

Temperance Efforts in Antebellum Wisconsin

By

Tom Sanders

A Research Paper Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts
History

At

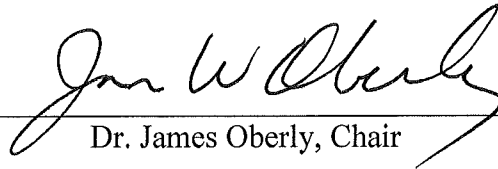
The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

May, 2014

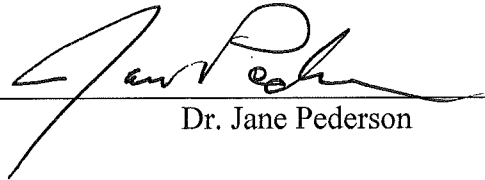
Graduate Studies

The members of the Committee approve the research paper of


Tom Sanders presented on April 24, 2014



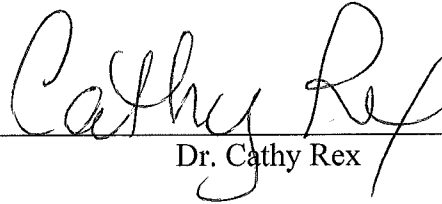
Dr. James Oberly, Chair



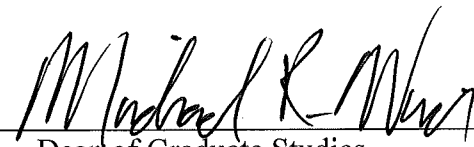
Dr. Jane Pederson



Dr. Oscar Chamberlain



Dr. Cathy Rex

APPROVED: 

Dean of Graduate Studies


Temperance Efforts in Antebellum Wisconsin

By

Tom Sanders

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 2014
Under the Supervision of Dr. James Oberly

This research paper examines the temperance movement in the United States and Wisconsin, focusing on the first 60 years of the nineteenth century. The author discusses how temperance emerged as a reform movement, the different stages it went through, its successes and failures, and its legacy. Also presented is an analysis of the last years of a temperance society in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin.


Research Paper Adviser (Signature)

April 24, 2014
Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research paper is the culmination of my studies at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and there are several people that I would like to acknowledge for their time and support. I would like to thank Dr. James Oberly for acting as my adviser through this process, for providing important insights, and suggesting valuable revisions. I would like to thank Dr. Oscar Chamberlain, Dr. Jane Pederson, and Dr. Cathy Rex for serving on my committee. They challenged me to think about this topic from unique perspectives and provided me with helpful comments. I would like to thank Nancy Amdahl and Donna Kuklinski for helping me with the finer points of the graduate student experience. As a student I was inspired by several courses taught by the aforementioned Dr. Oberly, Dr. Chamberlain, and Dr. Pederson, as well as Dr. Kate Lang and Dr. Robert Gough. These professors taught history, but more importantly they taught me how to think critically about the past, how to consider multiple perspectives and philosophies, and to think about what it means to be a historian. I would like to thank my parents, Robert and Kathy, who have always encouraged and supported my academic pursuits with unconditional love. Finally, I would like to thank Erin, for her unwavering optimism, support, and love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Figures.....	vi
I. Nineteenth Century American Society.....	1
II. Historiography.....	4
III. Seeds of Reform.....	10
IV. Initial Temperance Efforts.....	12
V. Washingtonians & Sons of Temperance.....	13
VI. Political Action.....	17
VII. Early Temperance in Wisconsin.....	21
VIII. Sons of Temperance in Wisconsin.....	24
IX. Dodge County – Demographics.....	24
X. Beaver Dam & the Sons of Temperance.....	27
XI. Conclusion.....	35
Works Cited.....	38

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. *The Maine Liquor Law*.....20

I. Nineteenth Century American Society

Early nineteenth century America was a place full actions and reactions, new opportunities and old bondages, of turmoil, transformations, and evolutions. New moralities were created to replace broken ideologies, and a new generation of Americans, more socially and culturally diverse than their predecessors, sought to make their own distinctive mark on the young country's future.

According to the accounts from the time, nineteenth century America was plagued by "conflict and instability," and "the nation's popular literature was filled with lurid images of frontier violence, urban savagery, and sexual vice, of cheats, cutthroats, tricksters, and con artists."¹ Americans faced threats inside and outside their homes. Citizens faced the real possibilities of mob violence and lynchings, duels, armed gangs, and pick-pockets. Murders and domestic abuse were on the rise, as were "scenes of heart-wrenching poverty" and "drunkenness and gambling."²

Against this backdrop of violence, Americans faced a number of changes to their society. More Americans were beginning to populate the nation's urban centers, aided by "a sudden increase in foreign immigration."³ Economic changes led to the rise of "distinct working-class neighborhoods," changes to ideas about gender led to an increase in opportunities for women's education, and there was a "collapse of an older pattern of paternalistic social relationships."⁴ The traditional authority figures – fathers, church

¹ Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 3.

² *Ibid.*, 4.

³ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

leaders, public officials – lamented “losing their ability to dictate conduct,” and all of this “contributed to a fear that vulnerable individuals were now defenseless against exploitation.”⁵

Americans placed the blame for all of these failings on two root causes. The first was what they saw as “a flawed value system that exalted material gain and individual self-seeking above all else;” and the second was based on an “apparent weakness of all forms of authority in an increasingly democratic society.”⁶ In reaction to these causes, groups of reformers sought to create a new set of moral and ethical standards, “to replace the ethos of selfishness and individualism that dominate American society.”⁷ The first wave of reformers were rooted in Protestant churches, and they devised mechanisms to instill self-control based on the new moral and ethical standards. They promoted the idea that self-restraint was “the key to respectability, upward mobility, and social harmony.”⁸ The second wave of reformers sought to create better and more efficient organizations, and they targeted reform through political action.

One of the major problems that early reformers targeted was intemperance. Though drinking and drunkenness were visible in colonial America, “it was seldom frequent.”⁹ The social order that was controlled by cultural and social leaders had

⁴ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁹ Joseph R. Gusfield, “From Social Control to Moral Regeneration,” in *Ante-bellum Reform*, ed. by David Brion Davis (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 121.

developed “codes of moderated drinking which were...reasonably well followed.”¹⁰ Early temperance leaders cited the example set forth by Increase and Cotton Mather, who delivered sermons on the importance of temperance.¹¹ But drinking habits changed, and after the American Revolution, the citizens “consumed alcohol with astonishing frequency and in prodigious quantities.”¹² Americans relished the opportunity to drink at such varied events as weddings, funerals, christenings, harvest celebrations, barn-raising; at public auctions, dances, elections, civic meetings; and there was a “well-established social custom of ‘treating,’ or buying drinks for companions to display hospitality and friendship.”¹³ It was common to drink during the workday and then after the workday. It was also a common belief that drinking wine or beer was a healthy alternative to water, and “few people challenged their medicinal efficacy for a host of health problems.”¹⁴ Even more alarming to temperance advocates was the increase in distilled liquors. The years following the revolution saw a dramatic increase in whiskey consumption, and the “average drinking-age person was swilling nearly ten gallons of distilled spirits each year by 1830 – nearly twice what he or she might have consumed in 1790.”¹⁵ Whiskey had become a patriotic alternative to English beers, which were scarce

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹¹ Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 82.

¹² Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 90.

¹³ Carol Mattingly, *Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998), 13; Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women*, 90; Gusfield, “Social Control,” 123.

