

GOOD SALOON, BAD SALOON: SALOONS IN WICHITA, KANSAS 1865-1881

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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

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ABSTRACT

This research evaluates the purpose, use, and public view of drinking establishments in Wichita and the surrounding area during one of the most iconic eras in American popular culture: the years following the Civil War in the West. There have been extensive depictions of the saloon in movies and the media, but the actual story was much more complicated. To fully understand the saloon in Wichita, this study first examines drinking establishments across the United States. These saloons show the diversity of drinking establishment across the West, each with its own unique path, from the relationship between the rowdy establishments across the river in Delano to the more respectable establishments built in Wichita. Contrary to what is often portrayed in Western movies and novels, saloons were diverse. Likewise, they were not all constantly violence prone. Instead, they were unique establishments that offered a variety of services and goods. Saloons in the early years of Wichita catered to clientele that ranged from respectable to dens of vice. As the temperance movement gained momentum, the distinction between good saloons and bad saloons began to break down. By the twentieth century, many assumed that the rowdy saloon of Delano was typical of all saloons during Wichita's cowtown days.

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INTRODUCTION

A man on a horse rides into a town with wide dusty roads and a hot summer afternoon. He has a ten gallon hat, cowboy boots, and ivory handled six shooters on each side of his belt. He jumps off his horse in front of a plain building with large windows in the front and big white letters that spell SALOON above the swinging saloon doors. As the man approaches the doors, he can hear “Buffalo Gal” on a piano, accompanied by the sweet voices of the saloon girls. Smoke fills his eyes and nostrils as he pushes his way in and sees men playing cards around a large green table, women dancing and flirting with inebriated patrons of the bar, and a bartender behind a polished hard wood counter drying a tumbler. When he sits down at the bar, in front of a large mirror mounted on the wall, the barman walks up and the man asks for some whiskey. When the barman returns with his drink he puts a nickel on the counter, and turns to observe a dispute that has erupted at a poker table behind him. As soon as he turns around, the dispute elevates into a fight which quickly expands until the whole bar is involved. People are smashing bottles over the head of those around them and men are being shoved down the bar, and knocking drinks onto the floor. The brawl only stops when the sheriff fires his gun into the ceiling and arrests the outlaws who started the fight. Once the fight is finished, everyone goes back to their business. This image owes its origins to Hollywood movies and western television shows that created the mythic West, with cowboys and Indians always at odds and gun fights happening daily at noon. In reality, saloons were more than places of violence that degraded the moral fiber of their communities. Instead, the story of the saloon in places such as Wichita, Kansas involved different cultures, ideas, and, only at times, violence.

The origins of the saloon’s violent image went back even further than movies. Even

newspapers in the nineteenth century reveled in the rowdy nature of western saloons. One account in Denver was particularly colorful.

A cutting affray occurred at Shorty McKay's saloon on state street to-night about 9 o'clock, in which two persons were badly cut and which will most probably result fatally for one of the participants. Three women, who conduct dives on the row, entered the saloon and ordered drinks. They were followed by three more women, who stationed themselves at the opposite end of the bar and also began drinking. In a few minutes the six women began quarreling, and two of them, Gussie Hayes and Minnie Willams, came to blows. A third woman Minnie Connors, handed Minnie a razor and told her to use it. The Bartender interfered, when he was stabbed in the right side of the jaw by an unknown man, who escaped before the arrival of the officers. The two women were ejected and Gussie was picked up a moment afterward in an unconscious condition. She had been fearfully cut, one gash laying open sub maxillary gland in the face...¹

This is only one of several newspaper articles that will be highlighted below that illustrate the rowdy and dangerous aspects of saloons often received coverage over the average day-to-day events.

One of the first entertainment genres to deal with the West was the dime novel. The goal of these dime novels was to sell copies and not to produce and accurate story. Because of this goal, the strong majority of western stories were written by people who had never been to these western towns. Beadle and Adams, one of the largest publishers of dime novels was based out of New York, as were many of its authors. One dime novel series was *Adventures of Buffalo Bill from boyhood to Adulthood* written by Colonel Prentiss Ingraham in 1882. This series depicts a fictional life of Buffalo Bill. While he spends most of his time in this series wandering the frontier and Indian country, there is one chapter that takes place in a saloon, involving a game of cards with a desperado. This story, and others like it, helped to start the image of the rowdy saloon with near constant gambling and unsavory characters. In the series *The William Brothers*, by Robert Maynard, the heroes of the story line get into a gunfight with a drunk at a remote

¹ "Saloon Row Six Women Engaged in a Lively Fight in a Barroom," *Rocky Mountain News*, (Denver, CO) Saturday, August 29, 1891.

tavern in the West, illustrating the danger of drinking and, as with the *Buffalo Bill* novels, the heroes are always on the sober side of a drunken fight.² Dime novel companies, such as Beadle and Adams, produced dozens of novels that helped to popularize the western, including a depiction of the western saloon as a location of vice and violence.³

Building on the tales of the dime novel, the western movie and later television show was an extremely popular genre in media for over a century and undoubtedly contributed to today's view of the West and the saloon. "From the twenties through the early seventies there were hundreds of nationally distributed feature films." These movies continued in popularity and gave rise to western radio shows thirties and forties and then television series in the following decades. In fact, "in 1959 there were no fewer than thirty-five Westerns running concurrently on television, and out of the top ten programs eight were Westerns."⁴

There was a wide range of different westerns, forming a part of "the lives of virtually everyone who lived during the first three-quarters of the century."⁵ The main themes of all of these westerns, however, included fights, the saloon girl, the lonely landscape, the cowboy, and always a hero. In westerns, the saloon stands in opposition to the landscape. It provides food, comfort, drink, and companionship, whereas in the outside world, men are tested and manhood is exemplified. The ruggedness of the West contrasted with the lavish accommodations of the saloon, complete with the red-lipped saloon girl and up tempo music and singing. The idea of the

² Colonel Prentiss Ingraham, *Beadle's Boy's Library of Sport, Story and Adventure*, "Adventures of Buffalo Bill from Boyhood to Manhood. Deeds of Daring, Scenes of Thrilling, Peril, and Romantic Incidents In the Early Life of W. F. Cody, the Monarch of Bordermen" (New York, Beadle and Adams: Circa 1882), Chapter 28 "A Game of Life and Death."; John E. Hallwas, *Dime Novel Desperadoes: The Notorious Maxwell Brothers* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press: 2008), 298.

³ Daniel Worden, *Masculine Style: The American West and Literary Modernism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 20.

⁴ Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 5-6, 47, 86.

⁵ Peter Stanfield, *Hollywood, Westerns and the 1930s: The Lost Trail* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001), 174.

saloon was in such stark contrast to rough, violent setting found elsewhere in the western, that:

there is a large section of America and an even larger faction abroad that demand and pay to see the same Two-Gun. These followers of the exponent of the Great, Clean West take their cowboy epics seriously... they feel that Western stars, whose lives have been devoted to succouring maidens in distress and lacing their tormentors, are out of place in sordid establishments in which the stuff is sold that stunts the growth and destroys the moral fibre.⁶

This quote described the 1930s, when the saloon was not necessarily the popular institution that it became later. During this time the saloon was not the iconic image of the “West” but instead a part of the seedy underbelly, a view that will change over time. When saloons and concert saloons were portrayed, they were usually as lavish palaces, and early on, given that westerns had special appeal to children, it was important that the hero of the story not drink. A major factor in how saloons were portrayed in entertainment mediums was based what people wanted to see and what the authors of these entertainment pieces thought people wanted to see.

Some themes seemed to persist from the days of the dime novels to recent television shows. One theme was the saloon as a location of violence. To describe a few examples in the film, *True Grit*, Mattie Ross the main character a young girl witnesses her father killed by one of his farm hands outside of a saloon where his murderer had been drinking, becoming the main villain for the film. In this film, the saloon is never shown and the heroes of the film never visit it, yet its influence remains.

If a theme is really well established, it shows up in satire and for saloons, perhaps the best western satire film is Mel Brooks’s *Blazing Saddles*. The bar fight that erupts in *Blazing Saddles* ends up spilling out off of the movie set onto the studio and into other movies, and involves more pies than most fights. This bar fight illustrates that audiences expect a saloon scene to have a

⁶ Ibid.

fight.⁷

Even if no fights took place, saloons in novels, movies, and television shows were depicted as places of moral failings. In *True Grit*, the main hero, Rooster Cogburn, spends a sizable portion of the movie drunk off of whiskey, but does his drinking away from the saloon.⁸ *Paint Your Wagon*, for example, heavily features a saloon and highlights all of the vices that go along with it, gambling, smoking, and prostitution. However, the hero goes to some great lengths to distance himself from the vices of the saloon and makes it very clear that he does not gamble or drink.⁹

In contrast to the saloon in popular culture, academic writers who study the actual institution have found a very type of establishment. Kelly Dixon in *Boom Town Saloons*, for example, focused on an archeological study of saloon sites in Nevada, finding a wide range of differences among the different saloons of just that one community. The violence from Hollywood is absent from the Dixon study, with a richer story of ethnicity and class emerging from materials that were left behind.

No study of drinking and vice in Kansas could be considered complete without the inclusion of Robert Haywood's *Victorian West: Class and Culture in Kansas Cattle Towns*. Although the focus of his work is on culture and class in Kansas cattle towns, the prevalence of the cattle industry in these communities makes it impossible to not cover the saloon to some degree. Haywood focuses on Victorian culture and as such, the rough and wild aspect of the drinking culture is less apparent in this piece. Haywood does mention the violent reputation of

⁷ *Blazing Saddles*, Directed by Mel Brooks (1974; Santa Clarita CA: Warner Bros. Productions).

