

Unit Template

Sources on the Temperance Movement

1. First is an excerpt from Frances Willard, the leader of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/92.html>
"We Sang Rock of Ages": Frances Willard Battles Alcohol in the late 19th century
Among the social movements joined and led by women in the late 19th century, including unionization and women's suffrage, none had either the widespread fervor or success enjoyed by the temperance movement. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), founded in 1873, drew widespread support from labor movements such as the Knights of Labor by linking the fight against liquor with the desire to protect home and family against the ravages of the new industrial order. Frances Willard was one of the leaders of the WCTU who vocally sought the alliance of the temperance movement with Labor. This is a selection from her autobiography.

"The first saloon I ever entered was Sheffner's, on Market street, Pittsburgh, on my way home. In fact, that was the only glimpse I ever personally had of the Crusade. It had lingered in this dun-colored city well nigh a year and when I visited my old friends at the Pittsburgh Female College I spoke with enthusiasm of the Crusade, and of the women who were, as I judged from a morning paper, still engaged in it here. They looked upon me with astonishment when I proposed to seek out those women and go with them to the saloons, for in the two years that I had taught in Pittsburgh these friends associated me with the recitation room, the Shakspeare Club, the lecture course, the opera, indeed, all the haunts open to me that a literary-minded woman would care to enter. However, they were too polite to desire to disappoint me, and so they had me piloted by some of the factotums of the place to the headquarters of the Crusade, where I was warmly welcomed, and soon found myself walking down street arm in arm with a young teacher from the public school, who said she had a habit of coming in to add one to the procession when her day's duties were over. We paused in front of the saloon that I have mentioned. The ladies ranged themselves along the curbstone, for they had been forbidden in anywise to incommode the passers-by, being dealt with much more strictly than a drunken man or a heap of dry-goods boxes would be. At a signal from our gray-haired leader, a sweet-voiced woman began to sing, "Jesus the water of life will give," all our voices soon blending in that sweet song. I think it was the most novel spectacle that I recall. There stood women of undoubted religious devotion and the highest character, most of them crowned with the glory of gray hairs. Along the stony pavement of that stoniest of cities rumbled the heavy wagons, many of them carriers of beer; between us and the saloon in front of which we were drawn up in line, passed the motley throng, almost every man lifting his hat and even the little newsboys doing the same. It was American manhood's tribute to Christianity and to womanhood, and it was significant and full of pathos. The leader had already asked the saloon-keeper if we might enter, and he had declined, else the prayer-meeting would have occurred inside his door. A sorrowful old lady whose only son had gone to ruin through that very death-trap, knelt on the cold, moist pavement and offered a broken-hearted prayer, while all our heads were bowed. At a signal we moved on and the next saloon-keeper permitted us to enter. I had no more idea of the inward appearance of a saloon than if there had been no such place on earth. I knew nothing of its high, heavily corniced bar, its barrels with the ends all pointed towards the looker-on, each barrel being furnished with a faucet; its shelves glittering with decanters and cut glass, its floors thickly strewn with saw-dust, and here and there a round table with chairs—nor of its abundant fumes, sickening to healthful nostrils. The tall, stately lady who led us, placed her Bible on the bar and read a psalm, whether hortatory or imprecatory, I do not remember, but the spirit of these crusaders was so gentle, I

Unit Template

think it must have been the former. Then we sang 'Rock of Ages' as I thought I had never heard it sung before, with a tender confidence to the height of which one does not rise in the easy-going, regulation prayer-meeting, and then one of the older women whispered to me softly that the leader wished to know if I would pray. It was strange, perhaps, but I felt not the least reluctance, and kneeling on that saw-dust floor, with a group of earnest hearts around me, and behind them, filling every corner and extending out into the street, a crowd of unwashed, unkempt, hard-looking drinking men, I was conscious that perhaps never in my life, save beside my sister Mary's dying bed had I prayed as truly as I did then. This was my Crusade baptism. The next day I went on to the West and within a week had been made president of the Chicago W. C. T. U.

2. Prohibitionist political cartoons: http://history.osu.edu/Projects/Rams_Horn/

From the Anti-Saloon League in *The Ram's Horn* in 1896.

"Rescued" and "Protect that Boy" are typical of the prohibitionist view of the need to save children from the life of drink.



Unit Template



Unit Template



And in the “Slave Driver,” appetite is seen as what takes a person into the debauched life.

3. And from the Prohibition Party a cartoon on who and what supports “the liquor traffic.”
<http://prohibition.osu.edu/ProhParty/cartoon2.htm>

THE liquor traffic is the child of law. It has no inherent right to exist. Whatever gives it its delegated right, perpetuates the traffic. Without the license law, with its provided revenue, the saloon would have to go.

Whether the license is high or low, the principle is the same. The two old parties are always ready to scrub up the statute for the gin-mills, and so help to keep the public conscience quiet, and the traffic at ease.

No wonder the liquor interest slides from one end of the political teter-board to the other in order to keep both old parties alive, and wrangling over old or dead issues.

As sure as fate the “Gold Dust Twins” do the saloon’s work. Fine twins for the gin-mills, but poor for the interests of social order and good government. It is about time that the people quit thinking that the political twins which work for the license system can overthrow the saloon.

Unit Template



The "Gold Dust" Twins DO Her Work.