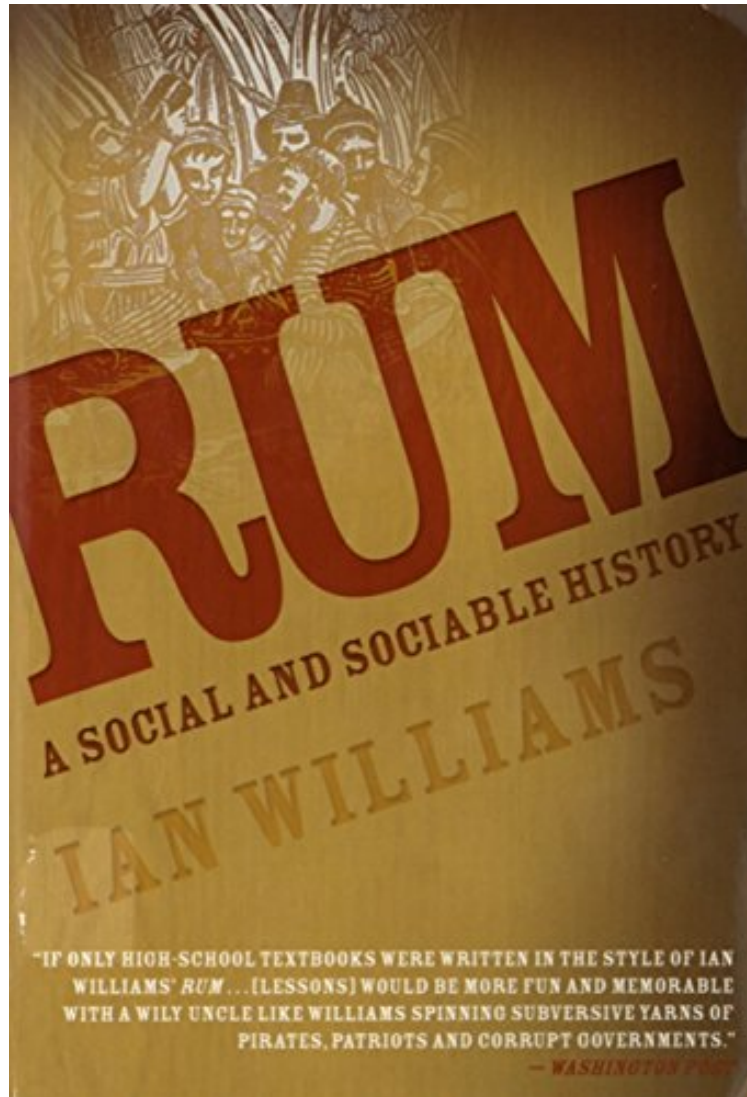


Rum: A Social and Sociable History of the Real Spirit of 1776

Ian Williams

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Ian Williams : Rum: A Social and Sociable History of the Real Spirit of 1776 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rum: A Social and Sociable History of the Real Spirit of 1776:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Rum - A Social and Sociable History By Erik Peterson This book is a quick, interesting and fun read. It is, as the title suggests, the story of rum - the invention of rum, the manufacture of rum, and the place of rum in world history and culture. There is a surprisingly large amount of information to be had here, and it is presented by the author in a tongue-in-cheek, bantering style which makes it easy to remember and to connect with many other points of reference. You'll learn all about 'kill devil', 'scuttlebutt', 'Nelson's blood', and then

