

Temperance in Antebellum Middletown

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Class of 2008

A thesis submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in History

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Introduction

Although the temperance movement, the longest lasting moral reform movement in American history, addressed what many people saw as the most serious problem afflicting society, today, most Americans scoff at the idea of eliminating the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Looking back, temperance is seen as a puritanical, reactionary attempt to control people's behavior which diverted attention away from more worthy reforms like abolition and women's rights. While temperance was certainly an attempt to change people's behavior, the change was rooted in a utopian future, not an idealized past. Through their efforts, temperance supporters hoped to improve society by freeing it from alcohol and the violence, poverty, and crime that it produced. Nor was temperance seen as diverting attention away from more important problems—intemperance was viewed as the greatest problem society faced. In the early 1850s, temperance attracted wider and deeper support than abolition, and at the turn of the twentieth century, many viewed it as a more pressing concern than women's suffrage. Although these other reform movements were ultimately more successful, neither could match the time, money, and energy that people devoted to temperance between the creation of the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance in 1813 and the passage of the Twenty-first Amendment which ended national Prohibition in 1933.

While existing in some form throughout United States history, temperance

came to the forefront of American politics twice.¹ The first time was in the 1850s,

¹ Before I go any further, I need to specify what I mean when I refer to temperance and temperance movement. The meaning of temperance is closely related to the history of the movement; as the temperance movement evolved, what its supporters meant when referring to temperance changed as well. Originally, temperance did not refer solely to alcohol. Historically, temperance was Christian a virtue meaning moderation. Temperance was opposed to the sin of gluttony, and valorized moderate consumption of food as well as alcoholic beverages. Drunkenness was often condemned as intemperance. While temperance continued to be used in the broad definition, by the eighteenth century, intemperance almost exclusively referred to the immoderate use of alcohol—drunkenness. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, temperance meant moderate consumption of alcohol (ardent spirits), although as late as 1829, Nathan Bangs, a prominent Methodist who led revivals and missions and briefly served as Wesleyan’s second president, used temperance to refer to moderation in all appetites, including sleep and food in addition to alcohol. Daniel L. Swinson, "American Methodism and Temperance in the Antebellum Period" (Thesis (Ph. D.), University of Chicago, Divinity School, 1992), 282. However, Bangs’ usage was an outlier; by the second quarter of nineteenth century, temperance was almost universally accepted as referring to the moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages.

Temperance was simply a virtue opposed to intemperance and did not mean total abstinence from all alcoholic beverages under any circumstance. In the early nineteenth century, temperance supporters saw themselves as fighting the sin of intemperance, drunkenness. As long as they did not become drunk, people were allowed to consume alcohol. Temperance supporters were allowed to consume wine and beer, which were regarded as temperance drinks, while avoiding the consumption of ardent spirits, like whiskey and rum, which caused intemperance. Over the next few decades, the intemperate use of alcohol came to mean any consumption of all beverages containing alcohol, including wine and beer as well as rum and whiskey. Moderate consumption of alcoholic beverages did not exist in the eyes of most temperance advocates by the 1840s. Temperance meant the opposition to all consumption of alcohol, personally and societally, and the temperance movement was the organized effort to eliminate alcohol within the entirety of American society. This meaning is what I mean when I refer to temperance and the temperance movement.

Temperance is not synonymous with either teetotalism or prohibition; both are related to temperance, but neither encompasses the entirety of the movement. Teetotalism or total abstinence merely refers to a personal pledge to avoid the consumption of all alcoholic beverages under any and all circumstances. It is not necessarily part of the temperance movement; a person can be a teetotaler while opposing the goals of the movement. However, in the nineteenth century, pledges of total abstinence, simply called the pledge, were an important part of the temperance movement. A typical pledge is like the one used by the Middletown Temperance Society, which reads, “We, the undersigned, do agree, that we will not use intoxicating liquors as a beverages, nor traffic in them; that we will not provide them as an article of entertainment, or for persons in our employment; and that, in all suitable ways, we will discountenance their use throughout the community.” “Constitution of the Middletown Temperance Society,” 31 January 1852, Temperance Societies, Middlesex County Historical Society, Middletown, CT. The institution of personal abstinence was the most important part of the pledge.

the personal pledge to not use intoxicating liquors is the only part which would apply to everyone who joined the society. Other societies used similar pledges to increase support for temperance; if an entire community signed and abided to a pledge, no additional work would be required.

Within the confines of temperance, prohibition is almost the complete opposite of teetotalism. Also called legal coercion, prohibition is the effort to adopt legal measures to curtail the consumption of alcoholic beverages, typically by outlawing the sale and manufacture of these beverages. In the nineteenth century, prohibition first applied to local option, whereby states gave counties or municipalities the right to ban sales of alcohol within their jurisdiction. Only later did the campaign for prohibitory laws become an issue at statewide and eventually national levels. Prohibition was often adopted because temperance supporters thought that the presence of alcohol would inevitably lead to

when Maine, under the leadership of Neal Dow, banned the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. Ten states and two territories followed Maine's lead and enacted similar legislation called Maine Laws. The second time was in the 1910s, when the Anti-Saloon League pushed for national Prohibition, resulting in the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act, which outlawed the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages throughout the United States. It is easy to limit temperance agitation to these two periods, or to assume the temperance movement always employed the same techniques used at these two moments, but the complete story of temperance in the United States is more complex, passing through what Jack Blocker described as five distinct cycles or phases of temperance reform, each of which can be interpreted as its own movement.²

The following work is an exploration of the temperance movement in Middletown during the second cycle of the temperance movement. Blocker described this cycle of the temperance movement as period dominated by the Washingtonians, fraternal temperance organizations, and Maine Laws.³ During this period, defined nationally as between 1840 and 1860, the temperance movement was no longer dominated by religious figures, and temperance organizations became more democratic, admitting men of all classes, including reformed drunkards. The period was also marked by the creation of fraternal temperance organizations and the first

its consumption; alcohol could only be eliminated if it was outlawed. Support for temperance and support for prohibition must not be conflated. Many people supported temperance while opposing prohibition, viewing prohibition as an illegitimate restraint on personal freedom. These individuals supported temperance by advocating the other major part of the temperance movement, moral suasion. Moral suasion was the attempt to convince men and women that the consumption of alcoholic beverages was immoral, un-Christian, and sinful, leading to behavior that would destroy business, family, and society as a whole.

² Jack S. Blocker, *American Temperance Movements : Cycles of Reform, Social Movements Past and Present* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), xv-xvi.

³ *Ibid.*, 30.

widespread support for laws restricting the consumption of alcoholic beverages. While Blocker placed the boundaries of the period at the first Washingtonian meeting in 1840 and at the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860,⁴ I will begin my study a year earlier in 1839 when Connecticut passed a local option law which gave cities and towns the authority to prohibit the sale of alcohol within a municipality's boundaries. I will conclude my study in 1856, when temperance was no longer the dominant social issue in Middletown, as anti-slavery and nativism became key issues in the local and national elections. 1856 was also the final year of Benjamin Douglas's third and final term as Mayor of Middletown. Douglas, a major figure in state and local politics, as well as a vocal supporter of social reforms, was a strong advocate of statewide prohibition, and his departure from office marked the political transformation in Middletown.

Middletown, like many small cities, fails to attract the scholarly attention lavished New York or Boston. Few historians have explored temperance in any city, and the cities that historians have studied were chosen because they were not typical. Often these cities are boomtowns, exploding just as the temperance movement gained strength in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.⁵ Middletown differs significantly from this type of city. By the beginning of the nineteenth century,

⁴ Ibid., 34.

⁵ Jed Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder : Temperance Reform in Cincinnati from the Washingtonian Revival to the WCTU* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium : Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*, 1st ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 121-35, 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), 92-115. Dannenbaum looks at the temperance movement in Cincinnati; temperance in wake of Charles Finney's revival in Rochester is discussed by Johnson, while Tyrrell uses Worcester, Massachusetts as an example of how the temperance movement evolved in the antebellum period. Although located in New England, Worcester's population growth resembled western cities more than Middletown, consisting of a relatively small agricultural population until growing rapidly in the second quarter of the nineteenth century when most of its citizens were employed in industry.

Middletown was an established city, with a thriving shipping industry, established churches, families, and civic institutions. It was the center of commercial and political activity in Middlesex County. Paul Faler's examination of the temperance movement in Lynn, Massachusetts, serves as a better point of comparison to temperance in Middletown than the boomtowns.⁶ Lynn, like Middletown, existed as a city, not simply an agricultural village, before industrialization. Both cities had artisan populations, whose role in society was altered by the Industrial Revolution. Social institutions and churches were transformed, not created, as these cities and the country slowly became part of an industrialized market economy. Even comparisons with Lynn are limited due to Lynn's reliance on a single industry, shoemaking,⁷ while Middletown's industrialists produced a variety of finished goods.

While my study of a small city provides a different perspective on the larger movement, a local study cannot explore the interplay between local, state, and national organizations. This study utilizes scholarship on national and state temperance organizations as a touchstone to measure trends in Middletown against a larger backdrop. One limitation of a local study is the comparative lack of archival sources. National or statewide studies of the temperance movement often rely on the detailed records of large organizations, such as the American Temperance Society; local studies, including mine, often lack such records. Most temperance societies in Middletown were small and existed for a short period of time, and their records were not preserved. Consequentially, my discussion of the temperance movement looks

⁶ Paul G. Faler, *Mechanics and Manufacturers in the Early Industrial Revolution : Lynn, Massachusetts, 1780-1860, SUNY Series in American Social History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 100-38.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xv.

more closely at the political aspects of the temperance movement, and rather than other activities of the temperance societies because the city's newspapers devoted more space to politics surrounding temperance than to the regular activities of temperance societies.

Studying the temperance movement in individual municipalities offers certain advantages over general studies of the temperance movement. In localized cases, the interplay between class, religion, and temperance is displayed in ways which are ignored in larger studies. National studies often view temperance as strictly a manifestation of hegemonic economic interest.⁸ My work, like that of other historians who have focused on individual cities, shows that this was not the case. In the 1840s and 1850s, temperance was supported by people across class lines, although its spread was influenced by economic factors. The economic transformation brought about by the market and industrial revolutions fueled the need for a sober working class, producing support for temperance among both manufacturers and their employees. Both groups believed that they would improve their economic standing if they were not inebriated while working. The relationship between economic opportunity and temperance was not confined to industrialized urban centers; temperance also had strong support among farmers transitioning from small-scale subsistence farming to market-driven agricultural practices. Temperance was a movement of the upwardly-mobile in both urban and rural communities,

⁸ John J. Rumbarger, *Profits, Power, and Prohibition : Alcohol Reform and the Industrializing of America, 1800-1930, SUNY Series in New Social Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). Rumbarger argued the evolution of the temperance movement from 1800 until 1933 was the result of the different views of the hegemonic class of each period. When the hegemonic class changed, the temperance movement changed accordingly.

regardless of class.⁹

Rooting temperance in economic interest can be appealing to historians who wish to minimize the role that religion played in shaping politics and society in antebellum America. Such an attempt would ignore the temperance movement's dependency upon religion, especially evangelicalism, for creating the people, organizations, and worldview which made the temperance movement possible. Their postmillennialist ideology led temperance supporters to believe that they could cure the world of the sin of intemperance and sins linked to intemperance, including profanity and violence. They believed that they could change the world for the better. Without the rise of evangelicalism, temperance supporters would not have concluded that man could free himself and society from sin, especially intemperance.¹⁰

The values of evangelicalism and social mobility which spurred the temperance movement were not contradictory; in antebellum America, they were intertwined. Men who believed in economic progress usually believed in societal progress as well. The men who believed in progress were generally drawn to the Whig Party which was "the natural haven for the hard-working, self-improving, sober, and thrifty of all classes."¹¹ Whigs supported a government which would act in a way that would help reach the twin goals of an advanced industrial economy and a perfect moral society. On a national level, the men who advocated temperance and ending the Sunday mail delivery supported internal improvements and tariffs. In Middletown, temperance supporters favored loans to railroads and gas lights on

⁹ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 7.

¹⁰ Johnson, *Shopkeeper's Millennium*, 6.

¹¹ Richard Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 109.

public streets. Sometimes, economic and societal progress were one and the same; free public water would provide workers with clean water which would improve their health and keep them out of the grogshop.¹² The evangelical mentality which shaped the temperance movement and dominated the Whig Party in the 1840s and 1850s was not confined to the upper class. Support for temperance ranged from wealthy manufacturers to day laborers. In Middletown, most temperance supporters belonged to evangelical churches, and many worked in industries dependent upon the new emerging industrial market economy, even if they were not members of the Whig Party.

The temperance movement's relationship with evangelical denominations did not begin in the 1840s; its development was gradual. Lyman Beecher's delivery of *Six Sermons on Intemperance* in 1825 is usually seen as one of the first events that linked temperance to the religious developments.¹³ Although early temperance leaders, like Beecher, and organizations, like the American Temperance Society (ATS), were evangelical, they were also typically members of the upper classes until the 1840s. The working class was largely ignored by temperance supporters. Nor did many of these early leaders advocate the passage of laws restricting the sale and manufacture of alcohol. Because of these distinctions, the temperance movement in the 1820s and 1830s will not be part of my examination of the temperance movement in Middletown.

My study focuses on the democratization of the temperance movement in the early 1840s, and the consequence of this democratization in the early 1850s: support

¹² Michael Rawson, "The Nature of Water: Reform and the Antebellum Crusade for Municipal Water in Boston," *Environmental History* 9, no. 3 (2004): 411.

¹³ John A. Krout, *The Origins of Prohibition* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1925), 105.

for statewide prohibition. As the ideology supporting temperance changed, the movement attracted more support. Without this increased support within the artisan and working classes in the 1840s, Whig politicians in Middletown would have been unable to attract the popular support they achieved a decade later when advocating statewide prohibition. Although this phase of the temperance movement was dominated by emerging middle class, the influence of an older morality, which emphasized an individual's duty to his community and country, remained.

In order to explain the evolution of the temperance movement in the 1840s and 1850s, the general structure of the temperance movement must be explained. The first section of my thesis explores the structure and development of the movement until 1839. At this point, I turn my attention to movement in Middletown during the 1840s and 1850s, beginning with an exploration of the rhetorical tools used by temperance supporters in order to advance their agenda. Parades, conventions, and speakers attracted attention to temperance while sermons and short stories created the moral justification for temperance. Examining these tools reveals how temperance supporters justified themselves to the public and how they tried to attract more support for temperance. Temperance rhetoric was often the product of a combination of an older morality, which emphasized civic responsibility, and a newer belief in upward mobility and self-improvement.

The third chapter will explain the general dynamics of the temperance movement in Middletown in the 1840s and 1850s. Local support for temperance increased because of the activities of organizations like the Washingtonians, and prohibition evolved from the dreams of a few isolated individuals to a realistic

political goal of members of both parties. The next two chapters explore who was involved in the temperance movement locally. I begin with an examination of the membership of Middletown's chapter of the Sons of Temperance, a fraternal organization devoted to the advocacy of temperance and prohibition. I then shift to an explanation why two prominent Middletown residents, Benjamin Douglas and E.W.N. Starr, supported temperance. Both men were involved in manufacturing; Douglas and his brother, William, owned a brass foundry and manufactured pumps, and Starr's father, Nathan, owned an arms manufacturing plant. Both men, Douglas as mayor and Starr as city clerk and commanding officer of militia, were involved in local politics and despite different partisan affiliations strongly advocated temperance. As a Whig and later a Republican, Douglas' long support and involvement in a wide variety of social reforms could be expected. Starr, a Democrat, surprised some of his closest friends when he supported prohibition in the early 1850s.

The final chapter explores how the city reacted to the passage of *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance*, which banned the manufacture and sale of alcohol within Connecticut. The city's reaction shows the extent to which the population supported temperance, especially prohibition, and how this support was manifested. Although some people aggressively aided the enforcement of the law, within a few months, the city generally adapted to life under prohibition, and people turned their attention to other issues: nativism and slavery.

Chapter 1

Early Americans expressed an ambivalence towards alcoholic beverages, believing them to be generally beneficial but dangerous when consumed in excessive quantities. Colonial governments enacted measures aimed at curtailing the excessive use of alcohol, but few individuals condemned alcohol outright. Even Puritans viewed alcohol as beneficial, not sinful. Increase Mather wrote, “Drink is in itself a good creature of God, and to be received with thankfulness, but the abuse of drink is from Satan, the wine is from God, but the Drunkard is from the Devil.”¹⁴ Mather’s opinions towards both wine and drunkenness would not have been controversial on either side of the Atlantic. Mather’s esteem of alcohol contrasts with the condemnation of alcohol emanating a century and a half later from New England pulpits.

Mather’s condemnation of intemperance was consistent with how alcohol was treated in New England during its first two centuries of settlement, when counties and towns attempted to reduce drunkenness by controlling the licenses to sell alcohol. In New England towns, selectmen limited the number of taverns which received licenses and determined who procured these licenses. Because taverns were the only places which could sell alcohol for onsite consumption, controlling who sold alcohol tended to reduce public drunkenness. Issuing licenses represented a limited attempt to

¹⁴ Increase Mather, *Wo to Drunkards: Two Sermons Testifying against the Sin of Drunkenness: Wherein the Wofulness of That Evil, and the Mistery of All That Are Addicted to It, Is Discovered from the Word of God* (Cambridge, MA: Printed by Marmaduke Johnson. 1673. And sold by Edmund Ranger bookbinder in Boston.,, 1673), 4.

control the consumption of alcohol; only public drunkenness by individuals was curtailed. Groceries were allowed to sell alcohol for consumption in the privacy of the home, and no action was taken to reduce alcohol consumption when the community gathered for special occasions like militia musters, elections, and weddings. Officials did not restrict the production of alcohol which occurred at hundreds of distilleries along the New England coast, or in farms across the country where entire apple crops were used in the production of hard cider.¹⁵

Colonies outside New England adopted similar measures to limit drunkenness, placing some restrictions on how and when alcohol could be consumed. The only systematic attempt to curtail alcohol consumption significantly occurred in Georgia, where James Oglethorpe banned the sale of rum, whiskey, and other spirits when the colony was founded in 1733. Beer and wine were allowed in the colony, but the settlers preferred to drink rum which was smuggled across the Savanna River from South Carolina. The ban was repealed one year after its initial passage.¹⁶ The mild restrictions which existed in the colonies did not have a significant influence on how much alcohol was consumed. Throughout the eighteenth century, alcoholic consumption increased in the colonies, reaching 6.6 gallons of alcohol per person over 15 on the eve of the American Revolution.¹⁷ While rum accounted for most of the alcohol, hard cider was consumed at high levels in the North. Beer could not be transported or stored easily in North America, and only the wealthy could afford

¹⁵ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 21-2.

¹⁶ Krout, *The Origins of Prohibition*, 56-7.

¹⁷ W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic, an American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 232-3.

wine.¹⁸ After the Revolution, a few individuals began to express concern about the amount of alcohol Americans were consuming. Despite this concern, alcoholic consumption continued to climb, peaking in 1830 when per capita consumption of alcohol reached 7.1 gallons a year.¹⁹

Alcohol's integration into early American society cannot be expressed simply in terms of high levels of alcoholic consumption. Alcohol enhanced the social bond between Americans when they gathered at events like clambakes or barbeques and got drunk together. Special occasions like militia musters, court days, weddings, even ordinations were celebrated with the consumption of large amounts of alcohol. Politicians were expected to treat voters with whiskey and cider, and by drinking with supporters, politicians revealed themselves to be equal to the voters.²⁰ Looking back from mid-century, temperance advocates were appalled at intemperance displayed at these events, particularly ordinations, although a few ministers did refuse to furnish alcohol at their ordinations in the early 1800s.²¹ At the time, however, these ministers were voices in the wilderness.

The first nationally prominent figure to advocate temperance was not a religious leader. Dr. Benjamin Rush, a physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, supported temperance before all but a handful of ministers. During the American Revolution and in the early republic, Rush was regarded as the country's foremost medical authority, serving as Surgeon General of the Continental Army and

¹⁸ Blocker, *Cycles of Reform*, 4.

¹⁹ Rorabaugh, *Alcoholic Republic*, 232-3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

²¹ Charles Jewett, *A Forty Years' Fight with the Drink Demon, or a History of the Temperance Reform as I Have Seen It, and of My Labor in Connection Therewith* (New York,: National temperance society and publishing house, 1872), 14.

president of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. Rush was the first physician anywhere to explore the medical problems caused by alcohol when he published *An Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits on the Human Body* in 1784. Rush associated medical and moral problems with alcohol and prescribed remedies to combat alcohol. He devised a moral thermometer which explained the relative benefits and detriments of various beverages. Water and milk were seen as the healthiest beverages, while beer and wine provided lesser health benefits.

Intoxicating spirits like rum and whiskey on the other hand, harmed a person's health and would lead to immoral behavior including idleness, poverty, and violence.

Rush's advice was novel as well—total abstinence from spirits. Rush was one of the first people to argue that the only way to avoid the perils of spirits was to avoid them completely. Although he condemned spirits, Rush offered wine and beer as healthy alternatives to rum and whiskey. *An Inquiry* had only a limited impact when originally published, but Rush's work was republished throughout the nineteenth century by temperance advocates who wished to capitalize on the doctor's patriotism and medical authority.²² In subsequent decades, physicians followed Rush's lead, becoming staunch supporters of temperance and joining temperance organizations in proportions second only to the clergy. Medical arguments supplemented the dominant religious and moral arguments advocating temperance and teetotalism.

