MSS. Collection #156

Fred Ratledge Papers, ca. 1920-1962. 7 boxes (181 folders), ca. 1500 items.

NOTE: The numbers cited in parentheses, e.g. 1:5, refer the researcher to the Series#:Folder# in which that name/topic will be found.

INTRODUCTION

The Fred Ratledge Papers is an interesting collection that traces the long career of Fred Ratledge, a prohibition agent for the U.S. Treasury Department and as Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the Alcohol Control Board (ABC) in Greensboro. Ratledge began his career in liquor law enforcement with the Prohibition Unit of the U.S. Treasury Dept. in 1921, which became the Alcohol Tax Unit (ATU) in 1934. He worked as a Federal agent during the height of Prohibition until his retirement in 1951. He was also a Deputy U.S. Marshall in Greensboro, from 1929 to 1931. From 1952-1961, he was Chief of the ABC law enforcement division in Greensboro. Researchers interested in different aspects of prohibition and liquor law enforcement, government administration, and bootlegging practices will find this collection useful.

The collection consists of numerous materials dealing with liquor law enforcement from bulletins describing proper finger printing procedures to reports written by Ratledge documenting the busting up of illegal still operations. There is administrative and personal correspondence, case files, photographs, printed materials such as pamphlets and targets, and a nameplate. The bulk of the collection is work related.

<u>Arrangement:</u> The Fred Ratledge Papers are organized into nine series according to subject and document type. The series are: **Chronology ATU 1922-1951**, **Chronology ABC 1952-1962**, **Correspondence, Financial, Legal, Literary, Miscellaneous, Photographs,** and **Printed.** One book, *Bates and Field's State Government* (NY, 1949), has been filed with the book collection (2001.52.2).

<u>Access Restrictions:</u> Due to the sensitive nature of certain materials, there are some restrictions for using this collection. Researchers are required to sign a waiver agreeing to the rules and regulations pertaining to access and usage.

<u>Provenance:</u> The material in this collection was created by J. Fred Ratledge during his long career as an agent for the U.S. Government and as Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the Alcohol Control Board in Greensboro. These items remained in his possession after his retirement in 1960, and stayed with his family until his death in 1975. Family member, Mr. Bob Ratledge on January 11, 2001, donated it to the GHM. The accession number is 2001.52.1.

Processing: J. Stephen Catlett began processing this collection in 2001. The arrangement and finding aid were completed by Christine A. Dumoulin, Archives Assistant, May 2003.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Fred Ratledge was born on January 30, 1898, in Davie County, NC. He had eight brothers and sisters and worked on his father's farm as a youth. He attended Cana High School in Davie County and was first appointed as a Federal Prohibition Agent on December 7, 1921 in Mocksville, NC. He took federal government courses in constitutional law and worked throughout NC and Virginia. From 1921-1929, he was assigned to several stations, including Mocksville, Elizabeth City, and Salisbury. In 1929, Ratledge came to Greensboro after being appointed as a U.S. Deputy Marshall, a position he held until 1931. He then returned to his work as a prohibition agent for three more years. In 1934, Ratledge was transferred to Roanoke, Va. where he became Group Head of the newly formed Alcohol Tax Unit and trained Federal law enforcement officers from 1934-1938. In 1938, he was transferred to Greensboro and remained with the Alcohol Tax Unit until December 31, 1951. Upon his retirement from the ATU, he was awarded the Gallatin Award for outstanding service as a federal agent, a first time honor for a North Carolinian.

In 1952, Ratledge was hired as Chief of the Law Enforcement Division with the newly established ABC Board in Greensboro. He was responsible for setting up and establishing the law enforcement operations. Among his many skills as an agent, he was a certified pistol expert and had a reputation as the fastest driver (his favorite the 1940 Ford Coupe) to run down bootlegger cars, as well as being able to run down bootleggers on foot. He was thought of as a "loyal, fair, and efficient" officer with excellent knowledge of liquor laws. He was a member of the Guilford College Civitan Club, taught Sunday school at Friendship Methodist Church, and was a very popular speaker at civic and church organizations, keeping his audiences spellbound with his many experiences. He died on November 11, 1975 and is buried at the Chestnut Grove United Methodist Church in Mocksville, N.C.

