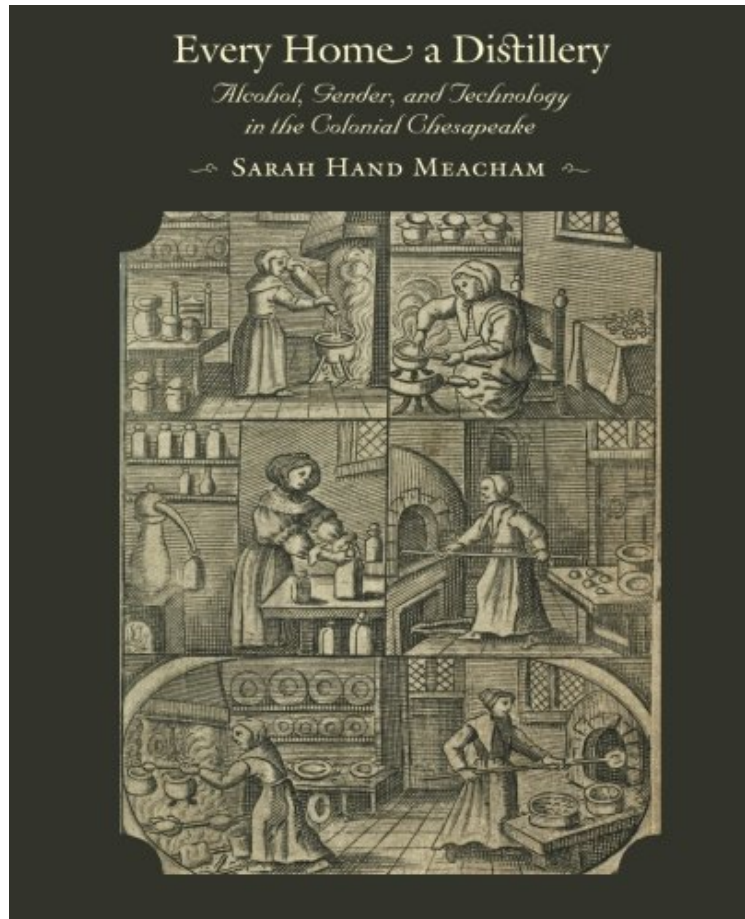


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Every Home a Distillery: Alcohol, Gender, and Technology in the Colonial Chesapeake (Early America: History, Context, Culture)

Sarah H. Meacham

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Sarah H. Meacham : Every Home a Distillery: Alcohol, Gender, and Technology in the Colonial Chesapeake (Early America: History, Context, Culture) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Every Home a Distillery: Alcohol, Gender, and Technology in the Colonial Chesapeake (Early America: History, Context, Culture):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Colonial HistoryBy Prof. Paul D. McDermottI highly recommend this book. For those interested in colonial history, this book is highly informative regarding the creation of alcoholic beverages-especially beer, cider, and homemade whiskey. In my study made for one backcountry region-Washington County, Maryland, a comprehensive inventory made in 1783 provided data that stills were widely distributed throughout the county. However, all were owned by relatively wealthy people. The average farmer did not have the

capital or the time to run a still. This book creates the argument that in the 17th century Women did most of the work in creating alcoholic beverages-cider and beer. In the late 18th century roles were reversed and at this time whiskey making becomes more commonplace.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting subject bogged down by repetitionBy ladymidnyteFascinating subject stretched out for length. This book gives great insight into a neglected area of Colonial history but it is incredibly repetitive. It seems as if the book was limited by the limited amount of primary sources available. After the first two chapters, you've pretty much garnered all the information the book has to offer.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Boring and uninterestingBy Kate 50I bought this book intrigued by the title and looked forward to learning more about this topic. However I found the book to be very disappointing as much of it was repetitious and boring as if the author needed to fill a required number of pages. I ended up skimming much of it and would not recommend wasting your time.

In this original examination of alcohol production in early America, Sarah Hand Meacham uncovers the crucial role women played in cidering and distilling in the colonial Chesapeake. Her fascinating story is one defined by gender, class, technology, and changing patterns of production. Alcohol was essential to colonial life; the regions water was foul, milk was generally unavailable, and tea and coffee were far too expensive for all but the very wealthy. Colonists used alcohol to drink, in cooking, as a cleaning agent, in beauty products, and as medicine. Meacham finds that the distillation and brewing of alcohol for these purposes traditionally fell to women. Advice and recipes in such guidebooks as *The Accomplisht Ladys Delight* demonstrate that women were the main producers of alcohol until the middle of the 18th century. Men, mostly small planters, then supplanted women, using new and cheaper technologies to make the regions cider, ale, and whiskey. Meacham compares alcohol production in the Chesapeake with that in New England, the middle colonies, and Europe, finding the Chesapeake to be far more isolated than even the other American colonies. She explains how home brewers used new technologies, such as small alembic stills and inexpensive cider pressing machines, in their alcoholic enterprises. She links the importation of coffee and tea in America to the temperance movement, showing how the wealthy became concerned with alcohol consumption only after they found something less inebriating to drink. Taking a few pages from contemporary guidebooks, *Every Home a Distillery* includes samples of historic recipes and instructions on how to make alcoholic beverages. American historians will find this study both enlightening and surprising.

