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### Rum, Riot, and Reform : Maine and the History of American Drinking.

William David Barry

Nan Cumming

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Maine

and

the

# Rum, Riot, and Reform

History

of

American

Drinking

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(Left) **Scamman Jug.** Germany, Westerwald District, 1689-1702. Salt-glazed stoneware. Collection of the York Institute Museum, Saco. *This splendid example of Colonial ceramics was abandoned by the Scamman family of Saco at their capture by Indians in 1697. When the family returned home after almost a year, their home was intact and the jug of beer untouched.*

**Catalog Design:** Katie Murphy/Univoice Graphics

**Photography:** Mark Skinner

**Printing:** Impressive Printing • Portland, Maine



# Rum, Riot, and Reform

Maine and the History of American Drinking

by  
William David Barry  
Nan Cumming

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June 1 through  
October 31, 1998

Maine History Gallery  
Maine Historical Society  
Portland, Maine



Atian Lervey at Grand Lake, Maine. Jim M'Kin, 1898. Maine Historical Society. *Maine's Native Americans were noted for their skill as guides. In this portrait, the addition of a jug – probably the photographer's prop – suggests the stereotype of drinking.*

Our fathers,  
having discarded  
everything else, betook  
themselves  
for recreation to  
the cup.

Reverend  
Sylvester  
Judd

A Discourse  
Touching the  
Causes  
and  
Remedies  
of  
Intemperance

preached  
in Augusta,  
1845

## Introduction

Mention the topic of alcohol reform in America and two semi-comical stereotypes usually take the stage. There's the zealous temperance crusader – a god-fearing, saloonbashing woman with an ax in her hand – and there's the prohibition-era wise guy, drinking his fill under the nose of the law. Stereotypes like these point to truths, of course, but they also mask a history that is more interesting and more important. The drive to reform the abuse of alcohol was one of the great moral and social controversies of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Temperance and prohibition movements, like the fight to abolish slavery and the struggle for women's suffrage, engaged the nation's full attention. Passions ran high and the political conflicts – exacerbated by economic, class, ethnic, gender, and religious differences – ran deep. Maine was at the center of alcohol reform in America, especially in the 19th century. Its legislation and its leaders help set the national agenda; its love of drink and resistance to change mirrored the national experience.

The current exhibition, Rum, Riot, and Reform, is a first step toward the history of Maine's role in the era of alcohol reform. It is an outline, an exploration of local connections, an invitation to new discoveries. It is also, in a sense, a prelude to the history of our own day, in which the issue of substance abuse and the limits of social control are still matters for hot debate. We hope you find it instructive.

Rum, Riot, and Reform was made possible by many friends, but special recognition must go to our corporate and foundation sponsors, who saw the importance of the subject and had faith in our plans: Anheuser-Busch Inc., National Distributors, the Edward H. Daveis Benevolent Fund, and the Lincoln National Foundation, Inc. Thank you.

**Richard D'Abate**  
Executive Director  
Maine Historical Society

At eleven o'clock on each day the bell would ring, the masons come and all would partake of rum, salt-fish, and crackers.

Reverend  
Elijah  
Kellogg  
(1813-1901)

(Below) **Tavern Sign.** Maine, mid 19th century. Painted wood. Maine Historical Society. *This sign came from Samuel Witham's tavern in Raymond, Maine.*



**T**he history of drinking in Maine and America is rich and complex. It began with the earliest European settlement, and it continues today. While the danger of drunkenness – to individuals, families, and the social order – was recognized from the earliest period, the use of alcoholic beverages has, at the same time, always found deep acceptance in our culture. Indeed, for the first settlers, strong drink was simply an ingrained part of the customs and dietary traditions brought from the homeland.

Over the next 200 years alcohol would help shape America's social landscape. Taverns, as much as churches, became the centers of small town activity in the early republic. Generations of later immigrants brought new brewing and distilling traditions – the signs of their cultures and often the means to fortune. For women, the fight against alcohol abuse and other social ills in the later 19th and early 20th centuries often led to a growing public, political, and professional stature.

