



Dead Distillers: The Kings County Distillery History of the Entrepreneurs and Outlaws Who Made American Spirits

Colin Spoelman , David Haskell

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Founders and award-winning distillers of Kings County Distillery Colin Spoelman and David Haskell follow up their successful *Guide to Urban Moonshining* with an extensive history of the figures who distilled American spirits.

The book presents 50 fascinating—and sometimes morbid—biographies from this historic trade’s bygone days, including farmers, scientists, oligarchs, criminals, and the occasional US president. Readers may be surprised to find the names George Washington, Henry Frick, or Andrew Mellon alongside the usual suspects long associated with booze—Jasper “Jack” Daniel, Jim Beam, and Julian “Pappy” Van Winkle. From the Whiskey Rebellion to Prohibition to the recent revival of craft spirits, the history of whiskey, moonshine, and other spirits remains an important part of Americana. Featuring historical photos, infographics, walking-tour maps, and noteworthy vintage newspaper clippings, it’s a rich visual and textual reference to a key piece of American history.

Dead Distillers is a spirited portrait of the unusual and storied origins of forgotten drunkenness.

Dead Distillers: The Kings County Distillery History of the Entrepreneurs and Outlaws Who Made American Spirits Details

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From Reader Review Dead Distillers: The Kings County Distillery History of the Entrepreneurs and Outlaws Who Made American Spirits for online ebook

Cris Gill says

Fun read on an obscure subject

The title tells it all and it is a surprisingly fun fast read. Short down to the point chapters that give you a quick look at some long lost history.

Jeff Mauch says

This was essentially a small collection of stories about the lives of those that distilled in the United States and also of those that had a part in the distilling industry. Many of these names are well known (Jim Beam, Elijah Craig, Jack Daniels), but many are much lesser known, but far more interesting. While I didn't get much out of the aspect relating to where these men are buried (Who cares?) I did enjoy the lesser known stories of the early years of the production of alcoholic spirits.

Jesse Welsh says

Interesting, but had hopes for more contextual history instead of a series of short vignettes about individual distillers.

Jae Luck says

Not being a whiskey drinker, I wasn't sure about this book's ability to hold my interest. The book was a pleasant surprise. I found myself reading the particularly interesting portions aloud to my family. This book was history made interesting.

Rebecca Lyman says

I really liked this book a lot! There were a lot of interesting, almost scandalous stories included which hold the readers interest throughout the book. The book also included a lot of nifty maps for anyone interested in checking out the tourist locations which I loved. I would definitely recommend this one! Great addition for the home library. See my full review here: [Dead Distillers](#)

The Irregular Reader says

“WHISKEY, OH WHISKEY, OH WHISKEY ALL NIGHT LONG
OH WHISKEY, OH WHISKEY, OH WHISKEY UNTIL THE BREAK OF DAWN”
– The Tossers “Break of Dawn”

Meed the Dead Distillers: heroes, villains, and forgotten players from America’s past who helped to advance the science of making hard liquor, or make a quick buck, or fund other pursuits, or all of the above. Spoelman and Haskell are the founders of King’s County Distillery in New York (check out their website at <http://www.kingscountystillery.com>) and they have pieced together a visually appealing, accessibly written history of American distillers in short, to-the-point format (dare I say, as history shots?)

In this book, we meet businessmen and bootleggers, patriots and presidents, colonists and chemists. We meet lawmakers and mobs, mobsters and soldiers. Suffice it to say: the distillation of alcohol has been an integral and omnipresent part of American history since the very beginning. Between these pages you will find the likes of George Washington, Andrew Jackson, and Thomas Lincoln (Abraham’s father). More recently you will find Al Capone, Jim Beam, and Jack Daniels. You will also find less well known distillers, including a fair number of women who made a name for themselves in what was (and largely still is) a man’s industry.

This is a great book, not only for history buffs or whiskey lovers. Dead Distillers gives us a bit of the history I, personally, love: the parts underneath, or just around back, or hidden away. We all know George Washington as the first president of the United States, as a general, and a cherry tree murderer, but how many know he operated a fairly large distillery at Mount Vernon? And, especially in the case of the more obscure moonshiners, and those distillers whose enterprises failed, they aren’t usually in the history books. They survive in newspaper clippings, local lore, and family stories. These hidden histories are a wonderful store of knowledge, and I applaud anyone who chooses to bring these stories to light.

PS – Just as a personal aside (and a Pittsburgh resident) I’m quite happy to see both Pittsburgh’s Whiskey Rebellion (you read that right) and Wigle Whiskey (Pittsburgh’s own craft distillery, named after one of the rebels) get a mention!

A free copy of this book was provided via Goodreads Giveaways in exchange for an honest review. Dead Distillers is currently available for purchase.

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<https://theirregularreaderblog.wordpress...>

Ilana says

Very interesting, well documented and well written history of American spirits starting with the 1600s onwards. I particularly appreciated the historical coverage and the stories as such, revealing not only details about the spirits, but about the American history as well. It also tells inspiring stories of American entrepreneurship and resilience.

Disclaimer: Book offered by the publisher in exchange of an honest review

Cristhian says

Empecemos por lo importante:

AMO EL WHISKY y similares, lo cual nos lleva a los bourbons, los whiskeys, los ryes, whitedogs y demás de este lado del océano. Por eso mismo me interesó este libro, para conocer más de los orígenes en Estados Unidos así como un poco más de las personas que ahora son leyendas.

No está mal, pero sí algo escueto sobre todo en el tema de las biografías ya que siento que podría ahondar en el legado que conllevaron estos Distillers.

Eso sí, todo cuanto menciona de la prohibición es maravilloso.

3.2/5

Jane says

I don't know that this book is any earth-shattering piece of literature or information, but it was just plain fun to read. I liked the stories, I enjoyed looking at the maps, and I found it interesting. This is a good read for some light-hearted information and trivia that you may or may not remember or that you may or may not share with your friends when the conversation is lagging.

Angie says

Interesting book but it seemed a little jumbled at times. The information about the distillers was often disjointed and it didn't give you much of a picture of who they were or how they lived. I realize that these are just meant to be short vignettes, but they still felt very abrupt and incomplete. While I enjoyed reading the book, I was also frustrated at times. It just felt like this could have been so much better.

Robert says

If you like American history, whiskey and cemeteries...this might be the perfect mix of short story history lessons.

The Irregular Reader says

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Brett says

My review can be found online here:

<http://www.bourbonbanter.com/gear/gea...>