⁸ *True Grit*, Directed by John Ford (1969; Bishop CA: Paramount Pictures).

⁹ *Paint Your Wagon*, Directed by Joshua Logan (1969; Baker, OR: Alan J Lerner Production). Some of the strongest use of the rough and tumble saloon themes make an appearance in science fiction movies, such as with *Star Wars* in the Cantina scene, as well as the television series *Firefly*, where a fight breaks out in every bar they enter. Both movies have strong western themes.

these cattle towns, such as Dodge City and Abilene and even how Wichita had the most violent reputation at the time. However, he also mentions that none of these cattle towns, even if one includes Delano with Wichita, exceeded a murder rate of about one every six months.¹⁰ Even if critics saw the saloon as the embodiment of a darker side of society and the Hollywood western celebrated the saloon as a bit of local color, the actual drinking culture was an important part of the Kansas cattle town, so much so that in the town caste system, with bartenders at the top the service providing pyramid.¹¹

Haywood sees vice and drinking as only a small part of the Kansas cattle town and, as far as entertainment is concerned, only one of many options that were available. Being at the end of a cattle trail, and having the railroad made for a violent situation. People were killed in all the cattle towns across Kansas, but it was not in the voluminous amounts that are often believed. Despite its reputation, Haywood makes the argument that, by and large, the *Victorian West* was a civilized and respectable place, saloons included.

Saloons were more than just places to drink and *Seeking Pleasure in the Old West* by David Dary shows saloons as part of a wide range of entertainment and pleasure facilities that offered gambling and drinking, portraying an image of saloons that early temperance movers would have understood. Dary finds that, except for a select few, most saloons were dark and cheaply built. In particular, Dary argues saloons were there to take all the money of the cattle drivers and miners. Violence is not a prominent theme throughout the book and he even spends some time talking about the prevalence of saloons in farming communities which had a less exploitive goal.

Elliot West's *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* argues there were two

¹⁰ C. Robert Haywood, *Victorian West: Class and Culture in Kansas Cattle Towns* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991) 103.

¹¹ Haywood, *Victorian West*, 27.

major venues for the saloon: cattle towns and mining towns. The primary difference between these two types of towns involved the amount of time the drinking population was there. For cattle towns, drovers and cowboys did most of the drinking, arriving at the end of cattle drives. In mining towns, however, the primary drinking population consisted of more sedentary mine workers, creating a drinking atmosphere that emphasized community in a bar at the end of the day. Focusing on liquor consumption itself, violence holds a less significant role and the economics of liquor on the frontier is the forefront of this study.

While Dixon paints the picture of a more civilized culture of drinking and vice in the mining towns of Nevada and Haywood sees Victorian morality at work in the cattle towns of Kansas, some writers continue to find violence and vice present in the nineteenth century western saloon. Stan Hoig looks at the cattle trade in Wichita and sees it as a more “rough and tumble” atmosphere that fits in more with the way that saloons are often portrayed in stories, books, and movies. Based on the colorful newspaper accounts of the time, Hoig’s work is a journey through all that is violent and unsavory in the history of Wichita, but does not tell the whole story. However, Hoig does tell the struggle that Wichita had throughout all of its early years with its reputation, arguing that Wichita first fought the reputation of untamed and wild land then fought the reputation of untamed wild people.

Although seen as a western institution, the saloon had its roots back east. Where Dixon, Haywood, and Hoig look at saloon in the West, Christine Sismondo looks at the saloon as part of an American drinking scene going back to the east coast and the earliest days of the county. From this approach, the saloon gains the image of being the younger sibling of the eastern taverns. Sismondo argues that the reality of western saloons was somewhere between the completely wild and wicked views portrayed by Hoig and the much more benevolent views

portrayed by Dixon. Sismondo recognizes that there were drinking establishments that largely fit within proper living in both the East and in the West. However, she is also quick to point out that many of the saloons that were established in the 19th century had nothing savory about them and reinforced the perception of the “Wild West” saloon as a place where the average night included not only drinking and gambling, but also a gun fight.

Richard Erdoes in his book, *Saloons of the Old West*, begins with the assertion that “The West” consisted of several different types of settings, each of which made up a different piece of the West. There were the mining towns, cattle towns, rail towns, and the frontier. All of these different spheres overlap and combine to create something that can be known as “The West.” Erdoes makes the point that for anything that was said about saloons, a statement to the contrary could also be made, neither being said with any intention of deceit. For example, consider these statements:

“The saloon was vile robber’s roost where the dregs of humanity reveled in swinish drunkenness.”

“The saloon was a bulwark against drunkenness, the poor man’s only club, the place where mine owner and beggar rubbed shoulders as equals.”

“The saloons were all the same and looked the same, if you had seen one, you had seen a thousand.”

“The saloons were of fantastic variety, of different architecture as well as clientele.”

“The saloons were dingy holes in the wall, made up of unpeeled boards, overflowing spittoons, and sawdust covering unspeakable things.”

“The saloon was an oasis of glamour in the wilderness, a place of shining brass, flowered carpets, and glittering chandeliers.”

“The bardog was a loutish, tight-fisted, monosyllabic brute with a shotgun under the counter, who loved to use his bung starter on his meeker customers.”

“The bartender was a philosophic gentleman overflowing with the milk of human kindness, a peacemaker if for no other reason than to protect his backbar mirror and crockery.”

“The western barkeep served nothing other than the straight undiluted road to ruin.”

“The proprietor was an accomplished mixologist who could be depended upon to serve up a hundred and fifty different concoctions satisfying even the most exotic tastes.”

“The saloon was a pure-bred native American institution, Anglo-Saxon to the core, blessedly free from foreign influence.”

“The saloon was a bibulous melting pot reflecting the drinking habits of Irishmen, Bohunks, Frenchmen, Germans, and Slavs.”

“The western pouring spot was a den of vice in which degraded sexual debaucheries were the order of the day.”

“Western saloon customers were excessively prudish, latent homosexuals, afraid of women, who treated even the soiled doves of the prairie like ladies.”

“Western saloons were slaughterhouses spattered with the blood of their customers who always died with their boots on—most of the time right at the bar.”

“The western thirst parlor was a place where endless talk was unrelieved by any kind of excitement and where nothing ever happened. Customers died in their bunks—sometimes with their boots on if they kept them on in bed.”

According to Erdoes, all of the above statements could be true depending on who was making the statement and the time and location of the establishment they were talking about.

Even some of these contradictory statements held some degree of truth in Sedgwick County.¹²

The unique way in which the Wichita drinking culture developed helps to illustrate that the Western saloon was not the monolithic establishment that it has been made out to be through the western genre. Wichita had the railroad, and was, for a few years, the end of the Texas cattle trail; however, it continued to grow and develop long after the cattle trade was moved to another town. Wichita is the crossroads for many of the factors that affected the West, the cattle trade, railroad, prohibition, and prosperity. Wichita continued to grow and so had to deal with the issues that arise when the saloon and family life start to clash. Wichita's story shows how the saloon continued to change after the end of the cattle trade. With prohibition coming to Kansas much sooner than it did in most other states, Wichita also provides an opportunity to look at the relationship between the saloon and prohibition when the West was still being "civilized." Wichita, therefore, makes a revealing case study in examining the history of the saloon partly because the clear ways in which the city and population tried to balance the money brought in by saloons and the immoral behavior that some saloons promoted. In addition, Wichita's story shows how the public opinion of the saloon changed as the world they found themselves in changed. The specific story and details of Wichita may be unique but the overall themes can be found throughout the West.

¹² Richard Erdoes, *Saloons of the Old West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 8.

CHAPTER I

SALOONS ACROSS AMERICA

The saloon emerged out of the European tavern, as an institution that was commonplace across the British colonies and later, the new country. They were hubs of social interaction, the place to get news, a meal, and debate the latest ideas. In Virginia, for example, the taverns were known as ordinaries and were as much a gathering place as they were drinking establishments. For Virginians, the ordinary was the center of social activities outside of the courts. Activities included buying and selling of goods, borrowing and lending, as well as games of a wide variety, including cards and dice. The ordinary was a place where people felt they could speak freely, one militia major in a Hanover County tavern said he would “freely he’l sooner die than pay a farthing [of the Stamp Tax], and is shure that all his Countrymen will do the same.” Some of these “ordinaries” were known to hold over one hundred people who all came in after a day at court, even if those were the only two establishments for miles. The wide spread ordinary emerged as an important aspect of communication, alongside institutions such as courthouses.¹³

By the nineteenth century, taverns and saloons were often deeply political establishments associated with a particular political organization. Taverns were voting bodies for the Democratic and Republican societies, while the eastern urban saloon became a center for gang-dominated machine politics.¹⁴ Activity in saloons and the unlicensed establishments that operated all over the country became a key target of the temperance movement that started to take hold in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Civil War changed the role and reputation of the saloon. Abolitionists often agreed

¹³ Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia: 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 90, 95, 245.

¹⁴ Christine Sismondo, *America Walks into a Bar: A Spirited History of Taverns and Saloons, Speakeasies and Grog Shops* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 104.

that “a slave-holder was better than a tavern-keeper” even though Abraham Lincoln, before he became president, owned several “grocery stores,” sometimes a euphemism for grog shop or unlicensed liquor store. Although a grocery store may sell liquor licensed or otherwise, their main purpose was still the sale of food. While it is unclear how much liquor he sold or if he actually sold any groceries, the connection caused him some trouble when running for president on a platform that took a stance against drinking, slavery, and immigration.¹⁵ The Civil War also brought with it new networks communication such as telegraphs that it made the saloon less relevant as a communication network as it had been in previous wars.¹⁶ As the Civil War ended, drinking establishments were no longer a part of organizing the war effort, and as such it was difficult for the owners to curb the changing public opinion of drinking establishments. That the assassination of President Lincoln was planned out of a tavern helped to accelerate that negative opinion.¹⁷

Perhaps the biggest change to the saloon in the nineteenth century, however, came from immigration. Immigrant groups, particularly the Irish and the Germans, were an important aspect in shaping and reshaping American drinking culture. In the East, these two immigrant groups both became targets for the temperance movement. In 1846, there were over 850 liquor dealers in Boston, just three years later there were over 1,200, the majority of them Irish owned. In addition to these establishments, it was not uncommon for Irish families to produce and sell their own gin to their fellow countrymen. During this period, the Irish faced a degree of racism which was connected in part to a reputation for excessive drinking that could end in an arrest. However, Irish culture allowed for higher levels of socially acceptable drinking. Others have argued that

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 139.