Alcohol has soothed and troubled life in Maine and America in numerous subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Having outlawed its use in this country in 1920 and repealed that law 13 years later, Americans continue to debate its pleasures and costs. This tension, in fact, between approval and disapproval is a continuing part of the politics of alcohol. Maine led the nation in the temperance fight; a look at its history might help put current issues in some perspective.

down from the ladders, the joiners drop their tools,



(Left) **Mrs. Greele's Tavern, 1770.** Charles Quincy Goodhue (1835-1910), ca. 1900. Pencil sketch, Maine Historical Society. *In the tumult of the Revolutionary era, three taverns served Falmouth Neck (Portland). The most colorful was owned by Alice Ross Greele (Grele), and served as a courtroom and meeting place for rebels. Running a licensed house was one of the few trades open to women, and the tough-minded Mrs. Greele achieved legendary status by extinguishing her burning building during the 1775 British bombardment. She ran the tavern until her death in 1795.*



(Above) **Jeremiah Berry (detail).** England, probably Herculaneum Pottery (1796-1840), ca. 1800. Creamware with enamel painting. Courtesy, Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass. *Jeremiah Berry (1742-1816) toasts the successful economy while joining workers or apprentices on a break in his Portland blockmaking shop. All are drinking grog.*

(Below) **A Reading Room Discussion on Anti-Slavery.** Charles Henry Granger (1812-1893), ca. 1840-45. Oil on canvas, Collections of the York Institute Museum, Saco. *Saco painter Charles Henry Granger created this composite tavern scene using local characters. In many of Maine's small towns and cities, taverns were the center of social and political life.*

## New England's Great Secret, 1620 - 1820

For Maine's early European settlers, alcohol was a social institution, a medicine, and an actively traded commodity. Yet it also presented problems for individuals and communities. New England's complicated relationship with spirituous beverages traces at least back to 1620 when the Pilgrims quarreled with the crew of the *Mayflower* over who had the right to drink the final allotment of beer. Considered medicine in Europe, where much of the water was polluted, alcohol was consumed at all meals, though generally in moderation. In 1630 the Puritan first ship *Arabella* carried 10,000 gallons of wine and three times as much beer as water. Puritans set strict limits on behavior and recreation

but allowed drinking. In Maine's Richmond's Island in 1639, settler John Josselyn wrote admiringly of Captain Thomas Wannerton, "who drank to me a pint of kill-devil Rhum at a draught." Aside from that historic toast, Josselyn recorded some of the common medical uses of alcohol he observed. It also appears, however, that local Native American tribes did not use or produce alcoholic beverages prior to contact with the Europeans. As their population decreased in the face of disease and war, the bottle became a growing problem for many Native Americans.

Alcohol production and importation became a business to those settling in the Province of Maine. In the region, which was annexed by Massachusetts in the 1650s, women made beer at home and the wealthy imported wine from the Portuguese and Spanish islands. Coastal





N'DAKKABIN SKUDEWHAMBŪ.  
RUM, FIRE-WATER.



1811. by T. W. Dring, 38 Nassau St. N. Y.  
Peseku wonismuhinoh, nanqitchidabamal matein Niweakura.  
suda begus kepkuabassan, metchineuabi, te alihkie Alamkik.

people discovered a taste for West Indies rum, trading lumber for it. By 1700 more Yankees drank rum than beer, with cheap "New England Rum" being distilled in Boston, and later Falmouth. Apple orchards, that matured ten years after settlement, provided towns with cider, a popular country drink and cash crop.

From the beginning, imbibing was part of New England's social and religious institutions. Religious leader Increase Mather rebuked drunkards, while praising strong drink as "a good creature of God." Parents and children drank together. Ministers were known to fortify themselves before sermons. Men were given daily grog breaks at work, and the drink was considered part of their pay. For women, tavern keeping was one of the few professions open to them at all. Polite society considered non-drinkers "crank-brained."

Although drink was common, drunkenness was a punishable offence in the region. Legal attempts at control included regulation of taverns and punishments for disruptive or destructive tipplers. In 1685, Maine taverns were prohibited from selling alcohol to Native

Per capita consumption increased throughout the 1700s, as did a growing awareness of the problems of abuse. By the time of the Revolutionary War, Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia, a leading physician, helped introduce the notion that alcohol was not always a medicine. His writings influenced a new generation of medical professionals who began to view drinking as a social ill. In February 1785, *The Falmouth Gazette* became the first major Maine forum to advocate temperate use of spirits.

(Above and below) Three images from Maine Historical Society collections: (Above left) **Rum, Fire Water**, published in *Ahiamihewintuhangan: The Prayer Song*, 1858. This book of hymns, written in both Passamaquoddy and English, depicts the Devil giving Native Americans rum and whiskey.



As in many temperance images, a mother and child plead father not to indulge.

(Far left) **Co-Partnership/Death & Co.** England, mid 19th c. Maine Historical Society. This frequently illustrated image of drunkenness – child begging father to leave a bar-room – suggests that many saw the family in jeopardy. (Left) **Illustration from Rumseller's Diary**, *Washingtonian Journal*, Portland, March 5, 1845.

