

## Chapter 1

### ALCOHOL AND HOMICIDE AMERICAN STYLE

The beginning of recorded human history is replete with stories of homicide and alcohol. Both Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian cultural histories place major emphasis on accounts of murder among the founding mythologies and legends. Chinese, African, and the native cultures of the Americas also contain such accounts, and the common recurrence of these homicidal incidents undoubtedly reflects the fact that homicide has been a part of the human behavioral repertoire for at least several thousand years. There is also substantial evidence that alcohol has been part of human material culture for thousands of years as well. The Sumerians brewed beer at least five thousand years ago, the founding Western cultures of the Mediterranean region worshiped gods devoted to alcohol, and the Aztecs of Central America drank pulque, an alcoholic beverage of fermented maguey juice, in religious ceremonies and in old age (Austin, 1985; Madsen and Madsen, 1969).

The link, however, between violence and alcohol has not been prominent in most cultures, either historic or current, industrial-

ized or preindustrialized. It seems that the United States is unique in the establishment of a cultural system in which these two traditional elements are brought together. Studies of the place of alcohol in nonindustrialized cultures indicate that alcohol is linked to a wide variety of behaviors, but not very often to violence (Marshall, 1979). Even in the United States during the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, the period during which, as we shall argue below, the critical elements of the alcohol and violence link in American culture were being formed, concern about the negative impact of alcohol abuse was more focused on breakdowns in the "social order" in general—for example, family, work, political participation, and so on—than on violence per se (Rorabaugh, 1979). Despite the fact that both alcohol and violence have been the subjects of major research efforts in the last fifty years, the recognition of the strong cultural and behavioral connection between them has not been reflected in a major research effort. This is not to say that some individual researchers and research projects have not recognized this connection or have not highlighted its importance, but rather to point out that neither of the fields of alcohol research or criminology has included the study of alcohol and violence as an important area of focus. The origins of this lack of attention are beyond the scope of this discussion, except to suggest that the reasons are numerous and interconnected, involving issues such as the politics of research funding, disciplinary boundaries, and the emphasis on applied versus basic research in the social sciences.

Although there have been significant efforts in alcohol research to study the impact of this drug on violence—Pernanen (1991), Steele and Josephs (1990), Kantor and Straus (1987), Leonard (1989), Goodman et al. (1985) being some of the more recent examples—evidence of the lack of focus on this topic is not hard to find. The National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) released a request for proposals on alcohol and violence in 1993, in which the rationale for increased attention to this link is stated as:

Nevertheless, understanding of the mechanisms by which alcohol influences violent behavior has been limited. . . . Theoretical explanations of alcohol-induced violence have tended to focus on only one aspect of the problem, and in turn, efforts to prevent such violence have been limited. (p. 1)

At a conference sponsored by the secretary of health and human services, Dr. Louis Sullivan, material prepared for attendees by the Office of Substance Abuse Prevention (1992) cited the most prominent and important study of alcohol and homicide to date, Marvin Wolfgang's (1958) landmark analysis of homicide patterns in Philadelphia, from which the often cited finding that two-thirds of homicides involve alcohol use by either the victim, the offender, or both originates. However, the citation given to this study was taken from a much more recent publication (National Committee for Injury Prevention and Control, 1989), thus giving the impression that these data were recent. We are certain that the authors of this material had no intention to deceive the conference attendees, but the fact that the exemplary citation on the link between alcohol and homicide is more than thirty-five years old illustrates the lack of attention and scientific progress on this topic (see Collins, 1981:290 for a similar argument).

As far as criminology is concerned, there has also been some attention paid to the alcohol and violence connection (Widom, 1989; Collins, 1981; Fagan, 1990; White et al., 1987; Lindqvist, 1986; Hammock and Richardson, 1993; Parker, 1993a). However, a recent review of homicide research (Parker, 1994a) demonstrates that although Wolfgang's (1958) study spawned a major research program among criminologists on homicide causation, alcohol is almost completely missing from this area of research and from the study of violence causation in general. We would argue that a large part of the problem of theoretical "myopia" noted by the NIAAA program announcement is the lack of attention to the alcohol and violence relationship—both theoretically and empirically—on the part of the discipline within which violence is a topic of major focus—criminology.

Given the undeveloped nature of this area of research, what are the major unanswered questions? First and foremost, the question of whether alcohol is simply associated with homicide or plays a causal role in the generation of homicide, remains largely unaddressed. Two kinds of research are needed to begin to answer this question. Theoretical analysis of alcohol's potential and multiple roles in the social and behavioral processes that lead to homicide needs to be advanced. This is the area where the current research literature is most developed, due in large part to the important work of Pernanen (1976, 1981, 1991). Second, a vast increase in the number

and variety of empirical studies in which alcohol and homicide are both measured is needed. As Pernanen (1981) points out, there are relatively few studies that actually measure both of these variables. Many of the ones that do are limited to one time point (Wolfgang, 1958; Parker, 1992b), one not so typical or generalizable place (Pernanen, 1991), or have a very limited set of additional variables available (Welte and Abel, 1989).