¹⁷ Ibid.,140-141.

there was some degree of truth to the myth in that the harsh conditions many Irish found in America and Boston in particular helped to keep the Irish tradition of social drinking alive. The crowded living quarters encouraged many Irish men out of the home and into taverns.¹⁸

German immigrants also were fond of drinking, but their habits and culture differed from those of the Irish immigrants, particularly in that German public drinking was intertwined with larger social activities, such as eating and entertainment. Unlike the Irish, German groups tended to do most of their drinking away from the view of the public, or outside Americans. The types of establishments that Germans operated were much more likely to be a restaurant, lunch room, or saloon (mainly offering drinks but also providing food). Because of this, they were more able to do business with native born American populations. The Irish, on the other hand, were much more likely to operate bars that specialized primarily in serving alcohol.¹⁹

Germans became especially active in saloon operations, as is evident the Society of German Saloon-keepers, from Ohio, established in the 1860s. The Society of German Saloon-keepers, played an important role in the battle between saloons and temperance movement. This society did their best to make sure that people behaved themselves as much as possible to keep the temperance movement from gaining any momentum. This same society took steps to make sure that there were fair prices throughout the saloons in the areas that they operated, and worked with the brewers and suppliers to make sure that their policies were enforced.²⁰

This did not mean nineteenth century eastern saloons were completely devoid of violence, gambling, and crime. Some of these eastern saloons, more commonly referred to as barrel-houses, went so far as to concoct a cocktail that would ensure its patrons would pass-out

¹⁸ Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation, Revised and Enlarged Edition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 120-121.

¹⁹ Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants*, 66.

²⁰ Political Letter, *The Daily Cleveland Herald*, (Cleveland, OH) May 11, 1869; Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants*, 136.

within a block of the establishment were they would be robbed and most likely arrested and fined for public intoxication. Many eastern saloons were “grog shops” which were illegal and almost impossible to regulate.²¹

By the start of the twentieth century, however, saloons remained a significant part of the American social fabric. “In 1915, New York had over 10,000 licensed saloons, or one for every 515 persons; Chicago had one licensed saloon for every 335 residents; Houston had one for every 298 persons; San Francisco had a saloon for every 218 Persons.”²² The purpose of visiting these saloons was not just for the drink. If it were the case that people visited saloons just to get liquor there would be far fewer saloons and far more wholesalers. The purpose of the saloon was to drink along with one’s community.²³

The origin of the term “saloon” is unclear. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “saloon” as an architectural meaning a room in particular spacious and lofty room, meaning that the use of the term saloon was originally an effort to establish an upscale feel to the establishment. Another a common belief is that it is an anglicanized form of the word “salon” a French word that refers to intellectual gathering places, often coffee houses. One of the first establishments in America to be called a “saloon” was Brown’s Hole Saloon in 1822 located in Brown’s Hole, Utah. The reason behind the new found use of saloon is not known.²⁴

The Saloon Moves West

As Americans moved westward, they took the saloon with them. As they were back east, western saloons were not as homogenous as they have appeared in the movies; with a wide

²¹ Sismondo, *America Walks into a Bar*, 106, 124.

²² Jon M. Kingsdale, “The ‘Poor Man’s Club’: Social Functions of the Urban Working-Class Saloon,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (October, 1973), 473.

²³ Kingsdale, “The ‘Poor Man’s Club,’” 474.

²⁴ Sismondo, *America Walks into a Bar*, 153.

variety of different barrooms tailored to different groups of people. With the rapid expansion westward saloons ranged from a keg on a stump to a fine polished bar complete with fine glassware and gaming tables. Some bars and saloons were similar to the ones seen in movies, but that was usually not the case, and there was a wide variety of saloons from clientele to buildings to the glass wear. Moreover, the types of services available varied to include theater shows, food, prostitution and gambling.²⁵

Much like prospecting, the idea of opening a saloon in mining counties had the reputation of being an easy way to earn a small fortune. When compared with mining, there was a relatively small amount of capital required to get started and the revenue started to flow almost as soon as the establishment opened. Much like mining, however, the success stories were much less common than those of failed attempts. One of the worst starts for saloons in a mining community took place in Emery, Montana, when three saloon owners who opened up shop soon after the town was founded; one died of pneumonia, one disappeared leaving his wife who soon poisoned herself, and the last hanged himself.²⁶ Some have concluded that what the residents of these towns lacked in violence they made up for in intoxication. Saloon-going men living in the Rocky Mountains allowed themselves the conservative ration of between a quart and gallon of whiskey every week. There was even one resident in the Rocky Mountains who was reported to drink an entire keg of whiskey in about two months and would complain about the eighteen “dollars in gold to fill it.”²⁷

A critical requirement for a heaving drinking society was the availability of liquor, a factor that the temperance movement worked hard to address. In the Rockies, a person often did

²⁵ West, *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier*, 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

not have to look very hard to find themselves a drink. On the way out to the mountains, a traveler in a grocery store in western Kansas found that it provided “some of the best whiskey you ever seen since you was born!”²⁸ While most miners brought their own supply of liquor with them when they came out to the Rockies, there was also a ready supply in everything from saloons to distilleries.

Elliot West makes the argument that there were a number of factors that led to a society of heavy drinkers. First, there was a large population of competitive and extremely mobile people group and drinking helped create a feeling of belonging. In societies that put stress on individual success, drinking can also be a “time out” to relieve some of the stress from the situation. Perceptions at the time suggested that the lack of the tempering presence of the family and church also help to create a society that encouraged heavy drinking.²⁹

The lack of families and a strong church presence in the West created one of the key differences between saloons of the West and taverns in the East. With some exceptions, ethnic neighborhoods of the East help keep excessive drinking in check. Ethnic communities in the East created an environment in which the actions of people were visible to the entire family and community.³⁰ Lack of women in mining towns, approximately twenty percent of the population for established mining communities, and being a low as four percent in some early camps, made it difficult for the men to start families of their own. This left single men to keep themselves entertained when they are not working. In many of these areas the saloon was one of the few options for entertainment.³¹

During the nineteenth century, there was a belief that liquor promoted good health, so

²⁸ Ibid., 12.

²⁹ West, *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier*, 4-5.

³⁰ Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants*, 66.

³¹ West, *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier*, 6.

even those who were against social drinking might acknowledge that liquor in the form of medicine could be helpful. In addition, liquor was often used in exchange for goods and services when cash was in short supply. Drinking was also the standard way in which to celebrate just about every social and private event.³²

Saloons in cattle towns bore similar traits to those in Rocky Mountain mining camps. Most started with the beginning of the town with modest structures such as a tent or rough log cabin, served all kinds of different liquors and some continued to grow with their towns. For example, J.L. McCaleb, who found himself at the end of the cattle trade in Abilene, Kansas in the late 1860s, remembered:

The boss let myself and another boy go to the city one day. As it had been a long time since we had seen a house or a woman, they were good to look at. I wore a black plush hat which had a row of small stars around the rim, with buck-skin strings to tie and hold on my head. We went into town, tied our ponies, and the first place we visited was a saloon and dance hall. We ordered toddies like we had seen older men do, and drank them down, for we were dry, very dry, as it had been a long ways between drinks. I quit my partner, as he had a girl to talk to, so I went out and in a very short time I went into another store and saloon. I got another toddy, my hat began to stiffen up, but I pushed it up in front, moved my pistol to where it would be handy, then sat down on a box in the saloon and picked up a newspaper and thought I would read a few lines, but my two toddies were at war, so I could not very well understand what I read. I got up and left for more sights—you have seen them in Abilene, Dodge City and any other place those days. I walked around for perhaps an hour. The two toddies were making me feel different to what I had felt for months, and I thought it was about time for another, so I headed for a place across the street, where I could hear a fiddle. It was a saloon, gambling and dance hall. Here I saw an old long-haired fellow dealing monte. I went to the bar and called for a toddy, and as I was drinking it a girl came up and put her little hand under my chin, and looked me square in the face and said, ‘Oh, you pretty Texas boy, give me a drink.’ I asked her what she wanted and she said anything I took, so I called for two Toddies. My, I was getting rich fast—a pretty girl and plenty of whiskey. My old hat was now away back on my head. My boss had given me four dollars spending money and I had my five-dollar bill, so I told the girl that she could make herself easy; that I was going to break the monte game, buy out the saloon, and keep her to run it for me when I went back to Texas for my other herd of cattle. Well, I went to the old

³² West, *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier*, 16-18.

long-haired dealer, and as he was making a new layout I put my five on the first card (a king) and about the third pull I won. I now had ten dollars and I thought I had better go and get another toddy before I played again. As I was getting rich so fast, I put the two bills on the tray and won. Had now twenty dollars, so I moved my hat back as far as it would go and went to get a drink—another toddy, but my girl was gone. I wanted to show her that I was not joking about buy out the saloon after I broke the bank. After this drink things did not look so good. I went back and it seemed to me that I did not care whether I broke him or not. I soon lost all I had won and my old original five. When I quit him my hat was becoming more settled, getting down in front, and I went out, found my partner and left for camp. The next morning, in place of owning a saloon and going back to Texas after my other herds, I felt—oh! What’s the use!³³

While this young cowhand no doubt had an enjoyable night, a good chunk of the money that he earned working on the cattle drive was lost to drink and monte, resulting in him having less money than when he started, contributing to the argument that the cattle town saloons were out to prey on the cattle drivers.