In 1789, five years after Rush published *An Inquiry*, the first temperance society in the world was formed in Litchfield, Connecticut, when a group of local farmers grew concerned about the drinking habits of their workers and decided to

²² Rorabaugh, *Alcoholic Republic*, 40-4.

band together in order to limit the amount of alcohol that the community consumed.²³ Over the next few decades, local temperance organizations were created in communities across New England and New York. Despite the existence of local organizations, there was little cooperation between the groups, and no attempt was made to create a national or even statewide temperance organization until 1813 when the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance (MSSI) was formed. The following year, a similar organization, the Connecticut Society for the Reformation of Morals, was founded in Connecticut. Both societies were hierarchical in nature, created by the state's Congregationalist-Federalist elite which was concerned that people were becoming increasingly intemperate and immoral. The societies were created to reaffirm the elites' status in society and to curtail what they viewed as the dangerous behavior of the masses.²⁴

In both structure and method, the organizations were elitist. Political and religious leaders dominated both organizations, and the few local chapters that existed consisted of local political and religious elites. The MSSI believed that its members, political and religious leaders from across the state, would lead by example; if a society's elite pledged to consume fewer spirits, the rest of society would follow the elite's lead and drink less as well. Although concerned about the consequences of intemperance, the MSSI did not even explain what the consequences of intemperance were. Because the MSSI was only interested in limiting intemperance and never advocated total abstinence, many of the leaders continued to consume wine.²⁵

²³ Krout, *The Origins of Prohibition*, 68.

²⁴ Blocker, *Cycles of Reform*, 11.

²⁵ Robert L. Hampel, *Temperance and Prohibition in Massachusetts, 1813-1852, Studies in American History and Culture ; No. 32* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1982), 13-7.

Although it lasted longer than its Connecticut counterpart, the MSSSI peaked in the early 1820s before suffering a slow but steady decline into oblivion by the mid-1830s.

Despite the failure of the early temperance societies, as the nineteenth century progressed, temperance found increasing support from ministers who used their pulpits to advance the temperance cause. New England Congregationalist ministers were the staunchest supporters of temperance. The most famous, Lyman Beecher, was an advocate for temperance long before he delivered *Six Sermons Concerning Intemperance* in 1826. Beecher prohibited alcohol from his ordination, and in 1816 called on political and other religious leaders in Connecticut to meet in Middletown in order to form the Connecticut Society for the Reformation of Morals.²⁶ Beecher was not alone; most of the early leaders of the temperance movement were pastors. Upon its founding in 1826, the first president of the American Temperance Society (ATS) was an Andover-educated clergyman, Justin Edwards,²⁷ and the organization's field agent, John Marsh, assumed the position after creating the Middlesex County Temperance Society while pastor of the Congregational Church in Haddam.²⁸ The dominance of Congregational clergy at this stage of the temperance movement discouraged members of other denominations, especially Methodists and Baptists, from joining temperance organizations. Although supportive of temperance, these denominations resented the Congregational church's position as the established church in New England, and refused to take part in any organization which would enhance the favored position of Congregational clergy. Members of these

²⁶ Middletown was selected as the meeting place because of its central location in the state as opposed to a particular strength of the movement in the city. Krout, *The Origins of Prohibition*, 90.

²⁷ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 61.

²⁸ John Marsh, *Temperance Recollections : Labors, Defeats, Triumphs, an Autobiography*, 2d ed. (New York: C. Scribner, 1867), 13-4.

denominations only joined temperance organizations once the groups were divorced from Congregationalist leadership.²⁹

The role of the Congregationalist ministers in the temperance movement mirrored the deep support for the cause in New England which would remain the center of the temperance movement until the Civil War. While many of the leading figures were ministers, temperance organizations attracted large membership from the region as well. Although only one sixth of the nation's population lived in New England, over a third of the members of the ATS lived in the six states.³⁰ While much of its support was tied to the Congregational Church and its ministers' views towards intemperance, the prominence of New Englanders in the temperance movement extended to other denominations as well. Within the Methodist Church, the strongest advocates for restoring Wesley's rule at the General Conference came from delegates from New England.³¹

While some of New England's dominance in the early temperance movement can be attributed to the elevated status that ministers held in New England society, such an explanation ignores the impact of the area's economic transformation on the temperance movement and reduces the role of individuals who supported temperance. New England was one of the first areas of the country to undergo an economic transformation; industrialization and changes in farming had tied many communities to the world market, and old ways of life, including drinking patterns could not continue to exist in the changing world. Ian Tyrrell has shown that support for

²⁹ Swinson, "Methodism and Temperance", 288.

³⁰ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 114.

³¹ Wesley's Rule was a term used by temperance advocates when referring to John Wesley's teaching that people should avoid alcohol because of how it harmed society. Swinson, "Methodism and Temperance", 252.

temperance was tied to the production of goods for the market, regardless of whether those goods were produced on a farm, in an artisan's shop, or small factory.³² Young men were particularly affected by the growing population as they no longer could hope to find arable land near their homes and were increasingly employed in small shops and factories in cities. Their income became tied to producing goods for the market, forcing them to change previous drinking patterns. Traditional drinking behavior slowed productivity; drams of alcohol, which were provided by the employer, were drunk throughout the day. The practice was abandoned when employers discovered that workers were more productive when sober. There was also pressure to reduce drinking when off the job, as employers complained that productivity was lost on Mondays due to the previous day's behavior.³³ If men were to advance economically, they needed to abandon earlier drinking patterns. While young men were drawn to temperance, their fathers were often hostile to the idea. After praising the young men of Middlesex County, John Marsh complained about the lack of support from older generations.³⁴ While much of the economic motivation for temperance was confined to self-employed farmers, artisans, manufacturers and entrepreneurs during the 1820s and 30s, during the 1840s this ideology spread; employees adopted, but modified, their employers' views about the moral and economic benefits of abstention.³⁵

While economic interests contributed to strong temperance support in New England and elsewhere, the ideology of the emerging middle class was the true

³² Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 8.

³³ Rorabaugh, *Alcoholic Republic*, 169.

³⁴ Marsh, *Temperance Recollections*, 16.

³⁵ Faler, *Mechanics and Manufacturers*, 207-8.

motivation behind the movement. This new class was not narrowly defined by economic status, but by a shared worldview that linked farmer and entrepreneur, manufacturer and artisan. The men of the middle class all believed in upward mobility, both for themselves and for their community and country. They believed that if they behaved morally and worked hard, they could improve their economic and social status and that if an entire community ascribed to the same morality, then the community would be improved.³⁶ Evangelical religion was closely tied to this ideology. Departing from the Calvinist belief in predestination, many Americans, including New England Congregationalists, began to believe in a form of Arminianism, believing that humans had the ability to effect their own salvation and that certain behaviors would change once a person was saved. When applied to alcohol, evangelicals concluded that an individual could free himself from the sin of intemperance, if he chose to follow God and abstain from alcohol. Alcohol was believed to interfere with a person's chance for salvation, because it caused people to become violent, profane, and irreligious, leading some temperance advocates to conclude that people who drank alcohol would not be saved. The general evangelical belief in the moral improvement of society also contributed to support for temperance. Evangelicals believed that through their efforts to save the country from alcohol and the sin of intemperance they could help create a Christian nation.³⁷ Their belief in moral improvement mirrored the bourgeois belief in economic improvement and in the minds of many the two types of improvement merged into a belief that a temperate society would improve morally and economically.

³⁶ Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics*, 130-1.

³⁷ Leo P. Hirrel, *Children of Wrath : New School Calvinism and Antebellum Reform* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 120-3.

In addition to its economic and religious components, the temperance movement had a political aspect as well. The ideology linking economic improvement and moral improvement found a home in the Whig Party. While members of both the Whig and Democratic Parties supported temperance, the Whig Party was more receptive to temperance and moral reforms in general.³⁸ Many Whigs became Whigs because of that party's economic programs which advocated a strong government role in the economy, supporting internal improvements and enacting tariffs to encourage manufacturing and economic activity. These industrialists and entrepreneurs simply brought their evangelical religion and support for temperance with them into the Whig Party. While defined by its economic policies, the Whig view towards government action allowed for support for increased government involvement in attempts to reform the society morally, including adopting new laws restricting the sale of alcohol. The Whig Party extolled the virtues of industry, self-improvement, thrift, and progress—all virtues which led to support for temperance. Mainly supported by the younger members of the party, the older generations remained hostile the idea that government could improve a society's morality.³⁹

As support for temperance increased, the cause's leaders shifted from ministers who used their prominence to promote the virtues of temperance to men, like John Gough and John Marsh, who became famous because of their support of temperance. Temperance organizations helped to produce these new temperance leaders. Because these new organizations were divorced from the Congregationalist hierarchy, members from other denominations, Baptists and Methodists, began to join

³⁸ Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics*, 35.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 122.

the same organizations as Congregationalists.⁴⁰ The Benevolent Empire had helped to create ecumenical evangelical cooperation which was used by temperance supporters. But despite the lesser involvement of religious figures in the temperance movement, the clergy continued to provide moral authority to the temperance movement. The movement continued to attract little support from the working class.

While temperance's appeal did not spread to the lower classes, beginning the late 1820s, temperance advocates adopted new organizational and rhetorical techniques which increased the popularity of their cause. While the previous generation of temperance leaders believed that a positive example would be enough to convince people to drink less, subsequent temperance leaders, influenced by other benevolent organizations, employed tracts and speakers to extol the virtues of temperance and to increase membership in their organizations.⁴¹ One of the techniques most commonly used by the ATS and similar organizations was the publication and distribution of temperance tracts. Borrowing a technique developed by the American Tract Society, the ATS republished temperance sermons, speeches, stories, and medical works and subsidized their distribution across the country to temperance supporters. The most popular tracts included reprintings of Beecher's *Six Sermons* and Rush's *Inquiry*, but most tracts were written by less well-known figures who simply employed strong arguments in favor of temperance.⁴²

The ATS also took its organizational structure from earlier benevolent organizations, actively working to create local chapters, unlike the MSSSI. These local chapters were created by the national or state organizations which employed field

⁴⁰ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 63.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴² Blocker, *Cycles of Reform*, 13-4.

workers to advocate temperance and organize affiliates. Organizers, such as John Marsh, were paid by the national organization and devoted themselves fulltime to advancing the cause of temperance. In addition to helping to create new chapters, they delivered temperance speeches, aimed at deepening support for temperance where organizations already existed.⁴³ Because their travel brought them into contact with thousands of temperance supporters, they became some of the most prominent voices in favor of temperance.

The ATS and other temperance organizations would not have been able to afford mailing tracts or paying field organizers if they relied solely on donations from sympathetic benefactors like earlier temperance groups. The ATS solved this problem by adopting fundraising techniques which aimed at getting a small amount of money from a large number of people. Through its local affiliates and tract mailings, the ATS developed a list of temperance supporters. These supporters were mailed requests for donations along with temperance tracts. The requests often rewarded donors by allowing them to become an honorary board member if they donated five dollars or an honorary vice-president if they donated fifty dollars.⁴⁴ This method provided the ATS with a source of revenue which was not dependent upon the whims of a few wealthy benefactors.

The network of temperance supporters, developed by the ATS and similar temperance organizations, helped cultivate increased support for restrictive measures throughout the 1830s. The colonial practice of limiting the number of licenses to sell alcohol in taverns continued in many parts of the country. In Middlesex County,

⁴³ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 88.

⁴⁴ Krout, *The Origins of Prohibition*, 110.

taverns keepers continued to present petitions every year to the county in order to retain their license to sell alcohol.⁴⁵ Temperance supporters in Massachusetts used the counties' control over licenses to advance their cause. By the mid-1830s, some temperance advocates demanded that their county boards approve no licenses, making the county dry. A candidate's stance on licenses became the central issue in county elections. Most counties voted no license at least once, with some counties consistently voting against issuing licenses, remaining dry throughout the decade.⁴⁶

The late 1830s also saw movement towards statewide prohibitory laws (but not outright prohibition). In 1838, Massachusetts passed the fifteen-gallon law which outlawed the purchase of alcohol under fifteen gallons and required people to take the alcohol away upon purchase. Supporters believed that the law would eliminate public drunkenness as people would no longer be able to go to taverns to buy spirits by the drink until drunk. They assumed that because people were forced to drink at home, they were less likely to become drunk.⁴⁷ The law brought cries of hypocrisy because poorer citizens argued that rich citizens who could afford to buy fifteen gallons of spirits would not be affected by the law, while the poor would be affected because they could not afford to buy that much alcohol. Taverns devised ways to get around the law and stayed open, and the unpopular law was repealed one year after it was passed.⁴⁸ Massachusetts was not the only state which adopted restrictive measures. By the end of the 1830s, many states passed local option laws, which gave cities and towns the right to ban the sale of alcohol within their jurisdiction. In Connecticut, a

⁴⁵ Applications for Tavern Licenses in Middlesex County, Connecticut, various dates 1789-1832, Middletown City Records, Tavern Licenses, etc., MCHS.

⁴⁶ Hampel, *Temperance and Prohibition in Massachusetts*, 61-8.

⁴⁷ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 94-5.

⁴⁸ Hampel, *Temperance and Prohibition in Massachusetts*, 79.

local option became law when the legislature met in its spring 1839 session.

Municipalities were to vote in January 1840.⁴⁹ Yet in 1840, support for prohibition even among temperance advocates was far from universal, and some supporters remained hostile to teetotalism as well.

But the passage of prohibitory measures masked the truth that the temperance movement was weaker in 1840 than it was a decade earlier. By 1840, membership in the ATS was slipping, the fifteen-gallon law was repealed, and in states which adopted local option, large cities remained wet. Despite the failure of prohibitory laws and the limited appeal of temperance to the working class, alcoholic consumption dropped rapidly during the 1830s. Per capita consumption which had been 7.1 gallons in 1830 dropped to a little over three gallons a decade later and to 1.5 gallons by 1845.⁵⁰ Perhaps the efforts of temperance advocates in the 1830s succeed in reducing alcoholic consumption despite their failure to win support among the working class. Surprisingly, lower classes began to support temperance after six men met in a Baltimore bar in April 1840. This was the first meeting of what became the Washingtonians.⁵¹ The Washingtonian movement, with its emphasis on reformed drunkards and experience speeches appealed to the lower middle and working classes; within three years it had spread throughout the country, beginning the democratization of the temperance movement. In Middletown, the democratization began in the early 1840s, and strengthened throughout the decade as organizations like the Washingtonians and Sons of Temperance appealed to the lower classes, and

⁴⁹ *An Act Relating to the Sales of Spirituous Liquors*, May 1839.

⁵⁰ Rorabaugh, *Alcoholic Republic*, 232-3.

⁵¹ Leonard U. Blumberg, and Bill Pittman, *Beware the First Drink!: The Washington Temperance Movement and Alcoholics Anonymous* (Seattle, WA: Glen Abbey Books, 1991), 58.

as these classes adopted certain aspects of the evangelical middle class worldview. Before exploring these changes within the local temperance movement, I turn my attention to the activities and rhetoric used by temperance supporters in Middletown as support for temperance began to expand in the 1840s and 1850s.

Chapter 2

During the 1820s and 1830s, the American Temperance Society pioneered the use of tracts in order to advocate temperance. These tracts, which included sermons and short stories, were an attempt to convince people of the moral hazards of alcohol. These moral arguments are considered moral suasion, which along with legal coercion, was one of the methods used by temperance organizations and supporters advance their cause. Although by the 1850s, prohibition had overtaken moral suasion as preferred tool of temperance supporters, moral suasion remained popular within the temperance movement throughout the antebellum period. By the 1840s, temperance supporters had honed their arguments. These arguments can be classified into two methods of persuasion. The first method consisted of literature written for individuals who were receptive to temperance ideals. This literature included sermons as well as short stories and poems written for the local newspapers which also reprinted stories and poems that appeared earlier in other papers and magazines. These works emphasized the morality of temperance, primarily by showing the consequences of intemperance. By appealing to an individual's economic and moral well-being and making overtures towards a sense of civic republicanism, the moral arguments attempted to show the benefits of temperance.

Temperance propaganda also appealed to a different form of patriotism—popular patriotism. While civic republicanism was a form of patriotism, it lacked the emphasis on figures and images which categorized popular patriotism. In parades and

speeches, temperance advocates employed patriotic images in an attempt to cast temperance and prohibition as a continuation of the cause of the Revolution. Through the use of patriotic images, temperance advocates attempted to appeal to segments of the population which might not have a favorable predisposition towards temperance. This form of patriotism had wider potential audience than appeals to the specific kind of morality found in other temperance stories and sermons.

Temperance stories, original and republished, appeared regularly in both of Middletown's major newspapers, the *Sentinel & Witness* and the *Constitution*. Both the Democratic *Sentinel & Witness*, edited by William Starr, and the Whig *Constitution*, edited by Abner Newton, expressed support for temperance through their editorial stances as well as through their selection of fictional works. While a Whig paper could be expected to support temperance, Jacksonian papers were generally hostile to the idea. Making the *Sentinel & Witness's* support of temperance even more surprising was the paper's hostility towards Martin van Buren during the 1848 election. Within the Democratic Party, support for temperance was strongest among the parts which left in order to form the Free Soil Party.⁵² In the 1848 Presidential election, the paper supported the Democratic candidate, not van Buren. Although he never supported the Free Soil Party and remained a loyal Democrat his entire life, Starr continued to print articles and stories advocating temperance until his death. The *Sentinel & Witness* continued to support temperance after his son, Samuel, became the editor upon William's death in 1855.⁵³

While both papers supported temperance, only the *Constitution* favored any

⁵² Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder*, 143-4.

⁵³ *Sentinel & Witness*. mult. dates

legal restrictions. The *Sentinel & Witness* even opposed local option. Whenever a city or town voted against issuing licenses, Starr attacked the results as a vote against liberty.⁵⁴ Despite his personal support for temperance and occasionally teetotalism, Starr, like other opponents of prohibition, viewed prohibition as a violation of an individual's right to drink. Starr's criticisms of prohibition were common among Democratic opponents of prohibition, although many of these opponents opposed temperance as well. This opposition to prohibition was rooted in the belief that alcohol was a form of property and any prohibition of the sale of alcohol violated property rights.⁵⁵ These views reflected the Democratic Party's views on individual liberty and its desire to prevent government control over people's lives. The *Sentinel & Witness's* support of temperance was tame when compared to its rival, the *Constitution*.

While both papers regularly published temperance stories, none of the stories matched the sustained support for temperance which appeared in works published pseudonymously in the pages of the *Constitution* in the summer and fall of 1840.⁵⁶ Signed by a man calling himself Hermes, these moral essays entitled "Thoughts to Young Men," describe proper moral behavior through a series of stories and lessons. Throughout the twenty-three lessons, temperance was directly addressed in six lessons, indirectly in an additional three, and the morality preached across the entire

⁵⁴ When describing Saybrook's vote to ban all liquor licenses, the paper wrote, "The liberty to sell was refused to all." *Sentinel & Witness*, January 29, 1840.

⁵⁵ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 256.

⁵⁶ My emphasis on the original works published in Middletown's newspapers should not be taken to imply that these works constituted the entirety or even a majority of the temperance stories which appeared in the papers. To the contrary, both papers reprinted temperance stories from other newspapers and magazines such as *Punch* and *Godey's Lady's Book*. I have elected to focus on the original works because they were written specifically for a local audience, although they may have been reprinted in other newspapers. The works, whether original or republished, appeal to the same type of morality.

series was closely linked to temperance ideals.⁵⁷ Hermes believed that young men should strive for respectability, expecting all men, regardless of upbringing, education, or vocation, to become moral, economically productive citizens of their community and country. The young men were told the consequences of vice and profanity and instructed on how to avoid these evils, and improve their social standing. Hermes believed that intemperance was one of the major threats to a man's respectability. Alcohol led men down paths of destruction, leading to violence, poverty, sickness, and ultimately death.

Hermes directly addressed intemperance when describing the life of a man named Edward P. Because of its length, Hermes used two issues of the *Constitution* in order to recount how alcohol caused the downfall and death of Edward, once the most promising young man in the town of Dunbar.⁵⁸ Hermes' description of Dunbar mirrored the kind of community he hoped to create through his "Thoughts"—a virtuous New England farming village whose citizens attended church together every Sunday, respected each other regardless of occupation or education, and refrained from profanity and alcohol. Edward's promise and his parents' wealth allowed him to attend Harvard, but he always respected his childhood friends who were now farmers and shopkeepers. After graduation, Edward chose to remain in Dunbar where he got married and had a daughter, Julia. Things did not remain idyllic. Edward began frequenting a grogshop which had recently opened in Dunbar. At first Edward pledged to drink only wine and beer, but these drinks inevitably led to his consumption of rum and whiskey. His wife (unnamed throughout the story) and

⁵⁷ *Constitution*, April 29-November 4, 1840. Hereafter referred to as "Thoughts."

⁵⁸ *Constitution*, May 27 and June 3, 1840.

friends became concerned, but his drinking only increased after a confrontation with his wife. Losing his reputation and friends, Edward spent his free time in the grogshop or abusing his wife and daughter. One night, Edward returned home drunk and, following a gentle rebuke from his wife, grabbed a fire poker and struck and killed her. Edward was subsequently arrested, tried, convicted, and executed for murder.

Hermes' used Edward's story in order to show how any consumption of alcohol would damage a man's health, family, and standing within the community. These consequences stemmed from the initial consumption of a single drink of either beer or wine. The arc of Edward's fall, from a man of promise to his destruction and poverty, was shared with men in other temperance works. Abuse, whether of a wife or a child, occurred in many stories as well. However, Edward's story lacked the redemption which occurred in most of the stories. Following a death resulting from a man's intemperance, the drunkard often repents, pledging never to drink again, followed by a scene depicting the drunkard's restored status.⁵⁹ In contrast, Edward was executed after murdering his wife, never given the chance to change his ways.

