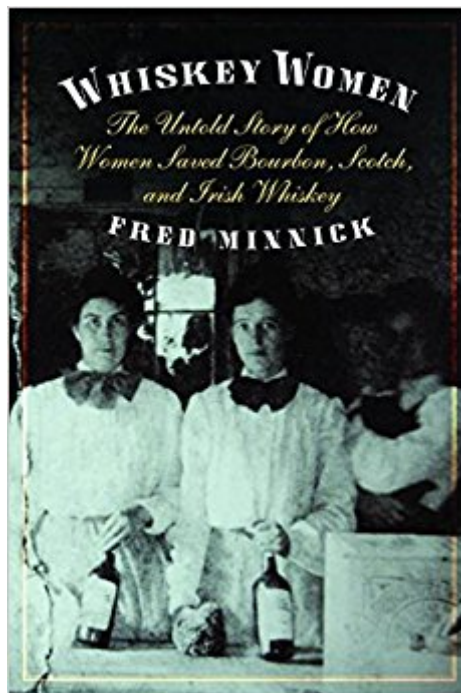




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# Whiskey Women: The Untold Story Of How Women Saved Bourbon, Scotch, And Irish Whiskey



## Synopsis

Best All-Time Booze Book, Eater.com 2013: GOLD Winner for Women Studies, ForeWord Reviews  
2014: Silver, Independent Publisher Award in Women's Issues Finalist, Spirited Awards  
Without women, whiskey may not exist. In *Whiskey Women*, Wall Street Journal bestselling author Fred Minnick tells the tales of women who have created this industry, from Mesopotamia's first beer brewers and distillers to America's rough-and-tough bootleggers during Prohibition. Women have long distilled, marketed, and owned spirits companies. These strong women built many iconic brands, including Bushmills, Laphroaig, and Maker's Mark. Until now their stories have remained untold.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 236 pages

Publisher: Potomac Books; First Edition edition (October 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1612345646

ISBN-13: 978-1612345642

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 0.9 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 29 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #193,645 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #43 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Beverages & Wine > Wine & Spirits > Whiskey #196 in Books > Business & Money > Women & Business #214 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Beverages & Wine > Wine & Spirits > Spirits

## Customer Reviews

"The necessary new book *Whiskey Women: The Untold Story of How Women Saved Bourbon, Scotch & Irish Whiskey* tells us exactly why the pinky-in-the-air, fruity-drink cliché has never, ever been true. Forget umbrellas in cocktails: Kentucky journalist Fred Minnick shows us how the fairer sex established liquor techniques, culture, and tastes as we know it today." -- Esquire.com  
"This enjoyable book leaves readers feeling a way they're likely not accustomed to after such a wild, whiskey-soaked ride: enlightened." -- American Way Magazine "...fascinating..." -- SeriousEats.com  
"*Whiskey Women* is an entertaining and unexpected look at the role of women in the spirits industry. They were an integral part of this history and I'm delighted their story is finally being told." -- Southern Foodways Alliance  
"Ask even the most committed spirits aficionado about

the contributions of women to the bourbon, scotch and Irish whiskey industry, and you'll probably draw a blank. Minnick, an elegant writer and fastidious scholar, not only fills in those blanks, but shows how women at Bushmills, Maker's Mark and Johnnie Walker owe much of their success, even salvation, to women like Bessie Williamson, who became the head of Laphroig Distillery and the spokeswoman for the troubled scotch industry." -- John Mariani,