Two additional questions will concern us here, questions that are directly subsidiary to the questions of causality versus association, and the only appropriate way to generate answers to these two questions is to advance the two types of research on alcohol and homicide identified here, theoretical and empirical, in that order. If we assume that the "correct" answer to the first question is that alcohol does cause homicide in some fashion, the second question for theoretical analysis is to specify the details of the causal mechanisms that lead from alcohol to homicide. In other words, why does alcohol cause homicide, and how does this occur? Recent theoretical work has made a start in this direction (Fagan, 1990; Parker, 1993a), and that effort will be extended and expanded here. Only by placing the alcohol and homicide relationship in the context of a number of theories of violence causation is it possible to begin to understand how alcohol would relate to the causes identified in the criminological research literature.

In addition, only with some increase in our knowledge of how and why alcohol affects homicide can we begin to intervene. Public policy directed toward violence in general and homicide in particular is outstanding only for its failure. Deterrence theory, especially that which involves the use of the death penalty to deter homicide, has noticeably failed to have any effect on homicide (Smith and Parker, 1980; Bowers, 1984; Bailey and Peterson, 1989; Bailey, 1990). Alcohol control policy, on the other hand, has had some moderate successes in the recent past, in particular with regard to the increases in the minimum drinking age which occurred for the most part during the 1980s and which led to reductions in drinking and driving accidents among youth (O'Malley and Wagenaar, 1991; Saffer and Grossman, 1987). If such a policy could be found to have a similar impact on homicide (Parker, 1991), a new realm of possibilities would be opened with regard to policies designed to reduce homicide in particular and perhaps violence in general.

The third question, following from the first two, depends on placing the hypothesized relationships among alcohol, other causes

of homicide, and homicide itself in empirical models that are sufficiently complex to account for homicide and the many factors that may cause it. This requires advanced statistical analysis of data that are sufficiently generalizable, both in space and in time, to warrant confidence in the evaluations of these hypotheses that will be generated by this exercise. Two sets of empirical data, both longitudinal and generalizable to the United States as a whole, will be subjected to analysis with two different if equally complex statistical approaches, structural equation models, and pooled cross section time series analysis.

However, before the effort to answer these questions can be undertaken, the cultural and social origins of the link between violence and alcohol, which we have argued is uniquely American (referring by this term to United States society explicitly) must be traced historically, and it is to that task that we now turn.

#### CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ORIGINS OF THE ALCOHOL AND VIOLENCE LINK

Alcohol and homicide have not always been so explicitly linked in the United States as we would assert they are today. We will argue here that the origins of the link, however, can be traced politically, socially, and economically to the circumstances and events in the United States from the late eighteenth century, throughout the nineteenth century, and into the pre-World War II portion of the twentieth century. The structural conditions of these times within which the origins of a connection between alcohol and violence occurred have for the most part, if not completely, vanished. Once these conditions provided a socially approved, ideological, and behavioral basis for the connection, alcohol and violence became part of a cultural and social tradition in United States society, with only Prohibition posing a partial threat to the established link between alcohol and violence. We shall have more to say about the relationship between Prohibition and this connection, but at this point it is important to recognize that neither contemporary reports nor more recent historical analysis of the time period of interest here, 1750-1920, focus on this link.

In thinking about the negative effects of alcohol on society during this period, both types of observers are more likely to be con-

cerned about breakdowns in the social order other than violence: family dissolution, loss of productivity, disease, and anarchy (Rorabaugh, 1979). Only discussions of the latter contain references to violence, although it seems clear that homicide and other forms of interpersonal violence were less central in these analyses than were subversion of the social hierarchy, family neglect, and riots and revolts in response to state action (Mather, 1708; Adams, 1760 [1865]; Hines, 1828; Rorabaugh, 1979:54-55, 190). However, we shall argue that there were a number of specific examples of political violence motivated directly by alcohol, which are much more important for the building of the cultural and social substructure, that led to the establishment of this cultural tradition. The link between alcohol and violence against the state is not that citizens under the influence revolt against tyranny in general, something they would have been reluctant to do if sober, but rather something more complex.