Fred and his wife, Flossie had seven children. They first lived in Davie County, where the first four children were born, and then moved to Greensboro sometime between March 3, 1928, and October 9, 1929. Hayes Ratledge was actually born on Cherry St. in Greensboro. The family lived on Pearson St. until Fred had a stone house built at 6811 Friendly Road in 1939. It was considered the family homestead until Flossie died on May 5, 1994.

<u>Biographical Sources:</u> The biographical information came mostly from newspaper clippings within the collection and through correspondence with members of the Ratledge family.

SCOPE & CONTENT NOTE

The types of materials in this collection include case files, correspondence, bulletins, newspaper clippings, photographs, and reports, posters, and advertisements. Most of the materials focus on the professional life of Ratledge with a scant number of personal items. The first series, Chronology ATU-1922-1951, contains the majority of materials and encompasses his work during Prohibition and after its repeal in 1933. The case files are mostly reports written by Ratledge documenting the numerous investigations into individuals and establishments who were committing federal liquor law violations. A 1927 case describes the seizure of property, including stills and illegally made liquor, and a report from a lab examining the liquor seized (1:26). There is also a 1947 investigation into the ownership of a seized vehicle (1:72). The

reports and administrative correspondence illustrate how agents were required to follow strict protocols and keep detailed accounts of their daily activities. A 1922 memo specifies that agents will refrain from any interviews with the press (1:4).

Chronology ABC contains materials from 1952-1961, when Ratledge worked for the Greensboro ABC Board as Chief Investigator. This series contains mostly reports documenting daily and monthly activities, as well as some annual reports with yearly statistics. There are only a scant number of case files. The correspondence is mostly administrative and includes memos and letters to agents regarding operations and procedures. One memo dated April 29 requests a special investigation into defendants believed to be conspiring to violate IRS liquor laws (2:8). A letter dated May 14 is from a private investigator inquiring about a possible connection between a stolen vehicle and car that was recently confiscated by law enforcement in Winston-Salem (2:11).

Series 3,4,5 and 7 contain a small number of items. The Correspondence series is significant in that it lists potential liquor law violators to be investigated by the ABC enforcement officers (3:1). The financial series contains audits of the ABC Board (4:1) and the legal series has changes to statutes and amendments pertaining to liquor laws in the 1930's (5:1-5:2).

Materials in the literary series consist of both personal and work related items. There are Treasury Department lectures on prohibition laws (6:1), a memorial to a fallen ATU officer (6:5), speech notes from a 1957 regional meeting of ABC Board members (6:11), and miscellaneous items such as poetry (6:6) and song lyrics (6:10).

The photograph series contains images relating to the search and seizure of illegal stills by enforcement officers of the A.T.U. and ABC Board. Ratledge is seen in several photos. There are early photos of stills busts from when Ratledge was a young man (8:1) to later photos, such as a 1953 image showing him sitting on a desk in his office. (8:6) There is also a folder of negatives, possibly from images used for the *Greensboro Daily News* and the *Greensboro Record* (8:8). There are also two early photographs of Ratledge, which he submitted with his application to be a Prohibition Agent in 1927 (1:23); they are part of the first series.

The printed materials encompass a number of booklets, manuals, and pamphlets outlining ATU procedures and changes in federal laws pertaining to the liquor law enforcement. Most relate to regulations and procedures prior to the repeal of Prohibition. Booklets include ABC Control Laws, regulations for "Operation Moonshine" (9:10) and procedures for search and seizure (9:4). Materials pertaining to Ratledge's gun training include a 1942 certificate becoming a pistol expert (9:15) and several targets (9:39). Several items are political in nature, one pamphlet regarding the views of North Carolina Governor, Al Smith, on immigration (9:24) and an undated election ballot (9:17).

There are significant chronological gaps within the collection. Few materials exist between the years of 1933 to 1944. The items for the years 1941-43 consist only of administrative reports written by Ratledge. Secondly, there is less material for the years Ratledge worked for the Greensboro ABC Board.

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

1. Chronology, A.T.U. 67 folders (ca. 1000 items). 1922-1951.

The materials in this series pertain to when Ratledge was working under the Prohibition and Alcohol Tax Units of the U.S. Treasury Department/Department of Internal Revenue. His early career with the Federal government is grouped under the A.T.U. heading, although the Prohibition Unit of the U.S. Treasury Dept. did not formally become the Alcohol Tax Unit until 1934.