¹⁴ Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women*, 90.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

during the American Revolution, but many reformers pointed to its ubiquitous nature as a primary reason behind drunkenness in America.¹⁶

The following pages will discuss how historians have studied antebellum temperance and the conclusions they have produced. The motivations and influences of reformers, and early temperance efforts will be examined. The evolution of temperance into a more organized and politically active movement will be detailed. A particular focus will be upon temperance reformers in Wisconsin, including Cutting Marsh, and the decline of antebellum temperance, as evidenced by the Beaver Dam Sons of Temperance.

II. Historiography

Historians have chronicled the efforts of American temperance reformers since the mid-nineteenth century. The first histories of the temperance movement provide a good starting point for discussion. They document some of the important individuals and organizations, focusing mainly on religious backgrounds and political achievements. One such example from 1848 is Samuel Ellis' *The History of the Order of the Sons of Temperance*, a friendly and predisposed account on the beginnings of one of the temperance movement's most successful organizations.¹⁷ Peter Turner Winskill's 1893 work, *The Temperance Movement and Its Workers*, is a similarly praise-filled account of the political successes that temperance reformers achieved.¹⁸ Throughout most of the

¹⁶ Gusfield, "Social Control," 123.

¹⁷ Samuel Ellis, *The History of the Order of the Sons of Temperance* (Boston: Stacy, Richardson & Company, 1848).

¹⁸ Peter Turner Winskill, *The Temperance Movement and Its Workers*, Vol. 2 (London: Blackie & Son, 1893).

early literature available on antebellum temperance, there appear few mentions about groups outside of white males. Native Americans and African Americans receive little regard especially. Some accounts make passing references to laws that were enacted to prevent Native Americans from buying alcohol, because of fears that it would lead to insurrection. John Chapin's 1900 historical account of temperance advocate Cutting Marsh makes degrading references to Native Americans, and suggests that reformers' efforts acted in the best interest of tribes.¹⁹

In the last half of the twentieth century, historians began to examine different aspects of the temperance reform movement. Frank Thistlethwaite's 1959 essay looks at the connections that existed between England and American reform movements and of particular note is Thistlethwaite's discussion on the temperance movement.²⁰ The author examines the relationships between several churches in America and England, and how they exchanged ideology. He also discusses the transformation of the temperance movement over time and how factions developed within the group of reformers.

A 1963 essay by Joseph R. Gusfield examines the connections that existed between the temperance movement and ideas of social control and upward mobility. Gusfield argues that the movement's first phase was driven by members of the old social elite, who were attempting to regain some type of social control. In the second phase, Gusfield traces members of the middle class who were trying to distinguish themselves from the lower classes.²¹

¹⁹ John E. Chapin, "Sketch of Cutting Marsh," in *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, Vol. 15, ed. by Reuben Gold Thwaites (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1900), 32.

²⁰ Frank Thistlewaite, "The Anglo-American World of Humanitarian Endeavor," in *Ante-bellum Reform*, ed. by David Brion Davis (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 63-81.

²¹ Gusfield, "Social Control," 129-136.

Genevieve McBride's *On Wisconsin Women*, published in 1993, offers only a little bit of information for those interested in antebellum temperance. The first chapter focuses primarily on the on the several publishing efforts by Wisconsin reformers. There are good discussions of important rights activists including Mathilde Franschiska Anneke, Sherman Booth, and Thurlow Brown. McBride discusses briefly the 1853 temperance convention that women organized in Lake Mills and the lecture tour and notable guest speakers that were organized. McBride's main focus is on the women's rights movement following the Civil War.²²

Robert Abzug's 1994 book *Cosmos Crumbling* is an examination of the religious foundations of the antebellum reform movements, and it traces the impact that religious thinking had on reformers as the period progressed.²³ Abzug begins his discussion by highlighting the lives and careers prominent moral reformers, shows how ideas concerning reform evolved over the years, and how these and other reformers engaged in a discourse regarding the application of moral reform in American society. Over time, activists agreed that religion should be used to actively reform their society. This idea, connected with the spirit of revivalism, led to the beginnings of radical reform movements in New England.²⁴

While discussing temperance reform, Abzug argues against recent interpretations that have ignored the religious impulse of reformers. He states that reformers were deeply religious and that their radical reform movements were attempts to create a

²² Genevieve G. McBride, *On Wisconsin Women: Working for Their Rights from Settlement to Suffrage* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 3-36.

²³ Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, 82-87, 93-104.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 84-87, 96-104.

Heaven on Earth. As the years passed, reform activities became an entrenched component of churches, and participating in movements was viewed as an essential element of being a Christian. But as the religious reform leaders began to assemble large numbers, and as the reform movements began to work alongside one another, inevitable factions and splinters began to develop.

Abzug does a good job of clearly pointing out the tremendous impact that religion had on the foundations and directions of antebellum reform movements. He shows how for many early reformers, movements against drunkenness or slavery were not simply a social activity or an example of charity work. For many, involvement in these reform movements was a truly religious activity that they took quite seriously, in hopes of reforming society and bringing about America's millennial promise.

Steven Mintz's 1995 synthesis on antebellum reform provides a good overview of reform, but because it seeks to serve as a general and quick narrative of the era it lacks in-depth analysis on most of the issues. In *Moralists and Modernizers*, Mintz examines the conditions of American society before reform movements began, and points out the religious and intellectual foundations of the reformers. He then describes the specific efforts of reformers, and points out the achievements as well as the shortcomings of reform workers. Throughout the book, Mintz shows how "antebellum reform combined a humanitarian impulse to redeem and rehabilitate the victims of social change and a paternalistic impulse to shape character and regulate behavior."²⁵

Mintz is interested in all of the reform movements of the antebellum period, but despite the limited space available he offers a solid introduction to the temperance movement. He offers a general discussion of what led to antebellum reform movements,

²⁵ Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, xvii.

the methods and techniques that reformers employed, their successes and their failures, and their legacy in American society. Mintz argues that temperance advocates were influenced by multiple factors, including religion, politics, economics, psychology, and culture. He avoids glorifying the reformers, and he points out their accomplishments and legacies, as well as their shortcomings and failures.

Carol Mattingly's *Well-Tempered Women* mostly emphasizes the last half of the nineteenth century; however the first chapter provides a useful overview of the temperance movement in the middle of the century. Additionally, chapter six provides some information about temperance literature, and how it reflected other issues that women were concerned about in this time period. Throughout, Mattingly focuses on the language of women temperance reformers, and argues that their effectiveness was due to their ability to construct a rhetoric that was easy to identify with.²⁶

Mattingly also provides some valuable insight into the efforts and accomplishments of women during the antebellum era. Mattingly describes how female temperance workers used their platforms to advance women's rights in other social areas. Women joined the temperance cause because they truly believed in the movement, but also because they saw it as a way to "effectively change attitudes about women's injustices and encourage women to become active on their own behalf."²⁷

Bruce Dorsey's study *Reforming Men and Women* looks at ideas associated with gender in the Post-Revolutionary era, and he examines how they contributed to the growth of reform movements. Dorsey focuses his history on men and women, but not just the white and upper-class. The author also argues that several economic changes had

²⁶ Mattingly, *Well-Tempered Women*, 13-38.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

an impact on reformers, and he discusses the market revolution, the decline of constrained labor in the north, and the development of American nationalism and U.S. empire expansion. One chapter focuses on the temperance movement in Philadelphia, and especially the social problems that gave rise to the movement.²⁸

Bruce Dorsey discusses the role that African Americans played in the reform movement in antebellum Philadelphia. He claims that African Americans were more involved in the total abstinence movement beginning in the 1830s, as “many urban black leaders were convinced that their only hope of being recognized as ‘men and citizens,’ and their best strategy for economic survival, rested in a complete identification with the temperance cause.” African American reformers equated intemperance with slavery, and thus strove to be free from both figurative and literal bondage.²⁹