Considering the historical evidence of interpersonal violence, it also seems clear that what evidence there is shows that homicide and other forms of violence were not especially aggravated by increases in alcohol consumption during the nineteenth century. For example, in the United Kingdom, during the height of the expansions of gin production, between 1840 and 1855 (Rorabaugh, 1979:238), records show a significant decline in homicide rates in the city of London (Daly and Wilson, 1988: 276). Despite much contemporary discussion of alcohol and the social order in the United States during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a similar conclusion is warranted, as alcohol consumption declined significantly between 1840 and 1880 (Rorabaugh, 1979: 8), at the same time as violent crime was increasing (Ferdinand, 1967). How can it be that during the time period in which the substructural bases for an alcohol and violence link were forming and developing, there was very little manifestation of this relationship? These features developed slowly during this period and continued to develop into their final form into the twentieth century. Prohibition may have delayed this growth in one sense, that being a temporary reduction in alcohol-induced interpersonal violence, but it also served to further accelerate development of the current form of the relationship because of violent clashes between the state and criminal elements bent on defying Prohibition through smuggling and illegal production of alcohol (Ayers, 1984: 263-64).

However, just as Weber (1898 [1958]) argued about the ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean and capitalism, having the cul-

tural elements for a strong link between alcohol and violence, does not necessarily result in that link being manifested throughout a society. After Prohibition, a major increase in alcohol consumption was needed to bring the alcohol and violence link to the surface. Such an increase began in 1950, peaking in 1980. Although a slight decline has occurred since 1980 (Sparrow et al., 1989), the magnitude of this decline is certainly not sufficient to result in a breakdown of the alcohol and violence link. One purpose of this study is to suggest how public policy might be directed to weaken the link without waiting for this decline, if it continues, to have such an effect.

## HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE ALCOHOL AND VIOLENCE LINK IN THE UNITED STATES

Patterns of alcohol use, concepts of alcohol abuse, and the relationship between alcohol use and violent behavior have changed over the course of United States history, in response to political, religious, and economic shifts. In addition, the complex relationships among the many ethnic groups that make up the United States population have affected both consumption of alcohol and propensity to violence. Alcohol-related violence has taken the form of individual violence such as brawls in bars, duels of honor, and battles over the production and sale of illegal alcoholic beverages, and collective violence in response to the government's attempts to control alcohol production and sale.

### *History of Alcohol Consumption and Attitudes in the United States*

The concept of alcohol abuse dates from the late eighteenth century in the United States. Before that time, the idea that alcohol was a dangerous, addictive, or harmful substance was not widespread (Levine, 1984: 109). Indeed, early settlers in what was to become the United States saw alcohol as good for health, drinking it at and between meals, and making medicines with it. The Puritans, who dominated among New England colonists, called it "the good creature of God," in recognition of its status as a gift from heaven. Both men and women drank alcohol, especially fermented beverages, daily. And while public drunkenness was a punishable offense, it

was considered a moral flaw of the drunken individual, rather than a problem with alcohol itself (Levine 1983: 115-16).

The early settlers drank homemade fermented beverages with their meals, because water was considered dangerous to drink (Earle, 1913: 147) (and given the state of sanitation, it probably was). Milk was not introduced as a drink for adults at meals until the 1630s, and its consumption was largely confined to breakfast (Earle, 1913: 148), leaving beer, ale, hard cider, perry (made from pears), peachy (made from peaches), and other fruit- and grain-based fermented beverages as the main liquids consumed for lunch and supper.

The consolidation of the slave trade in the 1700s, and the resulting boom in plantation-based sugar production, meant that large amounts of molasses became available, and rum was produced in large amounts. Unlike fermented beverages, rum was used mainly at celebrations and as an after-work relaxer in the colonial period (Earle, 1913: 163). Colonists did not define mild inebriation as drunkenness. A rhyme of the time gave the following definition:

Not drunk is he who from the floor  
can rise again and still drink more  
But drunk is he who prostrate lies  
Without the power to drink or rise.  
(Bridenbaugh, 1971, cited in Levine, 1983: 117)

Puritans saw drunkenness as sinful, because it was a form of sloth, and their religion was strict in its work demands. But although they noticed that fights tended to break out at taverns, they blamed that on the use of taverns as meeting places for gamblers, prostitutes, criminals, unemployed men, and other unsavory characters, rather than on the effects of the alcohol served there. In addition, their theology stressed the importance of free will, and therefore they could not remain true to their religion while positing that alcohol changed people's ability to freely choose their actions (Levine, 1983: 120-22).

This generally positive attitude toward alcohol changed under the pressure of a number of factors, including the increased production of distilled beverages, the decline of Puritanism and rise of Quakerism among colonists, increased ethnic, religious, and economic diversity among colonists, and after the Revolution, the ideas of physicians such as Dr. Benjamin Rush, who saw excessive alco-



hol consumption as not merely a vice, but a disease.