As the lightning shineth out of the East unto the West, so,

Americans and were held accountable if they drank too much. More subtle forms of alcohol abuse in the community, however, were left largely un-addressed. For this reason, at least one 19th-century critic accused New England of keeping a great social secret: pervasive intemperance.

**The Napoleon of Temperance and the Maine Law, 1820-1865**

By 1820, changes in religious attitudes in New England led to a widespread era of reform. As the harsh views of the Puritans gave way, Protestants came to believe that it was possible for anyone to achieve perfection in their lives and reach heaven. They set to work reforming themselves and their communities. Abolition of slavery, the fight for women's suffrage, and efforts to care for those less fortunate are all rooted in this era. Women like Maine's own Dorothea Dix, who fought for the welfare of the insane, took an active role leading these movements.

By the second decade of the 19th Century, New England's great secret was increasingly seen as America's growing problem with alcohol. Estimates show that per capita consumption of alcohol in America reached its peak in 1830. Its abuse led to violence, spousal

under its power, a great moral reform spreads.

Reverend John Marsh (1788-1868),  
American Temperance Union,  
on the passage of  
the Maine Law, 1851

and child abuse, loss of work, and sometimes a night in jail. Drunkenness among children was not uncommon, either. Recognizing these problems, physicians and religious leaders joined with recovering alcoholics in creating a loosely organized, grass roots temperance movement. Groups like the Temperance Watchman of Durham, Maine, one of the first, formed in 1848, strove to set a moral example and achieve social control through the moderation of drinking.

By mid-century, Portland's Neal Dow (1804-1897) changed the tactics of the battle against alcohol by adopting a legislative approach. Rather than changing people's attitudes, Dow's new reformers would change laws. Rather than preaching moderation, they branded all drinkers as rum dealers. Indeed, Dow left the moderates behind, including wine drinker Governor William King, who had founded the first statewide temperance association. In 1851 Dow guided his Maine Law through the legislature and Maine became the nation's first "dry" state. Neighboring states, including Massachusetts, took the law as a model and passed similar anti-liquor reforms. The nation's eastern-most state seemed to be living up to its motto, "Dirigo" (I lead) and, on paper at least, it stayed dry through National Prohibition. Celebrated as the Napoleon of Temperance, Dow promoted his approach nationally and internationally.

In spite of endless adjustments, however, the Maine Law never succeeded in destroying the liquor traffic or public thirst. Dow's own reputation was severely threatened in 1855 when he ordered the militia to fire on civilians as they descended upon Portland's City Hall, looking for a stash of liquor they had heard was kept there. One



(Above) Col. Neal Dow. John Russell, publisher, ca. 1865. Hand-colored lithograph. Maine Historical Society, purchased through J. Edward Foley Memorial Fund. *With the Civil War, the Napoleon of Temperance took his campaign to the front by forming his own dry regiment, the 13th Maine. Dow was eventually captured; wrote Capt. John Frankin of Bangor in 1863, 'a small squad of rebels gobbled him up and took him with them into the confederacy, where I hope he will stay the remainder of his life.' Mainers were either hot or cold about Dow — never lukewarm.*

(Right) Celebration! Portland, 1851. Maine Historical Society, gift of William B. Jordan, Jr., 1998. *This spoof of Mayor "Deal Now" appeared shortly after the passage of the Maine Law and reflects the spirit of a number of Mainers opposed to the dry ideal.*

**CELEBRATION!**  
**4th July 1851.**

By Order of **DEAL NOW**, Committee of Pimps, and Sons of Nimrod. The Chief Mogul hereby submits the following

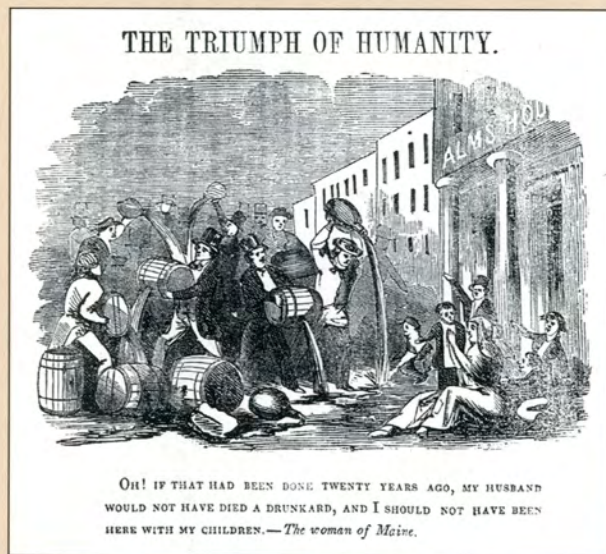
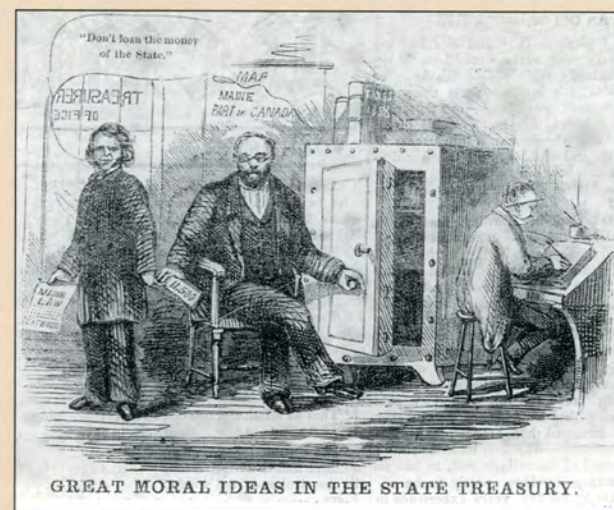
**PROGRAMME :**