HuffingtonPost.com "Fred Minnick gives us an entertaining look at booze's little-known history—including its links to childhood medicine, witchcraft, and the eighteenth-century mail order bride business. This book goes down smooth. A. J. Jacobs, New York Times best-selling author of *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* (A. J. Jacobs 2013-06-10) "The known history of whiskey changes with *Whiskey Women*. Fred Minnick has dug deep and come up with gold on the tremendous contribution women have made at each step in the history and evolution of this much-storied beverage. *Whiskey Women* is a real game changer. Davin de Kergommeaux, award-winning author of *Canadian Whisky: The Portable Expert* (Davin de Kergommeaux 2013-06-10) "The first of its kind, *Whiskey Women* chronicles the great contributions of women who, like myself, take enormous pride in our work, furthering excellence in the Whiskey trade. Fred Minnick's thought-provoking and passionate portrayal is nothing less than exceptional! Lauren Shayne Mayer, The Scotch Malt Whisky Society of America, Ltd. (Lauren Shayne Mayer 2013-06-12) "Let me raise my glass and say Cheers to Fred Minnick, to one of my favorite whiskey cohorts and fellow bourbon magician. Fred takes us on a historical stroll, giving a voice to the women for whom whiskey was a way of life. I'll drink to that. Lee Anne Wong, former producer of *Top Chef* and host of the *Cooking Channel's Food Crawl* (Lee Anne Wong 2013-07-09) "In the testosterone-laden world of whiskey, Fred Minnick finally gives women their due in his lively and entertaining book. This is an important contribution to the history of whiskey. Connie Kam, executive vice president of Michter's Distillery (Connie Kam 2013-07-09) "Brewsters, blenders, bootleggers, moonshiners, whatever your favorite spirit, little-known and highly influential women in Europe and the United States have helped create it, sell it, and fight for and against its consumption. In his lively and exhaustively-researched book, Fred Minnick finally brings these fascinating whiskey women to well-deserved light. Slainte! Caitlin Kelly, author of *Blown Away: American Women and Guns* (Caitlin Kelly 2013-07-09)

Wall Street Journal best-selling author FRED MINNICK, once an army journalist in Iraq, writes the award-winning "American Whiskey" column for TASTING PANEL Magazine and "Toasting the Hunt" column for Covey Rise. A regular contributor to Caviar Affair, Costco Connection, Whisky Magazine, and Whisky Advocate, Minnick has widely written about the spirits industry, traveling around the world covering everything from Limoncello in Sorrento, Italy, to Malbec wine in Mendoza, Argentina. Minnick is a member of the Authors Guild and the American Society of Journalists and Authors. Meridith May, publisher of TASTING PANEL, calls Minnick "one of the best whiskey storytellers in the business."

I have quite an extensive collection of books on every type of whisky, but every once in a while a book comes along that shed a whole new light on a subject that I thought couldn't be explored any differently. Fred Minnick has explored and documented the history of spirit & whisky, and has uncovered facts that even some of the featured whisky brands did not know about their own history, even though it was resting in their very archives. The writing is fun, succinct and fast paced. The passion that Mr. Minnick has placed in his writing and uncovering something that is long past over due. After you read his book, you will be asking yourself why whisky is not more associated with women than with men? Page after page gives evidence to the wonders of how women worked, created, sold, promoted and literally saved whisky, much to the relief of the rest of us. Speaking for the entire whisky drinking world...Thank You!

"Whiskey Women: The Untold Story of How Women Saved Bourbon, Scotch, and Irish Whiskey" is so important that I own(ed) 3 copies of it. I have carried it around with me for months, inhabiting it. I have consumed a pre-release publisher's timed self destructing electronic edition (based on my reviewer status), a signed hard cover (destroyed in an accident), and finished with a kindle edition. I consider it an important book - the kind that can change your view of the world. Or at least of the whisky world - and, in my view, that counts for a lot. The particular view that "Whiskey Women" undoes is the notion that whiskey is a man's drink and that, after that fact, it's OK for women to like it too. The "it's OK, honey, I'll scoot over for you and make room for you on this bench on the whiskey express" notion that is embodied in such facts as whiskey marketing people developing extremely light whiskies to be marketed to women and developing flavored whiskies specifically to appeal to the women's market. For example: "Though industry officials don't like to talk about it, it's no secret that one initial aim of the [flavored whiskey] bottlings was to bring women into the whiskey fold. I do think it's a major effort

