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Sobering Up the Magdalenes’ Drunken Sisters: The Institutional Treatment of “Female Drunken Pests” in Scotland, 1900-15

Thora Hands

Abstract. The inebriate reform campaign of late Victorian and Edwardian Britain has attracted historical attention because women were the main targets of institutional treatment. The confinement of women within inebriate reformatories highlights the political and medical debates about alcohol consumption and reflects the wider social context of class and gender inequality. Yet the historiography tends to glide over the subject of alcohol consumption despite the fact that all the women sent to inebriate reformatories were alcohol consumers. This article analyses the treatment of women within two inebriate reformatories in Scotland. It will argue that although inebriate reform was encased within class and gender inequality, attitudes towards alcohol consumption also played a key role in the confinement and management of “drunken” women. Alcohol consumption may have been used as a means of locking women up but within reformatories it was also used to differentiate types of deviancy and formulate treatment regimes.

Introduction

In Victorian and Edwardian Britain, attitudes towards many social problems were steeped in the class and gender bias of the time and drunkenness was no exception. As the pressure from temperance groups mounted and prisons, asylums, and city streets seemed to be filling with drunkards, debates about alcohol licensing, regulation, and control rebounded within the political arena. The drink question was a hot political topic that caught the eye of a group of doctors who lobbied parliament for legislation to allow habitual drunkenness to be treated as a disease requiring institutional confinement. The Inebriates Acts of 1879 and 1898 provided convenient political solutions to the perceived moral and physical scourge of intemperance affecting men and women of all social classes, but increasingly and most visibly among the “lower ranks” of society. The Acts allowed for the creation and regulation of private inebriate retreats for the wealthier classes and state or local authority run inebriate reformatories for criminal drunkards. In theory, inebriate reform cut across class and gender boundar-
ies to create medical institutions that offered treatment for drunken men and women of all social classes. However, in practice, the Inebriates Acts created a two-tier system of private care for the wealthy and imprisonment for the poor. In addition, the reformatories mainly targeted poor working class women who comprised the majority of people sentenced under the Acts. At the turn of the twentieth century, women’s drinking was situated at the core of many debates about racial degeneration, moral decay, crime, prostitution, and child neglect. So it was no surprise that four out of the five certified inebriate reformatories in Scotland were for women only and the State Reformatory at Perth Prison also dealt mainly with women.

This gender imbalance has been analysed by historians of inebriate reform who agree that the Inebriates Acts brought into focus many late Victorian social and political anxieties regarding women and alcohol consumption. As Beckingham notes, the Acts were the permissive legislation of liberal government and while there may have been a pressing political desire for the segregation and reform of problem drunkards, only the most visibly deviant groups fell under the scope of the Acts which denied personal liberty and the freedom to drink. In very simple terms, the Acts were designed to facilitate the detention and reform of problem drinkers but it was a matter for local authorities and magistrates to decide who those problem drinkers were and indeed if they should be sent to inebriate reformatories. In Scotland and England most local authorities that made use of the Inebriates Acts identified problem drinkers among poor, working-class women. McLaughlin argues that “fallen women made way for their drunken sisters” implying that the inebriate reformatories were a reincarnation of the Magdalene Homes for prostitutes, therefore serving as institutions to contain the shifting boundaries of deviant femininity. This view is shared by Hunt, Mellor and Turner and by Valverde who view the reformatories and the use of the Acts as illustrative of late Victorian imperial anxieties about drunken mothers and diseased prostitutes posing a threat to racial supremacy and social morality.

This article builds upon the historiography to analyse the treatment of women within two inebriate reformatories in Scotland: Girgenti Certified Inebriate Reformatory near Glasgow and the State Inebriate Reformatory situated within Perth Prison. It will be argued that although inebriate reform was encased within debates about liberty and social control and was framed by wider issues of class and gender inequality and imperialism, attitudes towards women’s alcohol consumption also played a key role in the confinement and management of “drunken” women. It will also be shown that alcohol consumption may have been used as a means of locking women up but within reformatories it was also used to differentiate types of deviancy and formulate treatment regimes.
LOCKING UP DRUNKEN WOMEN
Scotland’s “spectacular” capacity for drinking anything alcoholic, coupled with the resistance of its population to the moral regulations of sobriety imposed by restrictive liquor licensing, rational recreation, and temperance, meant that inebriate reform faced a challenge north of the border.\(^7\) Local authorities were reluctant to open inebriate reformatories mainly because the problems of drunkenness were so widespread that the financial costs involved in running a reformatory that dealt with very small numbers of drunkards outweighed any possible benefits.\(^8\) Between 1900 and 1914 there were six institutions for the detention of drunkards in Scotland: one State Inebriate Reformatory at Perth and five Certified Inebriate Reformatories established and run by local authorities: Girgenti Home near Glasgow, Greenock House of Refuge, Aberdeen Seabank Reformatory, Lanarkshire Inebriate Reformatory and the Scottish Labour Colony in the Borders. Of these institutions, five were for the detention of women only, the Scottish Labour Colony was for men, and the State Reformatory at Perth was for men and women, although it dealt mainly with women.

The State Reformatory opened in 1901 as an adjunct to the Criminal Lunatics Department within Perth Prison and as such it fell under the management of the Prison Commissioners for Scotland.\(^9\) It served a dual purpose: to detain prisoners convicted under Section 23 of the 1898 Inebriates Act for serious drink-related crime, which in most cases involved child cruelty and also to hold the “unmanageable” inmates who had been convicted under Section 24 of the 1898 Act for repeated drink related offences and sent to one of the certified reformatories then transferred to Perth for violent or disruptive behaviour.\(^10\) The Girgenti Home also opened in 1901 and was located in Ayrshire, approximately 20 miles from Glasgow, on 55 acres of farmland near the town of Stewarton. Its rural location meant that the women sent there from the Glasgow police courts were kept far enough away from the “temptations” of public houses and liquor sellers. Both these institutions contained “drunken” women found in Scottish towns and cities. The quote below from Dr. James Dunlop, the government inspector of inebriate reformatories in Scotland, sums up the ethos of inebriate reform in Scotland:

Experience gained in Scotland has shown that [inebriate reformatories] for the care and treatment of inebriates can fulfil useful functions... reformatories have been found to be of value as places of segregation and control of drunken pests, and to some extent as curative institutions... the reformatory is of a sufficient size to accommodate all the worst of the female drunken pests, and has been fully taken advantage of, and the removal of those drunken pests from the towns has been found to be very beneficial, their removal having resulted in a marked diminution in the number of drunken and riotous scenes of that town.\(^11\)
In Dunlop’s opinion, the main value of the reformatories was the containment and control of “female drunken pests.” In the vernacular of the time, these were “low women”: drinkers, thieves, beggars, and prostitutes who existed on the social and economic margins of society, often unmarried, separated, or widowed, some with children to support. These women dabbled in crime in order to survive poverty and difficult circumstances and therefore their behaviour, including their drinking behaviour became a matter of public concern or in some cases, scorn:

[These women] make the lower streets of all our large cities a by-word for evil. The vileness and degradation are so gross, so open, and unashamed and so contaminating... These women are like children in many respects – they are happier under firm government. The great lessons they have to learn are self-restraint and endurance, the want of which have been the cause of their downfall.12

This quote comes from a letter written by Elizabeth Grant to the editor of The Scotsman newspaper in 1908. It not only shows that condemnation of drunken women existed outside the boundaries of patriarchy but also highlights the main criticisms levelled at “female drunken pests”: they were weak willed, degraded, lacked any morality and self-control, and worse still were contaminating other women with their “vile” behaviour.

Grant’s vitriol against her less fortunate sisters can be situated within wider discourses on drunken women. Writing in 1915, Dr. Arthur Shadwell, an epidemiologist, stated that:

A large proportion of female drunkards are prostitutes, who drink at all times, and are not affected by the conditions which tend to sobriety among the rest of the community. The other reason is that the bulk of the habitual inebriates or dipsomaniacs among the lower classes are women, and with inebriates drink is a prime necessity. They must have it whatever else they forego.13

Shadwell’s “scientific” findings aligned women’s drinking behaviour with deviancy and pathology. So in effect, any lower class drunken woman was most likely a prostitute or an alcoholic. This view was fairly typical among medical men, social reformers and journalists who had an interest in the drinking culture of the urban poor, which to them appeared alien and immoral:

There is at least one public house within a stonethrow of the Tron clock where a license holder, in order to lure customers, supplies beer and porter at a penny a glass. In this grog shop there is no sitting accommodation, and sometimes in the space in the front of the bar there is a dead wall of human beings four deep, drinking, cursing, and indulging in the coarsest of ribald talk... Not in the worst dens of New York can a more brutalised crowd be witnessed. Bare-headed and barefooted women with infants in their arms, uncouth Magdalenes scarred with the leprosy of sin [and] men on the borderland of delirium tremens.14
The quote above which appeared as a part of a journalistic account of the “darker side” of Glasgow in The North British Daily Mail in 1897, exemplifies the “othering” of urban poor and also the preoccupation with the sexuality and drinking habits of poor women. At the turn of the twentieth century most of Glasgow’s drinking establishments were situated in or near the city’s most heavily populated working class districts where it was usual to find a pub at every street corner. In these areas, alcohol played an important social and cultural role in the lives of the men and women who consumed it. Drinking establishments such as pubs, alehouses, private clubs, music halls and shebeens were more than simply venues for intoxication; they were places to socialise, do business, or to escape overcrowding and poor living conditions. Women drank in the “lower class” pubs and shebeens but also bought alcohol from pubs or licensed grocers for consumption off the premises. Among the urban poor, it was the cultural norm for women to drink, so in this sense the slums were the “ideal” place to observe and analyse the behaviour of drunken women, which to middle class eyes seemed deviant and appalling.

While the conduct of “female drunken pests” was all too public and shameful, a more private shame was found in the homes of drunken mothers. An article on child neglecters in The Scotsman in 1907 stated that:

Several cases are reported which [have] resulted in the detention of women in the reformatories. In the first instance that is recorded, the woman pawned everything possible. Her children were in a filthy condition, and the clothing, which was verminous, consisted of one garment apiece. The living room was caked with dirt, the bedding horribly filthy, and the stench of the whole house abominable. The woman was committed to a reformatory.

The Scottish National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SNSPCC) brought cases of child neglect and cruelty to the police courts. Between 1896 and 1906 the annual reports of the SNSPCC were filled with cases of child neglect that were attributed to the actions of drunken mothers. During 1906 the Glasgow Committee of the SNSPCC dealt with five cases of child neglect under the Inebriates Act: one woman was sent to the Lanarkshire Inebriate Reformatory and the remaining four were sent to the State Reformatory at Perth. Case 961 was a married woman with four young children who “became a victim of intemperate habits.” Both the woman and her husband had several previous convictions for child neglect and one of their children had died. The SNSPCC ensured that the woman was convicted under the Inebriates Act and sentenced to serve three years at the State Reformatory at Perth. Her children were sent to stay with a relative. The Glasgow Committee speculated on the causes of child neglect and were increasingly inclined towards blaming drunkenness:

Another truth that experience is teaching the Committee is that, in a very large
The “truth” that drunken mothers were the cause of child neglect was framed by wider concerns about racial degeneration and imperial decline. This resulted in the elevation of motherhood and the focus on the health and reproductive capacities of working class women. Historians have argued that public health campaigns targeted working class mothers because they were considered a liability to the moral and physical standards of the British Empire. However, the inebriate reformatory records show that the desire to lock up drunken women did not exist only on a political or ideological level but also on a more basic social level. The case of Isabella T., who spent time in both the Girgenti and Perth reformatories shows that families were sometimes complicit in the detention of drunken relatives. Also, because Isabella’s case blurred the distinctions between drunken pests and drunken mothers, it highlights one of the main problems inherent in the Inebriates Acts, namely the confusion regarding appropriate sentencing and treatment of criminal drunkards. Within the inebriate reformatory “system” no one could agree whether Isabella was mad, bad, or drunk; but to her husband, she was all three.

