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Oh! Thou who poured the pitying tide
That flows through woman's gentle breast
And streams of tenderness supplied
To aid and comfort the distressed,
Making, in all life's scenes of ill,
Woman a guardian angel still,
Against our nation's deadliest sin
Bid female purity unite;
Aid us, oh Lord! Our cause to win,
By firm examples steadfast might,
'Til foul Intemperance has flown
Abashed by Virtue's awful frown.
Pause, God of Truth! Each lukewarm heart
Give wisdom to each wav'ring mind.
Let woman be a lofty part
In teaching Temperance to mankind,
Seeking with pure unretiring zeal
The wounds of sin and grief to heal.

-The Martha Washington Society
Introduction

The Jacksonian era, began with the victory at New Orleans during the War of 1812 and ended with the Mexican War. It was a period of flamboyant optimism when Americans viewed the United States as a chosen nation. The citizens of the mid-1800s felt America's unique mission was to illuminate the way to a millennium of peace and harmony for the rest of the world. As the American people strived to form the perfect society, they displayed a "romantic faith in perfectibility" that could not be quelled. Thousands of reform movements were born almost overnight, and new ideas were put into action daily. Nineteenth century reformers pushed to end prostitution and experimented with Utopian communities, health and prison reforms, peace and abolition societies, diet and exercise regimens. These social movements had in common the fervent desire to create the perfect American society that could be used as a model for other nations to follow.

One of the most prominent and widely publicized of these reform movements was the temperance movement, which attempted to eradicate the demon of alcohol. Involving literally millions of both men and women across the nation, the temperance movement superseded sectional divisions and united the urban and the rural, the agrarian and the industrial, and men and women. The temperance movement was formed to halt Americans from drinking away perfection and to keep society free from defect and human frailty.
The American woman was pivotal in the temperance reform movement. For the first time outside the home, women participated on nearly an equal basis with males. Women were involved in every aspect of the crusade -- from organizing charity drives to forming all-female temperance societies. Thousands of women signed pledges and vowed to raise their children in alcohol-free environments. Women also received publicity indirectly through the myriad of temperance publications that portrayed them as innocent victims of a filthy habit. Two far-reaching developments in the early nineteenth century drew women naturally to the temperance issue: the changing views toward alcohol and the nuclear family made intemperance an extremely important issue for the average American housewife. More than any other crusade, the temperance movement gave women the necessary impetus to make the cause their own.

In the early years of the American republic, the "great American Dream looked more like an alcoholic nightmare." So highly prized was alcohol in the colonies that "their statutes regulating its sale spoke of it as one of the good creatures of God, to be received with Thanksgiving." Drunkenness was a frequent and obvious fact of life, and most holidays and celebrations centered around the drinking of alcoholic beverages. Most Americans, young and old, female and male, began their days with a "tumbler full of rum or whiskey taken upon arising as an eye-opener." The day commenced and ended with stiff drinks of the fiery liquid, and shopkeepers were expected to stand a barrel of "rum by the entrance, and when customers dropped in to pay a bill, they could
help themselves." Distilled spirits were integral to every aspect of colonial existence, from mundane tasks, such as paying bills and shopping to special occasions, such as weddings and Christmas celebrations."

In those early days, alcohol was considered a cure-all for any disorder. Doctors prescribed a stiff drink for many maladies, from the common cold to influenza or a child's teething pains. Alcohol was thought to ease the aches and pains of old age, and pregnant women were exhorted to drink "rum and milk as it was a boon to a woman with child." Alcohol use was so popular that by 1792 there were 2,579 registered distilleries for a population of only four million. More than 11 million gallons of alcohol were consumed per year, an average of 2.5 gallons per year for every man, woman, and child in the colonies. Alcohol consumption continued to rise at an alarming rate until the mid-nineteenth century. By 1810, more than 33 million gallons of alcoholic beverages were consumed per year -- an average of four gallons per year per person. By 1823, the average had soared to more than 7.5 gallons per person per year. Obviously, something had to be done."

As alcohol consumption rates climbed, the public correspondingly began to see alcohol in a different light. Distilled liquor came to be regarded as a "demon and destroyer" of both individuals and families. A large part of this radical reversal can be traced to medical doctors and changes in their beliefs. While colonial practitioners flouted the medicinal benefits of spirits, physicians in the early nineteenth century
believed alcohol was detrimental to one's physical and mental health. According to one report, "alcohol causes the fermentation of food in the blood and retards digestion." The Philadelphia Medical Society investigated the relationship between drinking and mortality and found that of "four thousand deaths, one-sixth of them were caused directly or indirectly by intemperance." Besides the adverse physical effects, heavy drinking encouraged the "more violent and depressing passions, such as anger, ambition, jealousy, fear, grief and despair."

The growth of a strong middle class, socialized with a strict Protestant work ethic, also contributed to the change in people's attitudes toward the use of alcohol. The nineteenth century American Protestant adhered to a culture where "self-control, industriousness and impulse renunciation were both praised and necessary." Sobriety came to be seen as a virtuous characteristic every citizen should possess and "became necessary to social acceptance and esteem." The colonial patterns of reckless drinking were now considered counterproductive and morally reprehensible. Social pressures began to play a major role in curbing the use of alcoholic beverages. The changing view toward alcohol and the corresponding social pressures stimulated action.

The structure of American social life, especially within the nuclear family, also was undergoing alterations. In the colonial era, most husbands and wives worked as a team on subsistence-level farms. The family farm was the sole means of support, and it operated as an independent production unit. Although the roles
assigned to the sexes differed, all of the work was accomplished within the confines of the home environment. This scenario was drastically rearranged as America began to industrialize, and the husband left the home to earn a living while the wife remained to care for the home and the children.

From economic reality, an elaborate cult of domesticity arose that elevated the home to something that was almost sacrosanct. Within the domestic sphere, the wife gained new power, respect, and prestige. It was her sacred duty to provide a stable environment, and she reigned as queen of her domain. The home became the "woman's proper sphere and empire. It is the scene for the display of her excellence and worthiness. It is the proper field of woman's duties."

Along with the nascent cult of domesticity, women also came to be seen as moral superiors to the more base male. Women were thought to have a "firmer grip on religion and morals, a virtual monopoly on piety and purity, and a positive sense of moral superiority." If a family member strayed, the wife was obliged to use every available means in her repertoire to bring the wayward person back to respectability.

The changing view of alcohol and the home inevitably drew the nineteenth century woman into the temperance movement. Distilled spirits, instead of being considered beneficial, came to be regarded as a substance that could destroy the delicate domestic balance the wife had painstakingly built up. Although the situation called for female action, women in the temperance
movement were not allowed to participate in many of the activities pursued by the male reformers, and any attempt one the women's part to gain more power, for example, lecturing to a large crowd, was frowned upon. Little by little, however, women did make headway. At first, women worked within small areas, but as time passed, they expanded their duties. More pressing issues, such as suffrage and more liberal divorce laws, were addressed in the decades preceding the Civil War. Like a small leak in a dam that becomes a torrent of water as time passes, and eventually cannot be halted, there was no stopping the things women could accomplish once the movement began.


In folly, it causes him to resemble a calf, -in stupidity, an ass, -in roaring, a mad bull, -in quarrelling and fighting, a dog, -in cruelty, a tyger, -in fetor, a skunk, in filthiness, a hog, -and in obscenity, a he-goat.

-Benjamin Rush-
Alcohol consumption was not only physically and emotionally harmful to the nonabstainer and all his associates, it also affected society in general. Numerous studies during the Jacksonian period indicated that intemperate individuals were more likely than nondrinkers to be impoverished, commit crimes and violence toward their families, and lose their jobs. The community was heavily burdened by alcoholic individuals.

An all-out propaganda campaign commenced to make the general public aware of the evils of overindulgence. Temperance lectures and speeches were delivered, parades featuring children drinking cold water were organized, and pledge-signing drives became commonplace. Whatever form the publicity took, temperance propaganda was distributed with a fervor and dedication that characterized the righteousness of a moral cause.

The most popular forms of temperance propaganda were novels, poems, and serialized magazine stories. Each year, thousands of articles were printed. These tales depicted the horrors of drink through vivid descriptions and heartrending plots meant to bring tears to even the most stoic of readers. Magazines serialized such tales as "Somebody's Father" and "Emily Waters." Many poems lamenting the evils of intemperance appeared in ladies' magazines and temperance journals under such auspicious titles as "Do Something" and "The Drunkard's Child."
Both unknown and popular writers jumped onto the antialcohol bandwagon. Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, and Harriet Beecher Stowe each dedicated time to temperance reform. Timothy Shea Arthur gained his literary reputation largely as a result of his temperance novels. Arthur was one of the most prolific writers of the era, writing such popular works as Ten Nights in a Bar Room and What I Saw There and Six Nights with the Washingtonians. Many of Arthur’s works were eventually reworked into plays, and acting companies toured the United States to spread the message of intemperance.

Temperance publications were especially important to the female reformers, and women produced much of the temperance propaganda. Nathaniel Hawthorne described many of these female authors as a "d----d mob of scribbling women" because of their runaway popularity and heavy sales. As many women writers as male writers created poems, serial stories, and novels for publication. In some magazines, the number of pieces written by female authors actually outnumbered contributions attributed to male authors. For example, in The Templar’s Magazine, women were credited with nine poems compared with seven for men; eighteen articles and novel serials were penned by women while only fifteen were ascribed to men. Women were intricately involved in the temperance movement through many "little stories and poems and their large responsibility for the children’s periodicals and Sunday school library books devoted to the cause of intemperance."

Even if they were not credited with writing the actual pieces,
women played major character roles in almost every story composed. In most of the writings, women were stereotyped as victims of another person’s sinful practices. Through no fault of their own, women found their lives miserable and devoid of any enjoyment. They were passive participants in their own fate.

Most of the stories fit neatly into the "domestic tragedy" pattern, a type of formula writing most fashionable in ladies' journals and temperance serials of the period. In stories of this type, domestic tranquility was generally thrown into chaos by a drunken husband who failed to support his dependents. After numerous twists and turns in which the situation invariably became more pressing, the denouement brought either the tragic death of one of the main characters or the erring husband’s redemption as a result of the "spiritualizing influence of his wife."

The woman was portrayed as an innocent victim in the majority of the temperance literature and was "placed on her downward course from respectability and domestic happiness to poverty, misery and wretchedness" through no fault of her own. This stereotype of the long-suffering female was strongly reinforced by the staunch refusal of nineteenth century society to portray women as drunkards. The stories partially reflected reality because the typical American woman was not a heavy consumer of alcohol, and "most native born women by mid-century were probably either cautious drinkers or abstainers." Women consumed alcohol through the use of patent medicines and in cooking, but drunkenness was generally confined to men. As a result "temperance ideology and
literature was organized thematically and conceptually around the
issue of men becoming drunkards."

On February 24, 1833, a meeting was held in Washington, D.C.,
to promote the temperance cause. In one of the scheduled speeches,
the orator queried, "And why is it that the vice of intemperance
is almost wholly confined to men?" One answer is simply that
women had fewer opportunities to drink, so it is not surprising
that females as a whole were more temperate than males. Women
spent most of their time in their homes, and, unlike their
husbands, had fewer opportunities to meet with their friends and
neighbors in a local tavern, for example, during a lunch break or
after dinner. The social climate of the nineteenth century defined
the wife's role as domestic; raising the children and creating the
perfect home environment were paramount. As a result, women were
generally isolated from the temptations of the outside world.

Compared with males, women were considered to be "more pure,
virtuous and modest, and [to] have far more kindness, benevolence
and loveliness of disposition." Any deviation from this stereotype
would have generated dissonance within a carefully constructed
system of roles and values. In a society that socialized little
girls from birth to be domestic and submissive, anything that
threatened these attributes, such as alcohol, was strictly taboo.
Because of this upbringing, "under trying circumstances nineteenth
century females are patient and exemplary; seldom resorting to that
false solace which gives pleasure today -- brings ruin tomorrow."
A speech given on February 24, 1833, at a meeting for the cause of
temperance in the United States summarized the difference between males and females:

Whence the difference between the sexes? The habits of the lives of females are opposed to such a practice; their duties are faithfully performed at home. The domestic hearth is the altar. In joy and sorrow, here they are found seeking consolation, not in the bowl, but in the practice of those virtues which God has given them.

While women were primarily temperate, nineteenth century temperance publications depicted females as suffering needlessly in response to a male habit. "For when the drunkard falls, he plunges hell-wards like Milton's devil, and drags the angels down." Lengthy descriptions of neglected, abused, and abandoned families were drafted with great flourish to stimulate the readers to join the cause. Temperance fiction was usually devoted to exposing the ruin of men through alcohol abuse and to examining the destructive consequences that ensued for his wife and children.

First and foremost, the intemperate spouse neglected both his wife and children. The husband's "duties are disregarded, his time is consumed, his usefulness destroyed" when he overindulges. An inebriate "when intoxicated wholly neglected his family" while another "paid no attention to [his wife's] comforts." In a society where women were largely confined within the home, any disregard on the part of the husband could have profound psychological effects, creating a feeling of deep isolation. Because women relied on men for much of their outside news, an unattended wife rapidly lost touch with the "outside world." A letter from a lonely wife imploring her husband to give up the bottle vividly
illustrates this feeling of seclusion from society: "I am going to write just as I feel. I am sad and lonely. My life so far has been one of sorrow and trouble."

An alcoholic spouse also caused his wife and children to be ostracized by their friends and neighbors, cutting off yet another source of communication and support. "He is shunned and despised by all around him. Not because he is poor; but because his poverty has been caused by profligacy and vice." To avoid exposure to the depravity associated with the excessive use of alcohol, acquaintances boycotted an intemperate's house as if he had a highly contagious disease. This practice further isolated his family, and the result was an utter feeling of depression and lack of control.

The ultimate form of neglect occurred if the alcoholic husband abandoned his dependents, forcing them to rely on their own limited resources:

He heeded not the last appeal,
But thrust his wife aside-
That gentle being who had been
But for one short year a bride.
He braved the snow, he faced the storm,
And journeyed o'er the plain
But never to his wife and child
The drunkard came again.

This sentimental poem was written to demonstrate that alcohol can take away the main provider of the family, leaving his family entirely destitute.

A husband who neglected or abandoned his wife and children could indirectly cause the death of his wife. A poem composed in
1835 told of a neglected wife who eventually died as a result of the awful treatment she received from her intemperate husband:

Methinks I view her faded form,  
   Her spirit bowed to earth. 
With embers scarce to keep her warm,  
   Placed by her dreary hearth, 
While o'er the tie that binds her here  
   Where, all unconscious of her care, 
   Her smiling infant sleeps. 
With pale and care-worn, pensive look,  
   Amidst the gloomy scene 
   She tries to read her Holy Book,  
   And reads and weeps between. 
   And then she turns, to offer up 
   A fervent prayer to Heaven, 
   That thou wouldst dash that fatal cup,  
   Return and be forgiven. 
But all in vain: beneath the blast of chilling, hopeless grief,  
   She pines away, and falls at last,  
   A sere and withered leaf. 
Then comes perhaps the bitter smart 
   Remorse and wounded pride 
   May plunge the dagger to the heart,  
   A wretched suicide.

A woman took her own life, leaving an innocent infant, because of her husband's complete disregard for her needs. His drunkenness caused poverty and seclusion from human companionship or support. Although still a young woman, her face became haggard from the trials forced upon her as a result of her husband's intemperance. With no other course open to her, she sought relief from suffering by ending her own life."

Temperance propaganda also warned that distilled spirits inevitably brought financial ruin and poverty to the intemperate's family. "Society is cursed by the poverty which the love of strong drink engenders." The overconsumption of distilled spirits caused many problems: "irregular passion, thriftless habits, aimless
efforts and broken vows, moneys squandered, days and nights wasted in drunken debauch, must inevitably bring poverty and ruin." Often all the money that should have been used to buy food, clothing, and a decent place to live would be consumed on drink. "An intemperate man spends all his property, sells all his furniture and clothing and stock of cattle, even down to the last cow; and expends all his wife earns." One wife lamented as she implored her husband to forego his nightly visit to the local tavern:

Oh, don't go in tonight John-
Now, husband, don't go in!
To spend our only shilling, John,
Would be a cruel sin.
There's not a loaf at home, John-
There's not a coal, you know-
Though with hunger I am faint now, John
And down comes the snow."

Intemperate practices not only took what little money the family did possess, but often resulted in unemployment, which meant that no more income would be forthcoming. "As a natural consequence of drink, they [drunkards] become idle, shiftless, slovenly and quarrelsome." No respectable businessman would consider keeping a worker who is argumentative and irresponsible. Moreover, no jobs would be offered to the inebriate because his habitual use of alcohol impaired his ability to function normally. "All purposes and plans of business are frustrated, lucrative employments are lost, steady habits are broken, and good and honest intentions are dashed to wreck and ruin." 15

Alcohol consumption "paralyzes the will, the judgment, the mind and all the energies of both the soul and the body; thus
rendering the intemperate incapable of industry." Even if the inebriate sought steady or temporary employment, a job offer would be unlikely. Temperance literature stated over and over that habitual drunkards were incapable of honest labor and could not support their families in an acceptable manner. Alcohol was "injurious to industry and prosperity. Idleness, waste, destruction of property and wretchedness almost invariably follow in its use. When strong drink prevails, industry is paralyzed and prosperity is destroyed."