The lack of redemption altered the meaning of the story. The other temperance stories were ultimately uplifting, showing how even the worst drunkard could improve his life if he gave up alcohol. By contrast, Hermes' story ended with a murder, execution, and orphanhood. While Hermes might have been limited by the details of the real life story, the redemptive stories were often based upon true stories as well. Instead, Hermes' choice of story might exhibit how views towards the

⁵⁹ John W. Frick, *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-Century America*, *Cambridge Studies in American Theatre and Drama* ; 17 (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 111.

drunkard changed between the early 1840s and the 1850s when many of the more famous stories were written. By the time when the most famous temperance stories, the plays *Ten Nights in a Barroom* (1854) and *The Drunkard* (1849), were written, the reformed drunkard was an accepted concept within temperance circles. But in the summer of 1841, less than a year after the first meeting of the Washingtonians, Washingtonian rhetoric was not universally accepted among temperance supporters.⁶⁰ Although John Hawkins, an important Washingtonian speaker, lectured in Middletown in May 1841, many temperance supporters remained apprehensive about his arguments, especially the affirmation of the possibility of reforming the drunkard. Consequentially, the redeemed drunkard may not have been seen as a possibility by Hermes. Like other men of his day, he might have believed that the only way to avoid the perils of intemperance was never to drink alcohol. Redemption was not possible. Any story relating the loss of respectability to intemperance must show the detrimental consequences of alcohol consumption. Because he attempted to instill proper moral behavior into the minds of young men, Hermes needed to show that in order to retain one's status a man must never drink alcohol.

Hermes' story deviated from the typical temperance story in one other aspect, the role of the daughter, Julia. In many temperance stories, children of drunkards play important roles. They serve as the moral anchor in the story. In particular, a child, usually the daughter, is able to make her father pledge to stop drinking before she dies as a result of his intemperance.⁶¹ In these stories, children suffer most from their father's intemperance. They go without food, clothing, and education because

⁶⁰ Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder*, 34.

⁶¹ Judith N. McArthur, "Demon Rum on the Boards: Temperance Melodrama and the Tradition of Antebellum Reform," *Journal of the Early Republic* 9, no. 4 (1989): 536-7.

the father spends the money on alcohol instead. Sometimes, death is seen as a preferable outcome to life because the child of drunkard would be reduced to life of poverty and become a thief, prostitute, or drunkard.⁶² In many of his “Thoughts,” Hermes contrasted the images of thief, prostitute, and drunkard with the genteel young men he hoped to create. Because he focused on intemperance’s effect on the individual, preventing him from achieving his full potential, the impact of intemperance on friends and family was of only secondary importance. This altered Julia’s function in the story. Like the children in other tracts, Julia was sent to the bar in order to bring her father home, but she did not serve as the angel who saved her father from intemperance like the daughters in the other stories. Because the drunkard was not redeemed in this story, Julia could not fill the customary role of the daughter. In the other stories, the child’s death was needed to spark the reformation of the drunkard, but because there was no reformation, Julia did not die. However, through her visit to the barroom and her cries upon her mother’s murder, Julia partially functions as a conscience in the story; an unstated effect of her father’s intemperance was her orphanhood.

The downfall of Edward P. might be seen as an aberration if not for a similar story which Hermes wrote a few weeks later. In this essay, Hermes described how an unnamed man was able to acquire a farm on prosperous land, bringing respectability, happiness, and prosperity to him and his family through industry and temperance.⁶³ When Hermes visited a dilapidated dwelling a few years later, he found the man’s family living there. His wife recounted how her husband began to drink, which led

⁶² Ibid.: 239.

⁶³ *Constitution*, June 24, 1840.

him to mortgage the farm before they were eventually forced to move to their current dwelling because of his continued drinking. Her husband was on the floor dying from consumption. Because the story ended with Hermes' visit, the story was unfinished, but the message was clear; alcohol had ruined the family. Presumably, the family's lives did not improve after Hermes' visit. The father probably died while his wife and children continued to starve. Drunkenness introduced disease and poverty to the family.⁶⁴ This was not an optimistic story of a reformed drunkard; rather Hermes attempted to show how alcohol ruined families as well as the man. The only way for a family to preserve its status and prosperity is if the father never drinks alcohol; a return to respectability does not appear to be an option for Hermes.

While Hermes' "Thoughts" deviated from the norm of later temperance stories, the same year, the *Sentinel & Witness* published a temperance story which conformed to the typical temperance tract. Writing under the name Sigma, the author told how a young man saved his father from intemperance.⁶⁵ When the young man, Julius, returned home, he found his mother distraught because of his father's poor condition—he was a drunkard. Julius's mother recounted to her son how his father, who had abstained from alcohol, became sick and on the advice of a neighbor drank alcohol as medicine. Once he began to drink he could not stop. That one drink, taken while sick, caused him to become drunkard. Upon seeing his son, the father

⁶⁴ Beginning with Benjamin Rush, the relationship between alcohol and sickness was a part of the temperance movement which lurks below the surface of the larger question of the immorality of intemperance. In an essay entitled "On Intemperance", Mary Parker wrote that intemperance "destroys the constitution, produces imbecility of the mind, brings on premature old age and frequently early deaths." She deemed these consequences irrevocable before describing other health problems including depression, uncontrolled elation, and harm to the nervous system. Although lacking Rush's medical expertise, Parker made some of the same connections between the moral and health consequences as the famous physician. Mary Parker, undated, "On Intemperance," ms, in Temperance Societies, MCHS.

⁶⁵ *The Sentinel & Witness*, July 1, 1840.

confessed that although he knew he was harming himself and his family, he could not pass the grogshop without stopping in for a drink. That night, Julius convinced his father to attend a temperance meeting; upon hearing the minister's sermon, the father began to cry and signed the pledge. A year later, the family's status had been restored, and the father had become a good husband, father, and citizen. Commenting on her husband's improvement, Julius' mother credited God.

This story differs from the two that Hermes wrote primarily because it is the story of a redeemed drunkard. The father's salvation was possible through his love for his son and his willingness to accept God. Unlike, the story of Edward P., the son, although grown, is needed to convince his father to give up drinking. Without him, the father would have continued to drink. The father's redemption reinforced the connection between temperance and respectability. Instead of simply tying the loss of respectability to intemperance, the inclusion of the final scene shows how sobriety can help a man regain his status, establishing a direct relationship between temperance and respectability, instead of relying upon a negative relationship like Hermes. The emphasis on the positive effects of temperance, as opposed to the negative effects of intemperance, allowed for the possibility of the reformation of the drunkard, marking a sharp distinction from Hermes' stories. This redemption was rooted in explicit acceptance of God, unlike the subtler references to Christianity in "Thoughts." The redemption of the drunkard might indicate that the second story tried to reach a different audience.

Their appearance in the Whig paper may indicate that "Thoughts" were intended for a genteel audience, while Sigma's story, appearing in the Democratic

Sentinel & Witness, likely had more readers who were among the working class. A story of a reformed drunkard implies that portions of the audience drank alcohol. Sigma might have been trying to reach people who drank when describing the restoration of the father's status. His goal was to convince people to stop drinking, not to convince them never to start. Sigma's story reveals that the affirmation of the ability of the drunkard to reform himself had found an audience in Middletown by the fall of 1841, although Washingtonian beliefs had not been accepted by all temperance supporters. Later stories continued the uplifting anecdotes of the reformed drunkard, leaving behind pessimistic stories about a man's downfall and death caused by intemperance. These later stories always showed that the drunkard could be saved.

Inspired by Washingtonian ideals, these stories' emphasis on the ability of the drunkard to redeem himself are related to aspects of evangelical theology. The evangelical belief in the redemption of an individual from his sins, his ability to achieve salvation was mirrored by the Washingtonian belief that by abstaining from all alcohol, the drunkard can improve his economic and social status. Reformed drunkards' experience speeches were like the evangelical belief of salvation. In addition, the terminology used to describe the Washingtonian movement indicates a strong relationship to evangelicalism despite accusations that the movement was anti-religious. Washingtonian speakers were often called missionaries and their meetings were sometimes called revivals.⁶⁶ Describing the Washingtonian movement, Jed Dannenbaum wrote, "It [the Washingtonian movement] was at heart a secularized revival and was often called the 'Washingtonian Revival.' It promised financial security and social respectability to habitual drinkers and even to confirmed

⁶⁶ Blumberg, *Beware the First Drink*, 76-7.

inebriates, if only they would adopt the principle of total abstinence.”⁶⁷

Sigma’s story, like the ones Hermes told in “Thoughts,” showed the consequences of a single drink of alcohol. All three advocated teetotalism. Edward’s tale suggested that consuming wine and beer led to whiskey and rum, and Julius’ father’s example showed that even when taken medicinally, consuming alcohol led to intemperance. These examples are important because they countered two arguments employed by people who advocated temperance but not teetotalism. Most supporters of temperance agreed that there were medicinal uses of alcohol; even Maine Laws exempted alcohol used for medical purposes from their prohibitions.⁶⁸ Sigma’s story attempted to show the fallacy of this belief; even when taken for medical purposes, the father’s consumption of alcohol caused him to continue to drink and become a drunkard. The cost of using alcohol as a medicine outweighed the benefits.

Hermes used Edward’s example to counter an argument used by some temperance supporters who believed that in order to prevent drunkenness, the consumption of beer and wine should be encouraged as alternatives to ardent spirits. By the 1840s, many temperance supporters had abandoned this argument and were advocating teetotalism.⁶⁹ Edward’s story was part of this growing consensus within the temperance community. He exemplified how consuming these safer beverages led to the consumption of stronger drinks and intemperance. If a person wished to avoid the perils of intemperance, then he should abstain from beer and wine as well as from spirits. By revealing the faults of traditional temperance arguments opposing teetotalism, Sigma and Hermes indicate that support for teetotalism was growing the

⁶⁷ Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder*, 36.

⁶⁸ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 259.

⁶⁹ Krout, *The Origins of Prohibition*, 159-60.

early 1840s.

Moral arguments in favor of temperance extended beyond short stories. In his “Thoughts,” most of Hermes’ lessons were direct instructions detailing proper behavior. He explained which behavior would help young men achieve respectability and which behavior to avoid. In the two stories, Hermes classified intemperance as unrespectable behavior; he argued that it fueled other immoral behavior as well. Hermes described intemperance as “one of Satan’s most fiery agents” when explaining the relationship between alcohol, profanity, and disrespecting God.⁷⁰ Although he often appealed to a Christian morality while describing proper behavior, this was the only time in the twenty-three lessons that Hermes directly referred to Satan. However, temperance was clearly part of proper behavior, which produced moral and respectable young men. Temperance was treated as both a pathway to and a marker of respectability. Surprisingly, Hermes viewed temperance as a benefit of industry, not the typical view that temperance helped produce a better workforce. He saw temperance as God’s reward for an individual’s hard work. If men were industrious, they would remain temperate and avoid bad habits.⁷¹ God rewards men for their hard work with wealth and the opportunity for salvation. Temperance was seen as one part of the larger relationship between industry, prosperity, morality, and God. If a man was temperate, then he was engaged in proper Christian morality, enhancing his economic and moral standing. Both directly and indirectly temperance was treated as a requirement for salvation.

The interrelationship between economic interest and morality was the driving

⁷⁰ *Constitution*, September 9, 1840.

⁷¹ *Constitution*, October 7, 1840

motivation behind the entire series. In addition to extolling the virtues of industry and morality, Hermes valued civic republicanism. For Hermes, one of the major reasons for instilling proper morality was ensuring that men would become virtuous citizens of the republic. If men were not sober, industrious, and moral, then they would harm the republic whose success depends upon the virtue of its citizenry. Instead of spending his time in the grogshop with thieves and prostitutes, Hermes believed that a good citizen spent his time working hard, loving his family and furthering his education. Alcohol, profanity, and idleness would only harm the country. The importance of civic republicanism rested upon a belief that the country's prosperity rested upon a virtuous, educated citizenry which elected the leaders. The theme of republicanism existed in other temperance works of the period. In depicting how men fell from respectability and status, these stories implied that the men were unable to perform even the most basic duties of a citizen.⁷² This civic republicanism was a form of patriotism. By becoming moral, industrious citizens, the young men were improving the United States. This patriotism, hidden beneath explicit moral and economic arguments might have been as effective when tying temperance to patriotism as the symbolic patriotism displayed at many temperance rallies and parades.⁷³ The subtlety of the patriotism might have appealed especially to

⁷² The virtue of republicanism remained particularly strong in New England. "In the 1850s, however, something of an earlier world survived in those Republican virtues of competence and modest independence still endorsed by so many northern New England farmers, entrepreneurs and craftsmen." Although written about Northern New England communities, the assertion can be applied to Middletown and Southern New England as well. Louis Billington, "the Perfect Law of Liberty': Radical Religion and the Democratization of New England, 1780-1840," in *Religion and Secular Reform in America*, ed. David K. Adams and Cornelis A. van Minnen (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 44.

⁷³ Despite his general appeal to civic republicanism rather than popular patriotism, Hermes could not resist using the example of Roger Sherman, a signer of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, in order to demonstrate the importance of character with regards to involvement in

those individuals who were apprehensive about the cooption of Revolutionary imagery for a political cause like temperance.

While appeals to patriotism lurked beneath the surface in temperance works appearing in the local papers, whether original works or republications, during temperance parades and rallies, temperance advocates used popular patriotism to appeal directly to citizens' patriotism.⁷⁴ Temperance parades were held before the temperance statewide conventions of 1841 and 1852, in addition to marking the nation's anniversary on many Fourth of July. The high point of the Washingtonian movement in Middletown was probably that parade held on the Fourth of July in 1842.⁷⁵ On that day, the Washingtonians led a parade of temperance supporters throughout Middletown before holding a rally in the Grove.⁷⁶ The date of the parade is significant because the Fourth of July was an especially patriotic holiday which temperance supporters hoped to adapt to advance their cause. Just as importantly, the annual celebration was marked in most towns with parades, fireworks, and alcohol. Parades typically consisted of men marching by occupation or voluntary organization, such as the militia and volunteer firemen. Alcohol was central to this and other celebrations. It remained one of the few times when the entire community gathered

government. *Constitution*, July 22, 1841.

⁷⁴While many historians have written extensively about moral appeals made by temperance advocates, comparatively little has been written about the use of patriotic imagery to support the temperance movement other than cursory explanations of the use of terms like King Alcohol and Washingtonians.

⁷⁵ The name, Washingtonians, was a direct reference to the nation's first president in an attempt to compare the temperance cause to the cause of the revolution, emphasizing that as Washington freed Americans from the tyranny of King George III, the Washingtonians would free Americans from the tyranny of King Alcohol. The comparison between King George and King Alcohol was a common trope in temperance rhetoric.

⁷⁶ *Constitution*, July 6, 1842.

together to revel in each other's company and free time.⁷⁷ As a result of this revelry, some temperance advocates began to view the holiday as one plagued by the sin of intemperance, leading some to try and turn the day into one which would advance their cause. In order to do so, the day's celebrations needed to be adapted into ones advocating temperance. Co-opting the Fourth might have carried special significance in the 1840s, as support for temperance expanded beyond its base in the upper and middle class and members of the working and lower middle classes were drawn to the movement. As support for temperance increased, advocates may have needed to adopt rhetoric which had more widespread support than an appeal to civic republicanism. Popular patriotism would have found support among individuals of all classes who viewed themselves as Americans.

In addition to the obvious appeals made by co-opting the holiday's patriotic symbolism, the Washingtonians' parade in 1842 incorporated additional patriotic images. Other temperance organizations including the Washingtonians' female auxiliary, the Martha Washington Society,⁷⁸ and the Cold Water Army, a temperance organization consisting of children, took part in the parade. This was typical of temperance festivities, but the presence of town officials and the officers and students of Wesleyan University differentiated this parade from other temperance parades. In addition to showing the widespread support for temperance, the inclusion of these groups, in particular elected officials, reveals the increased continuity between the Washingtonians' parade and ones which were traditionally held on the holiday.

Town officials would not have taken part if temperance had been an extreme political

⁷⁷ Rorabaugh, *Alcoholic Republic*, 194-5.

⁷⁸ Like its male counterpart, the name, the Martha Washington Society, was an attempt to relate temperance to the American Revolution.

position. Their willingness to express their public support for the movement indicates that temperance had become an issue which was no longer seen as politically dangerous, receiving support from members of both parties.

Although the parade was dominated by patriotic imagery, religion was an important part of the day's events as well. While the Washingtonians deliberately avoided direct connections with religious denominations, many of the other temperance organizations in the parade did not share their qualms. At the rally in the Grove, the speeches were all given by men with religious connections (either ministers or Wesleyan professors). The only local minister to give a speech was the city's Universalist minister. By allowing a Universalist minister such a prominent platform, organizers might have been trying to show support for temperance had spread beyond the traditional evangelical denominations.⁷⁹ The presence of Wesleyan students and faculty further enhanced the connection between religion and patriotism. The decision of organizers to include students from an evangelical institution reveals their belief that students would see temperance as both a patriotic and religious cause.

The use of women and children in this and other parades emphasized the moral stakes of the temperance movement. While both the Cold Water Army and the Martha Washington Society incorporated patriotism into their names and function, much of their importance lay in the emotional appeals that they made to men through

⁷⁹Traditionally, Universalists avoided temperance organizations because they were dominated by evangelicals and maintained strong connections to evangelical denominations. Universalists who disliked the other denominations, supported the Washingtonians, because unlike other temperance organizations, they did not preach a particular religion while advocating moral reform. His inclusion might have affirmed that while the Washingtonians were not associated with religious denominations, they still incorporated general religious themes into their events. Ann Lee Bressler, *The Universalist Movement in America, 1770-1880* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 81-2.

their presence. Both groups reminded men that they were not the only people who were harmed by male drinking. Their inclusion in parades tied emotional appeals to the patriotism exhibited throughout the parade.⁸⁰ Along with students and town officials, women and children were used as a simple propaganda tool by temperance supporters, displaying the breadth of support for the temperance movement.

Speeches by temperance advocates often employed patriotic imagery, particularly when the speeches were delivered by political figures. These themes became particularly important in the 1850s when support for a Maine Law was building in Connecticut. The issue became one of the most important in legislative and statewide elections for the next few years. Both supporters and opponents of prohibition attempted to cast their cause as the cause of liberty when debating the merits of the law. Although support for prohibition was found in both parties, Whigs were more supportive of temperance than Democrats and wanted to use the issue in order to elect a new legislature and governor who would pass and sign a Maine Law. In 1851, one of the state's most famous citizens and temperance advocates, P.T. Barnum delivered a temperance speech at the Methodist Church in Middletown.

In his speech, Barnum cast prohibition in explicitly patriotic imagery, comparing the Maine Law to the American Revolution, and the state of Maine to the United States. Barnum believed that just like the United States led the fight for liberty during the Revolution, the State of Maine led the fight for prohibition. He viewed both causes as just causes. He argued that Connecticut should follow Maine's

⁸⁰ Although their name incorporates patriotic iconography, the Martha Washington Society primarily used their position as women in order to aid the temperance cause, in particular by persuading men and other women to sign the pledge. Ruth M. Alexander, "'We Are Engaged as a Band of Sisters': Class and Domesticity in the Washingtonian Temperance Movement, 1840-1850," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 3 (1988): 770.

lead and pass prohibition during the next legislative session. Barnum directly addressed the most common criticism of prohibition, namely that prohibition violated property rights and the general spirit of liberty, by asserting that alcohol was not protected by property rights, before returning to his major argument that prohibition continued the spirit of the revolution. Barnum argued that prohibition was good regardless of whether or not the people of Connecticut obeyed the law once it was passed. If people did not stop drinking after alcohol was banned, the failure was not because the law was bad law. Instead, Barnum believed that the people of Connecticut might not be ready for prohibition, just like the French were not ready for liberty following the French Revolution. Because the people of Maine showed that prohibition could work, the failure in other locations must be the result of the failure of the people and not of the law. The future success or failure of prohibition depended upon whether or not those people were prepared for prohibition.

The city's major papers covered Barnum's speech, but emphasized different aspects when recounting it. The *Constitution*, concerned as always about supporting Whig candidates, emphasized Barnum's explanation about the relationship between prohibition and the Revolution, while the *News and Advertiser*, which was politically neutral, instead focused upon how Barnum countered traditional arguments opposing prohibition.⁸¹ Each stance reveals how the newspapers attempted to shape the argument to advance their agenda. Because it was concerned with advancing a partisan agenda and supporting the Maine Law, the *Constitution* used the portions of Barnum's speech which were direct in their support of prohibition, using some of the strongest arguments in favor of that political belief. On the other hand, the *News and*

⁸¹ *News and Advertiser*, November 8, 1851, *Constitution*, November 19, 1851.

Advertiser, which was attempting to be more objective,⁸² presented Barnum's speech more as a counterargument to those of Maine Law opponents. Because of the period's extreme partisanship, many Whigs believed that Barnum, a Democrat who was widely seen as one of the leading candidates for governor, only supported temperance in order to advance his political career. Putting aside his party affiliation, Abner Newton defended Barnum against these charges, assuring his readers that Barnum's support for the Maine Law was genuine and not an attempt to mitigate an important difference between the two parties.⁸³

Barnum's speech and temperance parades were part of larger attempts to appeal to a specific type of patriotism—popular patriotism, while deemphasizing the moral and economic arguments; however not all speeches or parades followed this pattern. Many speeches, especially sermons given by ministers, employed moral arguments in order to advocate temperance. But an important difference was that many of these speeches were given to audiences which were already sympathetic to temperance and may not have required use of popular patriotism. Like Barnum's speech, parades were often seen as events able to reach the widest audience possible, while speeches given at conventions appealed directly to temperance supporters would not have been written with the intent to attract new people to the temperance cause. Public events might have been needed to increase support for temperance among the working class in the early 1840s, but by the time that Barnum spoke to temperance supporters the appeal to the Revolution was used differently, it was used as a justification for the legislative actions proposed by prohibitionists. They needed

⁸² Despite its pledge of neutrality, the *News and Advertiser* endorsed Winfield Scott for the presidential election the subsequent November and was generally pro-Maine Law at the time.