Isabella T. was admitted to Girgenti in July 1901 with a history of twenty-five convictions for drunkenness, disorderly conduct, indecent behaviour and importuning (a term which was applied to both soliciting for prostitution and begging). She claimed to have been separated from her husband Robert for eighteen months during which time she had been supporting herself through prostitution. Isabella was 29 and had three children. Her drinking behaviour was recorded as “regularly intemperate” for three years and “excessive” for 18 months. She drank whisky and stout and was described as a “social drinker” but “violent when intoxicated” and she blamed her drinking habits on “bad companions.” Isabella was a difficult inmate, refusing to conform to the institutional regime and after a few months of disruptive and violent behaviour she was transferred to the State Reformatory at Perth where she remained until 1903 when she was certified insane and removed to Woodilee Asylum near Glasgow. During her detention in the Perth reformatory, Isabella’s difficult behaviour continued. On some occasions she refused food and would not leave her cell and at other times she was violent and abusive towards inmates and officers. On several occasions she was physically restrained in a canvas jacket or in handcuffs and her diet was restricted to bread and water as a punishment for tearing up her clothing and refusing food. The Medical Superintendent, Dr. McNaughton,
believed that Isabella was not a suitable candidate for reform and that she should be certified insane and transferred to an asylum:

[Isabella] is a low moral type, always cross and irritable and difficult to control. I have no hesitation in saying that she is quite unsuited for Reformatory treatment. She has no desire to lead a better life, and her violent and threatening behaviour keeps Warders and Lunatics in a constant state of unrest. I would urge her removal to a prison asylum as a person of unsound mind.\(^{24}\)

In order to secure her removal he contacted Dr. James Dunlop, the inspector of inebriate reformatories in Scotland. Dunlop then wrote to Isabella’s husband Robert in order to gain additional background information. Robert’s letter described in great detail his married life with Isabella and her problematic drinking behaviour which he believed grew steadily worse when they moved house and she made new friends:\(^{25}\)

When I ask her at eleven or twelve when she came home what she meant, she’d make a charge at me with a bread knife or a poker and dance and scream cursing and swearing. This, Sir, continued for several months, some days so many as six or seven drunken women would sit in our house drinking with her at my expense. She suited them as they saw she was a bit daft, and about my time to come home at night they would all go and her along with them. Some nights she never came home at all. I by this time, kept part of my wages every Saturday in fact all I could get a hold of to buy the children food every night for there never was a crust in the house when I went home – the children standing in the close waiting perhaps for hours on me coming. It was winter and a cold wet winter it was nice Sir – mother sitting drinking in a pub singing drunk and her poor little children starving with hunger. She ought to be drowned.\(^{26}\)

Robert left Isabella and took the children with him. He described his wife as having a “weak intellect” and of being selfish, cruel and immoral. He claimed that she had beaten their children, sold the family furniture and had become a prostitute in order to fund her drinking habits. The letter reads like a template for deviant femininity crafted by a desperate and angry man who wanted to keep his wife locked up. Isabella was not asked to provide her side of the story and instead judgements on her mental state and suitability for reformatory treatment were based upon her husband’s account of their life together and on her behaviour within the reformatory.

The Inebriates Acts provided the legal means to lock up women like Isabella T. who not only challenged popular concepts of respectable and sober femininity but on a more basic level, caused harm and shame to their families. However, once confined within the reformatories, the treatment of “female drunken pests” and drunken mothers lost its political edge. A constant source of complaint from those involved with inebriate reformatories such as local authorities, prison commissioners and reformatory staff was that the Inebriates Act only dealt with criminal drunkards, many of who were found to be difficult to reform.\(^{27}\) When faced with this apparent
mass of deviant drunken femininity, staff created institutional regimes that were guided by the regulations set down by the 1898 Act but also shaped by their own attitudes towards women’s alcohol consumption and drunken behaviour.

The basic premise of the inebriate reformatory was to turn heavy drinking criminals into sober, industrious workers. This was to be achieved through institutional regimes that instilled discipline, sobriety and moral guidance. The maximum sentence imposed for detention within inebriate reformatories was three years but it was stipulated that efforts should be made to release inmates on licence to an approved guardian for a proportion of their sentence. The superintendents and medical officers were charged with “restoring the powers of both body and mind” in order to “strengthen moral tone and restore self control” among inmates. Sobriety was paramount and alcohol was strictly forbidden, even for the resident reformatory staff who had to remain teetotal for the duration of their employment. Although these guidelines applied to both State and Certified reformatories, the regimes at Girgenti and Perth developed in different ways.

The Girgenti Home was located in the Ayrshire countryside on a farm where the emphasis was on reforming the inmates through “fresh air” and the discipline of indoor and outdoor work. Girgenti was run as a local authority home managed by a Mr. and Mrs. King who served as Superintendent and Matron. There was a resident medical officer, Dr. John Cunningham, who played a key role in assessing and treating inmates but Girgenti was not intended to be a medical or a penal institution, the emphasis was very much on moral reform. Security within the home was lax and escapes were numerous. In contrast, the Perth reformatory was situated within a prison and, more specifically, within the Criminal Lunatics Department. It was managed by the Governor of Perth Prison and run by medical officers who were responsible for both the reformatory inmates and the lunatics within the prison. Central to both institutions were the same basic tenets of sobriety, hard work, and moral reform. Yet there was no doubt that the Perth reformatory was the penal option for dealing with more serious drink related crime and for holding the difficult or “hopeless” inmates who were filtered through local authority homes like Girgenti.

**Weeding out the Hopeful from the Hopeless in Girgenti**

Both reformatories recorded basic information and background histories of inmates admitted, although the Girgenti records contained far more detail than those kept at Perth. As Table 1 shows, the majority of women admitted to Girgenti were either single or separated and some had children to support. This challenges the argument put forward by some historians that the Inebriates Acts were mainly used against women because magistrates were reluctant to remove the main breadwinner from the home since it
would plunge the family into poverty.\textsuperscript{30} Some of the Girgenti inmates were the sole breadwinners and, for those that were married and working, their wages would have made a significant contribution to the family income. One of the Girgenti inmates, Annie M., who was admitted in August 1901, was married to a man described as being “in delicate health.” Between them they had thirteen children to support. Annie had been employed as a housekeeper but had a string of convictions for drunkenness, obscene language, and breach of the peace. Despite her personal circumstances and her pleas to be released for the sake of her husband and children, Annie remained in Girgenti or on license to a guardian until 1904.\textsuperscript{31}

The Girgenti inmates were mainly women of Scottish or Irish origin professing both Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths, living in Glasgow and occupied in an array of low-skilled, unsecure jobs.\textsuperscript{32} Levels of education and basic literacy varied considerably, and some inmates were completely illiterate. The women were given the classifications of “hopeful,” “doubtful,” or “hopeless” with regards to their prospects for reform. The “hopeless” cases were divided into two classes: the “vicious and uncontrolable, verging on insane” and the “physically deteriorated that were beyond hope of productive work.”\textsuperscript{33} The Superintendent and Matron argued that the home was not a suitable place for these types of women as they were considered to be beyond any hope of reform. They believed that two thirds of the inmates sent to Girgenti were either “vicious and lazy” or “physically unfit.”\textsuperscript{34} Indeed Glasgow Corporation complained that most of the women sent to Girgenti should instead be charged to the local parishes as paupers or held within the prison system.\textsuperscript{35} The physical fitness of the women mattered because work was central to the Girgenti regime. Inmates were encouraged to engage in domestic and outdoor work since this was believed to provide both suitable training and restorative physical exercise. This type of work differed from other certified reformatories such as Greenock and Aberdeen, where inmates were employed in commercial laundry work, which generated substantial revenue. Table 2 shows the daily schedule within the reformatory.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Marital status and dependant children of Girgenti inmates 1901-9}
\begin{tabular}{lrr}
\hline
Marital Status & Total & With Children \\
\hline
Single & 38 & 4 \\
Married & 28 & 13 \\
Separated & 24 & 8 \\
Widowed & 3 & 2 \\
\hline
Total & 93 & 27 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textit{Source: ML, TD1574/7, Girgenti Case Book, (1901-1909)}
Recreation time involved religious observance, letter writing and social activities such as lectures and concerts. The regime centred on moral improvement perhaps because many of the inmates were listed as either prostitutes or paupers and some had “done the rounds” of various institutions in Glasgow such as the lock hospitals, poor houses, asylums, and prisons. These were poor women who had spent their lives struggling through poverty and ill health. They were also women who had spent most of their lives drinking. Therefore it is hardly surprising that, when they found themselves faced with the prospect of three years of enforced sobriety and moral reform, many resisted the Girgenti regime.

The punishments and escapes from Girgenti were numerous. The main breaches of discipline usually involved: using obscene or threatening language, refusal to conform to orders, refusal to work, fighting with other inmates and absconding from a guardian when out on license, in which case inmates were returned to Girgenti and punished. The main form of punishment used was solitary confinement in an isolation room, usually for twenty-four hours. Other punishments included loss of tea allowance, and letter writing privileges, usually for a period of weeks. More serious offences resulted in transfer to other institutions such as Ayr prison, or Perth State reformatory. The escapes were frequent and numerous with some inmates making repeated bids for freedom during their sentence. A typical escapee was Elizabeth W., a 17 year-old single woman, sent to Girgenti in December, 1903. Elizabeth was an orphan from Liverpool, who had worked as a ballet girl before moving to Glasgow in June 1903 to work as a charwoman. Her escape record is representative of those inmates who chose not to stay in Girgenti:

January 23rd 1904: escaped
February 15th 1904: readmitted
February 25th 1904: escaped

Table 2: Daily Schedule of the Girgenti Reformatory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00 am</td>
<td>Inmates called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 am</td>
<td>Breakfast / prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:45 am</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 pm</td>
<td>Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Recreation / private work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45 pm</td>
<td>Prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 pm</td>
<td>Bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 pm</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ML, TD1574/7, Girgenti Case Book, (1901-1909)
February 26th 1904: readmitted
March 18th 1904: escaped for one hour
May 1st 1904: escaped
May 10th 1904: readmitted
June 15th 1904: escaped
June 17th 1904: readmitted
June 25th 1904: escaped and readmitted
September 7th 1904: escaped
September 10th 1904: readmitted
October 2nd 1904: escaped
October 10th 1904: sent to Ayr prison for 10 days
October 20th 1904: readmitted

Elizabeth, and many like her, refused to conform to the Girgenti regime and took advantage of the fact that security was somewhat lax and the opportunity to escape often presented itself. Interestingly, Elizabeth’s bids for freedom stopped during July and August 1904. This may have been because she was selected as a candidate for Dr. Cunningham’s “special drug treatment.”

Cunningham was the resident medical officer at Girgenti during the entire period of its operation from 1901 to 1909. In his role as the resident doctor, he recorded the physical and mental conditions of inmates upon admission and during their stay and also noted their drinking preferences and behaviour. Many of the women were in a poor physical condition when they came to Girgenti and suffered from a variety of complaints ranging from bad teeth and stomach problems to syphilis and more serious heart and circulatory diseases. Their drinking habits were categorised by the “type” of drinker that they were, for example “social” or “solitary” and by what they drank. Most of the women drank whisky and porter, a type of stout, and some also smoked tobacco and used other intoxicants such as laudanum and chlorodyne. The women were also classified by their type of drunken behaviour, for example, “gloomy,” “cheerful” or “violent” and were asked to give a reason for their drinking, which in most cases was given as “bad companions” but other reasons included “death of a husband,” “death of a child,” “want of home comforts,” “pain,” “depression of spirits,” “husband drowned at sea,” and “nothing special.” In his medical analysis of the Girgenti records, Smith notes that it is interesting that Cunningham made no attempt to gain an insight into the “inner life” of his patients or probe further into their reasons for drinking. These were poor women, living in difficult circumstances and many suffered ill health so they drank for a variety of reasons, which also reflected the many uses of alcohol in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. Cheap whisky would have served as an intoxicant and analgesic and porter was calorific enough
to act as a food supplement or substitute. Moreover, among the poorer working classes drinking alcohol was the cultural norm, therefore many of the Girgenti women may have had no particular reason for drinking.

Cunningham believed that most of the women had started drinking by “nipping whisky in the interval between meals, usually in the forenoon, on an empty stomach” and that alcohol was often used for its “sedative action on the nerves.”\(^\text{40}\) Cunningham’s observations led him to conclude that inebriety was a type of neurosis characterised by symptoms such as “insomnia, irritability, sorrow, anger, despair, fear, excitement, delusions and untruthfulness.”\(^\text{41}\) Arguably, these “symptoms” could also be attributed to the women’s reactions to a three-year sentence in a reformatory. He believed that “youth and physique” were more important than the number of convictions in terms of rehabilitation and that the best treatment for inebriety was “absolute abstinence from alcohol coupled with food, drugs, baths, work, recreation, exercise etc.”\(^\text{42}\)

Cunningham commenced a series of drug treatments on twenty-two selected inmates, including Elizabeth W., who “willingly” consented to a one-month course of treatment. No details are given of just how “willing” the patients were; however it is likely that the women were coerced in some way because the drug treatment was unpleasant and would have made them feel ill. The “treatment” consisted of a daily dose of atropine sulphate, quinine, sodium, ammonium, and aloin: a purgative cocktail that produced some nasty side effects such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea. Cunningham recorded the testimonials of inmates who underwent the drug treatment, and although they invariably listed the debilitating side effects, the accounts always ended with a positive declaration of good health – perhaps for fear of a repeated course of treatment. “While taking your medicine I may tell you that it operated on my bowels swiftly and my hair was coming out. It also caused a roughness in my throat. Up to the present time I feel in the best of health.”\(^\text{43}\) Cunningham believed that once the initial unpleasant side effects had passed, the medicine “acted as a tonic” and he noted one successful case where an inmate that had undergone treatment remained abstinent from alcohol after release.\(^\text{44}\) Some of the women selected for the drug treatment were, like Elizabeth W., resistant to the institutional regime. Along with their classification as types of drinkers, background histories and overall physical health, how women behaved within the reformatory was also considered an indicator of whether they were “hopeful” or “hopeless” candidates for reform.