In addition to simply moralizing about the loss of employment that necessarily followed intemperate habits, many temperance stories offered concrete examples to illustrate the fate of the inebriate. *Ten Nights in a Bar Room and What I Saw There*, a novel by T. S. Arthur, is a good example of a story of this type. Arthur writes of an upright citizen named Morgan who has a good job. Unfortunately, Morgan chooses to associate with the wrong group and begins to frequent the local tavern. Within a short time, Morgan loses his job and cannot find other employment. "Since then he has been working one job and another, earning scarcely enough to buy the liquor it requires to feed the inordinate thirst that is consuming him." The man of the house was expected to be the main provider of the family, and if he was unable to work, his family would inevitably live in poverty.

Vivid descriptions of the poverty-stricken families were an integral part of temperance propaganda. By focusing on the impoverished nature of the families, the stories elicited sympathy
and pity. In "Emily Waters," published in The Lady's Book, a benefactor is implored by a ragged and dirty child to bring a stove to his freezing family. The charitable gentleman accompanies the child to his house:

In a narrow and obscure street of our city, the character of whose neighborhood was of questionable respectability. Its begrimed and dirty front...its broken windows...gave it a forbidding and desolate aspect. In a dark and badly ventilated chamber were two individuals. There was no furniture in the apartment, save for some articles for the preparation of meals. Drunkenness reduced the wife and children to wearing rags and living in less than respectable areas of the city. They lacked nourishment and received poor medical care."

In addition to fiction, poems were written to illustrate the poverty suffered by families of an alcoholic:

In a hovel dark and drear bends a mother pale with fear, O'er the children cold and ragged on the floor; for the rum fiend's cursed blight all her day has turned to night, and the wolf with hungry mouth is at the door. Tramp, tramp, tramp, she hears Starvation, sees his face so gaunt and white. God of Mercy! Hear her cry. Rising to Thy throne on high, stir the hearts of men to battle for the right!

This poem vividly illustrates the tortuous existence forced on the wife and children of a drunkard. They never know from day to day if they will have supper or if, during the winter, they will have the "luxury" of a fire to warm the house. Desperation and despair have become a well-known part of their existence."

Society did not believe that poverty, in itself, caused a husband or father to be a terrible provider. If a temperate man tried to find work, but was a victim of circumstances, he was not looked down upon or blamed for his failures. The inebriate,
however, was another story. No sympathy was given to a man whose drunken actions directly caused his family to live in poverty.

An illustration of this principle appeared in Samuel Chipman's study on the effects of alcohol. An intemperate man "in the next town, who had a large family, and who was dependent in a great measure on the milk of a cow for their support, actually undertook to kill the cow in order to sell the hide for liquor." Little pity was given to a man whose self-centered actions took away his family's only means of nourishment. This type of behavior was criminal, and the husband deserved only disdain.

To shock the populace into action, temperance publications portrayed the atrocities of alcoholism. Almost worse than the destitution engendered by the male intemperate was the violence suffered by the innocent wife and children. Intoxicating beverages turned the "once kind husband into an unfeeling, unreasonable and furious tyrant." Violence was a direct result of overindulgence, and "inflamed with liquor, infuriated with passion, the assailant stops not to weigh consequences; he weighs nothing -- deliberates upon nothing -- he is only intent on avenging his antagonist some real or fancied deceit or injury.""

A husband who was calm and reasonable when sober found himself unable to control his passions while under the influence of alcoholic beverages. The slightest comments resulted in violent outbursts, and the long-suffering family members lived in constant fear of such attacks. "Who are preeminently fighting men? Sudden and quick in quarrel -- always ready to take offense -- and when
offended, disposed to blows? Who are the men of violence? Who are
they?...They are the men who sit long at the wine."

The family was more often than not the stage for this awful fury. An inebriated father's treatment of his family was both
cruel and barbarous. He would come home "beastly intoxicated and
vent his spite in abuse and blows on his defenseless wife and
child." The repeated abuse of his offspring "caused them to
tremble before him, and endeavor to escape him." The families
could do little except endure and pray the physical torment would
soon stop.

While the physical wounds of a beaten child would heal within
a matter of weeks, the psychological damage affected the child
throughout his life. A father should protect and nurture his
child, but a drunken father often failed to provide even the basic
sustenance. As a result, many children of alcoholics were
confused, frightened, and were wary of trusting their fathers:

The children, for whom he thanketh God, at their birth;
the little ones of whom he had been so proud, whom he
had dawdled on his knee, and taught to lisp the endearing
name of father -- see them trembling before him, and
endeavoring to escape his violence. His children have
learned to hide away when they hear their father's
footsteps.

The innocent children were the greatest casualty of an alcoholic
parent."

Sometimes the fury vented by the inebriated husband got out
of hand. According to one report,

A man was carried to the jail when he was very much
intoxicated and slept through the night. Upon awakening
in the morning and looking upon the walls, and seeing the
bars across the windows, he exclaimed,"Is this a jail?"
Someone answered, "Yes, you are in jail." "What am I here for?" was the earnest inquiry. The answer was "for murder!" With still greater astonishment and earnestness he inquired, "Does my wife know it!" Said someone, "Why it is your wife you have killed!"

While the veracity of this report is questionable, and was most likely exaggerated to show the awful consequences of an intemperate lifestyle, it aptly illustrates how defenseless a woman was in dealing with a man under the influence of alcohol.

Sometimes the tragic violence was almost indescribable, but temperance propaganda did not hesitate to portray these episodes. A poem composed by the temperance reformer, W. A. Williams, tells the tale of a drunkard who came home one night from the local tavern beastly intoxicated. His innocent wife and infant child were sound asleep:

   In the city Chicago, a poor drunken man
   In his wrath seized his dead infant child
   With its body he beat his own poor dying wife
   Licensed rum made him frantic and wild....

This poem was composed to emphasize the barbarism and complete loss of control that alcohol consumption engendered. Not even loved ones were safe from the horrendous acts of violence. The message of temperance rang loud and clear throughout the poems and stories of the era."

Violence was frequently the outcome of overindulgence, but it was not until 1847 that a study was conducted to investigate the possible connection between crime and intemperance. In 1847, Samuel Chipman, a popular temperance lecturer, traveled through New York, Maine, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio, Indiana, and
Connecticut to gather data on prisoners, paupers and criminal trials. His findings were surprising because he found that the majority of persons tried and imprisoned for crimes were found to be under the influence of alcohol at the time of arrest. In Albany County jail, for example, Chipman catalogued fifteen incarcerated persons as temperate, seventeen as doubtful, and eighty-two as intemperate. Of the intemperate, he noted at least twenty had been committed for abuse to their families.

A similar pattern was established for the Allegheny County jail. Of the fifty-seven inmates, Chipman found that forty-nine were intemperate, and of these, three were imprisoned for whipping their wives, one was charged with poisoning his spouse, and another was charged with abusing his parents. Continuing his study through all the counties in New York as well as in other states, Chipman found that the same patterns surfaced. In summarizing his findings for New York in 1847, Chipman found that of those sentenced to jail, 641 were temperate, 1,003 were doubtful, and 3,808 were intemperate.

Chipman's study was ground-breaking because he systematically obtained and recorded data from many counties and across state borders. Not contenting himself with drawing conclusions from a restricted population, Chipman assured the veracity of his findings by acquiring samples from many different locations. Through his methodology, Chipman guaranteed the readers of his report reliable findings applicable to any area in the country.

Chipman's findings were alarming. Alcohol was proved to be
an extremely dangerous substance that caused men to commit crimes of violence against strangers or even their own families. He found that "the amount of suffering arising from [intemperance] exceeds the powers of the human mind to compute." The report's conclusions reinforced the belief that something must be done to halt the flow of the demon of alcohol before more innocent people were hurt."

In addition to violence toward their families and innocent bystanders, intemperate men were more likely to commit crimes to support their addiction. "There can be no doubt that, of all the proximate sources of crime, the use of intoxicating liquors was the most prolific and the most deadly." Individuals under the influence were more likely to be drawn to crime, and "over three-quarters of all criminals were the direct well-ascertained consequence of intemperance." Of all the criminal cases brought to trial each year, "five out of every six of the cases...were traced directly to that fearful habit.""

Samuel Chipman was not the only temperance advocate to arrive at the conclusion that alcohol caused many crimes. James Shaw, while gathering data for his book, *History of the Great Temperance Reforms*, compiled figures on prisoners throughout the United States. After analyzing the results, he found that more than" 82 percent of the prisoners of the United States have privately confessed their frequent indulgence in intoxicating drinks." Shaw wondered why intemperate individuals were so likely to commit crimes. He decided that alcohol

prepared the way for the commission of crime of every kind, and those which required a steady hand and a clear
head, there is need of the paralyzing effect of the alcohol upon the conscience and moral sense, and that such an effect is desired and sought by the professional criminals is a fact well known.

Shaw believed that liquor lowered a person’s morals, thus making a criminal act easier to commit.

A man under the influence of strong drink would not deliberate before he took action. He acted as if a primal instinct had taken over his powers of reason, and he could only react to the powerful urges within him. As a popular poem written by H. T. Ardley said:

I saw a weak woman in pale tremor shrink,
From a dastard, a demon, a victim of drink --
   An oath and a blow
And the brute laid her low
   And his fiery eyes flashed with a maniac glow.

All sanity was lost, and the inebriate could not control his temper. His wife was nearby, and he vented his anguish by physically abusing her.

All the studies and temperance publications concluded that substantially fewer robberies, thefts, and murders would be committed if prohibition was adopted. By cutting off the supply of alcohol, families would remain intact, and the children would grow up with a father who served as a positive role model, instead of teaching them that crime and violence were acceptable. A poem written in 1856 supported the cause:

The cause goes farther -- where that crime is brewed
   In a shop licensed for the public good!
   Where murder, arson, rape are brought to pass,
   With hell-broth vended at three cents a glass.

If alcohol was banned, American society in general, as well as the individual families, would be immediately better off."
In retrospect, the temperance formula stories, poems, and studies appear overly dramatic and deliberately contrived. Although they were melodramatic and meant to appeal to the emotions of the average reader, the temperance propaganda aptly illustrated the reality of the life of the nineteenth century female. Faced with poverty and deprivation, domestic violence and psychological abuse, criminal charges and prison sentences, the wife "true to her own kind nature, with a self-sacrificing devotion, clings to her husband; even in her degradation." A woman had few options available to better her conditions, and a "married woman was dependent on her husband, and there was no protection against the hardship caused by alcoholism."

Custom dictated that the wife must stick by her husband through thick and thin. From birth little girls were taught that marriage was forever, and once the vows were spoken a woman was required to remain at the side of her husband through any situation that might arise. It was socially unacceptable for a wife to leave her husband. Temperance propaganda fullheartedly accepted this premise, and preached that the inebriate's wife must stand by her husband.

In *The Lady's Book*, a magazine for women, a short story entitled, "Emily Waters," illustrated that a good wife must not leave her husband, but should try to nurse him back to temperate habits. After years of trials and tribulations engendered by her alcoholic spouse, the heroine of the story, Emily Waters, finally succeeds in bringing her husband back to sobriety. She never once
complained or thought of doing anything to better her own life; her husband's recovery was her reward. After Emily's spouse is cured of his alcohol affliction, he tearfully asks, "How can I repay thee for all thy care and goodness towards me -- me, who am so unworthy of receiving kindness at thy hands! Do not detest me, Emily -- me the degraded, the fallen, the dishonored!" Emily's response tells all. "No! no! -- Detest you, My Cecil! You! My own dear husband -- never! Stories such as this illustrated to women their proper role with regards to their mates. A woman who stood by her husband no matter what was exalted as the ideal woman."

Nineteenth century laws dictated what women could and could not do. Her roles in marriage and in the community were also legally sanctioned. "At the inception of the nineteenth century women lived in a position of subjection. The common law of England was the law of the land, and that law condemned women to a status decidedly inferior to that of men." An elaborate series of laws, built up over the centuries, controlled each and every action a woman could take.

From the first day of marriage, the wife "for all practical purposes was dead in the eyes of the law." Dating back to English legal tradition, a married woman had no control over her own property or earnings. Upon a woman's marriage "the personal property of the wife, such as money, goods, cattle and other chattels which she had in her possession at the time of her marriage, in her own right, and not in the right of another, vest immediately in the husband and he can dispose of them as he
pleases." In addition, the husband controlled all his wife's future earnings. In all cases, the husband was entitled to spend the money in any way he saw fit.

A woman's complete financial dependency on her husband became particularly important when the husband adopted intemperate habits. According to the statutes, a wife had no legal recourse to halt her spouse from drinking the family into the poorhouse. "By law, a woman could be stripped of every available cent she had in the world, and see it squandered." A woman could not require her husband to provide even the most basic necessities for his children.

If a wife went against the traditions of the period and abandoned her intemperate husband, the law stepped in. "If [a wife] ran away, no matter what the provocation, [her husband] could compel her return and collect damages from the person who gave her shelter." Once she had returned home, her spouse "could use gentle restraint upon her liberty to prevent further improper conduct." Even extenuating circumstances, such as beatings by an inebriated husband, did not change the letter of the law.

Divorce was almost unheard of and was granted only in the rarest cases. An abusive husband who drank was no excuse to sever the marriage relation. "Til death do us part" was taken seriously, and the wife was expected to simply tolerate whatever events developed in her life. If a divorce was actually granted, the wife "forfeited all right to property earned during marriage as well as to their home and children." A mother would not be given
custody of the couple's children; instead, they would be left in
the care of a father who could not consider their best interests
becasue of his alcoholism. There was nothing a wife could do to
better her station in life. Realizing this fact, women reformers
incorporated liberalized divorce laws as a major part of their
platform."

Even if a divorce was granted, most nineteenth century females
lacked a formal education and possessed few job skills. The wife
of an alcoholic who attempted to survive on her own could rarely
make ends meet. Odd jobs, such as sewing, washing, or taking in
boarders, were common means of support, but, for the most part,
women could not support their families on anything but a
subsistence level. The social environment of the nineteenth
century left the wife utterly dependent on the man of the
household.

The 1800s were bereft of any form of social net for needy
families. Food stamps, subsidized housing, state-sponsored
counseling programs and social workers were nonexistent.
Charitable organizations distributed food and clothing to the
victims of intemperance, but these groups were privately funded
and operated and helped only a small proportion of the suffering
households. Women could not rely on outside sources to ease their
suffering.

The legal and economic discrimination of Victorian America
created a woman who was expected to passively endure whatever came
her way. In the words of the transcendentalist and feminist,
Margaret Fuller, "In the nineteenth century there was no woman, only an overgrown child." Women became involved in the temperance movement primarily for practical reasons. The temperance publications of the times accurately portrayed women as innocent victims of male intemperance because they had few available resources to deal with the reality of alcohol abuse. "It was tragic to have an alcoholic in the family in view of the total legal and economic dependency of wives on their husbands. The fear of drunkenness was thus very real to many women" and action had to be taken."


...We prostrate ourselves in the dust before thee to beg for the lives of our fathers, our brothers, and our sons. Oh God, help us to save dying men; help us to rescue the idols of our love...send down Thy spirit on this poor man who still turns a deaf ear to our pleading -- he will not listen to us...Give us access to the heart of this man...

-Woman's plea to end intemperance, Xenia, Ohio
Hints to the Ladies:
-A lady should never show ill temper.
-A woman's lips is the place for smiles; their heart should be the repository of goodness and gentleness; scorn should never be found upon the former.
-Ah, ladies, beware of your tempers!

-The Templar's Magazine-
Join the Movement!

Many reform movements of the Jacksonian era, such as the abolition crusade, were openly hostile toward female involvement and participation. Women who judged slavery to be morally wrong and attempted to give speeches, organize protests, or distribute propaganda were reminded of acceptable feminine conduct and admonished to return to their proper sphere. Abolition societies were reluctant to accept female members for fear their cause would lose credence if linked or affiliated with radical feminists or women's suffrage.

The temperance movement, on the other hand, openly encouraged and even implored women to become actively involved. Women signed temperance pledges, organized charities, and wrote stories for publications. They participated on almost every level of the temperance movement and gained important organizing skills that would be used in later women's rights activism. However, a woman's place in the movement was still restricted to the well-defined "cult of domesticity" ideology.

Joining the temperance mission was "worthy of all the self-sacrificing benevolence of woman's heart." At every opportunity, females were beseeched to cast their authority behind the cause. One male temperance society member entreated the "female sex to throw their influence around to hold man back from destruction." As soon as the men pointed out the way in which females could aid
the movement, they would "put forth direct efforts to rescue the captives to strong drink." Women were important allies for reform and were instrumental in bringing about radical changes.

Soliciting potential female advocates was an important function in all areas of temperance propaganda, and most journals, newspapers, and speeches actively sought women representatives. For example, a temperance article, "Female Influence: Necessary and Useful in Advancing the Temperance Reformation," was written to draw women into the folds of the crusade. Temperance magazines devoted entire sections to female issues, and speeches were composed to motivate feminine involvement. At every turn, temperance publications eagerly entreated women to enlist in the campaign.'