Dorsey also does a good job of introducing ideas about temperance and gender. He shows how the social lives of men were constructed around traditional ideas about drinking and manhood, and the ways in which temperance threatened those traditions. He also describes how male temperance leaders used language to create a patriotic and heroic ideal of temperate manhood, and “proved they were true men by showing they were different from other males who compromised their manhood by drinking.”³⁰ For the most part women were relegated to being silent activists during the first half of the temperance movement. They were used as symbols by men: “either they were portrayed as helpless victims of male drinking or they were championed for their domestic influence that tamed men’s drinking appetites or redeemed wayward husbands and

²⁸ Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women*, 90-135.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 122-123.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 131.

sons.”³¹ But as the temperance movement moved forward, women became more active outside the home, formed their own temperance societies, and especially “began to assume more prominent roles as the movement attracted greater working-class and nativist support.”³²

III. Seeds of Reform

Religion was a primary influence upon the early temperance reformers. Most of the early leaders of temperance were deeply Christian individuals, and “the initial aim of pre-Civil War reform was to uplift the nation’s morals and spread Christian values.” The leaders of temperance had honed their skills previously in movements to promote Sunday Schools and keep the Sabbath holy.³³ Reformers in the United States and England were influenced by each other and motivated by the idea of “spreading Christian influence around the globe and combating all forms of tyranny and injustice.”³⁴ Unitarians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, and Quakers in America all developed relationships “with their British co-religionists, corresponding on matters of doctrine and organization.”³⁵ Despite being devout Christians, Steven Mintz points out that the first group of reformers also embraced religious liberalism: “an

³¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

³² *Ibid.*, 133.

³³ Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 20, 51-60, 71.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁵ Thistlewaite, “Anglo-American World,” 66-67.

emerging humanitarian form of religion that rejected the harsh Calvinist doctrines of original sin and predestination...[and] stressed the basic goodness of human nature.”³⁶

The early reformers were moralistic in nature, but had other motivations and influences. The reform movement originated in New England where “concerns about social and Godly order came more and more to focus on abuse of alcohol.”³⁷ Some historians have labeled the temperance movement as a “reaction of the old Federalist aristocracy to loss of political, social, and religious dominance in American society.”³⁸ Afraid about the possibility of “an uncultured and uneducated mass of farmers” taking control politically led to efforts by the “declining status group...to maintain social control.”³⁹ American employers sought alcohol reform in the name of “improvement of employee efficiency.”⁴⁰ Temperance could also be used to control minority groups. Laws were in place restrict the sale of liquor to Native Americans, African Americans, servants, and apprentices.⁴¹

Reformers were inspired by many sources. The previous generation of Americans were the patriots who had sacrificed to create a new nation. Americans in the early nineteenth century “felt an acute ‘belatedness’ – that they had missed the sense of heroic mission and social solidarity experienced by the revolutionary generation.”⁴² The reformers were motivated by their forefathers to create and succeed at their own noble

³⁶ Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 21.

³⁷ Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, 83.

³⁸ Gusfield, “Social Control,” 121.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 123-124.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴² Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 18.

endeavor. Reformers were also inspired by the ideas of the Enlightenment period, and firmly believed in the idea that humans were created equally and that environments corrupted. They tackled the problems of intemperance with common sense and an optimism that they could “improve society through the use of reason.”⁴³

IV. Initial Temperance Efforts

The very first efforts of the temperance movement in the United States are attributed to when “a number of individual Quakers, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Methodists began to denounce alcohol as a threat to the health and morals of the new republic.”⁴⁴ Benjamin Rush was one of the more prominent figures of the early days of temperance, and he delivered many speeches about the destruction caused by intemperance.⁴⁵ The first truly organized effort started in 1808 when a small group of citizens located in Moreau, NY were led by Dr. Billy J. Clark and formed “Moreau’s society,” a collection of 43 who pledged abstinence from alcohol.⁴⁶ The group set up a system of dues and fines which would be copied by future temperance societies. The money that they collected was used to purchase and pass out literature to the public, to “educate citizens as to the consequences of drinking alcoholic spirits.”⁴⁷ Soon after its

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 17-20.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴⁶ Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, 84.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

formation “there came to be a strong concentration of such societies” throughout western New York.⁴⁸

Lyman Beecher was another influential early temperance reformer. Beecher’s rhetoric tied the health of the nation’s citizens to the overall health of the nation. He claimed that intemperance “sapped this very life blood of America,” and that it “destroyed the national intellect, crippled the military power of the nation, and destroyed the substance of patriotism.”⁴⁹ Beecher’s messages contributed to the formation of the American Temperance Society (ATS) in 1826. The ATS was the first temperance society to gain nationwide momentum. More so than previous movements, the ATS reached out to the “common man.” Five years after its initial formation, the ATS claimed 170,000 members spread across 2,200 local groups. A majority of ATS members resided in the New England region, however, and temperance had not yet made as great of an impact in other regions.⁵⁰

V. Washingtonians & Sons of Temperance

In 1840 a new temperance group, the Washington Temperance Society, developed out of Baltimore. The Washingtonians were “loud, boisterous, and dramatic,” and marked a new phase of the temperance movement. They were less connected to religion and used aggressive tactics in public, hosting “cold-water picnics, parades, and mass meetings at which reformed drinkers offered vivid personal testimony of the social

⁴⁸ Thistlewaite, “Anglo-American World,” 75.

⁴⁹ Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, 87.

⁵⁰ Gusfield, “Social Control,” 130.

degradation they suffered under the influence of alcohol.”⁵¹ Whereas previous temperance organizations had mostly targeted individuals who were already temperate, the Washingtonians “sought to reform the seemingly incurable drunkard.” They focused on getting individuals to stop drinking, take a pledge to stay sober, and on “supporting those brave enough to take the step.” Washingtonian meetings resemble modern day Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and they “featured reformed drunkards attesting to their experiences before and after living by the pledge.” By the end of 1843 the society claimed that “millions” had taken their pledge of sobriety.⁵²

According to Samuel Ellis’ 1848 account on the creation of the Sons of Temperance, the movement sprung forth in reaction to the Washingtonians. Ellis claims that the Washingtonians possessed an “excess of zeal” and a lack of “efficiency.” The first Sons of Temperance meeting occurred September 29, 1842 in New York, with the purpose of creating a society that was as fervent as the Washingtonians but with better organization and order.⁵³ In the six years between the society’s creation and Ellis’ publication, the Sons of Temperance claimed to mobilize 150,000 white males in America.

At its beginning stages the Sons of Temperance remained closed to women and non-whites. In 1850, Orland Lund presented a defense of his society’s regulations and practices, and he pointed out that women were free to join the auxiliary organization the “Daughters of Temperance.”⁵⁴ Lund stated that numerous other reform groups kept

⁵¹ Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 74.

⁵² Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, 103.

⁵³ Ellis, *History of the Order*, 8.