Both the Superintendent and Matron believed that they were able to “weed out” the good from the bad inmates.\(^\text{45}\) In this sense, the Girgenti Home acted as a filter by sending on the more difficult or “hopeless” cases to the Perth reformatory. Isabella T. was not the only inmate to pass through both institutions. Another case was Rebecca M., a 22 year-old “prostitute”
from Glasgow admitted in January 1902. Rebecca had repeated convictions for indecent behaviour, assault, drunkenness and “importuning”, which was a term that referred to both begging for money and soliciting for prostitution. Both her parents were dead and she had entered domestic service aged 13 at which time she claimed that she “became a prostitute” and started drinking. Upon admission she was described as “bright and cheerful” but her behaviour became more problematic when she refused to work and repeatedly escaped from the home. She was finally transferred to Perth in March 1904.46 Once women like Rebecca M. and Isabella T. arrived at Perth they were classified and treated in a different way.

THE “CHILD NEGLECTERS” AND THE “TRANSFERS” IN PERTH

The women sent to the State reformatory at Perth Prison were admitted and assessed by the resident medical officer in charge. Between 1901 and 1915, two physicians managed the Perth reformatory. Dr. John McNaughton held the post of Medical Superintendent of the reformatory and Criminal Lunatic Department until he resigned in 1908. Thereafter the post of Medical Superintendent was made obsolete. Instead, Dr. James Sturrock, the Medical Officer for Perth Prison was given the added responsibility of managing the Criminal Lunatics Department and the Inebriate Reformatory. The post of Assistant Medical Officer was held by Dr. Lyell who worked under both McNaughton and Sturrock. Each of these men held different views on the causes of inebriety and the effectiveness of the inebriate reformatories but they all agreed that the Perth reformatory dealt with two distinct categories of women: the “child neglecters” that had been sent straight to Perth for drink-related child cruelty and the “transfers” sent from the various local authority homes. In McNaughton’s opinion:

The majority of the first class [the child neglecters], although they may have been intemperate for years, have few of the traits of the habitual criminal. As a rule, they are quiet and inoffensive, and all apparently wish to lead better lives... The second class [the transfers] are all unmanageable inmates from the Certified Inebriate Reformatories. The disorderly conduct which determined their removal has, in almost every case, a mental basis. They are “explosives” of a virulent type. The most unpromising feature of their cases is that drink is merely a concomitant, not the cause, of their criminal career.47

The Medical Superintendent’s reports from 1901 to 1915 consistently emphasised the perceived differences in character and behaviour between the child neglecters and the transfers. The 1904 report stated that efforts were made to prevent “contamination” of the drunken mothers by the “degraded class” of certified reformatory transfers, by keeping the inmates separated as much as possible.48 As the quote above suggests, McNaughton believed that most of the transfer cases were “hopeless mental defectives” for whom the label of inebriate held little relevance. He argued that
the transfers were resistant to reform and that many should be detained in a home for the feeble-minded. He also reported a high rate of relapse after the inmates had been released from the reformatory, with most “lapsing into their old drinking habits.” Lyell concurred with McNaughton’s views, believing that the “respectable married women who got drunk” were completely different from the “borderland cases” that were “neurotic women of the lowest order.”

Both McNaughton and Lyell believed that the transfers were degraded, weak willed and mentally defective. Their reasoning fits with the construction of the feeble-minded in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. As Jackson notes, during this time certain “deviant” groups of women were believed to pose a threat to social stability and it was therefore deemed imperative to control their behaviour and reproductive capacities through institutional confinement and reform. McNaughton and Lyell believed that the transfers were hopelessly physically and mentally degraded and therefore beyond the capacity for reform. However Sturrock did not share this view and instead he made a moral distinction between the “superior and respectable” drunken mothers and the “disreputable” transfers. He believed that the transfers were not all mentally defective and that they could control their drinking and criminal behaviour but chose not to. However he did concur that they were beyond hope of reform and that the most effective treatment for the transfers was indefinite detention in labour camps that imposed sobriety and moral guidance.

Sturrock’s views regarding the child neglecters were less moralistic. He examined the women and found evidence of gynaecological problems among the majority of the child neglecters, many of who claimed to have used alcohol to relieve physical pain. Sturrock believed that these women had become addicted to alcohol through its usage as a medicine. This made a significant difference to the way in which the women were viewed and treated within the reformatory. In the late Victorian and Edwardian periods alcohol was still widely prescribed by doctors and was a key ingredient in most medicines and tonics for pain relief. While there was less shame in a woman taking alcohol for pain, drinking for pleasure was a different matter altogether. There was also the belief held by some physicians that women simply could not control their alcohol intake and that caution was required when prescribing alcohol as medicine, as this quote from The Lancet in 1871 exemplifies:

A careful practitioner should always remember that women are especially sensitive, particularly during all that portion of their life which corresponds to the activity of sexual function, to the temporary delights of stupefaction. Hence, if he prescribes alcohol for them at all, it should not be for trivial ailments and miseries which are likely to recur frequently... For women are very apt to think that they cannot have too much of a good thing; and instead of taking the moderate dose which might relieve the pain without narcotising at
all, they are extremely likely to take a dose which narcotises – or in plain English, makes them slightly drunk.\textsuperscript{54}

If, as this quote suggests, women of the higher classes were felt to lack the ability to stick to a moderate dose of alcohol for pain relief without downing the lot and getting drunk, then women of the lower classes must have been considered even less likely to control their narcotic impulses. This apparent lack of self-control was central to how women were viewed and treated within the reformatory. It could explain the drunken mothers slide into alcoholism and also explain the transfers inability to reform because they were either too mentally degraded to possess any willpower or too morally corrupt to use it.

Yet when it came to trying to get out of Perth, some of the transfer cases appeared to possess a significant amount of willpower. In a suppressed letter written by Perth inmate Catherine S. to her mother in October 1915, Catherine stated:

\begin{quote}
If I had done a crime I would have first taken it as a punishment and said nothing, but to be ordered about and never anything to look forward to… my one prayer is to have my health and I will put up with the rest for it is an awful place to have anything wrong with you.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

Catherine was transferred to the Perth reformatory in August 1915 from the Greenock reformatory, another certified inebriate reformatory (which was also known as the “Greenock House of Refuge”), where she had already served two years of a three-year sentence for drink related crimes. Upon admission she lodged a formal complaint, claiming that she had been physically assaulted by the Superintendent of the Greenock reformatory. However, the Medical Superintendent at Perth dismissed the claim stating that there was no evidence of physical injury.\textsuperscript{56} Catherine also wrote to the Scottish Inspector of Inebriate Reformatories, Dr. Dunlop, asking for an early release, but her request was rejected. She then wrote to her sister asking for help in pursuing legal action against Dunlop:

\begin{quote}
Would you promise to do something for me, you remember the lawyer you were so many years with, I should go with you and we could [explain] that I am treated so unfairly by Dr. Dunlop. If only you knew what I have had to suffer since I came here, you will know some day when I tell you.\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

Catherine was eventually released in November 1916 when Dunlop approved her license to a guardian in Dundee, on the condition that she did not return to her home in Greenock. Catherine’s case file lacks any background information on her life before committal to the inebriate reformatories. However her letters express her sense of injustice and misery at being detained for three years for drunkenness, which she did not consider to be a criminal offence. Most importantly though, was the fact that she was not
Hands: Institutional Treatment of “Female Drunken Pests” in Scotland

only able to articulate her sense of injustice, but to also act upon it. This is hardly, the type of behaviour one would expect from a “degenerate” or “feeble-minded” individual.

Another of the transfer cases, Theresa N., requested transfer from the Greenock reformatory to Perth. Theresa was a repeat offender, who had been convicted at Dundee Sherriff Court 40 times for prostitution, drunkenness and importuning prior to her sentencing to the Greenock reformatory in 1908. The police report described Theresa as “a prostitute of drunken and immoral habit.” Theresa spent a year at the Greenock reformatory before being transferred to Perth in 1909. The Superintendent at Greenock stated that she had repeatedly made applications to be sent to the Perth reformatory and had written letters to friends asking them to “do their utmost to get her to Perth.” The reasons for Theresa’s request to be transferred to Perth are unknown, but she seemed to believe Perth was a better place to be than the Greenock reformatory. This may have been because the Greenock reformatory functioned as a commercial laundry where the women were made to work in order to generate funds for the maintenance of the reformatory. However the regime within Perth did not seem any easier. The daily routine for the drunken mothers and the transfers consisted of doing unpaid work for the female reformatory staff, the male and female criminal lunatics departments, and the reformatory. These duties included laundry, cooking, cleaning, sewing, mending and net-making. The women were also given daily lessons in literacy and numeracy, and were expected to participate in Swedish Drill, which was a type of physical exercise which also enforced discipline and obedience. Once she was sent to Perth, Theresa’s mother instructed lawyers to petition the Secretary of State for Scotland for her daughter’s early release on the grounds of ill health. The Prison Commissioners response stated that: “this is a neurotic woman, whose case is almost hopeless. I cannot advise her liberation on license.” Yet despite being a “hopelessly neurotic drunken prostitute,” Theresa N., like fellow inmate Catherine S., managed to make reasonably intelligent and assertive bids for transfer and release. These women were reluctant to engage with the institutional regimes because they believed that three years imprisonment for alcohol consumption was unjust. They may have lacked the willingness to reform but certainly did not lack the willpower to gain their freedom.

CONCLUSIONS
There are three main conclusions that can be drawn from this study. The first relates to the politics of inebriate reform. Valverde argues that the Inebriates Acts governed many things, such as criminality, urban disorder, prostitution, and neglectful mothers, and addressed imperialist concerns
over degeneracy and feeble-mindedness. Yet the Acts did little to govern inebriety. There is evidence to support this thesis in the Girgenti and Perth records which show that the reformatories acted as places of exclusion for “problem” individuals and groups but mainly failed in any remit to reform or cure habitual drunkards. However, the political allure of inebriate reform lost its edge within institutional settings. The guidelines for inebriate reformatories sketched out institutional regimes which were then coloured with the attitudes and judgments of the staff and doctors who dealt with women on a more pragmatic level, based upon a complex mix of medical, moral, and penal strategies. Secondly, along with class and gender, alcohol was another key factor in determining the treatment of women within the reformatories. Women’s drinking behaviour and reasons for consumption were encased within concepts of femininity and morality which in turn determined their classification as “hopeful” or “hopeless” candidates for reform. Thirdly, the inebriate reformatories were, as McLaughlin argues, institutions of containment for the shifting boundaries of deviant femininity. Yet this analysis misses one very basic fact that was stated by all of the women sent to Girgenti, which was that they all drank alcohol, some periodically, some to excess but the point is they all did it. For the Girgenti and Perth inmates, drinking alcohol was the cultural norm. Yet the prevailing historical focus on temperance history, inebriate reform, and the medicalisation of drunkenness misses the fact that for some women in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain, alcohol consumption played an important social and cultural role in their lives. These women may have been constructed as drunken pests and drunken mothers but from another angle they could be viewed as alcohol consumers caught in a political and ideological web.

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ENDNOTES

1. The report of the Royal Commission on Liquor Licensing Laws in 1899 included a summary of all twenty-seven parliamentary commissions on “the liquor traffic” in Great Britain and Ireland between 1817 and 1888. The report highlights the debates and controversies that underpinned the contradictory nature of alcohol legislation during the nineteenth century. However it also reveals the common threads of enquiry that ran through many of the parliamentary commissions such as the concern over controlling intemperance among the lower classes.

2. The concept of inebriety was popularised in the 1870s by a group of medical reformers and politicians led by the Scottish physician Dr. Norman Kerr, a prominent temperance campaigner and Medical Officer of Health for Marylebone. In 1876 Kerr formed the Society for Promoting Legislation for the Control and Cure of Habitual Drunkards, a medico-legal alliance that later became the British Society for the Study of Inebriety in 1884. Kerr and his associates were fervent advocates of the disease theory of addiction, and their political campaigns for the legal detention and institutional treatment of habitual drunkards resulted in the
Inebriates Acts of 1879 and 1898.


9. Between 1901-15 there were a total of 131 female admissions and 39 male admissions to Perth. Male admissions ended in 1915 when the male accommodation was converted into military barracks. The reformatory closed in 1924.

10. The full list of aims and intentions of the inebriate reformatories in Scotland can be found within Inebriate Reformatories (Scotland) Report of the Departmental Committee on the Rules of Inebriate Reformatories under the Inebriates Act 1898 (1909), House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (hereafter HCPP), C. 9175.


18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Glasgow Committee Report (1904), SNSPCC, GB1847, GCUA.


24. Memorandum from Dr. McNaughton (1902), [case file for Isabella T.]; State Inebriate
25. Superintendent’s Journal, State Inebriate Reformatory Perth (1901-1903); HH12/74/1, NAS.

26. Letter from Robert T. – husband (1901), [case file for Isabella T.]; SIR-P, HH19/1, NAS.

27. The annual reports of the Girgenti Home and of the State Reformatory at Perth contained complaints about the limits to the Inebriates Acts and the desire that the Acts should be extended to deal with non-criminal drunkards. The reports of the Prison Commissioners for Scotland and Glasgow Corporation contained similar complaints.


29. Ibid.


31. Girgenti Case Book (1901-1909) [case of Annie M.]; TD1574/7, ML.

32. Occupations included: hawkers, domestic servants, mill workers, charwomen, laundry maids, rag pickers, dairy maids, kitchen maids, and weavers.

33. Girgenti Annual Reports (1901); TD1574/1/1, ML.

34. Evidence of Mr and Mrs King, Superintendent and Matron of Girgenti Home, Departmental Committee on the Operation in Scotland of the Law Relating to Inebriates and their Detention in Reformatories and Retreats (1909), pp. 88-93; HCPP, Cd. 4707.

