



THE STAGECOACH KING

THE STORY OF BEN HOLLADAY

Ben Holladay is one of the greatest unknown figures in American history. Born in a log cabin near Blue Lick Springs, Kentucky, in 1819, he was exposed as a young boy to the ways of managing a wagon train, accompanying his father in leading settlers westward through the Cumberland Gap.

After migrating as a teenager to St. Louis, the “Gateway to the West,” he spent time at the freight camps talking to traders to learn all that he could about travel to the West. He arrived in Weston, Missouri, in 1838 and immediately took on a number of jobs, including clerking for a trading post and starting his own saloon. He also became a courier for Colonel Alexander Doniphan, who earned the trust of the Mormons by defying the orders of Missouri Governor Lillburn Boggs to exterminate the Mormons and execute their leader, Joseph Smith. Doniphan used Ben Holladay to deliver messages to the Mormons in Salt Lake City.

The good will that this earned Ben with the Mormons later provided him with exclusive access to lead caravans to Salt Lake with freight wagons full of goods they needed. He set up a trading post to sell the goods and swapped some in exchange for enough cattle to launch cattle drives across the Nevada wastelands to California’s mining camps, where beef was bringing sky-high prices.

Ben purchased the land on which the distillery sits in 1849. Upon discovery of the site’s limestone springs, the Kentucky native knew that limestone water was optimal for bourbon production and he and his brother, David, went to work acquiring the necessary items needed for distillation.

The distillery was officially founded in 1856 as the Blue Springs Distillery, with the first batch of whiskey sold the following year for 35 cents per gallon. Ben transferred ownership of the distillery to David in 1858.

Ben acquired the Pony Express in 1860, shortly after it had launched to much acclaim, with newspapers hailing it as the greatest achievement in history. But its existence was short-lived, ceasing to operate after only 18 months when the continental telegraph did away with the need for it.

The Central Overland California and Pike’s Peak Express was launched as a commercial passenger operation in

1861, using money borrowed from Ben. When they went bankrupt a year later, he took control of the operation and its 1200 miles of stage lines, renaming it the Holladay Overland Mail & Express.

By 1864, Ben controlled most of the stage and freight traffic between the Missouri River and the West and secured a federal mail contract worth nearly one million dollars annually. With everything from gold and silver mines to saloons also under his domain, he was the largest private employer in the US and kept close counsel with everyone from President Lincoln to Brigham Young. His wealth was staggering, allowing him to own opulent mansions in Washington D.C., Portland, New York, and San Francisco. His estate in Westchester, New York, named “Ophir,” after the Nevada silver mine whose shares he won in a poker game, is now the home of Manhattanville College.

In 1865, under threat of losing his transcontinental mail contract, Ben left the comfort of his home on Holladay Hill in San Francisco to lead his own team of drivers to prove the efficacy of the operation. In a dramatic journey, he made it to Atchison, Kansas, in twelve days and two hours, by far the fastest run ever made. He became an international hero overnight, and his mail contract was renewed.

But by 1866, Ben realized that the impending construction of the Transcontinental Railroad would soon render stage lines obsolete and he sold the entire operation to Wells Fargo for \$1.5 million cash and \$300,000 in company stock.

Ben then went into the railroad business, beginning with the Oregon and California Railroad Company in 1868. He became a huge presence in Portland, Oregon, where he lived for the remainder of his life and where there are still streets and parks named after him.

Ben was ruined by the Black Friday stock exchange panic of 1873. He lost his businesses to creditors and was forced to sell off many of his holdings. He was left with virtually nothing and died in relative obscurity in Portland in 1887.

After building an empire that spanned the country, the distillery Ben founded is the only piece left standing. Little did he know that whiskey would be the lasting legacy that carried the Holladay name well into the future.



BEN HOLLADAY BOURBON

“Individual taste is influenced by where you came from and past experiences. It’s important to be intentional about how you taste, but be guided by your own perspective. Ben Holladay Bourbon is a quality, balanced bourbon that is authentic and traditional. Try it and let your palate tell the story.”

Kyle Merklein

Holladay Distillery Master Distiller

This six-year-old, Bottled-in-Bond, Real Missouri Bourbon is crafted with the same mash bill that was developed by Ben Holladay in 1856. This whiskey represents the perfect union of distilling tradition and modern-day production.

Bourbon is by definition American-made. The spirit can only be made in the United States and it can be made in any state, but the finest bourbon results from an ideal combination of climate and geology that is rare outside of Kentucky but is found in the rolling hills of Weston, Missouri.

The Holladay Distillery was founded in 1856, making it both the oldest distillery in the state of Missouri and the oldest distillery west of the Mississippi still operating on its original site. The property sits on active limestone springs that were first charted by Lewis and Clark in 1804, more than fifty years before Ben Holladay purchased the land that would later become his legacy.

Ben Holladay Bourbon is classified as Real Missouri Bourbon under a 2019 law requiring that any whiskey labeled as Missouri bourbon meet certain criteria identifying it as a true product of Missouri in addition to meeting the federal standards for bourbon. It is also Bottled-in-Bond, a rare and prestigious designation in the distilled spirits industry, signaling that the product is distilled, aged, and bottled in the same location and assuring a mark of authenticity.

Ben Holladay Bourbon is aged in a level three, charred, Missouri white oak barrel and is non-chill filtered. It is produced using many of our original methods including a two-grain cooker system, same distillation proofs, and barrel entry proof.

This is handcrafted small batch bourbon, with each batch being pulled monthly from different barrels spread out on different floors of our two seven-story rickhouses and blended by our master distiller to match our strict criteria for flavor profile.

Approximately 80% of the very first batch will be sourced from barrels that were aged on the fifth floor of Warehouse C, the largest rickhouse on-site. The remaining 20% of the bourbon will come from barrels aged on the first floor of the same warehouse.

