

### **John Barleycorn Must Die: The War Against Drink in Arkansas**

There were three men come out of the west  
Their victory to try  
And those three men took a solemn vow  
John Barleycorn must die  
They plowed, they sowed, they harrowed him in  
Threw clods upon his head  
And those three men made a solemn vow  
John Barleycorn was dead<sup>i</sup>

In 1768, Captain Alexandre de Clouet, the Spanish commandant, watched apprehensively from Arkansas Post the building of an English fort across the Mississippi River. He soon informed the governor in New Orleans that the nearness of the colonial rivals would undermine the policy of keeping liquor from the Quapaw Indians, allies and trading partners for post merchants. Before transferring control of Arkansas Post two years earlier, the French had customarily exchanged alcohol for Quapaw corn. De Clouet's superior was unmoved and urged the post commandant to deliver a rousing speech on "the evils of drink." Despite de Clouet's eloquence, English rum and brandy continued to provoke sharp disagreements between the native peoples and the Spanish. The Quapaws chafed under the blunt paternalism. In 1770, a Quapaw chief, outraged at Spanish refusal to supply liquor, attempted to strike the commandant before being evicted from the fort.<sup>ii</sup>

In 1779, Captain Balthazar De Villiers decided in the interest of fairness and free trade to lift restrictions on the liquor trade. The initiative proved unpopular with post merchants and farmers, who anticipated derisive behavior from Indians. Captain de Villiers acquiesced and contented himself with regulating the trade rather than halting it. In 1686 prominent Quapaw leaders, convinced that drink was disrupting village life, reversed course and requested that the Spanish interdict the trade. Only after the murder of a chief in a drunken brawl in the following year did the colonial governor outlaw the selling of liquor to the Quapaw.<sup>iii</sup>

Europeans and the native peoples of colonial Arkansas forged close ties to sustain the fur trade and protect imperial boundaries. For the Americans, the land acquired in the 1803 Louisiana Purchase represented an opportunity for new farming settlements that were to be clearly divided from assigned Indian holdings. The conclusion of treaties with the Cherokees and Creeks during the 1820s confirmed that Arkansas would emerge as an American territory rather than as part of the Indian Territory formed to the west. Whereas French and Spanish Arkansas Post had depended upon on Quapaw goods, Fort Smith straddled the frontier border to keep apart Indians and Americans. Nevertheless, the trade in whiskey once again preoccupied a commander at a outpost on the periphery of an empire.<sup>iv</sup>

The boisterous history of Fort Smith throughout the nineteenth century was due in part to the split responsibilities between federal and local authorities. The matter of selling corn whiskey to the Indians was no different. An 1806 territorial law banned providing intoxicating spirits to Indians without the permission of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, but enforcement was a local responsibility rather than a matter of U. S. military jurisdiction. When Captain John Stuart, the fort commander, attempted to prosecute settlement merchants for violating the territorial anti-liquor measure, he was threatened with lawsuits by angry townspeople and Cherokee leaders. In 1832, members of a federal grand jury insisted their inability to stop Arkansas sales to Indians and the tolerance of corrupt local officials endangered safety and property. The panel reported that Indians while drunk had set fire to public buildings near the fort itself. Jurors also noted that "six mercantile establishments" within a few feet of the Indian Territory border were well-stocked with whiskey. Shortly thereafter, twenty-two Fort Smith residents purchased an advertisement in the *Arkansas Gazette* to insist that their community had been unfairly slandered. Nevertheless, Captain Stuart did have the power to seize the contraband in the Indian territory, and soldiers kept a close watch on shipments up the Arkansas River. The effective surveillance compelled the whiskey runners at Fort Smith to shift their operations six miles down river to Van Buren, from where the spirits were hauled overland. As smugglers bypassed Fort Smith, the

need for the post's existence became less evident to the War Department, but the newly installed Arkansas congressional delegation exerted pressure to insure the construction of a permanent fort at the site.<sup>v</sup>

While the proximity of the Indian country permitted some to make a profit from corn liquor, most of the whiskey in early Arkansas was produced for home consumption or for barter in the local community. Nationally, whiskey by 1815 supplanted rum, the colonial drink of choice. The opening of new tracts of corn acreage in the Ohio Rive valley coupled with the lack of reliable transportation prompted farmers to distill their grain into alcohol to lower shipping costs. Cheap whiskey pushed American per capita alcohol consumption to five gallons, three times the modern rate. By 1830, the canal building boom made it feasible to transport bulk grain while larger commercial distilleries stabilized whiskey prices by pushing out the smaller operations. Yet, large sections of Arkansas throughout the antebellum era remained isolated from the national market, and whiskey remained a critical part of the backwoods economy.<sup>vi</sup>

During the early phase of Arkansas history, whiskey was brought in on keel boats as a medium of exchange for the still thriving trade in beaver, deer, otter, and bear skins. Distillers within Arkansas set up dram shops to sell their wares or supplied taverns, which accommodated travelers with food and a bed. The proliferation of such outlets prompted the territorial legislature in 1820 to impose a tax on distilleries and require grog shops and taverns to purchase a license. The measure was haphazardly enforced and was less of a check on frontier entrepreneurs than the temptation to deplete their own stock. Friederich Gerstäcker, a young German on an extended hunting trip in the late 1830s, observed that a distillery near the White River was a joint enterprise in communal drinking by three young men rather than a source of profit. On the other hand, some ventures may have offered African Americans a chance to escape the usual tasks. On a cold and rainy November day Gerstäcker found refuge in an Ozark tavern: "Merry peals of laughter resounded from the well-lighted room, where a bright fire was blazing. . . Three jovial looking fellows were sitting round it, telling stories, and roaring with laughter."

One of the three was the distiller for the tavern, a "little fat man, with sparking eyes and ruby nose" who was "making constant love to the whiskey-bottle." The owner of the public house patronized by these white men, regaling the German with buffalo hunting stories, was "a free Negro."<sup>vii</sup>

By the 1830s the growing middle class in the northeastern United States became increasingly alarmed at the violence and disorder erupting around unregulated taverns. In addition, the traditional allowance for workers in artisan shops to take a dram while on the job was judged to be inefficient and dangerous for wage workers in new factories. Anxieties over drinking were transformed into a social crusade by the national evangelical revival movement known as the Second Great Awakening. Just as the individual conversion experience was the aim of religious gatherings, temperance societies required their members to take the pledge to lead a new, sober life. The local associations affiliated with the American Temperance Society (formed in 1826) recruited upper and middle-class pillars of the community in the hopes their public abstemiousness would inspire others. In 1836, the society adopted the expanded "teetotal" pledge which required the giving up of wine and beer as well as whiskey and demon rum. While the temperance movement flourished in New England and the revivalist centers of western New York, it had also infiltrated the southern states. Teetotalism, however, proved too much for the southern elite to swallow.<sup>viii</sup>

Heavy drinking confirmed and displayed the high status of southern leaders. Candidates for office were expected to "treat" the voters with generous portions of whiskey. Elected officials were feted with dinners during which supporters raised glass after glass to praise the victor's finer points. At an 1830 gathering in Little Rock, Ambrose Sevier, the Arkansas territorial delegate to Congress, was the subject of thirteen regular and 45 volunteer toasts. Yet, widespread drunkenness clearly challenged elite dignity and power. William F. Pope recalled how a banquet in Little Rock to honor the U. S. commissioners who had negotiated a purchase of Cherokee lands in Arkansas degenerated into lowbrow brawl. The town worthies entertained the

distinguished guests in a tavern on Main Street that attracted patrons from across the social spectrum. "After the banquet was over and the guests and more respectable portion of the company had retired from the hall, the tables were taken possession of by a lot of rowdies who were in a state of drunkenness bordering on frenzy, and made the hall resound with their oaths and yells." One of the revelers climbed onto one of the long tables and began marching forward, "kicking dishes, plates, glasses, and other articles of table ware in all directions." When he was pulled from the table, the young man stabbed to death his attacker and then escaped amidst the confusion.<sup>ix</sup>