be overcome with the urge to wash down the lesson with a shot of 'Barbadoes waters' as you contemplate the grog ration, and how Britannia actually came to rule the waves. Like coffee, chocolate, tea, opium, sugar, methamphetamines and tobacco, rum is a product for which there is great demand -a craving no less- and that demand creates all sorts of consequences-it becomes a great driver of human events, for both good and ill. The by-product of Jamaican sugar refining is molasses, which is distilled in New England to make rum, which is shipped to West Africa as a trade good in exchange for slaves, who are taken to Jamaica to cultivate sugar cane...If you want to learn more about subjects as diverse as the drinking habits of our Founding Fathers and why they were indebted to medieval Arabian alchemists, or the triple scourges of 'Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion' (to say nothing of 'Rum, Buggery and The Lash'), or the pirates of the Caribbean, or the one and only quality export coming out of Haiti these days, or what those fifteen men were up to, you really should pick this book up today. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Enlightening read By Paul Senft Ian Williams "Rum: A Social and Sociable History" chronicles the birth of Rum in the new world and its global impact to modern day political maneuvering. Mr. Williams offers the reader an uncut and honest accounting of the events surrounding the rise and fall of the triangle trade, prohibition, as well as the modern rum market circa 2005. I particularly enjoyed where he reintroduced details that others chose to omit or modify to promote their own sociopolitical agenda. From Washington to Kennedy I promise you will either learn something new or be reminded of a fact that others tend to shy away from. I recommend this book for anyone who is interested in learning more about Rum's history, or would like to read a different perspective concerning the exploration on the New World. Mr. Williams manages to take what can be a dry or uncomfortable subject and offers it with an honesty that is bound to make the more politically correct or revisionist squirm. I personally found this enjoyable and am happy to have this book as part of my library. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well researched topic By Matthew Monico I purchased this to do some research on the topic of alcohol and rum-running. This was a good resource of information. The book covers many years and eras from the American Revolution to the West Indian trade. The only downside is that it may have been a little dry at times, but the book is more a victim of its genre than the author.

Ian Williams describes in captivating detail how Rum and the molasses that it was made from was to the 18th century what oil is today. Rum was used by the colonists to clear Native American tribes and to buy slaves. To make it, they regularly traded with the enemy French during the Seven Years' War, angering their British masters and setting themselves on the road to Revolution. The regular flow of rum was essential to keeping both armies in the field since soldiers relied on rum to keep up their fighting spirits. Even though the Puritans themselves were fond of rum in quantities that would appall modern day doctors, temperance and Prohibition have obscured the historical role of the "Global Spirit with its warm heart in the Caribbean." Ian Williams' book triumphantly restores rum's rightful place in history, taking us across space and time, from its origins in the plantations of Barbados through Puritan and Revolutionary New England, to voodoo rites in modern Haiti, where to mix rum with Coke risks invoking the wrath of the god, and across the Florida straits where Fidel and the Bacardi family are still fighting over the rights for the ingredients of Cuba Libre.

From Publishers Weekly The Nation's Williams (Deserter: Bush's War on Military Families) offers a spirited and if rambling discussion of the history and spread of rum, from the field-side stills of 17th-century Barbados to the scientifically calibrated factories of modern multinationals like Bacardi. His main point? That the "role of rum and drink in both causing and effecting the American Revolution has been filtered out" of our history books. Williams details the mechanics of the pre-Revolutionary triangles of trade: African slaves for the Caribbean sugarcane plantations were purchased with rum distilled in New England from Caribbean molasses. He deftly describes how the American colonists evaded British taxation of rum-making supplies, and relishes the notion of our patriotic forefathers as a bunch of rum-sozzled smugglers. His other discussions on the use of rum rations by various countries' navies, the production of rum in other parts of the world, the efficacy of Prohibition and his own rum-tasting forays are less focused. Readers also may tire of Williams's tendency to overwork the liquor metaphor: "cultural alembic," "heady cocktail," "good spirits," "the equation in a small tot," etc. 10 pages of bw illus. not seen by PW. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist A connoisseur of rum, a distillate of sugar cane, Williams (who writes for the Nation) cheerily discusses the liquor but keeps the reader in mind of its dark underside, which was slavery. Structuring matters chronologically, Williams selects anecdotes about rum as if to set up his own witty observations: he is out to entertain, not to bore. The Caribbean Sea's signature contribution to the world's bar, rum originated in Barbados as a by-product of sugar refining--molasses. Williams establishes how molasses became fixed in transatlantic trade in African slaves and, in the mercantile minds of the British, as a revenue source. Williams may oversimplify things by attributing the cause of the American Revolution to New England molasses smugglers, but his product-based interpretation of history will appeal to readers of similar books on cod, sugar, and salt. Tracing rum's run on the frontier, its run from the law in Prohibition, and its contemporary incarnation in popular brands, Williams concocts a stimulating saga. Gilbert

TaylorCopyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reservedAbout the AuthorIan Williams is The Nation magazine's UN Correspondent and the author of DESERTER: George Bush's War on Military Families, Veterans and His Own Past. Since becoming interested in rum he has amassed a collection of "rumabilia;" books, pamphlets, prints, advertising ephemera, bottles and decanters, hundreds of rum labels from all over the world, and not least, a growing collection of rum, from Croatia to Thailand, from Kazakhstan to India, from Hawaii to Argentina. Williams lives in New York City.