⁵⁴ Orlando Lund, *The Order of the Sons of Temperance* (Syracuse: Agan & Summers, 1850), 24.

separate branches for the separate genders, and praised the Daughters of Temperance for performing a “great and gracious work” and for acting as “co-adjutors in the work of reforming the world, and elevating our fellow creatures to honor and respectability.”⁵⁵ Ellis, in 1848, stated forcefully that “in the present organization of the National Division, no Division of colored men would be allowed; and we trust no Grand Division will ever attempt to introduce one.”⁵⁶

Lund also responded to other criticisms that were leveled against the Sons of Temperance. In response to allegations that the Sons of Temperance were a secret and sinister society, Lund proclaimed their innocence, and said that any secrecy that the group adopted was purely to maintain financial security.⁵⁷ In response to allegations that the group was raising and using funds improperly, Lund outlined how money collected was used to pay for organizational resources. Collected dues also had a charitable purpose, as Sons of Temperance divisions would help widows and orphans when members passed away.⁵⁸ Finally, responding to criticisms that the Sons were planning and organizing political treachery, Lund pointed out that “the discussion of all matters of a sectarian or political character in our meeting is strictly prohibited.”⁵⁹

Joseph R. Gusfield argues that both the Washingtonians and Sons of Temperance represented the “growing importance of Temperance as a sign of middle-class status.” Becoming a member in these or similar groups “was both a sign of commitment to

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁶ Ellis, *History of the Order*, 38.

⁵⁷ Lund, *Order of the Sons of Temperance*, 14-15.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

middle-class values and a step in the process of changing a life style.” He underscores how these societies used strategies aimed at the mainstream, employing “an emotional and dramatic quality...[in] ceremony, music, drama, and fiction.” Temperance advocates used “parades...banners, flags, and outdoor meetings” and “temperance songs were written and children enlisted in the cause.”⁶⁰ Reformers also “devised drink-free alternatives to the leisure-time activities of urban residents...created temperance hotels and temperance taverns for travelers...organized children and youth clubs...[and] transformed popular celebrations and amusements into alcohol-free” events.⁶¹

Temperance activists also turned to new tactics, as evidenced by activities in Philadelphia:

From the beginning, temperance reformers in Philadelphia tried to present their movement as a scientific as well as a moralistic reform. Since evangelical activists at this time saw no inherent conflict between science and religion, they exploited whatever new knowledge or technology served their purposes. They tried to capitalize on the populace’s growing concerns about personal health or economic advantages of temperance. In addition, temperance societies became obsessed with statistics, the numerical proof of their campaign. More than any other reform, temperance agents were enamored with numbers, hoping such scientific evidence would morally persuade drinkers.⁶²

All of these methods and tactics helped to give the temperance movement “a mass appeal” and it was soon “infused with a new group of reformers from working-class backgrounds.”⁶³

As the Washingtonians and Sons of Temperance grew, they developed more radical beliefs, and soon “total abstinence from all alcoholic beverages was the primary

⁶⁰ Gusfield, “Social Control,” 129-131.

⁶¹ Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women*, 125.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 116.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 120-121.

doctrine of Temperance organizations everywhere in the United States.”⁶⁴ Radical reformers even challenged churches to ban “the use of fermented wine in communion rites.”⁶⁵ By the beginning of 1850 “abstinence and sobriety had become public virtues,” and the majority of the American middle-class reformers turned their attention toward political change.⁶⁶

VI. Political Action

Temperance advocates in the 1820s and 1830s were traditionally politically affiliated with the Whig party. But as the political fortunes of the Whigs waned, and as the temperance movement gained momentum in the West, support for temperance followed political lines less and less.⁶⁷ The first attempt at political action by temperance reformers occurred in 1838, when the Massachusetts state legislature constructed the nation’s first significant temperance law. Dubbed the “Fifteen Gallon Law,” it “prohibited purchase of liquor in quantities of less than 15 gallons.” The law was primarily aimed at preventing less fortunate citizens from buying liquor.⁶⁸ The law did not end drunkenness in the state, but it did set the stage for future political battles across America.

⁶⁴ Gusfield, “Social Control,” 130.

⁶⁵ Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, 98.

⁶⁶ Gusfield, “Social Control,” 131.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 134.

The following year a young Quaker businessman named Neal Dow began his quest to bring total abstinence to the state of Maine. Dow was an early and active member of both the Maine Temperance Union and the Washingtonian movement. He believed that true reform could only come from a complete removal of alcohol from American society, and he began advocating for prohibition in his home state.⁶⁹ Dow was elected mayor of Portland, ME in 1851, and he rode that momentum to help pass the Maine Law, “the nation’s first statewide prohibition law.”⁷⁰ Others soon followed Maine’s lead. The Minnesota territory passed a similar measure in 1852, then Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Michigan. New York’s legislature passed a prohibition law in 1854, but it was vetoed by the governor. The following year, it passed the New York legislature again and this time it was signed into effect. Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, and New Hampshire also passed temperance measures in 1855. Wisconsin’s legislature sent a temperance law to the governor in 1855, but it was met with a veto.⁷¹ By the end of 1855, 13 states had passed laws similar to the Maine Law, and temperance reformers had reached their climax of political power.

The following year the number of states with prohibition laws was down to eight.⁷² An appeals court in New York ruled that that state’s law was not constitutional, and Maine’s own state “legislature repealed the Maine Law.”⁷³ Two major reasons explain the decline in temperance reformers’ political power. The first was a dramatic

⁶⁹ Winskill, *Temperance Movement*, 268-269.

⁷⁰ Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 76.

⁷¹ Winskill, *Temperance Movement*, 269-270.

⁷² Gusfield, “Social Control,” 133.

⁷³ Winskill, *Temperance Movement*, 270.

increase in immigration. When immigrants from Ireland and Germany first began to arrive in the thousands, temperance reformers responded by pressing harder for prohibition. Most reformers “viewed the immigrants as an object of benevolence; someone they would help to achieve the morally sanctified habits of the native American.”⁷⁴ Immigrants’ drinking habits were no worse than native-born Americans, and they viewed temperance efforts as “a tyranny over their ways of life and not a move to uplift the society.”⁷⁵ After the early political victories of temperance advocates in the 1850s, immigrants began to mobilize politically in urban centers, and worked to elect candidates who were not in favor of prohibitory measures. The second major reason behind temperance reformers losing political power was the rise of the Republican Party. When the Republicans were first founded, they had embraced temperance as a component of their party platform. But as the Republicans began to grow into a national party, they abandoned temperance as an issue. The party “feared that prohibition would diminish support for its central issue – opposition to the extension of slavery.”⁷⁶ Furthermore, the Republicans were afraid “of losing immigrant support,” because opposition by mobilized immigrants could be “strong enough to cost state elections.”⁷⁷ Temperance had transitioned from a moral issue to a political issue, but as the antebellum period came to an end, Americans were disconcerted by other social and cultural problems.

⁷⁴ Gusfield, “Social Control,” 136.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁷⁶ Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 76.

⁷⁷ Gusfield, “Social Control,” 137.