If elite plantation owners recoiled at taking the teetotal pledge, they wielded temperance as another tool to control their labor force. An act of 1853 forbid selling liquor to slaves without the permission of masters; white violators who could not afford the fine were imprisoned, while free black offenders who failed to pay were sold at public auction for a term of service to a person willing to accept court costs. Another measure approved in the same legislative session enjoined taverns from employing African Americans, whether free or slave.<sup>x</sup>

Temperance also aroused the ire of frontier citizens living at some distance from the emerging plantation regions in Arkansas. In these places seemingly far from heaven, camp meetings both broke the isolation and encouraged women to become active in shaping the moral life of the settlements. The hard sayings of Methodist circuit riding ministers, those outriders of the Second Great Awakening, left no doubt that pouring out the whiskey was God's work. Predictably, a reform threatening a basic economic activity and the liberty of backwoods freeholders drew few beyond the aggressively devout. This skepticism is replete in the writings of Charles F. M. Noland, the popular humorist whose fictional alter ego, Pete Whetstone, lived on the Devil's Fork of the Little Red River and dabbled in politics when not hunting. In a letter dated May 8, 1837, "Whetstone" recounted that a political opponent had gone among "the religious women" to report on his gambling and drinking. "Lawyer McCampbell says Pete's a sinner. He tells a lie: Pete loves God, fears the devil, and hates snakes. . . .He doesn't horse race,

except for fun, and when there is a sure chance to win. He doesn't drink liquor except bald face whiskey, just to encourage our own 'stil houses."<sup>xi</sup>

The towns were a different matter. Here resided the Arkansas business and professional class. They were able to attend church services regularly but also were confronted by the violence spilling from the saloons. Little Rock in the 1830s hosted a grand public barbecue each Fourth of July during which "people with bottles or jugs of whiskey went about offering it to all present." As the *Arkansas Gazette* called attention to temperance progress elsewhere, Arkansas seemed to its enterprising middle class a world apart. In a clear demonstration of the ecumenical spirit of the Second Great Awakening, the Little Rock Temperance Society first met at a Baptist church and selected as its president the Rev. William Stevenson, one of pioneer organizers of the early territorial Methodist circuits. In general, Methodists were the most ardent for the cause, while the Baptists remained lukewarm until after the Civil War. Other communities followed Little Rock's example, and by November 1841 the Arkansas State Temperance Society organized a rally which included a Main Street parade and an address by Alfred W. Arrington, who along with William E. Woodruff, the publisher of the *Gazette*, organized the event. Arrington's prominent role, however, may have troubled many of the Methodist faithful. He had been forced to resign his pastorate of the Little Rock Methodist Church ten years earlier and was later defrocked in Missouri over questions about his marital arrangement.<sup>xii</sup>

Since the reputation of the temperance societies depended upon the discipline of those who took the pledge, they were vulnerable to derision when members fell off the wagon or offended moral sensibilities in other ways. True to their religious antecedents, the societies held public trials of those accused of backsliding. In 1843, the board of the Fayetteville Temperance Society expelled W. T. Larremore who "confessed that he had drunk WINE, which was proved by witnesses to be intoxicating liquor." Already in 1841 the society had been rocked when William McKnight Ball, vice president of the society, fled to Texas after it was revealed the Fayetteville branch of the state bank had come up short \$20,000 under his management. In spite

of such lapses, the society claimed credit for enlisting the support of three-quarters of the Fayetteville adult population.<sup>xiii</sup>

The depression which struck the country in 1839 not only brought down the banks of Arkansas, it also dissolved the American Temperance Society, which had been weakened by its teetotalism policy. The return of prosperity spurred the revival of reform. The Sons of Temperance, founded in New York City, proved to be the anti-drink organization that captured southern allegiance. The proportion of the Sons' slave state membership outstripped the region's percentage of the national white population (the organization did not enroll African Americans.) In 1851, the Arkansas General Assembly approved the incorporation of the state division of the Sons of Temperance, recognizing Samuel A. Sanders as the "Grand Worthy Patriarch." The Sons of Temperance was a fraternal organization that held together its members through rituals as well as participation in a mutual benefit association, a type of insurance program providing aid in times of illness. These bonds of support meant that individuals did not have to rely simply on their own self-discipline to stay dry. In addition, the secrecy surrounding the group's activities insulated backsliders and the organization from ridicule by non-members. As in northern states, town-dwelling artisans--blacksmiths, carpenters, cabinet makers, printers, shoemakers--represented a substantial presence on rolls of the southern wing of the Sons of Temperance. In effect, the temperance empire was constrained in antebellum Arkansas because it thrived only on small urban islands in a great rural expanse.<sup>xiv</sup>

In 1851, John Keet arrived in the notorious Mississippi River village of Napoleon to work as a bookkeeper in a local general store. A letter to his uncle in Ireland revealed the shock of a skilled, ambitious young man encountering a raw, agrarian society: "In fact, the Southern Americans are different from the northern a great deal. . . . They have not the same steady, sober, peaceable, persevering & enterprising character possessed by their northern brethren. . . . Drinking is their principal, I might say their only enjoyment. And O! how strong drink degrades

a people--turns them from men to imbeciles & demons, by turns. . . .The intemperate habits of the people here, form my principal objection to the place."<sup>xv</sup>

In 1850s, the various temperance organizations throughout the nation began to abandon "moral suasion" to encourage sobriety in favor of state coercion to suppress the manufacturing and selling of alcohol. Beginning with Maine in 1851, thirteen states adopted statewide prohibition laws. Delaware was the only slave state to follow this path. Arkansas was, however, not immune to this trend cresting in economically developed sections of the country. During the decade the state legislature approved the incorporation of a number of private academies with provisions forbidding the sale of alcohol within a prescribed distance of the school, usually two to three miles. In 1855, a new tavern license law introduced the first form of local option in the state. Under the measure, a person wishing to open a tavern must present to the county court a petition signed by the majority of the voters in the township where the business was to be located. Expanding prohibition zones around schools and permitting local communities to expel alcohol would become critical goals of the Arkansas temperance movement following the Civil War.<sup>xvi</sup>

They let him lie for a very long time  
Til the rains from heaven did fall  
And little Sir John sprung up his head  
And so amazed them all,  
They let him stand til the midsummer's day  
'Til he looked both pale and wan  
And Little Sir John's grown a long, long beard  
And so became a man.

In 1862, the Confederate state government of Arkansas enacted the first statewide prohibition law when it banned distilleries as a means to conserve food stores during the war. Inept and without resources, officials could not enforce a law that was ignored by those who greatly profited from turning corn into whiskey. Ten stills made the community of Brownstown a magnet for soldiers and civilians alike, while David Walker, the noted political leader and jurist, let it be known that to obtain a keg of whiskey he was willing to meet "any price in or out

of reason." Finally in 1864, Governor Harris Flanagin acknowledged that the willingness of distillers to pay fines in order to stay in business rendered the law worthless.<sup>xvii</sup>

Temperance had better friends in the Republican dominated state government and federal agencies during the Reconstruction era. Generally, anti-liquor activists became Republican because of the party's emphasis upon individual enterprise, government activism on behalf of social betterment, and the benefits of a self-reliant work force. Northern reformers entering the defeated Confederate states after the war saw temperance as a way to promote the transition of the emancipated slaves from bondage to free labor. Before the reestablishment of state governments, agents for the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau) provided immediate relief to displaced southerners, enforced contracts setting out the terms of labor for former slaves, and built schools. The Bureau also founded temperance societies. In Arkansas, societies in Lewisville, Washington, Little Rock, Helena, and Camden grew rapidly as hundreds of African Americans attended the weekly meetings. The Bureau's state head of education programs organized temperance schools attended by black children after Sunday church services. African American leaders clearly believed that eschewing drink was an avenue to prosperity as well as a means to disprove white assumptions that the ex-slaves could not meet the demands of freedom. Religion confirmed confidence in the virtues of abstinence. The Second Great Awakening revival movement that had stoked early temperance fervor had also led to the widespread Christianization of the southern slaves during the early nineteenth century. Independent black denominations quickly took root in the south after the Civil War, and temperance was incorporated in sermons expressing optimism about the future. At an 1868 gathering organized in Little Rock by the African Methodist Episcopal church, children sang tunes celebrating the importance of education as well as a song entitled, "Downfall of Old King Alcohol."<sup>xviii</sup>