The case files pertain to various aspects of enforcing liquor laws such as securing warrants, reports and descriptions of different raids, affidavits attesting to running illegal stills, and letters informing superiors of investigating individuals and/or establishments. A 1922 letter described the raid that took place at the home of an S. Reavis where an illegal distillery was discovered; he was later prosecuted in federal court (1:3). An interesting report dated March 16, 1950 discusses the shipment of illegal whiskey through the U.S. Post Office (1:78).

There are also some anonymous informant letters written by area citizens exposing possible liquor law violations, such as the manufacturing and transportation of illegal liquor. A letter from a "worried wife and mother" expresses her concerns about local bootleggers and says, "you ought to put a detective down there and enforce the law" (1:22).

The administrative correspondence contains memos to agents, agent assignments, press releases, and receipts for car maintenance, such as gas mileage and oil changes as reported by Ratledge. A 1932 memo assigns Ratledge and another agent to attend a University of North Carolina football game to look for liquor law violations (1:43).

The daily and monthly reports document the work Ratledge and other agents completed on a daily basis, including the number of hours worked, expenses such as gas and meals, and the people/establishments they interviewed and/or investigated. A letter from 1927 denies Ratledge's request for the installation of a telephone and does not "offer encouragement" as to its authorization (1:26).

2. Chronology, A.B.C. 31 folders (150 items). 1952-1961.

This series contains materials related to Ratledge when he worked as the first head of the Alcohol Beverage Control board for Greensboro. The bulk of the materials are mostly administrative correspondence, reports, and some case files. Two letters from 1952 congratulate and commend Ratledge for his work in the ATU (2:2). The monthly reports are standardized forms that document the hours worked, travel expenses, number of cases, seizures, and the purchases of evidence such as illegal whiskey. Among the more interesting case files include the 1955 case involving the State of North Carolina vs. Samuel S. Thomas and other defendants for operating a club which violated state liquor laws (2:12) and 1957 list of restaurants under the jurisdiction of the Guilford County Health department (2:18). A 1953 memo stated the IRS had the authority to request the full cooperation of ABC officers and an announcement for the annual fall barbeque held by the Greensboro Police Dept (2:9).

3. Correspondence. 1 folder (2 items). ca. 1950.

This series contains a list of local residents suspected of violating liquor laws through illegal sales and distribution.

4. Financial. 1 folder (2 items). 1961-1962.

Two audits of the ABC Board, detailing ABC operations, profits, structure of law enforcement and their duties, and educational efforts.

5. Legal. 2 folders (2 items). 1931, 1936.

Materials in this series relate to several summaries of statutes and amendments pertaining to the enforcement of alcohol laws. A 1936 summary lists amendments to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act (5:1). Folder 5:2 contains 1931 regulations for obtaining consent in the search and seizure of dwellings, boats, and automobiles.

6. Literary. 11 folders (15 items). 1928-1959.

This series contains a variety of materials, including addresses, interviews, lectures, programs, and speech notes. There is an interesting interview conducted by Ratledge with the owner of the Plantation Supper Club in 1956, investigating an allegation that liquor was spotted on a table (6:2). Liquor by the drink was illegal in North Carolina until 1978. There is a 1932 address given at a convention for the Bureau of Prohibition as well as a question and answer sheet regarding prohibition laws (6:1). A 1933 memoir honors the life of Levi Trexler, an agent who was killed in the line of duty (6:5). Other items include several poems that Ratledge collected and a copy of the lyrics to the song, "Mountain Dew" (6:10). A 1959 outline for the ABC Law Enforcement Regional Meeting lays out the structure of the meeting (6:7).

7. Miscellaneous. 1 folder (1 item). ca. 1952.

Nameplate that belonged to Ratledge.

8. Photographs. 8 folders (234 items). ca. 1930-1960.

This series contains photographs, mostly pertaining to the documentation of raids to bust up illegal liquor operations. Some show the actual stills, others show the men dumping out illegal liquor, and the destruction of illegal fermenters. The ATU photos are mostly of Ratledge and ATU officers on various illegal liquor raids. An earlier 1930 photo shows ATU officers posing with an illegal still; they are dressed in suits (8:1). Folder 8:3 contains images documenting raids with ATU officers seizing and destroying fermenters in 1937. There is also a folder of negatives documenting various raids, possibly from the Greensboro News & Record (8:8). There are also two early photos of Ratledge submitted with his 1927 Prohibition Agent application, located in folder 1:23.

