

Material History of the Liquor-Temperance Conflict

An Honors Thesis for the Department of History

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Introduction

In the beginning, the dynamic between temperance advocates and their enemies, the distillers of America, was wholly one-sided. Distillation took the frontier west by storm, and Americans drank heavily from the spirits derived from their own farms. The massive technological shifts in the early to mid-19th century would necessarily alter their relationship. The advent of industrial practices and machinery created high barriers for entry for distillers, and the industry became consolidated into massive corporations which would further their exclusionary practices by forming trusts. They exercised massive political and social power. On the other hand, temperance advocates began to hone their skills in mass-media communication. They were able to reach far more people and vilify a newly erected institution: the saloon. In a grand finale, the whiskey trusts faced off against massive temperance organizations, though their conflict never reached direct interaction. This thesis will show the pivotal role which technology played in influencing this great conflict.

With respect to organization, there were three distinct time periods for both liquor companies and temperance organizations. Divided by the technologies which each had access to, those periods are as follows. The beginning for both camps was post-Revolutionary War. Distillation was dominated by farmer-distillers who had carved out their lives in the western frontier, in Ohio, Kentucky, Western Pennsylvania, and other territories beyond the pale of the Appalachian Mountains. Judge John Cleeves Symmes presents an accurate case study of the early farmer-distillation market. Concurrently, temperance was born

in the established metropolises in the original states. Temperance was defined by exclusion of lower classes, these early organizations which championed the cause were wholly unsuccessful at curbing consumption or building robust coalitions. Despite luminary figures at the helm, such as John Wesley and Benjamin Rush, temperance was unable to garner enough legitimacy to be effective.

Their evolution diverged along technological lines from here. The temperance movement was able to adopt new printing and papermaking techniques to form regional hubs of political influence starting in the 1830s. The American Temperance Society was the first organization to find success, largely through the disbursement of literature and involving a broader bloc of Americans. Liquor companies did not realize the gains from improved distillation methods until after the Civil War, due to a lag in the adoption of Scottish stills. However, the liquor industry was similarly divided into regional power brokers in the 1870s. Distilleries were capable of great production, as a result of the sheer efficiency of steam, or perpetual distillation.

The introduction of railroads shifted both sides from regional to nationalized institutions, capable of shipping their goods, be they barrels of liquor or propaganda, throughout the country. The ATS and the Whiskey Ring were unique in their ability to pool resources and wield political power, but they were still severely limited by poor distribution networks. Railroads changed everything. The actors which emerged in a railroad-laden environment were far more powerful than their predecessors. The Women's Christian Temperance Union and Anti-Saloon League were national institutions of temperance promotion, they

commanded offices and members in the furthest reaches of the country. They disbursed ludicrous amounts of propaganda. Likewise, the Whiskey Ring was replaced by the Whiskey Trust as synecdoche for the overall industry, and was not confined to Missouri, as the Ring was. Its board of trustees controlled the national liquor market completely, taking advantage of railroads to offload their steam-distilled products. An entirely new institution arose to take advantage of centralized production, the saloon. Saloons, especially in the far west, were promoted and subsidized by a Trust content to rely on a middleman. With the Trust actively supporting saloons, the temperance movement chose such institutions as the focus of their ire. The battle over consumption would be fought over the interstitial institution, conspicuously insulating each warring faction from one another.

These actors, the WCTU/ASL and Whiskey Trust, achieved their final form in the 1890s. Though Prohibition did not come into effect for 30 years, campaigning and market strategies were enshrined by technology. To render a holistic history of temperance vs. liquor, it is necessary to note which inventions emerged from the industrial revolution to transform the conflict. Papermaking, steam printing, steam distillation and, crucially, railroads, redefined each side. Changes in strategy, such as the acceptance of inclusive membership criteria, or collusion to collectively lobby for industrial protections, was informed by the technology available at each axis. This thesis will inject an element of materialism into the historiography, illustrating that the social and political factors which

inspired temperance and liquor (the foci of existing literature) do not conspire to form a complete set of variables.

Literature Review

The role of whiskey in American history is embellished in popular media, though underdeveloped in scholarship. Ancillary social and political movements, such as labor or temperance, have been studied rigorously, but scholars in those fields have generally refused to delve deeply into the machinations of the whiskey economy. Rather than explain how social movements impacted liquor, my thesis will describe the inverse relationship. The most harmful failure in the existing literature has to do with the prevalence of technological changes allowing distillation magnates to rise at the expense of farmer-distillers. While material history is not the sole driver of alcohol history, it is a vital player and too often overlooked. Rather, the preponderance of anecdotal evidence, a classical folly of popular literature, and the hyper-focus placed on social movements by authors who seek to study those movements, has rendered the literature on this crucial product incomplete. Thus far, the only respect given to a progression of scientific achievements which reshaped the liquor landscape is via scientific sources, namely chemists and engineers who specialize in distillation. There are a number of historians whose overall methodology in analyzing the second industrial revolution grants technology its due, though their works are too general to involve a deep studying of American whiskey markets.

The secondary sources used here are separated by those which are direct references to alcohol, and those which offer evidence on ancillary topics. Within alcohol literature, there is a stark divide between popular and scholarly sources,

though both will be utilized in this thesis. Generally, the popular sources are too focused on the agency of given individuals or mythos. The scholarly sources, while important, are also bereft of technical ideas, focusing more on sociological approaches, i.e. how Americans viewed alcohol or an emphasis on the institutions selling it. The ancillary sources are too divorced from the history of alcohol, even when they are investigating temperance, alcohol's direct opposing force. There is little to no explanation *why* temperance was successful following the Civil War, and attempts at putting forth a sustainable argument fail in their refusal to include the shifting of the alcohol economy from diffused to mass production. This literature review will show how these sources offer wildly different perspectives, and an analytical synthesis will provide the most holistic picture of how the whiskey economy evolved and impacted politics and American society.

Scholarly Sources on Alcohol

Academics have shied away from the study of alcohol, or never developed interest in the topic to begin with, save a few noteworthy exceptions. Despite these historians lack of peers in their field, and therefore the lack of competitive voices pushing for refined scholarship, they have put forth solid histories of alcohol in America. There are specific issues which each, however, notably the exclusion of studying the overall market in favor of highlighting moments of political intrigue or "fun facts".

W.J. Rorabaugh's *An Alcoholic Republic* is the paragon of whiskey scholarship. His analysis ranges from the pre-colonial period to Prohibition and

presents well-researched arguments for the impact of whiskey on American history. Undoubtedly, without his work, my own thesis would not be possible. That said, *An Alcoholic Republic* was the first of its kind, and suffers from a major handicap: the entire book is devoted to justifying the study of alcohol. The book is replete with ways alcohol affected major moments, or when it was mentioned by famous politicians. It also is far more concerned with consumption than production, a consequence of its highly sociological tone. A more markets-centric, or institutionalist perspective would have bolstered his claims well. With respect to institutionalism, Christine Sismondo's *America Walks into a Bar*, presents the taverns and saloons which impacted America. There were phases of whiskey's history when places selling spirits were just as important as the producers, so Sismondo's piece helps to add additional value.¹²

Popular Sources on Alcohol

A dearth of academic sources on alcohol has combined with the public's intense curiosity and demand for whiskey stories to propel popularized accounts of an alcoholic history. These accounts are, usually, either based on myth or far too concerned with important individuals and their impact on history. Honing in on individual impact rather than larger trends is also present in some of the social histories written about the temperance movement, and so this phenomenon invades whiskey history throughout.

¹ W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic, an American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

² Christine Sismondo, *America Walks into a Bar: A Spirited History of Taverns and Saloons, Speakeasies, and Grog Shops* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Solid history has been made in the popularized field, epitomized by the best-selling *Bourbon Empire* by Reid Mitenbuler. Mitenbuler's sources are often myths, though he is quick to point out which stories were invented for marketing. To add another qualification, he does often point out a myth, such as Evan Williams being the first distiller, without a justification for its inclusion in his narrative.³ They are often just "fun facts". He is an expert on bourbon quality, and very adeptly weaves his impressions of taste into his history. However, that comes at the expense of delving into more concrete analyses of socio-political trends. The book puts forth accurate claims without evidence to back them up, such as the consolidation of whiskey power by fewer distillers, and eventual formation of cartels. His work is far more valuable to this thesis when paired with primary evidence to support his assertions. For example, he outlines failed attempts to curb the ever-growing temperance movement, listing off the defenses from the whiskey industry. These are valuable sources of political discourse. Mitenbuler does not analyze them at all, he simply notes that the defense of imbibement failed and that Prohibition was put into place, sans rationale.⁴ The same chapter which references temperance for the first time devotes as many pages to the history of NASCAR, illustrating that *Bourbon Empire's* focus lies elsewhere.

Temperance

³ Reid Mitenbuler, *Bourbon Empire: The Past and Future of America's Whiskey* (New York: Viking, 2015), 121.

⁴ Mitenbuler, 171.

Whiskey was America's biggest drink in the decades leading up to Prohibition, and its throne would only be stolen by beer, debatably not even in the same category, in 1913. So why is it that the literature on temperance rarely, if ever, focuses on the enemy of the movement? There are a variety of approaches and methodologies to use in viewing temperance, yet despite this variety, there is no mention of an evolving whiskey market influencing the strategies or fortunes of the temperance movement. Original temperance organizations during the period of regional control are left out of the literature. Historians choose to focus on the eventual victors, the nationalized organizations, carefully stepping around the successes of earlier movements.

There are two main temperance advocacy groups which receive the most credit for the eventual success of the movement: the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Anti-Saloon League (ASL). Scholarship on the former is couched in gender history studies, with special emphasis placed on the organizational and managerial aptitude of the WCTU's leader, Frances Willard. The Anti-Saloon League is frequently mentioned in secondary sources for its unique mandate: to rid the country of saloons rather than drink. These sources, similarly to Sismondo's *America Walks into a Bar*, hyper-emphasizes institutionalism and the role which establishments themselves have had on American history. This is a vital part of the whiskey-history lexicon, but it offers analysis without a deeper rationale. Certainly, saloons' roles were outsized relative to distributors', especially when compared to antebellum decades, but

how their supremacy came into being, and the specific shape that their impact assumed, is missing in academics.

With regards to the WCTU, Ruth Bordin is the preeminent scholar in the field. Her works, *Frances Willard: A Biography* and *A Baptism of Power and Liberty: The Women's Crusade of 1873-1874* are very important sources for this paper, yet are at odds with a complete understanding of the environmental factors which contributed to Willard and her movement's success in curbing imbibement. In Willard's biography, far more attention is placed on the WCTU's rationalization of suffrage with their titular goal of inducing prohibition. In the chapter *Victory*, which is ostensibly referencing temperance, is not about that movement at all. Rather, it is Willard's rise to the presidency of the WCTU, and her activism in supporting the Home Protection Ballot.⁵ This is one of many examples in the biography where one of the staunchest and most effective proponents of temperance is recognized for her alternative achievements. There is no doubt that Willard's captaining one of the greatest social movements in U.S. history is a crucial piece of American history, but her activism in the temperance sphere is eschewed. *A Baptism of Power and Liberty* is likewise disposed towards the suffrage movement over temperance.⁶ To Bordin, who I stress is recognized as the most prolific scholar on the topic, temperance is seen as a means to an end. This thesis seeks to reframe the focus on the WCTU to their temperance activism.

⁵ Ruth Birgitta Anderson Bordin, *Frances Willard: A Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 107.

⁶ Ruth Bordin, "'A Baptism of Power and Liberty': The Women's Crusade of 1873-1874," OHJ Archive, 1977, [http://resources.ohiohistory.org/ohj/browse/displaypages.php?display\[\]=0087&display\[\]=393&display\[\]=404](http://resources.ohiohistory.org/ohj/browse/displaypages.php?display[]=0087&display[]=393&display[]=404).

With that focus, it is clear that technological development and evolution of the whiskey economy is an indispensable factor for analysis.

It is true that following the Civil War, saloons became hotbeds of political intrigue, dissidence, and even high political involvement. The ASL's mission was of an opposite nature to the WCTU, rather than an expansive social agenda, they were singularly focused on getting rid of saloons. They also exhibited an opposite ability to manage their movement. While Frances Willard was a political adept, the various leaders and important figures of the ASL, such as Wayne Wheeler, were plagued by infighting and managerial ineptitude. This is all according to K. Austin Kerr, a historian at the University of Ohio State, who wrote *Organized for Prohibition, the History of the Anti-Saloon League*.⁷ Kerr's work represents a daunting task, it covers the period from the Maine Liquor Laws of the 1850s to the repeal of the 18th Amendment. However, it is enthralled by intraleague conflicts, exacerbated by radical anti-immigrant, racist and religiously fanatic members. The ASL had self-identified members in lofty offices, such as Ohio Governor Myron Herrick and Henry Ford, so their impact was duly massive on temperance. Ultimately, Kerr's work takes the anti-saloon proclivity for granted, never explaining *why* the League existed, and instead explains their political strategies.

Ancillary Sources – Economics and Technological

⁷ K. Austin Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition: A New History of the Anti-Saloon League* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

This paper is primarily concerned with the most conspicuous dearth of scholarship regarding the evolution of whiskey technologies and its impact on temperance. As such, it is necessary to understand the chemical and engineering inventions which revolutionized the industry, and to incorporate these technical changes into the overall narrative of the temperance movement.

The Academic Press compiled a series of essays in their Handbook of Alcoholic Beverage Series, titled *Whisky: Technology, Production and Marketing*. In this book, there are chapters devoted to the adoption of perpetual steam-powered stills in America, noting how they work and the sheer volume they were capable of producing (namely: Chapters 3 and 6).⁸ Understanding the history of stills is critical to understanding the history of whiskey production, which has thus far gone unnoticed in studies on this topic. With respect to railroads, secondary source materials are more complete than those regarding alcohol or temperance. Richard White's *Railroaded: the Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* is the most relied upon source in this thesis.

More generally, I will utilize a series of works regarding the Carbon Revolution. The development of steel-made products and coal as an energy source catalyzed all of the technical discoveries analyzed in this thesis. In Robert B. Marks' *The Origins of the Modern World*, the import of harnessing carbon power is blatant. In his "Chapter Four: The Industrial Revolution and its Consequences", the adoption of steam-powered machines, the creation of massive, nationalized economies, and the refinement of steel, all entered the fold beginning in the late

⁸ Inge Russell, ed., *Whisky: Technology, Production and Marketing*, Handbook of Alcoholic Beverages Series (Amsterdam ; Boston: Academic Press, 2003).

18th Century.⁹ These discoveries and inventions allowed for rail and steamship transport of grain, eliminating the need for an independent supply of cereals. Steam-powered stills, as mentioned previously, were an integral aspect of the consolidation of massive whiskey production, and this method of concentrating vaporous water was developed contemporaneously. Finally, refined steel is the only material capable of actuating the microdistillations in Aeneas Coffey's still, as it is far easier to control high temperatures in a steel-made machine. Steam and steel did factor into the liquor-temperance dynamic.

⁹ Robert Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative*, World Social Change (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 103–32.

Chapter I: Farmer-Distillation in the Frontier

Americans did not always drink whiskey. Rum and cider were perennial favorites in colonial America, and U.S. citizens were the beneficiaries of cheap sugar coming from Britain's Caribbean colonies and the upper class was infatuated with fortified wine. Take, for example, the bar receipt at the Constitutional Convention, in which the founding fathers drank 54 bottles of Madeira, 60 bottles of claret, 22 bottles of porter, 12 bottles of beer, 8 bottles of cider and 7 large bowls of rum punch.¹⁰ The cider was likely reserved for the New England delegation, and likely could have been all for President John Adams, who was said to put down a tankard of hard cider every morning.¹¹ Being in Britain's mercantile system meant it was unnecessary to form a self-sufficient liquor industry. Americans did make their own alcohol, but the northeast was inundated with apples, not grain, and the south was still consumed with plantation tobacco production. Once the nation formed, and especially once the War of 1812 had been waged, America was excluded from the mercantile system. There was not enough domestic sugar to supply the nation with rum, and cider was too inefficiently harvested and distilled to quench the thirst of a rapidly growing nation. This section will outline the American response to such a predicament. When a problem arose, a lack of spirits, enterprising folks in the newly-settled frontier seized an opportunity to make a living by filling in demand.

¹⁰ "The Bender That Began America: Bar Tab Shows Framers Celebrated a Newly Finished U.S. Constitution and a Future President - Chicago Tribune," accessed October 11, 2018, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-george-washington-bar-tab-20180222-story.html>.

¹¹ W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic, an American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 6.

The beginning of a whiskey industry in the United States was bred from necessity. Rigors of frontier life combined with the need for far-flung farmers to accrue capital and build up their communities. A capital model developed in a few short years which saw subsistence farmers move to fiscal security by distilling their surplus grains and selling the product. The liquor market became a crisscrossing matrix of salesmen who would strap whiskey to their beasts of burden and transport it to metropolitan centers. This was the only way to transfer produce over the daunting Appalachians from western Pennsylvania, Ohio, or Kentucky. Alternatively, they could float their wares by raft down to New Orleans. Whiskey was the guardian of the frontier, it was a widely accepted business model which combined with, and even catalyzed, the other large frontier industry: pork. Farmer-distillation was defined by huge numbers of actors producing at small quantities to propagate an intensely large industry.

The Rise of Farmer Distillation

The early American alcohol industry was a noted issue in both high and low politics. In *Federalist 12*, Hamilton noted that one of the benefits of having a strong centralized government was the ability to levy an excise tax. They could raise revenue while imposing negative economic reinforcement against overdrinking.¹² Washington and Adams, by virtue of their Federalist leanings, were likely to support the tax, but they were also personally disposed to supporting it. Washington asserted that alcohol would be “the ruin of half the

¹² Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, “The Federalist Papers No. 12,” Text, December 29, 1998, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed12.asp.

workmen in the country”, while Adams wrote, “is it not mortifying... that we, Americans, should exceed all other... people in this world in this degrading, beastly vice of intemperance?”.¹³ Aside from the blatant hypocrisy (Washington retired from office to form a distillery and Adams was a noted alcoholic), these men were set on passing a domestic production tax, as well as imposing sanctions on imported spirits. The rum tax was not met with resistance, but western Pennsylvanians were outraged enough to take up arms against the federal imposition of a whiskey tax.¹⁴ Whiskey production, which had to this point paled in comparison to cider and rum, was a nascent industry in backwater regions of the country. At the time of the tax, in 1793, Americans were still drinking more in total alcohol quantity of cider than rum, and more rum was being imported than whiskey produced. That is not to mention all of the molasses shipped into the country, some of which was used to make even more rum.¹⁵ However, those who owned personal stills were willing to die for the right to go on distilling. Rum and the molasses used to make it were deemed foreign and therefore unnecessary for the independent nation SOURCE. But, whiskey was something else. It was “revolutionized”, to become a symbol for the nation’s independence from Britain and from Americans’ independence from the impositions of government. Harrison Hall, a journalist and distiller who affords this thesis crucial information, describes that whiskey was made for two reasons: “the influence of patriotism, or rather, the desire for making money, with a worm made of gun barrels, was all the

¹³ Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic, an American Tradition*, 6.