The paternalism of federal Reconstruction officials delayed the lifting of antebellum restrictions on access to drink by black Arkansans. Yet African American officeholders opposed

any differential treatment based on race and noted that such practices contradicted the protections contained in the newly added Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. In February 1873, the state legislature approved a measure outlawing various forms of discrimination, including the refusal to sell alcohol to any person "on account of race or color." Saloon keepers catering to whites apparently resisted serving black customers, and state court decisions left the law unenforceable. As events unfolded, the 1873 legislative session was the final one before the Democratic party retook control of state government and brought to an end Arkansas Reconstruction. Civil and political rights began to erode as the planters sought to regain control of black labor. The U. S. government was unwilling to intervene after 1876 to insure equality and liberty for those emancipated in the terrible war. On the other hand, the authorities did not flinch from using force to collect the federal excise taxes on liquor. In Arkansas, as throughout the south, the moonshine wars flared after Reconstruction.<sup>xix</sup>

The first national internal tax (as opposed to tariffs) was the 1791 excise on distilled whiskey. This measure provoked the famous "Whiskey Rebellion" by Pennsylvania farmers, who quickly dispersed with the arrival of an army led by President George Washington. In 1802 the administration of Thomas Jefferson repealed the excise but it was revived to meet the costs of the War of 1812. The return of peace buried the levy, and Americans paid no internal taxes until the Civil War. To defray the expense of the Union military mobilization, the Tax Act of 1862 not only authorized an array of taxes, including the first income tax as well as new excises on distilled spirits and malt beverages, it also created the Office of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue. By 1883, most of the war era taxes were repealed, but the excise on alcohol and the requirement that distillers obtain a federal license survived. The Bureau of Internal Revenue, as it was informally known, appointed in each state a district collector who in turn hired deputy collectors. The deputy collectors and the special deputies employed on per diem basis to assist in raids on illegal stills were the "revenoors" of rural lore.<sup>xx</sup>

Small distillers who sold their whiskey to individuals and taverns had not been troubled by antebellum Arkansas tax and license measures. The entrance of agents enforcing federal laws carrying stiff prison sentences for violators transformed a domestic craft into a hazardous occupation. The term moonshine, which had once referred simply to alcohol made in small quantities, now became synonymous with illegal corn whiskey. If travelers in Arkansas before the Civil War could happen upon distilleries along the routes, the new moonshine operations huddled near isolated creeks. The incentive for most moonshiners was clearly economic. As backwoods farmers became caught up in the market economy, they faced steadily declining crop prices throughout the late nineteenth century. At the same time, the penetration of the upland sections and river bottoms by railroad lines brought in increasing numbers of thirsty loggers and sawmill workers. In the 1890s a southern farmer could make about \$10 when he hauled his 20 bushels of corn to town, whereas distilling 40 bushels into 120 gallons of whiskey could clear \$150, without the federal tax.<sup>xxi</sup>

With federal troops available to accompany revenue agents on raids during the Reconstruction period, resistance by distillers or "wildcatters" usually did not lead to gun play. In 1876, as military units withdrew from southern states, a new national revenue commissioner launched a crackdown on moonshiners. Casualties on both sides of the law mounted. The moonshiners in particular states acquired distinctive reputations for methods of resistance. The Georgians were counted on to run while the Kentucky distillers made open battle. Those in Arkansas waited in ambush. Yet, not all the dangers were confined to the whiskey hollows. Local officials arrested revenue agents for injuring moonshiners but lightly punished individuals who wounded or killed the federal officers carrying out their duties. Between 1876 and 1879, southern state courts prosecuted 165 agents for actions taken against still operators. In the summer of 1897, a federal deputy marshal and two other members of a posse approached a large still in Searcy County located "in a deep ravine protected on the lower side by a fort built of logs and stone." The marshal's call for the surrender of the wildcatters was answered by gunfire from

a port hole in the fort's wall. The wounded marshal tried to use the body of a dead compatriot as a shield but was dispatched by another shot. After a trial in the Russellville circuit court, the killer was given a six month sentence.<sup>xxii</sup>

The hostility of local and state officials toward the collectors indicates that moonshiners relied upon the silence and protection of neighbors. On the other hand, the violence associated with the operations increasingly disturbed those in nearby communities aspiring to modernize. In 1898, John Burris, a legendary deputy collector credited with destroying 150 stills in little over a year, investigated moonshining in Cleburne county in response to entreaties from "the best citizens in the adjoining counties." Posing as a timber buyer, Burris located three stills near the village of Hiram before returning to Little Rock to secure warrants and a posse. The raid succeeded in destroying three stills and capturing six wildcatters, but Burris and his men were forced to swim the Little Red River to evade fifteen moonshiners in pursuit. Understanding that whiskey-making pervaded the county, Burris soon communicated through an elderly justice of the peace that the U. S. government was prepared to use larger forces to suppress moonshining unless the distillers first accepted an offer of amnesty. Burris and one other officer, after receiving assurances of cooperation, returned to the locale from which they had recently fled. "All that evening wagons continued to arrive on the streets of Hiram loaded with copper stills and men, and when night came there were seventeen stills and forty-seven voluntary prisoners."<sup>xxiii</sup>

Moonshining persisted well into the twentieth century and expanded as prohibition measures forced all those who purchased liquor to do business with lawbreakers. Yet, the bloodshed and corruption associated with the stills faded from the popular mind. The image of brewing corn liquor was tamed into a traditional craft practiced by mountain folk keeping the modern world at bay. This alteration in the reputation of wildcatters resulted in part from sympathetic portrayals by the collectors of Ozark folklore and from the general discrediting of temperance following the repeal of national prohibition in 1933.

Otto Ernest Rayburn, one of the more notable shapers of the romance of the Ozarks, believed that the wildcatter was no different from other hill dwellers in meeting the dismissal of outsiders with resigned self-effacement. Rayburn wrote in the manuscript of his "Folk Encyclopedia" that the moonshiner "has been persecuted by press and pulpit, chased by the law, and held in contempt by the righteous public to the extent that his professional dignity is badly shaken." Charles Morrow Wilson in a 1959 collection of reminiscences quoted a lecture by an experienced moonshiner that fused the touted Ozark practicality with anti-temperance feeling: "Human kind is a drinkin' kind. Me and Alfred plants our corn, raises it shucks it and takes it to mill and gets it mealed. If my woman goes and makes a pone of bread, that don't violate no law. Then why shouldn't we put part of our crop to licker?. . .Honest licker is bound and beholden to come out a crop. And back in these parts hit's our only chance for a fair crop."<sup>xxiv</sup>

Ozark romanticism obscured some facts about moonshining in Arkansas. While the smoke from stills could be spied throughout the upland south, Arkansas during the moonshine era could lay claim to far fewer wildcat whiskey operations than the Appalachian regions. And other sections of the state were as remote as the northern hills and as promising for distillers. The islands in the Mississippi River, floating between state jurisdictions, were ideal sites for blind tigers, illegal saloons that sold bootlegged and moonshine whiskey to Delta farmers and workers. In June 1915, a raid by an Arkansas posse on Island 37 led to the death of the sheriff of Mississippi County while the blind tiger's owner, who was not present during the shootout, was taken from the Osceola jail and lynched. Customers thirsting for the renowned "Ike Williams, Pure Old Panther Piss" had to find Mr. Williams on Island 34, where they purchased five-gallon jugs and fifty-gallon kegs sporting the appropriately illustrated labels.<sup>xxv</sup>