The ratios of each subsequent batch of Ben Holladay Bourbon will be unique as we embrace the variable aging between floors. The temperature can vary by as much as 30 degrees between the top and bottom floors, resulting in differences in taste between barrels that have aged in the cooler temperatures and higher humidity found on the first floor versus the warmer and drier conditions on the higher floors. These differences are most dramatic in the early years and diminish over time, but are still present at the six-year aging mark.



Due to the unique variations of each batch, the Ben Holladay Bourbon label features a blending chart to help distinguish the individual batches and allow consumers to identify the blending process used.

The label design itself was inspired by founder and serial entrepreneur Ben Holladay, who was known as the “Stagecoach King” for his innovation of and contributions to overland stage travel.

This product is dedicated to our long distilling history and the future of Real Missouri Bourbon.



REAL MISSOURI BOURBON

WHAT IS BOTTLED-IN-BOND?

This classification is a prestigious mark of transparency and legitimacy in the distilled spirits world. The Bottled-in-Bond Act was established in 1897 to guarantee that the product a customer was purchasing was truly whiskey. The Act requires that spirits are aged and bottled according to a certain set of guidelines.

Prior to the establishment of this Act, many people would sell spirits labeled as whiskey that were not authentic. Some would be colored, flavored, or diluted to produce a deceiving taste and appearance of true whiskey. Distillers fought for the government to get involved and that is how Bottled-in-Bond came to be.



TO BE LABELED BOTTLED-IN-BOND, A WHISKEY MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

Product of a single distiller in a single season — Spring (January to June) or Fall (July to December)

Aged for a minimum of 4 years in a federally bonded warehouse

Bottled at 50% ABV (100 proof) in the same location it was distilled

WHAT IS REAL MISSOURI BOURBON?

According to Missouri House Bill 266, signed on Thursday, July 11, 2019, any whiskey labeled as Missouri bourbon must not only meet the federal standards for bourbon, but also be mashed, fermented, distilled, aged and bottled in the state; aged in oak barrels manufactured in the state; and—beginning January 1, 2020—made with corn exclusively grown in the state. The law went into effect on August 28, 2019.

The Missouri Craft Distillers Guild pushed heavily for this measure, bringing Missouri Bourbon into the ranks of Kentucky Bourbon and Tennessee Whiskey as a product that must meet specific criteria to earn its geographic designation.

The requirement that a spirit called Missouri Bourbon must truly be a product of Missouri, made entirely in Missouri and using raw materials sourced only in Missouri, ties together the interests of agriculture, tourism, and spirits manufacturing in the state.

The provision requiring the use of Missouri oak barrels is unique in the industry. White oak trees are plentiful in Missouri, and the state is a top supplier of white oak to bourbon producers throughout the country. But no other whiskey in the world is required to use barrels from a specific place of origin.

This six-year-old, Bottled-in-Bond, Real Missouri Bourbon is crafted with the same mash bill that was developed by Ben Holladay in 1856. This whiskey represents the perfect union of distilling tradition and modern-day production.





THE DISTILLERY

ONE DISTILLERY, MANY NAMES

The Holladay Distillery was established over 166 years ago, but the history of the property goes back even further. Over fifty years before founder Ben Holladay acquired the land, Lewis and Clark passed through the area in 1804 during their famed expedition to the West. They discovered and charted the limestone springs that run abundantly throughout the property as they traveled through what would later become Weston, Missouri.

It wasn't until 1837 that the town of Weston was officially established, earning its name by virtue of being the "farthermost town west in trade" of that era. It was a small town of fewer than 300 people, but it was the second-largest port on the Missouri River at the time, surpassing both Kansas City and St. Joseph.

In 1850, over 265 steamboats docked at the Port of Weston each year. It continued to be a prominent port town until 1881, when a flood shifted the river into an old channel approximately two miles away. It is speculated that if the river channel had not shifted, Weston might have become what Kansas City is today.

Ben Holladay purchased the Weston land in 1849. The site consisted of several acres of land and a stone building that had served as a meatpacking house. It was repurposed as a stillhouse and this same building is where current distillation takes place. Upon discovery of the site's limestone springs, the Kentucky native knew that limestone water was optimal for bourbon production and he and his brother, David, went to work acquiring the necessary items needed for distillation.



In 1856, Ben and David distilled their first batch of bourbon under what they had named the Blue Springs Distillery. The barrels were stored in an ancient cave on site that had previously been used for meat curing and preservation. To this day, the same cave is intact and continues to be a fan favorite along the tour route of the facility.

After a short year of aging, the first batch of whiskey from the Blue Springs Distillery was sold for 35 cents per gallon. Shortly after, Ben transferred ownership of the distillery to his brother, Major David Holladay. The business stayed in the Holladay family through the end of the 1800s, passing from David Holladay to his son and son-in-law to become Barton & Holladay in 1894.

Over the next century, the distillery changed hands only three more times (purchased by George H. Shawhan in 1900, Isadore Singer in 1936, and Cloud L. Cray in 1950) before being acquired by a group of private investors led by spirits industry veterans Edward A. Pechar and the late Michael S. Griesser in 1993.



This ownership group shifted the direction of the company toward a more premium brands portfolio, paving the way for innovative product development that led to the introduction of brands like Tequila Rose, 360 Vodka, Five Farms Irish Cream, Whicked Pickle, and more.

In 2015, the distillery underwent a \$10 million renovation of the original stillhouse and began distilling bourbon on-site for the first time in 30 years.

Now, over 6 years later, we have the privilege to release Ben Holladay Missouri Straight Bourbon Whiskey, a six-year-old, Bottled-in-Bond, Small batch, Real Missouri Bourbon.