35. Girgenti Annual Reports (1902); TD1574/1/1, ML.

36. Girgenti Register of Inmates (1901-1909) [case of Elizabeth W.]; TD1574/4, ML.

37. The Girgenti Home was closed by Glasgow Corporation in 1909 when treasury funds were cut and it was believed that the home had proved ineffective in reforming habitual inebriates.

38. Girgenti Case Book (1901-1909); TD1574/7, ML.


40. Medical Officer’s Report, Girgenti Annual reports (1902); TD1574/1/1, ML.

41. Medical Officer’s Report, Girgenti Annual Reports (1907); TD1574/1/1, ML.

42. Medical Officer’s Report, Girgenti Annual Reports (1902); TD1574/1/1, ML.

43. Medical Officer’s Report, Girgenti Annual Reports (1905); TD1574/1/1, ML. The quote is from the testimony of Francis A (1905).

44. Medical Officer’s Report, Girgenti Annual Reports (1905); TD1574/1/1, ML.

45. Evidence of Mr. and Mrs King, Departmental Committee on the Operation in Scotland of the Law Relating to Inebriates and their Detention in Reformatories and Retreats (1909), pp. 88-93; HCPP, Cd. 4707.

46. Girgenti Case Book (1901-1909) [case of Rebecca M. (1902)]; TD1574/7, ML.


50. Evidence of Dr. Lyell, Assistant Medical Officer, Perth Prison, Departmental Committee on the Operation in Scotland of the Law Relating to Inebriates and their Detention in Reformatories and Retreats (1909), pp. 196-98; HCPP, Cd. 4707.

55. Catherine S to her mother, 7 October 1915 [case file for Catherine S.]; SIR-P, HH19/3, NAS.
57. Catherine S to her sister, 19 August 1916 [case file for Catherine S.]; SIR-P, HH19/3, NAS. This letter was suppressed.
58. [Case file for Theresa N. (1909)]; SIR-P, HH19/2, NAS.
59. Enquiry form from Perth to Dundee police (1909) [case file for Theresa N. (1909)]; SIR-P, HH19/2, NAS.
60. Letter from Greenock House of Refuge (1909) [case file for Theresa N. (1909)]; SIR-P, HH19/2, NAS.
61. Response of Prison Commissioner to Copy of Petition to Secretary of State for Scotland (2 December 1910); SIR-P, HH19/2, NAS.
Abstract. This paper highlights a pivotal yet understudied moment in the history of South Carolina and the American South: the South Carolina State Dispensary enacted under Governor Benjamin Tillman in 1892 and operated until 1907. The story of the State Dispensary offers an opportunity to study an embryonic Progressivism in South Carolina. The State Dispensary explicitly manifested measures of reform as understood in the Progressive Era – efficient government regulation to root out corruption and uphold morality – while adapting these measures to local cultural and political demands. Southern cultural ideals of manly honor and evangelical morality figured most prominently in these demands and fundamentally shaped the Dispensary’s development. Benjamin Tillman sought reforms that at once challenged these ideals while adapting to them. His Dispensary system symbolized the persistence of tradition and call for change that typified the slow transition to Progressivism in South Carolina.

South Carolina State Dispensary Commissioner W.O. Tatum proclaimed in his 1905 evaluation of the State Dispensary, “South Carolina is nothing if not original. Her solution of the vexatious liquor problem – the gravest and most all-pervading of the age – was such an innovation as to startle the world.” He continued “but its unquestionable success and the satisfaction with it of the great majority of the people who live under it is leading to [the] study of it in other states which have tried either prohibition or license regulation or both and are not satisfied with the results obtained.” However, a tranquil atmosphere of the kind so confidently described by Tatum in 1905 never developed around the state dispensary system he headed. That system granted a complete monopoly to the state of South Carolina for the sale and distribution of alcohol within its borders. It began operations in 1892 and continued until abolished by the state legislature in 1907.

The story of the State Dispensary offers an opportunity to study an embryonic Progressivism in South Carolina. The State Dispensary explicitly manifested measures of reform as understood in the Progressive Era – efficient government regulation to root out corruption and uphold morality.

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– while adapting these measures to local cultural and political demands. Southern cultural ideals of manly honor and evangelical morality figured most prominently in these demands and fundamentally shaped the Dispensary’s development. A contentious atmosphere plagued the Dispensary throughout its existence, as it was a frequent battleground issue between South Carolina’s dominant political factions, the “Conservative” establishment and the “Reform/Tillmanite” insurgency. Intrastate tensions between rural and urban, Low-country and Upstate, prosperous and poor, all found voice in this factional divide. Benjamin Tillman’s “Reform Movement” sought reforms that at once challenged these divisions while adapting to them. His Dispensary system symbolized the persistence of tradition and call for change that typified “Tillmanism” as well as a slow transition to Progressivism in South Carolina.

Benjamin Ryan Tillman’s political career began in the service of former Confederate General Wade Hampton during his “Redemption” campaign for Governor in 1876-77. Tillman built his early political success upon conspicuous service with Hampton’s “Red Shirts,” infamous for their violent persecution of black Republicans during this campaign. After Hampton’s election, however, Tillman divorced himself from what he saw as an increasingly corrupt state government that paraded Wade Hampton as its figurehead. Tillman cast himself as the vocal leader of the voiceless white farmer, held politically ignorant by Hampton and his elite Conservatives. According to Tillman, Hampton and his political legions sought only to advance the interests of their faction, invoking images of past Confederate glory and the specter of race war to render moot social class dissension among whites. All the while they pandered to the black vote at the expense of the white farmer.

During his ascendancy to the South Carolina governorship (two consecutive two-year terms from 1890 to 1894) and later the U.S. Senate (four consecutive six-year terms from 1894 to 1918), Tillman espoused a vehement racist vernacular, even defending lynching if it involved “a negro who had committed an assault upon a white woman.” He aimed to ensure white supremacy by disfranchising and segregating blacks. At the same time, he would politically empower white farmers through reforms that promoted their interests by regulating railroad rates, reining in corporations, and offering affordable education in agriculture and mechanical sciences. In doing so, Tillman employed an invective against the Conservatives that at once endeared him to the rural white masses while making him a pariah in Conservative circles, fomenting a political factionalism that colored nearly every aspect of South Carolina politics between 1890 and 1920.

Most historians tend to discuss Tillman in this context of Southern Popu-
lism and racial demagoguery. Historians who have analyzed the Populist and Progressive Eras in the South specifically present an opportunity to reevaluate Tillman’s Reform Movement – including the State Dispensary – as “Progressive” impulses, in the same sense that they grudgingly bestowed that label to segregation and disfranchisement laws of the period. According to these historians, racial segregation purported a stable social and political environment by diminishing the racial tensions that bred corruption and conflict. Therefore, these laws represented Progressive measures within the context of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century South. From this perspective, Tillman’s reforms – especially the State Dispensary system – seem similar to other Progressive measures that constituted the period’s overarching search for order.

Few historians have examined the Dispensary “experiment” in state regulation, and those who have done so have generally pursued one of three courses. For biographers of Tillman, the State Dispensary constitutes one issue in many he confronted in his personal and political career, and the system itself is neither analyzed nor placed in its own context. For historians of prohibition, the Dispensary generally receives cursory notice as a failed compromise option. And with one exception, the few theses that examine the Dispensary have couched it in a legal and economic context, but not a cultural and political one.

Just months before the state legislature enacted Tillman’s Dispensary law, Baptist Reverend John G. Williams of Allendale, South Carolina wrote several editorials decrying South Carolinians’ unhealthy relationship with alcohol. “The awful plight that South Carolina is in today,” he noted, “politically, financially, and morally, is due in great measure to the corrupting and destroying plague of whiskey.” He proceeded to place the debate over liquor in the context of longstanding conflicts between good and evil, using Biblical references to the “prophet Elijah” and the “wicked King Ahab” to represent the contemporary forces for and against prohibition. Williams echoed the concerns of many South Carolinians when he asserted, “Whiskey troubles the country with drunk[en] rows, with murders, with crimes of all sorts; It is the foe to all domestic peace and happiness, it corrupts and blights the young manhood of the country.” He went on to lament whiskey’s role in perpetuating poverty, corrupting politics and public life, and generally degrading community welfare. He closed by asserting: “Not one of these charges can be denied, or ever is denied.”

The Progressives were not the first to find Demon Rum the root of all evil. Regulation of alcohol in South Carolina dated to the colonial period and persisted in various forms – chiefly liquor taxes and licensing – through the Civil War. During the antebellum period, social reform movements gained momentum, and alcohol increasingly drew their ire. However, all of these early attempts at alcohol control reflected the era’s preference for
“moral suasion” of the individual rather than systemic solutions to social shortcomings. As such, they largely failed to engender widespread adherence, typically stimulating only infrequent and short-lived reform initiatives. South Carolina generally followed national trends in these respects.15

Following the Civil War, resurgent temperance sentiment in South Carolina eventually resulted in local option laws, which granted individual county governments the discretion to prohibit the production, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages. The state legislature passed this local option law in 1882, and several counties across the state exercised this discretion and voted out trade in liquor over the remainder of the decade. These initiatives differed from their antebellum counterparts in that they held society itself responsible for perceived moral deficiencies and sought to reform the social structure systematically by law. Despite these efforts, alcoholic excesses persisted. In 1891, continued concern regarding these excesses resulted in a general referendum at the state Democratic primary, where prohibition votes outnumbered the opposition. Though the vote carried no authoritative weight, it demonstrated widespread agreement with Rev. Williams’ consternation over alcohol and its effects in South Carolina. South Carolina again followed emerging regional, national and even international trends. Tillman’s gubernatorial administration occurred during this general high point of emphasis on temperance and prohibition, necessitating some form of state action, a role his dispensary law sought to fulfill.16

At its core, the dispensary law addressed the “liquor problem” in South Carolina by granting the state a complete monopoly over the sale and distribution of alcohol within its borders, in an effort to eliminate the corrupting influence of bars and saloons. It did so by establishing a central state dispensary through which all liquor sold legally had to travel. Local county dispensaries operated beneath this central state entity, and the law mandated they be located in municipalities and incorporated towns. The county dispensaries provided weekly reports to county boards of control, which convened at least once a month and reported on dispensary activity in the county to the State Board of Control.17

Under the law, revenue from the state dispensary system would be divided among the state, county, and municipal governments. The state’s profits derived from selling to the various county dispensaries. Each county contained one dispensary, and since the law directed it be located in a municipal center, the retail trade of these municipal dispensaries was divided evenly between the city and county governments. The law also established a constabulary to enforce the system. Initially, much of the enforcement and supervisory power within the dispensary system lay in the hands of the Governor and the State Dispensary Commissioner, who oversaw the activities of the constabulary and commercial operations, respectively. This
state-sponsored form of political patronage and fundraising drew the ire of Tillman’s political opponents, who abhorred its seemingly limitless potential for the aggrandizement of gubernatorial power and influence. This resistance contributed mightily to the factional political atmosphere surrounding the State Dispensary.\textsuperscript{18}

The dispensary law itself evolved significantly between its inception in 1892 and its demise in 1907. However, these changes never detracted from the initial spirit of the law and its intended social and cultural effects. Most of the alterations affected the organization and day-to-day operation of the system, designed to increase the efficiency and enforcement of the law while responding to legal and cultural resistance. The first dispensary law, the Evans Prohibition Bill, was hurried through the state legislature at the close of the session in December of 1892. Passed largely due to the factional influence of Tillman and his followers in the legislature, the law replaced a full-on prohibition bill that had passed the House and been held up in the Senate. Presumably, many voting on the Evan’s Prohibition Bill only vaguely understood either the letter of the law or its intent. Given this rather precarious legislative foundation, questions and contestations indubitably followed, in the form of court cases attacking various aspects of the law as well as direct physical assaults on the system in operation.\textsuperscript{19}

Legal disputes over the dispensary arose intermittently throughout the life of the system, beginning in 1894 with \textit{McCullough v. Brown}, wherein a partisan State Supreme Court ruled the 1892 Dispensary Act unconstitutional. The court, which consisted of two “anti-Tillmanite” or “conservative” judges and one Tillmanite, ruled that the Act involved the state in commercial pursuits and overextended the state police power regarding the sale of liquor, both of which the court deemed unconstitutional. Anticipating this decision by a partisan court and knowing that the tenure of one of the “conservative” judges expired in August of 1894, Tillman complied with the decision in the short-term but quickly secured the passage of a revised Dispensary Act in 1893, which fell beyond the purview of the \textit{McCullough v. Brown} decision. The 1892 law was dead, but the revised law went into effect on 1 August 1894 and promised to receive a favorable ruling from a reconstituted State Supreme Court now consisting of two Tillmanites and only one conservative.\textsuperscript{20}