The early 1920s oil discoveries in south Arkansas created raucous boomtowns shortly after national Prohibition was enacted. Ernest Pyle, who was a wildcatter in Punkin Center in southern Columbia county, recalled that with the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment, "moonshine whiskey broke out all over this country. Most everybody got involved in some way

or another." Greater numbers of illegal distillers meant that those in the customary isolated locations operated at a disadvantage. Pyle explained, "I lived too far off of the main roads. There was always somebody selling whisky before they got to my house, and the whisky drinkers would stop and get their whiskey before they got to me." Yet, in areas remote from banks and town stores corn liquor was recognizable currency. "I did trade a lot of whisky for some things that I needed like geese, fruit jars, tools, fence wire, barbed wire, guineas, guns, pea seeds, and cotton seed. I even swapped whisky for two cars."<sup>xxvi</sup>

Most moonshiners continued to take pains to escape scrutiny. In 1921, O. C. Pill promised a Smackover club owner that he could brew better whiskey than what the proprietor had been paying him to haul from Oklahoma. Although he had little experience making alcohol, Pill and a partner took the first step when they chose an almost inaccessible site on Fish Trout Lake in southeastern Union county. They sent for a coppersmith from Little Rock who specialized in stills and hired him to construct one "as big as the Henry H. Cross Refinery." Pill remained close to his work, setting up a permanent camp, where he relocated his wife and mother-in-law. He then met the challenge of distribution by constructing a power boat, large enough to carry six ten-gallon kegs to the Calion port on the Ouachita River. As he promised, the club owner paid Pill eight dollars for each gallon of whiskey, which was loaded at the dock onto trucks for the journey to Smackover. Finally, Pill reduced the riskiest aspect of his enterprise by bribing law officers in both Union and Ashley counties. Local police and deputies usually were among the first to know of a planned federal raid. "Internal Revenue shook us down twice and didn't find a thing. We knew they was coming the day before."<sup>xxvii</sup>

They hired men with the scythes so sharp to cut him  
off at the knee  
They rolled him and tied him around the waist and  
served him       barbarously  
They hired men with the hard pitchfork  
To pierce him through the heart  
And the loader he has served him worse than that  
For he bound him to a cart

They wheeled him round and around the field 'til they  
 came unto a barn  
 And these three men made a solemn oath on poor John  
 Barleycorn

The moonshine wars in the late nineteenth century on occasion took casualties from the ranks of temperance advocates. In 1876, four Methodist preachers traveling home from a general council meeting made a stopover in an Ozark village near Russellville. Suspicious that the unfamiliar visitors were revenuers, local moonshiners shot three of the clergymen, one of whom died the following day. Nevertheless, the aim of anti-alcohol advocates was not simply to suppress the production of illegal liquor; they wanted to make all liquor illegal. In fact, national temperance organizations had denounced the 1862 federal tax measure that was the basis of the revenue battles against moonshiners because it appeared to give official sanction to drink. The failure of the temperance lobby to alter the tax law reflected a general decline in influence as the pre-Civil War state prohibition laws fell by the wayside and saloons operated in dry precincts with the cynical tolerance of local officials. The failure to exorcise demon rum through traditional partisan politics gave opportunity to the largest group of Americans who had never enjoyed political rights. In the winter of 1873 women in Ohio towns marched on saloons and stood outside singing hymns and praying until the owners signed a pledge to stop serving drinks. Before it ended the following year, this "Women's Crusade" reached 912 communities in 31 states and gave birth to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).<sup>xxviii</sup>

Founded in Cleveland, Ohio in November 1874, the WCTU under its first president, Annie Wittenmeyer, adopted the Crusaders' approach of converting drunkards and shaming liquor retailers but shrank from public demonstrations in front of saloons. Significantly, the Union determined at its first convention not to enroll men. This decision would lead the WCTU to become the largest and most influential women's organization in the United States before the twentieth century. In 1879, Frances Willard took over the presidency and steered the organization toward political action in support of a variety of social reforms that complimented

the temperance drive for a renewed America. Willard's "Do Everything" exhortation became the WCTU motto. The president understood that her own devotion to activism could alienate conservative members, but skillfully introduced progressive initiatives as weapons to achieve victory over alcohol. An early supporter of women's suffrage, Willard insisted that giving women voting rights aided the traditional female cause of "Home Protection." Beyond her gift for slogans, Willard had a commanding presence that elevated her into a revered figure within the WCTU. Through her tours of the south, generally inhospitable to social reformers, "Mother Willard" bolstered state unions. The "Do Everything" mission was accepted as consistent with New South modernization.<sup>xxix</sup>

In 1866 the Indiana Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), with the support of the Freedmen's Bureau, established Southland College near Helena to offer education for African Americans. The Quaker leadership, shaped by nineteenth century revivalism, also believed that the college could ignite a temperance wildfire that would free the Arkansas delta "from the blighting and demoralizing effects of the greatest sin now existing in our country." Lydia Chase accompanied her husband, Amasa, to Southland after having participated in early women's demonstrations against Ohio saloons. In 1876 her temperance lecture at the Presbyterian church in Monticello moved the assembled women, several of whom had never seen a woman behind a pulpit, to organize the first local WCTU chapter in Arkansas. Women in other communities began to pin to their clothing the white ribbon, the WCTU badge. In 1879, the Forrest City union urged WCTU members to gather at Searcy at the same time as a convention of the recently organized male-only Arkansas State Christian Temperance Union. Meeting in a Searcy Baptist church, the delegates elected Annie T. Jones as president of the new Arkansas WCTU. Jones was the wife of a prominent businessman and farmer in the small town of West Point, a background that was representative of the WCTU membership.<sup>xxx</sup>

Francis Willard's address in 1881 to the state WCTU meeting stimulated membership drives while her 1882 speech before the Arkansas state legislature underscored the organization's

expanding influence. In 1888 seventy-five local unions in addition to 37 children's Loyal Temperance Unions were identified at the state convention, which accepted reports from the volunteer heads or superintendents of the formal departments: Social Purity, Sabbath School, Sabbath Observance, Narcotics, Scientific Temperance Instruction, Influencing the Press, Juvenile Work, Evangelistic, Prison and Jail, Legislative, Temperance Literature, Heredity and Hygiene, Flower Mission, Impure Literature Suppression, Work among the Colored People, Use of Unfermented Wine, and Franchise. While the "Do Everything" mantra was recited frequently by Arkansas WCTU leaders, the departments concentrated on temperance as opposed to broader, and potentially more contentious, social reforms. The Arkansas WCTU promoted temperance among black residents but was not among the eight southern states establishing standing African American unions during the late nineteenth century. Between 1903-1911, an era marked by expanding segregation and numerous lynchings, reports on "work among the colored people" were not delivered at the Arkansas state conventions.<sup>xxx1</sup>

The department of "Franchise" apparently also lapsed after the 1888 meeting. Its disappearance suggested not apathy over the question of women's suffrage, but division. Early suffrage leaders such as Clara McDiarmid, the founder of the Arkansas Equal Suffrage Association, were steadfast white ribboners as well. First published in 1888, the *Woman's Chronicle* of Little Rock served as the official journal for both the suffrage association and the state WCTU. Annie T. Jones echoed the national "Home Protection" program when she declared in 1889 that permitting women to vote was "the only means to further the temperance movement and protect the youth of the country." The first WCTU president was emphasizing the conservative goals of suffrage to soothe dissidents within the ranks. The state union's official position that women should be given the ballot in municipal elections had provoked fervent opposition among several local chapters.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Advocacy for the franchise at the local level reflected the temperance strategy of imposing prohibition town by town rather than through a state-wide act. And even without the

