glass. So, but what I did was, I would brew in the morning, work in the brewery. I then hired someone to help me keg and oversee things when I was out. And so, what I did was make appointments and then go to Lancaster and go to the restaurants or taverns and try to sell beer.

23:18

McCulla: And what was that kind of conversation like, when you met a new chef that you hadn't, how did you open,

Stoudt: Well, initially it wasn't meeting the chef. It was basically trying to find out who was the beer bar-, beer buyer, if you will. And I was not really, a lot of times they didn't want to sample the beer. A lot of times they thought the pri-, it was too expensive. You know, it was twice as expensive, like, as a, as a Yuengling was. Or another beer. It, it didn't go very well at all. So, what was my saving grace was I entered the Golden Lager at the Great American Beer Festival and I was awarded a silver medal for the Gold. And so, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* picked up on that and wrote a nice article. And then a lady by the name of Judy Wicks, she's still around today, good, good person, she owned The White Dog Cafe and she said, "Carol," she called me up on the telephone. She said, "I just read this great article about you. I'd like to have my beer." And I said, "Well, I don't sell beer in Philadelphia. I just sell beer locally." She said, "Well you, you don't understand. I have Yuengling, and I have some local wines. I'd really like to have your beer." So, she was very persistent. So, I went to meet her. And I took some bottles down to her. And of course, well, she was very persuasive. So, how was I gonna get the beer there? So, initially, I drove the beer in my station wagon. I got a special plaque from the [unintelligible] that I could, that I could, magnetic plaque, I could put on my station wagon so I could legally drive the beer down to her. And then this lovely lady was so kind to introduce me to other tavern owners. And so, that, that was my footprint. So, and I succeeded when I could meet the owner of the restaurant or the bar or the chef. And then I had to get a wholesaler. Well, how, or a distributor. So, that was another issue. So, they collaborated and recommended a

couple people that I could use. And I, I started with a small distributor and then, you know, I gradually, that was a whole, that's actually another nightmare book. But, that's, that's really how I got started. And Philadelphia is still my largest market. My footprint is to be a strong, local regional brewery. My footprint was never to sell in multiple states, because I always felt survival is, is when people can drive in a day to get your product. And, and I think with all the proliferation of breweries and brewpubs that are now, I think that is going to be survival, I don't think many people can survive by being in all fifty states. Plus, I think it's special. I mean, if I go to California or Oregon, I'm gonna not look for my beer, or even one of my local colleagues' beers. I'm gonna look for a beer that I can't find at home.

McCulla: Do you feel your attitude toward the scale, appropriate scale, of the brewery or expansion changed over time as the industry changed? Or, or?

Stoudt: We did expand three times. And our last expansion was, I think, six years ago. And we decided that this is enough. And I have room to, to go another couple, another maybe ten more thousand barrels. And then, that'll be fine. And then you just make it more special. Raise your price if you have to. Be selective on who handles the product.

27:18

McCulla: How did the range of styles change over time?

Stoudt: Interesting. The first several years were all German style lagers. Hefeweizens. Rauchbiers. Michael Jackson, he came with Charlie Papazian to my beer garden, and I had a Rauchbier on, I had brewed it for the fall. We couldn't sell it. It, no one understood what a Rauchbier was. But he loved that beer, and he wrote about it many times. It was really quite comical. We did Altbiers, Bock beers, Maibocks, you name it. Philadelphia was the reason that I started ales, because Philadelphia's a very, was at that time, very ale-driven. And I noticed there were a lot of pale ales. So, I, my first ale was Scarlet Lady, which was an ESB. And this is another funny story. Great beer and, I basically was competing with, you know, the two English imports, you know, Bass and, but the funny thing was, people didn't want an ESB. I don't like bitter beer, even though an ESB is very sweet, very malty. So, we changed it to Scarlet Lady, and of course it's still one of our strongest selling beers. Then a few months later, we did eventually do an American Pale Ale with all American ingredients. And that became our number one beer at the time. And, you know, just kind of with market trends, I mean, we do kettle sours, we do Belgian beers. I mean, our rep-, we've probably done over fifty, sixty different beers. You know, this is, this year we did our first Berliner Weisse which, it, it wasn't, it wasn't troublesome at all. At first, you know, I wanted everything, you know, everything had to be pure in a lager brewery with no contaminations of the yeast. But, if you're very careful, you can do those styles as well. So.