¹⁴ Christine Sismondo, *America Walks into a Bar: A Spirited History of Taverns and Saloons, Speakeasies, and Grog Shops* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 88.

¹⁵ W J Rorabaugh, “Estimated U.S. Alcoholic Beverage Consumption, 1790-1860,” n.d., 360.

apparatus at this time employed”¹⁶ Whiskey, though still in its earliest stages of development as an industry, was cultural important to farmer-distillers. As this section will show, and through the eyes of Judge John Cleeves Symmes, it was more than a cultural phenomenon, it was crucial to the economic survivability of the settlers to the west. It is no surprise, then, that Hamilton’s proposed whiskey tax was met with such fervent opposition: whiskey was both guardian, and symbol, of the expansion of this country.

Despite the federalists’ efforts to curtail drinking, President Jefferson’s administration drastically reversed the course of whiskey production in America, irrevocably bolstering the industry. In two short years, the President passed two tremendously impactful pieces of legislation. First, he repealed the whiskey tax, which allowed for individual distillers to produce without government interference. Furthermore, the international sphere arrived to impact the liquor markets with the passage of the Embargo Act in 1803. Once the liquor supply ran dry from abroad, American whiskey was set up to take over the resulting vacuum. The source of that takeover was west of the Appalachians, where the burgeoning industry was catalyzed by farmer-distillers.

John Cleeves Symmes

Judge John Cleeves Symmes typified the life of a farmer-distiller finding new fortunes as he sought to begin a new life in Ohio. Symmes was a force U.S. history. In his early career, he was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention

¹⁶ Harrison Hall, *The Distiller: Adapted to the Use of Farmers and Distillers*, 2nd ed., enl.improved. (Philadelphia :, 1818), 6–7, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015093177536>.

from New Jersey, and represented the state in its senate. He abruptly moved to Ohio in 1788 to forge a new life in the territory, settling in what is now North Bend, Ohio. He was President William Henry Harrison's father-in-law and President Benjamin Harrison's great-grandfather. In direct application to this thesis, his later years of his life were defined by distillation. Due to his, and his family's, great repute, Judge Symmes's letters from Ohio have been preserved.

In letters to his grandsons, the Judge outlines the story of his successes out west. Over time, he is made aware that one of those grandsons, Peyton Short, is committed to following in his "grandpah's" footsteps, and he increases their correspondence. From a narrative to a specific account of advice in setting up an operation, Judge Symmes provided a clear overview of life on the frontier. He was careful to stress the two most important facets of frontier distillation: first, that the delivery of spirits represented a legitimate logistical hurdle, and secondly, the perils of transportation across territories with little infrastructure.¹⁷ A primary concern of his was keeping up a rapport with Native Americans, who largely controlled the routes through the mountains. The "Wilderness Road" ran down to Kentucky, and allowed for easy access through to St. Louis and even New Orleans, but it was fraught with peril.¹⁸ His advice was to ingratiate the Native Americans with the very product which was being transported, whiskey, exchanging it for equal value in furs.¹⁹ In the same letter, he warns against

¹⁷ John Cleves Symmes, *The Intimate Letters of John Cleves Symmes and His Family, Including Those of His Daughter, Mrs. William Henry Harrison, Wife of the Ninth President of the United States* (Cincinnati, Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1956), 62–63, <http://archive.org/details/intimateletterso00symm>.

¹⁸ Symmes, 109.

¹⁹ Symmes, 63.

floating product down the Mississippi, being afraid of raids and reluctant to involve himself in the hyper-saturated market in New Orleans. Noting his own special circumstances as a delegate to the convention, and then the father-in-law of then-General Harrison, he attempts to take some matters into his own hands. In a communique with John Jay, he lobbies for subsidy through an “Indian Treaty” for his goods, suggesting that federal insurance is needed.²⁰ Judge Symmes, though successful, always remembered his “dreadful misfortunes” of his first summer whiskey sales in 1792, in which his entire catalogue was seized by the Miami.²¹

The picture painted by Judge Symmes underlines the necessity of whiskey in carving out a life for his grandson. It also underlines the perils. It was difficult to transport liquor across hostile territory, but there was no other option to accrue capital. Selling grain was impossible and a doomed venture, the size of cut grain was prohibitive to easy travelling by mule or even riverboat, and the margins did not exist for it to be worthwhile to try.²² Liquidity for a farm was only achievable through the sale of a liquid asset. To frontier farmers, whiskey was protection against hostile Native American parties, and protection against insolvency.

As settlers flocked to Ohio, frontier life evolved to accommodate the newcomers. Whiskey markets had to adjust as well, and Judge Symmes was well aware of this. He wrote to his grandsons that he was surrounded by rags to riches stories, of enterprising young Americans who had come to make their fortune. He

²⁰ Symmes, 100.

²¹ Symmes, 109.

²² Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic, an American Tradition*, 77.

knew that his own operation would dwarf theirs, after all, he came to Ohio with a large staff and deep pockets.²³ Near the end of his life, though, the Judge began articulating to a business partner that he needed to innovate to stay ahead of the curve. The whiskey market was quite literally becoming saturated with newcomers, the model of capital accretion had been imitated to a vast scale.²⁴ In response to greater competition, Symmes diversified his catalogue. He advised adding simple syrup (boiled sugar-water) to his barrels to increase palatability, and he even began to sell “gin”. The quotations are placed because his recipe was just adding “20 drops of the oil of juniper” to a barrel and then running another round of distillation.²⁵

At the time of Judge Symmes’s passing in 1814, distillation in the frontier had grown to incorporate tens of thousands of stills in Ohio alone. Symmes was able to stay on top of the game through his vast resources and ingenuity, but a more regimented model would emerge and be followed by the masses. To give a sense of the scale of frontier distillation in 1816, Revenue Commissioner Samuel Smith wrote to House Speaker Henry Clay regarding tax revenue projections. The Treasury’s army of agents had run through Ohio, Western Pennsylvania and Kentucky, and counted “11,070 stills of capacities less than fifty gallons, 17,080 stills of capacities between fifty and one hundred gallons, 9,160 stills of capacities between one hundred and two hundred gallons, and 570 stills of capacities

²³ Symmes, *The Intimate Letters of John Cleves Symmes and His Family, Including Those of His Daughter, Mrs. William Henry Harrison, Wife of the Ninth President of the United States*, 19.

²⁴ Symmes, 126.

²⁵ Symmes, 126.

exceeding two hundred gallons”.²⁶ Unapologetically imitating Judge Symmes, the new normal was to harbor a still alongside a homestead.

The Distiller

Harrison Hall released his publication *The Distiller* in 1818. *The Distiller* paralleled Symmes’s own instructions to his grandson, though it was far more in-depth and meant for a wider audience. Hall makes it clear that whiskey distilling was an everyman’s vocation, and he outlines exactly how everyone can achieve the fortunes Symmes had seen sprouting up around him in Ohio. First, he tells his readers what they will need, \$2,046 as startup capital to finance everything from a patented still, to transportation costs, to hogs (more on that last aspect later).²⁷ In turn, he estimates that the enterprise will bring in \$727 each three months, a ridiculously lucrative proposition.²⁸ Some of Mr. Hall’s numbers are inflated, even with modern technology, pot stills can be run about three times per day, with steam stills running about nine distillations in the same period.²⁹ He asserts that the newest stills, an early predecessor to the perpetual still invented by Philadelphia co-inhabitant Alexander Anderson, could be run twelve times a day.³⁰ It is possible that Hall’s inflation was due to the fact he and Anderson were good friends, and Mr. Anderson even wrote a review featured prominently at the

²⁶ US Gov. Documents, “A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875,” 154, accessed September 16, 2019, <https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsp&fileName=011/llsp011.db&recNum=163>.

²⁷ Hall, *The Distiller*, 29–32.

²⁸ Hall, 29–32.

²⁹ Robert F. Moss, *Southern Spirits: Four Hundred Years of Drinking in the American South, with Recipes* (Ten Speed Press, 2016), 77.

³⁰ Hall, *The Distiller*, 63.

beginning of *The Distiller*.³¹ To digress, even with the ~33% decrease in estimated production, the venture was still worthwhile and highly profitable. A huge additive to overall proceeds was his suggestion to use spent mash (otherwise worthless ‘cooked’ mash which had not separated in distillation) to fatten hogs. In sketching out his model, Hall devotes an entire chapter to hog rearing.³² Given Cincinnati’s eventual moniker of “Porkopolis”, his suggestion was both well-founded and prescient. Hall’s mention of Col. Alexander Anderson’s still is important, though the total output was likely depressed when compared to Hall’s estimates, as a technological change. Anderson’s still was essentially a hyper-shallow pot still which used a boiler to heat multiple stills at once. It did not need any steel, as the boiler and condenser could be added to a conventional copper still and increase production with little up front capital needed.³³ Anderson’s still represented the peak of distillation technology available to farmer-distillers. Once Aeneas Coffey and his perpetual, largely steel, still entered the fray in the 1830s, the cost for state of the art stills became prohibitive. The advent of the Coffey Still was a watershed moment in the history of whiskey production, and its impacts will be discussed in the succeeding section.

The Distiller delves into great detail regarding why the west became the center for countryside industrialism, and how it attracted notable figures, Judge Symmes included. The fact was that cheap and abundant barley, the chief ingredient of early whiskey production, was only found in the west.³⁴ During

³¹ Hall, *The Distiller*.

³² Hall, 212.

³³ Moss, *Southern Spirits*, 76.

³⁴ Hall, *The Distiller*, 148.

Symmes's adventure to Ohio, in the late 1700s, distillation was a forced vocation, as transportation of agriculture goods lacked the margins and infrastructure needed to be profitable. By the time of *The Distiller's* publishing in 1818, Hall notes that this paradigm had changed. He notes that "Distillation was for a long time confined to farmers... and men of small capital", and that now, "we find men of science, men of capital, lawyers, doctors, and merchants, abandoning professional pursuits... to learn the art of extracting spirit from grain".³⁵ Hall speaks to the professionalization of distillers in the west, but he underestimates the prevalence of farmer-distillation. Rather than seeing men who have already accrued capital enter the liquor market, it was the liquor market which allowed for farmers to build up their capital and turn hefty profits. The rags to riches dynamic which Judge Symmes has noted was at play. Altogether, the liquor industry was still dominated by small distillers who distilled their own grain. Alexander Anderson even wrote to the Treasury Department, who in turn passed that information on to Congress, to emphasize that "by far the greater number of stills (more, probably, than nine out of ten) are of the common old (i.e. deep pot) construction, which is generally very uniform".³⁶ Harrison Hall goes to great lengths to exaggerate the boom occurring in the liquor industry. His production figures are a fantasy and he insists on an excessive impact of Anderson's inventions. The truth lies somewhere in between the reports to the Treasury and Mr. Hall's assertions. The whiskey industry in the west was large, and growing,

³⁵ Hall, 10–13.

³⁶ US Gov. Documents, "A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875," 154.

but it was still beset by imperfect technology. Volume was predicated on the sheer number of stills in operation, nearly 50,000, not on revolutionary new technology.³⁷

As per Hall's model, he grants readers an achievable, and largely affordable path towards entering the industry. When technology truly advances, the model falls apart. Barriers to entry become too great for smaller outfits to exist as they did, and production became dominated by the few whose resources could push the boundaries of industrial production. The shape of the whiskey industry and market for farmer-distillers was fully evolved by the turn of the 19th century. The industry was radically altered and seized from them by the inexorability of the industrial revolution. It should come as no surprise that the biggest issues facing Symmes and Hall's readers, transportation and production capabilities, were stripped away by the advent of railroads and hyper-efficient stills. Nationalized markets and unbound production capabilities led to the disintegration of farmer-distillation in the country, but for an early few decades, the craft of distillation was dominated by farmers.

³⁷ US Gov. Documents, 155.

Chapter II: Early Exclusionary Temperance

Temperance began in opposite circumstances to whiskey production.

While decentralization defined distillation, temperance ideas were bandied about by legislators and civil and religious leaders. Before the nation existed, famous physicians warned against over-drinking, typified by founding father Benjamin Rush. His treatises were verbose, and likely attracted the attention of his compeers at the Constitutional Convention. Presidents Washington and Adams, along with Alexander Hamilton, were wary of the distress overdrinking could cause the young nation. In Hamilton's case specifically, overdrinking was both an issue and an opportunity to raise government revenue. Additionally, newfound religious fervor against drinking was promoted by the growing Methodist movement, spearheaded by the teachings of John Wesley. These historically significant figures were the exemplars of anti-drinking in the pre-industrial stage. Their rhetoric and scholarship on the topic was not widely accessible, and it was not circulated to lower classes. For years, notable Americans, ranging from the founders to religious paragons, were embroiled in anti-drinking fervor. However, their pleas for temperance would remain isolated from the masses. Plagued by an inability, or unwillingness, for their dogma to reach the lower classes, the furthest penetration by these voices was to a small subset of the religious middle class. Entirely defined by religiosity, the temperance movement before the Civil War left out a great deal of Americans from joining its ranks. Conversely, per capita

drinking absolutely exploded, much to the chagrin of the well-to-do. Altogether, the temperance movement in its nascent stage was supremely ineffective.

Industrialization made grassroots activism possible. The defining feature of early temperance was its largely isolated reach. A given community, usually a small one with a singular church and religious populous, could be all for temperance. Many such communities were. Their issue lay not in conviction, but the lack of necessary tools to spread propaganda and effectively organize. Those problems were emphasized as the nation expanded westward. When fighting over the hearts and minds of city dwellers, the temperance movement was able to gain a strong foothold by the 1840s, but they were constantly undermined by the proclivities of their western compatriots. Lower classes and immigrants consistently evaded the rallying cry for temperance.

Once technology entered the fray, temperance movements became better equipped to push their message to the people. Beginning in the 1840s, the movement was no longer being peddled by aristocrats, but by community leaders. Just before the Civil War, the temperance movement was still highly regionalized, but it found success on an ad hoc basis (i.e. passing dry laws per state). The ultimate prize, prohibition, was the result of even greater shifts in available technology, allowing movements to become a movement.

Benjamin Rush, Social Status, and Temperance

The sources of temperance advocacy is a worthy unit of analysis alongside their available technologies. Dr. Rush and John Wesley were larger-than-life

figures, the former a founding father and leading physician, the latter a champion of the evangelical Second Great Awakening. By all accounts, both men demanded great levels of respect. However, their treatises on drinking were often made for circulation amongst their peers: a subset of society removed from the lower classes in Rush's case, and specifically Methodists for Wesley. Their writing was highly verbose and not widely circulated outside their prescribed circles.

Furthermore, these men and their peers were unable to bridge the gap between pontificating and actual grassroots mobilization. The societies and publications which formed around this early temperance ideology were largely ineffective.

In 1815, Benjamin Rush released his treatise *Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits upon the Human Body and Mind*, a plea and rationale to all who sought to imbibe, to stop. He lists out the physiological effects of alcohol, which range from the benign "foetid breath" and "frequent and disgusting belchings" to "madness".³⁸ Donning his status as a physician as his armor of authority, he asserts that medicinal alcohol (when a patient has been in the cold for too long, or is fatigued) holds merit.³⁹ However, his most telling section refers to the need for those of higher status to abstain from drinking. Rush notes, "It is more or less affecting according to one's station... Is he a minister of the Gospel? Here language fails me- if Angels weep- it is at such a sight".⁴⁰ Alongside ministers, magistrates are also a prime target for the deleterious effects of alcohol. Rush

³⁸ "An Extract from Dr. Rush's 'Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits, upon the Human Body and Mind,'" *The New - England Missionary Magazine, for Promoting Useful Knowledge and Evangelical Doctrine (1815-1816)*; Concord, January 1, 1815.

³⁹ "An Extract from Dr. Rush's 'Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits, upon the Human Body and Mind.'"

⁴⁰ "An Extract from Dr. Rush's 'Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits, upon the Human Body and Mind.'"

goes into great detail about the “effects upon the estates” of those who over-imbibe. His audience is primed to read this, as Rush well knows, as threats to their possessions, to their authority, and mostly, to their status as leaders in the community. His assumptions are reserved to ensue fear in a particular subset of society.

Rush’s importuning was not meant for the drunkards whose lives were far beneath him. His brand of temperance activism was particular to the early 1800s, and not at all unique for its time. A perfect encapsulation of the secular temperance movement was the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance. The movement was founded in Boston in 1813, and though they were committed to curbing the deleterious effects of alcohol on the populous, they reserved membership for those of lofty social status.⁴¹ Moreover, their activism was even confined to those who could be members. In an address to the Society in 1828, their strategy was laid out by Joshua Flint, M.D. Their primary goal was to target the issuance of licenses to tavern-owners of high repute, employing a trickle-down-temperance procedure.⁴² Society members were fixated on public spaces for drinking, while they were largely accepting of homemade spirits. A huge problem for their strategy was that public drinking spaces were not popular enough to mount an effective assault against; the enemy was too small to rile substantial support to counter institutions.

⁴¹ “Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance,” Alcohol Problems & Solutions, February 11, 2016, <https://www.alcoholproblemsandsolutions.org/massachusetts-society-for-the-suppression-of-intemperance/>.

⁴² Joshua B. Flint, *An Address Delivered before the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, May 29, 1828*. ... (Boston [Mass.], 1828), 27, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hwh26l>.