The Brighton Flying Artillery, in Covered Carts.  
Military Escort by the Ramrod Blues.  
SHEET IRON BAND.  
Mounted Women! Horse Tailors.  
**CHIEF MOGUL.**  
**ORATOR, with Text in Hand,**  
"UPON WHAT MEAT doth this our CÆSAR FEED."  
**The Right Worshipful the Great**  
**"I"**  
Mounted on a Jackass, holding in his hand a 'certain Will.'  
Marshal. NIGHT SOIL CART. Marshal.  
**BOARD OF ALDERMEN**  
with bloated faces and big bellies, singing, "We are on a Tim."  
**PRESIDENT OF THE SAME, in a Hand Cart.**  
Licensed City Agent for Selling ROT LUT and making  
Legal Drunkards.  
**Members of Common Council,**  
headed by the President, Directors, and Co., of the *Maine Health Insurance Co.*, led off by a retired Clergyman.  
Male Town Paupers.  
Female Town Paupers—in *Bloomer Costume.*  
Reader of the Blue Laws of Conn.  
**GOVERNOR OF MAINE.**  
Members of the Legislature, from this City, with a Banner  
Motto—"Two runs for one money."  
Members of the Bar, taking their nips, singing—"we won't go home till morning."  
CALATHUMPIAN BAND.  
PORTLAND SECTION OF SUCKERS.  
MAINE SECTION OF INFANTS.  
EXCELSIOR SECTION OF INEBRIATES.  
CHARLES SARGENT'S SECTION OF GRABBERS.  
Ex. Chief Officer of the Rechabites,—bearing in his hand 'Baxter's Call to the Unconvicted.'  
Gentleman and Lady in Black.  
**PACKED JURIES.**  
**Members of Long Heel Party.**  
LARGE WELL, drawn by 8 Jackasses, from which will be dealt out *Whiskey Punches.*  
SPECTACLE EYED MONSTER, in a wheelbarrow selling shoes  
OUR LORD, alias notorious JOE, bearing a bag of Coffee which is said to come from Widgey's Wharf.  
The Un-Common Councilmen who didn't pay for Railroad Tickets to Saco.  
An Ex Custom House Officer crying *P-Shaw.*  
MARSHAL.  
COL CRACKETT, mounted on Jack's Stud, bearing a California Widow.  
CONSCIENTIOUS RETIRED RUM SELLERS (who have secured themselves a competency in the Eastons in Special Branches, drawn by EIGHT WHITE HORSES.  
**OUT TOWN RAMRODS.**  
**LOAFERS GENERALLY.**  
The Procession will be formed at 11 o'clock in the Jail Yard, near the Pump, and proceed immediately to Charles Sargent's New Hotel on Washington Street, where an Address will be delivered by Esq. Siggs, upon WOOL and WOOLY HEADS, after which the crowd will drink all round, and partake of such horizontal refreshments as may be offered by the Landlord.  
The whole to conclude with a Sang by the celebrated Papatonica, of "All Round My Hat."  
Per Order, **JOE W. SADDLEBAGS,**  
Portland, July 4, 1851. Chief Marshal.



Burns is a devil when he's drunk, peaceful when he lets liquor alone—until he must go to abusing the young ones, and getting mad at me; and because I tried to keep his hands off the little girl — she was a delicate thing you know, and only two years old — he caught her away from me and shook her furiously, dashed her down over a chair, and went out the door with an oath ...I think her back was broke, and last night she died.

Metta Victoria Fuller,  
The Senator's Son or The  
Maine Law, A Story Dedicated  
to the Lawmakers, 1853



(Left) Illustration from *The Battle Axe*, Portland, July 4, 1849. Maine Historical Society. This newspaper was one of many local prohibition sheets of the time. What sets it apart is its unusual woodcut illustrations depicting – and occasionally naming – local tipplers.