With the proliferation of distilled beverages and the increased ethnic diversity of new world immigrants, the production, sale, and consumption of alcohol was increasingly important in ethnic tensions among the many groups who made up the fledgling society of the new world, because access to alcohol and patterns of consumption were influenced by ethnic affiliation. Enslaved Africans were prohibited from producing or consuming alcohol except with their owner's permission (Huggins, 1971: 108). In addition, different class and ethnic groups within the white majority had varying patterns of drinking. And alcohol was a major commodity traded between whites and Indians, playing an important role in the fur trade along the western frontier (Hunt, 1983: 34).

### *Drinking on the Frontier*

Today, we think of the far west as the frontier, but until the consolidation of the western territories as states, the frontier was on the western edge of existing states. Writing in 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner described the movement west of the frontier over time:

The fall line marked the frontier of the seventeenth century; the Alleghenies that of the eighteenth; the Mississippi that of the first quarter of the nineteenth; the Missouri that of the middle of this century (omitting the California movement); and the belt of the Rocky Mountains and the arid tract, the present frontier. (Turner, 1894; cited in Winkler, 1968: 414)

Frontiersmen were even heavier drinkers than colonists, prone to binges in town as respite from hard days and nights working in difficult conditions. And Native Americans soon developed a reputation as heavy, violent drinkers. In fact, from the earliest times of settlement, Native Americans and enslaved Africans were the only groups colonists recognized as stimulated to violence by alcohol (Levine, 1983: 123; Tyrrell, 1982: 490; Walton, 1970: 728).

Native Americans had no traditional fermentation or distillation skills (except for a few tribes south of the 35th north latitude who made fermented beverages) (Heath, 1985: 208) and could only get alcohol from whites, who saw this as an opportunity to open advantageous new markets. Alcohol was traded for furs and access to terri-

tory (Hunt, 1983: 34; Winkler, 1968: 429-31). While not all the tribes easily accepted alcohol, others were ravaged by its widespread use (Heath, 1985: 208). Unlike groups that have produced and consumed alcohol for millennia, Native Americans had no social strictures within which to contain their drinking. Combined with the extreme depression accompanying the destruction of their cultures through conquest, these factors led to a pattern of heavy drinking in some tribes, which continued into the twentieth century (Dozier, 1966: 80).

This pattern was also encouraged by white traders who encouraged Native Americans to drink, partly to accustom them to alcohol so that they would trade for it, and partly to inebriate them so that they could be more easily swindled in trading. Traders swapped so-called Indian whiskey for furs and buffalo robes. This concoction was described by one Missouri River trader as follows:

You take one barrell of Missouri River water, and two gallons of alcohol. Then you add two ounces of strychnine—because strychnine is the greatest stimulant in the world—and three plugs of tobacco to make them sick—an Indian wouldn't figure it was whiskey unless it made him sick—and five bars of soap to give it a head, and a half a pound of red pepper, and then you put in some sagebrush and boil it until it's brown. Strain into a barrell, and you've got your Indian whiskey; that one barrell calls for one buffalo robe and when the Indian got drunk it was two robes. (Abbot and Smith, 1939: 123-24, cited in Winkler, 1968: 430)

Often, Native American drinking was accompanied by quarreling, fighting, and murder. There soon arose a stereotype of the violent "drunken Indian" who would trade anything for more "fire water." As a priest noted in 1750:

The savages—especially the Illinois, who are the gentlest and most tractable of men—become when intoxicated, madmen and wild beasts. They fall upon one another, stab with their knives, and tear one another. (MacAndrews and Edgerton, 1969: 101-3, cited in Levine, 1983: 123)

Colonists and frontiersmen regarded Native Americans as brutish pagans, and blamed their pattern of drinking on innate sav-

agery. Similarly, slave holding southerners, always fearful of insurrections, argued that drink brought out what they saw as the bestial nature of the African. Starting in the early 1700s they passed laws prohibiting sale of alcohol to blacks (Walton, 1970: 729).

However, the evidence is that there were plenty of brawls among drunken whites in colonial times. It was just that in the opinion of the colonists, their own behavior had different roots than the similar behavior of Native Americans and enslaved Africans. By the nineteenth century, public opinion on the relationship of alcohol to violence had changed, and whites began to attribute their own violence to the effects of alcohol (Levine, 1983: 124). This change reflected not only increasing prosperity as the new country matured and former immigrants became members of a well-established middle class, but also increasing ethnic diversity among European immigrants, leading established Americans to fear fellow whites as dangerously different.

Although early settlers and frontiersmen did not attribute their violence to the effects of alcohol, looking back from today's vantage point, we can see how alcohol consumption articulated with the ethnic and class divisions of early American society. While alcohol itself did not cause the brawls, battles, and insurrections common in those violent times, it did influence how and where brawls got started. Its nature as a valuable commodity inspired violence over its regulation and trade.