This revised law greatly increased the power of the constabulary by enacting heavier fines for violations and increasing the internal policing of negligence by dispensary employees. Future changes to the dispensary system in 1895, 1897, and 1900 primarily affected the internal organization and external enforcement of the law, with each revision taking the 1893 version as a template. In spirit and purpose, the law remained true to its original form, with experience in operation necessitating “improvements” along the way.\textsuperscript{21}
This continual process of evolution did not prevent opponents from resisting the law, as demonstrated by the U.S. Supreme Court case *Donald v. Scott* in 1897 and the nearly continuous litigation faced by the system from that date forward. Conflict between federal and state law, especially the issue of interstate commerce involving liquor, provided the major point of contention. Ultimately, the court decided in *Donald v. Scott* that it was unlawful for a state to prevent private individuals from carrying “original package” liquor across state lines. This decision essentially stripped the constabulary of the right to search and seize liquor at the state line, and opened an avenue for “blind tiger” establishments where individuals could sell liquor thus brought into the state. Other court cases further limited the search and seizure ability of the constabulary by invoking similar arguments involving both interstate commerce and individual rights.22

The result of this copious litigation was a general weakening of the system’s enforcement capabilities, undermining the state’s monopoly by limiting the extent to which the state could exert its police power to enforce it. This structural weakening only exacerbated increasingly conspicuous leadership limitations, which combined to invite deep-seated corruption and graft that ultimately debilitated the dispensary system.23

While these legal attacks on the system fostered lively debate on the dispensary law itself, the physical assault known as the “Darlington Riot” or “South Carolina Whiskey Rebellion,” most vividly highlighted the socio-political situation into which the State Dispensary was born. The factionalism that permeated every aspect of South Carolina politics in the 1890s certainly shone through amidst the violent confrontation over the Darlington dispensary facility. Tillman’s Reform Movement threatened to turn the traditional social order on its head by allocating political power to formerly powerless lower class whites. The conservative political faction, which wielded most of the economic power within this traditional order due to its members’ status as propertied heads of household, constituted the primary opposition to Tillmanism, which based its support amongst the rural farmers over whom the conservatives exerted their political mastery. As governor, Tillman plainly grasped this dynamic when he declared, “I led a fight inside the Democratic party, the white man’s party, to free the State from the rule of these old Bourbons, who wanted the reins of government to rest entirely in the hands of themselves and those who would be subservient to their will.”24 He continued to emphasize the class conflict and factional politics driving resistance to his reforms – especially the State Dispensary – by proclaiming, “I was elected by an overwhelming majority, the greater part of my support coming from the agricultural classes, which had until then been practically deprived of a voice in the selection of the officers of the State government.”25

The newspapers, according to Tillman, had exacerbated this factional
divide and promoted class conflict among whites with their attacks on his Reform Movement and its State Dispensary. He said that they sought to “stir up against them the anger of the people in the towns and cities, the inhabitants of which constitute the opposition to the reform movement which resulted in my election.” Cleary, Tillman understood this factional divide as both a blessing and a curse for his reforms, as it enabled him to foment solidarity and political will among the white rural classes but also put the urban-backed upper crust more thoroughly on the defensive. In its design, the dispensary system acknowledged this fact by providing that county dispensaries be located exclusively in incorporated towns and cities and that half the proceeds from liquor retail remain in these locales. The system also anticipated resistance among the conservative urban class in its enforcement clauses, which empowered the state to withhold these funds from cities and towns that failed to enforce compliance with the dispensary law.

Darlington, county seat for Darlington County in the state’s northeastern corner, epitomized this conservative resistance, but the momentous “Darlington Riot” or “Whiskey Rebellion” began inauspiciously enough. In the spring of 1894, dispensary constables arrived in Darlington to search several places alleged to be selling illicit liquor. Any liquor not purchased through the dispensary was considered contraband, and upon finding several establishments and private homes engaged in the traffic of such contraband, the constables seized the illegal liquor and arrested the perpetrators. An assembly of increasingly hostile Darlington citizens numbering in the hundreds greeted these actions with rising resentment and ignited a bloody confrontation at the Darlington train station. One constable in particular, J.D. McLendon, endured significant insult from Frank Norment, a Darlington citizen. In his rhetoric and behavior, McLendon acted on long-standing notions of southern manly honor. He declared Norment’s abuses an obstruction of justice as well as a personal affront, and began firing his pistol in answer to these perceived insults. According to the traditional southern honor code, a man was duty-bound to defend his reputation – violently if necessary – when confronted with public insults. McLendon’s response clearly demonstrated his adherence to this code of honor. From this personal honor dispute a general shootout ensued, resulting in several casualties among both constabulary and citizenry. The surviving constables escaped to the woods and remained hidden in the local swamps while a posse composed of Darlington citizens as well as citizens from the neighboring towns of Florence and Sumter scoured the surrounding countryside in pursuit. Four other constables, who had left Darlington by way of another train station, had their car riddled with bullets when passing this mob.

Benjamin Tillman was almost perfectly reared to understand the sense of honor involved in both the enforcement of and resistance to his State Dispensary. He had been born in Edgefield County, South Carolina, a district
in the southern part of the state long-renowned for its honor-bound violence. George McDuffie represented the county in the U.S. Senate during the 1820s, and fought several duels with fellow politicians during his tenure in Washington. Andrew Pickens Butler, another U.S. Senator from Edgefield, had likewise displayed his prowess on the field of honor during the 1840s and 1850s. Preston Smith Brooks, the notorious Congressional Representative who battered Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner with the gutta percha cane in 1856, also hailed from Old Edgefield. And Tillman’s own had family figured just as prominently in this Edgefield tradition for honor and violence. His eldest brother, George D. Tillman, had been forced to flee the country in 1856 after an honor-bound dispute in which he shot and killed a local mechanic over a game of cards. Another older brother, John Tillman, had been shot and killed by members of a local rival family in 1850.

This community tradition for honor and violence had molded Governor Tillman’s own sense of honor. His Edgefield home and his family history both provided vivid examples of honor’s violent defense. As such, Tillman was not unlike many South Carolina men who came of age after the Civil War. Having missed the opportunity to assert their honor in the war, they actively sought other avenues to establish their honor and manhood in its wake. Benjamin Tillman’s active support of Wade Hampton’s Redshirts provided one such opportunity; the attacks on his Gubernatorial Administration and its State Dispensary provided another, and Tillman clearly understood them as such.

Governor Tillman’s reaction to the 1894 Darlington Riot exemplified this sense of honor, both personal and public. Believing the disturbance represented a statewide conspiracy to frustrate the constabulary, destroy the dispensary, and promote general insurrection against his state government, he acted immediately to answer the affront. When he summoned the state militia forces of Columbia, Manning, Sumter, and Charleston, however, the commander of these forces, Brigadier General T.A. Huguenin of Charleston, responded tersely: “The brigade will uphold and defend the honor of the state, but it will not lend itself to foment civil war among our brethren.” The invocation of traditional manly honor codes thus permeated reactions to the dispensary’s operation.

In response, Tillman issued a general call to militia companies statewide, as well as a call for volunteers among his most ardent supporters – the rural farmers across the state. In doing so, Tillman also invoked the honor code by appealing to these farmers’ manhood and the duty to defend the honor of the governor, the state, and in the broadest terms, their own households. Five hundred fully armed men quickly gathered in Columbia, with several hundred and perhaps thousands more ready to deploy, when Tillman sent
word that his forces were sufficient and the crisis averted. This show of
armed support proved enough, and resistance subsided after the “fugitive
constables” returned to Columbia unharmed and Tillman received assur-
ance that dispensary operations in Darlington would resume without inci-
dent. The Darlington Riot essentially ended outright opposition to the State
Dispensary, but coercive and clandestine resistance continued to afflict the
system. As Tillman’s political focus and influence expanded from South
Carolina into the national arena, these opposing factions forced dispensary
leaders to loosen their control, inviting the graft and corruption that eventu-
ally spelled the dispensary’s doom.

All of these legal and physical attacks on his State Dispensary between
1891 and 1894 provoked Tillman’s most concerted attempts to defend that
system and its intended purpose. His public defense of the dispensary dur-
ing and after these attacks to a regional and increasingly national audience
did not mark any monumental shifts in his perspective or in the design of
the dispensary system itself. Tillman’s strong public backing of the State
Dispensary as the most promising and practical solution to the liquor prob-
lem reiterated his belief in the system from its inception.

Early in his term as Governor, Tillman’s utterances regarding liquor traf-
fic and consumption revealed his burgeoning concern over the moral and
political corruption of the saloons and his desire for state intervention to
address these ill effects. In his message to the general assembly’s regular
session in 1891, Tillman professed:

I desire to direct your attention to a question of great importance, with which
the welfare of society and the economical administration of the government
are closely connected… Now, while I do not believe it is practicable, or even
desirable, to attempt the absolute prohibition of the sale of liquor in the State,
no sensible man will deny that one-half or three-fourths of the crimes com-
mitted in the State, are traceable directly to the drinking of whiskey. He closed by stressing: “The people in the country not only pay tribute to
those who sell liquor – by means of which the towns are beautified and
adorned – but they pay tax for the suppression of crime produced by the
maintenance of these bar-rooms. It is unjust and unequal and ought to be
stopped.”

Tillman, at this early stage in his administration’s approach to the liquor
problem, had advocated placing the control of licensing in the hands of
state and county governments. The licenses required for every liquor dealer
in the state would provide the proceeds to fund these government entities.
The resulting increase in revenue and decrease in crime would consequent-
ly minimize court expenses and reduce taxes.

The governor’s annual message to the General Assembly the following
year retained this concern for regulation, efficiency, and morality but did so
by specifically promoting a statewide dispensary system to achieve these
ends. This message dismissed the referendum vote for prohibition cast at the 1892 primary election, deeming it an abstract recommendation that lacked legislative backing. However, the obvious desire of a substantial portion of the population for some form of government action prompted Tillman to propose his State Dispensary system, modeled on an arrangement in successful operation in Athens, Georgia. This Athens municipal dispensary system had adapted features from a similar control system in Gothenburg, Sweden, in 1865, and Tillman referenced both in designing and implementing his own state-controlled dispensary. From this point forward as governor and then as U.S. senator, Tillman remained an unyielding advocate of the State Dispensary system in South Carolina as an ideal solution to a national problem: liquor and the saloons.

Early in this process, Tillman visibly weighed the applicability of the State Dispensary in his private journal, where he revealed his conception of the system as a regulatory measure in line with state canal and railroad ownership and regulation: “Dispensary: State in business era built a R.R. and ran it for years. S.C. started a canal. N.Y. built a canal and owns it now… Disp[ensary] generates its benefits from the monopoly.”

In an article in the North American Review in early 1894, Tillman outlined the origins and initial process of enacting the dispensary law, highlighting its intended purpose and salient features. Tillman pursued this line of reasoning in a more thoroughly researched and developed defense published in the July 1894 edition of the North American Review. This defense, on the heels of the Darlington Riot and the South Carolina Supreme Court decision declaring the 1892 Dispensary Act unconstitutional, argued “It cannot well be claimed then that the sale of liquor by the State is a ‘business’ in the ordinary acceptance of the term. She assumed control for a specific purpose; that of policing and regulating the traffic.”

Tillman did not end by asserting simply that the dispensary represented the lawful use of state police power to regulate commerce. He thoroughly established the legal and historical precedents that legitimized his dispensary, in form and function:

The United State Government is in the business of transporting the mails, has made it a monopoly, and protects that monopoly by stringent laws… It is in the business of manufacturing arms and building ships. It is in the business of printing and engraving. The United States also went into the business of building railroads, very extensively, about twenty-five years ago (and giving
And he observed that individual states had followed suit: “The State of New York long ago went into the business of building canals, greatly to the benefit of her people,” while “the State of Georgia went into the business of building railroads direct, and still owns a line from Atlanta to Chattanooga, worth nine million dollars.” He then concluded that “none of these things has been considered unconstitutional. But whenever society has attempted, through legislation, to stifle the evils of the liquor traffic the courts have always been prone to throw obstacles in the way and place the constitution, State or national, in the pathway of reform.”

Tillman enumerated the key virtues of the South Carolina State Dispensary by highlighting its elimination of personal profit motive, its assurance of pure liquor, and its abolition of the saloon. This last looms particularly large, as the saloon encouraged corruption, especially through “local whiskey rings” that exerted undue influence on the local economy and political scene. Tillman’s pro-dispensary arguments clearly drew upon a long tradition of limited state commercial regulation, as well as contemporary Progressive measures of reform; measures that utilized efficient state regulation to promote economic and political stability and to address perceived social problems and moral decay. This sense of “reformed tradition” permeated these and all subsequent defenses of the State Dispensary by Tillman.

This reformed tradition ran headlong into broader cultural traditions in South Carolina during the 1894 “Whiskey Rebellion.” Tillman saw the Darlington situation as an opportunity to force reform, symbolized by the State Dispensary, against the grain of prevailing cultural norms that divided the urban and rural elements in the state along class lines. Governor Tillman’s response to the attack on the Darlington dispensary facility and constabulary underscored his comprehension of these political and cultural forces, especially manly honor and individualism, in South Carolina. His reliance on the “wool-hat boys” to respond to his call and his willingness to resort to force of arms to make his stand reinforced this point. As he declared after the fact, “had I deemed it necessary, I could in forty-eight hours after issuance of the call have had an armed force of ten thousand farmers at my command.”

