

W. Water Street 435 Businesses

- 1943 T. J. Craite
- 1945 Bob Giese
- 1951 Princeton Bowling Lanes
- 1985 KSI Lanes & Bar
- 2007 Stars & Strikes

The first bowling alley in Princeton was hand constructed by August Rochweit around 1902. It had two lanes and was located on the west end of Water Street where Art's Tavern is now. A short time later Otto Maulick built and her alley in the space presently an alley-way next to Hartman's Jewelry, obtaining the complete structure from Brunswick.

It is not certain how long the bowling alleys lasted (probably the thirties) but when I.J. Craite moved to Princeton there was no bowling alley. In 1943 Craite remodeled a garage owned by Ernest Priebe into a four-lane alley at it's present location, 435 W. Water St.

In 1945 the business was sold to "Bob" Giese. After that the establishment changed hands several times, first to Jake Schusler, then to Walter Hebbe and today Leonard Anderson is the proprietor. During Anderson's ownership the building has been remodeled and redecorated and additions made including automatic pinsetters.

At the present time there are four men's leagues, one women's evening league, two women's morning leagues, two junior leagues, and one couples' league.

A great many people assume that when I.J. Craite erected a bowling alley in 1943, it was the first such establishment in Princeton's history. That is far from true. There were two other alleys in Princeton as far back as 1902!

The following information was obtained in 1963 from some of the city's old-timers, the late Orlo and Henry Warnke, the late Gust Teske, and Herman Megow. Facts presented here must be considered as correct so far as human memory permits.

About 1902, a man by the name of August Rochweit (Rotchweit?) constructed his own bowling alley of two lanes which was located about where Art's Tavern is now, next to the Ray Gruenwald building.

A short later Otto Maulick built another alley in the alley-way next to the present Hartman's Jewelry. This bowling alley was not homemade. The complete structure was purchased from Brunswick.

Alleys were quite similar to what they are today and the maple pins were about the same but a great many other things have changed. The early alleys had no bar, no automatic or even semi-automatic pinsetters (boys set up each pin by hand). District lighting and oiling of the alleys was unheard of. Balls were made of pressed cypress rots which made them lighter than the 14 and 16 pound spheres used today. Girls and ladies probably were probably not seen in a bowling alley at that time.

The organization itself was not as complete as today's. At first everything was "open" bowling, no teams, no leagues, not competition.

It is not certain how long the bowling alleys lasted (probably the thirties) but when I.J. Craite came to town from Fort Atkinson, there was no bowling alley. After operating the theatre for a few years, Craite decided to remodel a garage building owned by Ernest Priebe (the present location at 435 W. Water Street) into a four-lane bowling alley. In 1945 Robert "Bob" Giese purchased the bowling alley and Craite went into real estate.

Today there is a trend to call them "lanes" rather than "alleys." The gutters aren't gutters anymore. They are "channels." There are automatic pinsetters, hand blowers, pin-spotters, score tables that project on a large screen, and the whole network of bowling leagues is run by a national organization known as the American Bowling Congress.

During Anderson's ownership the building has been remodeled and redecorated and additions made, including automatic pinsetters and two miniature bars behind the bowling benches for spectators or bowlers.

Bowling is a favorite local pastime in Princeton. There are four men's leagues, one women's evening league, two women's daytime leagues, two junior leagues, and one couples' league.

2007 Stars and Strikes

You haven't seen Princeton until you've stopped by its classic, '50's style 4-lane bowling alley. From monthly tournaments and year-round leagues to our own Chili Cook-off and Cinco de Mayo Fiesta, there's always BIG things happening. Open year-round and open late.