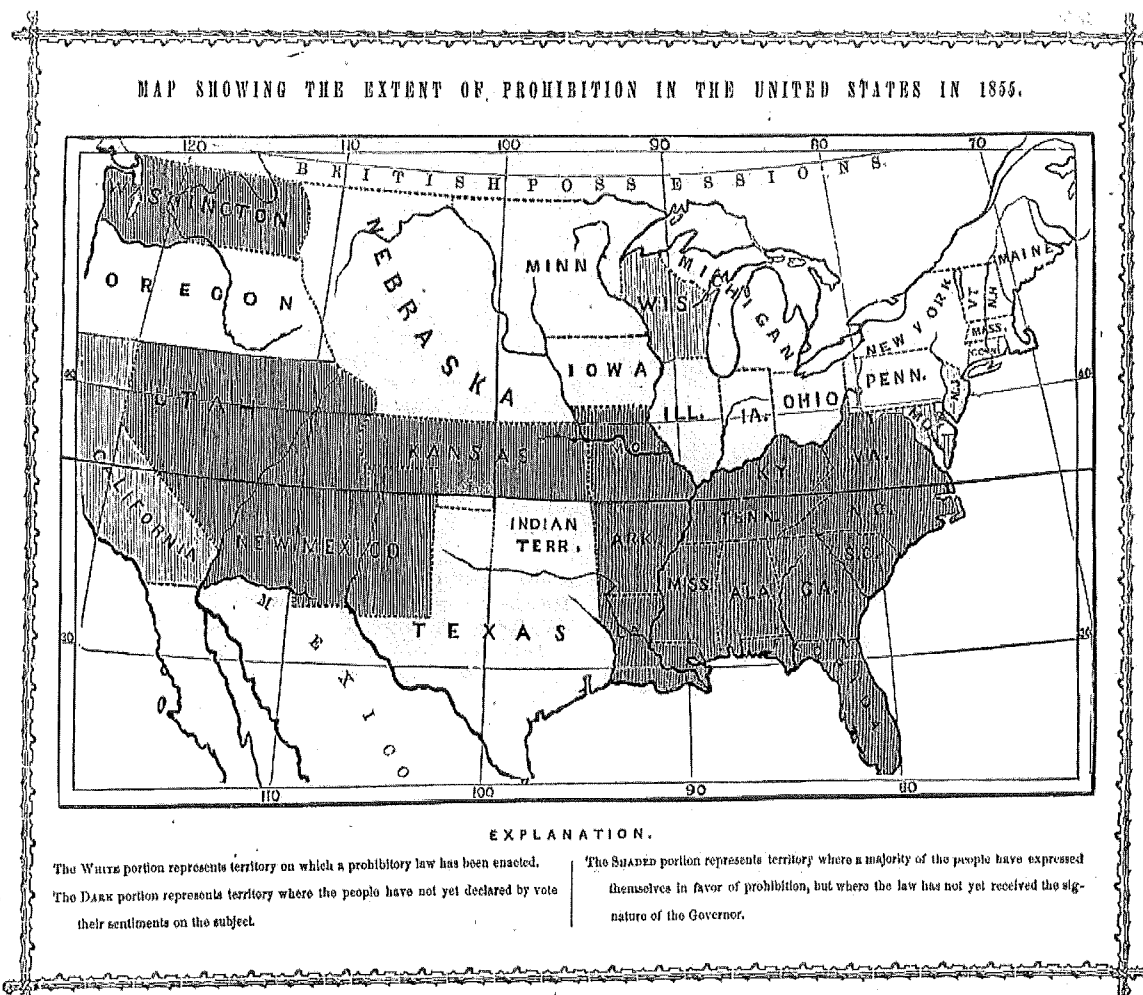


Figure 1: This map, created by Henry S. Clubb in 1856, provides an illustration of the political successes that temperance reformers believed they had accomplished by the end of 1855. The white areas showed places where some type of prohibition law had been passed. Clubb includes Minnesota, Nebraska, and Oregon, but does not explain what type of prohibition measures those territories had adopted. The gray shaded areas, including Wisconsin, display areas where according to the author, “a majority of the people have expressed themselves in favor of prohibition, but where the law has not yet received the signature of the Governor.”

Source: Henry S. Clubb. *The Maine Liquor Law*. New York: Fowler and Wells, 1856.

Accessed January 11, 2014.

<http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/sceti/printedbooksNew/index.cfm?textID=map_prohibition>

VII. Early Temperance in Wisconsin

The first significant steps of the temperance movement in Wisconsin occurred at a Presbyterian mission in the Green Bay region. The settlement was named Grand Kakalin, but the members of the Stockbridge-Munsee tribe who lived there also referred to it as Statesburg.⁷⁸ The Stockbridge-Munsees descended from the Mohicans who had lived in Stockbridge, Massachusetts for most of the eighteenth century. They relocated to New York following the American Revolution, and then began to settle in present-day Wisconsin in the early 1820s.⁷⁹ One population count from 1828 “listed 270 Stockbridges at Grand Kakalin.”⁸⁰

In 1830, Cutting Marsh moved from his family’s farm in Vermont to take over the leadership position at Grand Kakalin. Marsh would serve as a missionary until the Presbyterians discontinued their association with the Stockbridge-Munsee in 1848. During that 18-year span, Marsh delivered annual reports to the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, updating them of his and the mission’s progress for the previous year.⁸¹

In his first report, delivered in 1831, Marsh describes the foundation of a temperance society during the previous year:

⁷⁸ James W. Oberly, *A Nation of Statesmen: The Political Culture of the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans, 1815-1972* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 38.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁸¹ Chapin, “Cutting Marsh,” vii, 26.

A Temperance Soc. was formed about a year ago which now numbers about 70 males & females and exerts a very salutary influence. It embraces all of the most respectable part of our little community; altho' some at times have fallen away, yet in some cases the course pursued by the Soc. which was to have a Com. of vigilance to visit delinquents, has proved effectual in reclaiming them, but a large majority of the members have entirely abstained from ardent spirits since they joined the society.⁸²

Despite other accounts of the first temperance society in Wisconsin being formed in 1835 or 1832 in Green Bay, Marsh reveals that truly the first such society was formed eighteen years before Wisconsin achieved statehood. It is also worthy to note that Wisconsin's first society was open to females, which was not true for a majority of early temperance societies in America. Mohican women had previously demonstrated a "cultural pattern of matrilineal authority" as active participants in churches while in New York.⁸³ Furthermore, children were a part of societies, and Marsh believed that indoctrination of youth was "an excellent means of promoting the cause for the instruction is [also] carried home to their parents."⁸⁴ The society achieved initial success among the Stockbridge-Munsee, and the following year saw an increase from seventy members to one hundred. Marsh described the success as "apparent in the peace & quietness which is enjoyed in families & neighborhoods where before wretchedness & discord prevailed."⁸⁵

The "wretchedness & discord," according to Marsh, was the result primarily of two main factors. The first was his belief that members of the Stockbridge-Munsee tribe were essentially "pagans" and his efforts at teaching them to be temperate was part of the

⁸² *Ibid.*, 56.

⁸³ Oberly, *A Nation of Statesmen*, 23.

⁸⁴ Chapin, "Cutting Marsh," 99.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

process “to civilise the natives.”⁸⁶ The second important factor was an outside influence. Marsh describes how members of the tribe were aided in their “downward course” as a “consequence of mingling with fur-traders and others engaged in the traffic of ardent spirits.”⁸⁷ When outsiders would visit the mission, such as federal government agents dropping off provisions and annuities, they brought with them distilled liquors and traded with the Stockbridge-Munsee. As Marsh describes it, this would inevitably lead to “drunken frolics & feasts...both disgusting & shocking to the feelings.”⁸⁸ Sometimes it would lead to more violent outcomes. Fights were not an uncommon occurrence, and in his 1834 report, Marsh laments two deaths of tribesman due to drunkenness – one of which was a suicide and the other which was the result of a man trying to cross a river while intoxicated.⁸⁹ A few years after forming the first society, Marsh feared that the movement was regressing: “Intemperance is making fearful progress in this settlement, and its dreadful effects are abundantly manifest in their poverty, indolence and the exceeding low state of religion which prevails.”⁹⁰ It is hard to say definitively how effective Marsh’s efforts were. He does not mention numbers of members or saved souls after the initial years, and each year seems to find the temperance movement in the midst of either feast or famine. In 1843 Marsh offers one of the final statements on his temperance efforts, proclaiming that “since the Temperance Society was formed...[it has]

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 97-98.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.

been the means of diminishing the amount of sickness & the number of deaths more than one half.”⁹¹

VIII. Sons of Temperance in Wisconsin

The first Sons of Temperance charter in the Wisconsin territory was granted “April 24, 1846, and the Division was duly instituted at Milwaukee.”⁹² From there the Wisconsin order spread quickly, as far north as Green Bay and as far west as Mineral Point. After the first year of organizing in Wisconsin, the Sons of Temperance claimed 1,000 members, and boasted that “some of the most talented and influential individuals in the State have joined the Order...given great weight to the movement.”⁹³ In March of 1848 the state’s order had “nearly thirty Subordinate Divisions, and about 1500 contributing members.”⁹⁴

IX. Dodge County - Demographics

Dodge County is situated northeast of Madison, northwest of Milwaukee, and southwest of Green Bay and Fond du Lac. The county was created on December 7, 1836

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 181.