The Templar's Magazine, a publication of the Good Templar's Temperance Society, included a "Ladies Department" in each issue. This section, which was approximately two pages long, featured advice on what women could do to further the movement. They were implored to make sure their homes were models of sobriety and to raise temperate children. Various suggestions also were made on how to achieve these objectives. By providing the women with information on the temperance movement, the periodical motivated women to join the cause and to help bring about drastic changes that could improve their lives.'

If women issues were mistakenly omitted in the publication, profuse apologies were offered. When The Templar's Magazine omitted the Ladies Department from one of its issues, an
explanatory "note to the Ladies" was immediately offered. The written apology begged the women readers to "please pardon us for omitting their Department in this number. It is unavoidably crowded out. Under the Editorial they will find something to interest them, in regard to the social Degree. We will pay more attention to them hereafter." As this excerpt aptly illustrates, women were considered extremely important allies. The temperance movement strongly believed that the ladies should be "brought to bear directly on the subject," and for this reason a strong apology was in order if the information on women’s activities was omitted.'

In addition to the Ladies Department, The Templar's Magazine published articles that appealed to women to support the cause. In a short piece entitled "A Word to the Ladies," women were told that

your sex has suffered much from the ravages of intemperance. Indeed its blighting, withering, curse falls most heavily on our devoted heads and you can do much to banish the evil from our midst. You are not aware of the influence you can exert until you put forth all your energies. We call on you, in the name of suffering humanity...

Women's entrance into the temperance movement was justified by the terrible suffering they endured from an alcoholic father, husband, son, or brother. Women were morally obliged to do everything possible to arrest the spread of alcoholism.'

The Templar's Magazine also published short fictional accounts of women who contributed to the temperance movement. No matter how trifling the incident seemed, it was worthy of notice. In one characteristic vignette, the heroine, Isabelle, is married to an
intemperate husband. One day at a tea, Isabelle begins to tell her troubles to a group of girls surrounding her. At first the gathering is unhappy with the turn in conversation and wants to talk of less weighty matters. But as Isabelle presses on, "more than one thoughtless girl in the little group, began, for the first time, to feel their responsibility as women, when her little narrative was concluded."

Two very important ideas were illustrated by this short passage. First, women were told they could play an important role in the temperance movement. Second, they were shown a socially acceptable way they could aid the crusade to abolish liquor. By spreading the word to their lady friends in informal settings, many women would be discretely converted to the cause. A woman could influence others through a softly spoken, but heartfelt story.

Even if they did not publish a monthly section related entirely to female interests, other temperance journals also printed articles appealing to the woman reader. The Temperance Recorder, a monthly publication, devoted articles to the female temperance adherent. Like the Ladies Department in The Templar's Magazine, the Recorder printed items that suggested ways in which women could advance the movement. An article appearing in the journal stated that

the friends of the temperance reform turn to the female sex and appeal to them to throw their influence around to hold back man from destruction, and they appeal with confident anticipation that as soon as they point out the way which females can aid the reformation, they will put their hand to work and it will be accomplished.
Women reformers were explicitly informed of their paramount significance in the action of the crusade."

Another article appeared in the Temperance Recorder inviting women to enter to movement:

The cause of temperance is a common cause, interesting alike to all of either sex and of every station; for the pestilence has entered almost every dwelling...were we to portray the miseries and woes of intemperance; and were we to speak of the dangers to which the youth of our country are exposed...; who, of all our race would quickest shrink with instinctive dread, and press her little ones more closely to her bosom?

The temperance cause was universal. Insobriety indiscriminately affected the young and the old, the rich and the poor, and it equally disrupted the lives of both males and females. Because of its universality, each and every citizen, including women, was needed to endorse the movement.

Readers of The Lady's Book, a nineteenth century magazine for women, were implored to enter the temperance drive through the short novelettes that appeared monthly in the publication. The stories invariably told of a young and beautiful heroine's fall from respectable society because of her husband's intemperate habits. In the end, however, the husband is redeemed by the unceasing efforts of his devoted spouse. In a short temperance vignette that appeared in the magazine, an innocent and pious wife succeeds in rescuing her husband from the depths of intemperance. The ending phrase summarizes the moral of the tale: "she had redeemed a man, her husband, from beastly intemperance." Through such stories, thousands of women were urged to take action to
combat intemperance."

The Lady's Book was not a temperance publication. It was the nineteenth century's Good Housekeeping and devoted many of its pages to fashion plates, poetry, excerpts from novels, and advice on how to be a good wife. Also included were articles on social topics, such as temperance and education. Because the magazine encompassed many different features, it was widely circulated and had substantially more readers than the average temperance journal. Many women were first exposed to the issues fueling the reformation through the moralizing short stories published in The Lady's Book.

Public speeches also addressed women's issues, and lecturers traveled across the country to solicit feminine backing. In a rousing oration, Amelia Bloomer, a supporter of the temperance crusade and a women's rights advocate, questioned how reform duty can be none of woman's business, when she is subject to poverty and degradation and made an outcast from respectable society. None of woman's business when her half starving naked babes are compelled to suffer the horrors of the winters blast!... In the name of all that is sacred, what is woman's business if this be no concern of hers!

Females attending the emotional lecture were inspired to do everything in their power to aid the movement."

In another speech delivered by the Reverend A. L. Stone entitled, "Appeal to the Ladies of America," the women present were informed that "we greatly desire to win you as helpers and collaborators in the great cause of Temperance." The address continued to stress that every woman, including the betrothed, the daughter, the sister, the wife, and the mother were important advocates of
the cause. In his conclusion, the Reverend Stone specified what women could do to end the terrible plague of intemperance that was sweeping the United States."

Newspaper articles explicitly issued a clarion call for female readers to become intimately involved in the effort. An article in *The Lily*, a female temperance newspaper edited by Amelia Bloomer, stated that for women

intemperance is the great foe to her peace and happiness. It is that, after all, which has made her home desolate and beggared her offspring. It is that, above all, which has filled to the brim the cup of her sorrows, and sent her mourning to her grave. Surely she has the right [to take action] for its suppression.

By vividly describing female tragedy in the face of alcoholism, the author of this article expected the female reader to empathize with the character in the story and see herself as the victim. Once she became sympathetic and her emotions were outraged, she was primed for battle against male insobriety."

Women possessed many qualities of paramount importance to the movement. One article clearly stressed women's particular talent:

Woman! You have influence, and too, which stretches away beyond time, into eternity, farther than the human mind can conceive. Millions, millions of ages hence, that very same influence you exert to-day, shall be felt, shall be acknowledged.

This invitation to participate was a far cry from the exclusion experienced by women in the abolition movement; the significance of feminine participation was openly acknowledged. Women could "do much to banish the evil from our midst."
"From the beginning of the anti-liquor cause women participated in various activities, but it was always understood, and often stated that they were the followers of men and that their natural and proper place was in the home with members of the family." Even though female contributions were valued and openly solicited, a woman's sphere of influence was severely limited. The important nineteenth century "cult of domesticity" was still the dominant ideology. "Here, within these limits, and without transgressing that modesty, which is heaven's own gift, and woman's brightest ornament, you may exert a benign and mighty influence." An invisible line was drawn, and women were not allowed to cross it in their efforts to banish alcohol abuse from American society.

For women to enter the temperance movement, an elaborate justification was created that assured even the greatest cynic that the traditional female stereotype was not being threatened. In her book, Fifty Years' History of the Temperance Cause, Jane Stebbins looked back at why women were allowed in the movement.

For years and years, multiplied into decades, have the women of America waited to see the traffic which annually sends 600,000 of their sons, brothers, fathers and husbands to the drunkard's grave. They have been impoverished, disgraced, tortured in mind and body, beaten, murdered...under the impulse of maddening liquors.

Intemperance greatly affected women. It destroyed their homes, affected their children, and even sometimes caused their deaths. Women suffered inordinately because of alcohol, and, therefore, they had the right to do everything possible to promote temperance."
A woman's life centered around the home, and her way of life was threatened by the bottle. As an article in the Temperance Recorder stated, "Whatever of bitterness or of anguish intemperance infuses into the cup of human sorrow, a woman drinks its very dregs." A woman protected her home by signing pledges or participating in temperance rallies. To justify her actions, the slogan, "Home Protection," was adopted.

Women possessed certain unique characteristics that the more unrefined male personalities lacked, and these traits warranted her inclusion in the movement. The temperance cause was "one for which her gentleness, her true delicacy, her incomparable tact" were exactly fitted. With her "superior strength of heart," a woman could lead even the most depraved character to salvation. "Precisely because women are more moral than men, they should be allowed to ... help in the crusade."

A woman was allowed to enter the temperance movement because her "greater morality and virtue [were] nearly universally acknowledged." But she was not supposed to step out of character and attempt to take privileges that were not her due. Strict boundaries were established to define what female reformers could do. "Here, within these limits, and not transgressing that modesty, which is heaven's own gift, and woman's brightest ornament, you may exert a kindly but mighty influence."

Women could aid in reforming a victim of alcohol because nineteenth century temperance thought blamed "the alcohol and not the man for his downfall...." Alcohol was the central, if not the
only, cause of all ensuing problems. The afflicted individual was not considered to be less of a person or in possession of some inherent character flaw; the ingestion of distilled spirits was the antecedent to most of the problems."

This line of thinking developed into the realization that if alcohol was simply removed, the fallen would be resurrected and domestic harmony would be reinstated. "The once kind husband and affectionate father or dutiful son becomes morose, peevish, unreasonable, unmerciful and without affection" in response to drink. If the distilled spirits were removed, everything would quickly revert to normalcy, and domestic harmony would be restored."

Many stories portrayed men who beat or emotionally abused their wives and children while intoxicated. The stories emphasize, however, that when sober the same men were loving and devoted husbands and fathers. James Shaw's *History of the Great Temperance Reforms*, a book that summarized temperance activism through 1875, related how "a man killed his mother, but would not harm a dog when sober." At the time it was believed that by simply removing the liquor, the terrible things that had occurred during intemperance would rapidly disappear. There was hope for salvation and women could help to light the path to sobriety."

One way a woman could induce an errant husband back to sobriety, or to ensure that he would never stray in the first place, was to create and nurture the perfect domestic environment. Free from the chaos and temptations of the outside world, the home
became a refuge and sanctuary where the finer pleasanties of life were concentrated. The woman’s duty was to create the perfect home because the "domestic fireside is the great guardian of society against the excess of human passions." A good home offered a husband no excuse to find solace in alcohol; the home would soothe all the troubles and worries that each day engendered. "Home was supposed to be a cheerful place, so that brothers, husbands and sons would not go elsewhere in search of a good time." Saloons and taverns were destined to become obsolete if the domestic climate provided the proper ambiance.

"Domestic comfort is the chief source of her influence. Nothing conduces more to improve the character of men than domestic peace." As sentimental vignettes and poetry of the era showed, an alcoholic spouse could return to sobriety if the wife simply made the home a pleasant refuge from the tumultuous world.

The "Constant; or, the Anniversary Present," a short story that appeared in The Templar’s Magazine in 1850 illustrated how a wife could influence her husband by providing a comfortable home. In this story, the needs of a virtuous wife, Katie, and her young daughter are secondary to the call of the tavern for her husband. The neighbors advise the woman to leave her husband and refuse to let him come home on nights when he frequents the saloon. The wife responds, "I will do nothing at all but to try to make his home as pleasant as possible, and when he is weary of his gay companions, he will return to me with more interest." At the end of the story, the husband realizes his deviant ways and gives his wife the best
anniversary gift he could offer -- his sobriety. The story points out that the neighbors' suggestions would have driven the husband further away. The husband's final words are "Katie's way was the best."

The Lady's Book stressed the importance of creating a tranquil home environment not only to promote abstinence from alcohol, but to assure temperance in all areas. According to a short article a man is a creature of circumstances, and is swayed and biased by associations. The great endeavor of a wife must be, therefore, to fix the disposition of her husband by increasing and preserving attentions. The bride thinks no exertions too great the promote the happiness of the man she loves. If she rejects this opportunity, it can never be regained.

It was up to the wife to make sure her husband remained a law-abiding citizen. A man was easily swayed by the "wrong crowd," so a wife was expected to oversee his actions to ensure that his behavior was appropriate and moral. A woman accomplished this by creating the perfect domestic environment and serving her husband's every need. The Lady's Book commented that "a young lady, totally ignorant of domestic affairs, is nearly as unfit to be an American wife and mother as though she were lame in both feet and hands."

Traveling orators also stressed the importance of a good home environment for a temperate lifestyle. In "A Voice to Youth, Addressed to Young Men and Young Ladies," J. M. Austin preached, "The moment you have made home more agreeable and satisfactory to him than the places of his resort, that moment you have achieved your victory." The role of the female was to please, and she was incessantly indoctrinated on how to fulfill her duties."
Along a similar line, Eliphalet Nott declared in a lecture that women were "heaven-appointed amour, as well as a heaven-appointed theatre of action...[women could] remove temptation from the dining room -- the dining table. This is your empire, the empire over which God has given you domain." The legacy of a successful woman was a temperate home."

A woman was also expected to refrain from showing anger or outrage at her husband's drunken sprees. She must instead sit passively by, hoping and praying for reformation. Hanging cheery curtains, building a crackling fire, and cooking a pleasant meal were the primary methods a wife used to bring back an errant husband. Instead of taking control of her own life and leaving her husband or issuing him an ultimatum, the nineteenth century woman acquiesced to whatever situation was developed in her life and gave little thought to changing her circumstances.

A lady "must never show ill temper. A woman's lips are the place for smiles." The smart wife can also save her beloved through kind actions and gentle words:

Suppose the husband absents himself from home, and spends his leisure hours at the haunts of intemperance and vice, how shall the wife secure his company by his own fireside and save him from ruin? By meeting him on every return with a storm of clamor, and fury, and violence? By making his ears 'tingle' with a flood of harsh invective and reproach? This conduct will not, cannot amend him. When he enters his dwelling, meet him with a smile of love, instead of a frown of hatred.

In this way, the husband will give up his late-night sojourns in the tavern and regain his temperate lifestyle."

Women were told the most auspicious way to act if they desired
to change their husbands' behavior. In a speech, J. M. Austin commented that "women cannot command man to conform to her tastes and views -- she must win him into conformity." Austin continued to say that

it is contrary to human nature for man to be coerced or driven into any measure by woman, and she who undertakes this course, is ignorant of her powers, ignorant of her proper sphere of action, and blind to her own happiness! The true policy for woman to pursue...is to assume all the lovely attractions of her nature -- to be forgiving, kind, affectionate, and as pleasant and agreeable as possible.

Women were told how to act and what to say if they wanted to influence men.

Women who participated in the temperance movement were expected to set an example for others to follow. A female should "never put the glass to her own lips." Women were expected to be the paragons of virtue so that others would learn from their example. If a woman drank, "what young man could pronounce the habit disgracing, or brutalizing when thus vindicated before his eyes by those whom he chiefly esteems and admires?" Temperate women were extremely important to the movement because their sober habits influenced others to behave in a like manner.

As the role model for her children and husband, a woman who takes the wine-glass, lends all the charms of her manners, all the graces of her mind, all the captivation of her social qualities to give currency to wine-drinking in the circle in which she moves. It cannot be thought a beastly excess to copy the example of a refined and cultivated woman.

According to nineteenth century ideology, a woman possessed higher moral standards. If a lady drank, her actions would supposedly be
imitated by everyone she came in contact with, and overindulgence would become socially sanctioned."

Temperance literature also emphasized that women should serve as models of sobriety. "What Can Women Do? or, the Influence of an Example," a short magazine vignette that appeared in The Templar's Magazine, illustrated this point. In the story, the heroine refuses a glass of wine. "'Excuse me,' said she, in a quick, earnest voice, which drew the attention of all. 'I will drink to Lucy's engagement, with all my heart, but in water if you please.'" The heroine placed the full weight of her moral nature against liquor, and the rest of the guests followed suit. One man responded, "May I be permitted to follow Miss Gray's example?" Another man "gaily declared himself bound, for that night at least, to drink nothing but water, for her sake." Men could be given a large push toward sobriety if women set the proper tone of the evening."

In addition to foregoing alcoholic beverages, ladies could also provide models for action by signing temperance pledges. At a temperance meeting in the state of New York, "a young lady was asked if she would give her name to the pledge of total abstinence? She refused, adding that she was in no danger of being a drunkard." The standard answer was "why pledge ourselves to that restraint which we already practice? I answer, for the sake of others, for the sake of extending the knowledge and influence of your example." A woman who threw her weight behind the crusade by signing a pledge inspired many men to follow her example. Pledge signing intimately
bound thousands of wives, mothers, and daughters to the antialcohol crusade."

An unmarried woman also had much to offer the movement. By "shunning all social contact with men suspected of improper behavior," she could influence young men to adhere to temperate ways. In a speech, J. M. Austin urged women to "refuse to countenance or have any intercourse with men who are addicted to evil habits -- let them give a firm and indignant reproof to, or withdraw immediately from the presence of those young men." According to temperance publications, the threat of female ostracism was a powerful deterrent to budding alcoholics. A young man would sit home many nights alone while his friends attended dances and parties if he was intemperate. No respectable lady would give him the time of day if he was not a sober individual."