9. Printed Materials. 36 folders (75 items). 1919-1956.

This series consists of various materials such as advertisements, booklets, bulletins, news clippings, manuals and pamphlets. The bulletins in this series were put out by the heads of the A.T.U. and contain mostly departmental news, such as agent announcements, statistics, changes in regulations, etc. (9:13). The booklets and pamphlets are mostly government issued and cover subjects pertaining to law enforcement and various procedures.

A booklet from 1958 discusses ABC control laws (9:5). The pamphlets range from training enforcement personnel (9:27) to the classification of fingerprints (9:22). Among the more interesting items are a series of whiskey labels (9:41) and a poster spelling the dangers of drinking illegal liquor (9:37). Newspaper clippings range from 1927 to 1964. The articles range from reporting of still busts, such as a 1927 seizure of a liquor laden gas boat and the appointment of Ratledge in 1952 as head of the new ABC Board (9:16).

FOLDER LISTING

<u>Series</u>	<u>Folder</u>	Contents	
1	1	Chronology	ATU 1921 Application U.S. Treasury Dept.
	2	"	ATU 1921 Reports Daily (Dec.)
	3	"	ATU 1922 Corresp Admin
	4	"	ATU 1922 Reports Daily (July)
	5	Chronology	ATU 1923 Case Files
	6	، د د	ATU 1923 Corresp Admin
	7	"	ATU 1923 Corresp Informant
	8	"	ATU 1923 Corresp Personal
	9	Chronology	ATU 1923 Reports Daily (Jan., Apr.)
	10	"	ATU 1923 Reports Daily (Sept., Dec.)
	11		ATU 1924 Corresp Admin.
	12		ATU 1924 Reports Daily (Jan., April)
	13	Chronology	ATU 1924 Reports Daily (Dec.)
	14	"	ATU 1925 Case Files
	15	"	ATU 1925 Oath of Office, Treasury Dept.
	16	"	ATU 1925 Reports Daily (July original)
	17	Chronology	ATU 1925 Reports Daily (Feb., Sept., Dec.)
	18	"	ATU 1926 Case Files
	19	"	ATU 1926 Corresp Admin.
	20	"	ATU 1926 Reports – Daily (JanJune)
	21	Chronology	ATU 1927 Case Files
	22	"	ATU 1927 Corresp Admin.
	23	"	ATU 1927 Corresp Informant
	24	"	ATU 1927 Corresp Personal Job Application
			Photos, Ratledge (1927)
	25	Chronology	ATU 1927 Coursework Franklin Institute
	26		ATU 1927 Reports Daily (Jan., Oct.)
	27	"	ATU 1928 Case Files
	28	، د د	ATU 1928 Corresp Admin.
	29	Chronology	ATU 1928 Legal
	30	"	ATU 1928 Reports Daily (AprJune, notebook)
	31	"	ATU 1928 Reports Daily (Jan., Apr., Dec.)
	32		ATU 1929 Case Files
	33	Chronology	ATU 1929 Corresp Admin.
	34	"	ATU 1929 Reports Daily (FebJune)
	35	"	ATU 1929 Reports Daily (July-Dec.)
	36	"	ATU 1930 Case Files
	37	Chronology	ATU 1930 Reports Daily Logs
	38	"	ATU 1931 Case Files
	39	"	ATU 1931 Corresp Admin.
	40	"	ATU 1931 Reports Daily (Feb., Dec.)