These poor farmers, whom Tillman claimed to have given a political voice, took him up on the offer, and reiterated their support of Tillmanism and its reforms in their letters to the governor. The support of these farmers seems especially poignant in that many of them presumably resented the class bias inherent in many other Progressive reforms of the era. These letters to the governor, from Tillmanites across the state, paid significant attention to the dispensary. Innumerable letters voiced a decidedly Pro-
gressive expectation of government intervention to address social ills by highlighting the aspects of the dispensary with promise toward these ends and instances in which the system currently failed to fulfill this promise.49

One of the earliest letters in this vein analyzed the various provisions of the law as observed in the public press. The author of this letter warned that several facets of the law required careful deployment of honest leadership and strict enforcement to ensure effectiveness. In emphasizing this general point, the author called the governor’s attention to one particular applicant for county dispenser, whose former occupation of bar keep disqualified him. The writer explained, “I refer to Mr. John Hill. I have no ill feeling to Hill, but cannot stand by to see this done without a protest when the majority of my people ask to wipe out this influence.”50 Other correspondents exhibited a similar concern for the proper enforcement and execution of the law while also heralding its potential success in combating the influence of liquor.

A Mr. H.B. Buist of Blackville, S.C. wrote in early 1893, “I wish to say that the new Liquor law if wisely and firmly put in operation will meet the approval of a majority of both factions of the Democratic Party.”51 He went on to warn the Governor that he should be “very careful in selecting a commissioner… a mistake in the appointment of this officer will give the new law the black eye and I trust you may be guided with wisdom in this matter.”52 Mr. Buist also suggested that Tillman take “great care in selecting all county boards of control,” and “that at least one anti-Tillman man be appointed on each board, one strongly in favor of prohibition. This will command respect from all sides and do much good to bring about unity of action.”53

The dispensary issue, while placing the forces opposing Tillmanism in sharp relief, also made for interesting bedfellows. The cooperation of staunch prohibitionists and whiskey dealers against the dispensary persistently attracted the public’s attention. However, just as frequent and much less discussed was the combination of “Wets” and “Drys” in favor of the system. Many a professed prohibitionist, like the previously cited Mr. Buist, wrote Tillman to praise the dispensary and the governor’s foresight in establishing and defending it. A Protestant evangelical moral concern over alcoholic corruption pervaded these prohibitionists’ letters of support for the State Dispensary. Despite its limited promise to merely “moderate” the sale and consumption of alcohol, many prohibitionists throughout the state expressed hope that the dispensary could curb alcoholic excess and its most corruptive social effects.

Several of these prohibitionists also recognized South Carolina’s class divisions and political factionalism and placed the dispensary in that context. Waddy C. Johnson of Lancaster, S.C. wrote in 1893, “I am glad to see you take the firm stand you do, on this law, and hope you will be able
to make Charleston and Columbia ‘stand to the rack’… I wanted ‘out and out Prohibition’ and am sorry did not get it. As it is, I want to see this new law rigidly enforced, as I regard it, a big improvement over the present bar-room.”\(^{54}\) Another supporter of the law, from Greenwood, S.C. seconded this position on the dispensary law by writing, “I want to say to you as a Prohibitionist I feel proud of it, believing as I do the law will be enforced. It is high time for S.C. to throw off the rule of Charleston and Columbia – again allow me to congratulate you on your stand for the right.” He concluded “it is sure to win for yourself friends and strengthen the reform movement.”\(^{55}\)

“Wets” also took solace in the dispensary as a reform measure, as the system in their view limited the most adverse effects of liquor consumption without the derivative corruption that typically attended full prohibition. Unlike their prohibitionist counterparts, these authors condoned alcoholic consumption, and conceivably supported the role alcohol traditionally played in Southern society and culture. Several letters to Tillman from these “Wets” corroborate this point. One letter proved particularly representative of this general perspective: “I have just read full text of the law regulating [the] sale of liquor. It occurs to me, from a hasty appreciation of the subject, most admirable and that only two classes could object to it, drunkards and minors.”\(^{56}\) The author proceeded to laud the assurance of pure liquor the law provided, and cited the impurity of intoxicants illegally begotten under full prohibition as a main cause of the delinquency that often accompanied liquor consumption. In closing, the writer added, “I am delighted your State is making this trial, and remember when I say that, I am a decided anti-prohibitionist.”\(^{57}\)

The common theme of these letters was an expectation of government action to address the liquor issue, with an appraisal of the dispensary as a fitting attempt to do so. They also displayed general recognition of the cultural context into which the dispensary entered, and in many respects, echoed Tillman’s own defenses of the system and its proposed reform. The call for rigid enforcement that permeated nearly all of these letters from both “Drys” and “Wets” helped to explain how Tillman could have acted with confidence during the Darlington Riot and again reiterated one of Tillman’s major emphases in defending the dispensary: the backbone of the law was the constabulary.\(^{58}\)

South Carolinians held no monopoly of interest in the dispensary or conception of it as a Progressive reform. Tillman and the dispensary received notable exposure in New York Times throughout the life of the system. That the dispensary apparently garnered enough national interest to appear in this wide-reaching publication suggests that many beyond South Carolina also comprehended the Progressive nature of the dispensary. Issues covering the entire lifespan of the system seemed to find a niche in the pages of
The early legal and physical resistance to and resulting debates over the Dispensary Act – that is, its enactment and enforcement – appeared in the Times throughout 1893 and 1894. One article in July of 1893 referred to the Act as “the most revolutionary business law of recent years.” Highlighting both the potential for reform as well as resistance, the article commented upon the Act’s decree that dispensaries close at six o’clock: “consequently there has been little of the usual Saturday night drunkenness among laborers who have been paid their wages.” The remainder of the article hinted at the possibility of blind tigers that so often accompanied prohibition measures, but conceded that these establishments had not appeared as of yet except in the cities of Charleston and Columbia, which were acknowledged to be the areas most fervently opposed to the dispensary system. Many of the other articles in the Times during this period focused more intently on the negative response to the dispensary and vaguely connected anti-Tillman sentiment with opposition to the system.

Finally, Tillman’s frequent promotion and defense of the South Carolina dispensary system to a national audience appeared often in the Times, increasingly so when Tillman entered the U.S. Senate in 1894. Two such articles, one in June of 1894 and the other in August of 1895 described Tillman speaking and debating on prohibition and the dispensary. In these accounts, Tillman’s arguments differed very little from those he had offered since the inception of the dispensary: prohibition was a practical failure and the dispensary limited the corruptive effects of liquor by removing profit motive and fraternization in saloons. All the while Tillman buttressed his arguments with comparisons that pitted South Carolina and her dispensary against prohibition states.

As late as 1902, Tillman still adamantly defended the dispensary system from his U.S. senate seat, citing familiar comparative statistics in an article published by Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly. Comparing the three states with laws to prohibit or regulate the liquor traffic – Kansas, Maine, and South Carolina – Tillman used permit sales by the Internal Revenue Department as evidence that the dispensary not only tempered alcohol consumption by destroying the saloons, but limited illicit liquor activity by enforcing regulation through legal state liquor distribution. Again, Tillman made an explicit connection to Progressive reforms and placed the dispensary and its operation in that context. And he was not alone in doing so. He tapped into a vigorous and on-going discussion concerning the practicalities of controlling alcohol sales and consumption that extended beyond regional and even national borders.

This debate did not end with the legislative dissolution of the South Carolina State Dispensary in 1907, nor with nationwide prohibition through the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919, nor even with the repeal of national
prohibition through the Twenty-First Amendment in 1933. The idea of a state monopoly to regulate the sale and consumption of alcohol, and many features of the South Carolina dispensary in particular, persisted after 1933 in the various forms of licensing, local option, and state monopoly systems enacted to control trade in alcohol. The most visible remnants of the South Carolina dispensary remain in the eighteen states that currently enforce a state monopoly to regulate alcoholic commerce and consumption.\textsuperscript{65}

The South Carolina State Dispensary, studied in the context of traditional Southern cultural ideals of manly honor and evangelical morality, symbolized a culture in transition, capturing at once the persistence of these traditional values while introducing a “modern” conception of social organization and state intervention. “Bourbon” versus “Reform,” urban versus rural, richer versus poorer: debates over the dispensary provided the initial stage on which these debates over the cultural and political transition to Progressivism in South Carolina played out. Evincing recognizably Progressive reform measures, the South Carolina dispensary embodied the deliberate application of such measures within a South Carolina where traditional cultural ideals persisted. Although the South Carolina State Dispensary system was short-lived, many of the lessons learned in South Carolina during its operation reverberated across the nation in the twentieth century. Adapting methods pioneered in international centralized control systems, most notably the Scandinavian model of disinterested management as enacted in Gothenburg, Sweden, South Carolina’s dispensary served a similar role as a template for future state control systems in the United States.\textsuperscript{66} Numerous government entities – municipal, county, state, and national – adopted and adapted various facets of a state monopoly in an on-going effort to govern the commerce, consumption, and morality of alcohol in the United States throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.\textsuperscript{67}

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ENDNOTES


2. \textit{The Dispensary Law, To Regulate the Manufacture and Sale of Liquors in the State of South Carolina} (Sumter, S.C.: Herald Job Presses, 1893); Dispensary law pamphlets, 1892-1907; Box 1, Folders 12-17, SCDR/SCDAH (this is the first in a series of revised Dispensary laws, with subsequent editions enacted in 1895, 1896, 1897, 1900, and 1902); Ellen Alexander, “The South Carolina Dispensary System” (M.A. Thesis, Duke University, 1940), 145-58.

3. For the cultural traditions associated with honor and manhood, see especially Edward


5. Francis Butler Simkins, Pitchfork Ben Tillman: South Carolinian (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2002 ed.), 103-184; Stephen Kantrowitz, Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 110-97. This article extends Kantrowitz’s view of Tillmanism as an expansion of the state apparatus through greater gubernatorial control. He asserts that racism shaped most of Tillman’s perspectives. The ideals of masculine honor and evangelical morality emphasized here largely assumed and reinforced this racism. This essay shows how these cultural traditions could and did incorporate “modern,” “progressive” means of social reform, broadly defined and limitedly applied in a “Progressivism for whites only.”

6. Tillman as quoted in Kantrowitz, Ben Tillman, 169.


14. Ibid.


18. Ibid.


20. Teal and Wallace, South Carolina Dispensary, 15-26; Rowntree and Sherwell, Temperance Problem and Social Reform, 99-104.

21. Teal and Wallace, South Carolina Dispensary, 24; Rowntree and Sherwell, Temperance Problem, 99-104.

22. Teal and Wallace, South Carolina Dispensary, 29.

23. Ibid., 28-30.


25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., 515.

27. Ibid., 517.


31. “Duel in Prospect – Messrs. Butler and Benton,” 9 August 1848; “Difficulty between Judge A.P. Butler and Hon. Thomas Benton,” 22 August 1848; “In our last number,” 30 Au-


37. Ibid., 22-24.

38. Message of Benjamin R. Tillman, Governor, to the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, Regular Session 1891, Series 3, “Personal Unprocessed,” Box 1, Folder 10, Benjamin Ryan Tillman Papers MSS#80, Special Collections, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson, South Carolina (hereafter Tillman Papers/CU).

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.


42. Undated note by Benjamin Ryan Tillman, Series 8, “Diaries and Notebooks,” Box 1, Envelope 8, “Notebook of Ben Tillman, 1894,” Tillman Papers/CU.


45. Benjamin R. Tillman, “A Last Word on the South Carolina Liquor Law,” *North Ameri-
can Review 159 (July 1894), 50.

46. Ibid., 50.


49. Letters received by Governor Tillman regarding the Dispensary from farmers across the state, as well as from interested parties beyond, reiterate this general point. These letters reside in Series 2, Box 1, Folder 3 and Series 3, Boxes 1-18, Tillman Papers/CU; and in Boxes 15-16 of the South Carolina Governor’s Records, Benjamin Ryan Tillman, RG 526000 (hereafter Tillman Records/SCDAH).

50. H.B. Berish to Tillman, 22 May 1893, Series 2, “Personal Correspondence, Incoming Series,” Box 1, Folder 3, Tillman Papers/CU.

51. H.B. Buist to Tillman, 9 January 1893, “Letter’s received, 1890-1894,” Box 16, Folder 7, Tillman Records/SCDAH.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Waddy C. Johnson to Tillman, 12 January 1893, “Letters received, 1890-1894,” Box 16, Folder 14, Tillman Records/SCDAH.

55. P.L. Sturkey to Tillman, 16 January 1893, “Letters received, 1890-1894,” Box 16, Folder 18, Tillman Records/SCDAH.

56. T.P. Branch to Tillman, 25 December 1892, “Letters received, 1890-1894,” Box 15, Folder 24, Tillman Records/SCDAH.

57. Ibid.


60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.


65. These “control” states include Alabama, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wyoming. For more on this relationship, see Harrison and Laine, After Repeal; Kyvig, Law, Alcohol, and Order; Lender and Martin, Drinking in America, 177-82; Murdock, Domesticating Drink, 134-70; Sellers, The Prohibition Movement in Alabama.