29:29 McCulla: I'm curious with the very traditional German styles you began with, and then as you moved through different styles, what kinds of resources did you use to learn about styles?

Stoudt: Well, my husband and my children, we would travel to Europe at least once a year. And we would go to an area and understand the beers, the beers of that region. Like, the Altbier. I think there are about twenty-two Altbiers. The Kolsch beers of Cologne. We just go there and just kind of, you know, just listen and taste and just understand the style and the origin. And that, that was really fun. And then, of course, you come back to your home and your own brewery, and then you make the style. But of course, you make it your own.

30:17 McCulla: And your beer has long been associated with the food at your husband's restaurant.

Stoudt: Correct.

McCulla: What do you see as the relationship between food and beer on the table?

Stoudt: Well, first of all, beer complements food even better than wine, because you can have a beer with, I mean, I love wine, also. But, you can have a nice Weissbier with salad where, you know, there's, aren't a lot of wines that go well with salad. I think there's room for both beverages. And it also appeals to a lot of people. It, it's a little bit, it's more affordable than wine is. There is a lot of, you can debate about beer versus wine, but that was one of my selling attacks. I mean, when I, the way beer was sold when I first started selling beer was, okay, this is Stoudts beer, it's a golden lager, this is the price, and if you buy five cases you get a toy. I'm teasing, but. That's, you know, wasn't about the style, what it tastes like. So, I appealed to the chefs when I could, and talked about maybe what on their menu, how this beer would complement that. Another thing I did was, I go into a tavern or a bar and I'd look at all the beers that they had, and, "Oh, well, you don't have an ESB. I think Scarlet Lady would fit in here nicely." Try to complement. So, my approach to selling was totally about the beer, totally about relating to that customer, potential buyer on how it would help complement their bar or restaurant.

McCulla: Makes sense. You also judge beer.

Stoudt: Yes.

McCulla: In competitions. And I,

Stoudt: I was the first lady judge at the GABF, and I was asked to judge because I was a female. And I love it so much. You ne-, learn a lot, just in the discussions and the debates when you're at a judging table. It's, it's very, very rewarding.

- 32:24 McCulla: How do you think being a judge has changed you as a brewer?
- Stoudt: Well, I've, I think, not just being a judge, but also being around the brewing community, you talk about different yeasts, different ingredients, different hops. Now the new craze is all these, you know, New Zealand and South African hops. But you talk about all these things, and so it excites you to see if you could fit that beer in the repertoire. And then with judging them, you know, you judge a lot of beer styles that you don't make. So, you know, perhaps one of these, you know, that was, I judged imperial stouts, so then a-, shortly after that, we did brew, we had a Stoudts stout, but eventually made it a big beer, an imperial oatmeal stout.
- 33:17 McCulla: Wow. I'm curious a bit about the area of Pennsylvania where you have lived and, and brewed. What has been the beer culture of the region over time? And,
- Stoudt: Well, I'm also with a lot of Amish and Mennonites and they do not drink. The people that do drink, it's, I would say the area that I live is very blue-collared. And the beer that people drink is very inex-, what is probably the least expensive that they can find, because of their, but it, it's not a big beer drinking area. The German clubs, however, which there's one in Lancaster and one in Reading, they have a large, you know, more of the German and more of the beer enthusiasts.
- 34:08 McCulla: And so, do you feel like the, the, the German, the presence of German influence in that region of Pennsylvania, is that, does that make that part of the country unique compared to others? Do you see it in other parts of the country as well?
- Stoudt: Well, I think I see it in other parts of the country. You know, like, look at Milwaukee. That's a lot of good German beer. Ohio has a lot of good, Cleveland, a lot of good German beer. No, I think, no. 'Cause it's not a big beer drinking area. Like, a lot of people say, "Why did you choose Adamstown?" Well, because my husband had the restaurant there. I mean, if you would go to pick for a place for a brewpub or a brewery, you would definitely wouldn't have picked Adamstown. But, I also help complement the restaurant. And how many, my husband's been in business for fifty-seven years. So, how many restaurants are that? So, I think you constantly have to innovate and change things. And the beer definitely draws a different type of person that typically wouldn't be coming there. And I think it's also an attraction. It helped build Adamstown, along with, you know, the antiques and, and the other things that the town has to offer.
- 35:23 McCulla: The beer garden at the brewery,
- Stoudt: Yes.