A flippant poem of the era stressed that an intemperate young man would never enjoy the company of a lady:

...your lips, on my own, when they printed Farewell,
    Had never been soiled by "The beverage of hell."
But they come to me now with the bacchanal sign,
    and the lips that touch liquor must never touch mine.
The misguided young gentleman who overindulged in distilled spirits
was doomed to lead a lonely, chaste life."

Propaganda urged women to refrain from associating with, dating, or especially marrying an intemperate individual. An article advised ladies to "never marry an intemperate gentleman. How many, by neglecting the admonition, have plunged into the deepest misery!" In her refusal to marry a drinking man, the
single female ensured her financial and domestic position and also served as an example for other men of marriageable age.

A poem composed in the 1840s stated,

'Tis but a simple word for her to say,
A simple firm decided nay,
When Mr. -- asks, will you, I pray,
Become my wedded wife.
If he's with alcohol concerned,
Indignant be his offer spurned
Now girls you have your lesson learned.
Go act it in life.

In a society that promoted marriage and the family as its central institution of support, the threat of ostracism and of life alone exerted a real and potentially powerful deterrent on the drinking of distilled spirits. "Teetotalism or no husband" was the rallying cry of the female temperance adherents.

Like present-day society, wedding receptions in the 1800s were prime occasions for overindulging in spirits. At one intemperate wedding reception, "the father pledged to his new son in flowing bumpers. The son pressed upon his bride the scented wine. The attendants joined in mutual congratulations and healths, in other words, until excitement wild and joyous, ended in a revel for the night." This drunken scene could very well set the tone for the entire marriage and be the commencement of the husband's downfall into alcoholism.

The solution advocated by temperance adherents to halt drunken marriage receptions was to have a "cold-water" wedding. In place of serving wine and champagne, juice and water were provided. As one dry-wedding guest commented, "The happiest wedding I ever
attended was the first cold water wedding I had witnessed." Besides keeping the wedding party sober, the cold-water wedding symbolized a temperate marriage.

Women actively boycotted establishments that dispensed liquor to the public. One article appearing in The Templar's Magazine taught that "by withdrawing your patronage from all who are engaged in the manufacture or traffic of ardent spirits as a beverage...you can do much for the cause." Because women were largely responsible for the household shopping, a woman who refused to patronize a shop that sold liquor could deeply affect the profits of a small businessman. "Let the ladies of our communities resolve never to give a farthing's trade to a grocer who sells rum, whatever inducement he may offer in the cheapness and excellence of his wares." 

Women were bombarded with propaganda urging them to marry temperate men, hold cold-water weddings, and serve as examples for men. Above all, however, they were told to raise temperate children. A woman's children were her greatest contribution to society, and she was expected to see that they were educated, morally upright, and temperate in all matters. "Noble sublime is the task of the American mother."

In the early nineteenth century, women were solely responsible for the upbringing of their children. Mothers spent most of their time ministering to the needs of their offspring, and "in truth, woman is the legitimate teacher of both sexes -- she is constitutionally fitted by the Creator for the duties of teacher."
As educators, women stressed the evils of alcohol consumption. "It is her prerogative, her duty, her pleasure" to train her children to temperance. To set an example for her children, a mother should never drink alcoholic beverages and should abstain from cooking with liquor or administering medicine that contained alcohol."

Temperance publications cited numerous examples of mothers who had shirked their responsibilities. These examples were offered to illustrate the ensuing disasters children could experience if they were raised to be intemperate. A magazine article in the *Temperance Recorder* vividly portrayed the path a son's life would take if he was improperly raised:

She fed it to him, to her son, on whose arm she hoped to lean for support. If she leans on him for aid, she leans upon a broken reed, that sooner or later will pierce her very soul. And all this because 'he loves it'—'because he cries for it!' for these were the excuses the mother made. Supposing then he should cry for an open razor as a play thing, would that be given to him? Let her beware, nor ruin her child in BODY AND SOUL!

The mother was a sculptor who could mold her progeny in any way she saw fit. The temperance course was the proper method, and children should be indoctrinated with temperate habits from their earliest years."

Mothers whose children grew up to be drunkards suffered extreme guilt and were blamed for their offsprings' afflictions.

Yet, should it be your lot, to behold one whom you had nurtured, blot the heritage of his ancestors, and lay down in a drunkard's grave -- God forbid that you stand before his tribunal and say, "I am very guilty concerning" -- whom? Not the brother, or the husband, but the child who you brought into life; because it was entrusted to you as a soft and unsullied wax, that you might stamp it with the seal of heaven.
It was up to the mother to make sure her children grew up to be model citizens. If her charges turned out to be brilliant, well-adjusted children, it was because they had a supportive mother and a strong home life. On the other hand, if the child was intemperate and led a wild life, that was also the mother's fault. There was immense pressure placed on the female parent with regards to her children."

Women were unprecedentedly involved in the temperance movement. As illustrated by the publications and records of the era, females were actively encouraged to join the cause and play a prominent role in its promotion. The part assigned to women was undeniably important, but it was also entirely consistent with the prevailing "cult of domesticity" ideology. Women could be agitators for reform, but only within the confines of the home environment, that is, raising temperate children, creating an enjoyable home environment, and setting examples. In no way was she to challenge her subordination to men.

In a speech delivered in Albany, New York, in 1847, Eliphalet Nott counseled, "No, I repeat it, I would not, if I could, persuade those of the sex who hear me to become the public, clamorous advocates of temperance. It is not yours to wield the club of Hercules." Although women were openly encouraged to enter the crusade, their admission was conditional. If they overstepped the invisible boundaries, they would be immediately chastened."

Women were often discriminated against by the more dominating male reformers, but through persistence, they created a niche for
themselves, and through that arena exerted a strong influence. They "found a place to use their talents in a society that defined woman's role very narrowly. Along with the explicit desire to solve certain social problems, there was the implicit desire to create a realm of usefulness for themselves." Women's place in the early temperance movement was restricted, but it served as an important foundation that later reformers would slowly build upon. Little conquests sometimes accumulate and lead to something wholly unexpected."


17. Jane E. Stebbins, *Fifty Years’ History of the Temperance Cause* (Hartford, 1876), 299.


22. Temperance Recorder vol 1 (1832-33), 17.


28. J. M. Austin, A Voice to Youth, Addressed to Young Men and Young Ladies (Utica, 1839), 274.

29. Nott, Lectures on Temperance, 272.


34. Temperance Recorder vol 1 (1832-33), 93; Henry Ware, An Address Delivered before the Cambridge Temperance Society (Cambridge, 1932), 18.


37. Austin, A Voice to Youth, 387.


42. Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood," 173.


44. *Temperance Recorder* vol 1 (1832-33), 39.


It is WOMAN that has taken charge of this department of human effort -- the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters have entered the field, united and determined, to see what female influence can accomplish, in rescuing and saving from perdition their husbands and sons, their fathers and brothers, and all who seek pleasure in the use of intoxicating liquor.

-Martha Washington Society
Temperance Societies

By the mid-1800s, temperance societies composed of both men and women could be found in almost every city and village on the East coast as well as in many midwestern and western towns in the United States. These organizations attempted to build a community of support and understanding that intemperate individuals could use for support in times of need. At first, the societies advocated only temperate drinking, but, as time passed, the societies became increasingly radical in their methods and aims. The movement became militant, and nothing less than teetotalism, or complete abstinence from alcoholic beverages, was satisfactory. Each of the dozens of temperance societies around the country used slightly different methods to achieve their goal of reformation. The majority of the associations drew members through pledge-signing drives. Potential compatriots were encouraged or, in some cases, overtly coerced into signing the pledges in creative ways. The techniques employed depended on each individual league. Some organizations relied on powerful and stirring orations delivered by a former drunkard who told of his downfall and subsequent redemption. Other groups canvassed the neighborhoods to gather members, while some societies distributed clothing and food to families affected by alcohol abuse with the implicit promise that a pledge to forego distilled spirits would be forthcoming.

Individuals who had been recruited became full-fledged members
of the society after they signed the pledge. They could attend the support meetings and participate in social activities sponsored by the group, such as "cold-water" picnics and parties. The social activities were planned to show recovering drunkards that fun did not have to be equated with drinking. The activities brought them into contact with other like-minded individuals in a social situation. In addition, the organizations sponsored regular speeches to remind former intemperates of the dire consequences of returning to their previous habits. Each temperance society, like its modern-day counterpart, linked like-minded people into a community of mutual support.

Temperance societies appealed to the average American citizen as well as the intemperate person they purported to save. This interesting phenomenon is clearly illustrated by the large number of people who signed the pledges and were actively involved in the societies, but who had never touched alcohol before, or had been only occasional drinkers. These findings are explained by the changes experienced in industrializing America. Increasingly, the United States was becoming materialistic, self-centered, and urbanized. Many of the support networks of earlier eras were cut off as the new factory workers moved their families to the cities. The need for acceptance and social support became paramount, and the temperance societies offered just that. They admitted everyone, with the only condition being a temperate lifestyle. They arranged social activities and encouraged a sense of belonging. By signing a pledge and joining a fraternal type of
organization, the nineteenth century citizen was assured of acceptance and support.

Although temperance societies came into their own in the mid-1800s, the first association was founded in March 1808 by Dr. Billy J. Clark in rural New York. Clark was a country surgeon who daily observed the debilitating effects of alcohol on his patients. Dismayed at how little people cared about their own health, Clark commented to a friend, "Sir, we shall become a community of drunkards unless something is speedily done to arrest the progress of intemperance." His mission became more focused after a particularly grueling day "spent in visiting his patients and witnessing the ravages of rum." Some action had to be taken.

Clark's decision led to the formation of the first American temperance society. Known as the Union Temperance Society of Moreau and Northcumberland, the organization was headquartered at Clark's Corners, Saratoga County, New York. At the first official meeting, the founding fathers drew up a constitution that would serve as the model for future associations. Upon its completion, the document required members to "pledge to abstain from the use of ardent spirits and wine, except in case of sickness, also excepting wine at public dinners and communion." For breaking this rule, a fine of twenty-five cents was imposed, and for actual intoxication a fine of fifty cents was collected.

After the constitution was adopted, the original members signed the document and began to search the town for prospective sympathizers to the cause. Over forty-seven citizens were formally
inducted into the organization. Each of the members pledged to drink in moderation. The first association was not a "teetotaler society" but allowed drinking on special occasions, if done temperately. Although the Union Society was less strict in its demands than future groups, Clark's establishment had "the imperishable honor of inaugurating a hundred years of anti-drink crusade and of pioneering the way for literally thousands of temperance organizations."

Small local societies, following the general framework set by Clark, were formed over the years and "sought, for the most part, to regulate the use of strong drink, not to abolish it." But as the movement became increasingly militant in its aims, many reformers began to believe that moderate drinking was impossible, and the only way to lead the nation to sobriety was to abandon alcohol consumption entirely. This new militancy was based on the idea that "the very nature of strong drink leads to excess. A little drinking tempts to more drinking, which men cannot resist; which results in intoxication; which tends to repeat itself; which ends in confirmed drunkenness." To many of the temperance advocates, the cycle of overconsumption could only be broken by complete abstinence and not just moderation.

In response to the increasing militancy of the reformers, the American Temperance Society (ATS) was founded in Boston on January 10, 1826. Although the constitution did not explicitly state that total abstinence was required, it was implicitly understood by the pledge signers that they must completely forego all distilled
spirits. More than eighty-four men endorsed the original constitution and agreed to lead entirely sober lives. The temperance society became exceptionally popular, and by 1827, only a year after its founding, the association had converted hundreds of members."

The ATS was influential, and its fresh outlook on temperance tactics spread to other organizations. For example, the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, organized in 1813 on a platform of moderation in drink, adopted the ATS program of total abstinence in 1827. Previously existing societies adopted the ATS ideology, and new groups throughout the United States utilized its constitution and pledge.

The ATS was highly publicized and became an integral part of the temperance reform movement. The word was spread through paid lecturers who exhorted the benefits of a sober life and encouraged the colonization of new orders wherever they spoke. The society distributed its own journal and newspaper to keep all of the colonies in touch with the latest innovations and techniques. The success of the ATS was immense, and by 1834 the size of the organization had increased by more than 500 percent, had a total membership of one million, and possessed more than five thousand local colonies."

In 1840, the temperance society movement took a novel turn as the George Washington Society came into existence. Still calling for absolute restraint in drinking, the Washingtonian Society was also innovative in several ways. The association was founded and
completely run by recovered alcoholics instead of the elite group of reformers who had previously controlled the direction of the societies. The story of the formation of the society is a part of temperance folklore, and the legend of the founding fathers appeared in almost every temperance publication of the era.

One night six friends were sitting around a table at Chase's Tavern in Boston. They had been drinking since early in the afternoon and were loud and boisterous in their jokes and language. The conversation eventually turned to the temperance movement and the ridiculous societies that proliferated across the nation. The abuse of the movement became more forceful, and several men from the group were dispatched to hear a temperance speech being delivered not far from the saloon. When the men returned, instead of mocking the speaker, they informed their friends of their complete conversion to the cause of temperance. After listening to the arguments put forth by their newly persuaded comrades, the rest of the group was swayed to sobriety, and they firmly resolved to establish their own temperance society.

The main method the former drunkards adopted for their new organization was the "experience speech." This form of oration required a reformed drunkard to stand before a crowd and tell, in heart-rending language, of his "journey from debauchery to sobriety." This fresh approach proved to be extraordinarily effective in converting members to the cause, in the first year alone more than three hundred members were enrolled.

The citizens attending the lectures empathized with the
speakers because they were from their own class. They were not lectured to by some visiting do-gooder who had never faced the poverty and despair engendered by intemperance, but were appealed to by men who had been through the very experiences they described. The audience felt they were not alone in the world, and that if others had faced the same problems and overcome the obstacles, they could also. The same method is still in use today in the thousands of Alcoholics Anonymous groups across the country, in which each new member is required to tell of his or her downfall because of alcoholism and to receive support from people who have been through the trauma themselves.

The Washingtonian Society was more secular than other groups and prayers were not a part of their proceedings. In this way, people of every religion and nationality could be drawn together to concentrate on alleviating their problems. After pledges were signed, the newly converted members could attend support meetings to assure their good promises were kept. Activities were organized to keep the members involved and away from temptation. The Washington group was one of the first societies to attempt "to create social situations to replace the saloon." Outings such as picnics and dances (cold water was served, of course) were arranged to show the reclaimed inebriate socially acceptable alternatives to drinking."

Another step in the history of temperance societies came in 1842 with the founding of the Sons of Temperance in New York City. The Sons of Temperance largely followed the path blazed by the
first temperance organizations and the Washington Society. Complete abstinence was demanded of the associates, and they enlisted their support because of stirring experience speeches. Pledge signing was still used to signify the commencement of a temperate lifestyle. But a new twist was added to the program; the society also served as a charitable organization and attempted to provide material support to the reformed men and their families."

Members paid an initiation fee, and weekly dues were collected. The money provided sickness and death benefits to the wife of the member. If the husband was sick and could not feed his family, the wife received four dollars a week, and widows of members were given thirty dollars in case of her mate's death. This system was one of the first attempts at establishing a social welfare system, and moved the temperance society in a new direction. The plan dispensed aid to the wives, and because of this, many women actively encouraged their husbands to join the group."

Like the Washingtonian Society, the Sons of Temperance was a secular organization, but it also resembled a fraternal order. Their activities were secret, and a ritual ceremony was conducted for the initiation of new associates. The older members of the organization voted whether or not to admit a potential member after examining his credentials. The active members then planned social activities, arranged speeches to be delivered by reformed alcoholics to show that it was possible to remain sober, and
attended group meetings. All of these events provided alternatives to drinking and insulated the former intemperates from the world of alcohol. The Sons of Temperance proved that peer support was effective against intemperance."

Many other societies were established during the height of the reform drive, such as the Independent Order of Rechabites (1842), the Order of Good Samaritans (1847), and the Good Templars (1851). All of these groups followed the same organizational pattern of the Washingtonians and the Sons of Temperance. At the height of their popularity, temperance societies could be found in every town and city, and millions had pledged themselves to the cause."

Similar to the other aspects of the temperance movement, women were expressly entreated to join the budding temperance societies. *The Templar’s Magazine* counsels that if "ladies [were] everywhere in these associations, [they could] exert a wonderful influence in favor of the complete triumph of our glorious cause." Another article in the same issue stated "the ladies have combined, resolving to make their influence felt through the medium of organized effort, and we have frequent intimations of their encouraging success." At every turn, women were told their support was needed and desirable for furthering the temperance associations."

Each society decided on its own what the role of women would be in their organizations. Some gave the ladies only a cursory part in the action by asking them to sign a pledge, while other
associations permitted female members to take part in the meetings, serve on committees, or even deliver speeches on a paid circuit. Many societies, however, would not even consider having a woman in their group. The function of women in the societies was influenced by the philosophy of each separate organization, and no general rule could be applied to the role women would serve.