The Society was plagued by self-imposed restrictions on membership and mandate, but they were also misinformed about the state of the country. Dr. Flint makes two unbelievably untrue assertions. The first is that the sale of drinks are “of no use in the economy”.⁴³ The doctor betrays his coastal leanings, and a complete disregard for the capital model which had sprung far western farmer-distillers to prosperity. It is no surprise, that in segregating their messages from the lower classes, the frontier states would similarly fall by the wayside. The second false assertion is that the “majority of communities” are in “good repute” when it comes to temperance.⁴⁴ This address, in 1828, came at the peak of drinking in the United States. Per capita drinking is estimated at 5 gallons in 1825 and 5.2 in 1830, the latter being the most per capita consumption of alcohol in the nation’s history.⁴⁵ Perhaps Dr. Flint had a tendency to inflate the impact of his organization, but the fact remains that their efforts did not lead to grassroots mobilization. A sympathetic paper in Maine implored its readers to avoid giving money to a Society agent, Rev. Justin Edwards, as they did not see cash as an effective cure to intemperance.⁴⁶ Later sections will make clear just how important it was to finance large propaganda campaigns, but in the early 19th century, the common view was to reserve temperance advocacy for churches. The paper goes as far to say, in reference to Rev. Edwards’ plea for money, “Alas! how much deception is practised in the world under the garb of a pretended

⁴³ Flint, 11.

⁴⁴ Flint, 21.

⁴⁵ Rorabaugh, “Estimated U.S. Alcoholic Beverage Consumption, 1790-1860.”

⁴⁶ “Suppression of Intemperance.,” *Reformer (1820-1831); Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, United States, Philadelphia: J. Rakestraw, December 1827).

concern for the welfare of others”.⁴⁷ Such were the dire straits which the Society had placed itself in, only with the evolution of their strategy, and a robust arsenal of propaganda technology, could they move past their constraints.

John Wesley and Religious Temperance

Even though the aforementioned sources are replete with religious imagery and arguments, their religious rationale paled in comparison to the fully spiritual messages of ministers and religious leaders. Just as physicians and the upper class was restricting its movement to those of their ilk, so did the religious movement. The difference was that the devout were interested in active attempts to proselytize, so their movement was capable of growth outside of a set starting demographic. That being said, the religious win of the temperance camp was still beset with difficulties in reaching the far west until it was capable of distributing literature to those beyond the auspices of their church.

Temperance was not confined to the Methodist movement, though the denomination’s rapid growth led to an outsized influence. Standing alongside Wesley as a religious champion of temperance was Lyman Beecher, and while he did not found a Christian sect, paralleled Wesley in his rhetoric and impact for Presbyterians. Wesley’s most impassioned espousal of temperance is in *A Word to a Drunkard*, which is as combative as it is eloquent. He begins with, “Are you a *man*? God made you a *man*: but you make yourself a *beast*”.⁴⁸ Warning against

⁴⁷ “Suppression of Intemperance.”

⁴⁸ John Wesley, *A Word to a Drunkard* ([London?]: s.n., 1780), https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0116190582/ECCO?u=mclin_m_tufts&sid=zotero&xid=3116f921.

the perils of peer pressure, he says of friends who drink socially, “What manner of *friends* are they, who would be *obliged* by your destroying yourself... They are villains. They are your worst enemies”.⁴⁹ This was the Methodist view on alcohol consumption: a feverish anti-drinking dogma. Beecher added his own treatise to the fray, in *Six Sermons on Intemperance*, he is as explicit as Wesley in delineating the perils of drinking. He writes, “No sin has fewer apologies than intemperance”, charging the issue with pernicious energy to supplant heinous acts such as murder or blasphemy.⁵⁰ His inflation of the issue comes at little to no surprise, since Beecher saw liquor as an existential threat to Christianity writ large. Beecher writes that liquor, “obliterates the fear of the Lord”, and “paralyzes the power of conscience”.⁵¹ This forceful language was the impetus for a strong conviction, but the organizations in the 1820s largely failed due to organizational malaise. The 1830s and 40s would prove more fruitful in temperance endeavors, as they adopted strategic shifts to usher in a broader swath of the populous, made possible by new information technologies.

Early Failures and a Glimmer of Hope

The failure of the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Temperance is a perfect microcosm for the failures of the movement as a whole at this time period. Membership may have steadily increased, but its spatial

⁴⁹ Wesley.

⁵⁰ Lyman Beecher and William Reid, *Six Sermons on Intemperance : Delineating Its Nature, Occasions, Signs, Evils, and Remedy* (Glasgow: Office of the Scottish Temperance League, 1846), http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/U0107954836/MOME?u=mclin_m_tufts&sid=zotero&xid=a8942bc1

⁵¹ Beecher and Reid, 16.

boundaries proved too much to make a lasting impact on overall alcohol consumption. In the 1830s, a number of factors conspired to push drinking to absurd heights. Out of context, the numbers stated previously of 5.0 and 5.2 gallons of spirit per capita may not seem so ridiculous, but in historical context, they were unheard of. In 1790, per capita consumption of hard spirits was 2.7 gallons, and in 1890, it had fallen to 1.4.⁵² Despite the temperance movements best efforts, intemperance was an issue they were wholly outmatched in combatting. One major issue which was bred from religious and socio-economic exclusion was that immigrants, namely the large influx of Irish immigrants to the U.S. in the early 1800s, were kept outside of these groups. They became a powerful pro-drinking coalition, lobbying successfully against dry legislation through to the 1850s.⁵³

Though defeats outnumbered victories for the temperance movement in the 1820s and 30s, there were inklings of future success already present. The Second Great Awakening conspired with new technologies to help form a broader coalition than the exclusionary past. Lyman Beecher formed the American Temperance Society in 1828, and their chosen strategy would prove fruitful. The Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance was dead set on sending their high class members to gather funds, as evinced by Rev. Edwards in Maine, that strategy was untenable. This Society failed in 1833, but its members joined with Beecher in a grand coalition. A modern temperance stalwart, Alcohol

⁵² Rorabaugh, "Estimated U.S. Alcoholic Beverage Consumption, 1790-1860," 360.

⁵³ Ian R. Tyrrell, *Sobering up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860*, Contributions in American History ; No. 82 (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1979), 198.

Problems and Solutions, notes that early membership did not accurately predict longevity, lambasting the exclusivity and hubris which defined the Society.⁵⁴ Conversely, the American Temperance Society took a different tact. The Executive Committee of Beecher's brainchild issued a circular through various temperance-aligned periodicals, and it can be found in *The Christian Register*. In the circular, the Committee did not stress the prevalence of their members to constitute enough manpower to elicit change. Instead, they state that their cause "depends on the universal diffusion of correct information among all classes of people".⁵⁵ Relying on distribution, a shotgun shell of propaganda spread with as much breadth as possible, was a stark divergence from former strategies which demanded eloquent treatises and argumentation. Beecher's leadership was still critical as a moral pillar, one which could be relied upon at the top of an organization to instill legitimacy in an organization, but his tactics emphasized breadth over depth. The Eighth Report of the American Temperance Society was not circulated amidst only its members, instead, 400,000 copies were disbursed.⁵⁶ Importantly, the Reports represented a shift in medium of distribution. Prior to the ATS, temperance relied on periodicals with broader mandates than just temperance, such as the *Register*. Though the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance had its own periodical, *National Philanthropist*, its articles ranged far beyond the scope of their titular conflict. Their nominal cause

⁵⁴ "Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance."

⁵⁵ "American Temperance Society.," *Christian Register (1821-1835)*; Boston (Boston, United States, Boston: American Periodicals Series II, December 29, 1832).

⁵⁶ American Temperance Society, *Eighth Report of the American Temperance Society* ([Preston]: [Printed and published by J. Livesey], 1836), http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/U0105495721/MOME?u=mclin_m_tufts&sid=zotero&xid=a34e959d

did not carry the weight of a sole mission, whereas a Report was a more effective means of communication, it carried more purpose. Beyond implications of the audience's interpretation, there was an even greater enticement to the ATS's literature: it was free. The 1830s saw a change in tactics for temperance advocates which transformed the movement from a club of philosophes engaging only within their ranks, to an activist powerhouse. Cheap and abundant literature was crucial, which was spurred by technological changes coming into effect in America. In later sections, it will be made clear just how effective, and how removed from past failures, Beecher's grand design was.

Chapter III: Revolutionary Technologies

There was no sphere of life left untouched by industrialization. For whiskey companies, which were small and uncommon before the 1840s, their evolution was to be expected. The ability to produce at massive capacity coupled with economies of scale to create colossal powers in the industry. With more sophisticated, and expensive, technology, supply chains and distribution networks were the only limiting factors on how much whiskey could be made; the still could operate night and day, rarely causing accidents. With revolutionary machinery available, barriers to entry into the market became unfathomably high. In later sections, the fallout from such consolidation will be illustrated, though to put it simply, it led to even greater consolidation of the market. For the industry, in summary, distribution networks and still capacity were the catalysts for rampant growth. The two characteristics of industrialization, distribution and production, were only possible with immense capital and high degrees of coordination. Large labor forces replaced the lone farmer and his family, perpetual stills with hydrometers and steel filtering plates replaced the homely pot still. Most of all, industry moved away from the countryside as it needed to plug into national networks for distribution and labor.

For the temperance movement, gone were the days of closed-circulation of literature to a select few. Sermons and medical texts, though they certainly still existed and informed the upper class/religious, were strategically replaced by advertisements and pamphlets. The audience for temperance's arguments broadened tremendously in the years leading up to, and then following, the Civil

War. As a result, their media underwent gradual shifts in tone: from lofty prose and nuance to be more entertaining. Furthermore, by virtue of these new mediums' adoption, messages had to be condensed.

There is, of course, a broader context in this story. The impact of business techniques should not be overlooked, as new machines were being mass produced, so was whiskey bottled and distributed. The very process of consolidation was a "technology" of sorts, allowing free reign for price gouging or collusion to protect a small number of vested interests. On the other side of the picket line, temperance was the beneficiary of increased literacy. Cheap production of literature, be it pamphlets or cartoons (assuming they had captions or titles, which nearly all did), would be irrelevant if folks could not read it. For both, the advent of nationalized transportation, communication, and distribution systems were a great boon to productivity and activist organizing. As such, alongside novel technologies were novel methodologies, in education, in transportation, in business, in activism, and so on. These broader systems-level changes were just as impactful to the temperance feuds as the industry-specific inventions. Staying with a macro-perspective, there are two threads which link temperance to liquor in the technologies they employed: steam and steel. From steam printing to railroads to perpetual distillation, steam and steel were crucial. It took the harnessing of these two forces to push the liquor-temperance divide to new heights.

In this section, the new models for whiskey companies and temperance movement will be explained and analyzed. In the succeeding section of this thesis,

the impact of these changes will be made apparent. For both camps, industrialization allowed them to continue their practices at industrial scale. While altered technology did catalyze some strategic and tactical changes, the core operations remained unchanged. Temperance was still built to reach as many people as possible with its arguments, asserting political pressure wherever the movement could. Whiskey companies went right on making whiskey, though it shifted from a domestic, homely task into an industrial undertaking.

Steam and Steel

Carbon and iron, and heat and water were the innocuous combinations which shook the temperance movement and liquor industry. Each invention of note in this thesis employed either steam or steel. In distillation, steam power was fed through tubes which could heat the mash uniformly, or straight into the still. It eliminated burnt wash which had to be cleaned out. In perpetual stills, steel plates could withstand the hotter temperatures required for microdistillations. Railroads shifted from iron to steel once Henry Bessemer's process allowed for the cheap production of steel, and they were far more reliably built and operated. The steam printing press signaled a marked overhaul of activists' ability to disburse propaganda, jacking up production capabilities. Without steel machines powered by steam, the temperance-liquor conflict likely would not have taken the character it did; a nationalized reform movement or liquor conglomerate would have been impossible if not for steam and steel.

Distillation Technology

Distillation, the broad process of separating liquid components with heat, has been practiced for thousands of years. Generally, there was little novelty in distillation technologies from their inception until a radical boom in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Original methods, comprised of an alembic or retort, were smaller versions of modern day pot stills, and their continued usage in many distilleries is a testament to their elegance.⁵⁷ However romantic the pot still is, its efficiency pales in comparison to a wholly new way of distilling: Aeneas Coffey's still, called by a number of names including "perpetual, steam or continuous".

Aeneas Coffey casts a fascinating figure on the history of distillation. His invention would prove the greatest boon to whiskey (truly, all spirits) companies, but he began his career as their greatest enemy. While this thesis is not concerned with the captivating history of Irish whiskey, the fact that Mr. Coffey had been a civil servant, a revenue agent, before retiring to catalyze rampant whiskey production, is too ironic to go unmentioned.⁵⁸ The raw efficiency of Coffey's machines were unbelievable, almost poetic in their capabilities. Christopher Williams at Coopersea Distillery in New York compared the column still to a "shiny tenor saxophone", whereas the pot stills he used were a "diatonic harmonica".⁵⁹ The allegory is apt, especially considering the complications, and price, of the stills. Like a saxophone, immense training is required to wield a

⁵⁷ Denis A. Nicol, "Chapter 9 - Batch Distillation," in *Whisky (Second Edition)*, ed. Inge Russell and Graham Stewart (San Diego: Academic Press, 2014), 155–78, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-401735-1.00009-X>.

⁵⁸ Nicol.

⁵⁹ Reid Mitenbuler and 3M Company, *Bourbon Empire: The Past and Future of America's Whiskey* (Place of publication not identified: Penguin Publishing Group, 2015), http://ebook.3m.com/library/neworleanspubliclibrary-document_id-fd7n3g9.

column still. Also, procuring a column still is prohibitively expensive, even with modern day financing. Short Path Distillery, a small outfit in Everett Massachusetts, explained that they operate with pot stills to avoid taking on six-figures of debt and using a perpetual model.⁶⁰ In the early 1800s, it was difficult enough for homestead farmer-distillers to finance an efficient pot still.

Adoption of new distillation technologies was uniquely American. Though Coffey came from Ireland, his compatriots preferred to cling to their traditional stills. In America, innovation was widely accepted. In the repertory of patent inventions for 1830, an incredible 7% of all issued patents were for stills or still-related technologies.⁶¹ In many cases, there were improvements to pot stills, rendering them more efficient with the use of more modern equipment. Accurate thermometers, hydrometers, and even chemical processes were being patented. At Woodford Reserve, whose history as the Oscar Pepper Distillery reaches back to 1812, Chris Poynter asserted that their pot stills could produce at adequate volumes.⁶² He did concede that the Brown-Forman Cooperage in Louisville and the Jack Daniel's column stills (which produces whiskey added to Woodford's bottles) were imperative to their production successes with pot stills.⁶³ In the early 1800s, though, it was a much more clear-cut divide between those who had adopted Coffey's still, and those who did not. Pot stills had to be constantly monitored, lest they burn the mash, and they certainly had to be cleaned between

⁶⁰ Zach Robinson, Interview at Short Path Distillery, In Person, September 17, 2019.

⁶¹ *The Repertory of Patent Inventions [Formerly The Repertory of Arts, Manufactures and Agriculture]. Vol.1-Enlarged Ser*, 1830.

⁶² Poynter Chris, Interview at Woodford Reserve, In Person, January 11, 2020.

⁶³ Poynter Chris, Interview at Woodford Reserve, In Person, January 11, 2020.

each distillation. Since the 1960s, large operations which use pot stills have incorporated steam-heated coils and automatic stirring mechanisms which prevent the mash from burning.⁶⁴ These problems literally evaporate when a perpetual still is used. Not only does the still self-clean by pumping steam throughout its columns, it uses microdistillations along a number of small steel plates, affording the distiller a great deal of particularity. Once the hydrometer and thermometer are set, a column still can be fed perpetually, producing the same product during each distillation. Column stills are so efficient at distilling that it is possible, though not recommended, to distill grains to 183 proof.⁶⁵ Without modern advantages, farmer-distillers were left behind, clearing out their stills and ruining batches while large corporations were able to distill indefinitely.

Industrial Model of Production and Consolidation

The consolidation of the whiskey industry was rapid, and a stark divergence from a historical trend. Mitenbuler asserts that the number of distilleries in the United States increased from 14,000 to 20,000 in the two decades between 1810 and 1830. The following decade, the number of distilleries in operation was cut in half.⁶⁶ While the claim is generally correct, it paints a misleading picture of the true extent of consolidation, which happened decades later. The column still was patented in 1830, but it only came into widespread use

⁶⁴ Inge Russell, ed., *Whisky: Technology, Production and Marketing*, Handbook of Alcoholic Beverages Series (Amsterdam ; Boston: Academic Press, 2003), 11.

⁶⁵ Russell, 4.

⁶⁶ Mitenbuler and 3M Company, *Bourbon Empire*.

following the Civil War.⁶⁷ Tax records from *this* period are far more illustrative. In 1873, there were exactly 700 (legal) distilleries throughout the country who specialized in grain distillation.⁶⁸ There were over 5,000 distilleries in total, but most were distilling fruit, often for medicinal reasons or to produce fragrances. Delving even deeper, of these 700 grain distilleries, the 36 operational in Illinois were responsible for ~95% of production in 1883.⁶⁹ As such, the gross amount of distilleries was largely irrelevant when compared to the foci of production. Kentucky produced small quantities, usually of high quality and very expensive, while Illinois produced an astounding amount of the world's whiskey.

The lag in truly staggering consolidation is easily explained. While the still could efficiently produce whiskey, it still needed raw cereal grains and a distribution network. To truly reap the benefits of Coffey's invention, a broader context of industrialization with nationalized markets was required. Once all of the machines were in place, those captains of industry who controlled the means of whiskey production were able to shift their economic supremacy into palpable political power.

For whiskey companies to take advantage of their latent production capabilities, they needed primary products to get to them, and they needed to send out their secondary products. Peoria was the center of whiskey consolidation in

⁶⁷ Kennetpans Trust, "Coffey Still Patent," Kennetpans, February 4, 2011, <https://www.kennetpans.info/coffey-still-patent/>. *For an explanation of the Civil War's impact on the temperance vs. distillers history, see the endnote following this section.

⁶⁸ "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue on the Operations of the Internal Revenue System for the Year ., 1873-74 1873-1874. -- Text-Only - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library," accessed December 3, 2018, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/ssd?id=osu.32435063580377#seq12>.