⁸³ *Constitution*, November 19, 1851

to cast their cause as a continuation of the cause of the revolution. In particular, these arguments were needed in order to counter arguments made by opponents of the Maine Law that the individuals had the right to sell and drink alcohol and that government action to the contrary violated individual liberty and property rights. Patriotic imagery used by temperance supporters might have been used to show people that it was their patriotic duty to support temperance. This is part of the larger argument that the cause of prohibition was part of the larger cause of liberty.

Although many temperance speeches were dependant upon moral or political arguments, some temperance speakers were popular entertainers as well as temperance advocates. One of the most famous temperance speakers was John Gough. Gough, a reformed drunkard and advocate of teetotalism and prohibition, gave at least three performances in Middletown between 1839 and 1856, in addition to attending two temperance conventions held in the city. Much of his popularity stemmed from his presence on stage. On stage, he told the audience the story about how he became a drunkard and how he was saved, often interweaving anecdotes of other reformed drunkards into his performance. Although other reformed drunkards told similar stories, Gough stood out because of his performance, especially his reenactments of delirium tremens.⁸⁴ Gough's performances were so convincing that he became one of the most famous advocates of temperance, and upon a visit to Middletown, one fan wrote a poem in which he was called a "champion of truth and of right," who would lead the temperance cause in the battle against intemperance.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ David S. Reynolds, "Black Cats and Delirium Tremens: Temperance and the American Renaissance," in *The Serpent in the Cup: Temperance in American Literature*, ed. David S. Reynolds, Debra J. Rosenthal (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 27.

⁸⁵ *Constitution*, January 21, 1852.

Gough was one of the first people to fuse temperance advocacy with popular entertainment. By the mid-1850s, temperance melodramas, beginning with *Ten Nights in a Barroom* and *The Drunkard*, became some of popular plays in the country. Although Gough was an entertaining speaker, his performances contained a moral dimension. His emphasis on his personal redemption was infused with the same evangelical beliefs as Sigma's story.

Although he was an entertaining speaker, the moral arguments in John Gough's performances did not appeal to as large an audience as patriotic speeches like Barnum's. Although speeches which appealed to popular patriotism were dominated by Revolutionary imagery, they incorporated moral aspects into their arguments. Perhaps the popular patriotism displayed in parades and speeches and the moral and economic arguments of stories and sermons were two sides of the same coin. Although on the surface both types of rhetoric emphasized either the moral or the patriotic aspect of temperance, beneath the surface, a form of patriotism and morality existed within all arguments. While temperance stories emphasized the economic and moral consequences of intemperance, they also appealed to civic republicanism. Civic republicanism was simply one form of patriotism that was prevalent in the early nineteenth century. Behind the popular patriotism of public parades, Washingtonian incorporated moral arguments in their weekly meetings. The larger theme of both types of work might be that being temperate was an important part of creating an ideal society. While the division between patriotic and moral arguments can be used to understand the tools used by temperance supporters, this division becomes more blurred if an individual's personal morality was interpreted as

affecting the functioning of American society. An important part of civic republicanism is the belief that when an individual became industrious and moral, he was performing his patriotic duty. Abstaining from alcohol had become a citizen's moral and patriotic duty. The next chapter examines how residents of Middletown used moral suasion and legal coercion during the 1840s and 1850s in order to free the city from intemperance.

Chapter 3

The increased use of the reformed drunkard within temperance tracts and speeches in the 1840s was an indication of a larger transition within the movement. During the 1840s, temperance began to attract more widespread support when the Washingtonians made direct appeals to reformed drunkards and the lower classes. The increased support for temperance was linked to the other major change in the movement—the shift towards prohibition. By the early 1850s, many temperance supporters, including those new to the movement, began to strongly advocate prohibition. While many historians have begun their examination of this phase of the temperance movement with a study of the increasing support for temperance among the working class,⁸⁶ in Middletown, the movement towards prohibition began before the first meeting of the Washingtonians.

In January 1840, in accordance with the state's local option law, many Connecticut towns voted to ban the sale of alcohol. Middletown was not one of them; it would continue to allow the sale of alcohol until 1854 when alcohol was banned statewide. Despite the city's relative lack of support for prohibition, as early as 1839, some local temperance supporters began demanding that alcohol be banned statewide. In a letter appearing in the *Constitution*, an anonymous writer described the story of a man found dead from exposure in the snow on the road between two towns. The man was returning home after visiting the other town in order to buy alcohol because his

⁸⁶ Blocker, *Cycles of Reform*, 30-31.

town was dry.⁸⁷ The writer used this story in order to show the consequences of allowing alcohol to be sold anywhere. Alcohol had caused this man's death; as long as the state continued to allow the sale of alcohol, men like him would continue to die. Because drunkards would always risk their lives in order to buy more alcohol, the only way to prevent their deaths would be to enact statewide prohibition.

In 1839 however, the anonymous writer's opinion was part of a small minority; even within the temperance community, few individuals advocated prohibition. By 1840, with support for temperance appeared to be declining, alcohol was heavily incorporated into the presidential campaign. Historians have noted that throughout the 1830s, the party associated with the temperance movement was the Whig Party, while Democrats were generally hostile to the movement. When Whigs used hard cider as a part of the campaign it was viewed as an abandonment of temperance by supporters who, for other reasons, were unlikely to support Van Buren, the Democratic candidate.⁸⁸ Whigs seemed willing to sacrifice their support for temperance in order to elect their candidate for President, William Henry Harrison. The Whigs' campaign that year centered on Harrison's common man appeal, his birth in a Log Cabin and his consumption of hard cider as opposed to the wine drunk by Martin van Buren. Recalling the older tradition of treating voters with alcohol, Whigs even provided barrels of cider at log cabin meetings and parades that year.⁸⁹ While appealing on the surface, this interpretation ignores some important details about the temperance movement. First, in 1840, there was not universal acceptance of teetotalism within the temperance community. Many temperance

⁸⁷ *Constitution*. October 23, 1839.

⁸⁸ Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics*, 61.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

supporters continued to argue that temperance only excluded the consumption of ardent spirits; beer, wine, and hard cider were allowed. The use of hard cider as opposed to whiskey to show Harrison's humble roots could be interpreted as not a complete abandonment of temperate principles in order to win the election. While historians cite the campaign in order to show the weakness of temperance, in Middletown, the use of alcohol in the Presidential Election of 1840 was more ambiguous about the state of the local temperance movement.

Viewing the campaign as a departure from temperance ignores the support that temperance found in both political parties. In the 1830s, Democrats as well as Whigs supported temperance. The reaction of Democratic temperance supporters has been ignored when historians have discussed temperance and the Presidential Election of 1840. In Middletown, there was a competition between the parties, each seeking to cast the other party as the party of intemperance during the campaign. The *Sentinel and Witness*, the local Democratic paper, charged that by providing cider to supporters throughout the campaign, Whigs were engaging in intemperate activities.⁹⁰ The *Constitution*, the city's Whig paper, countered with editorials asserting that Democrats had only adopted the temperance banner as an election year ploy to win votes.⁹¹ Although neither party attempt to cast itself as the party of temperance, both parties tried to associate the other party with intemperance, hoping to win the votes of temperance supporters. The existence of the debate reveals that despite the movement's apparent weakness, members of both parties continued to support temperance, although the election was seen as the more pressing concern.

⁹⁰ *Sentinel and Witness*. April 15, 1840

⁹¹ *Constitution*. June 17, 1840

The ambivalence about temperance within both parties indicates that while many people supported temperance, it was not universally endorsed in 1840. The movement lacked dynamic new ideas and methods which would have increased support for temperance, much less prohibition. When some supporters began to advocate prohibition, their techniques did not change; temperance advocates continued to write and distribute temperance stories and other tracts.⁹² But neither tracts nor prohibition revitalized the temperance movement in the early 1840s—the Washingtonians did. By the end of 1841, the Washingtonian movement had expanded beyond Baltimore, reaching most of the country and revitalizing the temperance movement. The rapid growth of the Washingtonians brought reformed drunkards and members of the working and lower middle classes into the temperance movement in numbers which had never been achieved before. Washingtonians also dropped the traditional religious arguments made by ministers, favoring experience speeches by reformed drunkards that detailed how alcohol ruined their lives and described their reformation and redemption following their abstention from alcohol.⁹³ These experience speeches dominated the Washingtonian's meetings, which were held as often as three or four times a week.

In Middletown, at least two Washingtonian societies formed;⁹⁴ one was a

⁹² Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 151-2.

⁹³ While these experience speeches were moral arguments, their appeal was less about eternal salvation and more about earthly benefits than arguments found in ministers' sermons.

⁹⁴ Because of their lack of organization, referring to an individual Washingtonian society as a chapter might be a stretch. The term chapter implies that there was a large central organization, which was not the case within the Washingtonian movement. This lack of organization also contributes to the lack of records for each chapter, as they were either destroyed or never existed.

general group while the other was organized specifically for seamen.⁹⁵ Robert Hempel's study of Massachusetts has shown that, contrary to traditional assumptions about the Washingtonians, most members were light or moderate drinkers, not reformed drunkards and new temperance supporters were drawn from the lower middle class, not the working class.⁹⁶ Hempel did not dispute that Washingtonians brought reformed drunkards and the working class into the movement, only that these groups' membership has often been overstated. Yet the existence of two societies in Middletown reveals that temperance found adherents among the working class and artisans, even if this support has been overestimated by many historians. In particular, the existence of a separate society for sailors, an occupation with an earned reputation for intemperance shows that, in Middletown, support for temperance was spreading beyond its traditional base in the middle class to groups which were traditionally hostile to the idea of temperance. In addition to their meetings, Middletown's Washingtonians organized parades and other public events which advocated temperance by casting the cause in a more populist light.

Most Washingtonian societies were formed by outreach from other societies, often through the work paid organizers.⁹⁷ Like other temperance organizations before them, the Washingtonians used public speakers in order to help spread their beliefs about temperance. These speakers were instrumental in helping to establish local societies outside of Baltimore. One of the most important of these speakers was John Hawkins, a hatter and reformed drunkard who joined the Washingtonians in June of

⁹⁵ Although this chapter was organized for seamen, anyone could attend its meetings because all Washingtonian meetings were open to everyone who wished to attend. Blumberg, *Beware the First Drink*, 139.

⁹⁶ Hempel, *Temperance and Prohibition in Massachusetts*, 104-9.

⁹⁷ Blumberg, *Beware the First Drink*, 76-9.

1840. In May 1841, a little over a year after first meeting of the Washingtonians in the Baltimore bar, he visited Middletown and gave a speech describing his personal experience with alcohol. Hawkins described how he began to drink when he was an apprentice and that after twenty years drinking alcohol had left him a destitute man. A year earlier, he pledged to stop drinking and had not had a drink in the subsequent year. Although his speech did not result in a mass conversion to the temperance cause, Hawkins convinced some that the drunkard could be saved and become part of the temperance movement. The *Constitution* wrote,

We have been slow to believe that the *old inebriate* will put aside his cups—but are *now* ready to admit that if the drunkards of Middletown had been present to hear this address, the honest and direct appeal made to them by one who had for a long time been of their number in misery and degradation, they at least would have signed the abstinence pledge.⁹⁸

This reflection indicates that the Washingtonians' breakthrough was convincing temperance supporters that the drunkard could be reformed as well as convincing the drunkard that he could be reformed. Temperance supporters needed to be convinced that men like Hawkins, who were previously seen as the enemy of temperance, had become allies in their cause. Advertisements for Washingtonian meetings began to appear in the fall of 1841, after Hawkins' visit.

The high point of the Washingtonian movement in Middletown appears to have been the society's organization of a large temperance parade on the Fourth of July in 1842, less than a year after the chapter first formed. During the parade, the Washingtonians were joined by other temperance organizations, including the Martha Washington Society and the Cold Water Army, the city's elected officials, and the

⁹⁸ *Constitution*. June 2, 1841.

students attending Wesleyan. At the end of the parade, the participants rallied at the Grove, where they drank cold water from a spring and heard temperance speeches.⁹⁹ While Washingtonian chapters organized and led the parade on the Fourth in 1842, they were less involved in similar parades subsequent years and by 1845 did not participate at all.¹⁰⁰ Local Washingtonian societies were less likely to advertise meetings in 1843 and 1844 than they were in 1842, and by 1845 the Washingtonians had faded from existence in Middletown, mirroring the national trend in which the organization grew rapidly before waning just as quickly only to disappear in all but the most committed cities by 1846.

Their short existence did not mean that the Washingtonians had little influence on the temperance movement. To the contrary, even in Middletown, the movement appeared to be revitalized over the course of their brief existence, particularly by the affirmation of the worth of the drunkard which did not exist before the Washingtonians arrived. In addition, the Washingtonians inspired the creation of other temperance organizations, especially the proliferation of fraternal temperance organizations in the 1840s and 1850s. A local chapter of one fraternal organization, the Order of the Sons of Temperance was founded on March 10, 1845. Other fraternal organizations may have had chapters in Middletown; however, the most influential of these organizations, the Independent Order of Good Templars was founded in 1850 and flourished after the Civil War.¹⁰¹

Fraternal organizations were not the only types of temperance organizations

⁹⁹ *Constitution*, July 6, 1842.

¹⁰⁰ *Constitution*, July 5, 1845.

¹⁰¹ David M. Fahey, *Temperance and Racism : John Bull, Johnny Reb, and the Good Templars* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 5.

which developed in the 1840s and 1850s. Local temperance organizations, whether affiliates of national organizations or independent ones, were founded every year while others withered away. By the 1850s, these organizations supported legal restrictions on the sale of alcohol, if not prohibition. These new organizations often included the same leadership and membership as each other, yet none appeared to have the ability to last for more than a few years. One important evolution was that the clergy ceased dominating the leadership positions in the local organizations. Ministers were still involved in the movement, but increasingly presidents and secretaries of temperance societies were men who, although deeply religious, did not hold ecclesiastical positions.

The departure of clergy from leadership roles in the temperance organizations did not mean the ministers no longer supported temperance. Ministers were still involved in temperance organizations. Although they ceased dominating leadership positions, their names still appeared prominently within the groups' announcement and charters. The use of ministers' names appears to have been used primarily to legitimate the temperance groups. Support of the clergy would enhance a society's moral authority. Despite their overall sympathy for temperance, not all ministers belonged to temperance organizations. In a eulogy for Revered John Crane, the pastor at North Church, Joel Hawes described the pastor's involvement in benevolent societies:

He [Crane] took a lively interest in all the great benevolent operations of the day; and though his voice may not have been heard on the platform at the anniversaries of our benevolent societies he gave them a ready advocacy in his pulpit, and encouraged and engaged his people to contribute liberally of their substance to sustain and extend their

operations from year to year.¹⁰²

Unlike other ministers in Middletown, Crane never joined the Sons of Temperance or assumed a leadership role in any temperance organization. Crane's lack of direct involvement in the temperance movement underscores the changing position of the clergy within the temperance movement; they were no longer expected to take a leadership role in the movement although they were still expected to support it. Other ministers, more involved in temperance organizations than Crane, joined various temperance organizations, including three who were members of the Sons of Temperance.¹⁰³

Perhaps no factor underscores the deep support for temperance which existed among religious leaders than their willingness to work across denominational differences in order to host temperance conventions and other events. Middletown hosted statewide temperance conventions in 1841 and 1852; both times, events were held across the city. Speeches and sermons were given in churches throughout the city, as organizers wished to avoid favoring one denomination over the others; however the two Congregational Churches along with the Methodist Church appeared to have been used as venues more often than other churches.¹⁰⁴ These temperance conventions were an important part of the movement, although they appeared more important to the statewide movement than in the localities where they were held. The conventions were covered by the local press; before the convention, the papers

¹⁰² Joel Hawes, *Final Meeting of Ministers and Their People: A Discourse, Occasioned by the Death of the Rev. John R. Crane, D.D., Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Middletown, Connecticut, Who Died August 17th, 1853* (Middletown, CT: A. Newton, 1853), 16.

¹⁰³ Constitution and Minutes of Sons of Temperance, Mattabesett Division, No. 18, 1845-52, Temperance Societies, MCHS.

¹⁰⁴ These findings are based in the accounts of the 1841 convention and 1852 convention found in the *Sentinel and Witness*, September 29, 1841, and the *Constitution*, February 9, 1852.

printed the schedule of events and announced who would attend the convention.

After the conventions, the papers described the speeches and other aspects of the convention. In the issues before and after the conventions, the conventions received more coverage than any events except political conventions and elections.

During the 1840s, interdenominational support extended beyond evangelicals who were traditionally supportive of temperance. The Universalist Society played an active role in the local temperance movement, hosting speakers and working with the other denominations in town at parades and conventions. Temperance was seen by its supporters as a cause which transcended traditional boundaries between denominations; it would not get bogged down in comparatively petty theological differences. Local temperance advocates were vocal in their support of the work of Father Theobald Mathew, an Irish Capuchin monk, who helped spread support for temperance amongst the Irish people. In particular, his 1849 tour of the United States, advocating temperance to the country's Irish Catholic population was well received by the local Protestant press, which would become hostile to the same immigrant population five years later.¹⁰⁵

In addition to hosting Connecticut Temperance Conventions in 1843 and 1852, famous speakers regularly visited Middletown in order to advocate temperance. These speakers were brought in by one of the churches, the Athenaeum, or a temperance society. These speakers may have done more to advance temperance in Middletown than the temperance conventions which may have aided the cause statewide, but likely did little within the host city. Speakers included religious

¹⁰⁵ John F. Quinn, *Father Mathew's Crusade : Temperance in Nineteenth-Century Ireland and Irish America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 167-9. *Constitution*, mult. dates.; *Sentinel and Witness*, mult. dates.

leaders like Henry Ward Beecher, political figures like P.T. Barnum, and entertaining speakers like John Gough.¹⁰⁶ Prominent speakers were able to attract audiences which included men who were apprehensive about temperance.

While famous speakers might have received the most attention, the advocacy of temperance in the local press likely played a more important role in the development of the temperance movement in Middletown. Both of the major local papers supported temperance throughout the period. Beginning in 1847, a temperance paper, the *Son of Temperance*, was published in Middletown. Although the paper pledged to avoid partisan battles in order to devote itself fully to the cause of temperance, in 1850, its editor William Trench became involved in a political scandal when he abandoned his non-partisanship and began advocating Democratic opinions. The controversy culminated when he called the Whig Mayor of Bridgeport a rummie and was arrested and brought to Bridgeport in order to face libel charges.¹⁰⁷ Following the controversy, Trench was forced to leave Middletown. He settled in Springfield, Massachusetts, where he assumed the editorship of a paper and was appointed the city's postmaster by Franklin Pierce.¹⁰⁸

The libel charge against William Trench reflects the larger role that temperance played in political discourse beginning in the late 1840s in Middletown. Although temperance was part of the political debate throughout the period, by 1850, it had become an issue in almost all local and statewide elections. Although Middletown had a strong Whig organization, the city and Middlesex County in

¹⁰⁶ Beecher delivered a sermon on temperance in Middletown in October 1852, Barnum in December 1851, and Gough visited the city regularly on his circuit throughout the 1840s and 1850s. During the two decades, a prominent temperance speaker visited the city about once a year.

¹⁰⁷ *Constitution*. May 8, 1850.

¹⁰⁸ *Constitution*. July 15, 1853.

Table 3.1: Sons of Temperance by Party Affiliation and Occupation

	Whig	Democrat	Republican
Farmer	3	1	0
Unskilled	1	0	2
Skilled	13	3	10
Professional	6	2	4
Total	31	6	19

Source: Constitution and Minutes of Sons of Temperance, Mattabesett Division, No. 18, Sons of Temperance. The Whig and Democratic affiliations as based upon published lists of delegates to party conventions and candidates for elected office as well as the membership list at the end of *The Constitution & By-laws of Young Men's Whig Association of Middletown*, (Middletown, CT: Charles Pelton, 1840). Republican totals use the Constitution and Minutes of the Fremont Club of Middletown, 1856, in *Political Clubs, Elections, MCHS*. Numbers will not add to totals because not all Sons were listed in the 1850 Census, which was used to determine occupational classification.

general was a stronghold of the Democratic Party in Connecticut.¹⁰⁹ Nationally, Whigs were more supportive of temperance than Democrats throughout the 1840s.¹¹⁰ Similarly, in Middletown, temperance received more support from Whigs. Table 3.1 shows that although Democrats belonged to the Sons of Temperance, Whigs joined the organization in much larger numbers. Whig candidates for office were more likely to support restrictive measures and, beginning in 1852, a Maine Law.

Although support was stronger amongst Whigs, leaders of both parties in Middletown supported temperance. The editors of the Whig paper, Abner Newton, and the Democratic paper, William Starr, supported temperance, serving as delegates to the 1841 Connecticut Temperance Convention.¹¹¹ Elected officials from both parties supported temperance: Charles Woodward, a physician who was elected to various offices including state representative was a member of numerous temperance organizations as was E.W.N. Starr, the commanding officer in the local militia and town clerk. On the Whig side, Benjamin Douglas who served as the city's mayor and

¹⁰⁹ This conclusion was based upon the elections results between 1840 and 1854, including national and statewide races.