Features of the Western Saloon

McCaleb’s Abilene experience references “toddies,” hinting at the wide array of drinking options in the West. Despite the image of miners and cowboys drinking their whiskey straight, mixed drinks were often preferred. Not only were mixed drinks popular, but beer was also an attractive whiskey alternative and, like fine bourbon whiskies, beers were shipped in, giving mining and cattle communities not only a large supply of liquor but also choices in both, type and quality of intoxicating beverages.³⁴

While whiskey may have been the drink of choice in the “Wild West” myth, it was far from the only choice in the period. An article from 1875, titled “A New Self-Acting Saloon” mentions “Brandy Smash, Gin and Bitters, Bourbon Whisky, Jamaica Rum, Bass’ Ale, ect.”

³³ J. L. McCaleb, “My First Five-Dollar Bill,” in J. Marvin Hunter, editor, *The Trail Drivers of Texas* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1925), 485-486.

³⁴ West, *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier*, 12-14.

This one article shows a great deal about what visitors of these saloons were drinking. Not only was there more than just whiskey, there might be beer, foreign liquors, wine, and even mixed drinks. Even if someone was to order whiskey, many of the old saloons would have had several different kinds to choose from.³⁵ In some less honest establishments, owners watered down their drinks and added chemicals such as varnish solvent or sulfuric acid. Drinking these concoctions could be dangerous and was often closer to poison than actual drink. These would more likely be found in transitional places where customers were likely passing through town.³⁶

Much like the types of saloons and the people who visited them, the drinks served were also full of variety. Kentucky Bourbon was still a favorite, but was not as common as the plethora of concoctions with names like “Taos Lightning,” “Apache Tears,” “Tiger Spit,” and “Panther Piss” all of which were commonly over one hundred proof.³⁷ Taos Lightning, for example was an alcohol mixed in Taos, New Mexico, and distributed throughout the West. For pure liquors there was still a wide variety from different types of whiskey and bourbon to wine, brandy, gin, and beer and in many bars mixed drinks were quite popular.³⁸

Much like the whiskies and mixed drinks, there was also a wide variety of different beers for people to choose from. These beers included “lager bier, beer stored, table beer, small beer, bock beer, and dark and light ale,” these types of beer ranged from three to ten percent alcohol content.³⁹ Whiskey may have been important in western saloons, and certainly was the best known beverage in the Hollywood saloon, but beer was one of the top sellers within bar-rooms.

³⁵ “An English paper publishes an article under the title of “A New Self-Acting Saloon,”” Daily Rocky Mountain News, (Denver, CO) October 3rd, 1875; Col A. This research used several on line databases including “Chronicling America,” for *The Wichita Eagle* available at chroniclingamerica.loc.gov and “19th Century American Newspapers,” for all other papers, accessed through Wichita State University libraries.

³⁶ Erdoes, *Saloons of the Old West*, 88.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 88.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

It did not take long for breweries to get established in the Rocky Mountains. In Denver, Colorado, in 1873, there was even a price conflict over beer. Some saloons were selling the beer at five cents a glass and others at ten. The brewers demanded that their beer be sold at ten cents a glass. Those who were selling their beer at ten cents and the brewers took a pledge that they would keep prices at \$3.50 a keg, and the saloon owners pledged they would not sell foreign beer.⁴⁰

Every saloon had drinking paraphernalia. Nearly all saloons had several different types of glasses, not just the shot glasses seen on the silver screen. Beer mugs and tumblers would have been more common than shot glasses. Depending on what types of beverages they served, a saloon might even have long stemmed wine glasses, or other high quality glassware made for drinking bandy, champagne, and wine.⁴¹ Saloons required a range of utensils and accoutrements. Because serving food was not the main priority, it was not usually important to have fancy plates and utensils, most plates found were more durable than fancy.⁴²

Food was an important aspect to many saloons, as important as alcohol in bringing in customers. Miller's Saloon in Atchison, Kansas in 1881 claimed to be the only saloon in the area that served a "splendid lunch." Calling his lunch "splendid" may have been a ploy to take customers from other establishments also serving lunch or it could have been the only local saloon serving lunch. Mutton and lamb were much more common than now, sometimes even making up the majority of the meat sold, although pork and beef were common as well. Some of the condiments used in the American West included tabasco sauce, and more commonly

⁴⁰ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver, CO) March 13, 1873.

⁴¹ Kelly J. Dixon, *Boomtown Saloons: Archaeology and History in Virginia City* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2005), 101.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 105.

Worcestershire sauce, as well as catsup.⁴³ Other types of food offered varied from oysters to buffalo, goose, bear, rabbit, venison, as well as a variety of other meats. Fruits and vegetables were much more difficult to find in a saloon, but were not totally absent.⁴⁴

Among the most popular foodstuffs were oysters, brought in live in barrels of wet straw. At the Court Hall Saloon in Denver, Colorado, there was an “Oyster and Lunch Room,” while The Mayflower Saloon in Little Rock, Arkansas, was able to brag about the freshest oysters in the state, packed on ice. One of the few ways to get fresh sea food off of the coast, oysters were a popular sea food among saloons across the country, including the West. Catfish, however, was available as well, so popular that the type of catfish served could make a difference: there were some people who thought that the small blue cat was sweeter than the larger shovel head cat fish, while others were of the opinion that the small blue cat fish was tougher and had a fishier taste.⁴⁵

The most noticeable variation within saloons came with the buildings themselves, and one of the biggest myths surrounding Old West saloons has been that all saloons were the same. The building that housed the saloon could vary from a tent put up in a railroad town, to a multiple story building with a kitchen and rooms to rent out to customers. In railroad towns, a saloon might be set up in a tent, complete with bar, and utensils that were moved with the train as the rails are built. In more established towns, there may have been a lavish saloon connected to theatres, with cut glass decanters and high quality wines and brandies. Some saloons were in a one story building by themselves or in a multiple story building with other businesses. The Court Hall Saloon, in Virginia City, for example, was located under a jewelry store. Costello’s Saloon, also in Virginia City was several stories in its own building with rooms that can be rented like a

⁴³ “Millers saloon, on Commercial street, below Third,” *The Globe*, (Atchison, KS) September 19, 1881; Issue 1,173; col B.

⁴⁴ Erdoes, *Saloons of the Old West*, 114.

⁴⁵ Dixon, *Boomtown Saloon*, 40.

hotel and even featured a shooting gallery.⁴⁶

That said, there were a few features that many of the saloons across the West had in common. One of those architectural features that many saloons used was the set of swinging double doors which would have been installed just behind the street entrance, which would usually have been a regular door, particularly in the central and northern plains states. The purpose of these doors is best described by a man remembering his childhood:

I always wanted to see the picture of the “nakkid lady” over the bar and would sneak back and forth in front of them swingin’ doors hoping to get a good look, but them doors were working too business-like, operating on steel springs. You could peek under them and see a lot of books and spurs lined up at the bar, or you could stand on your tippie-toes and admire a bunch of big hats, but I never got a good look at that nude lady until I was old enough to walk in and buy a drink.⁴⁷

Preventing children from seeing nude art hanging on the wall was only a side effect of the swinging doors. The real purpose of these doors was to allow people to see inside the establishment without anyone seeing the people drinking. There was similar reasoning behind the use of heavy curtains, wanted posters, or potted plants over the windows so it was difficult to see in from the outside, and also served to prevent law enforcement from causing the saloon owner and patrons trouble if the saloon remained open after the laws said they should close.⁴⁸

The images of Appendix 1 illustrate several examples of the different types of saloons. The first image from “The Saloon: A Frontier Institution” is of a small brick building which has a simple wooden door with a small sign. This saloon has no windows in the front and is narrow, and long. In this saloon the windows were along the sides of the building. On the right side there is another wing of the building with a second door to maybe another business another part of the saloon such as a dining hall or guest rooms. Image two is a wooden saloon located in a building

⁴⁶ “Court Hall Saloon,” *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, (Denver, CO) November 9th 1878; col E.

⁴⁷ Erdoes, *Saloons of the Old West*, 46.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

with multiple businesses, to the left of the open saloon door there is a door to another business and several signs of drinks available there. Most of the people in this picture are fairly dirty suggesting that it was a working class saloon; the only one of them in clean clothes appears to be the bartender. Image three shows a saloon similar to what might be found in a Western movie with large glass windows in the front with elaborate decoration. Image four show a much simpler saloon that was installed into a repurposed building, possible an old school house.

The interior of these saloons varied greatly. Some saloon owners used cheap materials to construct what they needed while others would draped their saloons in finely carved and finished woods with chandeliers, large mirrors and finely polished brass bars, including one in Portland, Oregon, that was 684 feet long. The counter, brass bar, and the backbar complete with the establishments stock on different liquors were all things that were just about required for a saloon even if the counter was only wide enough for a few people to get their drinks and leave.

These images show a great deal about the types of people who patronized them and events that took place in saloons. Image eight shows a very upscale barroom, with a polished counter sporting a simple but distinct design on the front, along with a brass bar at the base lined with metal spittoons. The walls and ceiling are wallpapered and there are several paintings and mirrors hanging from the walls. Behind the counter there is a wide variety of liquors, and even the cash register behind the counter is decorated nicely. Next to the bar is a stove which would be used to warm the building in the winter. The wooden floor is damaged, dirty, and unfinished. In contrast to this saloon, image five has an unfinished wooden counter without even the brass bar at its base. The floor is dirt and messes, unless particularly nasty, would have been largely ignored. Despite the minimal quality of the building, there is still a wide range of bottles behind the counter with a few different types of glasses, and in theme with the West a revolver hanging

on the wall.