⁹² Ellis, *History of the Order*, 213.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 214.

and named in honor of Wisconsin's first territorial governor, Henry Dodge.⁹⁵ The carving of the territory followed years of encroachment upon the lands of Native American tribes. The prominent Native American tribe found in the Dodge County area was the Winnebago, also known as the Ho-Chunk. In 1832 the Black Hawk War had "divided the Ho-Chunk" in the region.⁹⁶ At the conclusion of the war, "the Ho-Chunk were forced to cede their lands south of the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers to the Rock River, encompassing their cornfields, hunting grounds, and other significant sites," including present-day Madison and Wisconsin Dells.⁹⁷ In 1837 "twenty individual Ho-Chunk ceded the tribe's remaining lands east of the Mississippi River and agreed to move to lands set aside for them in Iowa."⁹⁸ Later in that same year the U.S. government forced upon the Ho-Chunk a new offer of land in Minnesota instead of Iowa.⁹⁹ The first white settlers began to populate Dodge County in March of 1838.¹⁰⁰ According to Homer Bishop Hubbell's 1913 history of Dodge County, it took a few more years until the new settlers of the land felt at ease with their surroundings:

With this treaty, the United States obtained an unassailable title to all the lands lying within the present bounds of Dodge county; but, so fond of their former homes in this locality were the Rock River Winnebagoes, that even after they had been removed to the reservation provided for them, they continually revisited them, in small parties, to the great annoyance of the citizens, and the government was finally compelled, in 1841, to send a military detachment to secure obedience to the order confining them to the territory set off to them beyond the Mississippi. But, though forced to leave, they would frequently return in small parties, and when these straggling bands would pass their old

⁹⁵ Homer Bishop Hubbell, *Dodge County, Wisconsin: Past and Present* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1913), 71.

⁹⁶ Patty Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2001), 45-46.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰⁰ Hubbell, *Dodge County*, 69-70.

time burial places, they would manifest the deepest reverence.¹⁰¹

Twelve years after the first white settlers arrived, Dodge County held a total population of 19,138, enough to make it the fifth most populous county in Wisconsin. It was a mostly homogenous group, with only 12 non-whites appearing in the Federal Government's 1850 Census figures. The gender ratio was split fairly even, with males making up 54% of the population. Just over one-third of the population was foreign-born, and among these non-natives a majority were of German descent. Of the ten total churches in the county, nine of them were Protestant, the one non-Protestant being Roman Catholic. There were three Lutheran, two each of Presbyterian and Methodist, and one each of Baptist and Episcopal. Nearly all of the inhabitants the county worked the land. There were 2,132 farms: one farm for every nine people.¹⁰²

Like so many other areas in America during this time period, the years between 1850 and 1860 saw dramatic demographic growth for Dodge County. The total population more than doubled to 42,818, which now made Dodge the third most populous county in Wisconsin, only behind Milwaukee (by 19,700) and Dane (by 1,104). In 1850 35% of the population was foreign-born, but that number increased to 37% in 1860. Again most of those newcomers came from Germany, but there were also new immigrants from Ireland.

The number of farms also more than doubled to 4,604. 47% of those farms were between 20 and 49 acres in size, while 28% were between 50 and 99 acres. Only 12% of the county's farms were 100 acres or larger. Farming was still the primary occupation for

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 66-67.

¹⁰² Historical Census Browser. Accessed December 28, 2013, <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html>.

the county's inhabitants, though it is interesting to note that in 1860 Dodge boasted 638 manufacturing jobs, which was the fourth-most in the state at the time.¹⁰³ One account from this period recalls how "farms would open as if by magic; villages of five hundred or one thousand inhabitants would spring up in a few months or a year."¹⁰⁴

The number of churches increased to 53: 15 Methodist, 14 Lutheran, 6 Catholic, 5 Presbyterian, and 5 Baptist. According to Timothy L. Smith's study of evangelicalism and social reform, Protestantism in America saw a steady growth between 1830 and 1860. In the U.S. Methodists were the largest group, followed by Baptists, Presbyterians, and then Lutherans.¹⁰⁵ Dodge County's prevalence of Lutheran churches is explained by the large number of German immigrants. Evangelical and native-born Protestants, including Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, were more likely to be temperance advocates; while foreign-born Lutherans and Catholics were more likely to oppose temperance efforts.¹⁰⁶

X. Beaver Dam & the Sons of Temperance

One of the first significant towns to develop within Dodge County was Beaver Dam, which was first settled in March of 1841.¹⁰⁷ Thomas Mackie and Joseph

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Chapin, "Cutting Marsh," 37.

¹⁰⁵ Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), 17, 20-21.

¹⁰⁶ Richard J. Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 30, 250-253, 393; Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 168.

¹⁰⁷ Hubbell, *Dodge County*, 70-71.

Goetschius were the first to settle Beaver Dam and by 1843 there were about 100 residents. Beaver Dam grew with mostly immigrants from England, Wales, and Scotland, but also from Germany, Ireland, and the Netherlands. The expansion of the Milwaukee Railroad in the 1850s helped to spur along development and settlement of Beaver Dam.¹⁰⁸

Before the railroads were introduced, the temperance movement had found its way to Beaver Dam. An 1880 historical account recalls the organization of two temperance groups in Beaver Dam:

The first temperance organization of which we can find record was that of the Sons of Temperance, who organized a Division in this city in 1849, but disbanded after two years' service. J. E. Hosmer and Daniel Howard are believed to be the only persons now living here who were members of it. But a short time elapsed when another Division was organized, which continued to battle for the cause until 1869. In 1856, the Good Templars entered the field, and for the space of twenty-three years have been in active existence.¹⁰⁹

There are few records that survive regarding the Sons of Temperance and the temperance movement overall in Beaver Dam during the antebellum period. One small account left by the Protestant missionary Cutting Marsh, reveals that the movement was indeed fervent in its beginning.

Cutting Marsh's work as a missionary to the Stockbridge-Munsee came to an end in 1848, and the minister was thrust into a new role of the temperance movement. Temperance had transitioned into a new period by this time, a more active and engaging movement which borrowed from evangelicalism. Marsh became a traveling preacher in 1848, traveling throughout southeastern and southwestern Wisconsin. Sometimes he would stay at a church for a month and other times it would just be for a few days. He

¹⁰⁸ *Dictionary of Wisconsin History*. "Beaver Dam (brief history)." WHS Library-Archives staff, 2009, Accessed December 28, 2013, http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=15129&term_type_id=2&term_type_text=Places&letter=B.