### *Individual Violence: Brawls, Duels, and Battles*

Patterns of violence in a society—who fights whom, in which way, and over what issues—reflect the dynamics of cultural beliefs and both inter- and intragroup relationships (Gorn, 1985: 18). Fistfights, pistol duels, lynchings, and beatings have been an integral part of struggles over ownership of territory, rights to produce and sell goods, conflicts between ethnic groups, and gender relations in the United States from colonial times and continuing until today. A belief in the right of free persons to use violence in defense of their freedoms, and a self-image as a nation founded on the basis of liberty play a central role in the United States psyche. In addition, Americans have resisted attempts to limit the access to alcohol.

Levels and forms of violence have varied in different historical periods and different regions. Violence was especially strong in the

antebellum south and along the western frontier. The legendary violence of the west has been attributed to its nature as a frontier, yet the similar Canadian and Australian frontiers did not see such brutality. And violence was not confined to the frontier, being so commonplace in the south that some have suggested frontier violence was a result of southerners moving westward through Texas rather than a condition of the frontier itself (Ayers, 1984: 12). Violence in the south can be traced back to the tensions that existed between racial groups in this slavery-based society, and especially among the varying economic classes of whites. Central to the relationship between alcohol and violence in the old south and the western frontier was the concept of male personal honor.

In an honor-based system, personal worth is dependent on the opinions of others (in contrast, a dignity-based system vests worth in the intrinsic value of a human being). This makes honor unstable, because others' opinions are changeable (Gorn, 1985: 39; Ayers, 1984: 12-13). It is maintained through continual demonstration of characteristics considered symbolic of honor and immediate violent response to any perceived insult. An insult unanswered has the potential to change the public opinion on which honor is based, and so it must be obliterated. In the antebellum south, only white men were considered to have honor, and only white women to have virtue. The condition of slavery excluded black men from honor, and meant that black women could not defend their sexual virtue against the advances of their owners.

In the system of male honor that developed in the southern and western United States, the reputation on which honor was based depended on power. The more powerful a man, the more esteem he could command. Some men, like the slave holders and landowners, commanded economic power. For others, behaviors such as drinking, boasting, and fighting, were both symbolic and demonstrative of power. Being very touchy about insults was also honorable, because it marked the difference between a servile slave and a proud free man, since slaves were not permitted to fight or to answer back to insult (Gorn, 1985: 41). And it showed that the man had honor to defend.

Not all white men were honorable. To be honorable, a man had to demonstrate his freedom, self-reliance, and therefore strength, his ability to defend the virtue of his women from other men, and his courage and therefore willingness to defend his reputation to the death if need be. This demonstration could be direct or symbolic.

Symbolic demonstrations of male honor included heavy drinking, brawling, and prodigious boasting.

Throughout the south it was the privilege of white men to engage in duels over honor. Among the upper classes, these took the form of formal pistol duels, with official challenges, seconds, and the ritual of pacing, turning, and shooting. But the lower-class men were famous for their eye-gouging, lip-biting-off, and ear-ripping fisticuffs (Ayers, 1984: 3; Gorn, 1985).

These duels were so popular that Virginia, South Carolina, and North Carolina were all forced to pass laws making a felony out of "premeditated mayhem" defined as cutting out tongues, pulling, gouging, or plucking out eyes, biting or cutting off noses, or stomping upon citizens, in unsuccessful attempts to prevent them (Gorn, 1985: 19). Rough-and-tumble or gouging was a form of fighting in which the combatants went at it with no holds barred, with special attention paid to mutilating the opponent's body parts. Some famous brawlers grew their fingernails long especially to aid in the gouging out of eyes. The fights ended when one or the other combatant was unable to continue, or cried for mercy (Gorn, 1985: 20).

Often these brawls started in bars, and both combatants were inebriated. One contemporary commentator, writing in 1880, stated:

[One] could hardly fail to be impressed with the prevalence of whiskey-drinking and the frequency of fighting with deadly weapons . . . when the whiskey begins to work, it very often happens that there is a fight between parties having what is locally called "a grudge." (Redfield, 1880, cited in Ayers, 1984: 14)

It would be an error to attribute the popularity of these duels to simple lawlessness. Duels and brawls reflected a combination of economic and interethnic tensions with a strict code of honor in the context of a comparatively weak state. In comparison to the power of the slave-holding landed class, the state had relatively little clout, and legal sanctions against whites of all classes were lenient. In contrast, slavery's coercive mechanisms against drinking, disobedience, and attempted violence by black slaves were harsh (Ayers, 1984: 132-34).