(Above, left) *Triumph of Humanity*, published in *The Napoleon of Temperance: Sketches of the Life and Character of the Hon. Neal Dow*, Mayor of Portland and author of the *Maine Liquor Law*, 1852. Maine Historical Society

(Above, right) Illustration from *The Sedley Family or the Effect of the Maine Liquor Law*. Boston, 1853. Burden Collection. A dramatic depiction of the harm of drunkenness on family life, this book also provides marvelous written and visual propaganda about the success of Neal Dow's legislation.

(Above, far right) *Great Moral Ideas in the State Treasury*. ca. 1860. Newspaper clipping. Maine Historical Society. Elder Benjamin D. Peck, a close associate of Neal Dow in the Temperance crusade, served as State Treasurer from 1857 to 1860. During this time, he borrowed and loaned state money to private individuals including Dow. Peck went to jail, but Dow's involvement in the scandal and perceived cover up was a personal setback and a major blow to the Maine Law movement.

man was killed by Dow's forces. Portland's Rum Riot demonstrated the passionate, sometimes irrational, zeal of both factions.

Maine's immigrant communities were also noticeably absent from the Maine Law ranks. Irish-Americans, whose younger men tended to embrace the stereotype of public drinking, often seemingly to spite Yankees such as Dow, were now given the brunt of the blame for outbreaks of violence. Portland had a remarkable number of riots in the 1830s, 40s, and 50s, often related to alcohol. Ironically, some of the first non-Yankee fortunes came from brewing or the hundreds of kitchen bars that appeared after 1851. The growing middle class, still largely Yankee, enjoyed an occasional drink but came to view excessive drinking as a lower-class, foreign, or youth problem.

Though Dow's legal attempt to completely abolish drinking was never fully successful, the attention he brought the issues helped change people's attitudes toward drink. Children and adults came to view temperance as a virtue and drinking declined rapidly.

# Temperance Reform:



(Left) **Banner of the Andover Cataract Division No. 9 Sons of Temperance.** Attributed to George Jefferds Wardwell (1826-after 1894). Painted cloth. Collection of the Rumford Historical Society. This extraordinary banner, painted by a member of Rumford Corner's talented family of artists, demonstrates the cultural vibrancy of Oxford County in the decades before the Civil War. The Sons of Temperance was an all-male organization; typically, women were asked to support such early organizations rather than lead them. This banner was paid for and presented by "The Ladies of Andover."

(Below, left) **The Youth's Temperance Visitor, Rockland, January 1861.** Maine Historical Society. One of numerous publications aimed at preventing a younger generation from taking up the habit.

(Right) **Temperance Levee, Bath, February 1849.** Burden Collection. Some temperance groups presented entertainment as a way of introducing their ideas to new followers.

**TEMPERANCE  
LEVEE.**

**THE DAUGHTERS OF RECHAB**  
WILL GIVE A TEMPERANCE, SOCIAL LEVEE  
**AT THE CITY HALL,  
TUESDAY EVENING,  
February 20th, 1849.**

TEA, COFFEE and other REFRESHMENTS  
WILL be provided—FREE TO ALL.—The services of the  
**BATH BRASS  
BAND**  
HAVE BEEN ENGAGED.  
**THE QUARTETTE CLUB**

Will also be present to add to the interest of the entertainment. Remarks will be made appropriate to the occasion. The Temperance community and the public generally are respectfully invited to attend.

**Tickets for sale at H. Hyde's Bookstore, and  
L. Jewett's Shoe Store.**  
Doors open at 6 o'clock. Admission 25 Cents.  
Bath, Feb. 17, 1849. — Tribune Press, No. 2 Union Block, Bath.

**The Youth's Temperance Visitor.**

MAKE PURE THE FOUNTAIN.

DEVOTED TO THE TEMPERANCE CULTURE OF THE YOUNG, EVERYWHERE.

Twenty-five Cents a Year.      Z. POPE VOSE, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.      Single Copies Three Cents.

VOLUME I.      ROCKLAND, MAINE, JANUARY, 1861.      NUMBER 12.



# A Statewide Movement

(Right) The Maine Democrat, Waterville, October 22, 1909. W.G. Bunker, illustrator. Collection of Herbert C. Adams. Few images so clearly suggest the hypocrisy of politicians pretending to serve the Prohibition cause while furthering their own aims.

(Below) Principal Causes of Spontaneous Combustion, Journal of Literature, Science, Morals and Religion, Bangor, June 29, 1837. Maine Historical Society. One theory suggested that drinking was a major cause of spontaneous combustion.