¹⁰⁹ *The History of Dodge County, Wisconsin* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880), 461.

was invited to serve as both a guest preacher and as an expert on temperance. In August of 1849 he was invited to Beaver Dam, where “temperance societies were vigorous,” and his experience displays the sometimes fervent nature of the movement. His main purpose in visiting the town was “a stirring temperance meeting...at which Mr. Marsh made the closing speech.” The speech undoubtedly evoked a great emotional response, as “the next morning his horse’s tail was found to be cropped, as the expressed resentment of the enemy.” The debate over temperance was a heated one for several years in Wisconsin, even enough for enemies of the movement to target a preacher’s horse.¹¹⁰

Between 1849 and 1858, there are few records of the activities of Beaver Dam’s Sons of Temperance society. We know that the original society was formed in 1849 and then broke up sometime in 1851. A short time after that the Sons were reformed, and maintained a peaceful existence with the Good Templars, who organized in Beaver Dam in 1856. In fact, in 1857 the two societies held their regular weekly meetings in the same space, “in the Sons of Temperance Hall.”¹¹¹ In 1858 they both moved to a new location which they shared until a fire destroyed the hall they held their meetings in January of 1863. Though the organizations were cordial with each other, it was forbidden in the Sons of Temperance’s constitution to be a member of both societies.¹¹²

By 1858 the fervor described by Cutting Marsh nine years earlier had diminished greatly. From a study of the minutes from the Beaver Dam’s Sons of Temperance weekly meetings, it is revealed that the local society was struggling to attract and keep members. In the summer of 1858 it was not unusual for five to eight new members to be

¹¹⁰ Chapin, “Cutting Marsh,” 35.

¹¹¹ *History of Dodge County*, 461.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 461.

proposed and initiated. Over the next two years the number of new members decreased gradually, and there were several weeks where no new members were proposed or initiated. By 1860 it was also not uncommon for current members to resign their positions and to withdraw from the society.¹¹³

This two-year period in the group's history is noteworthy for a few reasons, the first being the increased presence of, and roles for, women. As previously noted, the early years of the Sons of Temperance were marked by strict gender segregation. Women were not allowed to be members or attend meetings, and they had to create their own societies. The relationship between the Sons and Daughters of Temperance was not always the best. In 1852, New York's Sons of Temperance invited the state's Daughters to attend their meeting of all of the local divisions. Susan B. Anthony was present as a delegate and when she "rose to speak, the presiding officer insisted that women were invited to listen only."¹¹⁴ The next year, at the World's Temperance convention "a group of men hissed and hooted to prevent Antoinette Brown, an accepted delegate from speaking. The minority, primarily ministers, drowned out Brown's efforts to be heard with such calls as 'shame on woman,' because of their disgust at women's attempt at public speech."¹¹⁵

In Wisconsin women organized the Wisconsin Woman's State Temperance Society (WWSTS), and held a convention in Lake Mills in 1853. At the convention a lecture tour featuring two prominent female temperance speakers was approved, which

¹¹³ Sons of Temperance of Wisconsin, Kishawan Division, No. 173 (Beaver Dam, Wis.); Minutes, 1858-1860. Call number SC 31. Wisconsin Historical Society, 3-98.

¹¹⁴ Mattingly, *Well-Tempered Women*, 23.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

led to the men from the Wisconsin Temperance League taking up a “violent opposition to woman’s public efforts in this cause.”¹¹⁶ In the autumn of 1853 Lydia F. Fowler and Clarina Howard Nichols embarked on their lecture tour in Wisconsin, and met such opposition face-to-face. The women were “forced to defend women’s right to speak at a number of stops” and at one location Nichols “was even excluded from speaking by men who deliberately spoke at length in order to usurp her lecture time.”¹¹⁷ The president of the WWSTS, R. Ostrander, “defly justified and emphasized women’s right to act in any capacity in the name of temperance, but she carefully phrased that right as a duty,” in order to stay in line with the feelings of the more conservative majority.¹¹⁸ Ostrander compared the efforts of temperance crusaders to the women who first settled in Wisconsin and called for “courage and independence on the part of Wisconsin women.”¹¹⁹ Women speakers for the temperance cause were careful to avoid “agnostic presentations,” but at the same time they “forcefully and permissibly encouraged and participated in public debate.”¹²⁰

It is not known when the first woman was initiated into Beaver Dam’s Sons of Temperance division, but by 1858 several had gained membership. On June 15, 1858 seven women were initiated and another was proposed for membership. That same night it was proposed and agreed upon that women’s dues would be less: “the initiation fee be one dollar for Brothers and 50 cent for Sisters.” Finally, the organization proposed and

¹¹⁶ McBride, *On Wisconsin Women*, 18.

¹¹⁷ Mattingly, *Well-Tempered Women*, 16.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

affirmed that “two sisters be appointed Editors” for a temperance journal which would be read bi-weekly, and “Miss L Case and Miss H Taylor were appointed.” Not only were women admitted into the Sons of Temperance, they were also assigned important responsibilities. However, there were setbacks as well and not all of the assignments would be considered as revolutionary today. On August 17, 1858, a proposal was passed to “appoint a committee of the sisters to get curtains for the division.” The following week “Sisters Case, Delert, and Thompson reported that they had purchased and put-up the curtains.” And in October of the same year, the society decided to replace the two female editors of the division’s paper with new male and female co-editors.”¹²¹

Once inside the society, women continued to push for more equality and rights with varying degrees of success. On September 7, 1858 one of the members proposed that the division’s by-laws be amended “so that the sisters pay the same dues as the Brothers,” however that resolution “was met with its death.” No women served as officers or on the more important committees between 1858 and 1860, but a few did serve on what would be considered “social” committees, for tasks such as organizing balls and other social occasions. Finally, in October of 1859 a resolution was proposed that “sisters have the same privileges as brothers.” The record from the night states that a debate on the question was scheduled, but the minutes make no mention of the debate or the outcome of the resolution.¹²²

The period of 1858-1860 is also noteworthy because the minutes from the division’s meetings reveal how interest in the temperance movement was waning. In the 1840s, the Washingtonian movement was exciting and spread like wildfire. The men

¹²¹ Sons of Temperance; Minutes, 3-26.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 21-98.

who founded the Sons of Temperance cited a lack of organization as their motive behind harnessing the spirit of the Washingtonians. In time, the hierarchical structures and group regulations that they imposed led to a decrease in energy and focus. Sons of Temperance divisions were provided with a blue book that outlined all of the essential information for the local group leaders, including how to create and maintain secret passwords, the 29 steps that needed to be followed to open meetings, and the 70 steps that made up the society's initiation ceremonies.¹²³ A majority of the meetings between 1858 and 1860 were absent of any activity besides the proposal and initiation of new members. There is little direct mention of the temperance movement itself, and fewer mentions of activities that the society was undertaking to further the movement. Furthermore, other social issues had become more pressing, most notably the abolition movement. On November 17, 1858 the Beaver Dam division took up a debate among its members regarding slavery. No mention of any debates on temperance are found in the minutes for this period.¹²⁴

The minutes from Beaver Dam's society reveal far more interest in the policing of the organization's regulations. On February 8, 1859 a group of members "prefered a charge against Adaline Nelson for violation of...the constitution" and a "committee to investigate the charge against A Nelson" was then formed. Two weeks later "Br Grace prefered a charge against Br S Brockway for revealing secrets to those not members" and as was the normal procedure, a committee was formed to investigate. At this same

¹²³ *Blue Book for the use of Subordinate Divisions of the Order of the Sons of Temperance* (Philadelphia: Wm. F. Geddes, 1854), 7-25.