Slavery was a moral anomaly in a country that prided itself on its freedoms. Because blacks as a class were held to be separate from

whites and without honor, all whites felt superior to all blacks. But in addition, there was an economic hierarchy among white males, who ranged from the planter classes to the impoverished indentured servants (Ayers, 1984: 26). This led to great tensions among the poorer class of whites, who were eager to show their difference from and superiority to blacks, and frustrated by their exclusion from the upper white classes. For example, the emphasis on mutilation in rough-and-tumble fighting was part of the attempt of lower-class men to distinguish themselves from slaves. Since it was illegal to mutilate slaves, the facial mutilations of the rough-and-tumble fighters served to announce their status as free men who could allow themselves to be mutilated if they so chose (Gorn, 1985: 42).

Class and ethnic tensions found outlet in competitions over who could out-boast, out-lie, out-drink, out-fight, and generally out-do whom. Men also competed to be more generous or convivial than their fellows (Gorn, 1985: 22), often seeing who could buy the most rounds, drink them, and tell the hairiest yarns while being ready to start fighting should the occasion arise. Legendary Mississippi keel-boatman Mike Fink, for example, was quoted as saying:

I'm a salt River roarer! I'm a ring-tailed squeeler! I'm a regular screamer from the old Massassip! Whoop! I'm the very infant that refused his milk before its eyes were open and called out for a bottle of old Rye! I love the women and I'm chockful o' fight! I'm half wild horse and half cock-eyed alligator and the rest o' me is crooked snags an' red-hot snappin' turtle. . . . I can out-run, out-jump, out-shoot, out-brag, out-drink, an' out-fight, rough-an'-tumble, no holts barred, any man on both sides the river from Pittsburg to New Orleans an' back ag'in to St. Louiee! (Blair and Meine, 1933: 105-6, cited in Gorn, 1985: 29)

Alcohol was inextricably integrated into the image of these "brave . . . heavy drinkers, coarse frolickers in moral sties . . . heavy fighters, reckless fellows" (Twain, 1883: 24, cited in Gorn, 1985: 35). It was almost always a lubricant for brawls, either to give the contestants "liquid courage" or because status conflicts were enhanced in the convivial, masculine atmosphere of bars.

An act such as buying a round of drinks for the men at a bar was demonstrative of power, because it showed that the buyer had sufficient resources to pay for the large number of drinks. It also

marked the buyer as a leading, generous member of the group of men in the bar. In addition, it was symbolic of status, because not all people in society were permitted to drink or buy drinks. Women and minors, for example, were excluded from bars, and slaves could only drink with their master's permission and could neither buy drinks for nor accept drinks from others (Huggins, 1971: 108). Participating in the buying and consuming of drink rounds was therefore symbolic of membership in the group and equality, and refusing to accept a drink was an insult to the buyer, because it implied that the refuser thought he was superior to the buyer (Gorn, 1985: 40). Given the deadly seriousness with which insult was regarded in the male honor complex, buying and accepting drinks was a highly charged process that could explode in violence at a moment's notice. Any existing tensions between rival groups could be brought to a head by the ritualized offering and refusal of drinks, making bars dangerous places to frequent.

Brawling in bars was not confined to the south and west of the country. In the north, immigrant Irish and Italian workers were thought dangerous for their attributed tendency to drink, gamble, smoke, curse, brawl, engage in mob violence, and subscribe to free-thinking ideas (Dodd, 1978: 515). Here, as in the south, alcohol-related violence reflected ethnic and class tensions.

Brawling and dueling eventually fell out of favor, partly because as the frontier moved further west and finally disappeared, life became less rough-and-ready in general, but also because the Civil War changed ethnic and class relations. The invention of efficient weapons such as rifles and pistols changed the methodology of combat. The ritualized code duello of the upper classes began to seem too ceremoniously cold-blooded (Ayers, 1984: 268), and as the inaccurate, misfiring pistols, which had made it survivable, were replaced by efficient firearms, therefore making it too dangerous.

In addition, the Civil War marked the last major challenge to the power of the federal government over the states, and as power was increasingly centralized, justice was increasingly the responsibility of governments to provide. Private justice in the form of vigilantism, feuds, and brawls was increasingly associated with the lower classes, as the upper and middle classes turned to the law to settle their disputes. Access to state-sponsored police work, courts, and legal protections became an increasingly important marker of class. Today, the complex of hypersensitivity to insult and symbolic

demonstration of manhood through drinking, violence, and sexual acting-out is most prevalent among disenfranchised, impoverished, lower-class men (Ayers, 1984: 275) who cannot expect justice in courts and so must carve out their own version of it for themselves.