It was very common for drinking houses to help its visitors with some of their other “vices,” particularly tobacco. A spittoon was an item that one could find at most old West saloons. Even these simple buckets for spitting were greatly varied from saloon to saloon: some were simple clay pots, others were engraved stoneware, and in some saloons they even had a tortoiseshell glaze, making them some of the nicest things a person spits into.⁴⁹

Saloons offered more than just food, tobacco, and alcohol, with the distinction between a saloon and a gambling establishment was not always clear. Gambling was a popular past time in the nineteenth century along with drinking and smoking. Poker was a common game to be found, along with chess, and checkers, although dice and card games were played far more often. Keno was a popular gambling attraction that could have prizes up to a five dollar gold coin to the winner and a free lunch to everyone who played. Roulette tables were yet another games that could be played in drinking houses, a roulette table is shown in the foreground of image eight. In this picture one can also see men gambling behind the roulette table, and a second group playing cards in front of the dining room door.⁵⁰

The distinction between a saloon and a hotel was also complicated, ranging from saloons that offered a place to sleep to hotels that had saloons attached. The types of accommodations changed from place to place, but despite the amount of space available there always seemed to be room for more people one traveler noted:

For a bed in a house, barn, blacksmith shop or hay yard (none to be had) \$10.—
For sleeping on a billiard table, \$5.—Ditto under table, \$3.—Sleeping behind bar,
\$7.—For a horse blanket in an old sugar hogshead per night, \$10.—For crockery
crate with straw, \$7.50. Without Straw, \$5.75. For cellar door, \$4.00.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Dixon, *Boomtown Saloon*, 117-120.

⁵⁰ Dixon, *Boomtown Saloon*, 113; Elliot West, “The Saloon: A Frontier Institution” *The American West*, Vol. 17 No. 1 (Buffalo, Wyoming: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1980), 17.

⁵¹ Erdoes, *Saloons of the Old West*, 104.

Some places were more suited for offering places to sleep than others. In one Leadville saloon a sleeping palace was built with huge double decker bunks to sleep eighty people.⁵² Image seven shows how cramped living quarters can be, with narrow boards for people to sleep on and under.

In many towns, the number of saloons that operated was equal to the number of all of businesses in the area.⁵³ Because of the huge numbers of barrooms operating in the American West there was a need for those drinking houses to each offer something that could not be found at other saloons. Today, most of the bars in a town are around the same area, but they all have something different to offer, it may be a cigar bar, or a club with loud music and a dance floor. Finding two bars that are the same would have been as difficult in the West as it is today.⁵⁴

Because of competition, each saloon had to create its own image to make it stand out from others in the area. This might be done with the food, or the activities available, however the type of materials used to build the structure and how it was decorated could create the right feel for a certain group of people to keep them coming back to one saloon instead of another. In one advertisement, from Ruby City, Idaho, the “Star Brewery and Billiard Saloon,” advertised lager beer, in barrel, keg, and bottle. The ad also mentioned cigars, wine and liquors, as well as Phelans patent combination cushions. The saloon brewed its own beer, and had several other services to go with it, including tobacco and gambling.⁵⁵

Therefore, variety was perhaps the main feature of the western saloon. The saloons of Virginia City, Nevada, for example, are some of the most studied saloons in the West. Several of these saloons underwent an archaeological study which showed more than newspapers what

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³ Elliott West, “The Saloon : A Frontier institution,” *The American West*, Vol. 17 No. 1 (Buffalo Wyoming, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1980), 15.

⁵⁴ Dary, *Seeking Pleasure in the Old West* 195.

⁵⁵ “Star Brewery and Billiard Saloon,” *The Owyhee Avalanche*, (Ruby City, ID) Saturday, August 20, 1870; Issue 46; col C.

types of food and dining utensils were used. Dixon's study done in Virginia City looked at a four saloons each owned by a different ethnic group and each catering to a different clientele.⁵⁶

The German-owned saloon, the Piper's Corner Bar, in Virginia City operated between the 1860s and 1880s and leading up the 1880 Piper remodeled the building into an opera house. The atmosphere of the opera house was much more upscale than many of the other drinking establishments in the town. It was designed to appeal to a theatre-going crowd and as such had more of a gentlemanly environment that would not be found in the other saloons.⁵⁷

Another saloon in the study was the Boston Saloon the establishment of A.G. Brown, an African American from Massachusetts. Neither particularly fancy nor seedy, it catered particularly to African American clientele. The Boston Saloon likely served people from all sections of the socioeconomic spectrum in Virginia City of the African American population, which was not always the case of ethnically specific saloons in the town.⁵⁸

The other two saloons in the study were O'Brien and Costello's Saloon and Shooting Gallery and the Hibernia Brewery. Both of these establishments were designed to cater to the Irish immigrants in the city. The biggest difference between these two saloons, was that Costello's had a shooting gallery to cater to a lower income clientele of the Irish immigrants whereas the Brewery was focused on a more middle class clientele.⁵⁹

This study also went into more detail about the kinds of services each of these saloons provided for its patrons. While all of the saloons used similar dishware that was plain and sturdy, the variety came in the types of glasses they used and the types of food they provided. The glassware accommodated the different kinds of alcohol that they were serving in all of the saloons,

⁵⁶ Kelly J. Dixon, *Boomtown Saloons*, 26.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵⁹ Kelly J. Dixon, *Boomtown Saloons*, 31.

wine glasses as well as beer mugs and shot glasses were all common place in all of the saloons. Food ranged from the Boston Saloon serving lamb and mutton as the most common meats, whereas beef was much more common at the Piper's saloon. At the middle class Hibernia Saloon, there was an even split between beef, lamb and mutton. There were pig remains found but was much less than the amount of sheep or cow remains. The food available at each of these saloons comes down to what the clientele likes to eat as well as how much they want to pay for their food.⁶⁰

Whether in the East or the West, the main purpose of the saloon was to sell intoxicating beverages, but they provided much more. In archeological studies of several different saloons across the West only about thirty eight percent of the artifacts found were related to liquor. The rest of the artifacts illustrate some of the other activities that were taking place there, such as tobacco related items, household items, pharmaceuticals, and personal items. The relationship between liquor related items and other items found is only slightly more in favor of liquor related items for saloons than an average drinking household. This study shows the variety of different services that were provided by the saloon.⁶¹

What Dixon found in Virginia City was similar across the West, where there would have been a saloon for just about every social class. The mid to late 1800 was still a time of racial and social inequality. Because of this, there were saloons specifically for the African American population of the town. For example, the Atchison, Kansas, newspaper *The Globe*, mentioned a small African American saloon, which was often filled to capacity. Each establishment catered to a different social group, where patrons in Atchison could find a German-owned saloon would more likely serve German beer and foods and an Irish saloon would likely serve items from their

⁶⁰ Ibid 88.

⁶¹ Catherine Holder Spude, "Brothels and Saloons: An Archaeology of Gender in the American West," *Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Sin City (2005), 95.

home country.

The reputation of a specific saloon was also an important consideration in the variety of saloons across both the East and West. It would not be uncommon for a saloon that had a more upscale visitor base to be referred to as a gentlemanly resort. If a woman were to open a saloon it was important for them to be known as “Women of the right persuasion,” otherwise their saloon could easily gain the reputation of being more of a brothel than a drinking house. There would not be saloons known as “gentlemanly resorts if there were not also saloon that had a less savory reputation.”⁶²

Social Hub or Den of Violence

While saloons were important hubs for gatherings and cultural survival, they were even more important in the growth of community. Until the 1880s, when the argument for the temperance movement was developing, most news articles about saloons, by a wide margin, had something to deal with their role as a social institution. There is a very telling article from Houston, Texas.

A Man walked into a saloon in Wasan, Wis., the other day, where three men were sitting around a fireless stove. As he entered, all eyes were turned toward him. Apparently taking a mental inventory of the number of persons in the room, the new-comer walked up to the bar and blandly ordered four glasses of beer. The boots that had adorned the top of the stove now sought the floor; three men cleared their months of tobacco, and all looked at the bar-tender as he filled the glasses and placed them in a row on the bar. When everything was ready, the three loungers arose, and the stranger paid for the beer, then starting with the glass furthest from the door, he emptied all that the bar-tender had filled, and left the saloon, the three chairs were resumed....⁶³

⁶² Two Female women, of the Woman’s right persuasion, have started a saloon at Wellsville, Ohio,” *The Weekly Arizona Miner*, (Prescott, AZ) September 10, 1870; Issue 37; Col E.; “Pony McConnell has disposed of his interest in the “fashion” Saloon, in Ruby, with the intention of starting a first-class drinkery in Boise City,” *The Owyhee Avalanche*, (Ruby City, ID) November 11, 1865; Issue 13; Col B.

⁶³ “A Man walked into a saloon in Wasan, Wis., the other day, where three men were sitting around a fireless stove,” *The Galveston Daily News*, (Houston, TX) November 11, 1874; Issue 265; Col E.

The article continues to ridicule the man who bought the drinks for playing such a cruel trick on those other men. It also shows however, that the saloon is a place of community. It was in no way odd that a stranger would walk into a saloon and buy a round for everyone that was there already, and the fact that he made it seem like he would do this and then did not share all of the drinks that he bought was seen as a horrible act of selfishness.