Women's involvement in the temperance societies, no matter how benign, potentially clashed with the prevalent domestic ideology. The nineteenth century woman was confined within the home environment, and joining a temperance organization necessarily brought her into the forbidden public sphere. A lady fighting to bring a family member back to sobriety by creating a pleasant home situation or setting a temperate example was one thing, but actively participating in community affairs was quite another.

But women flocked in droves to enroll in the groups. Two lines of reasoning were used to justify a woman's participation in the associations. First, a woman's benevolent and giving nature perfectly coincided with the objectives of the societies and raised the level of morality to a new height. As The Lady's Book stated, "Ladies are encouraged by Christian philanthropy to exert more and more, her power for doing good." It was the God-given duty of the ladies to use their talents to promote philanthropy and better the human condition in every way possible, even if that meant joining a public organization."

Second, the majority of the temperance societies severely restricted the participation of the ladies, and because of this
their activism was viewed as benign. In his speech, "The National Temperance Offering," S. F. Cary speculated why a woman may not enter into covenant with her sisters against a destructive evil eminently social in its character? Is it out of her place and sphere, unwomanly and questionable for her to attend and act in reform meetings...while it is just the height of fashion of delicacy and propriety for her to enter a parlour crowded with ladies and gentleman, in that undress which is strangely called full dress, and dance half the night away! We beg of you to dismiss that thought forever.

According to this line of reasoning, entrance into temperance societies was relatively harmless and a lesser evil than many activities that were socially sanctioned. Most temperance societies did not advocate suffrage or equal rights and relegated women to subservient positions in their organizations. Male dominance was in no way threatened.

Although women were allowed to join the associations, their roles in most of them were minimal. Some organizations, such as the American Temperance Society, nominally allowed women to participate by encouraging them to sign temperance pledges and to spread the word to friends and families. However, the ATS considered it highly improper for women to traverse the country delivering speeches and holding highly visible positions; these important functions were left to the male members. Some societies, such as the Sons of Temperance and the George Washington Society, entirely excluded women. One association, the Good Templar's Society, however, admitted women on an equal status with the male members and allowed them to participate in all the functions and activities. Organizations such as the Good Templar’s
came under attack for their policies of equality and were looked upon with undisguised malice.

The American Temperance Society and its affiliates appealed to the ladies to sign their pledge. Women responded to the call and signed the constitution by the thousands, and in many areas of the country, more females than males pledged to lead a temperate life. The membership records of the Connecticut Temperance Society (an affiliate of the ATS) illustrate the gender imbalance. In Middletown, Connecticut, the society recorded 176 male and 191 females as members, Westfield reported 57 males and 93 females, while the village of Haddam had 94 men and 128 female associates. The records of the Connecticut societies reveal that women outnumbered the men in all cases but two, and in those colonies, equal numbers of both sexes were enrolled.

After pledges were signed, women received the privilege of attending the society meeting and lectures, but their involvement stopped there. They could sit and listen, but could not offer advice or suggestions at the gatherings. They were "intimidated by the male [society members]. They could attend meetings and listen to the eloquent arguments of men, but had little to say or do."

The few brave female members who did venture out and sit through the lectures were expected to remain quietly and absorb the more rational and intelligent oratory of the male speeches. They could not, under any circumstances, make addresses of their own or offer any suggestions on how the organization should
function. Women functioned as merely ornamental members, and for this reason, the meetings were not well attended by the female temperance associates. "Few women felt comfortable attending a public meeting, having been told all their lives to 'let you women keep your silence!""

When the Sons of Temperance was organized and began to spread throughout the country, many women became interested in its new charitable ideas. Unfortunately, women were forbidden to join these secret male fraternal organizations. The "women wanted to help, but the men refused to admit them to their organizations, protesting that public reform was outside woman's sphere." Membership in the society could only be gained by receiving a majority vote of the current associates, and this effectively excluded women from participating in the group.

The same circumstances prevailed within the George Washington Society. Instead of exclusion by vote, as in the Sons of Temperance, women were banned from the Washingtonians for another reason. The "old Washingtonian Society was composed entirely of men because reformed drunkards only could belong to it." The nineteenth century possessed few female alcoholics, and, as a result, the Washington Society did not have female members. It is unclear if any reformed women were ever admitted, but if they were, they surely would have been overshadowed by the numerical superiority of the male members.

The Good Templar's Society, founded in 1852 in Onondaga County, New York, did let in women members and adhered to a strict
policy of equality. The ladies were actively entreated to sign up.

The prosperity and future stability of our order rests upon the efforts of our sisters, therefore we would recommend an Appeal directed to the sisters of our order, setting forth the importance of the responsibility that rests upon them, and exhorting them to renewed efforts on behalf of Temperance and our noble order.

Women members could speed up the reformation process and assure that the newly temperate initiates would continue to honor their pledges. Women were so important to the Good Templar's Society that "the prosperity and future stability of our Order rests upon the efforts of our sisters."

Once the female influence was deemed necessary for the perpetuity of the organization, all available means were employed to recruit the ladies. Speeches directly appealing to women became commonplace. The Templar's Magazine entreated women to enlist their support, and equality with the male members was promised as an incentive for signing up.

Feminine involvement in the Good Templar's Society was extremely popular. "At the fourth Annual Session of the National Temple, the subject of enlisting female interest on behalf of the object of the order, met with such favor that the committee on ritual was instructed to prepare a ceremony for the initiation of the wives, daughters and sisters of the Templars, and the widows of deceased brothers into the Order." The motion was unanimously passed, illustrating the importance of recruiting the ladies into the society. Across the country, women enlisted, and in some areas their numbers surpassed that of men."
The proceedings of the Good Templar's Society's annual meeting held in Decatur, Illinois, on September 17, 1861, shows feminine involvement at every level of the lodge. The members were addressed as "Brothers and Sisters," which illustrates that women were active participants in the proceedings. During the elections for committee chairmanships, women ran for offices and were even elected: L. B. Matteson was chosen for the appeals committee, while Melissa Emery sat on the credential and returns committee. According to the financial records divulged at the meeting, ladies also served as paid speakers. F. D. Gage received five dollars to lecture in 1861. (Unfortunately, her fee was substantially less that the fee earned by male orators, but it was a start.)

The Good Templar's Society was one of the only societies that allowed women to participate in the daily functions of the group. All other societies discriminated against women. Many ladies were angered at this treatment, and their displeasure was channeled into the formation of female auxiliaries to the male societies. Long the numerical majority in many of the temperance societies, women were tired of always being relegated to secondary roles. Almost every male organization had a female offshoot. The Sons of Temperance led to the Daughters of Temperance, The George Washington Society spawned the Martha Washington Society, and the Daughters of Samaria arose from the Good Samaritans. In each of these associations, the membership and leadership was entirely female.

As Susan B. Anthony, a temperance and feminist reformer
stated, women’s auxiliaries were founded "in very nearly all the towns I have visited and the woman are beginning to feel they have something to do in the temperance cause." Women had always been relegated to a subservient position in the male organizations, and the new female societies gave them the opportunity to show what they could do if given the chance.

The Daughters of Temperance, formed in 1843, was one of the first organized societies composed entirely of women. Although they were never formally recognized by the Sons of Temperance, membership blossomed, and after only a few years, New York state alone had more than "Fifty Unions of the Daughters." An address delivered by Mary C. Vaughn, in Albany, New York, on January 28, 1852, told of the hopes and dreams of the founding mothers:

We have met to consider what we, as women can do and may do, to forward the temperance reform...we would act as well as endure; and we meet here today because many of us have been trying to act, and we would combine our individual experiences, and together devise plans for the future, out of which shall arise well-based hopes of good results to humanity.

The Daughters of Temperance gave a voice to women who had been hitherto silent.

Membership in the society was open to any woman over fifteen years of age who had signed a total abstinence pledge and paid a weekly membership due. Although the society was involved in many activities, the majority of the work involved charity distributions. Money was raised through the collection of dues, and temperance fairs, bazaars, and picnics were arranged to collect funds. Most of the money was distributed to needy families, and
the rest was divided among members to pay for funeral expenses in
the event of the death of a spouse or to support a member's family
in times of need.

In addition to their charity work, the Daughters of Temperance
initiated many new programs. The New York chapter published the
first temperance newspaper edited by women and became the first
society to openly advocate sexual embargoes against drinking men.
The society was extremely influential because of its novel ideas,
and also because

in many places where no previous movement of the kind
had been made, the ladies have combined, resolving to
make their influence felt through the medium of organized
effort, and we have frequent intimation of their
encouraging success. We point to many towns where the
cause of temperance finds its most devoted and efficient
supporters is the Daughters of Temperance."

One of the best documented female organizations was the Martha
Washington Society. Founded on May 12, 1841, in a church in New
York, the Martha Washington Society was the female corollary to the
George Washington brotherhood. The newly formed organization served
as a case study for all of the other female associations. Like the
Daughters of Temperance, the Martha Washington Society provided
charity to needy families and aided in "establishing proper home
life" for an alcohol-afflicted family. The ladies promoted
benevolence by distributing food and clothing and also attacked
"the vice of drunkenness...by securing signatures pledging total
abstinence.""

The purpose of the Martha Washington Society was explicit,
and the duties of the members were clearly stated. The records of
the sisterhood told of their aims. "The object of the society was twofold -- to prevent the ravages of intemperance among their own sex, and to render pecuniary aid to the reformed inebriates and their families." In addition to their primary intentions, the ladies also pledged themselves "to refrain from the use of all intoxicating drinks and by their influence and example, induce others to do the same." The work of the sisters would be of monumental importance in creating a sober nation, free from the taint of intemperance. The women of the 1840s temperance societies would show "what ladies can do in the cause."

As the first order of business, the founders elected Ann Maria Egbert as the first directress and proceeded to compose a constitution for the delegates to sign. The charter, when completed, was vaguely radical in its explicit reference to males as the culprits of all the problems. The preamble stated that "the goal is to save a class of men who were nearly lost to society, to their families, and to themselves, and whom nearly all the world consigned to the drunkard's grave." Women would be the saviors of men, and raise them up from their degradation.

Women did not become members of the all-male George Washington Society, but the Martha Washington Society was intimately linked to the men's group:

The direct connection that exists between most of the Ladies' Societies and those of the Gentlemen, brings them into constant contact with each other; the influence of which is decidedly good, particularly on the reformed men. No better evidence of returning self-respect can be found in a reformed inebriate than to see him prize the society and good will of respectable females; and it is a remarkable fact that the comparatively small number
of men who have broken their pledge, and relapsed into their former habits in New York is owing mainly to the ladies.

The two groups planned joint activities, such as picnics or teas. This interaction was planned to bolster the resolve of the newly reformed inebriates by introducing them to respectable ladies who were paragons of virtue.

At the social functions, the women served as temperance models and drank cold water. Implicitly, the ladies also represented a lifestyle that a intemperate man would never have. The women symbolized a cheery home, with the luxurious smell of freshly baked bread drifting from the oven. The newly temperate man pictured himself coming home from his respectable job to a smiling wife and well-mannered children. It was insinuated that a man could have this type of nineteenth century domestic dream if he remained sober.

In addition to their joint activities with the George Washington Society, the Martha Washington Society had a very full schedule of its own. The society served as two organizations in one -- it was both a temperance and a benevolent association. When the pledge was first signed, no dues were collected. The women initialed the register but did not pay any fees and were called "pledged members." They did not participate in the daily business of the society. Other ladies signed the constitution and also paid an entrance fee and weekly dues. They were known as "constitutional members" and donated their time to charitable activities. The constitutional members "made, repaired and
distributed garments to the poor and various methods were employed to raise funds."

The constitutional members were involved in numerous activities to aid the victims of alcoholism. They "did a great deal of good with a little money." Clothes were donated, and the ladies met weekly to mend, wash, and distribute the clothes. Their garment circulation played an extremely important part in the reformation of an alcoholic. "The reformed man had to lay off his filthy rags for a teetotal dress before he could seek employment with any hope of success. This could all be done from the wardrobe of the ladies' society." If the individual looked temperate, others would treat him that way, and the road toward temperance and respectability would be easier to travel."

The association's records provided many descriptions of the importance of a suitable wardrobe. In one story, a poor, wretched mother was one of the rare females who suffered from intemperance. She arrived at a meeting of a local New York society in rags, with three filthy children in tow. Both she and her children were malnourished and sickly. The ladies immediately gave them all new clothing, and the effect was nothing short of miraculous. In a short time, some of the members had found her a job, and her offspring appeared well fed and contented. She had mended her ways and had not touched alcohol for more than a month. The benefits of a caring organization and new clothes could not be underestimated."

In addition to distributing clothing, the ladies spent time
raising money. They arranged picnics, concerts, and fairs featuring homemade crafts and edibles for sale to "accumulate funds that would be dispersed to the most destitute." The amassed finances were put to good use. Temperance banners were ordered and presented to fire and police stations to be hung in a prominent position to illustrate to all that the terminal was a temperate site. Banners were also given to churches and schools to publicize the importance of temperance to the very young as well as the old. The ladies provided assistance by paying court fines, providing lodging until the afflicted could get back on their feet, and donating furniture or stoves to impoverished homes. If any money was left over, loans would be given to a select few, and stipends were dispersed to women members for giving temperance lectures.

The popularity and industriousness of the Martha Washington sisterhood was aptly illustrated by the minutes recorded at its national convention held in New York City in 1843. With societies representing numerous states, and both urban and rural chapters, reports were delivered summarizing the projects of the past year. The New York Martha Washington Society proudly proclaimed that nineteen hundred women had signed the pledge, and more than half of them had become constitutional members. They had aided approximately seven hundred individuals and families, dispersed two thousand garments, expended five hundred dollars, presented two banners, held music concerts and one picnic, and presented medals to deserving individuals. Another society reported that it had completed and distributed more than three hundred garments,
repaired more than two hundred garments, and received one hundred thirty-nine dollars into the treasury."

These long lists of accomplishments show that women were intimately involved in the community. The presented speeches, delivered banners, and held charity drives. No longer content to hope and pray for reformation, a brave few took the initiative and worked diligently toward their goals. They became highly visible members of the reform movement even if they were not supported by many of the male reformers. They established one of the first social support organizations of the era for needy families.

Women advocates of moral reform were among the very first American women to challenge their completely passive home-oriented image. They were the first to travel throughout the country without male chaperones. They published, financed and even set type for their own paper. They began, in short, to create a broader, less constricted sense of female identity."

Women left the home environment to work with other like-minded ladies, and in the process forged a strong sisterhood of mutual support. The "societies reflected their desire for a feminine-sororal community which might help break down this isolation, lighten the monotony and harshness of life, and establish a counter system of female values and priorities." In the informal setting of sewing and mending, women could discuss their fears, insecurities, and problems with kindred souls. An important system of female support grew from these gatherings that did much to lighten the isolation these women sometimes experienced."

The associations also promoted a sense of individualism and identity among their members. The sisterly organization "quite
consciously sought to inspire in its members a sense of solidarity in a cause peculiar to their sex, and [demanded] total commitment to give themselves a sense or worthiness and autonomy outside woman's traditionally confining role." Temperance societies gave women the opportunity to become influential members of the community and not just ornamental members of society.'

In addition, because the female temperance societies were spread out around the country, they connected the rural with the urban. "For many of the society's scattered members, the moral reform cause was the only contact with the world outside the farm or village." The various societies, no matter what their location, were in constant contact. They traded ideas and aspirations through their published journals and corresponded with one another by letter. Women who previously were isolated in distant villages were given the chance to communicate with their cosmopolitan sisters and keep up with the latest innovations and tactics."

Unfortunately, the societies (male as well as female) lacked solid organization and quickly faded into oblivion in the decade prior to the Civil War. The demise of the female organizations was hastened by the hostility they drew from the male organizations. The female offshoots of the male associations were never officially recognized and were looked upon with open distrust. The female societies also suffered from a lack of funds. Despite the ladies' best efforts, their bazaars, concerts, and bake sales did not generate sufficient revenue for them to continue with their activities. Most of the women were not financially self-
sufficient, and had little cash to donate to the organization. The combination of hostility from the men and fiscal deficits assured the collapse of the female temperance societies.

The female societies increasingly came under attack as being too radical and promoting women's rights. The traditionalists openly denounced these "hotbeds of feminism." One orator commented, "I would not, if I could, persuade those of the sex who hear me, to become the public, clamorous advocates of temperance." Sewing and mending clothes were acceptable activities, consistent with the proper feminine role, but publicly delivering speeches and organizing marches were entirely opposite the accepted stereotype. Women were challenged for deviating from the approved norm and were told in no uncertain terms to revert to their decorous place, "for here, with in this limit, and without transgressing that modesty, which is heaven's own gift, and woman's brightest ornament, you may exert a benign and kindly, but mighty influence."

There was simply no women's movement in the 1830s. The female temperance and benevolent societies may have planted some of the first seeds that would later sprout into a full-fledged feminist movement. Women were united into a common cause and pursued many methods to achieve their objectives in a society that "closely restricted the feminine role, and new opportunity could be seen as a victory for their cause."