66. Gutzke, “Gothenburg.”

67. Harrison and Laine, After Repeal; Kyvig, Law, Alcohol, and Order; Lender and Martin, Drinking in America, 177-82; Murdock, Domesticating Drink, 134-70; Sellers, The Prohibition Movement in Alabama.
Reviewed by Noelle Plack, Newman University, Birmingham, UK

“In the old world, wine-making is an art; in America, it is an industry,” proclaimed André Simon in 1919. This famous quote opens James Simpson’s admirable book on the structural differences in the wine industry during the first wave of globalization pre-1914. While most books on wine focus on one country or region, Simpson is one of the first to have taken an international approach and the results are impressive. By employing the concept of “commodity chain from growers to consumers,” he is able to uncover the striking variants in the production and marketing of cheap table wines in the old and new worlds that emerged in decades prior to the First World War. In Europe, grape growing and wine making were combined usually done on small family-run vineyards, but marketing was a specialist activity of brokers and merchants. While in California, Australia and Argentina expert growers cultivated the grapes but the production and marketing of the varietal wines were often integrated by large wineries or business trusts. For the most part these differences still exist today; Simpson argues that they were in place by 1914 and were cause by six distinct but interrelated variables: *terroir*, tradition, technology, nature of market demand, political voice and national political organization. Interwoven into this context is the variance between fine and commodity wine, which were (and are) essentially two discrete industries, as the quality/volume ratio is incompatible.

The majority of the book is set in Europe analyzing how traditional viticulture was transformed by the effects of a devastating vine disease, the emergence of new wine making technologies and how the problems of overproduction, fraud and adulteration were solved. There were many tensions between small independent vine growers, merchants and national governments over how to guarantee the authenticity of a wine from a specific region. In France, the solution of creating the burgeoning *appellation contrôlées* system in 1905 is well-known, but Simpson brings new clarity by focusing on the economic structures of two of the most powerful and politically influential regions pushing for such reform: Bordeaux and Champagne. He also puts this subject in a comparative framework and argues that such a regulatory system did not occur in Spain as the small-producers in the sherry-producing Jerez were routinely ignored in this “elite democracy” in favor of the merchants and bankers, who saw an *appellation* system as diametrically opposed to their interests. The development of growers’ cooperatives is another topic that is given a contrasting analysis. Although they allowed small family-run vineyards the economies of scale of large wineries, they appeared much earlier in France than in Spain or Portugal because of the strength of rural growers and the political imperatives of the French Third Republic.

Simpson charts the remarkable growth of the wine industry in the new world in the final part of the book. Considering virtually no wine was produced in 1870 the takeoff to 3.8 million hL in Argentina, 2 million hL in Chile and 1.8 million hL in California by 1910 is extraordinary. The better climate, new wine making technologies, cheaper
land and large purpose-built wineries allowed winemakers to produce more consistent and homogenous wines year in and year out. A case study of the California Wine Association reveals that this trust of the state’s seven largest wine houses was one of the most successful vertically integrated firms in the business. It controlled the quality of its wines in the U.S. market and sold CWA-branded wines in bottles directly to retailers to guarantee their purity.

While the CWA was unique, their wines were still competing with more established drinks, such as beer and spirits. By contrast, in France, Spain, Portugal and Argentina wine was the alcoholic beverage of choice. This scholarly book draws on a diverse and notable source-base from around the world. It is an important achievement in the historiography as it establishes a new cohesive view of the emergence of the global wine industry. It is, however, a very structural and institutional interpretation; social and cultural historians with interests in drinking traditions, customs, tastes and habits will be frustrated as these issues are often overlooked. There is a chapter on selling wine in the British market after Gladstone’s 1860 lowering of duties to encourage consumption. While Simpson’s multi-layered analysis of why the British failed to increase their consumption at the end of the nineteenth century due mainly to issues surrounding the inconsistencies of wine quality is engaging, it completely eschews the social and cultural traditions of Britain as a beer-drinking nation. Were “British consumers” by which Simpson really means the upper-middle classes ever really large enough to lead a wine drinking revolution in Britain? This minor criticism withstanding, Creating Wine is a welcomed addition as it unravels the complicated story of how and why the global wine industry developed in the way it did and includes a brief conclusion on how these structural differences have endured for most of the twentieth century.

Reviewed by W. J. Rorabaugh, University of Washington, Seattle.

In the mid-1960s the two leading promoters of LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) were Timothy Leary, the highly quotable Harvard psychologist, and Ken Kesey (1935-2001), the best-selling author of One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest (1962). The pair wanted to use psychedelics to change both individual consciousness and society, but their purposes were different. Taking intellectual high ground, Leary emphasized “scientific” experiments or religious freedom, in contrast with Kesey’s freewheeling celebration of freedom and fun. A libertarian, Kesey tried to flood the market with LSD before officiaidom could respond. As early as 1963, two years before Leary, Kesey sensed an emerging revolution in values and morals. Accordingly, he abandoned novel-writing to plan his famous acid-laden bus trip across the country in 1964.

Rick Dodgson covers Kesey’s life only up to the bus trip. Imbued with frontier values, the boy grew up in hardscrabble rural Colorado and Oregon. A champion wrestler, as well as a magician, actor, and playwright at the University of Oregon, Kesey failed to break into Hollywood either as an actor or screenwriter, and only then turned to writing novels. After winning a graduate fellowship to Stanford University in 1958, Kesey wrote an unpublished first novel about Beat life in North Beach in San Francisco.

The breakthrough moment came in 1960, when Kesey participated in psychedelic experiments at the nearby Veterans Administration hospital. Stunned by LSD, Kesey saw the old world, with all of its cultural assumptions, explode before his eyes. He
introduced psychedelics to other Stanford graduate students, writers, and artists who, like Kesey and his wife Faye, lived in the bohemian community on Perry Lane. Kesey then took a job at the VA hospital, which enabled him to research *Cuckoo’s Nest*, to write the novel late at night, and to supply Perry Lane with stolen psychedelic pills. The idea for the book came while high on peyote, a psychedelic cactus widely used by Native Americans, and Kesey subsequently decided to have Chief Bromden, a shrewd but literally crazy Indian, narrate the tale. The book became a best-seller because it appeared just as large numbers of restless young readers began to challenge traditional culture.

While Dodgson’s cut-off date excludes some of Kesey’s better-known escapades, including the bus trip, the Acid Tests, and Kesey’s support for Jerry Garcia and the Grateful Dead, concentration on the early life puts the focus on Kesey’s development both as a person and as a writer. Dodgson makes excellent use of Kesey’s personal journal from the 1950s as well as Kesey’s letters at the University of Oregon, materials in family possession, publications by and about Kesey, and numerous interviews. Because Kesey often spoke and sometimes wrote enigmatically, masking true feelings with deceptively simple vernacular language, the best comprehension of Kesey’s thinking at a particular moment often comes from Kesey’s friends, Ken Babbs, Vic Lovell, and Robert Stone.

Dodgson’s book enhances our understanding of the early 1960s, LSD, and Kesey. This impeccably researched and carefully written book is an excellent contribution to the scholarly literature.


Diego Armus, Swarthmore College.

The history of cigarette smoking is growing and fast becoming a quite vibrant subfield of studies. A preliminary attempt to map the available scholarship reveals three ways of writing, each one with its particular emphasis but also with plenty of overlap because all three tend to discuss cigarette smoking as a practice framed by an array of biomedical, socio-cultural, economic, and political phenomena.

The first way of writing focuses its attention on the public health dimensions of smoking. Its topics weave epidemiological trends with public health policies and big tobacco corporations’ marketing strategies. It is a history both of public health and in public health, because those who practice it – mainly public health specialists and historians – want to find in historical processes a tool with which to influence the production and direction of public health anti-smoking agendas.

The second way of writing centers on the biomedical, disease-related dimensions of smoking, paying special attention to the production of specific knowledge by its key players: scientists, academic institutions, and corporate business.

Finally, the third way of writing approaches cigarette smoking as a socio-cultural practice crisscrossed by discourses, policies, and experiences. Its topics range from cigarette production to mass marketing and consumption, to the social meanings of cigarette smoking people create within particular historical contexts and distinct social settings. Thus, these histories delve into the visual and literary representations of smoking and smokers; the practice of smoking by men, women, youth, and children; and the critiques or celebrations of smoking as they were articulated in medical terms,
moral connotations, or individual rights and liberties. In the U.S., this way of writing has been dealing mainly with the cigarette as a consummate, very Anglo-American modern commodity that ended up penetrating and shaping daily life worldwide. In countries of the world periphery with strong and long smoking cultures, the scholarship has approached the cigarette as a socio-cultural site where local smoking styles accommodated and negotiated with the arrival of transnational corporate tobacco marketing.

These three ways of writing are present in *Golden Holocaust*. However, its dominant tone is that of a public health history of smoking in its most militant, anti-smoking version. Robert Proctor’s agenda is very clear from the book’s very first page: To unveil the tobacco industry’s perfidy in promoting the massive consumption of deadly cigarettes in the U.S. and worldwide. As a meticulous prosecutor, Proctor assumes the task of revealing how the cigarette became an artifact of mass culture; how biomedical associated cigarette smoking with health hazards and risks, and how big tobacco corporations used a myriad of strategies in order to hide the dreadful and deadly consequences of cigarette smoking. The last chapter of the book lists twenty measures aiming at a total ban on the sale and manufacture of cigarettes. Proctor argues that humanitarian reasons justify this quite radical agenda in which societal issues associated with drastic prohibition – product adulteration, black markets and so on – are not relevant because smoking does not provide immediate pleasure intoxication and most smokers want to quit.

*Golden Holocaust* significantly enhances the literature on the history of the American cigarette in the twentieth century. It does so by using optical character recognition as a search strategy to delve into more than 70 million pages of an open-access archive (created as a result of a settlement reached after a series of successful lawsuits against the tobacco corporations). From beginning to end, the book offers a rich – at times overwhelming – narrative based on evidence produced by many involved actors, but mainly big cigarette manufacturers. In this respect, Proctor’s work is exemplary and very persuasive about the scientific fraud displayed time and again by the industry.

Part I focuses on the triumph of the cigarette by tracing with great detail eight crucial processes: the invention of flue curing, which made it possible for cigarette smoke to be inhaled; the invention of matches; the mechanization of cigarette making; the discovery of cigarette consumption as a taxation resource; the inclusion of cigarettes in soldiers’ ration during World War I; the mass marketing techniques; the manipulation of knowledge of hazards by the tobacco industry; and the manipulation of tobacco chemistry to increase the addictive qualities of tobacco. These are chapters where history of technology, history of taxation policies, and history of marketing organize Proctor’s narrative.

Part II is by and large biomedical history. It discusses early experimental oncology, from developments based in Central Europe and the US, to those done in Argentina – an interesting exploration into scientific production in the periphery – to Nazi Germany’s anti-tobacco science, to early tobacco-friendly research financed and encouraged by tobacco corporations.

Part III is the history of a deception, a sort of travelogue over several decades of corporate strategies to oppose, deny, or delay any initiative that will diminish its profits. With great detail, Proctor reconstructs the vast networks of U.S. academic institutions and experts – epidemiologists, statisticians, scientists, and in the 1990s, historians – whose research or services were funded or paid by tobacco corporations in order to undermine anti-smoking initiatives based on biomedical, behavioral or marketing ar-
arguments. In doing so, *Golden Holocaust* retraces many instances in which the industry tried to weaken the emerging biomedical consensus that associated cancer and cigarette smoking, like in the “Not Yet Proven” campaign of the early 1950s, efforts to deal with cigarette smoking as a habit and not an addiction in the 1960s, or in the array of tools – from public opinion polls, to consumer letters, to internal industry assessments – utilized to deliberately induce ignorance or doubt within the population at large.

Part IV continues with the indictment of the tobacco industry, this time focusing on the toxic substances present in the cigarettes, the fallacy of the “safer” cigarette, and the global epidemic of tobacco-related diseases.

More than a history of smoking in the U.S., Proctor’s book is a history of very sophisticated and ever-evolving strategies designed by the industry to survive anti-smoking efforts. While non-consequential for quite some time, these attempts became very effective by the end of the century, when passive smoking became a decisive argument that consolidated a new anti-tobacco consensus. Once (p. 552), Proctor recommends to listen to the voices of the consumers. But smokers are almost absent in his narrative. And if they appear at all, they do so as poor victims of skilful and always updated campaigns of manipulation or as addictive consumers who want to quit but cannot. Other histories of smoking have dealt with the complex and diverse world of the smokers; their “careers” as heavy or occasional smokers; the social functions of smoking; the cultural meanings smoking had for different groups. These are just examples of a longer list. There is no doubt that these dimensions were not relevant in Proctor’s research agenda. For him, the focus goes – and must go – over the doings of one of the deadliest modern industries.


Joseph B. Askew, University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China.

Brill has just released Hans Derks’ panoramic view of the opium trade in Asia, coming in at over 800 pages. In this large volume Derks attempts to cover the entire history of opium as it relates to the West’s relations with Asia. However, the final result is somewhat mixed.

On the positive side, Derks provides a global perspective that has been largely missing in other works. This volume does not focus on one single country, but attempts to look at the history of opium over the whole of Asia. That provides a useful depth and an opportunity for comparison that is sorely needed. Certainly for this reviewer, reading about drug production outside his area of speciality, this book was often informative and interesting. This volume also contains a large and useful bibliography that could be profitably consulted by many academics.

