



# Jack Daniel Distillery

## History and Memorabilia

*By Don and  
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Jasper "Jack" Newton Daniel was born on September 5th, 1846, the last of ten children born to Calaway and Lucinda Daniel. Jack's mother died a few months after he was born. When his father later remarried, Jack could not get use to his new stepmother, and after a lot of thinking and talking to his siblings, he decided he would leave home and live with a neighbor. On his sixth birthday, he said goodbye to his favorite sister and told her he wanted to go live with their Uncle Felix. Jack then moved in with Felix Waggoner and his family on a very large farm on the banks of Mulberry Creek in Lincoln County. Jack did chores around the house and worked on the farm where he was a quick learner and worked hard at every job given to him.

Jack met Daniel Houston Call at the Waggoner farm in the fall of 1853. Dan Call had inherited a country store and had a still on Louise Creek. Dan served as a lay preacher on occasion at a Lutheran church, and took a liking to Jack and wanted him to move in with him. At age seven, Jack went to live with the Call family and began working at the Call's General Store. One year later, he was working at the still.

The Call's were honest and religious people and they passed those traits on to Jack. Dan Call also taught Jack how important honesty in the business world was and guided him thru the process of making good whiskey by telling him that whiskey must be made from iron-free water. That was an absolute necessity! There were about fourteen stills in the area and all were making whiskey by the same Lincoln County process as Dan Call: whiskey that started with a sour mash that only had natural fermentation with no chemicals or other additives.

Jack worked hard for five years learning the whiskey business, and at the age of thirteen, Jack Daniel purchased the whiskey business from Dan Call. Although the whiskey had been sold at the Call's General Store, Dan's religious beliefs made him decide that could not continue, and a young Jack had only a couple of months to find a new way to sell his whiskey.

Jack and his friend, Button Waggoner, began selling the whiskey in Huntsville, Alabama and to stores along the way. The price of a gallon of whiskey sold for \$1.00.

After the Civil War broke out and Confederate troops, bushwhackers and thieves were everywhere, the pair worried about how to continue making their routine trips back and forth to Huntsville. Jack and Button began to pick up all the one-gallon and half-gallon unmarked whiskey jugs they could find. They would then fill them with Jack's whiskey, cover the crock jugs with cured meat to cushion them and then pile hay and other goods on top to hide the whiskey. This enabled them to continue their trips to Huntsville and turn a very nice profit in the process.

As the Civil War was winding down, Dan Call would be coming home soon, and even though Dan had nothing to do with the operation of the distillery, it was still located on his property. Jack had put away a large amount of money, and knew he could accomplish anything he set his mind to, so when he heard that the Cave Spring could be leased, he immediately checked into its availability. After securing a lease on a portion of the property in the hollow, his new operation was virtually the same as his previous distillery.

Jack was determined to grind 32 bushels of corn a day and use that much mash, continuing in the Lincoln County process. Each bushel would yield two and

a half gallons, which figured a daily production of seventy-five gallons, when everything was up and running properly.

After the war, the federal government was trying to find new ways of taxation and they required every distiller to register with the federal government. The new tax was levied on every proof gallon of whiskey in the amount of two dollars.

At the age of twenty, Jack Daniel registered his distillery with the government under the name of Jack Daniel Distillery, Lynchburg, Tennessee. The year was 1866, and with the paperwork completed, Jack Daniel Distillery became the oldest registered distillery in the country. Jack was so proud of his new distillery and name that he began to stencil his barrels and crock jugs with his name on the side. [Fig. 1]

Jack Daniel Whiskey used their advertising on crock jugs from 1865-1920. These jugs came in a variety of shapes, sizes and stencils. The following photos depict variations of the many jugs used over the years. [Figs. 2-7]