⁶⁹ "THE WHISKY TRUST INVESTIGATION.: A Combination of Distillers to Limit the Amount Produced.," *The Washington Post (1877-1922)*; *Washington, D.C.*, July 28, 1888.

the late 1800s. The small town in Illinois was *the* distillation powerhouse following the Civil War, and it was the seat of the infamous Whiskey Trust. The operations of the Trust will be explained in later sections, but their seizure and adoption of newly developed technologies granted them an advantage over smaller distilleries or farmer-distillers. They used the asymmetry of production capabilities to price-gouge and lobby for higher taxes, all while consistently investing ludicrous sums into development. For example, the Trust reportedly spent \$2 million to a Japanese scientist, Mr. Takemine, for his discovery of a rice fungus which would increase the yield of usable beer in fermentation.⁷⁰ His process ultimately was not worth the investment, but the ability to invest ludicrous capital into research and development is a hallmark of the massive corporate entity. However, there existed an element of their rise which laid outside of the trustees' auspices, one which was instrumental in their success: a national railroad network.

Railroads – Liquor

Railroads and whiskey were inextricably linked in the late 1800s, two industrial revolutions working hand in hand. Thematically, they were both controlled by massive corporations whose growth ran unabated. In practice, there were explicit cultural and economic consequences which stemmed from the union of railroads and drink. As for cultural intersections, later sections will show that the environment which the railroad companies fostered for their laborers became

⁷⁰ “THE NEW FERMENT OF WHISKY.,” September 28, 1891, <http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1891/09/28/103338997.html>.

a primary target for temperance criticism. Here, the symbiotic economic relationship will be examined to illustrate how the laying of tracks was the final step in assuring total consolidation of the whiskey market.

Though the perpetual still was patented in 1830, and took about a decade to be fully incorporated by American distilleries, consolidation had largely plateaued. To be sure, the process of consolidation was a two-part event. First, distilling corporations formed, bolstered by their steam-powered stills, and drove many farmer-distillers out of business. From 1830-1840, this process halved the total number of distillers in the country.⁷¹ Those fewer distillers were able to dominate regional markets, and successfully pushed enough small competitors out of the industry that they could effectively collude with one another. This very phenomenon occurred directly after the Civil War, in the formation of the Whiskey Ring. But, for all their power, there was still the possibility for more output, limited not by the distillation technology, but by distribution networks. The second phases of consolidation is fairly easy to prove through the price history of whiskey. In rapid consolidation episodes, the price moves downwards dramatically with relation to inflation; those companies which can compete at the lower price due to their economies of scale, survive. In the 1880s, the excise tax on whiskey rose, prices fell, and the conglomerate companies increased their total production demonstrably. From 1881-1889, the price of whiskey fell by 10 cents a gallon, from 1.20 to 1.09 on average. Average yield per bushel, determined

⁷¹ Mitenbuler and 3M Company, *Bourbon Empire*.

entirely by utilization of new technologies, rose by a gallon, from 3.6 to 4.6.⁷² The rapidity of output improvements implies a dormant productivity level, unrealized potential in per bushel yields. The notion that there was latency of whiskey production capability is further evidenced by the fact that new technologies were not being championed in the press. In reviewing a number of sources, the most widely-covered invention was a novel storage method in 1872, right on the cusp of the invention period.⁷³

The completion of railroads was the shock the industry needed to truly benefit from their highly developed technologies. Richard White, in *Railroaded*, provides one of the most adroit histories of the railroads and their significance, but a simple map he shares of increased rail networks speaks volumes. In 1879, there was a single rail line running through Salt Lake City and into San Francisco, by 1885, the far western frontier was easily navigable.⁷⁴ The whiskey powers deliberately targeted the west, which became a bastion of their total sales, sending one-fifth of their stocks out west.⁷⁵ Peoria's undue influence as the mecca of whiskey production was entirely credited to its location at a major rail juncture.⁷⁶ Further, railroads did more than distribute a final product, they also brought raw materials to distilleries.

⁷² Jeremiah W. Jenks, "The Development of the Whiskey Trust," *Political Science Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (1889): 311, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2139341>.

⁷³ National Endowment for the Humanities, "New-York Tribune. [Volume] (New York [N.Y.]) 1866-1924, May 11, 1875, Image 1," May 11, 1875, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1875-05-11/ed-1/seq-1/>.

⁷⁴ Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*, 1st ed (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2011).

⁷⁵ Jenks, "The Development of the Whiskey Trust," 300.

⁷⁶ Ernest E. East, "The Distillers' and Cattle Feeders' Trust, 1887-1895," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 45, no. 2 (1952): 102.

A perpetual still is exactly that, perpetual. It does not require cleaning or overt maintenance, one simply pours beer into one end, sets the highly complicated levers and gauges, and allows for steam to micro-distill. So long as one constantly feeds the machine water and beer, it will go on producing.⁷⁷ Of course, farmer distillers did not have access to steam stills, but even if they had, it would do little good. For an outfit to farm and distill perpetually, it would require a massive workforce. Some Kentucky-based ventures, such as Dr. James Crow in Versailles, could lean on slave labor to farm adequate quantities of grain, but then the limiting factor would be moving the product away from the rural farm and into urban areas.⁷⁸ With railroads, the limitations were removed, and whiskey companies were free to produce to their hearts' content. The very formation of Trusts was bred from this environment, as overproduction plagued the industry in the early 1870s, industry-wide collusion was deemed the only answer to keeping prices high enough to be profitable, and high enough to keep competitors out.⁷⁹

With railroads and distillation propelling whiskey industrialists, the classical enemies of temperance, the distillers, had taken their final form. Trusts would remain common until the passage of prohibition, though the ire of the activists would turn to secondary merchants of the devil's nectar. With small numbers of distilling powerhouses in operation, their sales spanned the country, but they would have to be sold somewhere. An interstitial unit emerged to take up the mantle of directing whiskey towards the masses, and emerged directly from

⁷⁷ Zach Robinson, Interview at Short Path Distillery.

⁷⁸ Poynter Chris, Interview at Woodford Reserve, In Person, January 11, 2020.

⁷⁹ Jenks, "The Development of the Whiskey Trust," 300.

the crucible of railroad expansion into the frontier: saloons. The saloon became the foremost enemy of the temperance movement, yet public drinking spaces were a direct consequence of consolidation in the industry. It was also a direct consequence of railroad towns carrying young men who were primarily interested in imbibing to their hearts' content after long days of work. In later sections, the explicit and implicit means by which the Trust bolstered saloons will be explained. Both saloons and colluding bodies in the whiskey industry came to exercise political power and hold deep cultural sway. Despite this fact, saloons still became the face of drinking in America, though it was always the conglomerates who held the strings.

Wood Pulp Paper and Steam Printing

Steam power did not rest with revolutionizing distillation. Of course, steam-powered transports allowed up-river movement of goods, which did help farmer-distillers in Ohio break in to more markets.⁸⁰ The 1400s witnessed the groundbreaking invention of Gutenberg's printing press, yet the ensuing decades saw little revision upon his original scheme. In 1800, Lord Stanhope rebuilt the press with cast iron, which increased efficiency to some degree, allowing for a few hundred prints per hour.⁸¹ Steam power was the blessing which printing had been waiting for since its inception. In 1810 Frederich Koenig, a German printer, saw room for improvement over the simple hand-cranked mechanism which

⁸⁰ Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic, an American Tradition*, 77.

⁸¹ Philip B. Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983), 130–33.

powered Gutenberg's model. In his own words, his prototype press was a "hand press connected to a steam engine".⁸² Koenig's innovation may have been a simple improvement, but its impact was colossal. From Stanhope's ~400 prints, Koenig's steam press increased production to over 10,000 prints per hour.⁸³ A final upheaval in printing technologies was perpetrated by Richard M. Hoe, who changed the feeding mechanism for paper into the press in 1843. He spooled paper over a wheel, which could efficiently print nearly endless pages before being replaced. William Bullock then finalized the self-feeding mechanism necessary to maximize efficiency.⁸⁴ After Bullock's improvements, a rotary press could yield a million pages a day.⁸⁵

The history of paper, though longer in scope, parallels the history of printing. Innovations in papermaking were likewise concentrated in the early to mid 1800s, and these shifts shared a profound impact with the steam press on the spread of information. Paper's first radical transformation took place during the Roman Empire, centuries before Gutenberg, parchment was the medium of scribes and its preparation took days per book.⁸⁶ Parchment, made from animal skins, would be replaced by papermaking with rags during the renaissance, still fairly costly though less time consuming to produce. In ~1716, Rene Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur made a startling revelation regarding wasps: they appeared

⁸² Meggs, 130–33.

⁸³ Chase Richards, "Pages of Progress: German Liberalism and the Popular Press after 1848" (Ph.D., United States -- Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania, 2013), 37, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1412729138/abstract/3F9603B369FC4725PQ/1>.

⁸⁴ Improvement in rotary paper-cutting machines, United States US100367A, issued March 1, 1870, <https://patents.google.com/patent/US100367/en?q=William+Bullock>.

⁸⁵ Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design*, 133.

⁸⁶ Richard Raper and Charles Singer, eds., *A History of Technology. Vol. 8: Consolidated Indexes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 189.

to make paper from wood pulps. His vocation as a naturalist and his reputation as a rhetorician led him to cafes throughout Paris, spreading his observation, though he never conducted any experiments.⁸⁷ A number of decades later, and wood pulp paper was a legitimate industry, having been sponsored by Jacob Christian Schaffer, a popular German clergyman.⁸⁸ The world was inching closer to the dream of industrialized paper production, which was realized by another Frenchman, Francois Nicolas Louis Robert in 1798.

An impoverished schoolteacher, Robert did not have the funds to adequately build or test his intricate idea. Tightly-woven copper and brass would be powered by water (or steam) to act as rollers for wood pulp.⁸⁹ The process was adapted in the United States in 1812, and immediately pervaded the newspaper industry, and greatly increased the number of letters being sent.⁹⁰ The price of paper dropped dramatically, from \$2.50 to \$2 per ream between 1801 and 1843.⁹¹ With Robert's machine, large quantities of blank paper were easily produced. The 1830s and 1840s, with innovations in printing technology, creating information, or propaganda, was essentially costless. Eventually, wood pulp paper would be printed upon using the rotary steam press throughout the country, but only once railroads once again removed the bottleneck, allowing distribution to catch up to production capabilities. In the interim, regionally powerful temperance societies,

⁸⁷ Shelby T. McCloy, "Papermaking," in *French Inventions of the Eighteenth Century* (University Press of Kentucky, 1952), 66, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt130j1ht.15>.

⁸⁸ McCloy, 67.

⁸⁹ McCloy, 70.

⁹⁰ Dard Hunter, *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft* (New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 332.

⁹¹ *Comparative Wages, Prices, and Cost of Living: (From the Sixteenth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, for 1885) /*, Reprint ed. (Boston :, 1889), 137, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044050806330>.

such as state Temperance Societies, were able to rely on their presses to fulfill the demand for literature within their sphere of influence. The American Temperance Society is one such example, which was able to greatly broaden the temperance coalition by printing propaganda. However, they were still severely limited by their distribution network, which often required an attendant for their literature. They could not reach the frontier. Nestled in the American east, they were able to successfully lobby state governments to pass a number of dry laws, but never formed the grand national coalition which would perpetuate Prohibition.

Railroads – Temperance

Railroads also catalyzed an explosion of information being distributed throughout the country. In 1873, Edward Plumb, an American in Mexico, did not bat an eye at receiving a newspaper from New York. He was more concerned with the contents, regarding his impending financial ruin.⁹² A similar theme emerged with the spread of letters, as railroads expanded their continent-spanning operation, executives at railroad companies, such as Uriah Painter, were aware that their venture would yield massive returns from correspondence crisscrossing the nation.⁹³ Even today, the U.S. Postal Service views the advent of railroads with indulgence, as shown in the USPS workers' official blog when they released commemorative stamps for the 150th anniversary of the transcontinental railroad in 2019. The sheer efficiency in moving product by rail led the USPS to subsidize their stagecoach drivers who operated in railroad-dominated territories.

⁹² White, *Railroaded*.

⁹³ White.

Postmaster General Amos Kendall predicted accurately in 1835 that, “the multiplication of railroads will form a new era in the mail establishment. They must soon become the means by which the mails will be transported on most great lines of intercommunication”.⁹⁴ The Postmaster General was wise in his declaration. Letter writing had steadily increased since the turn of the 19th century, but steamship and carriage were far less effective means for information distribution than railroads, be it for personal correspondence or propaganda.

Temperance groups following the Civil War found themselves in a world dominated by railroads. In this new environment, propaganda was pushed through railroad cars by those who wanted a national audience. Some of the earliest advocacy by rail was, unsurprisingly, in favor of railroads entering western territories and states. In 1872, the *Omaha Herald*, for example, pushed unabashed support for the Union-Pacific Railroad, stating that the corporation was, “fighting the battles, and standing by the interests of the State and of Omaha”.⁹⁵ The Women’s Christian Temperance Union followed suit, not only sending their literature by rail, but sending forth their stalwart representatives to set up far-flung operations. Mary E. Balch, a National Organizer for the WCTU, made sure temperance supporters could get to the ballot. In her mission, she travelled 5,991 miles by rail.⁹⁶ In that time, she also wrote 519 letters and sent 341 postcards,

⁹⁴ Steve Kochersperger, “Mail by Rail: History of the Transcontinental Railroad and US Mail,” Postal Posts, May 3, 2019, <https://uspsblog.com/transcontinental-railroad-and-mail/>.

⁹⁵ Charlyne Berens and Nancy Mitchell, “Parallel Tracks, Same Terminus The Role of Nineteenth, Century Newspapers And Railroads In the Settlement of Nebraska,” n.d., 293.

⁹⁶ Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. and Woman’s Temperance Publication Association., *Minutes of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union at the... Annual Meeting in ... with Addresses, Reports, and Constitutions.*, Annual Minutes, Presidents Address and General Officers’ Reports of the ... Convention of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union 1892 (S.l.: s.n.], 1892), 236, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011985159>.

either delivered by hand or likewise transported by rail. The WCTU is a focal point in later sections of this thesis, but it is clear that their successes were largely predicated on their expert usage of rails to expand and manage a national network of letters and advocates.

Chapter 4: An Aside on the Civil War

The Civil War rests outside the bounds of the temperance-liquor conflict in its uniqueness. The bitter struggle gripped the nation's psyche so strongly that temperance or intemperance seemed trifles by comparison, and there was little campaigning over the period. There was also little to no technological invention, though railroad executives viewed the friendly Republican establishment as a great asset to their grand plans.⁹⁷ Therefore, the Civil War was a sort of hiatus in the conflict, while Americans were slaughtering one another, temperance advocates and distillers were forced into ceasefire. All that said, the impact of the Civil War was too complete in America not to touch the temperance divide. In three clear ways, the War extends its tendrils into this section. First, it pulled Americans away from temperance societies and pushed abolition to the forefront of national dialogue. While this may appear to be a devastating blow to temperance, their achievements in establishing dry states were being undone by the courts, and they had plateaued in membership. The War allowed the movement to reimagine itself and adopt new leadership, even more inclusive and effective than the highly successful old guard. Secondly, the War helped

⁹⁷ White, *Railroaded*.

minimally in establishing whiskey conglomerates. Many soldiers of fortune reaped great profits from the war, and those who served and became wealthy would reinvest that wealth into the whiskey industry. Some of those soldiers rose to a prominent enough position in the annals of whiskey history that they are featured heavily in this thesis. Finally, the Civil War's financing had a dramatic impact on the whiskey industry through the passage of the Revenue Act of 1862.

Temperance societies during the Civil War were consumed by the more pressing cause of abolition. For some time, reformers were adopting strategies of tackling both intemperance and slavery. Itinerant ministers, the rank and file members of the early temperance movement's army, took up the mantle of abolition and eschewed their mission to impose temperance, as the former was the more pressing concern. One such example was Jehiel Beman, the son of a freed slave in Connecticut, who was listed in attendance or listed as running, various temperance meetings until 1831, and in 1833, he founded the Home Temperance Society.⁹⁸ In 1834, he founded the Middletown (Connecticut) Anti-Slavery League.⁹⁹ Over the next decade, Beman strayed away from his message of temperance, a cause to which he was firmly committed, and became a massive figure in the abolitionist movement. He had garnered enough power to challenge William Lloyd Garrison on points of policy.¹⁰⁰ Beman was a rapid convert from temperance to abolition, and white temperance advocates often took longer to come around. In 1857, with difficulties mounting for second-phase temperance,

⁹⁸ Kathleen Housley, "'Yours for the Oppressed': The Life of Jehiel C. Beman," *The Journal of Negro History* 77, no. 1 (1992): 17, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3031524>.

⁹⁹ Housley, 22.

¹⁰⁰ Housley, 23.

John B. Gough, stated that prohibition efforts were “dead in the water”, and that energy was best spent on abolition.¹⁰¹ Gough was a prominent and highly committed temperance lecturer, he died on stage in 1888 still crusading against drink. For someone so wholly devoted to the cause, Gough’s announcement to move away from temperance and towards abolition, signaled the total shift of message. As later sections will show, a pause in hostilities was a boon for temperance. Emerging from the Civil War, new societies were able to control national advocacy networks, abetted by railroads.

Immediately following this section, the Civil War’s impact on the liquor industry will be illustrated. The founders of the pernicious Whiskey Ring, the epitome of regionalized control by capitalist distillers, were all soldiers. John McDonald, the mastermind of the plot and Revenue Agent in St. Louis, was a self-proclaimed “general”, though his rank in the Union Army was unclear.¹⁰² Amongst his distiller conspirators, some of the largest, such as Mr. Ulrici, J.W. Jouett, and Mr. Curran, all held high ranks. Other government officials who were in on the ring, from Orville Babcock to President Grant, were likewise soldiers whose careers brought them to the management or involvement in the Ring. Even more directly, the Revenue Act of 1962 imposed a production tax on whiskey. The tax, set to a fixed amount, was a focal point for whiskey lobbyists, who

¹⁰¹ Joe L. Coker and Joe L. L. Coker, *Liquor in the Land of the Lost Cause: Southern White Evangelicals and the Prohibition Movement* (Lexington, UNITED STATES: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 18, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/tufts-ebooks/detail.action?docID=792160>.

¹⁰² John (formerly supervisor of internal revenue) McDonald, *Secrets of the Great Whiskey Ring; and Eighteen Months in the Penitentiary. Containing a Complete Exposure of the Illicit Whiskey Frauds Culminating in 1875, with Documentary Proofs ... to Which Is Added the Author’s Remarkable Experiences While a Convict in the Missouri Penitentiary, at Jefferson City* (St. Louis, Mo., W. S. Bryan, 1880), <http://archive.org/details/secretsgreatwhi01mcdogoo>.

sought to keep it artificially high and dissuade small competitors from entering the market.