Although in the end women were unable to defy the limits of their sphere, the reform societies did much to advance the feminist cause. The female "activism raised new questions about woman's
role in public life. By mid-century, the stage had been set for
the beginnings of a woman's rights movement and a frontal attack
on the limitations of sphere."


35. Johnson, Martha, 10; Johnson, Martha, 10; Johnson, Martha, i.

36. Johnson, Martha, i; Johnson, Martha, 7.

37. Johnson, Martha, 52.

38. Johnson, Martha, 53; Johnson, Martha, 28.
44. Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast," 577.
45. Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast," 577.
46. Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast," 577.
"It may be God's will that the women should now take part."

- Delecta Lewis
  Temperance reformer
A Training Ground for Feminists

The support for reform in the temperance movement was extraordinarily popular among Jacksonian women and drew more followers than even the favored abolition cause. Thousands of women pledged to support temperance reform nationwide, and many actively participated in all stages of the movement. In each state and territory, ladies delivered speeches, signed pledges, and created exclusively female societies. As the movement progressed, many women whose careers began as temperance crusaders naturally were converted to the agenda of the budding women's rights program.

The blatant discrimination experienced by the female reformers in their war against insobriety resulted in more support for the women's rights movement. "Woman's experiences in the temperance movement had underlined the limits and restraints placed upon them and made their inferiority vividly clear." Complete subordination to the male reformers became apparent at every stage of the movement. Women were repeatedly barred from public speaking engagements, and women who did deliver addresses were regarded with suspicion and malice. The few brave female speakers who traveled throughout the countryside to convey temperance messages were considered to be lacking in femininity and were accused of being asexual. Female orators shattered the traditional women's role of subservience and silence by standing up and speaking their minds in public. They were not expected to appear before large crowds
and speak outright: at the time, society required women to follow
the rules and regulations set by others. Female speakers
frightened many men, and attempts frequently were made to disrupt
all female speaking engagements.  

Women were also excluded from such popular temperance
societies as the Sons of Temperance and the George Washington
Society. Although women created their own organizations as
corollaries to the male-only associations, these female-only
societies were never officially recognized as legitimate temperance
organizations, and they quickly faded into oblivion in the face of
repeated discrimination and lack of funds.

Women realized that they could not bring about major changes
in the temperance movement unless societal norms regarding women
were totally restructured. Women could set temperate examples for
their families, raise temperate children, and create cheery homes,
but whenever they tried to assert themselves, by delivering
speeches or joining a female temperance society, their efforts were
immediately branded as improper by the male majority. The women
reformers could not get to the heart of the problem nor could they
take concrete steps to end alcohol abuse because the majority of
their efforts were thwarted at every turn.

"These experiences stirred up and brought to the surface
myriad frustrations and disappointments in women's lives and
finally led them to come together and organize to change the
condition of their lives." The only way a woman could ever make
a material contribution to the temperance effort was to gain
certain rights: the vote had to be won, divorce and property laws had to be liberalized, and, above all, a wife's legal dependency on her husband had to be ended. The temperance movement paradoxically told women they were innocent victims of a male vice, but gave them no legal recourse or any concrete methods to ameliorate their position. The women's rights crusade offered a chance to change the way that American society treated women, and many temperance workers began to see the feminist program as a necessity for continuing the temperance cause.

In addition to making female discrimination more evident, the temperance movement served as a training ground for later feminist activism. "Through temperance campaigns, women gained personal self-confidence, organizational skills and political acumen." Women discovered abilities and talents they had never used before and may not have realized they possessed. Many of the ladies who were later involved in the women's rights crusade delivered their first addresses in front of a roomful of women attending a Daughters of Temperance meeting, or organized a charity movement for the Martha Washington Society. The women's rights movement was waged for the most part by women, and the ladies needed to be able to pursue reform tactics independently and not rely on the male reformers for orders and cues. To achieve their goals and be taken seriously, women had to become self-sufficient activists.

The importance of the temperance movement as a foundation for later feminist issues is vividly illustrated by the fact that "most of the great figures in the history of the Woman's Rights Movement
were active in the temperance movement." Such legendary feminists as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Amelia Bloomer received valuable educations in activism as a result of their participation in temperance reform. They learned reform tactics and skills and became acquainted with each other, bringing like-minded thinkers together. Because they frequently faced discrimination, women developed a burning desire to create a new role for themselves that was not dictated by other persons. Analyzing the careers of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Amelia Bloomer shows the intimate linkage between the temperance movement and the women's rights movement and how they drew strength from each other. The work of a few radical feminists also provided a case study for the thousands of women who began their work in the temperance movement and later came to accept the women's rights agenda as their own.

Susan B. Anthony, a devoted temperance advocate and feminist, was influenced by the temperance crusade at an early age. When Anthony was still a school girl, her father, a prosperous merchant, was walking home on a stormy winter night. He spotted a man frozen to death in a snow drift. At the man's side was an empty jug, "which told the whole story." Mr. Anthony was extremely shaken by the experience and vowed to end intemperance. He was the first merchant in his village to stop selling intoxicating spirits in his shop. He organized a temperance society and required his employees (male and female) to attend meetings. From her father's example, Anthony learned the importance of a sober lifestyle and the need
to eliminate alcohol abuse.

It is not surprising, given her background, that Susan B. Anthony chose to become involved with the temperance crusade. Her first participation in reform activism came when she joined the Daughters of Temperance on March 1, 1849, in Canajoharie, New York. She was immediately elected to the executive board as secretary and proceeded to devote herself entirely to the cause. She delivered her first public speech at a supper meeting sponsored by the Daughters of Temperance. About two hundred individuals were present to hear the young woman's address.

In a strong voice that resounded throughout the hall, Anthony stood before the large crowd and stated in blunt terms that intemperance was ruining American society, and women were the ones who could halt the destruction engendered by alcohol abuse. Her first words showed a strong feminist slant. "How is the great change to be wrought?" she queried. "Shall it not be women, who are most affected by the foul destroyers? Ladies! There is no Neutral position for us to assume ... permit me once more to beg of you to lend your aid to this great cause, the cause of God and all Mankind." Anthony defined alcoholism as strictly a male problem and referred to men who drink as "foul destroyers." Women must bring about the necessary revolution by devoting themselves completely to the cause.

In this first speech, Anthony also recognized the obstacles women would face in their uphill battle for a sober populace. She noted that the Daughters of Temperance were "strongly opposed as
being unlady-like and entirely out of the woman's sphere." She even labeled the association as a "despised little band." Anthony realized that many of her ideas (and those of other members of the Daughters of Temperance) were radical and socially unacceptable. Because of this mindset, many "traditional" women were reluctant to associate themselves with the organization. Despite the opposition, however, the war must be fought. The temperance reform movement was the "cause of God and all Mankind," and women could not give up even in the face of public rejection.

Anthony remained actively involved in the Daughters of Temperance throughout its existence. When she moved to the Rochester area she left the Canajoharie Daughters of Temperance Society and affiliated herself with the Rochester colony. She was immediately elected president of the Rochester chapter of the and was placed in charge of "planning suppers and festivals to raise money for their work, and she organized new societies in neighboring towns." Working for the Rochester society taught her how to organize events on a mass level. Her experiences proved to be directly applicable to her later work for the feminist cause.

Anthony went against the accepted stereotype of women by delivering speeches throughout the United States. For a while, she even worked as a paid orator for the Daughters of Temperance. She toured the eastern states and spoke in such cities as Sing Sing, Poughkeepsie, Hudson, Troy, Utica, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo. At each stop, she lectured chiefly on temperance, but asked, "incidentally for equal civil and political rights" for women.
Her temperance speeches promoted the secondary cause of feminist rights. Wherever she lectured, crowds gathered to listen to her speeches, largely out of curiosity to hear a woman speak rather than any deep commitment to alcohol reform. For whatever reason, the crowds came, and Anthony used the opportunity to promote the crowd with her feminist ideas. At every stop, she inspired controversy for her radical lectures and proposals.

As Anthony traveled across the country, she was increasingly struck by the "prejudice against any kind of equal participation by women." Stinging editorials appeared in almost every newspaper reporting on her speeches. Instead of silencing her, the editorials convinced her even more of the need for a feminist movement. She wrote, "Thus as I passed from town to town was I made to feel the great evil of woman's utter dependence on man for the necessary means to aid reform movements. I never before took in so fully the grand idea of pecuniary independence." The roles played by men and women for centuries would have to undergo radical reorganization if women were ever to be free from male dominance. Women were doomed to a subordinate role in the action unless they learned to strike out on their own.

Anthony promoted independence for the American woman by urging reform in the right to vote. She became "thoroughly convinced that the right which woman needed above any other, the one which would secure her all others, was the right of suffrage." According to Anthony's reasoning, the vote was the starting point for all other changes. If a woman secured the vote, she would
instinctively favor temperance legislation and only endorse politicians who supported temperance bills. Allowing women to vote would force the government to pass laws prohibiting alcohol, and the temperance issue would become null and void because no alcohol would be allowed in the first place. The temperance movement brought womankind's discrimination sharply into focus for Anthony."

Another formidable woman, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, also commenced her long and active reform career as a temperance advocate. Although she became one of the most radical of the nineteenth century feminists, Stanton initially appeared to call quietly for women's rights. Through the temperance movement Stanton developed many of her radical views. In every area of temperance activism she witnessed blatant discrimination against the women reformers and this bolstered her resolve to fight for increased women's rights in all areas. The temperance movement also allowed her to try out her new feminist ideas and see if they were accepted or rejected. The temperance movement was a learning experience for Stanton.

Stanton gave her first public speech on temperance reform in Johnstown, New York, in 1842. Before an audience containing more than one hundred men, she was too timid to espouse a radical women's rights agenda. She feared that she would offend the crowd and alienate many of her listeners from the temperance movement. She also was apprehensive that she would be barred from ever speaking again if her remarks were too iconoclastic. For these reasons, she gave only a cursory mention to the "inflammatory issue
of women's rights."

Stanton continued to lecture across the country in the 1840s. With each additional speech, however, she became increasingly vocal in her call for women's rights. As she toured the east coast, she became more openly radical in her demand that the temperance movement to include feminist issues. In a lecture given before the State Temperance Convention in Rochester, New York, in 1853, she openly advocated a feminist agenda. She felt compelled to justify her remarks to the audience, however, still fearing she would alienate a large number of them:

We have been obliged to preach woman's rights, because many, instead of listening to what we have to say on temperance, have questioned the right of women to speak on any subject. In courts of justice and legislative assemblies, if the right of the speaker to be there is questioned, all business waits until that point is settled. Now, it is not settled in the mass of minds that woman has any rights in this footstool ... Let it be clearly understood we believe it is woman's duty to speak whenever she feels the impression to do so.

Stanton stated that women were useless to the temperance movement unless they were given more rights. Instead of focusing on what the female lecturer had to say, the majority of the audience spent her entire speech arguing about the impropriety of any women who dared to address a crowd of people. The substance of her remarks were lost, and her temperance message was lost. If a woman was ever to be taken make a difference in the movement, she had to be taken seriously. Stanton's argument fell short of being completely radical, however, because she justified increased rights for women solely to promote a temperate society."
As she became increasingly radical, Stanton broke with the current ideology on drinking. At the time, alcohol was widely believed to be the perpetrator of all crimes; the solution was simple -- remove the alcohol and the violent and abusive husband would become gentle, kind, and industrious. Stanton, however, "regarded alcoholism as a symptom of the despotism of men over women and not as its source. Ending excessive drinking would not end male tyranny; for that, fundamental changes in laws and attitudes concerning women were needed." Blaming the alcohol and not the drunkard was only an excuse for abusive behavior. The real crime was a lack of inherent rights on the part of the woman to defend herself, her children, and her possessions."

In addition to her advocacy of suffrage, Stanton's temperance platform called for liberalized divorce laws. Divorce reform became her primary point of attack to alleviate the suffering women faced because of alcohol abuse; however, more liberal divorce laws would also serve as a stepping stone for increased women's rights.

According to nineteenth century law, divorce was allowed only in the most extreme case, and alcohol abuse was not a legally valid reason for a divorce. A woman who was abused or impoverished as a result of her husband's alcoholism was required to remain at her spouse's side no matter how difficult the situation became. Stanton wanted to end the suffering of the inebriate's wife. If a woman was allowed to seek a divorce, she would gain a sense of control over her own life. The "protracted outrages on helpless wives and children in the drunkard's home" would justify her
In 1852, Stanton made public a letter she had written promoting divorce in the case of marriage to an alcoholic husband. She believed that the "whole question of woman's rights turned on the pivot of the marriage relation." Her letter conceded that the grounds for divorce should be extended only to those "who were heavy and consistent drinkers." Her moderate call for divorce attempted to "radicalize" the temperance movement but still appease the conservative reformers. Later, Stanton dropped all efforts to appease the conservatives and called for divorce on any grounds.

Like her lifelong friend and colleague, Susan B. Anthony, Stanton learned many useful lessons during her involvement with the temperance movement. She gained experience in lobbying, organizing protests, and circulating petitions. She perfected her persuasive writing skills by composing articles for the temperance newspaper, The Lily, and she learned how to speak forcefully in front of a large crowd. The temperance movement vividly illustrated the oppression of women and showed Stanton the path she must pursue to lessen the discrimination.

Women were considered important contributors to the temperance crusade and were urged to mobilize their resources to promote sobriety. Because it was at least nominally acceptable for women to enter into the temperance movement, Stanton capitalized on the acceptability of the movement in her radical attempts to include women's rights in the temperance agenda. She felt that the temperance cause "offered a way of awakening women to an
understanding of their oppression."

In addition, Stanton learned to speak her mind despite conservative opposition. In the early years of her activism for temperance, she toned down her statements and "attempted to center her feminist activity around [conservative] support in hope of radicalizing them." This tactic failed miserably, however, and instead of converting the conservatives to her views, she further alienated many of them. In the future, "she would be drawn to radical groups and radical action," and she followed this course in the women’s rights movement."

Another close companion of both Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton was Amelia Bloomer. Bloomer also became involved in the temperance movement, but via a different path. "Along with her husband, she attended the great temperance gatherings and took an active part in carrying forward the great reformation." Amelia’s husband encouraged her to reach her full potential and to do everything in her power to aid the cause. He supported Amelia 100 percent and even wrote a biography of her life, showing how far ahead of the times she was in her liberal attitudes."

Amelia Bloomer was an associate of the Daughters of Temperance and served on many committees throughout the years. She was a gifted writer, and she supported temperance through the printed word. Her first articles on a sober lifestyle were published in her village temperance magazine called the Water Bucket. When Bloomer moved to Rochester, she continued to write and compose pieces for the Rochester Temperance Star. Throughout her career,
Bloomer was involved in the temperance movement "with her whole heart and soul.""

As she became more experienced in temperance reform, Bloomer began making oral presentations in addition to her written articles. In 1853, she toured the east coast along with Susan B. Anthony and Nette Brown, and at every stop the three women addressed audiences that numbered between 3,000 and 5,000 persons. The halls were always filled to capacity for each of their speaking engagements."

In her lectures, Bloomer usually confined her words strictly to temperance issues. She took advantage of her captive audience, however, and sometimes explored other issues that she felt strongly about, for example, the women's rights questions.""

After one of her numerous speeches, an editorial in a local newspaper stated that Bloomer "takes on temperance, but she gives us a large supply of woman's rights, also." Like her contemporaries, she promised her listeners a rousing temperance lecture; but once the audience was enraptured by her stirring oratory, she suggested "that the laws relating to women were narrow, unjust, and should be quickly changed.""

In February 1853, in New York, Bloomer delivered an address that aptly illustrated her growing dissatisfaction with the stereotyped women's role in society. While she called for a sober populace, she developed a strong feminist platform. She frequently focused on man's complete dominance of women. "She forgets that God created them equal; she forgets that our Heavenly Father has
not made one to rule over the other." In calling for equality, she certainly alienated a large portion of her audience, but she felt that the issues were so important that they could not be ignored. If her words influenced only one person, and estranged one hundred others, her gamble was worthwhile. She was rewarded if just one person gained enough confidence to take control over some aspect of her life."

To justify her radical views, Bloomer concluded the majority of her lectures by linking temperance and women's rights issues. She stated that a woman's "individuality must be recognized before the evils of intemperance can cease to exist." A woman had much to offer the movement, but she must be considered as an active and contributing member to the cause in her own right, and not only as a follower of the more prominent male leaders. Women invented creative and original ideas to move the reformation forward. But before these suggestions could be taken seriously and implemented, the populace had to recognize that women were equal to men."

Bloomer also linked the women's rights agenda with the temperance crusade by favoring a more liberal divorce law. In a lecture given in New York City, Bloomer promoted divorce. "Another obstacle to the progress of temperance principles is that women live in close companionship with drunken husbands." A husband could treat his wife and children in any way he desired because he knew that his wife would not hold him accountable. His wife and children would still be waiting at home for him. By advocating more liberal divorce laws, especially in the case of habitual
drunkenness, Bloomer attempted to give the battered wife a sense of control over her life."