On the negative side, as is inevitable for any author who works in many areas without any formal training, the discussions of specific countries tends to be derivative and highly dependent on a very small number of authors. Derks’ coverage of China and the Chinese in Southeast Asia, for instance, features well known names like Carl Trocki with some frequency. This problem is made even more apparent given the paucity of primary Asian materials used in this work. Even among the secondary literature, there is a shortage of new and original materials, especially from Asian sources. This reason for this soon becomes apparent. Chinese names are rarely cited correctly. Chen Yong-fa’s surname, for instance, is Chen and yet neither the author nor his editors managed
to list his, and many other Chinese names, correctly in the bibliography.

These are relatively minor problems with the work given the larger problem in the author’s approach. To his credit Derks does not hide behind a façade of academic impartiality and begins with a condemnation of the Bush administration. Central to this work is the idea that the West was engaged in, as the subtitle of this book puts it, an “assault on the East.” That opium exports were part of a conscious effort by the West to weaken Asia in preparation for invasion seems an interesting proposition, but one that needs to be defended by more evidence than is provided in this work. Given the centrality of this claim, it is in fact rather surprising that so little evidence is produced to suggest that such a deliberate policy was ever conceived. It is all the more exceptional given so much evidence is produced to the contrary. Derks admits that the first English export of opium from India was not to China but to England. Whether or not this comprised an assault on the English is unexplored. Similarly the book discusses cocaine production in the Dutch East Indies and Taiwan under the Japanese without making it clear whether or not this was intended as an assault on the Austro-Hungarian Empire of Sigmund Freud.

The lack of proper historical context is a source of serious concern. Derks examines the origins of the British opium trade in light of what it became, not what it was. When Warren Hastings sent the first cargo of opium to China, he could not foresee what opium would become in China. Nor could he be certain it would be smoked as opium was the basis of innumerable medicines. Opium was also legal in China if imported for medical purposes. No evidence is provided that Hastings intended to produce China’s later opium problems.

Had Derks considered the actual historical context, he would have reproduced the debate in Britain between those in favour of any trade and the rising Evangelical movement that saw opium as inherently sinful. Modern Chinese nationalism has taken up this last form of discourse and used opium as an excuse for many failings. Derks dismisses any deviation from this sort of discussion as “blaming the victim.” However that just raises more issues than it solves. If Chinese consumers knowingly chose to use opium, in what sense are they victims? The East India Company did not, and could not, force Chinese people to smoke opium. Every user made a personal choice to do so. In dismissing such arguments, Derks has largely overlooked a small but growing field that sees prohibition, not opium, as the problem in China. Even if he chose not to answer such critics, his work, with its lack of Chinese language sources, reproduces some of the worst of colonial scholarship. Derks denies Asians agency. In this volume little consideration is given to why individuals might choose to use opium. Asians are presented in a stereotypical way as passive agents of Western actions. The West is active, dynamic and powerful, the Asians passive and weak. When the British bring opium, the Chinese are somehow unable to choose not to smoke it. This is not surprising given that Derks’ discourse grows out of nineteenth century evangelical critiques of sinful products such as opium, albeit filtered through a moralising Marxist lens.

Further problems with Derks’ approach are found in his criticism of Frank Dikötter’s earlier work on race in China. Derks says that it is “remarkable” that Dikötter writes what he does “knowing its consequences when used at state levels and in state propaganda” (p. 597). This appears to be criticism of Dikötter’s motivation on political grounds. This is not helpful in an academic context. What makes it surprising is that Derks leaves himself open to similar criticisms: he repeatedly identifies every person of Jewish origins as a Jew, or in one case as a Zionist. This is made worse by Derks’ discussion of a “Jewish way” (p. 584) to deal drugs, descriptions of “Jewish opium
gangs” (p. 692) and by claims that, for instance, the American gangster Meyer Lansky logically must have known the Sassoon family (p. 698). While this starts out as interesting in that it highlights the Indian origins of merchants such as the Sassoons, after a while it becomes tiresome.

In conclusion Brill has produced an unexpected addition to their long and distinguished publication list. This sprawling work contains a very useful bibliography, but desperately needs a strong editorial hand. It provides little value to the average undergraduate and should be used with caution.

Reviewed by David T. Courtwright, University of North Florida.

Alcohol in World History is a brief survey covering the production, distribution, use, abuse, cultural impact, and regulation of ethanol from the Neolithic Revolution to the present. It appears in a Routledge series edited by Peter Stearns, who has recruited specialists to write about selected topics (e.g., food, sport, religion) in the context of world history. The object is to provide thematically focused companion volumes for world-history textbooks and document collections.

Gina Hames, who researches alcohol and gender history and who teaches Latin American and world history at Pacific Lutheran University, takes the charge of global coverage seriously. She includes extensive material on Africa and Asia as well as Europe and the Americas. There is even a section on Saudi Arabia, where sub rosa drinking has become commonplace, especially among westernized elites. Reading it, I could not help but recall a distant bridge-table conversation with a visiting Egyptian physician. “Of course people in Islamic countries drink,” he said with a dismissive wave. “They just keep the bottle under the sink.”

Much else in Alcohol in World History will be familiar to the readers of this journal. Perhaps it will be too familiar, expressed as it is in prose aimed at first-year undergraduates. Yet Hames has a knack for making comparisons across cultures. Her verdict is that the similarities and continuities are more impressive than the differences and discontinuities. In most civilizations alcohol served as an important source of nutrition and medication as well as recreation and intoxication. It was widely and, as preservation improved, distantly traded. It offered the means of cultural and colonial expansion, well-tended vineyards being as sure a sign of Roman presence as roads. It demarcated religion, ethnicity, and class, as when elites drank wine and the masses drank beer. It reinforced and often defined gender identity. It lubricated the wheels of vice and sexual misconduct. It financed states, armies, and empires. And it everywhere prompted nervous surveillance. All agriculture-based civilizations found ways to culturally integrate alcohol, though never perfectly and never in a fashion that completely eliminated its risks.

The particular customs – who should prepare alcoholic beverages, who should consume them, what spices should be added, what rituals observed – varied in accordance with local conditions. So did the alcoholic content of the beverages, which ranged from a few percentage points for traditional drinks like chicha or pulque all the way up to 40 or 50 percent for spirits like vodka or gin. Broadly speaking, the lower the alcohol content, the greater the nutritional value; the higher the alcohol content, the greater the risk of intoxication, organ damage, and loss of control over drinking. That was why many temperance advocates approved of the moderate use of beer and wine, though
not of potent mixed drinks like rum punch or, worst of all, spirits drunk neat.

The intertwined industrial and transportation revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries made strong alcoholic beverages cheaper and more widely available, triggering a “virtually universal rise in alcohol use” (p. 79) and attendant social problems. Alarmed civic groups and reform leaders pressed for stricter regulation, yet failed to maintain permanent bans. “The centrality of alcohol to society,” Hames concludes, “thwarted prohibition efforts everywhere” (p. 80).

The virtue of her book is that it shows, through examples drawn from many cultures, just what this centrality entailed. Alcohol was tied to life’s good things, like wedding feasts and fine dining and solvent governments, but also to gambling, prostitution, disease, squalor, domestic abuse, crime, corruption, and the fleecing of subalterns. Victorian moral reformers – and, often, anti-colonialists like Mohandas Gandhi, who was a bit of both – saw booze as the boulder athwart the path of progress. They went at it with a relish, though with few lasting results. By the late 1920s the international dry crusade had largely run its course.

The alcohol industry recovered smartly from the reform crisis. It has since prospered by marketing its goods in every corner of the world. The African miner who drinks bottled beer, the Indian entrepreneur who sips pricey scotch, the Japanese bon vivant who orders a bottle of French wine: They are signaling, not only their taste in alcoholic beverages, but also their “Westernness” (p. 125). It is as though the role once played by the cigarette as a multivalent symbol of modernity has been assumed, in the aftermath of tobacco’s health scandals, by branded alcoholic beverages. Their manufacturers promote them under the quatrefoil banner of status, sex, sociability, and salubrity, with a friendly wink and a reminder that it is up to you to “drink responsibly.”

*Alcohol in World History* contains obvious gaps. Price and consumption data are fragmentary; sometimes it is unclear whether percentage changes refer to aggregate levels or to rates. Medicalization gets only passing mention. Celebrated medical investigators like Benjamin Rush, Thomas Trotter, Magnus Huss, Bénédict Morel, and Sergei Korsakoff are conspicuous by their absence. The same is true of celebrated drinkers such as Alexander the Great and Joseph Stalin, whose alcoholic and behavioral excesses many biographers think linked. (Alcohol is many things, but one of them is fuel for tyrants.) Then again, the book is brief by design. Hames has chosen, I think wisely, to devote her 146 pages to comparative cultural history – her long suit – and to sacrifice some familiar figures for more coverage of nonwestern regions featured in the world-history syllabi whose readings her book is meant to supplement.

Reviewed by William Haydock, Bournemouth University.

The back of *Intoxication and Society* informs the reader that intoxicants are “a continuing obsession” – which will probably ring true with most readers of this journal. It’s certainly possible to make this case at the moment, as e-cigarettes disrupt established understandings of a familiar drug, DSM-V is published to (at best) mixed reviews and Novel Psychoactive Compounds arrive on the market at a rate of more than one a week.
In this context, it makes a great deal of sense to publish a book such as this combining a variety of disciplinary perspectives from neuroscience, through law, social science and history to English literature. The inarguable premise behind this collection of essays is that “the problem of intoxication transcends the boundaries of any single academic discipline” (p. 1). The aim of the book is to develop “a richer and more inclusive dialogue regarding the causes, characteristics and consequences of intoxicant use in modern societies” (pp. 1-2).

As you’d expect with a wide collection of essays, there are interesting titbits and insights throughout the book – and because of the book’s wide range of perspectives, it’s likely that most readers will find something new to spark their interest. One of my personal highlights was James Brown describing a mid-seventeenth-century scheme to remove the profit motive from brewers in Southampton, which reminded me of the Central Control Board’s scheme in Carlisle in the early twentieth century.

Each chapter, with its specific remit, could be useful as an introduction to a particular area of the academic study of intoxicants. Arlie Loughnan and Rebecca Williams, for example, both offer interesting discussions of the concepts of specific and basic intent in law, while Angus Bancroft’s chapter – amongst others – includes a fantastic range of references, which offer a useful starting point for those who wish to follow up specific points in more detail. Indeed, the introduction itself could stand alone as an introduction to many of the wide-ranging issues and debates relating to drugs and intoxication.

However, a collection such as this should aim to add something as a whole, beyond the juxtaposition of perspectives in itself. It could be argued that the range of issues raised in the book, and the variety of lenses used to observe them, undermines the utility of the singular term “intoxicants.” And yet I did find that there were key unifying factors. All the discussions of the nature of intoxicants and the challenges they pose for societies strike at what it means to be human. In Thomas Adams’ *Mysticall Bedlam* from 1615, quoted in Cathy Shrank’s chapter on tropes of intoxication in early modern literature, he describes drunkenness as a “voluntary madnesse” that makes man like a “beast” (p. 198). The issues of what makes one “mad,” and when this “madness” should be considered voluntary still resonate across the perspectives represented in this book, and they cannot be addressed by one discipline in isolation.

The premise behind Adams’ description is that rationality is the line that divides humans from animals. On this point, Bancroft argues that the current popularity amongst policymakers of behavioural economics and nudging raises interesting questions for the study of intoxicants. The fundamental premise of this approach is that human beings are *not* in fact rational, calculating creatures. Taking such a view, is the “addict” quoted by Darin Weinberg saying “it’s like there are two sides of me” (p. 237) so different from any other member of society?

This question of rationality is one of a range of issues running through *Intoxication and Society* that can be expressed as binaries: sober/intoxicated; rational/irrational; human/bestial; mind/body; psychological/physiological; motivation/action; voluntary/involuntary. Noting the difficulties in drawing such lines regarding autonomy and rationality in the field of legal responsibility, Alan Bogg and Jonathan Herring recommend “sensitive judgements of degree” rather than “bright-line binary distinctions” (p. 247) – a position to some extent supported by the neuroscientific approach to distinguishing between intoxicants and “natural rewards” outlined by Karen Ersche (p. 220).

Given this potential for dissolving “bright-lined distinctions,” the only real disappointment of this book is that the opportunity is not taken up more forcefully. Although
these ideas of rationality and selfhood are not the only way to approach the study of intoxicants; they do illustrate a way in which the book as a whole could have had more of an overarching shape. Chapters could perhaps have engaged directly with each other more, with each section considering specific questions, for example, and to my mind there could have been engagement with some of the fundamental philosophical questions underlying the discussions, regarding ideas of autonomy, rationality, the will, and the self. On the general point of coherence and coordination, there are instances of overlap and repetition. For example, one (admittedly fascinating) court case (R v. Kingston 1995) is discussed on four occasions. On the other hand, this is a consequence of the decision to make the essays self-contained, which has its advantages – and the book is not designed to be a textbook.

Given the scale of the questions Intoxicants and Society raises, and the range of perspectives given, on occasion I put the book down feeling somewhat overwhelmed and befuddled. However, given the purpose of the book, I saw this as a good thing (rather than reflecting my irrationality). The editors introduce the book as an attempt to “start conversations rather than offer definitive and conclusive remarks” (p. 24). To make such definitive remarks would certainly be a mistake in the field of intoxicants. Here’s to a contribution that makes the future of the field look a little blurry.