By the late 1870's, bottles became the rage for a more convenient way of distributing and selling whiskey. The cost of early free-blown glass bottles was not affordable for the small distillers. Soon the mold-formed bottles appeared and bottles were more affordable for everyone. When the plate mold inserts were developed, the bottles could be personalized by embossing. The early bottles were round with a cork stopper and usually held a quart of whiskey. For a very short time, Jack Daniel used one-gallon glass bottles with bail handles. The distillers could now have their name, addresses and city embossed right into the glass bottles. [Figs. 14, 23]

The familiar square bottle was first introduced in 1895 in a quart size. There was a short period when the square bottle was produced in a fifth size but they are very hard to come by. Jack Daniel felt the square bottle set his whiskey apart from the others who were mostly using the round bottles. The square bottle remains today in various sizes. [Figs. 15, 16, 19, 20]

In the early 1890's, W.T. & C. D. Gunter became the sole sales agent for Jack Daniel Distillery. They were located on Broad Street in Nashville, Tennessee. The demand for fine whiskey was growing very rapidly and soon the whiskey was being bottled in stock bottles, embossed with the

**[FIG 1]**

Examples of the  
early stenciled jugs.  
Circa 1865-1870  
Beehive crocks  
L-R: 3-gallon,  
½-gallon, 2-gallon

**[FIG 2]**

L-R: 1-gallon, 1 quart, 1-gallon,  
½-gallon bail handle

**[FIG 3]**

L-R: 2-gallon, 3-gallon

**[FIG 4]** L-R: ½-gallon,  
3-gallon UHL Pottery jug, ½-gallon**[FIG 4]**

L-R: 2-gallon, 4-gallon

**[FIG 7]**

Two different 2-gallon jugs

**[FIG 6]**

L-R: ½-gallon, 2-gallon, 1-gallon





[FIG 8]

All Goods Worth Price Sold;  
½-gallon, 1-gallon, 1-gallon bail-handle



[FIG 9]

2-gallon Jack Daniel/Lem Motlow jug; 1 quart Uncle Jack bottle



[FIG 10]

Two ½-gallon and 1-gallon crocks



[FIG 11]

Two 1-gallon and ½-gallon crocks



[FIG 12]

Here are some examples of brandy and corn whiskey made by the Jack Daniel Dist.: ½-pint Peach Brandy, 1-quart & 1-pint Corn Whiskey



[FIG 13]

1-quart & 1 pint Apple Brandy



Round quart bottles



Miscellaneous square bottles



Round quart bottles

names of both W. T. & C. D. Gunter and Jack Daniel Distillery. The crock jugs also had both names stenciled on them from about 1890-1910. [Figs. 10, 11, 17]

Lem Motlow, Jack Daniel's nephew, played a very important role in the legacy of the Jack Daniel Distillery. Jack hired Lem in the summer of 1887 to do chores around the distillery as a general handyman. Lem was a very smart, hard working, ambitious man with a mind that was very good with numbers. In just four years, he was Jack Daniel's chief bookkeeper.

As time went by, Jack Daniel put more and more responsibility on Lem Motlow and soon the responsibility of running the distillery was virtually in the hands of Lem.

In 1904, Jack Daniel went to St. Louis, Missouri and entered his whiskey in the World's Fair competition where he came home a winner - with the Gold Medal. To celebrate this honor Jack produced the original Gold Medal back bar bottle for a select group of people. Every other panel on the bottle was flashed with gold, making it a truly beautiful and unique bottle.

In the spring of 1905, Jack Daniel arrived at the office early and wanted to see some papers that were inside the safe. He tried several times to open the safe but failed with each attempt. Out of frustration, Jack

kicked the safe and hurt his left foot. There were many changes after the safe kicking.

