



Golden Agers Rock!

CELEBRATING SENIORS MAKING THE BEST OF THE REST OF THEIR LIVES

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The RUMblings of a Revolution

Sometimes I research why we “celebrate” certain things. Since “I Love My Feet” week didn’t produce any fun results, I kept looking. It turns out that the history of rum is not only a big part of world history, but also of American history since without rum I’m not sure how New England would have turned out.

Sugar cane was first cultivated in New Guinea and first fermented as early as 350 BC in India for medicinal purposes. Fast forward to the 1400s, where the explorers we all learned about in grade school started opening up trade routes around the world. As remote islands began to be discovered, so was a perfect climate for growing sugar cane. Sugar, similar to spices of that time, was highly valued on the trade route, but the most highly sought after payment for the sugar was alcohol.

What they needed was alcohol that was easy to make, was strong and would survive the long journeys across the ocean.

The discovery of Barbados in the early 1600s was an important gate to rum’s soon to be global popularity as it had the perfect climate to produce sugar cane! An explorer named Richard Ligon brought in his expertise from Brazil along with his distillation knowledge. In less than 10 years the sugar barons of Barbados became some of the richest in the world with a prospering sugar & rum export industry. What does this have to do with the American Revolution you ask? Hold on. I’m getting there.

Around this same time in the mid-1600s there were roughly 3,000 colonists living in New England. When they first settled, roughly 20 years earlier, there were dreams of a Mediterranean bounty coming from this new world. Little did they understand the harsh climate of New England...not exactly suitable for the wines, grains, fruits they were hoping for. It was a tough revelation and to make matters worse there was also a

beer shortage in England meaning New Englanders weren't getting as much beer imported as they'd hoped to help soothe their disappointments. They started to try to make alcohol from anything that grew there... pumpkins, apples, twigs, you name it. Some of it was somewhat successful but nothing scratched their itch for drink the way the introduction of rum from Barbados and the other Caribbean islands did.

You see, rum was much cheaper than the little bit of brandy they were importing given the shorter trade routes & cheaper ingredient base of molasses. Plus, rum was quite a bit stronger. Cheaper and stronger? Rum quickly became the drink of choice in New England! Soon enough those clever New Englanders got the idea to import molasses from the islands instead of rum and start distilling it themselves. This is now the late 1600s and towns like Salem, Newport, Boston and Medford became rum distillation epicenters with over 100 distilleries by the mid 1700s.

As they perfected their craft, making it some of the most affordable alcohol on the market, they began to seek more sales outlets. Enter, again, the sailors

and explorers who now had an unquenchable thirst for rum! By this point, rum accounted for 80% of New England's exports. Eighty percent!!

Given the importance of rum to this new economy, it's no wonder New Englanders freaked out when England tried to impose an import tax on molasses from French colonized islands (New England's primary source of molasses). This led to the Sugar Act in 1764 where a tax was levied on molasses. Thus began the early rumblings of, "no taxation without representation" which grew stronger when other goods were also taxed. Yep, we're getting mighty close to the Boston Tea Party, folks. Who knew this slippery slope towards revolution started with rum? Not surprisingly, once the fighting began rum was, once again, one of the most sought after commodities. One general, writing to George Washington in 1780 was quoted saying, "Besides beef & pork, bread & flour, Rum is too material an article to be omitted. No exertions out to be spared to provide ample quantities of it."

So, now what? The British surrender in 1781 & our country

seeks stabilization. Rum continues to be the drink of choice along the coast but the supply of molasses was disrupted during the war. Meanwhile more settlers were arriving and moving inward where there is more wide-open land and untouched resources. Many of these immigrants were from Ireland and Scotland. They had no experience with molasses distillation but plenty of experience with grain. You know what grows really well in middle-America? Grain. So Whisky and other grain-based spirits became more common and the height of rum's popularity begins a slow decline as the new kid in town becomes all the rage.

John Adams said in a letter to a friend, "I know not why we should blush to confess that molasses was an essential ingredient in American independence. Many great events have proceeded from much smaller causes." And you thought the American Revolution was all about the tax on tea. 😊

Now on to more important stuff..

The third week of August is:

- Safe & Sound Week
- Resurrect Romance Week
- Chef Appreciation Week

Some fun only lasts a day:

- 15th**-Best Friends Day
 - Chef Appreciation Day
 - National Relaxation Day
 - National Thrift Shop Day

- 16th**-Rollercoaster Day
 - National Rum Day
- 17th**-Black Cat Appreciation Day
 - Cupcake Day
 - I Love My Feet Day
- 18th**-Bad Poetry Day
 - Mail Order Catalog Day
 - National Fajita Day
- 19th**-Root Beer Float Day
 - Coco Chanel Day
 - Orangutan Day
 - World Photo Day
- 20th**-National Radio Day
 - World Mosquito Day
- 21st**-Men's Grooming Day
 - Senior Citizens Day

Have a great week & call if you need anything!

Serving Him & Loving it!

Carol 😊

Pastor Bill 901-569-1428
Pastor Cassie 678-492-3956
Carol 803-360-7137



Not meant to be political—just funny considering the above history lesson involving rum, sailors & America.

YO
HO-HO!
and a bottle
egg nog!

 **CARTOONSTOCK**

Search ID: dre0830

Reynolds

Santa never made it as a pirate.