McCulla: What, how, how do consumers use it? Do they come for special occasions? Or is it,

Stoudt: Well, it's used for lots of weddings. We do a lot of weddings. A lot of class reunions. And then we have our Oktoberfest in the fall. And, the traditional Oktoberfest with the German bands. And then, we also hosted the first Microfestival. And that was in 1989 or 1990. And I had breweries coming from, Goose Island from Chicago, Great Lakes, Weeping Radish from North Carolina, Harpoon from Boston, David Geary from Maine, who unfortunately is not in the business anymore. And what, what it did was, you know, and, and bring awareness about craft beer to the area, which didn't know anything about it. And they were very successful up until recently, because right now there are festivals, everyone, you know, people copy. So, you can go to fest-, multiple festivals every weekend. But, in the early days, and then as more breweries came about, we did one, we did 'em three times a year. The first one was all of the local breweries in the Middle Atlantic states. The-, we did one with the New England, and one with the southern ones. Yeah.

36:51 McCulla: So, your career which has been very long, has essentially tracked the history of the craft movement in, in the country. And I, I would like to ask what it's been like to be a woman in, in an industry that's been primarily male.

Stoudt: It's been fabulous. I, I think it's, it's helped me be more, gain more confidence, more security. It, it's fun. I mean, I taught with teachers in elementary school, a lot of them were all female. That, of course, that's changed now. So, I really like to be around men and women. I like the diversity, and I think women can bring something to the table that men can't. And, and vice versa. And I just, I think it's great that we can work together. And, the beer industry is a one that you can, can really call your, your colleagues up and ask them about this, you know, they'll call you. In fact, the first batch of Honker's Ale Goose Island was made in Adamstown, because their brewpub, they were also affiliated with Karl Strauss, my advisor and my consultant. And, their brewpub was ready, but their brewing equipment was delayed, so John Hall called me. I met him in Portland, Oregon, on that first trip. And he called me and said, "Carol, do you mind if my brewer Victor would come and brew in your brewery?" I said, "No, that'd be great." So, he came and brewed and then he came four weeks later to keg and drive it back to Chicago. So, that was really exciting.

38:37 McCulla: So, from you, brewing at Abita to,

Stoudt: Yeah.

McCulla: And brewing to you, it's a nice kind of chain effect.

Stoudt: Yeah.

McCulla: Camaraderie.

Stoudt: And the owners of Great Lakes, they came and looked at our equipment because their first equipment was also JB Northwest equipment. So, we shared, you know, a lot of our knowledge. And, of course, we would visit all, my husband and I would visit all the breweries that we could until it got to be so crazy. It's just impossible to keep up. But, those early days we, we very, we supported each other. We went to a festival in O-, in Ohio, at, in Cleveland to support the Cleveland breweries. We went to Chicago to a festival in the early days. You know, went up to Boston to Harpoon many times to one of their events. Celebrated Dave, Dave Geary's tenth anniversary, all, drove all the way up to Maine, which is beautiful. You know, just to, just to show support for what he's done and, and contributed to the beer community.

39:44 McCulla: And, do you, how do you feel this sense of community now that the craft community's so very large? What,

Stoudt: Well, we're definitely not as close. The initial people are. There's just so many. And who has time to --? So, we'll see. And part of that is that's a little, that saddens me, some. I used to know, I would say, couple hundred people, you know, when we'd go to the conventions. And now you go and a lot of them you just don't know. So, I don't know. We'll see what happens. I know the, 1990s was a struggling time because you had a lot of the suits getting into the beer business. That really had fancy packaging. The beers were just kind of okay. They would contract out in larger breweries. But, unfortunately, there's, because they didn't have the passion, I think, that we did, there was a lot of bad beer out there. And it, it hurt, it hurt us for a while until everything was cleaned up. And then we, then the late nineties was really, was when everyone was really doing exceptionally well. 'Cause people were now, the, we didn't have to convince the customer. The customers understood beer. I mean, you look, when I first started, you'd go to a bar and maybe there were, you know, always your three or four nationals, a Yuengling, two imports, maybe that one line for craft. So, you had to share it with Sierra Nevada, with Sam Adams, with Dock Street, and the other breweries. Now, you go into bars and, and it's almost all craft. Which is, which is really great, 'cause the consumer understands it.