### *Collective Violence*

Because there is no natural limit to demand for alcohol and because it is consumed with no remainder, it constitutes a perfect commodity, the sales of which are limited only by the purchasing capacity of the buyer (Hunt, 1983: 34). This makes it extraordinarily profitable to produce. Collective violence over regulation and taxation of alcohol production and sale has erupted periodically in United States history. Like personal violence, this collective violence has reflected concerns over the nature and implications of freedom and the association of freedom with honor, as well as racial and ethnic tensions. Like drinking, the production of alcoholic beverages was a white privilege during slavery; most states prohibited both slaves and black freedmen from distilling or selling liquor (Huggins, 1971: 108; Walton, 1970: 729).

In 1791 the colonial congress of the newly independent United States imposed an excise tax on a number of products including distilled spirits in order to replenish the national coffers after the Revolutionary War (Glaser, 1976: 75). Gallons of whiskey produced in the United States were taxed according to their proof, and yearly taxes were imposed on stills as well. In addition, producers were ordered to maintain records of their produce, and all sites relevant to the production and sale of distilled spirits including distilleries, storage areas, taverns, and the like, were ordered to permit government inspection (Klein, 1976: 30-31). This tax was especially bothersome in Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee, major producers of whiskey (Glaser, 1976: 31). Making grain into whiskey was much more profitable than selling it as cereal; it brought a better price, was more easily transported, and aged rather than spoiled (Klein, 1976: 25). The heavy tax sharply reduced profits; the inspections were seen as unwarranted invasions of privacy.

Because the Revolution was sparked by resistance to British regulation and taxation, residents believed that they had won the right to be free of taxation by national governments generally. Not only did locals fail to pay the tax, supported publicly by politicians,



but groups of vigilantes patrolled the states, tarring and feathering revenue officials and harassing local producers who were known to have paid the tax (Glaser, 1976: 76).

The government retreated slightly, reducing the taxes in 1792 and 1794 (Klein, 1976: 31), but in July 1794 hostilities broke out between a consortium of grain farmers, distillers, shippers, and retailers, and the United States marshal. This was followed by armed assaults on local officials by armed men, resulting in a number of murders. Some seven thousand opponents of the tax mustered in Pittsburgh, and President Washington was forced to send in troops to put down the rebellion. The sight of nearly thirteen thousand soldiers led by the governor of Virginia, General Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, and supported by appearances of other generals and even President Washington himself, so frightened the populace that the so-called whiskey rebellion ended without a shot being fired, and the tax was collected forthwith (Glaser, 1976: 75-76, Klein, 1976: 31). The tax was repealed in 1801 by President Thomas Jefferson, but it was reimposed after the Civil War (Klein, 1976: 31).

The whiskey rebellion was important because it was the first large-scale opposition to control of trade in alcohol and also because it established the power of the federal government to impose taxes and controls on alcohol production in the states. There were other whiskey rebellions, although none was as serious as the first. For example, in March 1894, the governor of South Carolina sent the state militia to Darlington to put down a rebellion against the imposition of a state monopoly on alcohol retail and wholesale (the dispensary system). When a significant portion of the troops refused to muster, Governor Tillman was forced to send volunteer "wool hat boys." By April 5 the rebellion had been dispersed, at the cost of three lives (including one man who lingered almost a year before dying of his wounds) (Huggins, 1971: 140-64).

In addition to these open rebellions, there was continual conflict between moonshiners and the revenue and police officials who tried to put them out of business. Moonshining, the production of distilled beverage alcohol at unlicensed, untaxed stills, was an especially prevalent industry in the south starting in the 1880s and continuing until the present day. When whiskey taxes were reimposed after the Civil War, sometimes violent resistance resurfaced. Moonshining increased during economic downturns and was accompanied by vigilante justice, as moonshiners took revenge on inform-

ers who led revenue officials to illegal stills, tried to drive rivals out of business, or avenged competitors' attempts to put them out of business (Ayers, 1984: 261-62). Like their ancestors a hundred years earlier, southern whiskey producers in the 1870s believed that the United States was founded for the purpose of being a free republic in which citizens could make their own living without government interference, and they were willing to defend their liberty with violence (Ayers, 1984: 262).

Added to that was the tradition of generations-long blood feuds in the mountains of Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, and Tennessee. Conflicts over moonshining, informing, and still-busting sparked many a lengthy conflict, such as the famous feud of the Hatfields and the McCoys. Prohibition only increased the violence as the whole alcohol production industry moved underground, and private vigilantism entirely replaced police regulation of it (Ayers, 1984: 263-64).