vote, women in Arkansas had weapons to force the exile of "King Alcohol." In 1871, the Republican Reconstruction legislature permitted the majority of the voters within a town to petition for the removal of retail liquor outlets within three miles of academy or college. Four years later a similar law was approved with a significant revision: the petition to halt alcohol sales within three miles of an educational institution must be signed by the majority of adult residents. In effect, the measure enabled women to exercise political power. Nevertheless, an 1879 local option law rather than the three-mile act became the primary engine for piecemeal prohibition. The later statute required voters within a township or incorporated town to vote every two years on whether or not to permit the granting of licenses to sell alcohol in quantities less than five gallons. If the license option failed to gain a majority, then saloons were out of business for at least two years. Usually a vote against liquor in one election kept the locality permanently dry.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Yet, the exceptions in the law caused the temperance activists to fear little would change even with triumph at the ballot box. A druggist could sell alcohol to a customer presenting a doctor's prescription that cited a medical need. Not surprisingly, the health of many Arkansans went into immediate decline. In February 1880, a letter writer to the *Columbia (Magnolia) Banner* observed, "Is it against the law to sell alcoholic or vinous liquors, except for medicinal purposes? If it is, I think three-fourths of the men in the county are under medical treatment." In addition, "vinous liquors" made in Arkansas were also legally protected from unfavorable local option outcomes. German Swiss migrants to the Ozark foothills had just begun to cultivate vineyards, and in 1880 Herman Wiederkehr and Jacob Post founded wineries near Altus. Anti-liquor leaders heatedly charged that lax enforcement allowed out-of-state wine to be marketed as Arkansas products.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Although some communities suppressed the liquor trade, the total number of retail licenses granted by local officials in Arkansas held steady through the early 1880s. The strength of the local unions enabled the WCTU to pioneer grassroots activism; however, the lack of

voting rights by members of the only organized state temperance group hindered the dry campaign. In April 1894, about 100 prominent men from central Arkansas counties met in Little Rock to form the "No License Association." The group determined to achieve prohibition through local option election victories and through pressure on legislators to close loopholes in current statutes. The president of the new association was George F. Thornburgh, a former speaker of the state House of Representatives, who would emerge as the dominant figure in the Arkansas prohibitionist movement in new century. Thornburgh's climb to preeminence was accelerated five years later when his association folded into the Arkansas chapter of the Anti-Saloon League of America.<sup>xxxv</sup>

In 1893 Howard Russell organized the Ohio Anti-Saloon League, which two years later became the basis for a national organization. The creation of the Anti-Saloon League (ASL) reflected the disapproval of the broad social reform program of the WCTU and the union's alliance with the national Prohibition party. The ASL kept its distance from political parties and bent all its efforts to eliminate saloons through local option elections. Changes in American drinking patterns contributed to the expanding consensus that saloons threatened families and community order. In the late nineteenth century Americans increasingly spurned whiskey in favor of beer, and the lack of home refrigeration required imbibers to seek out draft lager at the corner tavern. In addition, beer manufacturers owned many of the saloons, motivating barkeeps to urge customers to drink up. Mounting news reports of crime and violence around saloons justified the ASL arguments. With Frances Willard's death in 1898, the WCTU largely abandoned the "Do Everything" goal and cooperated more fully with the all-male ASL. Yet, Protestant churches proved to be the closest allies of the ASL, which allowed denominations to select the members of its state boards. In Arkansas, however, sectarian rivalry weakened the state ASL in its early years.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

The national ASL developed organizations to formalize the pressure politics pioneered by the WCTU. By 1906, over half of the counties and 60 percent of the towns in the United States

had banned saloons. Arkansas marched with the rest of the nation; in that year, 53 of the 75 counties voted dry in the required biannual local option elections. At this point, however, contention between Baptist and Methodist leaders split the male temperance ranks into rival factions. Believing the ASL ineffective, Thornburgh and several religious leaders broke away to form the Inter-Church Temperance Federation. Prominent Baptists charged that Methodists held sway in the new organization and that the Rev. E. A. Tabor, the superintendent of the upstart group, had solicited donations at the expense of the existing ASL. In 1907, Thornburgh's federation triumphed when the national ASL office recognized it as the official state chapter. Two years later, however, Tabor's Baptist critics gained some satisfaction when the superintendent resigned following revelations of his whiskey drinking. The ASL's own "secret service," which was set up to identify blind tigers, found a bottle in Tabor's satchel.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

In 1910 Thornburgh declared the ASL was replacing its local option strategy with a campaign for state-wide prohibition. In 1912 he also departed from the ASL practice of not backing candidates when he endorsed the re-election of Governor George Donaghey, who was challenged by Cong. Joseph. T. Robinson. Donaghey favored state prohibition while Robinson preferred the continuation of the local option system. Robinson's victory in the March primary allowed Donaghey to devote his energies to stumping for an initiated act drafted by the ASL to "prohibit the manufacture, sale or giving away in the State of Arkansas" of alcohol. Its fate was to be decided in the September election. The strong majorities against saloons in the local option elections boosted the optimism of ASL leaders, who also were buoyed by favorable resolutions in recent Democratic party state conventions. Still, Thornburgh's quest for prohibition through popular referendum was a grave miscalculation.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Robinson's aversion to prohibition indicated the political establishment was not of one mind on the issue. The opposition by powerful office holders to the act was buttressed by interest groups funded by liquor retailers and business development interests. On the other side, Thornburgh and the ASL could not mobilize a united temperance army. The WCTU leadership

protested the decision to pursue the prohibition initiative, asserting that "the State Anti-Saloon League did not know what it is doing, that it had lost its moorings and that whiskey people were using it as a leverage." In the end, the union reluctantly urged their members to work on behalf of the measure. Following the defeat of the measure, Thornburgh claimed the role of an scrappy underdog beaten by entrenched interests: "We had not the money to compete with the unlimited advertising fund of the liquor forces, we would not follow them in their outrageous misrepresentations, and we could not as honorable men trade with the negroes for their votes." Lula Markwell, president of the WCTU, reiterated this conclusion, insisting "that negroes have ruled at the ballot box" through the dereliction of "white Christians." The paternalism of white anti-liquor forces festered into overt racism when African Americans declined to support a temperance measure.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Prohibitionists charged that their liquor rivals were behind the successful drive to include on the September 1912 ballot a "grandfather clause" initiative that would have ended African American voting in Arkansas. The first state disfranchisement measures had been enacted in the 1890s, but the restrictions on black participation in general elections in Arkansas were less severe than those operating in Deep South states. The fears of the ASL and the WCTU that the inclusion of the grandfather clause would spur a turnout of anti-prohibitionist voters were confirmed when both initiated acts were soundly beaten in counties with significant African American populations. Even though the temperance groups took no position on the failed disfranchisement proposal, Gov. Donaghey had coupled his public efforts on behalf of prohibition with energetic advocacy for curtailing voting rights.<sup>xi</sup>

Unable to garner popular majorities, prohibitionists looked to the Arkansas legislature. The lawmakers buckled under the sustained lobbying to douse the saloon lamps through a succession of measures. In 1913, the general assembly required all liquor retailers to present a petition signed by the majority of white residents before officials would grant a license. Large majorities in both chambers during the 1915 session approved a comprehensive measure

outlawing the manufacture and selling of alcohol. Anti-prohibitionists, hoping to repeat their 1912 victory, submitted an initiated act to return Arkansas to the local option system but captured only a third of the votes cast during the 1916 referendum. Prohibitionists themselves had grasped a lesson from the earlier election and secured the backing of prominent black leaders including Scipio Jones, Bishop James M. Conner of the AME church, and the Rev. Joseph A. Booker, president of Arkansas Baptist College. In 1917 Arkansas became one of the first states to enact a "bone-dry" law when the legislature forbid the shipment of liquor into the state. American entry into World War I that year provide the final impetus for the national prohibition movement to unfurl a victory banner. Moved by demands that grain stocks must be reserved for food and by denouncements of German brewers, Congress submitted the dry amendment to the states. In January 1919 Arkansas became the 27<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment, an anti-climax to a battle already won.<sup>xli</sup>

They hired men with the holly club  
 To flay him skin from bone  
 And the miller he served him worse than that  
 For he ground him between two stones  
 Here's Little Sir John in a nut brown bowl

None of the resolutions presented at the 1919 WCTU convention addressed the problem of alcohol. The union supported the League of Nations and restrictions on tobacco as well as warning about the influence of movies: "Whereas, the uncensored motion picture show has become such a menace to the morals of our girls and boys. Resolved, that the WCTU endorse the censorship of motion pictures and throw all their splendid energies into getting a bill through our next legislature." During the 1920s members at annual meetings learned from Department of Americanization that immigrants were ignorant of temperance principles and from the Department of Bible in Public Schools that laws were needed to insure scripture recitation in the classroom. The emphasis upon moral reform reflected the concerns and outlook of Lula Markwell, a former WCTU president. Markwell later served as head of the Little Rock Board for