41:38 McCulla: What do you think has enabled this recent explosion in the number of breweries?

Stoudt: Because people that are passionate about their beers talk about what it's made of. What's the alcohol content? You know, what's the original gravity? What type of hops do you use? What flavors? This excites people. It's not just about, okay, this is Stoudts, this is what it costs. Do you want it?

42:06 McCulla: And so, what's, what, what is coming? That's, that's kind of the million-dollar question.

Stoudt: Well, first of all, I'm glad I'm my size. Number one. And if people continue to, I mean, people are making beers that are off the chart, you know, with the hazy IPAs. I know now there's a brewery up in New England somewhere making, like, a, an ice beer – not Eis beer, the, the Bock beer, that's an Eisbock – meaning like a slushy ice beer, with a flavor, like pina colada. So, will these things hurt the craft beer movement? I think it's gonna turn some people away. There's not room for a lot of gimmicks, in my opinion. I don't know.

43:02 McCulla: What, I'm curious what you feel is the balance between the consumer and the producer. What, you know, to what extent is the consumer driving new kinds of beers, new kinds of experiences at, at brewpubs versus, you know, creative and skillful brewers creating beers and experiences?

Stoudt: I would say maybe they have a, a, they don't totally demand, maybe like six percent, or maybe, maybe less than that. Maybe half of what we decide to do. I mean, obviously, I mean, there's certain beers I won't brew, just because I, it's not my philosophy.

McCulla: Can I ask what you prefer not to?

Stoudt: Well, I'm not going to do, I'm not big on a lot of fruit beers. I'm not big on, you know, like the trends. Like, the super thick hazy, not, not necessarily haze, hazy's fine. A Hefeweizen's hazy. But, really thick milkshake-y beers. I just, I, I don't understand that. But, I mean, I understand how they do it. But I, I, for me, there's something about making a great, beautiful pilsner. It has that nice golden color and those nice tiny bubbles. Something, yeah. And, maybe I'm a little bit old fashioned. I don't know.

44:26 McCulla: Well, that might be the answer to this question, which is if, if you think of Stoudts as a brand, what, what defines you as opposed to other breweries? What makes you unique?

Stoudt: I think our beers are all of the highest quality we can make. I would, I would have my, all my German beers, style beers, sell in Germany if, if, I don't want to, but they could sell there, because they, they can compete with some of the best of the German beers. I, yeah, I would let anyone taste my beers. I'm very proud of them. They're very true to style. Some of my favorite compliments are, like, if I am at the bar overhearing, like, someone from Germany say, "Wow, this doesn't taste like a German-, this tastes like a beer that's from Germany." You know. Because, you know, years ago, the Americans thought, excuse me, the Europeans thought Americans don't make good beer. Well, they made monochromatic beer. It's not that they were, they were well brewed beer. It was just light and not a lot of flavor in beer. Before Michael Jackson passed, he said at one of the con-, one of his last speeches in Denver, Colorado, that he said, "The

world now looks to the United States for quality and for diversification of beer." Which just is really a phenomenal compliment.

45:56

McCulla: A couple big questions to end on. But, the first is about this term craft related to beer. Is it, do you feel that is the most appropriate term to define what you do and what others similar to you, how you brew?

Stoudt: Yes. Because you're, you know, we're still have a hands on. There's a, we're not very manual. We don't work with computers. We still turn hoses and check by hands with a hydrometer. So, yes. We d-, hone in on our craft.

McCulla: Okay. And then last question.

Stoudt: And, also, an artform.

McCulla: Okay. Yeah. Art, art and science.

Stoudt: Yes.

McCulla: [unintelligible]

Stoudt: Yes. Yes.

McCulla: For a long time.

Stoudt: You need both.

McCulla: And then the final question is just thinking about, about the, your body of work, what do you value most about what you do?

Stoudt: Well, it's, it's very rewarding to take a recipe and brew it a couple times until you feel, by your taste, that it's perfect. And, that's just very, very rewarding. And that doesn't always happen the first time. I've only ever had to throw one batch of beer away, but, but definitely the beers that I know I made early on aren't what they've been in the last maybe twenty years. Because of just learning more, understanding more about your ingredients. Just every, you perfect your, you perfect your craft.

McCulla: Well, thank you so much for your time.

Stoudt: Sure.