¹¹⁰ Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics*, 61-2.

¹¹¹ *Sentinel and Witness*. October 27, 1841.

state senator during the 1850s was the most prominent of many Whig temperance supporters.

The city's support for elected officials who supported temperance contrasted with its consistent opposition to banning the sale of alcohol. The contrast between wet voters and dry officials may dampen the perceived strength of the temperance movement in the Middletown during the 1840s. The temperance views of prominent elected officials were not matched by their constituents. A partial explanation for the differing views towards temperance could be the continued hostility amongst some members of the temperance community towards legal restrictions on alcohol. These individuals tended to be Democrats who may have voted against banning alcohol but supported candidates who advocate moral suasion. In 1846, Democrats in the state legislature succeeded in repealing all restrictions on the manufacture and sale of alcohol (except ones prohibiting sales to Indians), and repealing the local option law.¹¹² Democrats may not have supported prohibitory measures in 1846; however four years later, a group of extreme temperance supporters floated a temperance ticket for mayor and other city offices, including many Democrats.¹¹³

Elected officials might have had a greater propensity for temperance given their occupations and class status. Many of them belonged to the upper class, which even after the increased support for temperance among the working class in the 1840s, continued to support temperance in higher numbers than the other classes.¹¹⁴

¹¹² *An Act Regulating the Sale of Wines and Spirituous Liquors*, May 1846.

¹¹³ The ticket was not formed by the men on the ticket (many ran for other offices during the city elections); rather it was an attempt by the most extreme temperance supporters to advance their agenda. *Constitution*. January 16, 1850.

¹¹⁴ The class status of temperance supporters will be discussed in chapter four. Most elected officials belonged to the upper class which was the most supportive of temperance throughout the 1840s and 1850s.

Whether their support for temperance was genuine or artificial, officials, including those who opposed prohibition, may have needed to support temperance in order to exhibit their respectability and worthiness to hold office. Additionally, although temperance was not a dominant political issue in the 1840s, prohibition supporters might have viewed the issue as more important than their opponents did and may have been more willing to vote solely according to a candidate's stance on the issue. Temperance may have been the safe political position, and the city's unwillingness to prohibit the legal sale of alcohol might have allowed candidates to support some restrictions because they knew that alcohol would remain legal in Middletown.

By the end of the 1840s, however, the dichotomy between the city's overall opposition to restricting sales of alcohol and the pro-temperance stance of many of the city's elected officials diminished as support for prohibition grew. No longer isolated voices, like the anonymous letter writer in 1839, many prominent men became vocal in their advocacy for state prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. By 1850, there was enough support for temperance that a temperance ticket was discussed as an alternative to the Whig and Democratic tickets which were deemed comparatively soft on the issue. Petitions and separate temperance tickets became more common after 1851, when Maine became the first state to ban the manufacture and sale of alcohol across the entire state. The apparent success of the Maine Law made voices advocating prohibition louder and more numerous. In 1852, Middletown's citizens presented two petitions, one signed by 160 adult male citizens (legal voters) and the other by 279 women and minors,

demanding that the state legislature work to restrict the sale of alcohol in the state.¹¹⁵

As the Maine Law thrust prohibition to the center of political debate, the Second Party System was disintegrating. The economic issues which had traditionally divided the Whig and Democratic Parties were largely resolved, replaced by slavery in national politics and temperance in many states.¹¹⁶ Although Whigs were traditionally more receptive to moral reforms, including temperance, in 1848, a group of Democrats left the party over slavery, forming the Free Soil Party. The Free Soil Party, whose members were more supportive of temperance and other moral reforms than other Democrats, did not attract significant support in Connecticut. While a candidate occasionally ran for governor on an anti-slavery ticket, statewide offices remained in the hands of the two major parties. The alliance between the Whig Party and the Free Soil Party which helped to enact prohibition in Maine did not exist.¹¹⁷ In Middletown, candidates for office continued to belong to the two major parties until 1856, when the Fremont Club was founded in order to support the Republican Presidential candidate.

Although slavery did not create a third party until the middle of the decade, the political structure in Middletown and in Connecticut was increasingly complicated by the presence of a Maine Law Party. The party ran tickets which were solely concerned with getting a Maine Law passed in Connecticut. In order to avoid the appearance of partisanship, the party was careful to include both Democrats and

¹¹⁵ Hartford Courant, May 20, 1852

¹¹⁶ Thomas R. Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum : The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800-1933, The American Ways Series* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998), 39.

¹¹⁷ For an account of how Free Soilers and Whigs worked together in order to pass prohibition in Maine see Frank L. Byrne, *Prophet of Prohibition; Neal Dow and His Crusade* (Gloucester, Mass.,: P. Smith, 1969), 42-7.

Whigs on its ticket. Although the party never came close to winning an election, its candidates attracted over ten percent of the vote statewide.¹¹⁸ Because the party was devoted to enacting prohibition statewide, temperance tickets were never seriously considered for local elections, and often failed to include candidates for state representative or state senator from Middletown. Despite the electoral failures of the Maine Law Party, in 1853, temperance organizations successfully lobbied state legislators of both parties to pass a prohibitory law, only to have it vetoed by Governor Theodore Seymour, a Democrat.¹¹⁹ The support for temperance that existed amongst Democratic lawmakers did not extend to the governor's office. Combined with outside factors, this veto set the stage for one of the most complicated gubernatorial elections in state history.

In the April 1854 elections (state elections were held annually in April), candidates from four parties sought to become governor. In addition to the candidates from the Democratic and Whig Parties, the Maine Law Party advanced its own candidate, as did an Anti-Nebraska Party, which was what the Free Soil Party was called in Connecticut. The Anti-Nebraska Party, which grew out of the uproar created by the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, ran candidates for statewide offices which had no direct influence over slavery. The result of four candidates seeking to become governor was a divided electorate. Although all parties ran strongly statewide, in Middletown, the Maine Law Candidate received only three votes, one of the smallest totals anywhere in the state, compared to the 313 votes the

¹¹⁸ Based upon election results appearing in the *Hartford Courant*, 1852-4.

¹¹⁹ Ernest Hurst Cherrington, *The Evolution of Prohibition in the United States of America; a Chronological History of the Liquor Problem and the Temperance Reform in the United States from the Earliest Settlements to the Consummation of National Prohibition*, (Westerville, O.: The American issue press, 1920), 147.

Maine Law candidate received the year before.¹²⁰ Despite the overall drop in support for the Maine Law candidate, a drop as precipitous as in Middletown was unusual, especially given the support for temperance which existed in city. Perhaps the strong partisanship which existed in Middletown meant that few voters were in the city were willing to split their tickets, producing increased adherence to the parties which ran candidates for state legislature (Whigs and Democrats).

Perhaps the passage of a Maine Law by the state legislature and the failure of the party's candidate in Middletown can be attributed to the same cause—the political chaos created by the ultimate dissolution of the Second Party System. The lack of a strong party system has been credited with allowing the success of prohibition in the 1850s and the 1910s;¹²¹ the situation in Middletown appears to support this argument. In the spring of 1854, temperance was not in the front of people's minds in Middletown. Many were concerned about the impact of the flooding of the Connecticut River. In March 1854, heavy rains caused the river to flood its banks by six feet. After some improvement in April, continued heavy rains combined with thawing snow in Vermont and New Hampshire caused the river to flood its banks by 26 feet in Middletown.¹²² In his diary, Samuel Hubbard, whose shop was flooded, wrote that the flood harmed his business.¹²³ Hubbard was not alone, many local businesses, which were concentrated near the river, were significantly affected by the flood. The flood rendered politics, despite the splintering of the parties, comparatively unimportant. In his diary, Samuel Hubbard described the voting on

¹²⁰ *Hartford Currant*. April 4, 1854, April 6, 1853. In 1853, the Maine Law candidate actually received more votes than the Democratic candidate in Middletown.

¹²¹ Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum*, xiii.

¹²² *Constitution*, May 10, 1854.

¹²³ Samuel Hubbard, diary, 29 April 1854, Diaries, 1987.x.9, MCHS.

April 3. “Everybody casting his ballot with a sort of ‘don’t care a damn’ manner quit [sic] unusual.”¹²⁴ After the election, the flood only became worse and people’s attention was drawn away from prohibition and politics in general in order to focus on the more urgent problem. Between the flood and the apparent dissolution of the major parties over slavery, temperance could not have been seen as the most important issue in Middletown in March and April of 1854.

Despite the comparative lack of support for the Maine Law candidate, in the May 1854 session, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a Maine Law which was signed into law by the governor. Entitled *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance*, the law was weaker than the one passed the previous year. It prohibited the sale of all alcoholic beverages except for wine and cider (in amounts under five gallons), provided that the beverages were produced on site. In order to account for every eventuality, the law included thirty-one sections, detailing the law’s enforcement, penalties, and exceptions. In general, the exceptions were for medical or industrial uses of alcohol which must be sold only by agents licensed for that purpose.¹²⁵ The law was to go into effect beginning in August—July 31 would be last day on which Connecticut residents could legally purchase alcoholic beverages for almost two decades.

The call for statewide prohibition which began with a letter to a local paper in 1839 was enacted fifteen years later. Yet the passage of *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance* was almost anticlimactic. In the prior decade, temperance organizations formed and disbanded regularly, the Washingtonian Movement faded

¹²⁴ Ibid., 3 April 1854.

¹²⁵ *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance*, May 1854.

from memory. Although the Washingtonians were responsible for the growth of the movement, the moral suasion that they preached had become surpassed by prohibition as the method favored by temperance advocates. While prohibition may have been made possible by the increased popularity of the movement, it may have also been responsible for the shift away from moral suasion. If large amounts of alcohol continued to be consumed after temperance found supporters among the working class, then supporters had no recourse other than attempting to prohibit all sales of alcohol. While the temperance movement might have been weaker than it was a decade earlier, in 1854, its supporters had achieved their goal—alcohol could no longer be legally consumed in the State of Connecticut. However, their efforts to eliminate alcohol continued to be required after *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance* went into effect on August 1, 1854. The following chapter will explore the membership of one of the myriad of temperance organizations which existed in Middletown in the 1840s and 1850s, the local chapter of the Sons of Temperance.

Chapter 4

Following the growth of the Washingtonians, the men newly drawn to the temperance movement formed new temperance organizations which emphasized social as well as temperance aspects. The 1840s and 1850s experienced the creation of fraternal temperance organizations, such as the Rechabites and Good Templars. Borrowing organizational and ritual elements from the Freemasons and Odd Fellows, fraternal temperance organizations employed passwords, handshakes, and regalia in their semi-secretive societies. One of the most prominent of these was the Order of the Sons of Temperance. First organized in New York City in 1842, the Sons spread more gradually than the Washingtonian, and did not have 50,000 members until 1847.¹²⁶ By 1850, it was the largest fraternal temperance organization. The Daughters of Temperance and the Cadets of Temperance were auxiliaries created for women and children respectively. Grand Divisions were formed when enough local chapters were created in a state. In Connecticut, a Grand Division was created in 1844; Middletown's chapter, Mattabesett Division, No. 18, was formed in 1845.¹²⁷

Unlike the Washingtonians who allowed everyone to attend their meetings, the Sons of Temperance were a closed society with strict membership requirements. In addition to requiring a pledge of total abstinence, the Sons admitted men of good moral character only—they demanded respectability of their members, while the

¹²⁶ Donald Weldon Beattie, "Sons of Temperance: Pioneers in Total Abstinence and 'Constitutional' Prohibition" (Thesis Ph D --Boston University, 1966), 45.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

Washingtonians admitted anyone.¹²⁸ Men who violated the pledge were expelled from the organization, although expelled members were later allowed to rejoin the order. The requirements for admission to the Sons went beyond good moral character; men had to be in good health and have gainful employment.¹²⁹ Restrictions went further in 1850, when the National Division ruled that blacks could not join the order.¹³⁰ As a result of the restrictions on membership, the Sons of Temperance were smaller than the Washingtonians, and despite their inspiration by the Washingtonian movement, the Sons were never a working class organization.¹³¹

The Sons of Temperance, like the Washingtonians, produced controversy within temperance ranks. Many temperance leaders disliked the secret nature of the society, while others felt that the Sons were too exclusive and lacked concern for the drunkard and those who could not afford membership. The strongest criticisms were about the Sons' secretive practices. Because meetings were held in private and many were excluded membership, the Sons received the lingering hostility towards all fraternal societies which existed in much of the United States. Many reformers saw these societies as unpatriotic and unchristian, an attack on liberty and religion. This hostility was passed on to fraternal temperance organizations.¹³² Other temperance supporters attacked the Sons for forcing members to pay fees, which many poor

¹²⁸ Blumberg, *Beware the First Drink*, 165.

¹²⁹ Beattie, "Sons of Temperance", 143.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 174. Although the Connecticut Division protested the decision, no members of the Middletown chapter were black, despite the city's black population.

¹³¹ Even the Washingtonians' reputation as a working class temperance organization has been overstated. Much of their support came from artisans in the lower middle class rather than impoverished, homeless drunkards at the very bottom of society. The distinction between the Washingtonians and the Sons of Temperance should be placed in Washingtonians' willingness to accept members who did not meet the standards of respectability demanded by the Sons of Temperance, as opposed to different class compositions of the organizations—both were predominantly artisan. Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder*, 34-5. Hampel, *Temperance and Prohibition in Massachusetts*, 104-6.

¹³² Beattie, "Sons of Temperance", 137.

drunkards could not afford.¹³³ There were critics on the other side who claimed that the Sons of Temperance did not have enough support from the traditional elites who dominated earlier temperance organizations.¹³⁴ Although classified as a closed society, the Sons of Temperance was not a completely secret society. Their meetings were usually closed and marked by guards, but the societies did hold some events which were open to the public, especially speeches by famous temperance advocates.¹³⁵ They also continued the Washingtonians' tradition of temperance parades and picnics.

In addition to their fraternal aspects, the Sons of Temperance departed from the Washingtonians in one other important way—their approach to temperance. While the Washingtonians supported only moral suasion, the Sons of Temperance were supporters of prohibition, especially after the passage of the original Maine Law in 1851. Sons believed that the Washingtonians had not established sufficient barriers between the drunkard and temptation, which resulted in many relapsing after pledging to avoid alcohol. This led to their support for legal restrictions on alcohol. This stance evolved, and by the 1850s, the Sons were ardent supporters of statewide prohibition.¹³⁶ Their refusal to admit men who were not employed or lacked good character might imply that the Sons felt that those men were incapable of making sound moral decisions. To prevent them from making the wrong decisions, legal barriers should be erected.

¹³³ Ibid., 153. This criticism reveals how much the temperance movement had evolved. The idea that there was not enough support for the drunkard would have been unthinkable a decade earlier.

¹³⁴ Jewett, *Forty Years' Fight*, 146-51. Jewett also attacked closed societies for wasting too much time with ceremonies and rituals, and not enough time on the issue of temperance.

¹³⁵ Beattie, "Sons of Temperance", 138-9.

¹³⁶ Blumberg, *Beware the First Drink*, 158.

The increased emphasis on respectability largely defined the Sons of Temperance nationally.¹³⁷ Middletown's chapter, Mattabesett Division, No. 18, was founded on March 10, 1845. Over the course of its existence, 361 men joined the chapter, which was most active during the first few years of its existence. By the time that it held a parade commemorating its second anniversary, the chapter had 248 members.¹³⁸ The 1847 parade included other temperance organizations and fraternal organizations, including the Masons and Odd Fellows.¹³⁹ By 1850, the Sons' role in Middletown had waned. Parades and speeches had all but stopped. Only eleven men joined the chapter in the two years before it dissolved in 1852, while dozens of members left the order during the same period. The Middletown chapter's membership mirrors the characteristics of the national body's membership. The chapter was overwhelmingly artisan, and younger men were drawn to the organization in larger numbers than their fathers. Although respectability is difficult to prove, members' church membership and occupations suggest that locally the Sons received support from respectable elements of society or at least those elements which hoped to attain respectability.

One of the most striking features about the local chapter was the relative youth of the members. Out of the 361 members, 234 were identified for this study.¹⁴⁰ One hundred thirty-five members were recorded as living in Middletown in the 1850 Federal Census. Their average age was 34 years old in 1850. The presence of three

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 157-8.

¹³⁸ Constitution and Minutes of Sons of Temperance, Mattabesett Division, No. 18, Sons of Temperance, Temperance Societies, MCHS

¹³⁹ *Sentinel & Witness*, March 10, 1847.

¹⁴⁰ Identified members were those members whose signatures which were legible. Totals given later in the chapter may not be 234 because not all of these members joined local congregations or lived in Middletown by the time of the 1850 Census.

members over 60 skewed the average, hiding the organization's youth, as did my use of 1850, a census year, to define members' ages. Most members joined the chapter earlier and many had left the order by 1850. The average age of adult white men in Middlesex County was 37 years old in 1850. This disparity would be greater except the Census Bureau classified individuals over 15 as adults while the local chapter had no members under 18.¹⁴¹ The Sons of Temperance therefore were younger than the general population. Because the local chapter reached its height two or three years before the census was taken, the average age of the members would have been correspondingly lower—about 31 or 32 years old.

The strength of the Sons within the younger population is somewhat masked by average age of the members. As table 4.1 shows, 59 were under thirty, and an additional 40 were in their thirties. These figures are modestly higher than their percentage of the general population.¹⁴² The major difference between the ages of the general population and those of the members of Sons was among those individuals over fifty. These individuals constituted 21.3 percent of the adult male population in Middlesex County, but barely accounted for 10 percent of the members of Sons of Temperance (15 total). The Sons of Temperance was a young man's organizations, but young men in Middletown did not join the Sons of Temperance in disproportionate numbers—older men stayed away from the organization in disproportionate numbers.

The comparative lack of support from the older population for the Sons of

¹⁴¹ U.S. Census Bureau., *The Seventh Census of the United States, 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, [G.P.O.], 1853), 76-7.

¹⁴² For Middlesex County, 43.4 percent of adult males were under thirty and 21.3 percent were in their thirties. Ibid.

Table 4.1: Occupational Classification and Age for Sons of Temperance in 1850 Census

	Farmer	Unskilled	“None”	Artisan	Professional /Merchant	Total
Under 30	2	9	1	37	10	59
30s	3	6	3	22	7	40
40s	4	5	1	10	5	25
Over Fifty	5	2	0	5	3	15
Total	14	22	5	74	25	139

Source: Constitution and Minutes of Sons of Temperance, Mattabesett Division, No. 18, Sons of Temperance; Manuscript Schedule of Seventh Federal Census of the United States, 1850. The classification “none” refers to those Sons who listed none as their occupation in the Federal Census. The older individuals were likely retired while younger men listed in the category had decided to remove themselves from the workforce for other reasons. When examining church membership and property ownership, members listing “none” as their occupation were included in the same category as professionals and merchants.

Temperance was the product of one of two possibilities: an aversion to temperance or an aversion to the Sons of Temperance. In the case of the former, some older men simply did not share young men’s enthusiasm for curtailing the use of alcoholic beverages. This explanation is only partially satisfactory given the context of the larger temperance movement. A man who was 55 in 1850 would have been 31 when the ATS was founded in 1826. Such a man was part of the first generation to support temperance in large numbers. A more likely explanation is an aversion to the specific tactics of the Sons of Temperance. Men in their fifties or older in 1850, might have been more disposed towards opposing fraternal organizations than younger men. The conceptions of these organizations as unpatriotic and unchristian might have had special significance to older men, who might have been directly involved in the anti-masonry of the late 1820s and early 1830s. The average Middletown Son would have been sixteen in 1832 when the Anti-Mason Party ran William Wirt for President. In contrast men in their fifties in 1850 would have been young men when political anti-

masonry was at its zenith. Any lingering hostility towards the Freemasons may have carried over to fraternal temperance organizations, resulting in less support for the Sons of Temperance among men over fifty.

Although a man's age contributed to his support for temperance, religion—particularly evangelicalism—was a major force behind the temperance movement. The religious affiliation of the Sons of Temperance can be used to explore the members' religious beliefs and helps to reveal the class status of members. After scouring church records for Sons, I have been able to find only 89 with established church membership.¹⁴³ This means that I only have proof that 38 percent of those members listed belonged to a church, although the number who attended religious services is likely significantly higher. Because of this lack of evidence, for the most part, I avoid comparing Sons who attended church directly with those who did not. As table 4.2 indicates, the vast majority of the Sons of Temperance, 80 members, belonged to evangelical denominations.¹⁴⁴ Liturgical Protestants, which in Middletown in the 1840s was confined to Episcopalians, accounted for 7 members, and the remaining 2 Sons were Universalists.¹⁴⁵ Among the Sons who were members of religious congregations, liturgical Christians were more likely to belong to the professional class, while farmers and artisans were predominately evangelicals.

Evangelicals constituted the largest percentage of the general population as well as the largest percentage of the Sons of Temperance. Evangelicals who were

¹⁴³ This number is low because many men and women regularly attended religious services without ever becoming members of that specific congregation.

¹⁴⁴ In addition to Methodists and Baptists, by the 1840s, Congregationalists had adopted evangelical beliefs as well. If Middletown had a Presbyterian population, they would be included in this classification as well.

¹⁴⁵ Because there were only 2 Sons with definitive membership in the Universalist Society, I am unable to examine this portion of the membership. However, both Universalists in the Sons of Temperance were artisans.