<u>Series</u>	Folder	<u>Contents</u>	
1	4.1	C11	ATH 1022 Con Eller
1	41	Chronology	ATU 1932 Case Files
	42	"	ATU 1932 Corresp Admin.
	43	"	ATU 1932 Corresp Memos
	44		ATU 1932 Reports Daily (Jan., Dec.)
	45	Chronology	ATU 1932 Reports Field Notes
	46	"	ATU 1933 Case Files
	47	"	ATU 1933 Corresp Admin.
	48		ATU 1933 Reports Field Notes
	49	Chronology	ATU 1933 Reports Daily (Dec.)
	50	"	ATU 1934 Corresp Admin.
	51	"	ATU 1935 Case Files
	52		ATU 1935 Reports Daily (Sept.)
	53	Chronology	ATU 1936 Reports Field Notes
	54	"	ATU 1937 Reports Field Notes
	55	"	ATU 1937 Reports Daily (Jan.)
	56		ATU 1938 Case Files
	57	Chronology	ATU 1938 Corresp Personal
	58	"	ATU 1938 Reports Daily (Jan.)
	59	"	ATU 1941 Reports Monthly
	60		ATU 1942 Reports
	61	Chronology	ATU 1943 Reports
	62	"	ATU 1944 Case Files
	63	"	ATU 1944 Reports Monthly
	64		ATU 1945 Case Files
	65	Chronology	ATU 1945 Reports Daily (June-Nov.)
	66	"	ATU 1945 Reports Monthly (JanJune)
	67	"	ATU 1945 Reports Monthly (July-Dec.)
	68		ATU 1946 Case Files
	69	Chronology	ATU 1946 Log Book
	70	"	ATU 1946 Reports Monthly (JanJune)
	71	"	ATU 1946 Reports Monthly (July-Dec.)
	72		ATU 1947 Case Files
	73	Chronology	ATU 1947 Corresp Admin.
	74	،	ATU 1947 Reports Monthly (JanNov.)
	75	"	ATU 1948 Case Files
	76		ATU 1948 Reports Monthly
	77 78	Chronology	ATU 1949 Case Reports ATU 1949 Reports Monthly
		66	ATU 1949 – Reports Monthly
	79	"	ATU 1950 Case Files
	80		ATU 1950 Finger Print Cards
	81	Chronology	ATU 1950 Reports Monthly
	82	"	ATU 1951 Case Files
	83		ATU 1951 Corresp Admin.

<u>Series</u>	Folder	Contents	
1	84	Chronology	ATU 1051 Deports Monthly
1	04	Chronology	ATU 1951 Reports Monthly
2	1	Chronology	ABC 1951 Reports
	2	٠,٠	ABC 1952 Corresp Personal
	3	cc	ABC 1952 Daily Journals
	4	"	ABC 1952 Receipts Gas
	5	Chronology	ABC 1952 Reports Annual
	6	cc	ABC 1952 Reports Monthly JanJune
	7	cc	ABC 1952 Reports Monthly July-Dec.
	8	دد	ABC 1953 Case Files
	9	Chronology	ABC 1953 Corresp Admin.
	10	"	ABC 1953 Reports Annual
	11	"	ABC 1954 Corresp Admin.
	12		ABC 1955 Case Files
	13	Chronology	ABC 1956 Corresp Admin.
	14	"	ABC 1956 Reports Annual
	15	"	ABC 1956 Reports Monthly
	16	"	ABC 1956 Corresp Admin.
	17	Chronology	ABC 1956 Reports Monthly
2	18		ABC 1957 Case Files
	19	"	ABC 1957 Corresp Admin.
	20	"	ABC 1957 Financial Audit
	21	Chronology	ABC 1957 Reports Monthly
	22		ABC 1958 Corresp Admin.
	23		ABC 1958 Reports Annual
	24		ABC 1958 Reports Monthly
	25	Chronology	ABC 1959 Case Files
	26		ABC 1959 Corresp Admin.
	27		ABC 1959 Field Notebooks
<u> </u>	28 29		ABC 1959 Reports Annual ABC 1959 Reports Monthly
	30	Chronology	ABC 1959 Reports Monthly ABC 1960 Corresp.
	31	cc	ABC 1960 Corresp ABC 1960 Reports Monthly JanJune
	31		ABC 1900 Reports Wolldiny JanJune
3	1	Correspondence	
		F : 33333	
4	1	Financial	Audits
5	1	Legal	Amendments ABC Control Act (1936)
	2	Legai	Amendments ABC Control Act (1930) Search and Seizure Law Procedures (1931)
			Souten and Seizare Daw Hoccoures (1731)
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<u> </u>	2	"	Interview (1956)
		l	1110111011 (1750)