One of the first changes occurred in June of 1907 when Jack decided to divest himself from the distillery that he had founded in 1866. Looking towards the future, he decided Lem Motlow and a cousin named Dick Daniel would be the best men to continue the legacy of the Jack Daniel Distillery. Dick Daniel had a distillery business of his own and many years of experience. Jack told both men of his decision and made preparations for the change of ownership, confident that the family business would be in good hands and would continue to grow and prosper. [Figs. 8-9]

Jack Daniel's health started failing shortly thereafter. He began using a cane and had been gaining weight, and after complaining about some pain in his left leg, decided to see a doctor. It seems that when he kicked the safe, he had damaged his left foot more than he thought, and treatment was needed right away or gangrene would set in.

In 1909 Jack Daniel had the first of several operations on his left foot, leg and thigh. His big toe was completely black and eventually his leg was amputated up to the knee. A final operation on his thigh could not stop the gangrene, and on October 9, 1911, Jack Daniel died at the home of his sister, Bettye Connor.

In 1905, Lem Motlow had

build an upper distillery and it became a part of the expanding Lem Motlow operation by crushing peaches that came from local farms. Lem basically had a monopoly in the United States for Peach Brandy. It was easy for Lem to run both the peach distillery and the original whiskey plant in the hollow.

Dick Daniel never seemed to show the commitment that Lem had for the distillery and Lem bought out Dick's share of the distillery before 1909. Tennessee went bone dry in 1910 - ten years before national prohibition. Lem would move his distilling operations to Birmingham, Alabama, and continue the business from there. City directories show that the Jack Daniel Distilling Company operated there from 1913-1915 at a location of 2431 Second Avenue.

Unfortunately, even though the whiskey



[FIG 16]



L-R: 5", 6", & quart Motlow Dist. Co. & quart Jack Daniel Dist. Co. Birmingham, Ala. bottles





[FIG 19] Belle of Lincoln, Pure Corn Whiskey & Green label



[FIG 20] Miscellaneous labels

was made in the same way as it had been in Lynchburg, Tennessee, it could not achieve the quality produced at the Cave Spring location. Lem also had a distilling operation in St. Louis, Missouri, so when Alabama went dry in 1915, Lem closed the Birmingham facility and all the stock was moved to St. Louis. That facility was closed in 1918. [Figs. 18, 21]

Lem Motlow also had a wholesale warehouse in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. It distributed Jack Daniel No. 7 whiskey from 1912 to 1913. [Fig. 22]

Prohibition went national in 1920 and Lem Motlow was out of the whiskey business until 1938 when Prohibition was repealed. He then rebuilt the original Jack Daniel Distillery on the old site in Lynchburg, Tennessee.

Lem and his four sons Reagor, Conner, Dan and Robert all went to work making whiskey the way Mr. Jack Daniel had

intended. The distillery started bottling one year later with two cisterns working: one for whiskey and one for brandy, which was a favorite of Lem Motlow. Lem made the peach and apple brandy from 1939–1946. [Figs. 12-13]

Lem's health was beginning to fail and in late 1939 he suffered an attack that paralyzed his right side, confining him to a wheelchair where he still conducted business as usual.

Lem Motlow passed away on Sept 1st, 1947 in Lynchburg, Tennessee. Reagor Motlow was promoted from General Manager to President, and his three brothers were all promoted to vice-presidents of various operations at the distillery.

The business continued to grow gaining worldwide distribution. In August of 1956,

the Jack Daniel Distillery was sold to Brown-Forman, Inc. of Louisville, Kentucky.

Brown-Forman decided to let the Lynchburg distillery continue to operate as it had for over 80 years. There were no changes in policy at that time and personnel remained the same. Brown-Forman continues to own Jack Daniel Distillery to this day and the famous square bottle is still in use.

*Image in Heading:* Original hand tinted photo of Mr. Jack Daniel. This is the only original photo the author has ever seen that is not at the distillery. It is quite unusual because he is not wearing his traditional hat.

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[FIG 21]

Letterhead, Birmingham, Ala.



[FIG 22]

Envelope, etched shot glass, corkscrew, Lucky penny watch fob and bottle from Hopkinsville, Ky.



[FIG 23]