Table 4.2: Church Membership by Occupation

	Farm.	Unskilled	Art.	Gunsmith	Prof./mer.	Not listed	Total
Univ.	0	0	2	1	0	0	2
Evan.	7	6	29	7	12	18	80
Lit.	0	0	1	0	6	0	7

Table 4.3: Church Membership vs. Non-membership By Occupation

	Farm.	Unskilled	Art.	Gunsmith	Prof./mer.	Not listed	Total
church members	7	6	32	8	18	18	89
Non-members	7	16	42	4	7	77	135

Not listed constitutes those Sons who were not listed as living in Middletown in the 1850 Census. Because gunsmith is a subgroup of artisans, they were only counted once in totaling church membership. Churches included in the study are Strict [South] Congregationalist Church, Holy Trinity, First Baptist Church, First Universalist Society, Cromwell Baptist Church, Middlefield Congregational Church, and First United Methodist Church.

Source: Constitution and Minutes of Sons of Temperance, Mattabesett Division, No. 18, Sons of Temperance; Records of the Church Organizations in the Towns of Middletown, Cromwell, and Middlefield, Connecticut Beginning in 1715, MCHS; Admission and membership records, 1830-80. First United Methodist Church, Middletown, Connecticut.

members of the Sons of Temperance consisted of neither the highest nor the lowest class of society. By and large, they occupied the middle class of artisans and skilled workers and those farmers who belonged to the Order. As indicated in table 4.2, I have found the occupations of 62 evangelicals. A large plurality of 29 Sons was artisans or other skilled workers, and 12 men were professionals or merchants. Six were unskilled workers and seven were farmers. This data suggests that unskilled Sons were less likely to join evangelical denominations. Although roughly the same number of farmers and unskilled workers belonged to evangelical denominations, among the total membership in the chapter, unskilled workers outnumbered farmers by almost 50 percent. Members of other occupational categories: farmers, skilled workers, and professionals, joined evangelical congregations at numbers roughly

proportionate to their overall membership in the order.

While professionals and merchants belonged to evangelical denominations in large numbers, their presence within liturgical congregations was more striking. Those members of the Sons of Temperance who belonged to the city's liturgical congregation were disproportionately drawn from the upper class of society. Out of seven members, six were either professionals or merchants, including Edward Hubbard, a druggist and the richest member of Mattabesett Division, No. 18. Hubbard's real estate was estimated at \$20,000 in the 1850 census. The only Episcopalian who was not a merchant or professional was an artisan. Membership in this congregation did not extend much beyond the upper class, a feature common within many New England communities in the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁶ Joining an Episcopalian congregation was a mark of elite status. While they did not constitute a large percentage of members in Middletown's chapter, Sons who belonged to liturgical congregations were significant because of the wealth and status that they brought to the organization.

Church membership indicates a degree of respectability. Membership in a congregation seems to reflect established roots in the community rather than transience. Out of my sample, only 20.2 percent of church members were not found in the 1850 census, compared to 57.0 percent for non-church members (see table 4.3). Church members were more likely to remain in Middletown than non-members. Long-time residence allowed men to gain a degree of respectability that the more transient population lacked. Conversely men, who lacking economic opportunities, moved away, were unlikely to have become deeply involved in the community,

¹⁴⁶ Johnson, *Shopkeeper's Millennium*, 64-5.

including membership in churches. These men lacked the social status of those who remained—the elite were less likely to move west. The relationship between church membership and respectability might have also forced members of the social and economic elite to join a church even if they were not religious in order to avoid the appearance that they were irreligious. Within the Sons of Temperance, a strong correlation existed between members who belonged to a church and appearance in the 1850 Census, indicating that church members were more established members of the local community than Sons who did not join churches.

Although church membership can help measure the status of members of the Sons of Temperance, understanding the occupational composition of the organization provides additional insight. One hundred and thirty-five members had discernable occupations. I have divided these occupations into five categories: farmers, unskilled workers, artisans and other skilled workers, professionals and merchants, and those who listed no occupation.¹⁴⁷ As shown on table 4.1, artisans accounted for over half of all Sons with a stated occupation (74 members). When compared to table 4.4, which shows that artisans were about one third of the adult male population of the city, they are revealed to constitute a significantly higher percentage of the Sons of Temperance than in the general population of the city.¹⁴⁸ The professional/merchant class and those listing their occupation as “none” joined the order in numbers approximating their percentage in the adult male population. However farmers and

¹⁴⁷ Men with no occupation were not men who were unemployed. In the 1850 Census, their occupation was described as “none,” either because they were retired or because as young men they removed themselves from the workforce in order to pursue other activities.

¹⁴⁸ The Federal Census divided Middletown into two areas: the largely urban core of the city was designated Middletown City, while the more agrarian outlying areas were called Middletown (although this part of the city was still more urban than most localities in America in 1850).

Table 4.4: Occupational Classification of Middletown According to 1850 Census

	Farmer	Unskilled	“None”	Artisan	Professional/ Merchant	Total
Middletown	380	393	18	336	40	1167
Middletown city	10	336	46	482	359	1233
Total	390	729	64	818	399	2400
Percent of total	16	30	3	34	17	

Source: Manuscript Schedule of Seventh Federal Census of the United States, 1850. This table excludes the 113 men who were listed as students at Wesleyan because their inclusion would have skewed the percentage of professionals in the overall workforce.

especially unskilled workers were significantly less likely to join the order than other men. Although they accounted for over 30 percent of the city’s population, unskilled workers constituted only 16 percent of all Sons. Farmers made up 16 percent of the total population, but less than 12 percent of members. Their percentage might be lower because the distance between their farms and the city, where the Sons’ meetings were held, might have deterred some farmers from joining the order.

The low numbers of unskilled workers in the Sons of Temperance was likely the result of different factors. Unskilled workers, which in Middletown consisted of quarrymen as well as laborers and sailors, belonged to a lower class of society than most members of the order. As their low rates of church membership suggests, these men were generally less respectable than other members of society. Many laborers lacked the gainful employment required for membership in the fraternal organization. During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, some laborers went weeks without working, and many were unable to provide for themselves and their families. “A defining characteristic of the lifestyle of the unskilled laborer...was that he was

unable to support his family unassisted."¹⁴⁹ Laborers and other unskilled occupied the lowest portion of the social hierarchy; they were more likely to be part of a transient population and were less likely to establish roots in the city, by acquiring property, holding a steady job, or joining civic organizations, including the Sons of Temperance.

Conversely both artisans and professionals constituted sizable portions of the local chapter. The high percentage of artisans in the Order reveals a great deal about the nature of the organization. Variety existed within the category of skilled workers. Some skilled workers were self-employed and owned their shops while others were employed by manufacturers. Historians have noted that the Sons of Temperance was primarily an organization of artisans, emphasizing the importance of self-improvement in the Sons and the Washingtonians before them.¹⁵⁰ This doctrine of self-improvement was strongest among men who either owned their own shops or who would hope to one day own one.¹⁵¹ Although many artisans in Middletown could at least hope to achieve this goal, laborers had no such aspirations.

However, not all skilled workers in Middletown could achieve this ideal. Twelve gunsmiths belonged to the local chapter. These men were employed by the arms manufacturers in the city. Unlike other artisans, gunsmiths were unlikely to ever own their business and would likely spend their entire lives working for wages, challenging the belief that membership was driven strictly by economic motives. Rather than emphasizing upward mobility as the cause for support for temperance,

¹⁴⁹ Stephan Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress; Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge,: Harvard University Press, 1964), 22.

¹⁵⁰ Alexander, "Band of Sisters," 766-7, Blumberg, *Beware the First Drink*, 165.

¹⁵¹ Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York,: Oxford University Press, 1970), 16.

the larger concept of respectability offers a more complete explanation. Belief in upward mobility was part of the desire for respectability; however in antebellum America, respectability was not dependent upon economic status or occupation. Occupation was a factor, but so, too, was church membership, the ownership of property, and the acquisition of material goods. Although I am unable to examine the material goods owned by gunsmiths in the Sons of Temperance, evidence suggests that they desired respectability even if they could not attain economic independence. Out of the twelve gunsmiths, four were able to list real estate in the 1850 Census. Their property was valued between one thousand and sixteen hundred dollars. This level of property ownership (one third) compares to less than one quarter for all other skilled workers (see table 4.5). Because of the high percentage of property ownership, the average property value was higher than for other artisans. Gunsmiths were also more likely to be members of religious congregations than artisans and the overall membership.¹⁵² While they may have been unable to achieve the goal of most artisans—self-employment, gunsmiths who belonged to Mattabesett Division, No. 18 were able achieve a degree of high respectability.

The largest group in the Sons of Temperance was artisans and skilled workers, accounting for half of all members in the order. Gunsmiths were the largest occupation with 12 members, followed by carpenters (including ship carpenters) which accounted for an additional 11 members. Other common occupations included rulemakers, shoemakers, and painters. Because they constituted such a large portion

Table 4.5: Real Estate listed in 1850 Census by Occupation

¹⁵² 66.7 percent of gunsmiths were members of local churches, compared to 39.4 percent of artisans and 38 percent of the overall membership.

	Farmer	Unskilled	Skilled	Gunsmiths	Professional	Total
None listed(<500)	3	19	58	8	14	94
<1,000	1	2	0	0	0	3
1,100-2,500	3	1	14	4	5	23
2,600-5,000	5	0	2	0	3	10
5,100-7,500	1	0	0	0	1	2
7,500-10,000	1	0	0	0	1	2
10,000+	0	0	0	0	1	1
Average	2700	109	417	442	2156	913

Source: Constitution and Minutes of Sons of Temperance, Mattabesett Division, No. 18, Sons of Temperance; Manuscript Schedule of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850.

of the total membership, many statistics for the artisans will not differ significantly from those of the entire chapter. The 39.4 percent who belonged to a congregation and the 89.3 percent who were evangelicals are almost identical to the percentages for the organization as a whole, suggesting that while artisans strove for respectability, they were unable to attain the same social status as professionals who were more likely to belong to the Episcopal Church and held more property.

Contributing to their inability to mirror the success of the professionals was the failure of skilled workers to own significant amounts of property. Table 4.5 shows that although sixteen artisans owned property, only two held real estate valued over twenty-five hundred dollars, compared to eight farmers and six professionals. The average artisan held property worth only \$417, less than half the average for all Sons. The census might understate the amount of property owned by artisans because only real estate valued over \$500 was recorded. Artisans might have held real estate worth less than five hundred dollars or made other investments for their occupation which were not included with the real estate totals. Their average wealth was probably higher than \$417. However, the general lack of wealth indicates the argument that the desire for respectability rather than respectability itself was the

organizing factor behind the Sons of Temperance. The desire for respectability among the artisans is further revealed by the youth of the artisans; over fifty percent of artisans were under thirty while barely five percent were over fifty. Their youth suggests that some skilled workers might have viewed membership in the Sons of Temperance as a pathway to improving their lives and attaining more respectability.

Farmers achieved varying degrees of respectability, but those who belonged to the Sons generally achieved some degree of respectability as measured by their church membership and value of their property. Overall, farmers were more likely to belong to religious congregations than the general membership of the Sons. Out of the 14 Sons who were farmers, 7 belonged to churches; all were evangelicals. The real estate owned by farmers suggests that they attained a degree of respectability. Only four farmers lacked the \$500 of real estate needed to be listed, while eleven held property. The property ranged in value between seven hundred and eight thousand dollars. Even accounting for the farmers without property, the average real estate holdings of farmers in the Sons of Temperance was \$2700, more than any other occupational classification and almost three times the average for all Sons. This number is high because most farmers owned their farms, meaning unlike other occupations, the average is not drawn down by a large number of men who held less than the \$500 of real estate needed to be recorded in the census. The wealth of the farmers was tied to land that they farmed; because the area had been settled for over two centuries, no cheap land was available. As a result those men who owned farms may have seen the value of their land rise without any increase in social status.

While the farmers might have held more property than the average member of

the Sons of Temperance in Middletown, they were not the elite members of the order. Taken together, professionals and merchants constituted Middletown's elite. Included in this class are three ministers of local congregations, eight merchants, two Wesleyan students, and the city's postmaster.¹⁵³ The merchants included a lumber dealer, and a man, Daniel Benham, who called himself a merchant tailor; the remaining six merchants were involved in retail sales. Traditionally these merchants made a significant portion of their profits from selling alcohol and were among the staunchest opponents of temperance, making their support of temperance surprising.¹⁵⁴ Students were included in this group because they do not belong in any of the others. They alter the composition of the group by making it younger, poorer, and less likely to belong to a church in Middletown.

This class joined churches in disproportionate numbers, with 18 of the 25 men belonging to congregations.¹⁵⁵ More staggering the percentage who attended church is the percentage that belonged to liturgical congregations, 33.3 percent—four times the rate for all Sons. The remaining two thirds were evangelicals. The high percentage of liturgical Protestants as well as the rate of membership overall further establishes their position as the elite of society, enhancing their respectability. This respectability is further enhanced by the wealth of the professionals and merchants. Although on average farmers owned the most property (real estate), the wealthiest

¹⁵³ The admission of some ministers reveals that there was clerical support for the Order, although the support may not have been universal; other ministers appear regularly on the lists of other temperance organizations, yet were not members. Perhaps they disliked the fraternal aspects of the Sons.

¹⁵⁴ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 95-6. One local merchant E.C. Ferre operated a temperance variety store, although he continued to sell wine and beer.

¹⁵⁵ This number would be higher if the two Wesleyan students were included as church members; however, because I have included only those with definitive proof of membership in a Middletown congregation, including these two as Methodists would be inconsistent with the rest of my work.

members of the chapter were professionals.¹⁵⁶ This class had a lower average wealth than farmers, likely caused by the large number which did not list any property. As evidenced by table 4.5, the professional class has a high percentage of members without property, but also includes many of the wealthiest members, including Edward Hubbard, a druggist who claimed \$20,000 of real estate. Hubbard's wealth was not enough to increase the average wealth to the average wealth of the farmers. Excluding students does not significantly alter the average wealth. Many clerks, teachers, even some merchants did not have significant property holdings. The merchants might have held property, but not enough to be listed in the census, further skewing the data for the group. Although the average professional held less property than the average farmer, this average was still twice that of the average member.

A group which I incorporated into the professional category when examining wealth and party affiliation were those individuals who stated that they had no occupation in the Federal Census of 1850. On first glance, these men would appear to be unemployed and constitute the bottom of society. On the contrary, a close examination of their wealth and church membership indicates that these men were unemployed by choice. While some were retired, others, including E.W.N. Starr, lived lives of leisure and could devote themselves to political and volunteer opportunities rather work. If these men were truly unable to find work, they would not have been able to join the Sons of Temperance which had an employment qualification.¹⁵⁷ Four of the five men who listed their occupation as none belonged to a religious congregation and three reported owning property in the census. They were

¹⁵⁶ For the purposes of wealth and party affiliation, individuals listing none as their occupation were included as professionals.

¹⁵⁷ Beattie, "Sons of Temperance", 143.

also older than other members, only one was under thirty. Their age, church membership, and real estate holding, suggest that men who described themselves as having no occupation should be classified with merchants and professionals.

The final category of workers is the unskilled workers, consisting of laborers, sailors, and quarrymen. In general, these men were the least respectable members of the Sons of Temperance. Less than a quarter belonged to a church and only three held any property. Although they lacked the respectability of other members, unskilled workers did not lack the desire for respectability. The desire to enhance their social status was displayed by Joel Taylor, one of the three laborers who reported owning property in the 1850 census. Taylor, reported owning property valued at four hundred dollars, below the five hundred dollar threshold.¹⁵⁸ The reporting of Taylor's ownership should be seen as indicating a desire for respectability rather than as an anomaly. Instead of admitting to owning no property, Taylor made sure that his property was recorded. He wanted to prove to people that he owned property—that he had achieved a degree of success, despite being a laborer. He yearned for the respectability which came from owning property. Taylor was not alone in desiring respectability. Fourteen laborers were members of the Sons of Temperance, despite their position in the lowest stratum in society. Their membership in Sons underscores that the organization was more interested in employment and desire for respectability than occupation. Because members needed to show gainful employment, the laborers who belonged to Sons were not vagrants. Laborers and other unskilled workers joined the Sons of Temperance for the same reasons as other men. Although they lacked the financial resources of other

¹⁵⁸ U.S. Census Bureau., *Seventh Census of the United States*, xxii.

members, unskilled workers, like artisans and professionals saw temperance as an opportunity to display their respectability and enhance their social status.

Although I have focused my attention on the overall membership of the Sons of Temperance, one major factor has been ignored, those Sons who had left the Order. Like many organizations, the Sons of Temperance had a high rate of turnover. Over half of all members left the local chapter before 1852, when the chapter's activities nearly stopped. Members left for one of four reasons: they died, were expelled, were suspended, or withdrew from the order. Excluding the six Sons who left the order upon their deaths, 108 left Middletown's chapter (see tables 4.6 and 4.7). Out of those 108 men, 37 withdrew or resigned from the order. Fifteen were suspended and sixteen were expelled or erased from the order. The remaining forty left the order, but without any explanation; their names were simply crossed off on the membership list.¹⁵⁹ Comparing the names of the Sons who left the Order to the 1850 Census reveals that expelled members were the more likely to remain in Middletown than members who left for other reasons, professionals left the order in lesser numbers than other occupations, and few suspended members remained in Middletown in 1850.

The Sons of Temperance were notorious for their policies on drinking by members. They constantly watched one another and expelled those members who drank.¹⁶⁰ Out of the 16 who were expelled, 13 were listed in the 1850 Census despite

¹⁵⁹ Expelled members were forced to leave the order because of consumption of alcohol. Individuals whose memberships were suspended were unable to continue paying the membership dues, and withdrawn members left the organization voluntarily, either because they grew disenchanted with the organization or because they moved away from Middletown and joined a different chapter.

¹⁶⁰ Beattie, "Sons of Temperance", 45. This spying on other members contributed to the slow growth of the order.

Table 4.6: Reasons for Leaving Sons of Temperance by Occupation
(Excluding Deaths)

	Expelled	Withdrawn	Suspended	No explanation
Farmer	2	4	1	3
Unskilled	0	5	2	2
Skilled	9	18	1	18
Professional (including none)	2	0	0	4
Not listed in Census	3	10	12	13
Total	16	37	15	40

Table 4.7: Membership in Sons of Temperance in 1852 by Occupation

	Total who left (excluding deaths)	Never left/ died
Farmer	10	4
Unskilled	9	13
Skilled	46	28
Professional (including none)	6	19
Not listed in Census	37	48
Total	108	126

Source: Constitution and Minutes of Sons of Temperance, Mattabesett Division, No. 18, Sons of Temperance; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850.

earlier expulsion. Members of all occupational categories, professionals as well as unskilled workers, were expelled from the order for consuming alcohol contrary to the pledge they made upon joining the order. This shows that men, regardless of class, continued to consume alcohol and that the Sons of Temperance were not afraid to expel elite members who continued to imbibe.

The continued habitation of expelled members in Middletown contrasts greatly to the situation of the men who were suspended by the chapter. Out of the 15

who failed to pay their dues, only 3 lived in Middletown in 1850.¹⁶¹ This suggests that members who failed to pay their dues because they left Middletown. Upon moving, these men might have joined another chapter or left the order entirely. When leaving a chapter members could receive a letter detailing their membership in the order. A man could use this letter as proof of his membership in the Order and could join another chapter without needing to go through the same initiation as new members.¹⁶² Because the members were listed as suspended, they did not ask for the letter when they moved and were suspended when their dues expired.

Although suspended members were those members most likely to leave Middletown, some members who withdrew or resigned from the order moved as well. When a member was listed as withdrawn from the order, no other explanation was given. Whether the member lost interest in the Sons or left Middletown was not recorded. However the presence of three-quarters of withdrawn members in the 1850 Census suggests that withdrawn members withdrew because they no longer wished to remain part of the Order. The most striking fact about these ex-members is the high percentage of artisans—almost 60 percent among them, compared to fewer than ten percent who were professionals. Perhaps artisans withdrew from the order because it did not enhance their position in the community. They might have seen membership in the order as a way to improve their status, but when their status did not improve, they decided to leave the order. Professionals lacked similar motivation for joining the order and did not withdraw when the order failed to enhance their status. Some

¹⁶¹ Two of the three were laborers who may have been unable to afford the dues, while the third was a painter who claimed \$2000 of real estate, which indicates that he may have become disenchanted with the order and let his membership lapse without formally withdrawing.

¹⁶² Beattie, "Sons of Temperance", 76-7.

artisans could not afford the dues and were forced to leave for financial reasons; professionals were unlikely to face this obstacle and could continue paying their dues without facing financial hardship.

The final group was those who left the order without any explanation. Their names were simply crossed out in the membership list with no indication whether they were expelled, suspended, or withdrew from the order. Almost 70 percent of these men were found in the census. Table 4.6 shows that the composition of this group is almost identical to those to the statistics for those who withdrew from the order, suggesting that most of them withdrew from the order without the secretary marking them as withdrawn. Another factor contributing to this conclusion is the nature of members' departures. Expulsions and suspensions had implications for members' reentry into the order.¹⁶³ In order to assure that these men would receive proper treatment if readmitted, the reason for their departure had to be noted. On the other hand, resignations from the Order had no such effect on future membership and may have been deemed unimportant by the chapter's secretary and gone unrecorded.