¹²⁴ Sons of Temperance; Minutes.

meeting, Brockway's 17-year old daughter, Hannah, was proposed for membership.¹²⁵ In 1860 Brockway owned one of the larger farms in the area, and in an 1880 account Brockway was described as "a prominent farmer" in the Beaver Dam area.¹²⁶

On March 1st the society initiated Hannah into the Sons of Temperance, and made their rulings against both Nelson and Brockway. For Nelson, it was "resolved that the charge be sustained" but also "that she be reinstated," implying that she had been absent from the meetings since the accusations on February 8th. Brockway's charge was also "sustained," but it was "resolved that he be reprimanded." It was then Brockway's turn to make accusations. Brockway presented charges against the same man, Grace, who had accused him of violations. He claimed Grace was guilty of "exposing the secrets of this order." At the same meeting yet another member – WJ Thompson – made accusations against his fellow brother – Albert S. – for violating Article II of the constitution. Article II was essentially the society's pledge; and stated that no member would create, buy, sell, or ingest any alcoholic beverage. Unfortunately the minutes provide no details about the nature or the seriousness of any of the accusations. A week later the charge against Grace was sustained and he was reprimanded. Albert S. was expelled on March 15, but a week later it was decided that he could be "reinstated by paying 50 cts within four weeks." Brockway faced charges yet again on April 19, ostensibly of a more serious nature, as he was expelled on May 3. Finally, on May 10, Grace accused five individuals

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 53-59.

¹²⁶ *History of Dodge County*, 713. Historical Census Browser. 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Clyman, Dodge, Wisconsin. Roll: M653_1405, Page: 252, Image: 257, Family History Library Film: 805405, Accessed December 28, 2013, http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&db=1860usfedcenancestry&rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angs-d&gsfn=s&gsln=brockway&msrpn__ftp=Clyman%2c+Dodge%2c+Wisconsin%2c+USA&msrpn=53393&msrpn_PInfo=8-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3247%7c52%7c0%7c898%7c53393%7c0%7c&uidh=xf6&pcat=35&fh=0&h=35955600&recoff=&m1_rpos=1.

of “revealing the password,” but a week later the committee assigned to investigate recommended that “those charges be discharged.”¹²⁷

More turmoil within the local society is found from the entry for the January 25, 1859 meeting. Four prospective members were up for election; however one individual, Jacob Morgan, was rejected. Following Morgan’s denial five brothers resigned their respective offices and announced their intentions to leave the organization. After this “it was resolved to reconsider the vote on the proposition of Jacob Morgan,” and “he was then balloted for and elected.” The members who had hastily resigned were welcomed back the following week.¹²⁸ With all the time that was devoted to initiation ceremonies and the policing of the society’s rules and regulations, there was little time left for the members to focus their attention on reforming the world outside of their hall. This version of the Beaver Dam Sons of Temperance stayed in existence until 1869; however its activities, effectiveness, and influence had decreased by 1860. One of the final entries for 1859 makes note that of a local tavern, and a resolution is passed proclaiming “Shaffers saloon is a nuisance.” However there is no resolution passed or plan formed to take action against this or any other nuisance to the Sons of Temperance.¹²⁹

XI. Conclusion

Wisconsin’s involvement in the antebellum temperance movement was brief compared to the states in the New England region. Yet despite this briefness, the state

¹²⁷ Sons of Temperance; Minutes, 58-72.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 51-53.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

witnessed the same major changes that took place out east. The first temperance efforts in Wisconsin were rooted in religion, were concerned with moral reform, and had overtones of social control. Wisconsin reformers soon organized into local societies, displaying emotional and dramatic pleas for reform. Early political victories were drowned out by the political power of working-class immigrants. Women became more involved in the movement, and used opportunities such as membership in the Sons of Temperance to work for increased rights. As the antebellum period drew to a close, enthusiasm for temperance decreased, and reformers turned their attentions toward other social issues and causes.

The legacy of antebellum temperance reform is complex. On the one hand, the movement accomplished its initial goal of creating a more temperate society. One estimate of alcohol consumption in 1825 for Americans 15 years or older is seven gallons per year. 25 years later, and after several decades of temperance agitation, the estimate for yearly consumption had decreased to less than two gallons per year.¹³⁰ However the goals that developed later in the temperance movement, namely total abstinence and prohibition, were only reached briefly in the 1850s. By 1860, the temperance movement had been badly weakened by its opponents and other, more pressing, social issues.

The temperance movement did have some unintended accomplishments. The increased participation of women in the movement led to an increase in rights. Temperance also served as a valuable training ground for future reform movements. Overall reformers began an important nationwide discussion on what role individuals and institutions should play in addressing the problems of society. Reformers displayed the power that can be attained by grass-roots organization, but also the ways in which

¹³⁰ Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*, 82.

powerful groups can use political instruments to implement social control mechanisms. Temperance had its share of successes and failures, and those successes and failures influenced future reform movements and future generations of reformers.

WORKS CITED

Primary Sources

1860 U.S. Federal Census, Clyman, Dodge, Wisconsin. Roll: M653_1405, Page: 252, Image: 257, Family History Library Film: 805405 (http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&db=1860usfedcenancestry&rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angs-d&gsfn=s&gsln=brockway&msrpn__ftp=Clyman%2c+Dodge%2c+Wisconsin%2c+USA&msrpn=53393&msrpn_PInfo=8-%7c0%7c1652393%7c0%7c2%7c3247%7c52%7c0%7c898%7c53393%7c0%7c&uidh=xf6&pcat=35&fh=0&h=35955600&recoff=&ml_rpos=1).

Blue Book for the use of Subordinate Divisions of the Order of the Sons of Temperance. Philadelphia: Wm. F. Geddes, 1854.

Chapin, John E. "Sketch of Cutting Marsh." In *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, Vol. 15, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, 25-204. Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1900.

Ellis, Samuel. *The History of the Order of the Sons of Temperance.* Boston: Stacy, Richardson & Company, 1848.

Historical Census Browser. University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, 2004: <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html>.

Lund, Orlando. *The Order of the Sons of Temperance.* Syracuse: Agan & Summers, 1850.

Sons of Temperance of Wisconsin, Kishawan Division, No. 173 (Beaver Dam, Wis.); Minutes, 1858-1860. Call number SC 31. Wisconsin Historical Society.

Secondary Sources

Abzug, Robert H. *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Carwardine, Richard J. *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Chapin, John E. "Sketch of Cutting Marsh." In *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, Vol. 15, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, 25-204. Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1900.

- Dorsey, Bruce. *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.
- Gusfield, Joseph R. "From Social Control to Moral Regeneration." In *Ante-bellum Reform*, edited by David Brion Davis, 120-139. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.
- Hubbell, Homer Bishop. *Dodge County, Wisconsin: Past and Present*. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1913.
- Loew, Patty. *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal*. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2001.
- Mattingly, Carol. *Well-Tempered Women: Nineteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998.
- McBride, Genevieve G. *On Wisconsin Women: Working for Their Rights from Settlement to Suffrage*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.
- Mintz, Steven. *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- Oberly, James W. *A Nation of Statesmen: The Political Culture of the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans, 1815-1972*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005.
- Smith, Timothy L. *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1957.
- The History of Dodge County, Wisconsin*. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880.
- Thistlewaite, Frank. "The Anglo-American World of Humanitarian Endeavor." In *Ante-bellum Reform*, edited by David Brion Davis, 63-81. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.
- WHS Library-Archives staff. *Dictionary of Wisconsin History*. "Beaver Dam (brief history)." http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=15129&term_type_id=2&term_type_text=Places&letter=B.
- Winskill, Peter Turner. *The Temperance Movement and Its Workers*, Vol. 2. London: Blackie & Son, 1893.