to go after female drinkers in an aggressive way," Mr. [Dave] Pickerell said."-- from the 2013/06/26 Times article in the Dining section titled "Flavored Whiskeys Expand The Market". This point of view is nothing new. In fact it is very old and well nigh universal - but it doesn't square with a reality where women invented and were the ones to practice the art of brewing beer in the earliest eras of civilization and where women invented the art of distillation and where women were the first and traditional practitioners of the art. Whiskey was born as a home made agricultural product as an outgrowth of the kitchen, and as a medicine that emerged as part of a woman-centered tradition of folk healing. Fred Minnick documents all of this in *Whiskey Women* in a careful and authoritative way. He does so in a way that isn't all that common in whiskey books. Minnick takes us back to ancient source materials, Sumerian cuneiform tablets, medieval illuminated manuscripts, and a host of other source materials in a mature approach that melds scholarship with journalism. But, as Minnick takes pains to show, this feminine locus of domestic whisky production was a dual edged sword in the culture wars that raged around whiskey in its initial rise from locally produced agricultural product to highly political source of tax revenue and then focus of industrial revolution mechanization and economies of scale. In this era women distillers were demonized, hunted, exploited, and ultimately displaced. Women making whiskey as part of traditional folk healing became connected with witchcraft and women distillers were burned at the stake as witches. In the American culture that followed in the 19th century whiskey became intimately connected with prostitution and gambling and addiction. It was a culture that produced strife and the women-led temperance movement which gave rise to Prohibition. This movement portrayed whiskey as part of a complex of sinful anti-family activity on the part of men that included the image of whiskey bearing women as temptresses. This created the great trope of women in bars as lures to a dissipated and destructive path. This ultimately resulted in general banning of women from working in bars in many parts of the country for decades in the period from Repeal to the 1950s and 60s. Prohibition was a time of organized bootlegging and here women, once again, played a major role. Minnick is on solid ground here with the fantastic stories of lady bootleggers, both high and low such as Gertrude, "Cleo" Lythgoe, "The Queen of the Bootleggers". This stuff is fun. The next historical moment is the movement for Repeal which was also led by a woman, Pauline Sabin. And then the rise of single malt Scotch, greatly influenced by the woman who owned and ran Laphroaig, Bessie Williamson. Bourbon's resurgence is connected with a number of fascinating women, as is the current global explosion of whiskey popularity. We meet women master blenders, executives, brand creators, taste makers, and owners. This cast of characters will be familiar to many whiskey enthusiasts. There's plenty of #WhiskyFabric here. And so we end up in

the current day and into the ironic situation where women are becoming leaders of the whiskey world and the bar and cocktail scene and it's presented as though it is a "new thing". Fred Minnick shows us this couldn't be further from the truth. We have it backwards. Women gave whiskey to the world and men took it from them, soiled it with big money, bloodshed, vice and greed and painted it as the very juice of the "Y" chromosome. This is a fictional recasting of what whiskey actually is - something originally made in a kitchen that is part of the attributes of hospitality, medical and emotional care, and social interaction and there is nothing inherently male about any of it. Get inside this idea and you'll understand why the Women In Academia Report listed this book on of the "Recent Books That May Be of Interest to Women Scholars" page. "Whiskey Women" will change the nature of scholarship on the subject and I cannot see how it will not ultimately change the modern view of whisky's history and how it is told in the future.

Having a nice drink became more enjoyable when I opened the pages of this book and learned that women have had a bigger hand in the process than most people knew. It isn't just a history of whiskey, but the history of women in whiskey and all they learned, taught and "invented", that most will find interesting and the next time you enjoy your drink, you too will realize the smoothness, the texture, and even the aroma of so many great brands, came alive, like so many other important things, through the working hands of a woman. Fred Minnick filled the pages with everything one needs to enjoy the book and the drink. Everything, that is, except the glass.

Fascinating viewpoint of how women were and still are so important in the whiskey industry. I especially enjoyed the sections about American women and their relationship to bourbon, prohibition (from both sides), and modern times. My daughter had no idea that women could not serve liquor in a public place until the 70s because they were considered prostitutes. We ladies have come a long way. A quick read with lots of great information. Well written.

Haven't finished this book yet because I can pick it up and read it whenever. So far, it is really interesting. All women must learn to appreciate the contributions women have made throughout history in keeping their families fed and dealing with adversity. We should be proud of ourselves.

If you are interested in whiskey, history, and learning about a tradition rich with strong women, then you should definitely read this book. I was amazed with the amount of research that went into this book.

It made a great Birthday present

I love reading about history and this is an interesting book. I thought it covered prohibition but it actually goes further back historically and was very enjoyable to read!

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