Outside of these few themes, the Civil War was not hugely important to the development of temperance or the whiskey industry in America. In some cases, such as soldiers turning to distillers, the linkage between the War and industry is purely correlation. However, it is fairly common to inflate the impact of the Civil War on the history of whiskey. A recurrent argument in scholarship is that the War increased alcohol consumption in the country, both for soldiers during the war, and for victimized veterans afterwards. James McPherson, in 1997, pushed the narrative of soldiers as alcoholics, blacking out on liquor before entering combat.¹⁰³ Put simply, these anecdotes may be well-founded, but overall consumption of alcohol did not increase during or after the war, it even fell: from 1860 to 1870, per capita drinking fell from 2.1 to 1.9 gallons.¹⁰⁴ Jack S. Blocker, in *Give to the Winds Thy Fears*, wrote to explain this strange phenomenon for dramatizing the linkage between the War and drinking. He postulates that the wives of veterans were more aware of the deleterious effects of drinking on their husbands, not that they were drinking more.¹⁰⁵ This analysis aligns with the history of temperance posited in this thesis: drinking was not increasingly dangerous in America, but anti-drinking advocacy improved its propaganda, raising awareness of alcoholism through industrial scale.

¹⁰³ James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 53.

¹⁰⁴ Rorabaugh, "Estimated U.S. Alcoholic Beverage Consumption, 1790-1860," 360.

¹⁰⁵ Jack S. Blocker, "Give to the Winds Thy Fears": *The Women's Temperance Crusade, 1873-1874*, Contributions in Women's Studies, no. 55 (Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 1985), 97.

Chapter 5: Regional Domination in the Whiskey Market

Directly prior to the Civil War, the temperance movement had been fairly effective in passing dry laws and increasing their information networks. Their efforts would be erased by the coming storm of conflict, only to resume once the country was reunified. For a decade, both sides were content to build up their repertoire, the Whiskey Ring and then Trust redefined feasible levels of consolidation and collusion. The temperance movement followed a somewhat parallel course, as only a few activist organizations were able to take advantage of new information technologies.

Both sides of the dispute were aware of the power they had inherited. They each underwent formative events to shape new faces in the conflict. For the whiskey industry, there were two “consolidation events” which cemented systems of collusion: widespread usage of steam distillation and hyper-capitalized distilling outfits, and then, railroads which lifted the congestion and allowed for national distribution regimes. There are also two illustrative examples of these events: the Whiskey Ring based in Missouri, and the formation of the Whiskey Trust in Illinois. The former acts an example of the cooperation possible when steam distillation is used: great quantities produced by fewer distillers meant ease of communication. Production, it should be stressed, was bottlenecked by lackluster distribution, and so distilleries began powerhouses, but were confined to their region of operation. The Whiskey Ring is a perfect example of how regional power emerged in the industry. John McDonald, himself a regional agent

for the Revenue Service, carved out a criminal enterprise by marshalling the powerful few distillers under his aegis.

The Trust is a different story, as railroads empowered their organization to heights far beyond McDonald's wildest, likely still iniquitous, dreams. The size of the Trust was astounding, and its power followed suit. Armed with Sherman's anti-trust laws, the courts could not stop the whiskey industry. Their only true enemies were the innocuous men and women placing their religious maxims on the doors of saloons. But, the saloons kept buying, and signing exclusive contracts, with the Trusts. Truly, until it all came crashing down in the 20th Century, the whiskey trust was unstoppable.

Temperance paralleled the whiskey industry, though they travelled along a slightly different timeline. As noted in the preceding section, temperance, a movement predicated on the spread of information, benefitted greatly from both cheap paper and improved printing techniques. Those changes came much earlier than the whiskey industry's own technological boons, if not in date of invention, then certainly in widespread adoption. Regional temperance was predicated on cheap materials and processes to print as much information as possible. In doing so, the temperance movement began to emerge from its self-imposed shell of moral superiority, and in the mid-1800s (1840 to the Civil War), the movement was directly sponsoring a host of never before utilized mediums: from poetry to pamphlets to plays. They were also tremendously successful in their regional mode; a number of state legislatures were pressured effectively to authorize dry laws, and drinking fell off a precipice. Following the Civil War, the temperance

movement changed in two important ways. First, they likewise seized the opportunity which railroads afforded them, an opportunity to centralize a grassroots movement, and go national. The largest groups, the Women's Christian Temperance Movement and the Anti-Saloon League, offer relevant points of analysis for the nationalized temperance movement.

Secondly, the anti-drinking mood shifted, not due to new technologies which benefitted them, but due to the impact of technology on their enemy. Distilleries, no longer confined to operating in their home state, were able to launch their product across the country, and institutions were erected to receive it. Saloons became the benchmark for targeted hate by the temperance movement, a fairly large alteration to prior focus on the individual's culpability in moderating their drinking. This was a tonal shift, and similarly to the condensing of messages, it was transitive to the usage of new technologies. More people, including ex-alcoholics, were accepted with open arms into the folds of the temperance movement. The Anti-Saloon League did undertake some detrimental steps to counter this new narrative. They reverted to terse yet highly offensive rhetoric to curb drinking, but the WCTU's foundational organizing had shifted sentiment onto their side. In spite of the ASL's ineffective leadership, they still counted a number of a politicians among their members, and could shoot themselves in the foot with impunity due to the WCTU's successes. While pre-Civil War temperance champions could point towards the passage of states' dry laws, which would all be overturned, the postbellum movement achieved the most radical dream of all: a total ban on recreational drinking in America.

The Whiskey Ring

1877 was a bad year for the country. Despite having successfully navigated through the Civil War, there were still grave doubts surrounding Reconstruction. Southerners' misgivings were mollified as President Grant was replaced by Rutherford B. Hayes, garnering a concession from Democrat Samuel Tilden by promising to remove troops from the south. The unwritten Compromise of 1877 was a watershed moment in US history, but it was also a pivotal juncture in the fortunes of the powerful whiskey trusts throughout the United States.

The Compromise came on the heels of new revelations that the Republican establishment had been benefitting from a tax racket: the infamous Whiskey Ring, led by John McDonald, a Supervisor of Internal Revenue stationed in St. Louis. His story illustrates the depth of corruption in the Republican Party, but it also highlights the great political powers exercised by liquor producers. 1877 began the whiskey power in the United States, though it was confined, it was a force to be reckoned with. The great shift from John Cleeves Symmes to John McDonald was production capability. In fact, Symmes's own grumbling about difficulties in transportation still loomed large for the perpetrators of the Whiskey Ring. This narrative illustrates that collusion was made possible because of consolidation, which was in turned catalyzed by new technologies that trumped competition. However, their power was limited. McDonald was able to raise millions in stolen tax revenue, but he could only collect from the distilleries within his purview, and even of those, only the ones which he could easily get to.

The tale truly begins during the Civil War with the passage of the 1862 Revenue Act. A measure which was meant to raise funds to fight the War was accompanied by a bevy of unforeseen, and still understudied, consequences. The IRS today lists the Act as their first “historical highlight”, belying their bureaucratic bias towards the legislation which brought the organization into existence.¹⁰⁶ Following the end of the War, the Revenue Service was extended into the south, and its high excise tax policy had to be managed. Enter John McDonald, the revenue service officer placed in charge of St. Louis.

McDonald had made a fortune organizing Civil War vouchers for supplies, into class-action claims against the government, which had chosen to repay holders with proper proof.¹⁰⁷ When he was transporting a large number of vouchers by train, a conductor’s accident caused a collision and subsequent conflagration in the storage car. The damages were immense, and McDonald brokered a deal for a new profession: one of twenty-five revenue officers in the country. Through these incredible circumstances, which pushed McDonald towards a career in civil service and granted him leverage over a powerful railroad company which would lubricate the wheels towards his appointment, he secured his new job.¹⁰⁸ Through a cacophony of protest from those who knew

¹⁰⁶ “Historical Highlights of the IRS | Internal Revenue Service,” accessed February 26, 2020, <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/historical-highlights-of-the-irs>.

¹⁰⁷ McDonald, *Secrets of the Great Whiskey Ring; and Eighteen Months in the Penitentiary. Containing a Complete Exposure of the Illicit Whiskey Frauds Culminating in 1875, with Documentary Proofs ... to Which Is Added the Author’s Remarkable Experiences While a Convict in the Missouri Penitentiary, at Jefferson City*, 18.

¹⁰⁸ McDonald, 18.

John McDonald (Missouri's two senators), noting his egomania and track record of get-rich-quick schemes, he prevailed.¹⁰⁹

In testimony before Chief Justice Morrison Waite, regarding accusations that McDonald had offered to orchestrate corruption schemes before he had taken office, the President noted that McDonald, "was an ignorant man and barely able to write his name".¹¹⁰ His literacy may have been in question, but he quickly proved himself to be a criminal mastermind. Edward S. Cooper, in a recent book detailing Mr. McDonald's life, explains the complicated process succinctly. There were essentially three main agents, the rectifier, the gauger and the revenue agent. The gauger would note how many gallons of whiskey were in each barrel as they were stored, the rectifier would repackage for sale after gauging the quantity again.¹¹¹ In between each job, a revenue agent would come and verify the gauger's work and then collect the tax based on how many gallons were there. The reason this complicated system had to exist is due to barrels' ability to absorb quantities of liquor during the aging process; the produced quantity was always less than the sold quantity. To defraud the government, revenue agents would either double-stamp barrels (re-use stamps which stated that the tax had been paid), or simply undercount the gallons.

McDonald not only oversaw this operation, involving dozens of rectifiers, gaugers, and agents, but he also brought newspapers and officials from

¹⁰⁹ "19 Nov 1875, 1 - Chicago Tribune at Newspapers.Com," Chicago Tribune, accessed February 26, 2020, <http://chicagotribune.newspapers.com/image/349276775/>.

¹¹⁰ Ulysses S. Grant, John Y. Simon, and John F. Marszalek, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), 49–50.

¹¹¹ Edward S. Cooper, *John McDonald and the Whiskey Ring: From Thug to Grant's Inner Circle* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2017), 53.

Washington into the scheme. He worked on commissions to negotiate, or force, Native Americans from their reserved lands, and managed an increasingly chaotic household comprised of his wife and eccentric mistress.¹¹² He overcame all challenges to defraud the government out of half a million dollars by 1872, just two years after his appointment.¹¹³ The scheme went well, veiled by intimidation and White House support, until everything came crashing down in 1875. The first domino to fall was the *Missouri Democrat*, the most popular newspaper in the state, which had turned against McDonald due to a personal vendetta concerning a loan. McDonald, in his memoirs, remembered that denial of a \$5,000 loan as his greatest blunder, stating, “I turned him a deaf ear, not regarding the influence of his paper... From that time Mr. Fishback became an active and insidious enemy of mine.¹¹⁴ Fishback, the editor, was so angry that he hatched a scheme to destroy the ring, writing directly to Treasury Secretary Benjamin Bristow. On May 11th, 1875, the New York Tribune ran an article with the title, “A GIGANTIC RING EXPOSED”.¹¹⁵ The unnamed author, who wrote in by telegraph, mentions some of the massive whiskey magnates which had been integral members of the Ring. Ironically, G.B. Bingham, owner of the Crescent City distillery, had in 1872

¹¹² Cooper, 67.

¹¹³ “Whisky Frauds: Testimony before the Select Committee Concerning Whiskey Frauds,” § Select Committee Concerning Whiskey Frauds (1876), 32, [https://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/Digital?p_action=doc&p_theme=sset2&p_topdoc=1&p_docnum=1&p_sort=YMD_date:D&p_product=SERIAL&p_text_direct-0=document_id=\(%2010CA7B98141DE700%20\)&p_nbid=W5FT47DEMTU4Mjc2MDI0NS41MTcwNTQ6MT0xMjoxMzAuNjQuMjUuNjA&p_doref=](https://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/Digital?p_action=doc&p_theme=sset2&p_topdoc=1&p_docnum=1&p_sort=YMD_date:D&p_product=SERIAL&p_text_direct-0=document_id=(%2010CA7B98141DE700%20)&p_nbid=W5FT47DEMTU4Mjc2MDI0NS41MTcwNTQ6MT0xMjoxMzAuNjQuMjUuNjA&p_doref=)

¹¹⁴ McDonald, *Secrets of the Great Whiskey Ring; and Eighteen Months in the Penitentiary. Containing a Complete Exposure of the Illicit Whiskey Frauds Culminating in 1875, with Documentary Proofs ... to Which Is Added the Author's Remarkable Experiences While a Convict in the Missouri Penitentiary, at Jefferson City*, 126.

¹¹⁵ Humanities, “New-York Tribune. [Volume] (New York [N.Y.]) 1866-1924, May 11, 1875, Image 1.”

invented a new whiskey storage method which would prevent revenue fraud.¹¹⁶ This was the aforementioned method which represented one of the few inventions between 1830 and 1880. Grant's administration was duly admonished for allowing such a conspiracy to take place under its supervision, and the Republican party's credibility was dealt a massive blow. Unable to act for fear of public outcry, Grant mustered all his political capital to save Gen. Orville Babcock, as the only U.S. President to ever sit as a voluntary witness. He was stuck in too dire of straits to pardon Mr. McDonald, who spent seventeen months in prison, laying out the bare facts regarding the ring and the Republican establishment's role in facilitating it.

While Cooper's history of the Whiskey Ring is the most exhaustive to date, and his investigation into the political conspirators is commendable, he does not place the crisis within the lens of the whiskey industry writ large. An operation this lucrative cannot rest upon a foundation of farmer-distilling. Rather, the industry needed to cooperate, or collude, to ensure that each actor would operate in lockstep with the scheme. Large distilleries with massive warehouses had the requisite stock to benefit from tax evasion. Without the advent of new steam distillation technology, the scale at which these corporations operated would be impossible. John McDonald is clear that he sought out the biggest distillers, as their stock would represent the vast majority of all liquor under his auspices.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Humanities.

¹¹⁷ McDonald, *Secrets of the Great Whiskey Ring; and Eighteen Months in the Penitentiary. Containing a Complete Exposure of the Illicit Whiskey Frauds Culminating in 1875, with*

In examining his co-conspirators, it is clear that their opportunity for fraud arose from the fortunate circumstances of having enough money at the right time to capitalize on new technologies. Each whiskey outfit in this narrative was using steam-powered stills, and each distiller was large enough to have an incredible number of barrels on hand by the time the government conducted its seizures of the Ring's assets. McDonald lists his notable distilleries by name in his book: R.W. Ulrici, Bevis and Fraser, P. Curran, M. Thomson, and W.R. Jouett were his accomplices.¹¹⁸ McDonald stands in lockstep with the newspapers of the time, and modern scholarship, in glossing over the role of these distillers or delving into any details about them. However, over the years, a number of civil suits were brought against the state by the Iron Mountain Bank of Missouri, which claimed that it was due reparations for the seized property, since it had a lien on stills or on product. In 1882, an agent for the bank put forth a claim for \$2,750 worth of reimbursement, acquiescing to take either cash, or the cash equivalent in "patent stills" no longer in operation.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, the committee made the recommendation that the bank should not be paid back in full, as they did not exercise good faith efforts at the original auction of the repossessed materials. They received \$1,668 for their troubles. The same bank was a creditor to the Bevis and Fraser Distillery, essentially making the same claim again in 1886 for repayment.¹²⁰ Of two other distilleries, there is no mention of their instruments,

Documentary Proofs ... to Which Is Added the Author's Remarkable Experiences While a Convict in the Missouri Penitentiary, at Jefferson City.

¹¹⁸ McDonald, 85.

¹¹⁹ "United States Congressional Serial Set," § Committee on Finance (1882).

¹²⁰ "United States Congressional Serial Set," § Committee on Claims (1886).

but there is a record of the barrels seized in federal agents' raids. In the original Congressional investigation, a number of rectifiers and gaugers were asked to compile a list of the barrels on hand at given distilleries, so the government could make sure it had successfully repossessed the majority of whiskey. That list stated Thomson as the owner of between 200-250 barrels and Curran between 250-300, far fewer than the 500+ they estimated Ulrici had, but still an incredible amount of liquor.¹²¹ That many barrels on hand is doubly noteworthy, since Missouri distillers did not age their whiskey, the barrels were likely to be sold relatively soon. Only steam distillation, or pot stills with steam coils and auto-washers, could yield such levels of production. For J.W. Jouett, it is difficult to find an exact approximation of his production methods or capabilities, though it is inferable that he was aligned with these other distilleries in his practices. These few distilleries formed the backbone for a multimillion dollar scheme, and each either explicitly, or implicitly, had amassed their fortune by availing themselves of steam distillation technology.

It is worth noting that distilleries, while indicted in the grand ring-busting efforts of Sec. Bristow, largely got off scot-free, despite losing their stores to federal auction. Corruption in revenue offices was a prime target, and as smaller players, distilleries themselves opted to become informants and evade jail time. It would become a theme for the whiskey companies and Trust; they were masterful at evading or defeating prosecution. Eventually, public opinion, not the courts, would be their greatest enemy. Harkening back to the actual operation of the

¹²¹ Whisky Frauds: Testimony before the Select Committee Concerning Whiskey Frauds, 216.

Whiskey Ring, the total amount raised was somewhere near 4 million dollars, which was conveniently blocked by defense counsel during the hearings on a number of occasions. On one such occasion, Orville Babcock's attorney, now in criminal court, not a congressional hearing, had the litigative expertise to play down the sheer amount of money actually in circulation in the ring. He convinced the jury that failed oversight was a mere "weakness of judgement, to which everyone is liable", when asked how the government could be so irresponsible to let that much money egress from tax revenues.¹²²

Unfortunately, the strategy employed, which was successful for the very top officials implicated in the Ring, and the Justice Department's preferred treatment for distillers has hidden the actual scope of the Ring's funds. The only numbers which historians can rely on are from two sources: McDonald's estimates and a certain William Avery's indictment. From McDonald, he believed that 1.2 million gallons had been distilled under his criminal auspices, and William Avery, who was placed in charge of liaison with some distilleries, was linked to the Bevis & Fraser and Ulrici Distilleries.^{123,124} From those distilleries alone, Avery was collecting between \$3,500-\$5000 per week. With taxes around

¹²² Special Dispatch to the New-York Times, "Trial of Gen. Babcock.; the Case for the Defense. Army Officers Testifying to the Character of the Accused--a Mail-Carrier's Evidence--the President's Testimony Presented.," *The New York Times*, February 18, 1876, sec. Archives, 1, <https://www.nytimes.com/1876/02/18/archives/trial-of-gen-babcock-the-case-for-the-defense-army-officers.html>.