The occupational makeup of those Sons who left the order indicates that the members most likely to become disenchanted with the order and leave it were those of the middling class. Although this class constituted a bare majority of the order's members, they accounted for almost 60 percent of members who left the Order, suggesting that men did not join the organization simply because of personal support for temperance. Perhaps they saw it as an opportunity to advance themselves within the community and joined the order despite the high cost of membership. When

¹⁶³ Men who were expelled and later readmitted faced enhanced scrutiny, and suspended members did not need to repeat initiation rituals. *Ibid.*, 72.

membership in the Sons of Temperance did not enhance their status within the city, they left, either because they became disenchanted with the order or because they could not afford the dues. Membership in a temperance organization, especially one which required members to pay dues may have been seen as an indication that a person had reached a certain position in society. Although membership in the Sons of Temperance would not make a person the equal of a druggist who belonged to the Episcopalian church, it might have served as a way to separate oneself from the bottom of society. During the nineteenth century, markers of an individual's middle class status were important as individuals emphasized their similarities the elite and their differences from the bottom of society.¹⁶⁴ If a man joined the Order, then he could identify himself with the social elite despite their economic differences. This desire to be seen as part of the same organization as the social elite may have motivated many artisans to join the Sons of Temperance.

This examination of Mattabesett Division, No. 18, reveals an strong desire on the part of members to attain respectability despite an individual member's specific economic status. While artisans and other members of the middle class who dominated the order were overwhelming evangelicals, many professionals in the Order were liturgical Protestants, suggesting that the social elite were still able to distinguish between themselves and other members. Yet their presence could not prevent the numerical domination by evangelicals and the middle class, suggesting that membership in the fraternal temperance organization was seen as a pathway enhance one's social standing. However, the importance of upward mobility, self-

¹⁶⁴ Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America : Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 420-1.

improvement, and enhanced respectability did not extend to the older population of Middletown which was resistant to a closed society that advocated teetotalism and prohibition. Younger men had no such inhibitions and joined the order in large numbers. Yet statistics cannot explain why specific men were drawn to the Sons of Temperance and temperance more generally. The next chapter explains why two of the more prominent supporters of temperance in Middletown, Benjamin Douglas and E.W.N. Starr, became involved in the temperance movement.

Chapter 5

While a statistical profile of an organization like the Sons of Temperance can establish the general characteristics of men who supported temperance, it reduces men to points of data, losing their individuality, personal differences, and specific reasons for supporting temperance. To complement the demographic analysis, I explored the lives of two individuals in order to learn why they were drawn to temperance. In Middletown, two of the most prominent supporters of temperance were Benjamin Douglas, a pump manufacturer who was the city's mayor for six years in the 1850s, and Elihu William Nathan (E.W.N.) Starr, the son of a wealthy arms manufacturer and the commanding officer of the local militia. Born within a few years of each other, both Starr and Douglas were members of the Sons of Temperance and other temperance organizations. Although both belonged to temperance organizations, Starr eschewed other social reforms, while Douglas supported almost every reform imaginable. The greatest distinction between the two men related to their social status. Although both belonged to the upper class, Douglas acquired wealth and status in Middletown by building a successful business with his brother, while Starr's family wealth and influence granted him status by birth. Benjamin Douglas was typical of the upwardly mobile, bourgeois men who dominated temperance and other reform movements, while Starr's involvement runs counter to some of the same assumptions about the individuals involved in temperance.

Born in 1816, Benjamin Douglas moved to Middletown in 1832 and served as

an apprentice to his older brother, William, who was a brass founder and machinist. Upon completing his apprenticeship, Douglas joined his brother's partnership, which was renamed Guild and W&B Douglas. A few years later the partnership was dissolved after William Guild left, and the brothers formed W&B Douglas. The brothers manufactured brass pumps, hydraulic rams, and similar products. The pumps made at W&B Douglas were the only solid cast brass pumps manufactured in the United States.¹⁶⁵ Their pumps were highly regarded, winning awards at agricultural fairs across the country and the highest medal at the World's Fair in Paris in 1867.¹⁶⁶ The brothers expanded their business, which included a brass foundry as well as the manufacturing business, making them both wealthy men. Following William's death in 1858, the company was incorporated under the name W&B Douglas Company. As he grew older, Benjamin Douglas became involved in other businesses as well, serving as the president of Farmers & Mechanics Savings Bank and later First National Bank in Middletown, and owning shares in railroads and other corporations.¹⁶⁷

The basis of Douglas' wealth remained the business which he created with his brother, which grew from a small foundry to a large manufacturing complex because of the brothers' innovations which produced superior products. Because his success was due to his abilities and not his birth status, Douglas was likely to have believed that people's status in the community should reflect their own abilities and industry.

¹⁶⁵ W&B Douglas, Co. advertisement, W&B Douglas Co. of Middletown. Douglas Family Papers, MCHS

¹⁶⁶ Certificate from Universal Exposition, Paris 1867, W&B Douglas Co. of Middletown. Douglas Family Papers, MCHS.

¹⁶⁷ Stock Certificate Connecticut Valley Rail Road Co. Miscellaneous papers of Benjamin Douglas, including politics and railroad ephemera, Douglas Family Papers, MCHS.

Men like the Douglas brothers who were mechanically innovative and could organize their business successfully were rewarded with wealth. Other men who adhered to same belief in meritocracy concluded that in order to improve their status within the community men needed to be industrious and sober. Without these characteristics, even the most innovative machinist would be unable to capitalize on his abilities. Benjamin Douglas must have attributed a portion of his success to his moral habits as well as his mental abilities, and like other manufacturers of his day, would have wanted to instill similar values in his employees so that they would be more productive at work, increasing the economic standing of the employee and employer. His need for a sober workforce is one reason why Benjamin Douglas would have supported temperance both for himself and for his employees.

His success in business enabled Douglas to become involved in civic affairs and a variety of moral reforms; temperance was one of many issues which interested him. Douglas was a member of anti-slavery societies, and signed a petition opposing the annexation of Texas.¹⁶⁸ During the Civil War, he worked with relief societies to aid soldiers and their families. He was a delegate to state temperance conventions, and was a member of many temperance organizations. Like the wives of many male reformers of the day, Douglas' wife, Mary, shared her husband's outlook, leading the soldiers' relief efforts during the war and supporting temperance. Mary, born Mary Parker, was the niece of Colonel Joseph Mansfield; her marriage to a man of Douglas's class indicates how some barriers between classes had been reduced. The Douglases were one of Middletown's most prominent couples, and when city residents presented two petitions in favor of prohibition, the names of Mr. and Mrs.

¹⁶⁸ Petition against the annexation of Texas, in Political Clubs, Elections, MCHS.

Benjamin Douglas appeared at the top of the lists signed by men and women respectively.¹⁶⁹ Members of the Strict (South) Congregational Church, the Douglases were similar to many supporters of temperance who were religiously evangelical and involved in many social reforms other than temperance, and who displayed a deep commitment to improving their community and country. Douglas' belief in moral progress was related to his belief in economic progress. His wealth, religion, and involvement in other reform movements made Douglas typical of many leaders of the temperance movement in the nineteenth century.

Douglas's prominence with the temperance movement in Middletown was not the result of his association with moral reforms, or even his success in business. Although he was involved in temperance organizations for most of his adult life, Douglas began taking a leading role in the local temperance movement only after he became a significant political figure. Although his older brother belonged to the Democratic Party, Douglas was a Whig throughout the 1840s and was a frequent candidate for state representative. In 1850, he was elected Mayor of Middletown, an office which he held for the next six years (three terms). Twice during his term as mayor, Douglas ran for the state senate. One time he won; the other time he lost in a highly controversial and contested election. In the April 1852 elections, Douglas was defeated by his Democratic opponent for state senate by 27 votes; however, Whigs claimed that ballots supporting Douglas were altered and submitted unfairly for the Democratic candidate.¹⁷⁰ When the Legislature met, the Democratic majority voted to seat Douglas' opponent. Douglas and other Whigs were furious, and but

¹⁶⁹ *Hartford Courant*. May 20, 1852.

¹⁷⁰ *Constitution*. April 7, 1852

could do little other than complain. Although he belonged to the Whig Party in 1852, when he was elected to the state senate two years later as a Whig, Douglas ran on a Free Soil ticket as well.¹⁷¹

His tenure as mayor made Douglas one of the city's most prominent citizens and because of this position he began to take on leadership roles in temperance and other reform organizations. He was involved in temperance organizations before he was elected mayor, however, after his election, Douglas's position within the community placed him on the same level as pastors. His name was used in order to lend credibility to temperance and other reform organizations. These organizations wanted to publicize that the city's mayor supported their cause. He was a vice-president of multiple temperance organizations and served as the chairman of the local Fremont Club, building the Republican Party in the city and county.¹⁷² During his time as mayor, Douglas strongly advocated temperance, often including the harms caused by drunkenness in his annual address to the city and, following the passage of the Maine Law, extolling the lowered crime rate after prohibition went into effect.¹⁷³ Declining to seek reelection in 1856, Douglas became increasingly involved in state politics. In 1860, he was an elector for Lincoln and was elected Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut in 1861. At various times, he was suggested as a Republican candidate for governor, but Douglas never ran. His involvement with the temperance movement did not end in the 1850s; Douglas continued to advocate the cause in later decades, serving as president of a state temperance society in the 1870s.

¹⁷¹ Free Soil Ticket, 18th Senatorial District, Miscellaneous papers of Benjamin Douglas, including politics and railroad ephemera, Douglas Family Papers.

¹⁷² Fremont Club of Middletown, Constitution and minutes, 1856, in Political Clubs, Elections, MCHS.

¹⁷³ *Constitution*. mult. dates.

Benjamin Douglas' political career was typical of many national leaders in the temperance movement. Many temperance supporters became Republicans after the Whig Party fell into disarray, while others moved from the Free Soil Party into the Republican Party, although few supporters belonged to all three parties like Douglas.¹⁷⁴ The involvement in electoral politics is especially common among the staunchest supporters of prohibition. In some aspects, Douglas' life resembled that of the Prophet of Prohibition, Neal Dow. Dow, only a few years older than Douglas, was a successful businessman before turning to electoral politics and temperance. Originally Whigs, both men helped to build the Republican Party in their states. They advocated statewide prohibition from their positions as mayor and worked actively in its enforcement once prohibition was enacted.¹⁷⁵ However, Douglas was never as strong a prohibition supporter as Dow, nor was he well-known outside of Connecticut. The comparison to Dow only serves to underscore how typical Douglas was of leading temperance supporters in the 1850s, and how the upwardly mobile, entrepreneurial class was one of the driving forces behind the temperance movement, both on the national level and within small cities like Middletown. These men supported temperance for religious and economic reasons, and were willing to use their political positions in order to pass prohibition in the early 1850s.

While Benjamin Douglas' party affiliation, involvement in moral reforms, and economic status was typical of most temperance supporters of the antebellum period, E.W.N. Starr's advocacy of temperance and prohibition contradicts some of the generalizations about temperance supporters and surprised some of his closet friends.

¹⁷⁴ Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics*, 275.

¹⁷⁵ Krout, *The Origins of Prohibition*, 284.

Like Douglas, Starr had strong ties to manufacturing interests in Middletown; his father, Nathan Starr was a significant arms manufacturer, producing muskets as well as swords, including one which was presented to Andrew Jackson.¹⁷⁶ His father's wealth enabled Starr to receive a military education at the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy (A.L.S.M.A.) in Middletown before the academy returned to Norwich, Vermont. He left the academy in 1828 without graduating.¹⁷⁷ His attendance at A.L.S.M.A. began a lifetime involvement in military causes. Just as his family's wealth allowed Starr to attend A.L.S.M.A., it also allowed him to avoid entering the family business or a different professional occupation. After graduation, Starr did not become directly involved in his father's manufacturing business. Instead he became involved in politics and the state militia. Although his education and ties to manufacturing might have made Starr sympathetic to temperance, other aspects of life would indicate that he had more in common with temperance opponents rather than its proponents.

In particular, Starr's deep involvement in the local militia was unusual for most temperance supporters, and his support of temperance was likewise peculiar for the militia. E.W.N. Starr's involvement in the militia lasted longer and was deeper than his support of nearly any other cause. Joining the militia after he left the academy, his training at A.T.S.M.A. allowed him to start at a higher rank than other men, and his family named aided his promotion. In 1845, he became the commander of the local militia, which was named the Mansfield Guard after then Colonel Joseph Mansfield, a resident of Middletown who later died in the Battle of Antietam.

¹⁷⁶ Nathan Starr to Joseph McMinn, Governor of Tennessee, 30 August 1820, Nathan Starr Swords & Firearms, Starr Family Papers, MCHS.

¹⁷⁷ F.F. Starr, "Biography of E.W.N. Starr"[1932], ms, Starr Family Papers, MCHS. 2.

Assuming his command as a colonel, in 1852, Starr was promoted to adjunct general in the state militia.¹⁷⁸ His personal political connections as well as his family's wealth and involvement in arms manufacturing likely helped Starr achieve this rank. Starr enjoyed drilling the militia and leading them in occasional parades.

Starr's involvement in the militia was not typical of temperance supporters given the association between militia musters and intemperance dating to the colonial era. Because the militia was rarely called up, militia musters and drills served as times when local men bonded. Like every other communal gathering, this bonding included the heavy consumption of alcohol.¹⁷⁹ Needless to say, this practice received strong criticism from temperance proponents who were concerned about drinking in the armed forces more generally. In 1838, Congress, under pressure from Secretary of War Lewis Cass, a former military governor of Michigan, voted to replace the whiskey ration in the army with coffee.¹⁸⁰ But Cass, like Starr, was an exception within the military which was hostile to temperance throughout its organization. Both commanders and enlisted men came from parts of society which did not support temperance. The leadership was predominantly members of the old elite who distrusted the various reforms advocated by the middle class. In Middletown, this tension played out on a familial level when Colonel Mansfield expressed his disgust with Benjamin Douglas' (his niece's husband) involvement in reform organizations and his extravagant spending in a letter to his wife.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ E.W.N. Starr, General Order Number 29, December 6, 1852, E.W.N. Starr Correspondence, regarding military career in Connecticut militia, Starr Family Papers, MCHS.

¹⁷⁹ Rorabaugh, *Alcoholic Republic*, 19-20.

¹⁸⁰ Cherrington, *Evolution of Prohibition*, 121.

¹⁸¹ Joseph Mansfield to Mrs. Joseph Mansfield, 15 May 1859, miscellaneous papers, Mansfield Papers, 2007.002, MCHS.

Given the hostility of many military figures to temperance, Starr's support of temperance appears to be out of place. Yet E.W.N. Starr was not a typical military officer; although he attended a military school, he was an officer in the militia, not the regular army. In a community like Middletown where temperance was a widely held belief in the 1840s, support for temperance would have been stronger than in the regular army which was dominated by southerners who were then strong opponents of temperance.¹⁸² His ties to manufacturing interests also distinguished Starr from other officers' whose wealth and status were generally tied to old economic practices as opposed to newer industries. Starr's support for temperance might have come from his economic interests. Given his age and ties to manufacturing, Starr might have represented as transition from the country's old elites to newer ones like Benjamin Douglas who supported a wide range of reforms, including temperance. Starr's support of temperance and his involvement in the militia can be seen as representing two different aspects of his character. On one hand, his support for temperance revealed a new morality, the belief that man could improve himself and the world, while his involvement in the militia and commitment to public service indicate that Starr still adhered to older values about civic responsibility and service.

In addition to his involvement in the local militia, E.W.N. Starr was involved in politics throughout his life. Beginning as a young man in the 1830s and continuing until his death in 1885, Starr was a member of the Democratic Party, except for a brief period in the 1850s when he was a Republican.¹⁸³ On February 18, 1841, Starr was appointed postmaster for the city of Middletown by Martin van Buren. Starr

¹⁸² Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 320-1.

¹⁸³ E.W.N. Starr Democratic Politics correspondence, 1833-1885, Starr Papers, MCHS; Fremont Club of Middletown, Constitution and minutes, 1856, in Political Clubs, Elections, MCHS.

served as the city's postmaster for a little over two years before resigning.¹⁸⁴ Starr also held elected office in Middletown. However, unlike Douglas, he did not appear interested in running for highly politicized offices, preferring instead the relatively non-political office of town clerk, a capacity which he served from 1851 until 1875, with only a two year gap in the mid-1850s.¹⁸⁵

Despite or perhaps because of his position as town clerk, Starr never appeared interested in higher political office. His position as general in the state militia and town clerk would have seemingly made him an ideal candidate for political office, but Starr never ran for another political office. His abstention from running was not the result of lack of support for a political party. His appointment as city's postmaster indicates that he was seen as a man worth rewarding for his loyalty to the Democratic Party and his consistent involvement in local Democratic clubs in the 1830s and 1840s reveals that Starr was capable of strong partisanship. Yet by the 1850s, something had changed. Starr was still involved in partisan politics, but in 1856 he joined the Fremont Club. The switch from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party was not unusual in the 1850s; national leaders of the party including men such as Salmon Chase began their careers as Democrats. Even Starr's return to the Democratic Party was not unheard of in nineteenth century politics. A shift to the Republican Party was common among Democrats who supported temperance, although their movement was usually the result of their opposition to slavery.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Martin van Buren, commission appointing E.W.N. postmaster for the city of Middletown, February 20, 1841, Starr Family Papers, MCHS.

¹⁸⁵ F.F. Starr, 12. Given Starr's long tenure as town clerk and that of his predecessor who served as town clerk for almost thirty years, town clerk appeared to lack the same political demands as most elected offices.

¹⁸⁶ Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder*, 167-68.

Starr's political affiliation, although shared by many temperance supporters, never constituted a majority within the temperance movement, and his return to the Democratic Party made his temperance stance appear even more unusual.

Starr's support for temperance was regarded as unusual at the time. His friends and colleagues were shocked to learn that he supported temperance and especially prohibition. Isaac Pratt expressed his disappointment with his friend's support of the law in a letter to Starr,

I am surprised to know that a man of your general good sense, and intelligence should embrace the 'Maine Law' fanatic Whig humbug, a thing introduced into this state solely for the purpose of defeating the democracy at the polls next Monday. I beg you to pause, and not go into the Whig ranks blindfolded Gov. Seymour feels bad to think that you have deserted him.¹⁸⁷

Pratt was disappointed that his friend put principle above party. Although Starr had previously established his support for temperance through his membership in the Sons of Temperance and other temperance organizations, Pratt was concerned about the political implications of Starr's support for prohibition, not his support of temperance. Given his long time support of temperance, Starr's embrace of prohibition once it became a political issue seemed natural, but his friend was nevertheless surprised. Either Pratt was ignorant of his friend's involvement in these organizations or he thought that Starr was partisan enough to oppose the Maine Law simply because Whigs supported it. Starr's decision to place principle above party indicates that he was not a typical Democrat despite his lifetime membership in the party. He was willing to break with the party over an issue like the Maine Law, and

¹⁸⁷ Isaac Pratt to E.W.N. Starr, March 1852, E.W.N. Starr correspondence 1850-1853, Starr Family Papers, MCHS. Pratt did not mention that one of the state's most prominent Democrats, P.T. Barnum, was a longtime supporter of temperance and an advocate for a Maine Law in Connecticut.

then completely during the 1856 elections. Although uncommon within the Democratic Party, Starr's emphasis on the importance of the Maine Law was shared by the strongest prohibition advocates in the 1850s whose political goals were almost entirely limited to adopting coercive measures to eliminate intemperance.

In some respects, E.W.N. Starr was typical of the leading temperance supporters of the 1840s and 1850s; he had strong ties to the fledging industrial economy, he was young, and deeply involved in politics. On the other hand, Starr's involvement in the state militia, affiliation with the Democratic Party and his lack of involvement in other moral reforms ran counter to many of the commonly held assumptions about temperance advocates. His involvement in the militia, a historically intemperate organization, differentiated Starr from most temperance supporters. While Douglas, like most temperance supporters was an evangelical, Starr belonged to Holy Trinity, the Episcopal Church whose congregants included a significant portion of the city's political and economic elite. Despite these contradictions, Starr's support for temperance began earlier than Douglas' support, although Douglas was more typical of temperance advocates. Although Starr's example shows that the temperance movement did not simply consist of members of upwardly mobile bourgeoisie. Yet his ties to arms manufacturing meant that Starr like many other temperance supporters depended upon the new industrial economy in order to make money, even though he was never directly involved in the operation of his family's business.

However, despite these similarities, Starr's strong support for temperance complicates the image of temperance supporters during the antebellum period. Even

upon reaching its greatest triumphs of the 1850s, the passage of Maine Laws, the temperance movement was hardly monolithic. Starr's involvement in the temperance movement, combined with his other activities, indicate that he might have continued to value traditions and virtues which not shared by the new middle class. Starr's support for temperance might have come from a different cause than the confluence of bourgeois and evangelical values which guided men like Benjamin Douglas into the temperance movement. Yet, despite their different reasons, both men appeared to share the emerging middle class belief in the great value of government and its ability to affect people's actions. The final chapter explores how Middletown's residents responded the passage and implementation of a Maine Law in Connecticut.

Chapter 6

Individuals like Starr and Douglas, like most temperance advocates and societies, supported prohibition, believing that it would solve the problem of intemperance. However, within two years after *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance* went into effect on August 1, 1854, the issue of temperance and prohibition faded from discussion despite the continued existence of the Maine Law on Connecticut statutes until 1871. On both sides, the issue lost its political potency; while enforcement was intermittent, no coordinated effort was made to have the law repealed. Apathy towards the law and temperance began in the spring of 1854 before the law was passed. Prohibition was almost an afterthought in Middletown during an election when the city's voters appeared more concerned about slavery and the river flooding. After an initial period of success and enforcement, people's attention turned to different issues. By 1856, many temperance advocates were more concerned with the growing problems of slavery and immigration than with alcohol as the law's enforcement became weak and intermittent.