(Below, right) Grand Temperance Rally Broadside. 1912. Burden Collection. Lillian M. N. Stevens was born in Dover, Maine and educated at Foxcroft Academy. She taught school, married and settled in the Stroudwater section of Portland. A founder of the Maine W.C.T.U., she became the successor of Frances Willard as National President. A social activist on many fronts, Lillian Stevens was the first woman to be honored, at her death, by the lowering of the statehouse flag.

MORALS.

**TEMPERANCE.** In relation to this great question we have often thought that the history of SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION has not been sufficiently pursued. It appears a remarkable *Modern Scourge of Intemperance.* A late prize essay enables us to subjoin an (incomplete) Table of some remarkable cases, and one of recent occurrence.

*Principal Cases of Spontaneous Combustion, from the Dictionarie de Medecine.*

Works in which they are reported.	By whom.	Time.	Age.	Combustion Complete.	Immediate Cause.	Habit of Life.	Situation of the Remains.
1 Actes de Copenhagen.	Jacobus.	1692		Except a part of the skull and the last joints of the fingers.		Abuse of spirits for three years.	Upon a chair.
2 Annual Register.	Blanchinde Verone.	1763	62	Except the skull, a part of the face, and three fingers.	A lamp.	Frequent fomentations of camphorated spirits.	Upon the floor.
3 Annual Register.	Wilmer.		50	Except the thigh and one leg.	A light upon a chair near the bed.	Having drunk for a length of time a pint of rum daily.	Upon the floor near the bed.
4 Encyc. Method.			50	Except a few bones.		Habitually drunken.	
5 Acta Medica.				Except the skull and fingers.		She drank brandy as her only drink.	
6 Mem. upon spontaneous combus.	Lecat.	1744	60	Except a part of the head and limbs.	A pipe which she was smoking.	A drunkard.	Near the chimney.
7 Ibid.	Ibid.	1745		Ibid.	A fire.	Habitually drunken.	Upon the hearth.
8 Ibid.	Ibid.	1749	80	Except a black skeleton.	Fire of the hearth.	Drinking brandy only for many years.	Sitting upon a chair before the fire.
9 Jour. de Medecine.		1779		Except a few bones, a hand, and a foot.	A foot stove under her feet.	A drunkard.	
10 Ibid.		1782	60	Ibid.	A fire of the hearth.	Ibid.	Upon the hearth.
11 Revue Medicale.	Julia Fontenelle.	1820	90	Except the skull and a portion of skin.	A candle.	Abuse of wine and eau de Cologne.	In bed.
12 Ibid.	Ibid.	1830	66	Except the right leg.	Ibid.	Ibid.	In the same bed; these two burnt together.
13	Gen. Wm. Kepland.		very old.	Except a few parts of the body.	A lighted pipe.		Upon the floor.
14 Journal de Florence.	Joseph Battaylia.	1786		The skin of the right arm and of the right thigh were burnt.	A lamp.		Upon the floor; he lived four days.
15 Revue Medicale.	Robertson.	1799		Combustion incomplete.		Abuse of brandy.	Upon a bench.
16 Ibid.	M. Marchand.			Hand and thigh only burnt.			Cured
17 Jour. hosp. Hamp.			17	One finger of the right hand burnt.	A candle.		Cured
18	Alph. Devenge.	1729	51	The muscles of the trunk, thighs, superior extremities, burnt.	A foot stove.	Abuse of spirits.	Upon a chair.
19 Dic de Med.				Combustion almost general.	A foot stove.	Ibid.	Upon the floor.

☞ All these were females, except Nos. 14, 15, and 16.

**GRAND TEMPERANCE RALLY**  
**OLD ORCHARD CAMP GROUND**  
**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1912**

**MRS. LILLIAN M. N. STEVENS**

President of the National WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION, will preside

**PROGRAM**

Morning Meeting at 10 o'clock

ADDRESSES BY

Distinguished Temperance Leaders

Afternoon Meeting at 2 o'clock

**TEMPERANCE DEMONSTRATION**

By children dressed in costumes of many nations, led by MISS ANNA A. GORDON, Evanston, Illinois.

Solos by the Famous Boy Vocalist, MASTER LEO LYONS, Portland, Maine  
 Addresses by MADAME BARAKAT, Philadelphia, and PROF. JOHN A. NICHOLS, Boston.