Censorship of Amusements. By contrast, Minnie Rutherford Fuller, president of the Union when prohibition was achieved, had promoted social welfare and political rights in the years leading up to World War I. She organized an early suffrage group, drafted the 1911 law establishing a juvenile courts, and in 1914 compiled a digest of laws governing women and children that justified expansion of married women's property and legal rights. Nevertheless, the winning of suffrage and prohibition shifted the union members from crusaders to defenders of the new status quo.<sup>xlii</sup>

Beyond education and propaganda, preserving prohibition also required enforcement of laws. Before 1920, the ASL had employed detectives and designated squads of members to uncover illegal liquor operations. National prohibition, however, had the potential to make private policing actions unnecessary. Federal agents could now move against alcohol retailers, who had previously only been subject to state restrictions. In addition, moonshiners now had to keep a watch out for city and county officers since distilling was no longer simply a federal tax offense. Ernest Pyle, the south Arkansas wildcatter, recalled that by the mid-1920s "both Columbia and Union counties were doing everything in their power to stop moonshining and bootlegging. When they went out after somebody, if they broke and ran, they would shoot them." The crackdown reflected the uncompromising policies of Gov. Tom J. Terral, whose 1924 election was aided by his membership in the era's most active prohibitionist organization: the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>xliii</sup>

Beginning in the summer of 1921, Klan organizers radiated from Little Rock to form klaverns or local chapters throughout the state. Eventually, the organization claimed around 50,000 members in Arkansas. The preponderance of Klan members shared the social and economic backgrounds of old-line temperance organizers. Klaverns were usually based in towns and enrolled white, middle-class men who believed in taking action to restore the moral and religious order of the community. The national Ku Klux Klans' nativist and racist goals mattered little in Arkansas, which had a small immigrant population and which had an oppressive

segregation system already in place. While the Klan was a male order, the Women of the Ku Klux Klan, a sanctioned auxiliary, was founded and headquartered in Little Rock. Lula Markwell, the former WCTU president, was the first Imperial Commander. Shortly after the organization's founding in 1923, Markwell embarked on a recruiting swing of the west, and within a few months the Women of the Klan claimed 250,000 members in 36 states. In 1924, Markwell resigned, following bitter disputes with James Comer, the Arkansas Grand Dragon, who treated the Women of the Klan as part of his emerging political machine. Comer installed his girlfriend and future wife as the new Imperial Commander.<sup>xliv</sup>

Although Klan No. 1 in Little Rock was the center of the Invisible Empire in Arkansas, recruits flocked to the Union County chapter as the oil boom spurred lucrative gambling dens, brothels, and barrel houses (saloons) in the discovery fields. In November 1922, 200 hooded men, describing themselves as the "Cleanup Committee," invaded the "Shotgun Valley" and "Pistol Hill" districts near Smackover, torching buildings and killing one man when the illicit proprietors resisted with firearms. The Ouachita County sheriff estimated that the Klan riot had expelled around 2,000 vice profiteers. In general, mass vigilante actions were unnecessary since Klan members controlled city and county governments throughout the state. In Monticello, where the mayor and half the city aldermen belonged to the Klan, the "Shock Committee" of Klan No. 108 aided sympathetic law enforcement officers by offering rewards to those identifying prohibition violators. Klansmen caught drinking were booted from the chapter, the same treatment afforded backsliders by early temperance societies.<sup>xlv</sup>

The 1925 implosion of the Arkansas Klan amidst charges of corruption and political arrogance occurred as the national Ku Klux Klan was dissolving. The moralist campaigns against modernity in the United States were flagging by the end of the decade. Prominent conservative business leaders funded and supported anti-Prohibition organizations on the grounds that the "noble experiment" had dangerously expanded federal authority, outlawed an entire industry without compensation, and undermined respect for the law through lax enforcement of the

Volstead Act. Formed in 1929, the Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform became the leading group agitating for repeal and soon boasted more members than the WCTU. Only Arkansas and five other states lacked chapters of this newest women's political organization. Yet, the dry consensus in Arkansas was fraying.<sup>xlvi</sup>

In 1928 the Democratic party nominated Al Smith, the anti-prohibitionist governor of New York, for the presidency and Sen. Joseph T. Robinson from Arkansas as his running mate. The militant dry forces in the state called the ticket a betrayal and veered toward a collision with the state's political establishment. Alexander Copeland Millar, a Methodist clergymen and ASL president, openly led a schismatic group of anti-Smith Democrats and urged the election of the Republican presidential candidate, Herbert Hoover. The WCTU executives were more disingenuous. In September 1928, President Jeannie Carr Pittman was compelled by discontent within local unions to issue a statement: "There seems to be a rumor afloat that the President has pledged the state W.C.T.U. to Republicanism. She pleads 'not guilty' to the charge." Pittman offered a convoluted interpretation of the national WCTU mandate to support a dry candidate to mean "not going into Republicanism or Democracy as such, but being big enough and fine enough to stand by the purpose for which we came into being." Chided by allies such as the editorialists of the *Arkansas Gazette* and unable to deliver their own members, the prohibition groups failed to dislodge Arkansas from the Democratic column in the November election.<sup>xlvii</sup>

As the Great Depression spread, President Hoover's adamant loyalty to Prohibition only deepened his unpopularity. During the 1932 campaign, the Democratic party's endorsement of repeal more clearly distinguished them from their rivals than Franklin D. Roosevelt's economic proposals, which were vague and conventional. The Democratic landslide emboldened the new U. S. Senate majority leader, Joseph T. Robinson, to pressure his colleagues into approving the resolution for a constitutional amendment to repeal fully the Eighteenth. In accordance with the resolution, states were to conduct elections for delegates who would meet in conventions to determine whether or not to ratify the proposed amendment. The Arkansas general assembly

made the procedure more democratic by holding a referendum on repeal of prohibition along with the election of convention members in each county. Delegates were required to rubber stamp the outcome of the referendum. The July 18, 1933 election date made Arkansas one of the first southern states to consider the amendment, and repeal proponents understood that a favorable outcome in this bulwark of temperance foreshadowed adoption of the Twenty-first Amendment. During the summer, the Roosevelt Repeal Club and the United Prohibition forces fought their battle through community rallies, caravans of volunteer speakers, pamphlets, and debates on radio. The referendum results were decisive: 67,622 voted for repeal as opposed to 46,091 against, with 52 of the 75 counties going wet. On August 1 the convention officially ratified the amendment. Prohibitionists now faced the challenge of agitating for restoring a program judged a failure by large popular majorities. Much like the temperance pioneers before the Civil War, the latter day advocates blamed the lukewarm faithful rather than credit the armies of darkness. In September 1933, Cora Gillespie, president of the WCTU, confessed, "Our response to the wet vote in Arkansas is inexpressible sorrow. . . .The line broke because the church members did not stand for the law."<sup>xlvi</sup>

Here's Little Sir John in a nut brown bowl  
 And brandy in the glass  
 And Little Sir John in the nut brown bowl  
 Proved the stronger man at last  
 For the huntsman he can't hunt the fox  
 Nor so loudly blow his horn  
 And the tinker he can't mend kettle nor pot  
 Without a little of the Barleycorn.