Saloons would also often act as meeting places for various activities, some of which were religious. In Black Hawk, Colorado, "Rev. Dr. Balcom," preached from the Bible to a group of men gathered at Scobey's Saloon. Not only did a preacher preach in this saloon, but he was also said to have had one of the best audiences that he could have hoped for.⁶⁴ While it often seems like bar rooms and churches were at odds with each other, it was often not always the case with many of the people who frequented saloons also faithful members of the local church. In fact there was even a saloon owner who also played the organ on church during the Sunday service. Unfortunately, for this bartender and the church community, he occasionally had a few customers who would stay particularly late on Saturdays, and the organ player fell asleep during the service. To make matters worse, this particular organ player was also a loud snorer and had to be woken up to play the end of the service.⁶⁵

By contrast, a long time bartender's retirement might have been an important event worthy of being in the paper. Even if that bartender had seen some trouble in his career it was still a big deal when a significant saloon, especially one that had a good reputation shut down. Some of these locations were popular enough to be open day and night, and at times there was even a dancing hall that opened at midnight on Sundays to work around the laws against

⁶⁴ As per announcement, the Rev. DR. Balcolm preached from the following Text," *Daily Central City Register*, (Central City, CO) December 6, 1871.

⁶⁵ Bonfort's Wine and Liquor Circular is responsible for the following story," *The Weekly Arizona Miner*, (Prescott, AZ) September 7, 1877.

operating a saloon on Sundays.⁶⁶

The social nature of saloons was their lifeblood and at times, their biggest liability. There was a certain degree of risk when dealing with an establishment that has the primary purpose of serving alcohol to men at a time when the average consumption was around ten gallons of pure alcohol per person per year.⁶⁷ However, a saloon would not have stayed in business very long if there were bar fights that smashed bottles and glasses every day. Furthermore, it was rare for a person to start a fight or pull a gun in a saloon and making it out without being arrested. That was true for both the patrons and owners of saloons. In Missouri, in 1880 a gang of ruffians came into a saloon owned by a Mr. Schoenhorst, and had drunk enough to want a fight in the bar. In order to try and prevent any violence in his saloon he grabbed a shotgun that was sitting on the counter behind him. Unfortunately for Mr. Schoenhorst, this had the opposite effect. Soon after, he grabbed his gun everyone was out of his saloon, in a short moment after that bricks, rocks, and mud were thrown through his windows. He stepped up to his door and tried to shot at the men attacking his saloon but the gun did not fire. In this case, the saloon owner was arrested.⁶⁸

The biggest theme in movies and Western stories involving saloons is violence. Whether it is a gun fight or bar room brawl, whenever people walk into a saloon in Hollywood it is almost inevitable that a fight will break out. In reality, most cases of gun violence in saloons had more to do with drinking than an outlaw or sheriff hunting down someone and gunning them down in a duel, although that did happen. In Denver, Colorado, an angry husband went in search of a saloon owner with a gun and after exclaiming “I’m going to kill you!” took a shot at the man. He

⁶⁶ “A greenhorn yesterday asked us where Allen an Cooke’s dining Saloon was,” *New Haven Daily Palladium* (New Haven, CT) July 29, 1865; Ald. White, of Denver, has retired from the saloon business,” *Weekly Resister-Call*, (Central City, CO) July 26, 1878; Issue 52; col B.; Cheyenne Notes, *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Cheyenne, WY) November 23, 1875.

⁶⁷ West, “The Saloon,” 14.

⁶⁸ “Shot-Gun Policy Put in Practice by a Saloon Keeper against Roughs,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, (St. Louis, MO) Monday, January 19, 1880; pg. 2.

missed and tragedy was avoided. Gun violence around saloons was more like this incident.⁶⁹ In 1874, a saloon keeper in Chicago was drinking with a friend and after the latter started hitting on his wife, the saloon keeper shot him with a shot gun, the night ended with the saloon keeper in jail.⁷⁰ Along with drunken incidents, there was the occasional robbery that took place in saloons, where men actually did come in with handkerchiefs around the faces and rob the owners at gun point.⁷¹

Most gunfights, however, were not as neat an affair as portrayed in the movies. This was due to the fact that usually when a gun fight occurred in a saloon, it would be as the result of drinking and an argument so when a gun was drawn several shots were fired and only a small proportion of those shot hit the target. Not only did the shooter miss with most of his shots, the one that did strike the target typically did not have much of an effect because he then struck the man in the head with his gun before he was arrested.⁷²

Most acts of violence around saloons did not involve firearms, and while most nights were quiet, there would be the occasional fight or brawl, that would almost inevitably end with the local law enforcement showing up. Ordinarily, a fight was just between two people, like what happened at Appleton's Saloon in 1876, in Chicago, the bartender had in a fight with a rowdy customer, the fight happened at 4:30 in the morning which resulted in the saloon owner being fined for being open after midnight.⁷³ However, there would be occasions where the fights could get much more "interesting," with a much worse outcome. In one of these saloon "rows," in

⁶⁹ "Almost a Tragedy Angry Husband Goes after a Saloon-keeper with a Gun," *Rocky Mountain News*, (Denver, CO) Saturday, September 26, 1896; pg. 5; Issue 270; col B.

⁷⁰ "Another murder," *Inter Ocean*, (Chicago, IL) Wednesday, December 16, 1874; pg. 5; Issue 266; col C.

⁷¹ "Daring Thieves," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, (Chicago, IL) Sunday, February 07, 1892; pg. 3; Issue 320; col D.

⁷² "A little after midnight," *Daily Central City Register*, (Central City, CO) Tuesday, August 06, 1872; Issue 309; col B.

⁷³ "At about 4:30 o'clock yesterday morning a fight occurred in Appleton's saloon, at No. 174 South Clark street, between the bartender and a man whose name could not be learned," *Inter Ocean*, (Chicago, IL) Friday, February 04, 1876; pg. 8; Issue 271; col E.

Chicago, one man resorted to using a pool cue to beat another man over the head which resulted in him being thrown violently out of the saloon. Many people carried knives with them and so when a brawl got started, someone ended up with a stab wound.⁷⁴

One way some saloon owners tried to avoid having their customers from becoming too violent was to have boxing matches. It may have just been an attempt to bring in more people to their bar, but having organized fights may have helped in keeping the rest of the drinkers in line. There are a few examples of boxing matches in the appendix images, one out front of the bar and the other right in the middle with the tables and chairs moved out of the way. For saloon owners in the West, boxing more than a way to direct violence around public places; it was an event in itself that could attract patrons, and they had their own boxing leagues. It was also another avenue for gambling, and socializing.⁷⁵

While there were a number of news articles about violence happening in or around saloons it was nowhere near as endemic as Hollywood would make it seem. Looking back at the articles only about one fifth of all the articles are about violence in saloons, many saloons may not have much happen that violent, or at least violent enough to make the news. It could be that violence was not always reported. However, these causes were most likely smaller, incidences that were not on the grand scale that is seen in movies. Those that did had an incident once every few years at the most.⁷⁶

Then, as now, however, when someone went to a saloon, they probably expected a quiet night with a few drinks and maybe some gambling and socializing, there with only a few

⁷⁴ "A serious cutting affray," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, (Chicago, IL) Friday, October 22, 1880; pg. 5; Issue 183; col D.

⁷⁵ John V. Grombach, *The Saga of the Fist: The 9,000 Year Story of Boxing in Text and Pictures*, (New York, A. S. Barnes and Company: 1977), 36-45.

⁷⁶ This research involved searching on-line newspaper databases. The Importance of the numbers of violent articles is the small proportion compared to the rest of the articles. Only about 1 fifth of five hundred articles on *Chronicling America*, with the search term saloon . Accessed 6/24/2013.

expecting a fight or shooting. Imagine an alternate version of a saloon experience from the one from Ogallala or Denver: a long day's work on the rail road a man makes his way back down the freshly laid tracks to the town of tents that had popped up overnight with the crew of railroad workers (image six). As he trudges through the mud past several plain white tents, he stops in front of a tent with a white and black wooden sign that says saloon on the outside of a large tent. He pulls the tent flap back and steps inside, he is noticeably surprised by what he finds inside. There are already a handful of other rail workers sitting around a stained and finished table drinking whisky out of fine tumblers. The bar is carved hardwood, and is quite a bit nicer than many of the counters that he had seen at many of the saloons that had their own building. If it was not for the canvass of the tent struggling to stay tied to the frame in the wind and the lack of windows there would be no way of telling that this saloon was not a permanent structure. He walked up the bar, orders a beer and then finds an open spot at one of the tables, and sat chewing what tobacco he had left and sipping his beer. As he drank his beer he thought back to the saloon he used to drink at before he started working on the rail road.

It is nothing fancy, and old wooden counter that may have been polished and shined at one point but now was cracked and scuffed to where it was almost impossible to tell if it had ever been finished or if it was made from raw oak planks. The brass rail by his feet was dull and dented but still managed to convey a certain degree of comfort. As he sat and talked with the bartender and his old friends they slowly filled the spittoon at their feet. The men behind him sat and quietly ate their dinner while another table was rather loudly playing a game of dominoes. It may not have been the fanciest saloon in town, but he knows that he would always be welcome here. The challenge for saloons and their patrons in the nineteenth century would be to convince their fellow citizens, and the generations that followed, that this latter scenario, not the one of

brawls and shoot outs, was the more common and typical one.

CHAPTER II

SEDGWICK COUNTY

The greatest town I ever saw
Is this town of Wichita.
Fun is plenty and so is law
And everybody plays Keno.⁷⁷

Wichita, Kansas, developed because of its connections with the railroad and the cattle trade, making it an ideal location for the development of a strong drinking culture. In some ways, Wichita's saloons paralleled those of other Kansas cattle towns, such as Dodge City and Abilene. The cattle drovers who came into town fit all three of the major criteria for heavy drinking. They were almost entirely male, traveling far from home and family, and had reason to celebrate the end of their cattle drive where liquor was in great abundance through saloons, breweries, and wholesalers.