**EVERYBODY CORDIALLY INVITED**  
**EVERYBODY COME!**

The results of our agitation will be the expulsion from all the S  
we hope that the State of Maine will have the honor of leading t

### **The Drys Gain New Adherents and Leaders, 1865-1919**

**Between the Civil War and the end of World War I, the anti-liquor cause, now led by both reformers and Republican and Democratic politicians, built a power base on temperance success.** Mainers contributed to this national reform through numerous leaders including Lillian M. N. Stevens, Francis Murphy and the unsinkable Gen. Neal Dow.

In this era women became leaders of the fight against liquor. The most prominent prohibition organization, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, was founded in 1874. Though originating in Ohio, this countrywide group of politically active women had strong roots in Maine. Lillian Stevens of Stroudwater was the right hand of President Frances Willard and succeeded her as national leader. Near the outset of the First World War, Mrs. Stevens was such a revered symbol of activist womanhood that she was honored by the lowering of the Statehouse flag at her death, the first woman so recognized. These tough-minded women engaged in other social causes including suffrage and aid to Armenian refugees and were part of an emerging generation of professional women.

During the 1870s, alcoholics including former Portland liquor-dealer Francis Murphy, Gardiner businessman J.K. Osgood, and Bangor physician Dr. Henry Reynolds were all instrumental in founding reform groups known for their use of red or blue ribbons as their symbols. Dr. Joseph E. Turner of Bath was one of the first medical

authorities to describe alcoholism as a disease. In 1864 he opened America's first "inebriate asylum" in Binghamton, New York, to help cure its sufferers.

In Maine, liquor laws were gradually strengthened, and brewing, drinking, and selling were outlawed in the State Constitution in 1885. Even this step did little to dry up those who wished to imbibe. From 1905 to 1911 Maine created a Liquor Enforcement Commission with deputies empowered to arrest transgressing citizens. This new limit on personal freedom proved exceptionally unpopular and the W.C.T.U. had to battle to save the Constitutional ban.

Opposition existed. New immigrants brought new drinking customs to the state and nation, as a way of preserving their native culture through traditional beer or wine making. College students continued to support social drinking as a rite of passage.

Near the end of her life in 1913, Mrs. Stevens told the faithful, "...we can see prohibition looming up all the way from Mt. Kineo in the east to Mt. Shasta in the west, from the pine forests in the north to the palmetto groves in the south. We verily believe that the amendment for national constitutional prohibition is destined to

prevail and that by 1920 the United States flag will float over a nation redeemed from this home-destroying, heart-breaking curse of the liquor traffic."

If it was the Ohio-based Anti-Saloon League, begun in 1893, that eventually tipped the nation's voters into supporting Prohibition, it was the W.C.T.U, the ribbon reform movements, and other adherents who had created the critical mass. The United States was about to embark on an experiment widely regarded as noble.



**Little Water Girl.** Bronze replica from a sculpture by George E. Wade, London. This work was a gift to the city of Portland by the Maine W.C.T.U. in memory of Lillian M.N. Stevens, 1917.

States of the traffic in intoxicating liquors to be used as a drink,  
this glorious reform.

Neal Dow,

Spring,  
1846

(Below) **Maine Woman's Christian Temperance Union Outing.** Neal Dow Scrapbook, Maine Historical Society. *By the 1880's women had pretty well taken charge of the Prohibition movement.*

**Two Different Views of Drink:** (Left, above) **The Home vs. the Saloon.** W.C.T.U. postcard. (Right, below) **Three Lads Drinking.** H.P. Poisson, Biddeford. ca. 1910-1915. Postcard. Both Maine Historical Society.



W.C.T.U. COTTAGE — LITTLETON CAMP — GROUND





## The Nation Follows Maine into Prohibition: Triumph and Disappointment, 1919-1934

The dream of outlawing the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages begun by Neal Dow was realized in 1919 and tested from 1920 to 1934. Pushed forward by the Anti-Saloon League and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the 18th amendment was submitted in 1917. The first state ratified the law in January 1918 and the crucial 36th state gave the law the required three-quarters majority in January 1919. Prohibition went into operation on January 16, 1920. The Volstead or Prohibition Enforcement Act, passed by Congress on October 28, went into effect with Prohibition.

As Prohibitionists imagined an age of peace and domestic tranquility, their opponents were learning to dodge the law. Statistically, legal drinking declined sharply while illegal drinking became so popular that it helped stimulate new heights of crime and evasion. Underground brewers, distillers, and merchants found new opportunities to flourish as they had after the Maine Law was passed 70 years before.

With its proximity to Canada and vast coastline, Maine became a major smuggling route for booze during the 1920s and 1930s. Liquor was smuggled from Quebec, St Pierre and Miquelon (French Islands off Newfoundland). For Maine and Massachusetts residents, buying a bottle was as easy as driving across the boundary into Canada – and bringing the booze back into Maine was only slightly trickier. Commercial cargo vessels also illegally



smuggled liquor into Maine ports. Rum continued to come from the West Indies in small Maine-made vessels built specifically as rumrunners.