"A well-composed, clearly written, highly informative study that significantly contributes to our understanding of how alcohol was brewed, distributed, and consumed in the colonial Chesapeake area." (Susan C. Imbarrato *Journal of American History*)"This exceptionally well-researched book provides important new information about alcohol practices in colonial America." (W. J. Rorabaugh *North Carolina Historical*)"Meachams style is eminently readable, informative, and entertaining. Her detailed Essay on sources is particularly useful. This work would appeal to students of early American studies, American history, and womens history." (M. Susan Anthony *Journal of American Culture*)"Meacham has studied and interrelated a broad variety of primary sources for this book: diaries, letters, account books, probate inventories and wills, cookbooks, court and local government records. The result is an eminently insightful, readable, and usefully annotated history." (Carolyn Cooper *Technology and Culture*)"This book does a real service in putting free women's work (enslaved women receive far briefer attention) at the center of colonial experience... With its focus on the methods and organization of alcohol production, *Every Home a Distillery* will appeal to anyone interested in early business history." (Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor *Common-Place*)"Meacham offers an engaging, thoughtful analysis of the gendered nature of alcohol production, using original sources and challenging historians to think in more complex ways about colonial men, women and gendered labor." (Monica D. Fitzgerald *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*)"[Meacham] convincingly argues that alcohol consumption was central to the lives of men and women in the colonial period... This book provides an important look at the gendered production of alcohol. It is useful to anyone interested in colonial history, women's history, or the history of alcohol." (Gina Hames *Journal of Social History*)"What is instructive about Meacham's book is that it examines the whole landscape of drink production and consumption in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake and explores the linkages between domestic and commercial output, the tavern trade and the nature and impact of alcohol drinking... An interesting, well-written book that makes an important contribution to the literature." (Peter Clark *Enterprise and Society*)"Anyone interested in daily life in the colonial Chesapeake would certainly benefit from reading this work." (Alexa S. Cawley *Journal of Southern History*)"It is a great pleasure when one comes across a brilliant interpretation of primary sources... [Meacham] tells a most fascinating and unique story... *Every Home a Distillery* offers a penetrating look at how people produced and acquired alcohol in the Chesapeake, the microcosm that greatly influenced the creation of the United States." (Cynthia D. Bertelsen *Gastronomica*)"Meacham's study is a welcome addition... By focusing her narrative on the production side of the alcohol market, Meacham establishes the basis for the ultimate microbrewerythe home, but, in her case, the plantation." (Linda L. Sturtz *Historian*)"A well-researched, thoughtful, and nicely written study of the gendered production of alcoholic beverages in the Chesapeake colonies. Meacham makes an original and highly readable contribution to the history of early America." (Cynthia A. Kierner,

George Mason University)From the Back CoverIn this fresh study of alcohol production in early America, Sarah Hand Meacham explores the crucial role women played in cidery, brewing, and distilling in the colonial Chesapeake. Her fascinating story incorporates gender, class, technology, and changing patterns of production. Alcohol was essential to colonial life in Virginia and Maryland; the region's water was foul, milk was generally unavailable, and tea and coffee were far too expensive for all but the very wealthy. Settlers used alcohol to drink, in cooking, as a cleaning agent, in beauty products, and as medicine. Meacham finds that the brewing and distillation of alcohol for these purposes traditionally fell to women. Advice and recipes in such guidebooks as *The Accomplisht Ladys Delight* demonstrate that women were the main producers of alcohol until the middle of the eighteenth century. Men, mostly small planters, then supplanted women, using new and cheaper technologies to make the region's cider, ale, and whiskey. "It is a great pleasure when one comes across a brilliant interpretation of primary sources... [Meacham] tells a most fascinating and unique story... *Every Home a Distillery* offers a penetrating look at how people produced and acquired alcohol in the Chesapeake, the microcosm that greatly influenced the creation of the United States." *Gastronomica*"A well-composed, clearly written, highly informative study that significantly contributes to our understanding of how alcohol was brewed, distributed, and consumed in the colonial Chesapeake area." *Journal of American History*"Anyone interested in daily life in the colonial Chesapeake would certainly benefit from reading this work." *Journal of Southern History*"Meacham has studied and interrelated a broad variety of primary sources for this book: diaries, letters, account books, probate inventories and wills, cookbooks, court and local government records. The result is an eminently insightful, readable, and usefully annotated history." *Technology and Culture*"With its focus on the methods and organization of alcohol production, *Every Home a Distillery* will appeal to anyone interested in early business history." *Common-Place*About the AuthorSarah Hand Meacham is an associate professor of early American history at Virginia Commonwealth University.