Bloomer's ideas about divorce revolted against the dominant ideology of the era. Society frowned on a wife taking action against her drunken husband, but she realized this was counterproductive and only justified the actions of the wayward husband. An ultimatum (for example, a separation or divorce) might force the husband to mend his ways, and if not, the wife could move forward in control of her own life.

One of Amelia Bloomer's most important contributions came as a result of her talent for writing. She became the proprietor, editor, and main writer for the first journal of any kind published by a woman, The Lily. This publication dealt with temperance issues and how they related to women. As the years passed, it also increasingly served as a sounding board for new feminist ideas.

The need for a temperance newspaper aimed specifically at women was suggested during a meeting of the Ladies Temperance Society of Seneca Falls in 1848. The Seneca Falls conference, which is mainly remembered for the "Declaration of the Rights of Woman," a manifesto calling for women's rights, also attempted to stimulate feminist thought in all areas. Plans were made to include feminist concerns in many of the reform movements of the era, including the abolition and temperance movements. A temperance society was formed as an offshoot of the Seneca Falls conference to promote women's issues through the anti-alcohol crusade. A newspaper called The Lily became the voice of this
ideology, and Bloomer was appointed to be the editor of the journal.

Bloomer stated the goals of the journal in an editorial published in the first issue. "It is a woman that speaks through The Lily. It is upon an important subject, too, that she comes before the public to be heard. Intemperance is the great foe to her peace and happiness." In her editorial, Bloomer plotted a moderately feminist course. She appealed to her women readers to join the cause because they were victims of alcohol abuse. She preached that women have a right to be heard and make their opinions known. The Lily would accomplish these goals by featuring articles "filled with good, substantial temperance ideas" and showing what ladies could do to help promote the movement.

In its first year, the newspaper was "almost exclusively filled with articles for promoting the temperance cause." As time passed, however, and Bloomer became wholly converted to the women's rights program (largely because of the efforts of Elizabeth Cady Stanton), the writings began to reflect her growing radicalism. "By and by as the months went by, her readers were apprised to her views in Woman's Rights. They learned something from her of the unjust laws relating to married women."

By March 1850, Bloomer's newspaper had taken an entirely new course. An article appearing in the March issue openly advocated feminist issues. "We believe that most women are capable of taking care of their own property, and that they have the right to hold it and to dispose of it as they please, man's decision to the
contrary withstanding." No longer timid in her espousal of feminist ideology, Bloomer published whatever she felt was necessary to help her readers "see the light."

The Lily was an ardent temperance newspaper despite its feminist flavor. In April 1853, Bloomer defended her new position in the face of ardent criticism:

Some of the papers accuse me of mixing Woman's Rights with our Temperance, as though it was possible for woman to speak on Temperance and Intemperance without also speaking on Woman's Rights and Wrongs therewith ... [that woman] has been cruelly wronged by the law-sanctioned liquor traffic, must be admitted by all. Then why should we not talk of woman's rights and temperance together?

Bloomer linked temperance and feminist reform in strong words; one cannot happen without the other.

Over the years, The Lily earned a reputation for featuring the latest innovations on the feminist front. For example, the newspaper was the first publication to show a "costume of baggy trousers and a short dress." Invented by Elizabeth Smith Miller to liberate females from the confining and uncomfortable corsets and stays, the outfit acquired the "popular name of 'bloomer' after its chief publicist rather than its creator." Pictures appeared frequently in the journal pages, and women were urged to wear the outfit as an outward badge of their newfound liberation.

Bloomer retained control of The Lily until 1856 when she sold the rights of the paper to Mary A. Birdsall of Richmond, Indiana. In her eight years as publisher, editor, and columnist, she had attracted a wide readership among temperance women. Through her articles, she exposed many women to feminist issues. Women readers
also were influenced by different radical ideas through regular columns by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.

Through *The Lily*, Bloomer learned many skills that proved to be highly useful in her later women's rights activism. In the course of printing her paper, she gained knowledge of the publishing business, attracted subscribers, read proofs, prepared editorials, solicited guest writers, and distributed the journal. She became skilled at doing business that was generally only performed by men. Her ability to succeed in a man's world gave impetus to both the temperance and the women's rights movements.

The temperance movement was an extremely critical stepping stone for the future women's rights movement. Through their participation in the antialcohol reform, women learned such necessary skills as how to deliver effective speeches, organize charity drives, and publish newspapers. The temperance crusade served as a trial ground for many new feminist innovations. In addition, the majority of the future leaders of the feminist movement commenced their activism in the temperance cause and became acquainted with each other through their antialcohol reform work.

The temperance movement was a highly popular and accepted movement. Because of its almost universal approval, many women's rights issues could be promoted within the guise of temperance reform. The average nineteenth century woman who would never have considered divorce, for example, may have accepted the premise when it was presented as a way to cure her husband of his intemperate
habits. "The woman's rights movement emerged as a way to assure the victory of the temperance ... movement, but it became a means to accomplish other reforms."


In courts of justice and legislative assemblies, if the right of a speaker to be there is questioned, all business waits until that point is settled. Now, it is not settled in the mass of minds that woman has any rights on this footstool, and much less a right to stand on an even pedestal with man, look in the face as an equal, and rebuke the sins of her day and generation.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton
Discrimination at Every Turn

Temperance Societies

The temperance movement provided women with an opportunity to gain new skills in areas previously closed to them, but they also encountered blatant discrimination along the way. Women’s roles were extremely confusing. To gain support for the reformer movement, women were told that their participation could be immensely influential. Every effort was made to ensure that women became temperance advocates. At the same time, women’s involvement was severely limited by the more dominant male reformers. Men dictated what roles women could play in the movement and decided what events they could participate in. Female reformers were useful, but only in ways chosen by the male reformers. This paradoxical relationship is illustrated by a series of events that eventually led to the formation of the Woman’s New York State Temperance Society in 1852.

The Woman’s New York State Temperance Society was established as a direct result of the discrimination encountered by the female temperance reformers. Women were urged to support temperance reform, but were excluded from numerous conventions. As a result, a group of women decided to form an organization entirely free from male domination. The new organization was founded by the most radical feminists of the era, including Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Amelia Bloomer. While the society supported the
temperance cause, it did so with a decidedly feminist stance on many issues and was disbanded after a short time.

The catalyst for the new society came in 1852 when the Sons of Temperance announced a "mass meeting of all the divisions of the state, to be held at Albany." The Daughters of Temperance received invitations to the gala event, and each group sent representatives to the conference. Susan B. Anthony, Amelia Bloomer, and Lydia Mott were chosen to represent the Rochester Union and departed for New York with great expectations. In retrospect, the three radical Rochester delegates were probably poor choices as representatives for the conservative Sons of Temperance conference. Each of these women was already known for her feminist opinions, and the slightest deviation from the proper woman’s role would be criticized as improper. The stage was set for dissention even before the conference commenced.

On the first day of the conference, the female delegates, including the three feminists from Rochester, were given seats in the lecture hall, and their credentials were accepted. Trouble commenced immediately, however, when Anthony rose to speak to a motion. The chairperson of the meeting, horrified that a woman would be so brazen as to speak in a public conference, admonished Anthony that "the sisters were not invited there to speak but to listen and learn." Chaos erupted as many of the delegates followed the example set by the chairperson and reacted to Anthony’s attempt to speak with shouts and violent attacks against the women delegates.'
The women had attended the conference with high expectations, and they refused to sit silently and listen to the denunciations by the male delegates. Outraged at the treatment they received, many women stood and walked out of the conference. Some of the women delegates, however, refrained from following their bolder sisters and sat quietly basking "in the approving smiles of the Sons," while the "bold, meddlesome disturbers" left amid hisses. The women who withdrew from the conference decided to convene their own meeting that night in the Hudson Street Presbyterian Church.

In a cold, dark, poorly ventilated room in the church that evening, the women, exhilarated with indignation, opened their meeting with a prayer. The first order of business was the election of officers. Mary C. Vaughn of the Oswego Daughters of Temperance was elected president, Susan B. Anthony received the position of secretary, and Lydia Mott was asked to head the business committee. These angry women criticized the treatment they received at the conference, and their addresses denounced the role of women in the temperance movement in general. The speakers declared that their "influence [was] as indispensable to the state...as well as to the home." The meeting evolved into more than just a protest against the women’s treatment at one specific conference. Years of discrimination had created a strong resentment against the male temperance reformers, and the women were now ready to advocate bold actions, even declaring their right to participate in politics.

The "time had come for women to have an organization of their
own." To accomplish this goal, a conference, composed entirely of women, was scheduled for April 1852 in Rochester, New York. All the female organizations in New York were invited to send delegates. The symposium would be devoted entirely to discussing the way in which women could aid the temperance movement, and no men were invited to attend. The women wanted to ensure that the men would not take over the conference and exclude the very women who had called the meeting.'

On April 20, 1852, as scheduled, more than 500 women answered the invitation and assembled in Corinthian Hall in Rochester, New York. The organization was named the Woman's New York State Temperance Society. Elizabeth Cady Stanton was elected president, replacing the temporary leader chosen after the Sons of Temperance fiasco. Susan B. Anthony's contribution to the society was recognized by her election to the post of secretary.'

After the elections, the goals of the convention were announced. The women convened to devise "such associated action as shall be necessary for the protection of their interests and of society at large, too long invaded and destroyed by legalized intemperance." This first statement established the tone of the entire conference. Before even mentioning the temperance cause, the women declared their interests must be preserved. Women could make considerable contributions to the movement, but their talents were not being utilized. Women must first be accepted as legitimate temperance workers before they could make a difference. After the initial statement of purpose, letters were read and
speeches were delivered that pleaded for women to stand up for their rights and fight for what they believed in.

A large number of delegates held conservative views toward feminist issues. An address delivered by Elizabeth Cady Stanton caused many of the assembled women to balk at the radical words of the president. In her inaugural speech, Stanton asserted "the right of all womankind to the electoral franchise; to a fair representation in the government; to the right in criminal cases to be tried by peers of her own choosing." The president painted a picture of women suffering helplessly because of male intemperance, and this injustice justified her radical words. But many of the women were appalled at her openly feminist stance. While the women wanted to aid the movement in any way possible, and were even willing to accept a moderate feminist viewpoint, they could not embrace an openly hostile position toward the male reformers. Then Stanton dropped a final bombshell on the flabbergasted ladies by advocating "a legal separation from drunkards."

Stanton's call for liberalized divorce laws received the strongest denunciation. At the time, a woman married to an alcoholic had no right to sever the marital relationship. The Troy Journal, a local Rochester newspaper, summed up the conservative backlash in an angry editorial. The writers were "horrified at the idea of a virtuous woman severing the tie that bound her to a confirmed drunkard," calling it the destruction of a "divine institution" and claiming that Stanton's ideas were "reviling
Christianity."

Not all of the women denounced the motion; many of them endorsed Stanton’s proposals, including the call for liberalized divorce laws. In support of Stanton, Amelia Bloomer stated, "Drunkenness is a good ground for divorce, and every woman who is tied to a confirmed drunkard should sunder the ties; and if she does not do it otherwise the law should compel it, especially if she has children." Although many of the convention members felt Stanton’s speech went too far, others believed that "marking out a distinctly women’s program on the temperance issue" was the only way that women would ever accomplish their goals.

Despite the conservative split over a few of the issues, the convention was an overall success. Over the course of the symposium, many new programs were established that allowed women to participate in some of the activities that previously had been filled only by the male reformers. For example, approximately six women were employed by the society to tour the country as public speakers, and they were to be paid twenty-five dollars a month plus traveling expenses. These newly commissioned lecturers crossed the state "holding meetings, securing membership to the society and signatures to the pledge." For decades, male-only societies had hired orators to spread the temperance word. The New York State Society was the first women’s organization to create a group of compensated speakers devoted exclusively to recruiting women into the movement.

The women hired by the society to enlist female support were
extremely effective in their efforts. By the end of the year, the society had enrolled more than 2,000 women in many states.

Probably no single event ever had so great an influence in promoting the cause of woman's enlargement as this Rochester Convention. It opened the door for women to enter. All devoted themselves to a singular fidelity and earnestness to the noble aims before them.

Women were told they could play important roles in the temperance movement, and these words were backed up with concrete actions meant to involve as many women as possible in the crusade. The New York State Society advanced the women's movement in new ways, but women received an unexpected setback the following year."

In June 1853, the Men's State Society issued an official call for a convention to be held in Syracuse, and the Woman's State Temperance Society received an invitation to attend the grand event. Because of the fiasco the previous year, the women's society was reluctant to appoint delegates. Inquiries were made, and the women were assured that their presence was welcome and they could "speak or not speak, as they chose." Susan B. Anthony and Amelia Bloomer were appointed as delegates to the conference, and they were confident that they would be treated with the utmost respect. They did not realize that the pattern of the previous year was about to be repeated."

The women entered the meeting room on the first day of the conference and settled into the seats designated for them. The seating arrangement suggested that the women delegates were not to be taken seriously. The ladies were placed directly opposite from the men, and the room was split by sex down the center of the
chamber. William H. Burleigh, the appointed secretary of the conference rose to read the annual report. He ended his opening remarks by saying, "We hail the formation of the Woman's State Temperance Society."

With this statement, barely minutes into the conference, pandemonium broke out. Dozens of angry men jumped to their feet and demanded that the last sentence be struck from the record. One of the male delegates, Reverend Mandeville, denounced the Woman's State Temperance Society and all women who publicly engaged in temperance work as "a hybrid species, half man and half woman, belonging to neither sex." Calm was never restored after this outburst, and guarantees the women had received prior to the meeting were not enforced. Many women simply repeated their actions of the previous year and withdrew from the convention.

Yet another meeting, the World's Temperance Convention, further showed women that they needed to focus on women's issues in the temperance movement. "All friends of temperance were invited to be present" at the New York conference on September 6, 7, and 8, 1853. Refusing to be deterred by the two previous disasters, many of the women's societies, including the Woman's State Temperance Society, elected to send delegates. Susan B. Anthony was once again chosen to attend. She was accompanied by Emily Clark, Abby Kelly Foster, and Lucy Stone.

According to the minutes, the meeting started smoothly. A prayer was said asking God to bless the proceedings, and then the conclave was called to order. It was moved that "all gentlemen
present be admitted as delegates." Dr. Trail of New York stated that there were delegates from the Woman's State Society, and moved the word "ladies" be inserted. This motion carried unanimously. The women were official members of the conference."

As long as the ladies remained unobtrusive, everything proceeded smoothly. Surprisingly, it was a man who, through a motion, forced the convention to recognize the women's issues that remained in the background. The man rose and stated that "as women were acting as delegates, they should be represented on a committee." He then moved to appoint Susan B. Anthony to the business committee. The previous restraint and goodwill toward the women at the conference were shattered, and the men rose and shouted at each other. The ladies, who were only indirectly the cause of the commotion, sat quietly in the background saying nothing in their own defense. One irate gentleman shouted, "Revolution is one thing, and reformation is another." Another man resigned from his committee, removed his name from the register, and stormed out of the conference room."

Amid the noise and confusion, Abby Kelly Foster attempted to defend the women's position. It was a losing battle, and cries of "Order," and "Sit down, we don't want to hear your remarks!" resounded. She did sit down and the men continued to fight among themselves. This was the only attempt the women made to speak on their own behalf."

The purpose of the conference was quickly forgotten. Instead of discussing temperance issues, the men debated on the proper role
of women. One man was strongly "opposed to women interfering with matters out of their own sphere." Another speaker attempted to redirect the conference to its intended agenda and at the same time defended the women.

It is not a matter of 'women's rights' we are considering, or have to consider at all. It is the question as to whether this is to be considered a meeting of the friends of temperance. Are these women not friends of temperance? Are they not advocates of temperance? Then why exclude them?"

The one voice of reason was cut off, and the conference further degenerated into a name-calling match. "Women in breeches are a disgrace to their sex!" Women were "good for nothing!" The ladies "were never productive in anything but mischief!" These phrases were a sad commentary on male-female relationships in the nineteenth century. The women remained silent, refusing to be drawn into the melee, even in their own defense; even so, they were denounced for merely sitting in the same room with the male delegates. It became obvious to the women that something had to be done to change the relationship between the sexes."

The World's Temperance Convention, which had convened to support the temperance movement, became a battleground and little was accomplished. The words of Horace Greeley, writing in the Tribune on September 7, 1853, summed up the conference:

This convention has completed three of its four business sessions and the result can be summed up as follows:

First day- Crowding a woman off the platform.
Second day- Gagging her.
Third day- Voting that she stay gagged.
Having thus disposed of the main question, we presume the incidentals will be finished in the morning.
Temperance business was never dealt with.

Following three frustrating experiences at three different conferences, the women conceded that they would not be able to continue meeting with the male temperance reformers if they hoped to be an equal part of the movement. The women realized that they would never be treated as equals in a male-dominated society and chose to strike out on their own. At the end of the three-day debacle, Susan B. Anthony called for the "first annual meeting of the Woman's State Temperance Society." The meeting was scheduled to be held in Rochester in June 1853.