The young, who had not experienced the earlier temperance crusades, largely rejected Prohibition. Many men and women of the 1920s, appalled by the carnage of World War I, were anxious to experiment and enjoy themselves after the war ended. To them, the aging membership of the W.C.T.U. appeared as narrow-minded, humorless busybodies, a far cry from the respected temperance heroines of 1870. In the minds of many Mainers and other Americans, Prohibition opponents like New York's Pauline Sabin, leader of the Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform, represented the new ideal for the modern woman.

By the 1920s and 30s Mainers were becoming a far more homogeneous part of the United States as radio, telephones, movies, and the automobile became more commonplace. Indeed, when National Prohibition was repealed in 1933, Maine's legislature also repealed the state amendment, which was similarly approved by the voters. The *Portland Press Herald* noted the general feeling: "There never was a time when Maine's annual liquor bill has not amounted to several million dollars, even when both state and federal officers were exerting themselves to the utmost to prevent the sale of liquor."



Vanilla fooled me  
 for a few days. In came  
 a shipment of five gross of  
 vanilla extract. I asked  
 what was the idea in tying up  
 money in that quantity of  
 extract. The clerk said,  
 "That won't last two  
 weeks. We sell a lot of it.  
 We get thirty-five cents  
 for it when they cook  
 with it, and forty cents  
 when they drink it."

R.E. Gould's memories  
 of 1920,  
 from  
 Yankee  
 Storekeeper,  
 1946



((Facing page, far left) **Franco-American Temperance Workers, on a Parade Review Stand in Westbrook.** mid 1920s. Maine Historical Society.

((Facing page, left) **Deputy with victrola/liquor cabinet seized in Portland.** 1922. Maine Historical Society.

((Upper right) **Suspected Rum Runner Dixie III, tied up at Portland wharves.** 1927. Maine Historical Society. *Like its large counterparts, Boston and New York, Portland also had its "rum row" – an area outside the U.S. territorial 3-mile limit where large vessels lined up and sold liquor to small, fast boats like this one which brought the liquor to shore. Building such craft for bootleggers brought a brisk business to Downeast boatyards.*

((Lower right) **Green River whiskey bottles hidden in Moxie cases** seized at a Yarmouth Inn, 1927. Maine Historical Society.



## The Continuing Debate

**Excessive drinking, once New England's secret, is now a recognized public issue.** Organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, D.A.R.E., and the W.C.T.U. still work to resolve its many problems. In Maine, increased media attention, including a series of award-winning articles in the *Portland Press Herald* last year, and the state's well-publicized tough drunk-driving laws also keep the issue open for examination.

Yet many Americans enjoy moderate drinking as a very pleasant part of contemporary adult life. Wine with dinner, beer at a ballgame, and champagne at a wedding are pleasures that many adults can enjoy without difficulty or overindulgence. Maine has even joined the rest of the nation as a manufacturer of local liquor, wine, and beer.

If banning the manufacture and use of alcohol was a failure nationally and statewide, one very positive change emerged from the ranks of the temperance movements – the dramatic and lasting drop in the amount of liquor Americans consumed. Mainers and their fellow Americans have never returned to the large quantities they consumed before 1830. Armed with the education they gained from the temperance movements, they have made that decision for themselves.

William David Barry  
 Nan Cumming

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(Above) Hayner Whiskey Advertisement, The New England Magazine, June, 1903.

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## We would like to thank the following for their research assistance and advice:

Herbert C. Adams

Matthew J. Barker

Edgar M. W. Boyd

Eva Biggart-Brady

Charles E. Burden, M.D.

Joyce Butler

Jason Cons

William B. Jordan, Jr.

Tom Hardiman

Richard J. Kahn, M.D.

Stephanie Philbrick

Arlene Palmer Schwind

Geraldine Tidd Scott

Timothy L. Smith

Laura Fecych Sprague

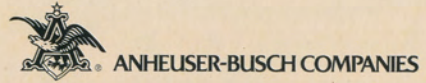
Didi Stockly

Jessica Skwire

William J. Volmar

(Left) **Stein Song**, 1930, New arrangement by Rudy Vallée (1901-1986). Written at the University of Maine at Orono by Lincoln Colcord and Adelbert Sprague, the great drinking song reached national popularity in 1929-30 when Maine's own Rudy Vallée's rendition made it the number one hit.

**Rum, Riot, and Reform** was made possible through the generous contributions of:



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Illegal whiskey removed from a vessel in Portland Harbor, 1920s



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