¹²³ McDonald, *Secrets of the Great Whiskey Ring; and Eighteen Months in the Penitentiary. Containing a Complete Exposure of the Illicit Whiskey Frauds Culminating in 1875, with Documentary Proofs ... to Which Is Added the Author's Remarkable Experiences While a Convict in the Missouri Penitentiary, at Jefferson City*, 37.

¹²⁴ "THE AVERY INDICTMENT.; AVERY CHARGED WITH FAILING TO REPORT ILLICIT DISTILLERS AND WITH CONSPIRING TO DEFRAUD THE GOVERNMENT--HE IS ARRESTED AND GIVES BONDS IN \$5,000.," accessed February 28, 2020, <http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1875/07/29/105200447.html>.

50 cents per proof gallon (ppg is one liquid gallon of alcohol at 50% content at 60°F) the Ring was taking in \$600,000 per year by McDonalds, though in Avery's indictment, it suggests that just the two largest distilleries were supplying ~\$700,000 of tax revenue directly to the pockets of the Ring, its cronies, officials, and distillers. While these numbers are not exact, it shows that only a small number of distillers were necessary to finance one of the largest criminal enterprises of its time. However, this was mere regional collusion when compared with the national force that the Whiskey Trust would become.

The whiskey market outside of the Ring also benefitted from increased excise taxes during the Civil War as well. Since the Revenue Act of 1862 was passed, the tax on distilled spirits remained flat, rising due to inflation, until 1917, when a graduated tax was introduced. Coupled with the aforementioned rapid technological advantages large operations had adopted, lobbying efforts were hard at work to raise the flat tax rate and destroy margins for any distillery which could not rely on economies of scale. A distiller in Louisville opted for the taxes to remain high, for fear of "every farmer with a stream near his farm would go into the business and ruin distillers by overproduction".¹²⁵ From the 50 cent tax ppg in 1875, the tax rose to a full \$1.10 ppg by Prohibition, and from 1875 to 1889, it rose from those 50 cents to 90 cents.¹²⁶ As though large whiskey companies, such as Bevis & Fraser or Ulrici, needed more help than their international distribution networks or their unbelievably efficient production capabilities. As the adage

¹²⁵ "THE WHISKY TRUST INVESTIGATION."

¹²⁶ Jenks, "The Development of the Whiskey Trust," 297.

goes, the rich get richer, and the whiskey industry consolidated itself through means other than healthy market competition.

Chapter 6: The Whiskey Trust

In 1887, the “Distillers’ and Cattle Feeders’ Trust” was born, not long after the Revenue Service was purged of its corrupt organizers. Originally comprised of 24 distilleries, only 10-12 remained active to lower market supply. Usually the operant plants were based in Peoria, as it could best take advantage of new technologies, access to rail has been mentioned, but also coal mines, and grain markets.¹²⁷ By the time of its full incorporation in 1890, the Trust was responsible for producing 95% of all spirits in the United States and paying ~50% of all excise tax revenue on whiskey.¹²⁸ This market capitalization was not enough for the Trust, and its animated leader, Joseph Greenhut. A New York Times special investigation noted that the chief competitor to the Trust, the Shufeldts’ distillery in Chicago. In true mafioso style, plans were drawn up to destroy their plant with an “infernal device”, but later it was decided that they would simply draw up criminal charges against their principal rival.¹²⁹ John McDonald, and his Whiskey Ring, paled in comparison to the power of this trust. \$400,000 a year was a tenth of the options bonuses given to the leaders of the Trust, who held 4.3 million in shares.¹³⁰ The trust/company was also a pioneer in adopting new steam technologies and rebate systems to their customers. In Massachusetts, retail liquor dealers were paid five cents per gallon sold, assuming

¹²⁷ East, “The Distillers’ and Cattle Feeders’ Trust, 1887-1895,” 102.

¹²⁸ “THE WHISKY TRUST INVESTIGATION.”

¹²⁹ “An Investigation Demanded.,” *New York Times*, 1895.

¹³⁰ East, “The Distillers’ and Cattle Feeders’ Trust, 1887-1895,” 108.

the Trust would be their exclusive provider.¹³¹ The rebate system is of particular importance, as it greatly incentivized a new business model for an intermediary set of businesses: saloons.

On their market capitalization alone, it is clear that the whiskey industry was the Whiskey Trust for the years of its operation (1877-1893). While these fifteen years were utterly dominated, the lasting legacy of consolidation was not monopolistic practices, but the support for a network of saloons which began to spread inexorably and unabated throughout the United States. At this juncture, it is evident that railroads became the greatest ally for continued domination. As the Whiskey Trust was declaring bankruptcy to induce going concern and avoid destruction at the hands of anti-trust crusaders, saloons were still happily seizing the secondary market for whiskey. Huge distillation conglomerates did not usually sell directly to consumers, instead, they would load up their millions of gallons onto trains to be shipped out to saloons across the country. When there was legitimate competition in the market, such as during farmer-distillation phase, households could either make their own spirits, buy them from someone within the community, or, if they happened to live in an urban environment, benefit from the glut of supplies being shipped from the frontier. As farmer-distillation ceased to exist, primary distillers of whiskey dictated the shape of the industry. The Whiskey Trust endeavored to bolster saloons throughout the country.

¹³¹ William Hudson Harper, *“Restraint of Trade”: Pros and Cons of Trusts in Facts and Principles. A Handbook for the Man Who Wants to Think Clear and Vote Right* (editor, 1900), 160.

Saloon Supremacy

Saloons had an immense impact on the temperance-liquor conflict. They were the front line, the most public institution, and liable to the most vehement attacks from temperance. They were also a proverbial printing press for the Whiskey Trust. Before delving into the effects on saloons on the temperance movement, the story of their rise, and its connection to the Whiskey Trust, is a necessary foundation. Saloons, which had opened in frontier settlements as early as 1822, were born of necessity in impermanent towns attracting railway workers, miners, or fur trappers. Following the Civil War, when manifest destiny was en vogue once again, saloons transformed into symbols of permanence for a frontier society. Concurrently, old public houses, or taverns, in the Northeast joined with saloons as the beneficiaries of cheapening whiskey prices, abetted by the Trust's rebate program. They rose in numbers and in stature as pillars of society.

Life in the postbellum frontier was very different than it had been for Judge Symmes at the turn of the 19th century. The Ohio River Valley was a place to bring one's family, set up a real homestead, and often participate in an inchoate liquor market. The wild west, now firmly enshrined in collective imagination by Hollywood, was no place for families. Settlements comprised of lower-class, largely immigrant men were disparagingly named "hell-on-wheels" towns when they were associated with the railroads which literally paved the path for expansion. Famous examples of debauchery are found in Cheyenne, Wyoming and Julesberg, Colorado.¹³² The first building in Cheyenne, which was deemed

¹³² Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nothing like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad, 1863-1869* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 219–28.

“the Mecca of railroading”, was the Tivoli building, a hybrid saloon-hotel which traditionally serves as the incumbent Governor’s campaign office. Stories from the mean streets of hell-on-wheels towns are found in the *Frontier Index*, a publication which was printed from within the moving trains of the frontier. State historians in 1924 deemed the *Index* to be the first publication in the territory.¹³³

Leigh Freeman was the editor of the *Index*, and paints a rough picture of a saloon infested town. In one anecdote, a man named “Father Ryan” was sent by the railroad companies to promote Christian order in the laborers’ ranks. He was flogged and driven out of town. Freeman’s writing on Cheyenne is now lost, likely because his negative view of the town led to his being unceremoniously driven away, leaving his prints behind and likely destroyed.¹³⁴ The surviving narrative is only found in secondary accounts of his misfortune, such as a *Quarterly Bulletin for the state of Wyoming*, recounting the story of Father Ryan, which inspired the inhabitants of Cheyenne to kick Freeman out. Freeman’s experience with journalism amidst the Union-Pacific workers paints a clear picture of a dangerous community traversing the Rockies in the name of expansion.

Saloons were debatably the catalyst for the peril seen in the far West, but they were certainly situated in the middle of increasingly savage communities. Whiskey companies were intent on spreading their wares to the furthest reaches of America, and often, he who arrived with the booze would rule. Judge Roy Bean, the self-proclaimed “Law West of the Pecos”, arrived in the mining camp of

¹³³ *Quarterly Bulletin* (State of Wyoming Historical Department, 1924).

¹³⁴ Ambrose, *Nothing like It in the World*, 219.

Langtry, Texas with 55 barrels of whiskey and the clothes on his back.¹³⁵ He built a roughshod structure which quickly became the center of the rail workers' lives, operated a polling station, and dealt out his own brand of vigilante justice.¹³⁶ The exceptional aspect of Bean is not his (undeserved) status as a folk hero, but how rapidly he assumed political control. The Jersey Lilly, as his saloon was called, was nowhere near farming settlements. Without arable land to cultivate and a rapacious hunger for liquor, Bean filled the supply vacuum courtesy of far-flung whiskey operations. In the antebellum frontier, it would have been miraculously efficient for a farmer-distiller to produce more than 100 gallons a year.¹³⁷ Judge Bean's ability to secure 55 *barrels*, on credit (holding from 70-100 gallons each), was a testament to the ease of whiskey transactions of the time.

Industrialism had birthed a new model for frontier liquor sales, despite frequent popularized myths of moonshine production, the fact is that Judge Bean's experience was not an isolated event. All throughout the western territories and nascent states, saloons were being erected before agriculture had taken root. When the westward moving pioneers did not tend to crops themselves, nor operate their backhouse stills, the industry was sure to step in and provide. Statistical evidence from the Annual report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue shows that the far west had an unbelievably high concentration of saloons. California, Nevada, and Colorado were joined by the Wyoming, Arizona,

¹³⁵ Everett Lloyd, *Law West of the Pecos: The Story of Judge Roy Bean*, 8th ed. (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1936).

¹³⁶ Sismondo, *America Walks into a Bar*, 150.

¹³⁷ US Gov. Documents, "A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875," 154.

Idaho and Montana territories to harbor over 10 recreational drinking establishments per 1,000 people.¹³⁸ The report goes further, in itemizing the amounts of each type of liquor purchased, showing that whiskey triumphed over other spirits by orders of magnitude. The lone exception was in California, which had a healthy smattering of vineyards leftover from Spanish colonialism.¹³⁹ In states without formal infrastructure, and often in territories with little infrastructure at all, saloons were prospering. Where statistics can't be found, there is a litany of complaints offering anecdotal evidence to the pervasiveness of saloons in the frontier. In Shoshone Idaho, there were 13 saloons promoting degeneracy placed against only two churches, neither of which had ministers.¹⁴⁰ These saloons were not failed business ventures, they were wildly popular, often holding in excess of 400 people, such as in Kiona, Washington, another railroad town.¹⁴¹ A glaring pattern emerges that as railroads expanded, and with them the nation, the Whiskey Ring seized new demand. The Ring was always most concerned with keeping demand high enough to sell at reasonable prices, and their general practice was to lower supply by controlling production throughout the country. Another strategy was to simply increase their consumer base. The far west did not just represent many customers, it was comprised of many customers who would drink to a ludicrous degree.

¹³⁸ "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue on the Operations of the Internal Revenue System for the Year ., 1873-74 1873-1874. -- Text-Only - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library."

¹³⁹ "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue on the Operations of the Internal Revenue System for the Year ., 1873-74 1873-1874. -- Text-Only - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library."

¹⁴⁰ Dale E Soden, "The Women's Christian Temperance Union in the Pacific Northwest: The Battle for Cultural Control," n.d., 198.

¹⁴¹ Soden, 198.

Railroading, mining, logging and fur trapping were the most common vocations amongst people in the far western United States, but all of their communities (save Utah, for obvious reasons), were served by saloons. To have such popular venues exist without access to arable land is only possible because of whiskey conglomerates which were able to spread their wares, and influence, across the country. Earlier, the rebate program taken by the Trust was mentioned, but when placed into the context of these anarchic western territories, its import only grows. The basics of the rebate program were fairly simple, saloon owners, known as “agents” in official Trust/Company documents, would offer generous terms on financing start-up saloons. Without an entrenched method for financing capital, the Trust and other pools were more than willing to allow surplus supply to percolate into the untamed reaches of the country. The Trust also could conveniently list these sales as “exports”, since secondary sales in the frontier was not subjected to state-levied excise taxes, the Trust consistently upped its distribution network. Eventually, this practice, along with a huge entrance of Kentucky bourbon into the market after it had been barreled during a peak, led to overproduction and quickly orchestrated shortages managed to save the industry. It does not preclude that nearly one-fifth of all whiskey produced was being exported (this figure does include actual exports outside of the continental U.S.).¹⁴²

In the already-established eastern states, taverns and public houses were gaining more social influence akin to the process seen in the West. With the

¹⁴² Jenks, “The Development of the Whiskey Trust,” 300.

backing of the Trust, and preceding and succeeding pools or conglomerates, in-home drinking fell away in favor of congregating in already present public houses. Fortunately, data on sales in this region is far more complete than in the West, for which only gross amounts of whiskey can be analyzed. In Massachusetts, for example, the Bureau of Labor statistics lists every major alcohol purchase in 1885, all those in excess of \$300.¹⁴³ There are hundreds of pages of agents purchasing hundreds of barrels, and while it does not list the supplier, the volume indicates that the supplies must have come from a large corporation. Again, it is worth stressing that volumes which exceed 100 gallons a year are impossible to reach through farmer-distillation. Furthermore, every single purchase was made by an “agent”, someone working on behalf of a retail liquor seller.

There was far less direct investment in Eastern public houses, bars, and taverns, than there was in the West by whiskey companies. Capital was much more accessible, and the structures which sold spirits were already extant. There was, however, a more institutionalized form of social power emanating from public houses. While the west was being settled by gunslinging saloon owners such as Wyatt Earp and Roy Bean, the urban centers were being overrun with a different brand of political vigilantism. Machine politics, eerily reminiscent of trusts’ omnipotent control over the market, dominated the political arena. As unskilled laborers came to the major population centers, they became chief targets for the machines to raise support.

¹⁴³ *Comparative Wages, Prices, and Cost of Living.*

Public houses had been a target for machine politics since before their rampant popularity. In 1856, when large scale alcohol production had taken root, the *New York Times* ran an article with an incredible statistic: 89% of all ballot boxes in immigrant communities were in alcohol-selling establishments.¹⁴⁴ Drinking and politicking has a storied history in the U.S., as Professor Rorabaugh notes, court houses and social engagement spaces were often abutting a tavern.¹⁴⁵ The scale seen in New York, though, was a new development. Previously, as noted in an earlier section, it was far more common for citizens to drink in the confines of their homes, eschewing engagement with their communities while imbibing. With market conditions based on the centralization of production, folks no longer drank what they distilled themselves, and did not rely on their neighbor's for drink either. Instead, the estimated 1.2 gallons per annum being consumed was done in the company of fellow Americans, and to in the machines' eyes, voters.¹⁴⁶ In the eastern United States, the consolidation of the whiskey market led to larger and more consistent sales, driving people out of their homes and towards public houses. Enterprising, and manipulative, political agents took advantage of this mass egress into common spaces to bolster their support. In doing so, they sowed dissidence, and inadvertently propagated animosity against drinking in general.

A new market rose on the back of new technologies, generating millions in tax revenue and establishing itself as a preeminent political force in the United

¹⁴⁴ "1 Nov 1856, Page 1 - New-York Tribune at Newspapers.Com," Newspapers.com, accessed October 28, 2019, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/50671306/?terms=>.

¹⁴⁵ Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic, an American Tradition*, 9.

¹⁴⁶ Rorabaugh, "Estimated U.S. Alcoholic Beverage Consumption, 1790-1860," 300.

States. The reimagined whiskey model was mired with corruption, both of the market, tax revenue, and politics writ large. The model was a product of industrialism, the technologies which stitched national distribution models and incredible production to political influence. The manipulation of markets and politics added a novel dimension to the fight against drinking, all predicated on the actions and strategies of an industrialized whiskey economy.

Corporate Whiskey Prevails Against the Courts

Before delving into the phases of the temperance movement, the failures of courts to break apart the Whiskey Trust's hold on the industry is a worthy inclusion. Managing public opinion to organize it against the whiskey power was more necessary as the Trust rebuffed its enemies on the legal battleground.

The relationship between trust-busting and whiskey is a one-sided narrative. At their peak, the Illinois-based Trust utterly dominated the market. Their fall from grace was more rapid than their rise, despite the speed at which industrial whiskey established itself after the Civil War. Their fall was also a direct consequence of campaigning by temperance, as their day in court was a strong reinforcement of their legitimacy, allowing their continued domination of the market. There are a number of causal factors which conspired against the Whiskey Trust and led to their legal sagas. Interestingly, they faced another zeitgeist, not coming from anti-drinking forces, but from anti-trust sentiment. Changing their name from the "Distillers' and Cattle Feeders Trust" to "Company" was done explicitly to subvert the unpopularity which had come to be

associated with the word “trust”.¹⁴⁷ Author William Hudson Harper, reflecting on the name-change, noted that it was a literal value-add. The incorporated conglomerate could issue capital stock instead of trust certificates, and because they planned on having no outlying stock, could artificially inflate the value of their equity.¹⁴⁸ Instead of being paid a fee as a trustee, the officers and Director were paid in dividends.

Restructuring was the boon that the Company had hoped for. While the officers made a fortune, their strategy was fooling the courts. In 1892, the *New York Times* reported on the restructuring. The title of their article was “A Thin Disguise”.¹⁴⁹ The author proposed a metaphor for the Trust officers, calling them, “the ostrich that tries to conceal his body by sticking his head in the sand”. That same year, it appeared that the Trust’s scheming was paying off, proving the *Times* writer wrong, having achieved a favorable summary judgement in Northern Ohio District Court.¹⁵⁰ In *United States v. Greenhut et al*, a North Ohio District Judge dismissed charges and denied warrants on a number of officers. As sugar and oil monopolies were being busted, whiskey was doing just fine. In 1895, a civil suit forced the conveyance of the Company, which was sold in its entirety to the American Spirits Manufacturing Company, an even larger consortium of whiskey companies which included the newly important high-priced whiskeys from Kentucky.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ “A Thin Disguise.,” *New York Times*, 1892.