### *Drink and Social Order*

By the nineteenth century, the link between alcohol and violence was firmly established in the popular mind. Whereas the colonists drank alcohol with their meals, during the nineteenth century drinking alcohol became detached from mealtimes. Increasingly, taverns were used exclusively for drinking by men, especially immigrant and lower-class men, unlike the colonial establishments that served food and drink to men and women alike. Drinking had become a male activity, taking place away from work and not including the family. It became a time-out behavior, increasingly associated with disinhibition (Parks, 1976: 134-35; Levine, 1983: 127).

These changes in drinking patterns were related to the increasing industrialization of the United States and the rise of a stable middle class. Industrial laborers worked a strict daily and weekly schedule, with special periods set aside for leisure (Levine, 1983: 127). The Friday-night-drunk pattern did not come into being until Friday night was the end of the workweek. And widespread concern with maintaining social order by suppressing inebriation accompanied rising prosperity and an increasing distinction between established Americans and new immigrants, most of whom were from different ethnic or economic groups than the established citizens.

The increasing preoccupation of United States society with social order was reflected in the development of a professional

police force and a variety of regulatory agencies (Parks, 1976: 130). Whereas eighteenth-century whiskey producers were outraged by the idea that the federal government wanted to tax and regulate their trade, a hundred years later their descendants turned increasingly to government agencies for legal protection through regulation. The rising middle class was concerned over potential damage to property by drunken carousers and time lost from work by inebriated laborers. They supported expanded police powers and regulation of alcohol.

For example, whereas the state of Massachusetts imposed penalties only for habitual drunkenness before 1835, in that year the law was changed and single instances of drunkenness became punishable. Arrests for drunkenness in Boston numbered in the thousands in the 1840s. The Boston Society for the Suppression of Intoxication made public calls for increased police work to combat drunkenness (Parks, 1976: 135-36).

Boston was especially concerned with the behavior of immigrant Irish. In the same way that opium smoking was only considered a problem when white Californians became concerned over labor competition from Chinese immigrants, alcohol drinking was considered a problem as it was increasingly associated with lower-class and immigrant men (Parks, 1976: 139). At that time ethnic divisions among various European types were deeply felt. Established Americans of English and German descent viewed Irish and Scottish immigrants with the same wary disdain as their European forbears.

The old concept of alcohol as the good creature of God did not die out as temperance ideology, with its emphasis on demon rum proliferated. The twin concepts of good-alcohol and bad-alcohol coexisted. D. Cahalan quotes a local politician in the Mississippi state legislature in 1958 who perfectly captures the dual image of alcohol:

If, when you say whiskey, you mean the devil's brew, the poison scourge, the bloody monster that defiles innocence, yea, literally takes the bread from the mouths of little children; if you mean the evil drink that topples the Christian man and woman from the pinnacles of righteous, gracious living into the bottomless pit of degradation and despair, shame and helplessness and hopelessness, then certainly I am against it with all of my power.

But if, when you say whiskey you mean the oil of conversation, the philosophic wine, the stuff that is consumed when good fellows get together, that puts a song in their hearts and laughter on their lips and the warm glow of contentment in their eyes; if you mean Christmas cheer; if you mean the stimulating drink that puts spring in the old gentleman's step on a frosty morning; if you mean the drink that enables a man to magnify his joy, and his happiness, and to forget, if only for a little while, life's great tragedies and heartbreaks and sorrows, if you mean that drink, the sale of which pours into our treasuries untold millions of dollars which are used to provide tender care for our little children, our blind, our deaf, our dumb, our pitiful aged and infirm, to build highways, hospitals, and schools, then certainly I am in favor of it. (Cahalan, 1987: 23-24)

The temperance movement, arising in the middle class in the early nineteenth century, tried to turn public opinion toward the bad-alcohol side of the equation. Temperance speakers believed that social problems such as crime, violence, poverty, and domestic violence were caused by alcohol (Levine, 1983: 129). They promulgated the idea that even small amounts of liquor would release the inner beast in any man, leading to violent, dissolute behavior. As John Marsh wrote in the 1830s, alcohol "makes every man that drinks it a villain" (cited in Levine, 1983: 133).

Temperance movement members not only promulgated the disinhibition thesis of the effects of alcohol, they also believed it to be a dangerously addicting drug that could lead to the total destruction of the drinker's ability to act in a moral fashion. So strong was their belief in the destructive powers of drink that they thought that habitual drinkers were permanently morally incapacitated, whether drunk at the moment or not (Levine, 1983: 135). Temperance writers claimed that most crime was caused by alcohol:

It is admitted that three-fourths of all the crimes of the land result from the use of intoxicating liquor. It is admitted that at least three-fourths of all the sufferings of poverty arise from the same source. (cited in Levine, 1983: 137)

Temperance ideology was based on the idea that human beings have a violent, bestial inner nature that is held in check by