<u>Series</u>	Folder	<u>Contents</u>	
	3	Litanony	Lastumas Casa Ramonta Traccumy Dont (1020)
6		Literary	Lectures Case Reports Treasury Dept. (1929)
	5	"	Lectures The Constitution (1928)
	6	"	Memoir "Trexler, Man and Official" (1933)
	7	Litarory	Poetry Program Outling (1050)
	8	Literary	Program Outline (1959) Regulations (n.d.)
	9	"	Č , ,
		"	Reports (n.d.)
	10	T '4	Song Lyrics "Mountain Dew"
	11	Literary	Speech Notes (1957)
7	1	Miscellaneous	Name Plate
8	1	Photographs	ca. 1930 Distillery Seizures
	2	"	1934 (O'size, vertical)
	3	"	1937 Distillery Seizures
	4	"	ca. 1945 Distillery Seizures
	5	Photographs	1946 Distillery Seizure- Lexington, NC (O'size,
		<i>C</i> 1	flat)
	6	"	1953 Illegal Liquor Seizures
	7	"	ca. 1950 Illegal Liquor Seizures
	8	"	Negatives 1956-57
	9	Photographs	1952, Gallatin Award
9	1	Printed	Advertisement Ford Police Car (1953)
	2	"	Advertisement Printex Camera (ca. 1950)
	3	"	Annual Report Greensboro Police (1956)
	4		Statutes ATU Search and Seizure (1936)
	5	Printed	Booklet Control Laws ABC (1950)
	6		Booklet Control Laws ABC (1958)
	7		Booklet Enforcement Laws (1923)
	8		Booklet Enforcement Laws (1929)
	9	Printed	Booklet Methods and Formulas for ABC Control Systems (n.d.)
	10	"	Booklet Operation Moonshine 1958 (1959)
	11	"	Booklet Regulations No. 3 Relative to the
	11		Production, Tax Payment, Etc. (1931)
	12	"	Booklet Testimony Concerning Introduction of
			Latent Fingerprint Evidence (1938)
	13	Printed	Bulletins The Bureau Bulletin (1923-1933)
	14	"	Certificates U.S. Coastguard Small Arms (1937)
	15	٠,٠	Certificates U.S. Treas. Dept. Pistol Expert (1942)
	16	٠.	Newspaper Clippings (1927-1964)
	17	Printed	Election Ballot (n.d.)

Series	Folder	Contents	
9	18	Printed	Manual "Manual of Instruction and Outline of
			Laws" (1934)
	19	"	Manual "Supplement to the Manual of Instructions for
			Investigators" (1937)
	20	"	Manual "Enforcement Manual, ATU, Regulations
			no. 17 & 92 " (1938)
	21	"	Pamphlet "Analysis of Operation of Federal and
			State Laws" (1926)
	22	Printed	Pamphlet "Classification of Fingerprints" (1937)
	23	"	Pamphlet "Fingerprints" (1937)
	24	"	Pamphlet "Governor Al Smith's Real Position"
			(n.d.)
	25	"	Pamphlet "An Endorsement for J.J. Jenkins" (n.d.)
	26	Printed	Pamphlet "Industrial Alcohol" (1930)
	27	"	Pamphlet "Method of Training Enforcement
			Personnel" (1930)
	28	"	Pamphlet "Padlock Procedure" (1930)
	29	"	Pamphlet "Permit Procedure Pertaining to Industrial
			Alcohol" (1931)
	30	Printed	Pamphlet "The Problem and Policy of Prohibition"
			(1929)
	31	"	Pamphlet "Public Cooperation in Prohibition Law
			Enforcement" (1930)
	32	"	Pamphlet "Travel Regulations" (1919, 1926, 1934)
	33	"	Pamphlet "The ABC of Alcohol Beverage Control in North
	24	D: . 1	Carolina" (ca. 1954)
	34	Printed	Pamphlet "The Value of Law Observance" (1930)
	35	"	Postcard (1954)
	36	"	Poster "250 RewardRobert Paul Evans" (1931)
	37		Poster "Warning Deadly Poison Moonshine Liquor"
	20	D: 4 1	(n.d.)
	38	Printed	Programs North Carolina ABC Annual Convention
	20	"	(1952, 1957)
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	41		Whiskey Labels (n.d.)

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