¹⁴⁸ Harper, *Restraint of Trade*, 37.

¹⁴⁹ “A Thin Disguise.”

¹⁵⁰ “United States v. Greenhut, 51 F. 205 (1892) | Caselaw Access Project,” accessed March 4, 2020, <https://cite.case.law/f/51/205/>.

¹⁵¹ East, “The Distillers’ and Cattle Feeders’ Trust, 1887-1895,” 123.

Anti-Trust legislation could not destroy the trust. Neither did the temperance movement. The Whiskey Trust fell to a revolt from within, of shareholders in 1895, when it became The American Spirits Manufacturing Company, which was more of a confederation of distillers than a monolith.¹⁵² Though a monopolistic whiskey institution was still operational in America, it would not match its economic nor political force again. As the temperance movement grew, its power came at the expense of the old Whiskey Trust. The American Spirits Manufacturing Company, as it was known after 1895, was not able to flood the market with whiskey from a central distillery, and not able to fully take advantage of the technologies which had bestowed so much strength onto the Trust. The temperance movement was able to incorporate new technologies, and were able to grow while their enemy faltered.

¹⁵² “When Peoria Tried to Monopolize Whiskey,” PeoriaMagazines.com, accessed April 21, 2020, <https://www.peoriomagazines.com/ibi/2016/feb/when-peoria-tried-monopolize-whiskey>.

Chapter 7: Regional Domination in Temperance

Before America was gripped by anti-trust fervor, the ranks of temperance advocates expanded demonstrably. The expansion came with the additions of new, powerful demographics, shifting away from a focus on the medical and religious communities. In two phases, temperance would explode in its lobbying capabilities. The first, as a parallel to the rise of regional power-brokers such as John McDonald, was a swelling of support in given communities, though it occurred before the Civil War. The temperance movement was finally able to move past its stubborn proclivities which separated it from the non-religious, non-medical profession, in large part by appropriating print technologies into its repertory. In doing so, they gained valuable support outside their previous spheres of influence, most notably, support from irreligious or non-Protestant power brokers in the country. The broadening of their coalition, which is evinced through the formation of the powerful and famous Washingtonian and Teetotaler Movements, paid dividends. For the first time in the nation's young history, per capita drinking fell. There is also tangible proof that this grassroots movement, while remaining regional-focused, was an effective political voice. A number of states adopted dry laws in response to the rancor, though a truly national movement, especially one which included the female half of the population, did not materialize until after the Civil War put a halt on temperance peddling. To proactively rebut a counterpoint: it is true that the American Temperance Society (still in effect) touted national membership, the operations of temperance were still highly localized, especially in comparison to its succeeding phase.

There is relevant context to social reform movements and religiosity in the 1820s onward. The Second Great Awakening had begun to pick up demonstrably and it fueled inter-denominational and inter-class cooperation. Invigorated evangelism was spurred by technology long before the American Temperance Society sought to hone it for more express purposes. The New York Religious Tract Society utilized steam-printing to reach nearly every family in New York City with their very own Bible, bringing the working and lower classes into the evangelical fold.¹⁵³ The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was founded in 1810 as a joint venture between Presbyterian and Congregationist ministers.¹⁵⁴ They sent literature worldwide, but more importantly, represented an emergent theme in American religious history: social change was being promulgated through cooperation between different communities, bridging religious or class divides. That same theme presented itself in the temperance movement beginning with Beecher and the American Temperance Society.

In the second phase, women, en masse, became the signal bearers for temperance advocacy. The regional model was far less exclusive than the tactics of 1820s temperance societies, but it was still dominated by community leaders, especially the clergy or industrialists. Once railroad distribution was made available to temperance leaders, they besieged anyone who would listen. Since they could shoulder the recently affordable burden of printing and shipping, temperance advocacy was unconstrained. Women could be reached, and they

¹⁵³ David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America*, Religion in America Series (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 85.

¹⁵⁴ Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic*, *The United States in the World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 24.

were galvanized. Armed with yet another new repertoire of activism technologies, organizing was swifter and more effective than it had been in the past for both phases of temperance. Messages were condensed into morsels, easier to understand and to publish as advertisements within the rising tide of penny press newspapers and periodicals. The great enemy of temperance had changed as well. Rather than concern themselves with general overconsumption, or the deleterious effects of alcohol, saloons became signposts for societal ills. Saloons were a much easier target than drinking at home, and they were vehemently detested by women, who were often not allowed inside while their husbands partook in the great societal evil. It is unlikely that targeting saloons was a manipulative or calculated strategy to garner more support, but the tonal shift did pay dividends, at least theoretically. The temperance movement was no longer mimicking Wesley's inflammatory and ad hominem attacks, it was attacking a highly visible and inanimate building.

Eventually, Prohibition would prove a fruitful end to decades of campaigning for the national phase, but following the Civil War, novel tactics were emerging and being employed by a revived movement. Those tactics carried into the Prohibition era, and as such, in the postbellum period, the nation witnessed the temperance movement's final form: a resource-saturated army, whose reach left no corner of America untouched, and whose ranks were reinforced by millions of women.

The whiskey pools, conglomerates, and trusts, were unprepared for the movement, and their responses were disproportionately poor in combatting the

inexorable progress in temperance advocacy. Whiskey companies lost nearly every ally they had come to rely on, including vested business interests who saw alcohol as a threat to their workers' productivity. When combined with a hubristic tendency to ignore female activism, temperance ran forward unhindered.

Washingtonians, Teetotalers, and P.T. Barnum

The term for temperance advocates in the 1830s and 40s was 'Teetotaler', and it was more than a change in name. It was a redefinition of the movement, and changing nomenclature was fitting considering the extent to which the movement grew and shifted tactics. Beecher's American Temperance Society laid the groundwork for regional advocacy, based on an inclusionary narrative, though more relevant to its efficacy, predicated on a strategy of overloading the populous with propaganda. This approach paid dividends, as the scope of temperance influence came to include formerly alienated groups. A perfect synecdoche for their newfound membership was P.T. Barnum, a man who was resolute in his anti-drinking convictions, and who became a valuable ally.

Barnum was a Unitarian, a religious movement which mirrored the new tact of temperance in its inclusivity. Barnum was a Christian, and as the religious community began to rally around the "evangelical" moniker rather than a denomination, he was welcomed to into social reform movements with open arms. Though he could not be counted as a member of Beecher's congregation, nor was he the recipient of Christian periodicals, he was brought into the fore of teetotalism (total abstinence) by a travelling sermon tour, heavily advertised and

sponsored by the Connecticut branch of the ATS.¹⁵⁵ Layers of evidence showing new temperance are present in this lecture tour. The advertisement for a speaking tour itself was not confined to the denomination of the speaker. Reverend E.H. Chapin was a Baptist, and though he did present his sermon in a Baptist Church in Bridgeport, he was acting under the patronage of Beecher's originally Presbyterian society.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, the very fact that Barnum received notice of this lecture proves the commitment that temperance leaders were to forging connections across religious groups, Christendom was becoming unified in the throes of the Second Great Awakening. Sending a letter to a Unitarian and inviting him to Church paid dividends. Barnum often sponsored lectures, and even canvassed neighborhoods, handing out the ATS's literature.¹⁵⁷ He eventually rose enough in stature, undoubtedly helped along by his vast resources, to give his own lectures, and he boasts that he "aroused many hundreds, perhaps thousands, to the importance of the temperance reform".¹⁵⁸

In the later evolution of temperance, which existed in a world of railroads, literature was the dominant force for propaganda. Though lecture tours were always employed, the emphasis between the two mediums shifted towards pamphlets as temperance was nationalized. As evidence of the regionalism involved in this phase of the movement, reliance on less easily transportable mediums was far more prevalent. Rev. Chapin's lecture tour is one such example,

¹⁵⁵ "Barnum as a Temperance Speaker," accessed April 17, 2020, <https://lostmuseum.cuny.edu/archive/barnum-as-a-temperance-speaker>.

¹⁵⁶ "Barnum as a Temperance Speaker."

¹⁵⁷ "Barnum as a Temperance Speaker."

¹⁵⁸ "Barnum as a Temperance Speaker."

since travelling was costly. These methods were forced onto the temperance movement. Moving information was difficult in the first half of the 19th century. There was no railroad system to safely ensure the passage of literature. If temperance advocates deigned to reach the untouched populous, to invest in getting information out beyond the pale, they endeavored to send as convincing of a medium as possible. An eloquent reverend would have a greater rate of conversion, though a smaller contact rate, than literature could. In fact, the American Temperance Society was well aware of different returns on investment very early on. In their meeting notes from 1836, when they pledge to disburse 400,000 pages of their quarterly report, they stress that this will not be enough to reach the people they need.¹⁵⁹ They list a number of counties in New York, Seneca, Yates, Cayuga, and others, to demonstrate the need for impassioned orators to take the lead in particularly alcohol-inundated communities.¹⁶⁰ Specifically, such orators' mandate is to spread, "a deep and solemn conviction of the truth, as a knowledge of the facts is communicated, is rapidly extending among the friends of temperance".¹⁶¹ It was far more effective to disburse such facts as they were "attended", and the ATS dives to ambiguity regarding how they will achieve such attendance for their materials.¹⁶² Their aim was to create documents or manuals, and then have them taken up by the community. They state, "the friends of temperance in many towns, counties, and states, it is hoped,

¹⁵⁹ American Temperance Society, *Eighth Report of the American Temperance Society*.

¹⁶⁰ American Temperance Society, 8.

¹⁶¹ American Temperance Society, 7.

¹⁶² American Temperance Society, 9.

will either print or supply themselves at cost”.¹⁶³ Though this plan worked out for Rev. Chapin and his temperance tour, it was reliant on decentralized organizing.

A different medium, which was less popular than lecture tours, was P.T. Barnum’s favorite method of advocacy: theater. Barnum invested in bringing William Smith’s 1844 play *The Drunkard* to his “American Museum”, where it ran for over 100 performances.¹⁶⁴ In terms of performances, it was the country’s most successful play until *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.¹⁶⁵ Reform plays grew in popularity largely because of patrons such as Barnum who were motivated entirely by their mission. The genre of “reform theater” signaled a new approach to disseminating information to a broad swath of the populace, which began in the late 1820s with *The Forgers* and carried until the Civil War.¹⁶⁶ But again, a play is not an easily moved piece of propaganda. In modern times, a successful show can embark on globetrotting tours, but this was not the fate for *The Drunkard*. Every performance of the show was held in Boston. The play was a rousing success, but it could not escape its spatial bonds; it reached many, but had it been packaged and disbursed throughout the country, it could have reached exponentially more.

Another new element which entered the fray in 1840 was the Washingtonian Movement, yet again distinguished for its acceptance of previously ignored groups. While the ATS expanded into new religious demographics, the Washingtonians were able to bring temperance to the least

¹⁶³ American Temperance Society, 9.

¹⁶⁴ Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 815.

¹⁶⁵ “Wm. H. Smith’s Drunkard,” accessed April 17, 2020, <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/sentimnt/drunkardhp.html>.

¹⁶⁶ John Blake White, *The Forgers; a Dramatic Poem* (Charleston ? S.C., 1899), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011204866>.

likely group: alcoholics. By focusing entirely on the individual's relationship with alcohol in a non-accusatory manner, they could impart sobriety.¹⁶⁷ The Washingtonian Movement's legacy endured far longer than any temperance society, it was a precursor to Alcoholics Anonymous and presented a novel method of utilizing compassion to help people master their addiction. That said, for the same reasons which caused their success, the Washingtonians had little political impact. They were not interested in shaping policies, and their spreading information was confined to where a meeting would take place. The Washingtonians became a cultural touchstone irrespective of the movement's prerogative, and again, through a bizarre medium: the novel. In his meetings with Washingtonians, T.S. Arthur inspired to write his magnum opus *Ten Nights in a Bar Room and What I Saw There* in 1854. He also recorded, and published, his thoughts on the meetings with Washingtonians, titled *Six Nights with the Washingtonians*.¹⁶⁸ On the third night of those meetings, he learned and applied a valuable Washingtonian lesson to his novel: the country must demonize liquor while accepting the humanity in its victims.¹⁶⁹ *Ten Nights* was a rousing success, only surpassed in its popularity, yet again, by *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.¹⁷⁰

Through plays, lecture tours, and novels, the temperance movement had pushed into unknown territory to push its message to the masses, and it was

¹⁶⁷ Holly Fletcher, *Gender and the American Temperance Movement of the Nineteenth Century* (Routledge, 2007), 31.

¹⁶⁸ T. S. Arthur, *Six Nights with the Washingtonians. A Series of Original Temperance Tales*. (Philadelphia, 1842), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044020274536>.

¹⁶⁹ Arthur, 92.

¹⁷⁰ Janet Chrzan, *Alcohol: Social Drinking in Cultural Context* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 76, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/tufts-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1114670>.

largely successful. A number of individuals, such as Barnum and Arthur, were just as critical to the success of the mid-1800s temperance movement as large organizations such as the ATS.

Victories for Regional Temperance

Although the ATS could not fulfill a completed destiny of modern grassroots activism, they were still able to influence national discourse through their information sharing. As this thesis delineates the divide between pre- and post-railroad temperance, it may fall too critically on the ATS and their incredible achievements. Total consumption finally fell in the 1840s, and it was a dramatic change in drinking habits. From a peak of 5.2 gallons per capita in 1835, just ten years later, that figure fell to 2.1 gallons.¹⁷¹ More tangibly connected to the efforts of mid-century temperance advocates is the bevy of bills which prohibited liquor consumption.

The acceptance of temperance legislation occurred in rapid succession. Beginning with the Maine Liquor Law in 1851, the establishment of dry states was undertaken by 11 other states by 1855.¹⁷² A direct result from the efforts of American Temperance Society and friendly citizens, these laws meant victory for the territorially bound activists, they pulled off total prohibition at the highest level they could reach: the state. Their reverie would not last long, however. The laws were imperiled by drinkers, not the whiskey industry, and through various

¹⁷¹ Rorabaugh, "Estimated U.S. Alcoholic Beverage Consumption, 1790-1860," 360.

¹⁷² Henry S. Clubb, *The Maine Liquor Law :Its Origin, History, and Results, Including a Life of Hon. Neal Dow* / (New York :, 1856), 33, [http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.\\$b268742](http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b268742).

legal challenges and demonstrations, every one of those laws was overturned by the Civil War.¹⁷³ The temperance movement was forced to start again, though it certainly learned from past achievements and failings. Literature disbursement was still a primary strategy, and it was given import at the expense of more trivial methods, such as plays. The distribution of literature was also more closely managed by temperance societies, ensuring that the soldiers of temperance were marching in lockstep. The WCTU and ASL invoked far more regimented procedures for the disbursement of their literature following the Civil War, as they could more adequately control its supply and effectively communicate with their agents throughout the country.

Again, these successes would not be possible without the outpouring of support for inter-denominational Christian cooperation. P.T. Barnum serves as the prime exemplar of how the Second Great Awakening changed social reform movements. The shift from exclusionary to broad coalitions was not only wrought by technological change, but was a consequence of the greater shifts in the American religious community.

¹⁷³ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 299.

Chapter 8: Nationalization of Temperance

Technological change was a point of inflection in both the fortunes of whiskey and temperance bodies, but temperance only benefitted after railroads dominated transportation, which also occurred after the whiskey industry's investment in saloon infrastructure. The justice system failed to deliver a fatal blow to the whiskey trust, allowing their business practice to run rampant. Saloons were a massive beneficiary. As noted previously, rebate systems were operating in force for retail liquor salespeople, and the practice was legitimized by the courts. While the Trust defeated injunctions and warrants calling for its officers to testify, by summary judgement no less, it is worth noting the actual case against them was for monopolistic practices *with regard to the rebate program*. In his judgement, Judge Rickers explicitly asks, "In what respects, then, are these [rebate] acts charged any different from the customary efforts of manufacturers... to increase the sale of their products".¹⁷⁴ Saloons would continue to flourish under the Trust's far-reaching rebate program.

An unforeseen consequence of saloons' preeminence was the movement of drinking into a paradoxically public, yet exclusionary sphere. The Trust was hated by journalists and anti-trust crusaders, but a new group of crusaders were on the brink of formation, and their activism would turn directly against saloons themselves. Saloons epitomized everything that the temperance movement hated, and they had campaigned against the frontier drinking spaces in the past.

¹⁷⁴ "United States v. Greenhut, 51 F. 205 (1892) | Caselaw Access Project," 208.

However, due to the limitations on distribution capability, the saloons of the far west were able to grow unhindered by the cries of temperance advocates back east. That is, until the nationalization of

Following the legacy of Dr. Rush and John Wesley, Josiah Strong famously lobbied against the destruction of the frontier by way of drinking in *Our Country*. Strong's magnum opus is classic example of the old form of temperance advocacy, high-browed and published for a more limited release. In his book, he decries the perils of "Intemperance", often mentioning "rum", likely chosen as an alliteration with his other threat "Romanism", despite rum being incredibly unpopular in the West.¹⁷⁵ Strong's arguments were prescient, similar in diction to Rush or Wesley. He offers a sociological analysis, that the "pace of civilization" has increased to such a degree that Americans are suffering a "strain on the nervous system" which is exacerbated by imbibing.¹⁷⁶ Separating from his pro-temperance predecessors, Strong goes further to decry the "Liquor Power": despite there being far more teetotalers in the nation, liquor consumption has increased 200% on the backs of cheap and omnipresent liquor.¹⁷⁷ Josiah Strong epitomized the old ways of tackling intemperance, bringing in religious and medical rationale to back his arguments (he relies heavily on Dr. Charles Beard for the latter, himself for the former).¹⁷⁸ Though *Our Country* was undoubtedly

¹⁷⁵ "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue on the Operations of the Internal Revenue System for the Year ., 1873-74 1873-1874. -- Text-Only - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library," 219.

¹⁷⁶ Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (Baker & Taylor for the American Home Missionary Society, 1885), 70, <http://archive.org/details/ourcountryitspo07strogoog>.

¹⁷⁷ Josiah Strong, 76.

¹⁷⁸ Josiah Strong, 74.

popular and published through a wide variety of houses from a reputable source, his form of temperance literature was beginning to wane. The prevailing strand of temperance pieces were shorter and more accessible, a characteristic which transcended attacks on saloons themselves.