Arkansans could not toast Sir John's resurrection quite yet. The state remained dry under the 1915 and 1917 prohibitionist legislation, but the fiscal crisis resulting from the Great Depression prodded tight-fisted lawmakers to scrounge for new revenue sources to avoid a general tax increase. A tentative first step was to allow the sale of beer and wine throughout the state. Then in 1935, the New Deal welfare czar threatened to cut off funds if Arkansas did not stop using those dollars to carry out basic state responsibilities, including the payment of

schoolteacher salaries. Gov. Marion Futrell reluctantly called a special session of the legislature to comply with the ultimatum. Among his revenue initiatives, Futrell proposed to operate a distillery at one of the prisons to manufacture whiskey. The "Convict Corn Plan" died in a wave of ridicule. The legislature was content to legalize all alcoholic drinks with an accompanying excise tax. Under the act, temperance forces could recover lost territory through local option elections at the township level.<sup>xlix</sup>

Late 19<sup>th</sup> century local option laws had not required dry proponents to file a petition in order to call an election to authorize the granting of liquor licenses. Under the 1935 measure, they had to obtain the signatures of 35 percent of eligible voters before an election could be held, and such referendums were to be conducted only once every two years for beer and wine sales and limited to every three years for distilled products. In 1942, for the first time in forty years, temperance groups, including the ASL and the WCTU, asked the voters to approve an initiated act. The proposal lowered the proportion of signatures to 15 percent and lifted restrictions as to when elections could be conducted. Victorious at the polls in November and with barriers lowered, the anti-liquor organizations and their allies in the Protestant churches quickly began to circulate petitions throughout the state. In 1943, they won 30 of 40 local option elections.<sup>1</sup>

As had their pre-World War I counterparts, the post-World War II Arkansas prohibitionists believed that local triumphs built momentum for state wide abolition of liquor sales. At the national level, however, the anti-alcohol forces were unraveling. After Pearl Harbor, they repeated to no avail the arguments raised during World War I that the nation should not waste grain on whiskey or expose soldiers to its poisonous effects. Consumption rose during World War II. In 1948, the ASL, with fewer members and organizationally infirm, changed its name to the Temperance League of America. The Arkansas chapter followed suit, and it was the Temperance League of Arkansas that launched the last prohibitionist crusade in the state. Clyde C. Coulter, executive director of the League, noted that the state would be the first to attempt to

overturn legalization of alcohol since the approval of the Twenty-first amendment: "All over the nation wet and dry forces have been watching Arkansas for this action."<sup>li</sup>

Initiated Act 2 of 1950 was put forward to repeal the 1935 liquor measure by prohibiting the sale and distribution of alcohol throughout the state. Once again, the men made their plans without consulting the WCTU, which doubted the likelihood of success but resolutely took on the task of circulating petitions to secure a place on the ballot for the proposal. The temperance league formalized a coalition embracing representatives from allied Protestant denominations, but this United Drys organization confronted the well-funded Arkansas Against Prohibition (AAP) group. To counter the WCTU, the AAP appointed an east Arkansas businesswoman to coordinate direct appeals to Arkansas women but did not form an affiliated female association. At the same time, Mary C. Crouse, WCTU president, compromised her organization's independence by becoming both an officer in the United Drys and by urging members to promote the initiative through the churches rather than as White Ribboners. The anti-drink forces relied upon rallies as the familiar technique from an earlier time to publicize their cause. A few days before the Nov. 7, 1950 election, a few hundred people gathered on the state capitol steps to hear clergymen exhort the faithful to lead the nation back to the better days of Prohibition. The white choir members of the Ouachita Baptist University chanted "vote dry" while the African American students in the Arkansas Baptist College choir "sang hymns and spirituals."<sup>liii</sup>

The American experience of Prohibition during the 1920s was fatal to any attempt to revive a dry regime. As Gov. Sid McMath laconically observed when asked about the proposal, "We tried prohibition once and everyone saw what happened." Whereas 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20 century temperance advocates could promise a society free of crime, disorder, and violence if alcohol were expunged, the post-repeal activists could not overcome the widespread conviction that Prohibition had failed to cure social ills. The day after Arkansans had soundly rejected the prohibition initiative, Jessie L. Knoll, WCTU secretary, wrote a disconsolate, cathartic

rumination on the reasons for the loss: "People don't seem to have convictions or strong feelings anymore. Christians lean over backwards to be broadminded and tolerant. It is nearly noon and none of our members have phoned to find out how I feel since our defeat. During the period I was sweating it out writing our cards--I was lonely, so lonely."<sup>liii</sup>

The Arkansas WCTU remained in existence until the 1980s, outliving the temperance league. Yet, the crusaders became largely a commemoration society, nostalgic for a past when the public bent to their vision and the saloon fell before the trumpets of the righteous.

### **Temperance Doxology**

Praise God from who all blessings flow,  
 Praise him who heals the drunkard's woe;  
 Praise Him who leads the temperance host,  
 Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.<sup>liv</sup>

And yet,

And Little Sir John in the nut brown bowl  
 Proved the stronger man at last.

---

<sup>i</sup> "John Barleycorn" was first published in a broadside in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, during the reign of James I, although it was apparently already well-known throughout England and originated much earlier. This version appeared in the *Journal of Folk Song Society* Volume VIII, 41 and is reprinted at <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Lofts/1245/files/barley.html>

<sup>ii</sup> Morris S. Arnold, *The Rumble of a Distant Drum: The Quapaws and Old World Newcomers, 1673-1804* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000), 128; Morris S. Arnold, *Colonial Arkansas, 1686-1804* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991), 154-155.

<sup>iii</sup> Morris S. Arnold, *Unequal Laws Unto a Savage Race: European Legal Traditions in Arkansas, 1686-1836* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1985), 70-71; Arnold, *Colonial Arkansas*, 156.

<sup>iv</sup> S. Charles Bolton, *Arkansas 1800-1860: Remote and Restless* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1998), 3, 67-88.

<sup>v</sup> Bolton, *Remote and Restless*, 83-85; Ed Bearss and Arrell M. Gibson, *Fort Smith: Little Gibraltar on the Arkansas* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press), 116-128; Odie B. Faulk and Billy Mac Jones, *Fort Smith: An Illustrated History* (Fort Smith: Old Fort Museum, 1983), 24-25; George H. Hunt, "A History of the Prohibition Movement in Arkansas (M.A. thesis, University of Arkansas, 1933), 15-16.

<sup>vi</sup> W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 8, 61, 80-86; Ian R. Tyrrell, "Drink and Temperance in the Antebellum South: An Overview and Interpretation," *Journal of Southern History* 48 (Nov. 1982): 505-506.

<sup>vii</sup> Friedrich Gerstaecker, *Wild Sports in the Far West* (1854; reprint, Durham, NC, 1968), 163, 173-174; Henry Schoolcraft, *Rude Pursuits and Rugged Peaks: Schoolcraft's Ozark Journal, 1818-1819* (1821; reprint, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1996), 103; Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 11.