Some cities in the West featured saloons from their start right up to the onset of national prohibition, Virginia City being an example. Meanwhile, many railroad and cattle towns, such as Abilene and Newton, boomed for such a short time that saloon culture only manifested its first, disorganized and wild phase, never having time to create more orderly, respectable establishments. The Wichita saloon story, by contrast, fits to a particularly defined time frame. Because Kansas started prohibition so much earlier than almost other states in the union, 1881, the drinking culture was not able to develop in the same way that other it would in other towns across the West, and instead, was concentrated to the years between 1869 and 1881. Although the cattle trade was relatively short lived in the area, lasting only about five years, Wichita

⁷⁷ Stan Hoig, *Cowtown Wichita and the Wild, Wicked West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 109.

continued as a railroad town and agricultural town and was able to support a decade-long drinking culture.

Wichita's location in Sedgwick County played a very important role in the development of the city and its saloons. With its location on the Arkansas River, Wichita attempted to segregate the wilder aspects of it to the west side of the river in an attempt to keep Wichita respectable. While Wichita proper did have a drinking culture in the 1870s, its settled population with a higher percentage of families and restrictions placed on the types of establishments and gambling that could take place. Meanwhile, there were few regulations on the opposite side of the river allowing those who truly desired to over indulge a place to do so away from civilized society. As a result, the most notorious and wild behavior tended to be concentrated in the community of Elgin, established in 1871 and later renamed Delano. As evidence to the importance of the cattle trade on the establishment on this township, one of the streets running along the public square was Texas Avenue.⁷⁸

As a town grew and became more permanent, the drinking establishments did the same. In many mining towns, the first saloons were established in tents or log cabins constructed in a day. As the community grew, the saloons became more permanent and quality establishments.⁷⁹ To a lesser degree, the same was true in Wichita and Sedgwick County, with rough buildings of 1869 and 1870 similar to ones that could be found in mining areas. After a few years, as with other western towns, Wichita saw the development of lavish beer gardens, pool halls, and breweries.

“Near Brimstone”

⁷⁸ Sedgwick County GIS maps, Map of Delano(formally Elgin), <http://gis.sedgwick.gov/view/plats/SelDateNoDSN1.asp>, 1871.

⁷⁹ West, *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier*, 28.

The reputation of the “Wild West” element in Wichita can trace its beginning to before the railroad and the cattle trade came to Wichita. The first saloon in Wichita, The Buckhorn, opened in 1869, before Wichita was even formally recognized as a town.⁸⁰ Proprietor Henry Vigus offered bedding, a dirt dance floor, and its key attraction, a music box. The Buckhorn was, at the time, the saloon of choice for all classes of frontiersmen, being the only saloon in town for its early days. Henry Vigus also worked with E. H. Durfee who operated a trading post in Wichita and was a licensed Indian trader.⁸¹

The saloon as an institution soon flourished in Wichita because of the sizeable revenue that it brought to both the county and the city through taxes on liquor, even if it was also seen as a hurdle to creating a proper city. The very first Board of County Commissioners meeting had as one of their first orders of business the issuing of a “license to sell liquor retail,” on April 27, 1870 at a fee of five hundred dollars a year.⁸² In 1871, the Board of County Commissioners agenda decided to allocate the money raised from liquor license to fund repairs on a bridge on the Chisholm Trail.⁸³ Not only did the city bring in money from licensing, but the city also brought in money from fining people for gambling and drunken and disorderly conduct.⁸⁴

Even before the first main season started, Texas cattle drovers brought over 3,000 heads of cattle came in by spring 1871, and by the end of the year over 400,000 had passed through Wichita. The arrival of the railroad in 1872 marked the start of the first major season of the

⁸⁰ D. B. Emerti, *History of Wichita*, Genealogy and Local History Collection, Wichita Public Library(Paper for Wichita State University) 2; Craig Miner, *Wichita: The Early Years, 1865-80* (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln: 1982) ,32.

⁸¹ Hon. O. H. Bentley, *History of Wichita and Sedgwick County, Kansas, Past and Present, Including accounts of the Cities, Towns and Villages of the County*, (C. F. Cooper and Co., Chicago: 1910), Chapter 2.

⁸² Board of County Commissioners, *April 27, 1870 Meeting Minutes*, Sedgwick County Records Management Archives, hereafter Board of County Commissioners.

⁸³ Board of County Commissioners, *October 7, 1872*.

⁸⁴ City Council, *Meeting Minutes*, Genealogy and Local History at Wichita Public Library Central Branch.

⁸⁴These Minutes contain the city records for liquor licenses, complaints filed with the city, arrest records, fines paid for all businesses, and general business, 1871-1878 (Hereafter referred to as City Council Records).

Texas cattle trade and the city-became the major trail end for Texas drovers. The cattle trade was only in Wichita for four seasons before the moving of the quarantine line in 1876, put in place to protect the local cattle from a disease that the Texas cattle brought in with them. Thereafter, Dodge City became the next cattle town after Wichita. Still, the cattle trade was also a big reason to why Wichita was able to bring in enough money required to become a major city, bringing in hundreds of thousands heads of cattle through the city, along with the cowboys.⁸⁵

The cattle trade, more than any other single factor, had the greatest impact on the culture of drinking in Wichita in the 1870s. The cattle trade brought with it saloons, brothels and gambling houses, which were popular among the cattle drovers. However, Wichita's citizens were initially able to overlook some of these problems that came along with the cattle trade because of the money they could bring into the city. It was said that a "Texas cattle trader ranks Wichita above all others in the region in all accommodations."⁸⁶

For Wichita, however, the cattle trade was a double edged sword. On the one hand, it brought in great fortunes. With these "lively" establishments, however, came all the aspects of a city that could ruin its reputation. To protect its all-important reputation Wichita used several different strategies. With the Texas cattle trade, saloons and vice culture became so prevalent, or perceived so, that one person of the time wrote:

At that time the streets were thronged with Texan cow boys, with huge spurs on their heels, and howitzers strapped upon their backs. Every other door opened into a saloon. The first thing heard in the morning and the last at night was that unceasing music at the saloons and gambling houses. The town was headquarters for harlots for two hundred miles around. Fighting, shooting and even killing were not infrequent. The streets were patrolled by a half dozen policemen. Gamblers were more numerous than respectable me.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Craig Miner, *Wichita: The Early Years, 1865-80* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 52; *The Emporia News*, May 12, 1871; *The Emporia News*, September 1, 1871, 3.

⁸⁶ *The Wichita Eagle*, April 19, 1872, 3.

⁸⁷ Cited in Hoig, *Cowtown Wichita and the Wild, Wicked West*, 111.

One of the most popular stories to illustrate this point involved the life and death of Jack Ledford. Originally from North Carolina, Ledford came to Wichita in 1870 and found himself no shortage of trouble. His exploits also included emptying his six shooter into the music box at the Buckhorn. His highest profile incident involved a railroad heist in which a fifty wagon government train was robbed and several of workers were killed. Ledford was not directly involved in this robbery, but was charged with compliancy in a following transaction. As a result W. N. Walker, Sedgwick County's first sheriff and Wichita's first marshal, placed him under arrest. He was set to go on trial in the summer of 1871 in Topeka for this crime but released on bail.⁸⁸

Even so, Ledford invested in local businesses. He acquired the Empire House Hotel, renaming it the Harris Hotel after his wife's maiden name. This legitimate business was not enough to keep Ledford out of trouble, however. His reputation included a fight with Jack Bridges, who was a deputy U.S. marshal at Hays City. Although Ledford did win this fight, it created an enemy Ledford could not afford to have. On February 26, 1871, Bridges came into Wichita with twenty-five troops from the U.S. fifth cavalry under the command of Captain G.W. Randall looking for Ledford. When Ledford learned that these men were after him he hid in the outhouse outside of George DeMoore's saloon. The cavalry surrounded the Harris Hotel and began to search the premise despite his wife telling them he was not there. When it was discovered where Ledford was hiding, he came out of the outhouse shooting, which resulted in Bridges being shot in the arm. Bridges would have been killed if Ledford's pistol did not misfire when aimed point blank at his chest, instead trying to escape Ledford was shot a total of three

⁸⁸ Hoig, *Cowtown Wichita and the Wild, Wicked West*, 109-110; Bentley, *History of Wichita and Sedgwick County*, Chapter 2.

times and died from his injuries.⁸⁹

The majority of the vice, or at least the majority of the reported vice, took place on the other side of the river, in what was called Delano, and once thought of as “near brimstone” because of the excessive amount of bawdy houses and saloons catering to the majority of the drovers before they proceeded into the actual Wichita city limits.⁹⁰ Because much of what was not allowed in Wichita was permitted in Delano, the reputation of West Wichita being a kind of moral hell from the standpoint of respectable men and women was understandable.

Although many saloon owners remained legitimate business figures who sought to keep their establishments running smoothly and avoiding trouble, there were aspects that made Wichita being a dangerous place to live and operate a business. While not all of the violence and unsavory activity came from the operation of saloons and houses of ill repute, local leaders saw drinking and gambling businesses as among the leading causes. They saw a strong correlation between an increase in drinking establishment and a rise in violence, both of which took off around 1872. This was, however, more do to a higher population and the large numbers of cattle drovers coming into the area. There were large numbers young men coming into town for short periods of time looking to relax, a larger cause of violence than simply the existence of saloons.

One example of the complicated attitudes towards drinking in Wichita is the case of Emil Warner, a German-born saloon owner. In 1871, Emil claimed that Mike Meagher, the city marshal, and one of his deputies, came into his establishment after one of his customers was found drunk on the street. Meagher told Warner that he could get into trouble getting people drunk. Warner replied that he had paid his fees and what he was doing was completely legal.