Take, for example, a poem by Dwight Williams, entitled *Railroad Drinking Saloons*.¹⁷⁹ Published in *The Christian Advocate* in 1875, the poem is a far better demonstration of usual tactics. William's poem did not offer a lengthy treatise decrying American sin, but rather used forceful imagery: "will ye turn him off the switches/ will ye plunge him down the ditches/ such the steed be driven quicker/ by the fiery touch of liquor".¹⁸⁰ The *Advocate* itself was a product of the brave new technological times America found itself in. In its inaugural issue, the *Advocate* stressed the centenary of the Methodist movement. John Wesley's Church had blossomed into a massive force in the American Christian landscape, and boasted control over the most widely circulated weekly periodical in the country.¹⁸¹ Wesley's pointed and verbose declarations against intemperance were replaced by pithy articles, cartoons, advertisements or pamphlets; each of these mediums was catalyzed by the operationalizing of new print technologies, and they were given for free, rather than sold. They spread their message across the nation in the same train cars carries millions of gallons of whiskey.

¹⁷⁹ Dwight Williams, "Railroad Drinking Saloons.," *Christian Advocate (1866-1905); Chicago*, November 11, 1875.

¹⁸⁰ Williams.

¹⁸¹ "The Centenary and Our Missions.," *Christian Advocate (1866-1905); Chicago* (Chicago, United States, Chicago: Methodist Pub. House, etc., January 4, 1866).

Pamphlets were an important new tool for the temperance movement. In *Practical Facts for Practical People*, marksmanship and typing are presented as activities which alcohol can contaminate.¹⁸² Temperance pamphlets were produced at massive scale, at little cost, over the entire course of the movement. Even in the throes of Prohibition, activists were distributing *Answers to Favorite Wet Arguments*, an in-depth response guideline to assertions such as “A minority put Prohibition over”.¹⁸³ More important than the content, though, is the volume and breadth of temperance organizations’ operations. In the minutes for the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union national meeting of 1884, they proudly report that over five million pamphlets were handed out that year.¹⁸⁴ The technology which bolstered this rise, wood pulp paper and steam printing, was joined by one luminary activist who would make the most of her novel arsenal of reformation tools. Others, in the past and contemporaries of Frances Willard, were not as successful at channeling the powers at their disposal.

The Leaders of Temperance

There were two leading temperance organizations in the mid to late 19th century: the Anti-Saloon League (ASL) and the Woman’s Christian Temperance

¹⁸² “Alcohol: Practical Facts for Practical People,” accessed March 10, 2020, <https://library.brown.edu/cds/repository2/repoman.php?verb=render&id=1096029731796875&view=pageturner>.

¹⁸³ “Answers to Favorite Wet Arguments,” accessed March 10, 2020, <https://library.brown.edu/cds/catalog/catalog.php?verb=render&id=1096031149863625&view=pageturner&pageno=1>.

¹⁸⁴ Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. and Woman’s Temperance Publication Association., *Minutes of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union at the... Annual Meeting in ... with Addresses, Reports, and Constitutions.*, Annual Minutes, Presidents Address and General Officers’ Reports of the ... Convention of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union 1892 (S.l.: s.n.], 1886), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011985159>.

Union (WCTU). The ASL benefitted from male involvement, though the organization itself was poorly managed, it had high-ranking officials and many wealthy individuals in its ranks. The WCTU, conversely, did not have members who could vote, yet their activism from outside the political establishment was effective to an astonishing degree. The largest difference between each organization was their mastery of new technologies: the ASL was not a publishing powerhouse as the WCTU was, and they did not take full advantage of the gains in communication technologies to spread into suburban and rural communities. The ASL was, however, able to coalesce around a very simple narrative and fund its spreading through the activist channels which the WCTU had painstakingly created. The WCTU benefitted from paramount leadership from Frances E. Willard, whereas the ASL could boast support from William “Pussyfoot” Johnson, and could work from within the framework of politics. Ultimately, the temperance movement was one of the first truly effective grassroots movements, mobilizing women who had been forced out of politics since the inception of the United States.

Frances Willard honed the vector of technological change into a pointed weapon for temperance. Her personal and WCTU-sponsored literature reached millions of people, and supporters from outside the organization saw the success of their strategy. A Mr. Stevenson, from the National Reform Association, compared the work of the WCTU to torch-bearers in the kingdom of Judea: “In ancient times”, he asserts, “when an invading army set foot on the soil of Palestine, the ready torch was applied to a beacon prepared on the nearest hill.

Soon, as its light was seen, other fires sprang upon distant hills; until ... every eye had seen the light”.¹⁸⁵ For a biblical analogy, its accuracy is solid. Reaching “every eye” was an impossible feat prior to innovation in mass media, but the WCTU rode the new avenues of change whenever they could.

In their meetings, WCTU stalwarts mention the extensive array of mediums which they were utilizing, and the intense scrutiny which Willard demanded from her cohorts. In 1884, the WCTU realized they could save five cents per 20 pamphlets by removing a cover page, which they chose to employ for their shorter pamphlets, such as “Facts for Fireman”.¹⁸⁶ Longer pamphlets, such as “The Doctors Can Help” and “Educate the Masses”, the covers would be left on. But pamphlets were only one branch of the overall strategy. A delegate from Michigan noted that their state-wide newspaper, “Our Message”, was actually turning a profit from selling ad space, and that their policy of delivery bouquets of roses throughout the summer was paying dividends in new membership.¹⁸⁷ Another lynchpin of the WCTU’s fund and awareness-raising campaigns was instrumentalizing Willard herself. Their brilliant leader would average \$27 in donations following speaking engagements, and she personally wrote many of the most widely-distributed pieces. Famously, she authored “The Woman’s Cause is Man’s”, arguing that womankind is on the upswing, being better educated and in greater positions of power, whereas men have succumb to the deleterious effects

¹⁸⁵ Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. and Woman’s Temperance Publication Association., 104.

¹⁸⁶ Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. and Woman’s Temperance Publication Association., *Minutes of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union at the... Annual Meeting in ... with Addresses, Reports, and Constitutions.*, 1886., cv.

¹⁸⁷ Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. and Woman’s Temperance Publication Association., 108.

of alcohol and tobacco consumption.¹⁸⁸ She astutely uses conservative gender conceptions to conceive of progressivism deeply couched in religion.

Willard was undoubtedly a political force unto herself, but, in posing a comparison to the Anti-Saloon League, it is clear that the WCTU was successful because of their mastery of new technologies and not just a beneficiary of them. The ASL was an effective political organization, but it was in spite of their lack of coordination and ineffective leadership. Their saving grace was relying upon media-organizing, pioneered by the WCTU, which allowed for vast sums to be spent on ludicrous advertisements.

The Anti-Saloon league was born from the WCTU's grassroots activism. Peter Odegard, who devoted his career to studying pressure groups and propaganda, chronicled the evolution of the ASL in 1928. Odegard opens the book *Pressure Politics* by blatantly stating the debt the ASL had to pay to the WCTU, "when in the [eighteen-] nineties the Anti-Saloon League entered the field, the groundwork had been laid".¹⁸⁹ They immediately began to inject capital to promote a different kind of propaganda, relying on more forceful, negative attacks on drinking. The Westerville Library has digitized a large portion of the ASL's propaganda, and though most of the materials they have are from a later period (~1917), the ASL's strategy is apparent in the collection. To discourage drinking, they funded thousands of cartoons with vehement attacks. "The Saloon, or the Boys and Girls" is one such choice the ASL offered to its followers, or in

¹⁸⁸ Frances E. Willard, "The Woman's Cause Is Man's.," *Zion's Herald (1868-1910)*; Boston, February 7, 1894.

¹⁸⁹ Peter Odegard, *Pressure Politics: The Story of the Anti Saloon League* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), 38.

another “Brewers First – Humanity Can Wait”.¹⁹⁰ Perhaps most indicative of their negativity was a satirical “ad” which read,

*Wanted: Boys for Customers
Most of our old customers are rapidly dropping out.
Ten committed suicide last week.
Twenty are in jail – eight in the chain gang.
Fifteen were sent to the poorhouse. One was hanged.
Three were sent to the insane asylum.
Most of the rest are not worth fooling with; they have no money.
We Need Fresh Young Blood.*¹⁹¹

The logic and religiosity of the WCTU had given them a foundation to stand on when many questioned women’s place in politics, but the ASL had no such hurdles to overcome. They took the regimented, highly organized methods which had been successful, and replaced them with chaotic slander and increased abrogation. There were still elements of somewhat more thoughtful persuasion in the ASL’s strategy. *The American Issue* served as the literary backbone for the organization. While *The Issue* was true-to-form in sensationalizing the threats of alcohol, it also offered an appeal to a more learned class. In one issue from 1910, the *Indiana Edition*, an array of authors mention “Masons” and their opposition to alcohol. In one such instance, George Stewart wrote that the allies to temperance included “Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias... All the Higher Class Order of Brotherhoods”.¹⁹² The *Issue* itself was a beneficiary of mass media strategies

¹⁹⁰ Westerville Library, “Anti Saloon League Museum Cartoons and Fliers,” accessed March 17, 2020, <http://search.westervillelibrary.org/iii/cpro/CollectionViewPage.external?lang=eng&sp=1000138&sp=2&sp=1&suite=def>.

¹⁹¹ Odegard, *Pressure Politics: The Story of the Anti Saloon League*, 41.

¹⁹² “The American Issue,” October 25, 1910, 34.

founded by the WCTU, having an edition in each state and releasing 2-4 volumes a year.

The WCTU and ASL operated with the same goal on wildly different tacks. The former focused on grassroots organizing, protests and a persuasion campaign. The latter was more secure and could channel the already-extant anti-saloon fervor in America, and sensationalized the WCTU's message. For both organizations, mass-media was paramount at reaching as many folks as possible throughout the country. Only decades after its inception would the ASL move away from the generalized WCTU playbook, once William "Pussyfoot" Johnson took over. Johnson envisioned a large-scale replica of his work in the Nebraska and Oklahoma, essentially orchestrating countless sting operations in dry counties. Johnson is understandably a major figure in temperance lore, his schemes were daring and interesting, but it worth remembering that he oversaw an enforcement regime.¹⁹³ Dry counties had popped up throughout the nation by the time of Johnson's ascendancy. The spread of literature, though not nearly as exciting as covert operations, was the impetus for shifting the tide of the battle between temperance and the liquor industry.

Another sharp delineation between the ASL and WCTU was their mandate. Willard and her Union mirrored the uprising of evangelism in the early 19th century in one critical regard: they were social reformers writ large, not just temperance advocates. Willard's "Do Everything" strategy brought everything from women's suffrage to vegetarianism under their mandate, and as the

¹⁹³ "William 'Pussyfoot' Johnson | Westerville Public Library," accessed March 17, 2020, <http://www.westervillelibrary.org/antisaloon-william-johnson>.

American Temperance Society before them, the WCTU was able to organize a grassroots movement with the promise of a wholly virtuous America, not just a sober one.¹⁹⁴ The ASL was no such organization. They were single minded in their pursuit, and ultimately, left a shallower impression on history. That is not to say the WCTU and ATS were the same on all counts. Differences in technology meant that both could strive for inclusion, with inter-denominational and inter-class coalitions, but the WCTU could build a larger one. Distribution and publishing technologies allowed the Women's Christian Temperance Union to dominate reform movements in the United States, and their battle with alcohol producers and sellers was one battle in their truly all-spanning war. Without the networks for disbursing propaganda, the technologies they employed, this national force would have never materialized.

¹⁹⁴ "How Did the Reform Agenda of the Minnesota Woman's Christian Temperance Union Change, 1878-1917? | Alexander Street, a ProQuest Company," accessed May 15, 2020, https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cweb_collection%7C2482588.

In Closing

A Lack of Confrontation

It is conspicuous that temperance organizations and whiskey conglomerates were able to assume total domination in their fields without coming to a head. The lack of interaction between warring factions is partly explained by the prevalence of saloons as the most public symbol of drinking, but there is some evidence that the WCTU was aware of the “liquor oligarchy” and its role as puppet master over drinking in the United States. At a meeting in 1892, Frances Willard herself mentioned the liquor power for the only time in these yearly reports. She notes that the “liquor oligarchy” was destroying itself, through bribery and even murder, and is content to allow the justice system to deal with their practices.¹⁹⁵ Of course, prosecutors were unable to stick convictions on trustees, and following these proceedings, WCTU leadership does not call out the man behind the curtain. It is pure conjecture to base an argument on the lack of evidence, but it possible that the Trust was a poor target for propaganda, especially after it had been so completely exonerated from criminal and anti-trust charges. Further, the WCTU grew in influence without relying upon attacking suppliers, and it is therefore also possible that they were content with their strategy, feeling no need to diverge from their path. Dr. Willard Parker (no relation), wrote in *The Sacred Heart Review* that he was troubled by the

¹⁹⁵ Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. and Woman’s Temperance Publication Association., *Minutes of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union at the... Annual Meeting in ... with Addresses, Reports, and Constitutions.*, Annual Minutes, Presidents Address and General Officers’ Reports of the ... Convention of the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union 1892 (S.l.: s.n.], 1892), 94, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011985159>.

increasing proof of spirits being sold by the Trust, though this is where his admonition ends.¹⁹⁶ Ultimately, the evidence at hand only proves that temperance activists were ambivalent towards the Trust. They built their opposition without touching upon their enemy until very late in their history. In 1912, the WCTU sponsored a lecturer named Seaborn Wright who explicitly laid out the root cause of drinking in America, asserting that “our greatest enemy... it is the great combine of business interests called the whiskey trust”.¹⁹⁷ The movement had already grown into a veritable reckoning for drinking in America by 1912 though, and while this speech may have signaled a late awareness of the Trust, it was far too late. Despite Seaborn’s impassioned reprobation, the Trust was a hollow shell of its former self, and not even called a Trust. In 1895, an internal revolt of shareholders who did not receive their dividends (they were injected back into the company) led to their filing suit against the company.¹⁹⁸ The Trust was neutered, its power greatly diminished when it became a consortium, the American Distillers’ Association. Without a central command, temperance would have to resort to levying attacks against a confederacy of independent distillers. Perhaps Willard’s allusion to the Trust’s litigation was a prescient nod towards its destroying itself.

¹⁹⁶ “The Sacred Heart Review, Volume 9, Number 21 — 15 April 1893 — Boston College Newspapers,” accessed April 21, 2020, <https://newspapers.bc.edu/?a=d&d=BOSTONSH18930415-01.2.27>.

¹⁹⁷ “TAX MAKES DRUNKARD: Seaborn Wright Lays Liquor Vice on U.S. Revenue. SAYS PROFIT IS 1,600 PER CENT Georgia Lecturer Declares Whisky Trust, Beer Combine, and the Government Are Partners in Frustrating the Passage of Temperance Legislation Because of Avarice and Greed.,” *The Washington Post (1877-1922)*; *Washington, D.C.*, February 5, 1912.

¹⁹⁸ “When Peoria Tried to Monopolize Whiskey,” *PeoriaMagazines.com*, accessed April 21, 2020, <https://www.peoriomagazines.com/ibi/2016/feb/when-peoria-tried-monopolize-whiskey>.

For the whiskey power, there is likewise a sense of ambivalence towards the temperance movement. Even at the peak of temperance slander, distillers remained unprovoked. For example, the Scientific Temperance Federation (a close ally of the ASL) published a pamphlet based on an experiment they conducted. They force pregnant dogs to drink and then took pictures of the deformed puppies, wrapped up in a pamphlet titled “Alcoholic Dogs Had More Feeble and Defective Puppies”.¹⁹⁹ Again, landing on a decisive rationale to ignore temperance is nearly impossible since the evidence does not exist. In face of temperance’s growing political sway in 1890s, Americans were drinking less, but the Trust was still able to turn hefty profits. Perhaps trustees saw the temperance movement as omnipresent throughout history, and they were never able to defeat the conglomerate. Or, perhaps the industry was more concerned with legal battles and internal dissidence from shareholders. Reid Mitenbuler holds that distillers were confident in government protection, and did not take temperance seriously, since liquor production taxes formed the majority of government revenue.²⁰⁰ Prohibition was too far along in the American zeitgeist for countermeasures. In 1911, John M. Atherton produced one of the only pro-liquor propaganda pieces, arguing that common sense should prevail and that the superlative nature of Prohibition was ludicrous.²⁰¹ Atherton’s published letter did not have the backing of the Trust, he was a successful, but independent distiller. Whether Prohibition

¹⁹⁹ Reid Mitenbuler and 3M Company, *Bourbon Empire: The Past and Future of America’s Whiskey* (Place of publication not identified: Penguin Publishing Group, 2015), http://ebook.3m.com/library/neworleanspubliclibrary-document_id-fd7n3g9.

²⁰⁰ Mitenbuler and 3M Company.

²⁰¹ Thomas H. Appleton, “Prohibition and Politics in Kentucky: The Gubernatorial Campaign and Election of 1915,” *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 75, no. 1 (1977): 43.

was a storm which took distillers by surprise, or their own ability to cooperate and form a counterforce was diminished too greatly by the dissolution of the Trust, is unclear. What is clear is that on both sides, there was never a concerted effort to attack the other.

A Technological History

Lacking direct confrontation, the feud at the center of temperance and liquor power was a cold war. Each camp, rather than seeking to destroy their opponent, looked inward, and improved themselves. For this reason, technology's role in the history is so critical. Political or cultural considerations, long the focus of scholarship, simply cannot explain how power was accrued by each faction, or give a holistic explanation of how it was wielded. Strategies were predicated on the tools at their disposal. The whiskey industry was consolidated because efficiency was greater at a small number of hyper-capitalized distilleries than it was for farmer-distillers. Temperance movements built broader coalitions because their literature could reach the uninitiated. The industry and the movement were clear in their emphasis: investment in technology will yield the greatest rewards.

This thesis demonstrates the preponderance of technology as more than a tool, but as the driving motivator for the histories of alcohol and temperance. The lessons derived, though, extend further. Industrialism and activism are two of the most impactful forces in any history. The role which technology can play in shaping such mighty vehicles of change should not be overlooked. Instead of relying on the great actors involved, the Willards, Wesleys, McDonalds and Greenhuts, it is imperative to consider how their agency was shaped by their

resources. One of the largest activist movements in American history, and one of the nation's largest industries, were framed, even defined, by technological development.

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