The call for the meeting was received with excitement and high expectations. By the end of the meeting, however, the fledgling society was dealt a death blow, and much of its leadership left the temperance movement to pursue other reform activities. The conference began with a radical address by the president, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In her first remarks, she alienated a majority of the conservative representatives because she linked the issues of women's rights and temperance. "Let it be clearly understood," she stated, "that we are a Woman's Rights Society; that we believe it is woman's duty to speak whenever she feels the impression to do so; that it is her right to be present in all the councils of church and state." Stanton also called, once again, for more liberal divorce laws. The women who simply wanted to discuss temperance reform were appalled that their leaders were presenting liberal feminist issues along with temperance matters.

The final blow to the conference came when the bylaws of the
constitution were amended to admit male members into the society and to allow them to serve as officers. The constitution, as written by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, excluded men from active participation. The Woman’s State Temperance Society was created as a women’s society where women could "prove their skills through reform acumen." If male members were allowed, the founding mothers were convinced that "the men would take over in all areas," and women would once again become subservient members. Their predictions came true; as soon as men were allowed in the organization, they voted Stanton out of the presidency and even changed the name of the society.

The society, which had been in existence for only one year, was betrayed by the very women it purported to aid. Even Amelia Bloomer felt that Anthony and Stanton had gone too far, and she remained a member of the reorganized conservative society. Stanton and Anthony attempted to sway women to their feminist viewpoints through the temperance movement. Failing miserably, they moved on to other areas, convinced even more by the series of exclusions from the male conferences that women needed equal rights.

Political Issues

The demise of the Woman’s State Temperance Society marked a milestone for the women temperance advocates as well as the entire temperance reform movement in general. Until the early 1850s, reformers pushed to bring about a temperate society through completely voluntary abstinence, as manifested in the temperance
societies that proliferated across the nation. Citizens were urged
to become models of sobriety and pass on their newfound lifestyle
to others, but the initiative for reform rested entirely on each
separate individual. This method, influential as it was, could
only reach a small percentage of the population. There were no
legal restrictions on alcohol. No matter how much the temperance
reformers begged, pleaded, and coerced drunkards to lead temperate
lifestyles, liquor was still an easily available source of
temptation.

Despite their best efforts, the temperance reformers seemed
to be failing in their objectives. The people they had reportedly
"saved" through temperance pledges appeared to be returning to
their intemperate habits:

Looking about...in perplexity [at the failure of the
movement] eyes fell on that other man -- on him who hands
out the liquor that makes man drink. Here was discovered
the source of trouble. Here was the man who incited
afresh the smothered flames of thirst which men were
struggling to quench.

Even the support system of the temperance societies did not keep
the men from being led astray and back into the arms of
intemperance."

"No man could resist temptation beyond a certain point; he
must be kept from entering in." No matter how good an individual's
intentions were, the saloons and liquor shops of the community
continued to be a source of temptation to the reformed drunkard.
As a result, the thrust of the temperance movement began to change.
Realizing that the alcohol problem would only disappear if
distilled spirits were rendered unavailable, and also perceiving that the voluntary abstention did not seem to work, temperance workers began to push for statewide statutory prohibition. The demise of the temperance societies in the 1850s happened concurrently with the commencement of the drive for legalized prohibition.

The political agitation for prohibition, which eventually spread to every state, had its origins in the ground-breaking Maine prohibition campaigns of the 1830s. Through the years, Maine had always been at the forefront of temperance agitation, and it was the first state in which a crusade was waged to legalize prohibition. The efforts to obtain statewide prohibition commenced in the early 1830s after a town hall was burned to the ground on the Fourth of July by drunken revelers. Petitions were signed, addresses were given to the state congress begging for the regulation of liquor sales, and congressmen were deluged with letters and visitors who clearly indicated that their political support was contingent on a positive vote for alcohol legislation.

Statewide prohibition did not pass at this time, but the government did adopt a less radical program. In 1833, as a result of the widespread movement, the Maine legislature passed an ordinance that adopted the principle of local option. Local option meant that individual communities could decide either for or against prohibition. Each local government could hold a referendum to decide whether to allow liquor shops and saloons to operate within the town’s boundaries."
Despite the high hopes engendered by the local option ordinance, it failed to live up to its promise. If a local area passed a law establishing a dry community, the "restrictive clauses of the law were generally disregarded by the licensed sellers." Little or no attempts were made to enforce the statute, and the ordinance was largely disregarded by liquor dealers. The regional governments simply did not have the inclination or the money to enforce the law, and liquor flowed as freely as before.

Because local option failed to halt the misuse of alcohol, reformers began to examine another more restrictive alternative, prohibition on a statewide basis. The temperance reformers called for "the state [to] step in and take such measures in self-defense as it deemed adequate." The crusade for prohibition in Maine was led by Neal Dow, "who had already in various ways showed that he possessed both a firm conviction and a resolute courage in the matter of temperance." Working from Portland, Maine, Dow canvassed the state promoting temperance policies. He held mass meetings, delivered stirring addresses, and distributed prohibition propaganda to every community he visited.

In 1846, Dow's efforts were recognized. A bill was initiated in the state House of Representatives calling for prohibition. The law did not pass at that time, but Dow and his followers continued with their crusade. In 1851, their efforts were rewarded when an "absolute prohibitory law" was signed into law. Under this law, no person was permitted to "manufacture or sell directly or indirectly any spirituous or intoxicating liquor." If three voters
complained someone was selling liquor, a search warrant could be issued and the sheriff could seize and destroy the liquor. In addition to banning alcohol from all areas, the law explicitly provided for methods of enforcement. Learning from the local option failure, the framers of the statute wanted to ensure that the decree was faithfully executed.

The Maine Liquor Law gave birth to a wave of prohibition legislation throughout the United States. The Maine law provided a "model for all similar laws to follow." In 1852, Minnesota, by popular vote, ratified a Maine-type ordinance. Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Vermont also adopted similar laws in the same year. Within the next four years, Michigan, Connecticut, Indiana, Delaware, Iowa, the Nebraska Territory, New York, and New Hampshire enacted laws that equalled or surpassed the Maine ordinance. By the time the legislation frenzy died down, about one-third of the states had enacted prohibition.

During the Maine prohibition crusade women played a major part in publicizing the law and urging politicians to support the temperance agenda. While working for the Maine law, "women extended the active role they had taken on during the reform's earlier days." The ladies drew up, circulated, and signed petitions, and each petition sent to the legislature contained thousands of women's signatures. In addition, the women organized campaigns to acquaint the voters with the issues at hand and canvassed entire cities to generate support for their cause. When the Maine law passed in 1851, a major part of the credit for its
implementation could be attributed to the women.

As with other areas of women's involvement in the temperance movement, women had to justify their actions. Until that time, women were not actively involved in political issues, and the image of women participating in governmental matters and eventually voting was a nightmarish thought for the majority of nineteenth century men. Women stressed that they were the innocent victims of a male habit, and this issue was used to justify their political actions. Moving into the political arena would allow them to "fulfill their domestic duties more competently."

After the ground-breaking prohibition statute passed the Maine legislature and was signed into law, women throughout the states began to organize their own campaigns, which were modeled on the activities of the Maine women. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, sensing the inherent failure of a completely voluntary effort, and disillusioned by the discrimination they faced by the male reformers, began to organize to push for a prohibition law in their home state of New York.

During the winter of 1852-1853, a group of women, headed by Anthony and Stanton, assembled in Albany, New York, to plan their strategy for obtaining prohibition. Lectures were scheduled to show the women, step by step, how to successfully lobby for legislation. Topics ranged from petition signing to speaking in front of a congressional session. Each part of the symposium was planned to familiarize the women with the American political system and to show them the most efficient ways to gain political support
for their issues."

During a morning lecture, the topics were put to a practical test. A committee of three women, including Anthony,

slipped out through a back entrance and wended their way to the capital carrying between them a large basket filled with petitions from 30,000 women of the state, each petition neatly rolled and tied with a ribbon and bearing upon it the name of the place from which it came, and the number of names it contained.

As they made their way toward the capital building, the three women planned to put into practice what they learned at the lectures. Not only were they going to present their painstakingly obtained petitions, but one of their rank was going to address the session of legislature. A woman had never spoken before the New York legislature before, and the rest of the women at the convention waited impatiently to hear the outcome."

The three women entered the state House of Representatives and presented their petition. Susan B. Anthony, the chosen speaker, then proceeded to give a short speech on the necessity of a prohibition law, and then the three ladies quietly left the building. The demands had not been belligerently presented, and no mention was made of any women's rights topics. Anthony calmly and rationally appealed to the House about the need for prohibition."

Once the women had respectfully exited the meeting room, chaos erupted. The legislators were shocked and appalled that a woman had been allowed to speak at the session. Politics was for men, and women should not concern themselves with such matters. One
irate legislator angrily shouted that the women "were out of their sphere" and denounced the Maine law. "Who are those who are asking for a Maine Law?" he demanded. "None but women and children!" Another equally incensed representative rejected the petition containing 30,000 signatures by commenting that "those 30,000 petitioners were only women."

Women were obviously not welcome in the male-dominated area of politics. Their reception was reminiscent of the treatment they had received at the series of male temperance conventions, where they had been ridiculed and eventually forced to leave. The home was the legitimate place for a woman, and when she attempted to speak out elsewhere her actions were violently denounced. Women could continue to gather signatures on petitions, but their hard work would probably have little effect on the outcome of the vote.

The harsh reception the women received at the New York House, and the realization that their painstakingly gathered signatures were useless, caused Stanton to once again change her tactics. On January 21, 1853, Stanton issued an ultimatum. "Either give women a vote on this great evil of intemperance, or else represent them by enacting a prohibitory law." Stanton knew that the vote would never be given to women in her lifetime, but she hoped that a prohibition ordinance would become acceptable.

In 1852, a long and bitter struggle commenced over the proposed law in the New York Assembly, and while it did not initially receive the required votes, the ordinance eventually passed. The role of the women in the ultimate passage of the
prohibition statute is difficult to evaluate. The legislators harshly denounced the validity of the petitions, but in reality it was difficult to ignore 30,000 signatures, even if those endorsements did come from the women. Attempting to speak in front of the legislature hurt the cause. Men were not ready to accept interacting with women in the political arena. The women’s attempt to have a political voice was contrary to the accepted stereotype of the era. Men, therefore, believed that the prohibition amendment was supported mainly by women who advocated a women’s rights program.”

Whatever the role the women played in the ultimate adoption of the law, their part in the action taught them valuable skills. By organizing petition drives and speaking in front of Congress, the women entered the previously forbidden realm of politics. They gained invaluable political experience by learning how the system worked, and this knowledge would be useful in the following decades. They tested the waters to find out the male’s reaction to woman’s entrance into politics and discovered they had a long and difficult struggle ahead of them.

Most important, the temperance petition drives brought the "average" woman into the political sphere. The thousands of women who signed the petitions were not radical feminists like Susan B. Anthony or Elizabeth Cady Stanton, but were ordinary women who felt alcohol abuse was a real problem. By signing the petitions, they registered their "vote" for temperance legislation. They became familiar with the issues at hand and took action to have their
opinions registered. Despite the setbacks, the drive for temperance legislation was a learning experience for thousands of women. The temperance movement had "brought to the public sphere of politics thousands of women, who were assigned by the conventional wisdom of the day to the private sphere of home and fireside."
1. Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment* (Minneapolis, 1944), 449.
17. Harper, *Life and Works*
40. Bloomer, *Life and Writings*, 93.
Conclusion
Toward Equality?

The romantic era of reform came to an abrupt halt with the commencement of the Civil War hostilities. The optimistic reformers who had ardently believed they could perfect American society and create a model nation for the rest of the world to follow quickly became cynics as first the democratic system of compromise failed, then an entire section of the nation withdrew from the union, and finally American citizens began killing each other on the battlefield. The greatest experiment in democracy was fighting for its very existence, and what had once been a perfect society in the making was on the edge of destruction.

From the retrospect of the violent 1860s, the reform efforts of the previous decades appeared naive. The reformers believed that if one more temperance rally was held, or one last utopian community was constructed, the key to an unblemished civilization was just around the corner. When the war started, however, the reformers were forced to face the grim reality of brothers killing brothers to determine if America would survive at all. The hopes and aspirations of the reformers became only dreams as the practical problems of fighting a war took precedence.

The temperance movement, along with the utopian communities, the drive to end prostitution, health and diet reform, and prison reform, was superceded by the Civil War. The decades of temperance propaganda, rallies and petition drives were quickly forgotten as
soldiers and civilians alike sought relief from the agonies of conflict in drink. The temperance movement had failed to achieve its objectives, and this was made obvious by the per capita consumption figures. Just prior to the commencement of the war, alcohol consumption rose from 4.08 gallons to 6.43 gallons per capita. These figures continued to rise throughout the hostilities. Alcohol reform would have to wait until after the war.

The reform decades were years of great social change in American society. The United States was beginning to experience an industrial revolution, and all of the changes associated with moving from a primarily agrarian nation to one that was based on factory labor. Cities across the nation quickly grew as farmers moved into the urban areas to find work in the newly built factories. As people poured into the cities, the urban areas became increasingly crowded, dirty, and noisy. Many farmers did not react well to their new city lives after the quiet of the farm, where they could set their own hours, as long as the chores were accomplished. Their existences were now regulated by the ringing of the factory bell and the demands of an urban lifestyle.

The new city family was completely different from their agrarian cousins. On the farm the husband and wife had been a production team. Although men and women were assigned different jobs on the farm, each chore was integral to a successful harvest. In the cities, however, the husband went off to work in the morning to make money to support the family, while the wife was left at
home. The women was no longer vital to the economic survival of the family unit. To fill this void, a new role was developed for the woman. Her place in the home was raised to paramount importance. According to the new "cult of domesticity" the wife was the supposed to create the perfect home and raise the children. By the early years of the nineteenth century, women were confined to the domestic sphere.

These changes in American society gave birth to the reform crusades that proliferated across the United States. The reform movements attempted to establish some stability in a rapidly changing society were nothing, even the family, was as it used to be. The temperance movement was one of the most popular reform efforts, and millions of men, women and children across the nation were drawn into the crusade to halt Americans from drinking away perfection.

More women participated in the temperance cause than any other reform movement of the day. The ladies were naturally drawn to the anti-alcohol crusade because of the new domestic ideology. The job of the woman was to protect her home, and alcohol abuse, more than any other evil, tore apart her family. Women's entrance into the movement was justified and even demanded by her new role in society.

At first, the women's part in the crusade was small. The ladies were only to be aids or helpmates to the male reformers, and were not supposed to take any steps without the men's approval. The women could set temperate examples, raise temperate children,
or influence her husband to give up distilled spirits through kind and gentle coaxing. These were the proper actions for the female temperance advocate, and any other activities were forbidden.

As the movement progressed, many women began to take on more responsibilities. They continued to justify their actions by referring to the same arguments. In order to defend their domestic sphere, the women felt they must participate in more activities, and they began to leave their homes to attend temperance lectures and rallies to "protect their homes." When this participation was accepted with little comment, they increased their involvement once again and began to sign temperance pledges and talk to their friends and neighbors to convert them to the temperance cause.

Almost before the male reformers knew what had happened, many of the women crusaders had stopped only attending the temperance lectures, and were instead delivering the addresses themselves. Female temperance societies free from any male influence had proliferated, journals and newspapers that were edited and printed by women were widely circulated, and the male bastion of politics was being challenged by women who gathered thousands of signatures on petitions, or even spoke in front of a state legislature.

Although the men did denounce many of these radical steps, it was difficult to make their criticism stick. The women were legitimate members of the temperance crusade. Their initial movement into the reform effort had been justified by the male reformers, and it was difficult for the men to take back their words. If a lady spoke in front of a crowd or canvassed the
neighborhood for signatures for a petition, it was to "protect her home." How could that be argued with? The women started out making small contributions to the movement with the consent of the male reformers, but ended up taking more and more privileges, until some of them were even demanding their rights.

The temperance movement was important to many women. It served as a training ground for future feminist activity, allowed women to gain new skills, and gave them an arena where they could test out new ideas. The ladies also met other like-minded thinkers through their activities, and developed a network of like-minded women who could draw together for future action.

Most important to the women, however, was the chance the temperance movement gave them to forge a separate identity from their husbands, children, or home. The women learned they had talents and skills useful in the public domain and could accomplish anything they attempted. Before any women's rights movement could be successful, women first had to believe they deserved equal rights. The temperance movement gave many women the needed self-confidence to eventually go against society's norms and fight for their privileges. Although the temperance movement only produced a handful of radical feminists, thousands of women throughout the nation were psychologically further along to accepting a women's rights platform.

The temperance movement ultimately failed in its objectives. Americans had not stopped drinking, even in the states where prohibition laws had been enacted. After the end of the Civil War,
the temperance efforts would be carried on by Frances Willard and her Woman's Christian Temperance Union. The WCTU did not rely on petition drives or temperance societies like their pre-Civil War sisters, but instead devoted their efforts to closing saloons through prayer and song.

The women of the temperance movement (1830-1860) had "stretched the doctrine of spheres and escaped its confinement in regular and patterned ways." Originally confined to the home in the early part of the century, the temperance movement allowed women to move out into the public domain. Many of them never went back. Perhaps society was finally on the road to accepting change.
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