- <sup>viii</sup> Thomas R. Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800-1933* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998), 17-26; Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997), 129-132.
- <sup>ix</sup> William F. Pope, *Early Days in Arkansas: Being For the Most Part the Personal Recollections of an Old Settler* (1895: reprint, Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1978), 108; Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 8-9; Tyrell, "Temperance in South," 503.
- <sup>x</sup> Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 27-28.
- <sup>xi</sup> Charles F. M. Noland, *Pete Whetstone of Devil's Fork: Letters to the Spirit of the Times*, eds. Ted R. Worley and Eugene A. Nolte (Van Buren, AR: The Press-Argus, 1957), 9; Bolton, *Remote and Restless*, 110-112; Rorabaugh, *Alcoholic Republic*, 206-208.
- <sup>xii</sup> Walter N. Vernon, *Methodism in Arkansas, 1816-1976* (Little Rock: Joint Committee For the History of Arkansas Methodism, 1976), 31, 62-63; Pope, *Early Days*, 140-141; Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 20-21; Gerstäcker, *Wild Sports*, 372-373.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Kim Scott, "Window on the Frontier, 1840-1862: The Early Newspapers of Washington County, Arkansas," *Flashback* 38 (May 1988): 11-20; "Proceedings of the Fayetteville Temperance Society, 1841-1844," *Flashback* 32 (May 1982): 29.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Tyrell, "Temperance in South," 491-492, 509; Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 23; Jack S. Blocker, Jr., *American Temperance Movements: Cycle of Reform* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 48-51; Walters, *Reformers*, 132.
- <sup>xv</sup> "John Keet to James Graham," in *Authentic Voices: Arkansas Culture, 1541-1860*, ed. Sarah Fountain (Conway, AR: University of Central Arkansas Press, 1986), 247-250.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 29-31, 54; Pegram, *Demon Rum*, 40-42.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Michael Dougan, *Confederate Arkansas: The People and Policies of a Frontier State in Wartime* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1976), 96-98, 124.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Randy Finley, *From Slavery to Uncertain Freedom: The Freedmen's Bureau in Arkansas, 1865-1869* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1996), 51, 65-66/
- <sup>xix</sup> Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 46; on Reconstruction in Arkansas see Thomas A. DeBlack, *With Fire and Sword: Arkansas, 1861-1874* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2003).
- <sup>xx</sup> Various national and state laws are noted in Ernest H. Cherrington, *The Evolution of Prohibition in the United States of America* (Westerville, OH: American Issue Press, 1920).
- <sup>xxi</sup> Wilbur R Miller, *Revenuers & Moonshiners. Enforcing Federal Liquor Law in the Mountain South, 1865-1900*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 16-31.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Isaac Stapleton, *Moonshiners in Arkansas* (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing Company, 1920), 3; Miller, *Revenuers*, 80-81, 106-109.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Stapleton, *Moonshiners*, 16-18.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Charles Morrow Wilson, *The Bodacious Ozarks: True Tales of the Backhills* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1959), 53; Otto Ernest Rayburn, "Moonshine Fact and Folklore" in "Rayburn's Folk Encyclopedia," Otto Ernest Rayburn Papers, Special Collections, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Kenneth R. Hubbell, "Always a Simple Feast: Social Life in the Delta" in *The Arkansas Delta: Land of Paradox*, ed. Jeannie Wayne and Willard B. Gatewood (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1993), 202; Miller, *Revenuers*, 16, 44; Jack Temple Kirby, *Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920-1960* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 210.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Ernest Seaborn Pyle, *Punkin Center* (Magnolia: NP, 1997), 254, 277
- <sup>xxvii</sup> O. C. Pill, interview by Bob Besom, January 1, 1990, Oral History Collection, Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources; O. C. Pill, interview by Clara Ayres, August 4, 1989, Oral History Collection, Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Ruth Bordin, *Woman and Temperance : The Quest For Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 19-22; Pegram, *Demon Rum*, 45, 58-65; Nancy Britton, *Two Centuries of Methodism in Arkansas, 1800-2000* (Little Rock: August House, 2000), 145.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Pegram, *Demon Rum*, 67-72; Bordin, *Woman*, 57-58, 76-82.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Jessie Lowe Knoll, *A Partial Fruition: A History of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Arkansas* (Little Rock: Women's Christian Temperance Union of Arkansas, 1951), 34-36; Henrietta Caldwell McQuiston, *History of the W.C.T.U. of Monticello* (NP, 1920), 2-3; Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 41-42; Thomas C. Kennedy, "The Rise and Decline of a Black Monthly Meeting: Southland, Arkansas, 1864-1925," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 50 (Summer 1991): 127-128.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> 1888 state convention program, Woman's Christian Temperance Union Papers, Series I, Box 2, File 1, University of Arkansas at Little Rock; Bordin, *Woman*, 83-84; Pegram, *Demon Rum*, 71-72;
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Elizabeth A. Taylor, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Arkansas." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 15 (Spring 1956): 21-22, 28.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 48-51.

- <sup>xxxiv</sup> J. R. Morris. "The Wine and Juice Industry in Arkansas. *American Wine Society Journal* 29, #3 (1997): 94-96; Mike McNeill, "Here's Mud In Your Eye," *South Arkansas Sunday News*, 12 August 2001
- <sup>xxxv</sup> "Arkansas [History of Prohibition]," George F. Thornburgh Scrapbook, Box 1, Folder 7, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville; Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 72, 90;
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Austin K. Kerr, *Organized For Prohibition: A New History of the Anti-Saloon League* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 67-81, 118-119; Pegram, *Demon Rum*, 91-98, 113-118; Blocker, *Temperance Movements*, 95-99.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> *Baptist Advance*, August 22, 1907; *Arkansas Gazette*, Jan. 9, 1909, Box 1, Folder 4, Thornburgh Scrapbook; Thomas R. Pegram, "Temperance Politics and Regional Political Culture: The Anti-Saloon League in Maryland and the South, 1907-1915," *Journal of Southern History* 58 (Feb. 1997): 80-81; on the relationship of temperance to southern Progressivism see William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992) and Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983).
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Calvin R. Ledbetter, *Carpenter from Conway: George Washington Donaghey as Governor of Arkansas, 1909-1913* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1993), 130-31; Copy of Petition for Initiated Act in Thornburgh Scrapbook, Box 1, Folder 5; David M. Moyers, "Arkansas Progressivism: The Legislative Record." Ph.D. diss., University of Arkansas, 1986, 254-255.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Knoll, *Partial Fruition*, 52; *Arkansas Methodist*, Oct. 3, 1912; Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 110; Moyers, "Progressivism," 256.
- <sup>xl</sup> Hunt, "Prohibition Movement," 134-135; Moyers, "Progressivism," 257.
- <sup>xli</sup> Moyers, "Progressivism," 258-273; Hunt, "Prohibition movement," 135-150.
- <sup>xlii</sup> Frances. M. Ross, "The New Woman as Club Woman and Social Activist in Turn of the Century Arkansas." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 50 (Winter 1991): 343, 345; Knoll, *Partial Fruition*, 63-71; Minutes and Yearbook of WCTU of Arkansas, 1919, WCTU Papers, Box 3, File 3.
- <sup>xliii</sup> W. David Baird, "Thomas Jefferson Terral" in *The Governors of Arkansas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed Timothy P. Donovan, Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., and Jeannie M. Wayne (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1995), 160-164; Pyle, *Punkin Center*, 264.
- <sup>xliiv</sup> Charles C. Alexander, *The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), 217-218; Charles C. Alexander, "White Robed Reformers: the Ku Klux Klan Comes to Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 22 (Spring 1963), 8-23; Kathleen M. Blee, *Women of the Klan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 88-89.
- <sup>xlv</sup> Donald Holley, "A Look Behind the Masks: The 1920s Ku Klux Klan in Monticello, Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 60 (Summer 2001): 141-142, 145; Alexander, *Ku Klux Klan in Southwest*, 76-77.
- <sup>xlvi</sup> David E. Kyvig, *Repealing National Prohibition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 92, 120-126.
- <sup>xlvii</sup> *Arkansas White Ribboner*, September 1928; Michael Richard Strickland, "Rum, Rebellion, Racketeers, and Rascals: Alexander Copeland Millar and The Fight to Preserve Prohibition in Arkansas, 1927-1933." M.A. Thesis, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, 1993, 53-66; Cecil Edward Weller, Jr., *Joe T. Robinson: Always a Loyal Democrat* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1998), 109-121.
- <sup>xlviii</sup> *Arkansas White Ribboner*, Sept. 1933; Strickland, "Millar," 101-112; Kyvig, *Repealing National Prohibition*, 171-178.
- <sup>xlix</sup> C. Calvin Smith, "Junius Marion Futrell" in *The Governors of Arkansas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed Timothy P. Donovan, Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., and Jeannie M. Wayne (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1995), 181; Ben F. Johnson, *Arkansas In Modern America, 1930-1999* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 200), 17.
- <sup>i</sup> Hinson, *Baptists*, 287-288; Knoll, *Partial Fruition*, 81; *Arkansas White Ribboner*, March 1942, June 1942.
- <sup>ii</sup> *Arkansas Gazette*, Feb. 4, 1950; Blocker, *Temperance Movements*, 138-139; Knoll, *Partial Fruition*, 87.
- <sup>iii</sup> *Arkansas Gazette*, Nov. 5, 1950; *Arkansas White Ribboner*, April 1950; Knoll, *Partial Fruition* 88; *Arkansas Gazette*, Sept. 7, 1950
- <sup>liii</sup> WCTU Papers, Box 5, File 1; *Arkansas Gazette*, Nov. 8, 1950.
- <sup>liv</sup> 1902 Convention Program, WCTU Papers, Box 2, File 1.