The increased indifference towards prohibition, exhibited in the April 1854 election, was displayed by the reaction of temperance supporters to the passage of prohibition. With less than seven weeks between when the law was passed on June 15 and when it went in effect on August 1,¹⁸⁸ temperance supporters had little time to develop a plan for enforcement. Although prohibition had been advocated for over a decade, its advocates were previously concerned with its passage, not its enforcement.

¹⁸⁸ *Hartford Courant*. June 16, 1854.

Advocacy for prohibition, which involved an organized campaign of petitions and lobbying legislators, was not matched by the ad hoc plans supporters applied to the enforcement of prohibition. Supporters knew that not everyone would stop drinking simply because alcohol was banned by the state legislature; they would need to help enforce the law if it was to be effective in eliminating intemperance. The lack of preparation for the legislation's success indicated some surprise on the part of prohibition supporters. Had they known that the law would be passed by the legislature and signed by the governor, prohibition supporters would not have needed to rush to a meeting in New Haven in order to plan for its enforcement.¹⁸⁹

In Middletown, a new temperance society, the Middletown Carson League devoted itself to aiding the enforcement of prohibition in the city. Modeled after the Carson League of Worcester County (Massachusetts), the League's emphasis was aiding the enforcement of prohibition. Like Connecticut, Massachusetts had passed a Maine Law in the 1850s, and local temperance supporters wished to emulate societies which helped enforce prohibition there. The Carson League was formed in May and June 1854, after temperance supporters realized that prohibition would become law but that their work was not complete. "By the enactment of the prohibitory liquor law, the friends of temperance have accomplished a good work, but a greater will be achieved in sustaining it and preventing its repeal...it is no time to relax our efforts as though entire work was accomplished."¹⁹⁰ While earlier temperance societies had time to hone their arguments in favor of temperance and prohibition, the Carson League needed to adopt new techniques to prevent legal and legislative challenges to

¹⁸⁹ *Constitution*. July 12, 1854.

¹⁹⁰ Middlesex County Carson League, Resolutions and Minutes, 1854, Temperance League, Temperance Societies, MCHS.

prohibition while aiding the enforcement of prohibition.

Although the Carson League and other temperance organizations helped enforce prohibition and used moral suasion in 1854, they were unable to prevent the chaos the week and especially the night of July 31, the day before prohibition went into effect. Because the law only prohibited the sale and manufacture of alcohol, many individuals decided to buy alcohol that they could legally consume after the law went into effect. Men visited groceries, apothecaries, and taverns with jugs, bottles, and cans which were filled with rum before it was illegal. Events culminated on the last night when alcohol could be legally sold in Connecticut, July 31. Men gathered to enjoy what they thought would be their last legal drink.¹⁹¹ Many of these men did not frequent taverns, and those that did drank more than usual. Grocers, tavern keepers, and others who sold alcohol, had an additional incentive to sell their supply of alcohol because unlike other individuals, their stockpiles of alcohol could be confiscated if it was believed that they intended to sell the alcohol.¹⁹²

So much alcohol was sold that night that in his diary, Samuel Hubbard noted, “By tomorrow morning they [tavern keepers] will have nothing to support a barroom if the law did not interfere.”¹⁹³ The pressure to both sell and consume additional alcohol resulted in extraordinary intemperance that night. The *News and Advertiser* described the situation on July 31,

¹⁹¹ Rhode Island’s Supreme Court overturned that state’s Maine Law the previous year. Cherrington, *Evolution of Prohibition*, 147. A similar outcome was unlikely in Connecticut because a former chief justice helped to write the legislation in order to prevent a similar outcome in Connecticut. Despite his involvement, some prohibition opponents attempted to have the courts rule the law unconstitutional. *Hartford Courant*. mult. dates.

¹⁹² Although the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages were outlawed, the possession of alcohol remained legal, provided that the individual did not intend to sell the alcohol. *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance*. Sec. 9.

¹⁹³ Hubbard. July 31.

Many ordinarily temperate men staggered about with heavy loads of bricks in their hats, and we reported to notice several mere boys decidedly intoxicated. It was a sad spectacle, and the presence of some thirty or forty in the watch house the next morning proved that rum had done its usual work of promoting and creating disorderly and riotous conduct.¹⁹⁴

The general rowdiness of the night, especially the actions of the “ordinarily temperate men,” indicates that popular support for the law was far from universal, despite the law passing with overwhelming support from both houses in the legislature.¹⁹⁵

Although dismayed at the intemperance on the night of July 31, temperance supporters had few legal options that night, and focused their efforts on enforcing the law after August 1. Before the Maine Law went into effect, an election was held to determine whether or not the city would appropriate money for a liquor agent.¹⁹⁶

During the election, proponents of prohibition supported appropriating money. Prohibition’s opponents voted against the appropriation of money. The vote became an avenue to express approval or disapproval of the Maine Law. Perhaps opponents believed that voting in favor of appropriating money would undermine possible legal challenges to the law. Despite the city’s unwillingness to ban alcohol under Connecticut’s local option law, Middletown’s voters approved appropriating money to pay an agent. Describing the vote, Samuel Hubbard wrote in his diary, “At the town meeting on Tuesday the rummys [sic.] lost by some 75 votes.”¹⁹⁷ The vote

¹⁹⁴ *News and Advertiser*. August 4, 1854.

¹⁹⁵ The law passed by a vote of 141 to 60 in the House and 18 to 2 in the Senate. *Hartford Courant*. June 16, 1854.

¹⁹⁶ The liquor agent would be an employee of the city and would be licensed to sell alcohol for sacramental, medical, and mechanical purposes. The agent was appointed by the selectmen and could be recalled by them as well. The city, not the agent, purchased alcohol, and the agent received a salary—his income was not dependant upon the amount of alcohol that he sold. In order to assure that the agent did not violate the Maine Law, the liquor agent was required to record each purchase and sale of alcohol and present these records at the town meeting and upon request by a town official. *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance*. Sec. 5.

¹⁹⁷ Hubbard, 27 July 1854.

indicates that Middletown had either more prohibition supporters in 1854 than a decade earlier or that the supporters were better organized and turned out in large numbers in order to express their will at the town meeting. Although their actions on July 31 might have indicated otherwise, Middletown's voters expressed their support for the Maine Law after its passage by the General Assembly.

Although voters favored funding agents to sell alcohol, this enthusiasm faded once the Maine Law went into effect and prosecutions began. Although public drunkenness was a crime under earlier laws, *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance* strengthened these laws. The laws were strengthened to enable town officials to learn who sold alcohol illegally. Because illegal sales were seldom witnessed directly by a justice of the peace, a witness was needed in order to prove that an individual was engaged in the illegal sale of alcohol. The law assumed that in order to be a drunk, a man must have purchased alcohol illegally; town officials were required to arrest such individuals and hold them until they were sober and able to tell the officials who sold them the alcohol. The men who sold the alcohol were supposed to be arrested for breaking the law.¹⁹⁸

In the year following the passage of the Maine Law, prosecutions for drunkenness in Middletown increased, although temperance supporters claimed that this was the result of increased enforcement of the law, not increased drunkenness.¹⁹⁹ These prosecutions were for minor offenses; if convicted, men were fined twenty dollars or jailed until the fine was paid.²⁰⁰ Although prosecutions were common, convictions occurred less frequently. Sympathetic judges acquitted defendants based

¹⁹⁸ *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance*. Sec. 17.

¹⁹⁹ *Hartford Courant*, Jul 18, 1855

²⁰⁰ *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance*. Sec. 8.

upon personal views towards prohibition rather than the letter of the law.²⁰¹ The emphasis on public drunkenness resulted in few cases involving prominent citizens, while immigrants appeared to bear a disproportionate brunt of criminal prosecution.²⁰² While occasional complaints were made about the prosecution of men for drunkenness, the most controversial and prominent cases were ones which involved the sale of liquor at hotels and other establishments which previously served alcohol, but could not continue the practice under *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance*.

The most prominent enforcement of the Maine Law in Middletown resulted in the closure of one of the city's hotels, the McDonough House. The hotel, which had earlier hosted meetings of the local Whig Party and moral reform societies, was operated by J.S. Parmelee. On September 1, 1854, he was issued a writ for selling alcohol and paid his fine without trial. The next day, he told his boarders that he was closing the hotel and did.²⁰³ Parmelee's actions while extreme were not inexplicable. Historically hotels made a significant portion of their revenues from selling alcohol.²⁰⁴ Because of this historic relationship, inn keepers, like pub owners, faced extra scrutiny under prohibition. They were similarly prohibited from possessing alcohol under the assumption that they would attempt to sell their liquor supplies. If Parmelee could no longer sell any liquor, he would be unable to run a profitable institution argued a supporter, noting that Temperance Hotels did not make any

²⁰¹ *Hartford Courant*. September 18, 1855.

²⁰² In their reports of arrests, newspapers emphasized when Irish immigrants violated the law. This might be the result product of the anti-immigrant views of the mid-1850s which ultimately helped to temper support for temperance and prohibition.

²⁰³ *Constitution*. September 6, 1854.

²⁰⁴ Tyrrell, *Sobering Up*, 200.

profits.²⁰⁵ Despite Parmelee's actions, the McDonough House soon reopened, and next June, he was once again convicted of selling alcohol.²⁰⁶ The prosecution of the proprietor of such of prominent business reveals how prohibition supporters attempted to enforce the law. By going after Parmelee, advocates showed that they were not simply drawn to prosecuting working men who were found drunk—they were willing to arrest men who were involved in the sale of alcohol regardless of class. Occurring exactly a month after prohibition went into effect, the prosecution may have also served as an example of what would happen if a person was caught selling alcohol—an arrest followed by a quick conviction and fine. The Parmelee cases showed that the law was enforced and would continue to be enforced, providing advocates with free publicity about their ability to enforce the law which they hoped would help end the scourge of intemperance.

Despite the high profile prosecution of J.S. Parmelee and a few other prominent raids on personal liquor supplies, the enforcement of the Maine Law was desultory. Formal complaints were made on occasion, but even the few arrests which were made did not always result in convictions. One notable example was the trial of Allen Osborne whose liquor supply, which was acquired before August 1, was seized by a city constable. The County Court acquitted Osborne and returned his liquors, one of the court's many rulings in a defendant's favor.²⁰⁷ By the first half of 1855,

²⁰⁵ *News and Advertiser*. September 8, 1854. A temperance hotel was a hotel which did not sell liquor in its bar. Their owners believed that they would be able to attract a large temperate clientele which would stay exclusively at such establishments, allowing them to turn a profit. Similar behavior motivated the creation of temperance steamboats and general stores. Rorabaugh, *Alcoholic Republic*, 195-6.

²⁰⁶ *Constitution*. June 27, 1855.

²⁰⁷ *Constitution*. April 18, 1855. Under *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance*, the possession of alcohol was only prohibited if the owner intended to sell the liquor. Personal supplies were legal. Supplies could also be confiscated if the liquor was believed to be acquired illegally.

liquor prosecutions, although up from a previous year, were down from first months under prohibition.²⁰⁸ Although the decrease in prosecutions appears to indicate that prohibition was partially successful, the failure of many of the prosecutions reveals otherwise. Unsuccessful prosecutions might have deterred prohibition supporters, and underground drinking establishments may have learned how to evade the law. While unsuccessful prosecutions might have created indifference, an incident in Portland, Maine may have exacerbated antagonism towards prohibition.

The Maine Law Riot occurred in Portland, Maine on June 2, 1855. Neal Dow, the Mayor of Portland and man responsible for organizing support for the original Maine Law and pushing it through the state legislature, had acquired a supply of alcohol to sell for medical and sacramental purposes in accordance with the Maine Law. Because the liquor bore Dow's name instead of the liquor agent's as required by law, political opponents accused Dow of illegally possessing alcohol and demanded that the supply be confiscated. A crowd gathered near the legal liquor-store where the alcohol was stored and demanded that Dow's liquor be destroyed. The police and state militia were called to prevent the crowd from rioting. After Dow told the crowd to disperse, stones were thrown, injuring two militiamen. Dow then moved the militia into the store in order to defend it from the rioters as stones continued to be hurled. The militia fired on some rioters later that night, killing one and injuring a handful more.²⁰⁹ The riot and violence discredited many of the claims made by Dow and other prohibition advocates because prohibition, which was supposed to curtail violence, led to bloodshed. As a result of the riot, Maine would repeal its Maine Law

²⁰⁸ *Hartford Courant*, July 18, 1855.

²⁰⁹ Byrne, *Prophet of Prohibition; Neal Dow and His Crusade*, 61-4.

the next year and the entire nation's perception of prohibition changed. It was no longer universally seen as the solution to the problems of violence and crime. While arguments about prohibition violating a citizen's liberty and property rights had failed to prevent prohibition, one simple event showed how prohibition failed to meet its original goals. Occurring a year after Connecticut banned alcohol, the Maine Law Riot appeared to sap the remaining desire to enforce prohibition in Connecticut.

While the increased indifference towards prohibition could be interpreted as contentment with the law and with people learning to live without alcohol, in reality views towards alcohol did not change much. Alcohol was still sold legally or illegally, and temperance organizations still attempted to eliminate intemperance. The continued existence of these organizations reveals that prohibition was not effective. Few societies were directly involved with aiding the enforcement of the Maine Law; instead they advocated teetotalism among their members, requiring them to sign the same pledge as earlier societies, promising to abstain from alcohol and to avoid involvement in the liquor trade as well. In theory, the passage of prohibition would have limited the use of liquor to sacramental and medicinal purposes lessening the need to require people to sign the pledge. This was clearly not the case in Middletown, and new temperance organizations were created even after the city was legally dry. Most new societies were not created to aid the enforcement of the Maine Law, instead they functioned in largely the same manner as earlier organizations, requiring members to sign a pledge and advocating moral suasion as well as the preservation of the Maine Law. *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance* had not significantly altered people's drinking behavior in Middletown—individuals who

wished to drink continued to drink, and temperance supporters continued to form and join organizations devoted to advancing their cause. The failure to significantly change how people viewed liquor likely contributed to the growing indifference towards prohibition and its enforcement.

The continued presence of alcohol and the increased ambivalence towards enforcement occurred as many temperance supporters becoming more interested in slavery and nativism than prohibition. Beginning with the April 1854 elections, which produced the legislature that passed the Maine Law, these other issues dominated political discourse while prohibition remained in the background. The flood of the Connecticut River and debate over the Kansas-Nebraska Act concerned people in the spring of 1854. Once prohibition became law, the issue became less and less important. In the second half of 1854 and especially during the April 1855 election, the Know-Nothing movement attracted significant support.²¹⁰ Nativism became part of acceptable political discourse; local newspaper reports detailing the enforcement of the Maine Law emphasized the individual's nationality when it was Irish, introducing an aspect of xenophobia to temperance advocacy which did not exist before prohibition became law.

While concern about immigration was an important issue for some temperance supporters, most were drawn away from prohibition by a more pressing issue—slavery. Although anti-slavery societies existed in Middletown decades before 1854, the division in local politics over the issue began during the election of 1854. This election was the first in Connecticut which included an anti-slavery party, the

²¹⁰ *Hartford Courant*. April 5, 1855. The Know-Nothings elected a governor and controlled both branches of the state legislature following the elections, although in many instances candidates for legislature ran under both the Whig and American (Know-Nothing) tickets.

Anti-Nebraska Party. Absent during the next year's election when the Know-Nothings achieved a resounding victory, by 1856 state and local politics were again divided into the Democratic Party and the opposition. For the Presidential election, a Fremont Club was founded in Middletown in order to help elect the Republican candidate. The formation of the Fremont Club was particularly important because it marked the final step in the dissolution of the old party system. Temperance and prohibition were not factors in this dissolution and played only an ancillary role in the state elections of 1855 and 1856.

The Fremont Club, while not incorporating temperance into its political discourse, had many members who were active in earlier temperance organizations. The Fremont Club included individuals who previously belonged to both the Whig and Democratic Parties, and many of their most active members previously belonged to the Sons of Temperance. Nineteen members of the Sons of Temperance were involved in organizational efforts of the Fremont Club, including Sons who were members of both political parties of the 1840s (see table 3.1). Given the previous involvement of Republicans in both earlier parties, in Middletown, the nascent Republican Party could have adopted a position in favor of preserving and enforcing prohibition, but it did not. Enforcement of prohibition was waning as the local party was founded in the summer of 1856, and temperance was ignored as the Club emphasized the actions of the Pierce Administration during the campaign. The Fremont Club did not oppose prohibition, it simply ignored the issue; slavery was more important. Prohibition had dropped out of the political debates in elections for national, statewide and local elections without being repealed.

For many denizens of Middletown, temperance was one of the most important moral and political issues of the 1840s and 1850s; however, within two years of the enactment of statewide prohibition interest in the issue had waned. Almost an afterthought during the April 1854 elections, it was briefly the source of great controversy as it went into effect that August. But soon, people adjusted to life under prohibition as prohibition's enforcement waned and people continued to drink. Men who previously advocated temperance and prohibition turned their attention to other issues, first nativism, and then slavery. The newly founded Republican Party ignored the issue, and *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance*, which banned alcohol statewide, fell out of the political debate within Middletown and across Connecticut. The law was gradually weakened over the subsequent legislative sessions before its ultimate repeal in 1872, eighteen years after its initial passage.²¹¹ A partial repeal occurred in 1861, when the legislature repealed section 27, which viewed any payment in violation of the law as an illegal transaction.²¹² The manufacture and sale of liquor remained illegal, but by repealing this section of the law, the legislature removed one of the most significant impediments to trafficking in alcohol. Other laws altered how cases were tried in court, similarly weakening sections of the law which enforced prohibition. As a result, by the time that the law was formally replaced with a local option law, the Maine Law, although outlawing the sale and manufacture of alcohol had few means to enforce it. The gradual repeal would have been unthinkable when prohibition was passed; however, it shows how little people cared about the laws beginning a few years after its initial passage; opponents of the

²¹¹ Cherrington, *Evolution of Prohibition*, 188.

²¹² *An Act in Alteration Of "An Act Relating to Taverners and the Sale of Spiritous Liquors"*, May 1861. *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance*.

law were either unwilling to directly change the law or fearful of the consequences, while supporters of temperance were unable or unwilling to defend the most extreme aspects of the bill. The gradual repeal was simply the final exhibition of people's indifference to the Maine Law which began before the legislature enacted prohibition during their session in June of 1854. Although the law would not be repealed until 1872, by the beginning of 1856 even temperance's staunchest advocates became more concerned with other reforms, allowing the law to become weakened during later legislative sessions.

Conclusion

During the 1840s and 1850s, as it increased in popularity and became more radical, the temperance movement captured a transition from an older morality to a newer one. As industrialization took root, Middletown, like other areas of the country, was adopted morality dependent on the new economic system. As the new industrialists became part of the city's elite, they modified many of the virtues valued by the older elite. Traditional views about temperance, meaning the limited consumption of alcohol became the radicalized as teetotalism. Ideas of civic responsibility and republicanism still resonated in the 1840s, even as few members of the old elite were drawn to the movement. These views were fused with new ideals like upward mobility and self-improvement. Temperance became a marker of respectability, but also a pathway towards a better future. If a young man abstained from alcohol, he could advance economically, socially, and religiously. Temperance was both a virtue and a means to a better position in life. The modified ideology appealed to more than the new industrialists; men of all social standings saw temperance was a way to improve their status and their society, and seized the opportunity. While the older generation, through organizations like the MSSS, believed that people would simply emulate society's elite, they never appealed to the possibility that new men might join society's elite. During the antebellum period temperance responded to great economic and social turbulence; the ideology of upward mobility became a significant motivation for the temperance movement.

Temperance was seen as pathway to improvement; supporters emphasized how it would benefit individuals' lives and strengthen the nation.

As the nation moved closer to Civil War, interest in temperance waned. Temperance and prohibition became less important aspects of the political debate. Although alcohol remained banned in Connecticut it was no longer the political issue that it was in the early 1850s. Eventually, temperance and prohibition returned as vital issues on the political scene. However, when it returned as a political issue following the Civil War, the movement had changed; its center moved from New England to the Midwest, women became the dominant figures through organizations like the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and prohibition was advocated nationally by the Prohibition Party. The advances made by supporters in the early 1850s had largely evaporated. When Connecticut repealed *An Act for the Suppression of Intemperance* in 1872, it was one of the few states to have a Maine Law still on its books. Despite these changes a local temperance movement continued to exist. Within Middletown, local chapters of the WTCU and Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America (CTAU) were formed; Benjamin Douglas was president of the Connecticut Temperance Society in the 1870s, and another resident, Ira Gardner was the Prohibition Party's candidate for governor. However, the later decades of the nineteenth century, the temperance movement once again adopted different moral arguments.

In the decades following the Civil War, abstinence continued to be viewed as a virtue; however, its relationship to upward mobility was lessened. Women's temperance organizations emphasized how abandoning temperance harmed the

family, not how becoming temperate would improve an individual's place in society. This reversal of values is significant because it might have marked a greater change in American society; the family although valued by previous temperance advocates, became the center of the debate over alcohol. As industrial society matured, the ideals of upward mobility and self-improvement and their relationship to temperance had lessened, replaced with one which emphasized something which was more easily attainable. Perhaps the appeal to upward mobility and self-improvement worked best during the early years of the industrial revolution as relationships between employee and employer, artisan and manufacturer, were fluid, and class mobility appeared easily achieved. Just as the temperance movement in the antebellum period had captured a moment of transition from an older economic system and sense of morality to a more industrialized and market driven economy and its accompanying morality, the later phases of the temperance movement would be influenced by other cultural factors. These distinctions between different moralities and the temperance movement can be lost if the temperance movement is treated as stagnant throughout its long existence.

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