⁸⁹ Hoig, *Cowtown Wichita and the Wild, Wicked West* 110; *The Emporia News*, March 10, 1871, 3.

⁹⁰ Hoig, *Cowtown Wichita and the Wild, Wicked West*, 115.

Meagher and his deputy did not like that answer and proceeded to pistol whip Warner.⁹¹

It did not take long for the citizens of Wichita to notice the violence that came with the cattle trade. In early June 1872, in a dance hall and saloon in Delano, a man was shot through the thigh, which caused a long scathing article about the lawlessness that the cattle traders brought to Wichita. Marshal Murdock, one of Wichita's founders and *The Wichita Eagle* editor, argued for a stronger police force to help enforce the ban on weapons in Wichita, claiming that the Texas cattle drivers were just as civil as anyone but any man, when mixed with whisky and women, will cause trouble. This realization had already created restrictions on deadly weapons, gambling and drunkenness that were put in place during the city's first council meeting.⁹²

With the first major cattle season in full swing, there were several episodes of violence throughout 1872. The attitudes of the people of Wichita were made quite clear early on in the days of the cattle trade. In one article in the first major cattle season in Wichita noted the "Texas cattle man philly (sic) is (a) pistol crack fiddle poker shouts and clinking glasses usually dies in a drunken brawl."⁹³ Whether this was an accurate depiction of most drovers is unknown, but it does illustrate how the cattlemen were viewed: violent, drunk, and looking for nothing more than to have a good time at the end of their trails.

Wichita was not completely defenseless. Mike Meagher, the marshal of Wichita in 1872, did his part in making sure that the city was as safe as possible with the volume of young men coming through. The main way that this was done was to enforce a policy of keeping weapons out of the city, seeing firearms and knives, not alcohol, as the source of the violence in the area. In one instance, he "went into a saloon and took a knife from a fellow's girdle (belt), it looked

⁹¹ City Council Records, *Petition 1871*; Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000*, 194.

⁹² *The Wichita Eagle*, June 7, 1872, 3; Jordan D. Jones, *The Wichita Police Department: The first Century*, Wichita Public Library Genealogy Reference Material.

⁹³ *The Wichita Eagle*, May 27, 1872, 1.

like a butchers cleaver elongated. There were two together and had concluded to stand him off but finally were persuaded not to do so.”⁹⁴

Meagher was not the only law man in the vicinity making sure that their community was safe from the rough and rowdy cowmen. Bill Brooks was the Newton marshal in 1872 and he did his part to make sure that the cattle men were as well behaved as possible. Even in his own life was in danger. In June 1872, “Bill Brooks, Newton Marshal, shot three times by Texas cattle men while trying to arrest two men running amuck. Chased ten miles after being shot in the right breast and in limbs before returning to dress his wounds. Will recover.”⁹⁵

During the years of the cattle trade, shootings in the Delano saloons occurred more often than any other time period in the township’s history. When three men were shot at Raymond’s saloon, *The Wichita Eagle*’s Delano informant said “it took that number to make the regular week’s quota.”⁹⁶ There are no records that indicate three shootings a week during this period, so it is possible that this informant is exaggerating. It is also quite possible that many of the shootings that took place across the river did not get reported. It is also possible; however, that many of the shooting incidents that did happen resulted in no serious injuries or any injuries whatsoever. Perhaps people were blending what happened with the cattle traders in Wichita with that of Newton and even perhaps a fatal shooting in a Caldwell saloon after two Texas men started a fight after “drinking pretty freely.”⁹⁷

These shootings demonstrate how dangerous the “traditional duel” really was. On a Sunday night, Jackson Davis confronted a Delano Resident when he was walking behind a saloon there. During this confrontation, Charley Jennison was shot in the neck and Jackson Davis

⁹⁴ *The Wichita Eagle*, June 14, 1872, 3.

⁹⁵ *The Wichita Eagle*, June 14, 1872, 3.

⁹⁶ *The Wichita Eagle*, August 16, 1872, 3.

⁹⁷ *The Wichita Eagle*, July 5, 1872, 3.; McCoy, Joseph G. *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest* (Ramsey, Millett & Hudson: 1874), 4.

was shot in the body. The result of this shooting was the death of both of these men. However, the idea of the duel was already a dated idea from when the flintlock pistol was the common dueling instrument. With the more accuracy and rounds available, the six shooter duels like this were more dangerous and as such did not occur as often as popular culture has come to believe.

During the winters, when the cattle trade slowed until the following year, there was a lull in the violence and problems that the cattle trade brought. Keeping cattle in Mexico and Texas during the winter worked best for herd owners due to the mild winters and continuous grazing land year round. The spring of 1873 brought renewed money—and rowdiness-- to West Wichita. In May 1873, “a man from south town [Wichita] was arrested over shoot out to cross bridge came with twenty five dollar fine.”⁹⁸ Shorting after this event, another shooting took place in which a man fired his pistol three times in which no one was injured but he had to pay the treasury thirty two dollars.⁹⁹ The month of May, when there were no injuries from shootings reported; gave way to a more violent June, when a fight broke out between some soldiers and “rowdies” outside of a Delano saloon that resulted in the injuries of two soldiers and Emma Stanly a “girl of the period,” despite their wounds none of them were fatally injured.¹⁰⁰ Thanks to the vigilance of the city marshals, not all of the violent episodes are able to result in the injuries. In June of 1873, when a drunken man attacked the omnibus agent, Mr. Fox, the marshal was able to break up the fight before anyone was injured despite the use of a pistol by the assailant.¹⁰¹

While there was a “no gun” law enforced in Wichita thanks to the efforts of Mike Meagher and others on the police force, Delano was outside of the city limits and this law did not apply. Therefore, the safety of saloon owners and their rowdy patrons could not be left entirely to

⁹⁸ *The Wichita Eagle*, May 21, 1873, 3.

⁹⁹ *The Wichita Eagle*, May 28, 1873, 3.

¹⁰⁰ *The Wichita Eagle*, June 5, 1873, 3.

¹⁰¹ *The Wichita Eagle*, June 5, 1873, 3.

the marshals, county sheriffs, and local law enforcement. Instead of hoping that one of the local marshals or county sheriffs happened to be in the area, many of the saloon owners had to protect themselves. One of the best illustrations of this self-protection was that of Joseph, “Rowdy Joe” Lowe, proprietor of perhaps the best known saloon and dance all on the west side of the Arkansas River. Lowe came to Wichita from Ellsworth with his wife Kate Lowe, where they operated a brothel. When they drugged and robbed a customer they were kicked out the county and came to Wichita. When one of his patrons was being particularly “drunk and disorderly,” Rowdy Joe took it on himself to make sure he did not cause too much trouble by pistol whipping him.¹⁰² It does not say what this patron was doing to justify being pistol whipped in a Delano dance hall. Given the reputation of Rowdy Joe’s establishment and the type of business he kept it is probable that he was likely going to cause physical harm to either some of the working women or other patrons. Remarkably, there does not seem to be evidence of him being chastised for his actions or receiving any fines or legal penalties. This suggests that locals expected for saloon and dance hall owners to play a part in keeping Delano safe.

One of the most spectacular events that took place around the drinking scene in Wichita was brought on because of a rivalry between the establishment of Rowdy Joe and his neighboring proprietor, Edward T. Beard, better known as “Red Beard,” both dance hall owners on the west side of the river. In October 1873, the two of them got in a shootout in which Joe was hit with a bullet in the back of the neck and Red Beard was injured in the arm and hip from buckshot. Neither of these two men was seriously injured, although there were some bystanders who were not as lucky. Bill Anderson, a patron, was struck in the head with a bullet but made a full recovery. One of the women working for one of the men was shot and fatally wounded in the

¹⁰² *The Wichita Eagle*, July 26, 1873, 3; Hoig, *Wild, Wicked, Wichita*, 115.

abdomen. After all of the violence had ended, Rowdy Joe turned himself in and was issued a two thousand dollar fine but otherwise was faced with no other charges. This was not the end of the Rowdy-Red rivalry, and in a drunken episode Red Beard shot at Rowdy Joe through a window only grazing his neck. This resulted in Rowdy Joe, his wife, and a posse of five other men confronting and eventually killing Red Beard.¹⁰³

According to some accounts, Rowdy Joe died in the Black Hills as part of party attacked by Indians, and his body was identified by another of the party. The following year, however, local Wichita papers mentioned that that “James Hope, mayor told Rowdy Joe to get out.” This article went on to talk about all the problems with beer gardens loud and rowdy behavior all night at early hours. This statement came about half a year after Rowdy Joe had supposedly been killed and his establishment had been put up for sale. Other accounts suggest that Lowe and his wife, Rowdy Kate, left Wichita for Dodge City, then Tombstone, and eventually ended up in Denver, Colorado, where they continued to operate a bawdy house.¹⁰⁴

The first ad of sale for the Rowdy Joe Dance Hall describes the establishment thusly “The old Rowdy Joe Dance house is about to be put to uses new. The present occupants have concluded that there is more money and less wear and tear of shoes and nerves in agriculture and the old house which has been the scene of many a dark crime and many starting denouncement will now be hauled out to some rural retreat, where nature cheers with her smiles and every element conspires to bless.”¹⁰⁵ Without Rowdy Joe around to run the establishment, the other unknown owners decided that it was not worth the hassle to operate the place. The owners of the

¹⁰³ *Wichita Eagle*, Oct 30, 1873, 3.; Hoig, *Wild, Wicked, Wichita*, 117; see, particularly, “Sedgwick County, Murder and Tragic Events” in William G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas*, (A. T. Andreas, Chicago IL: 1883), Digitized book, accessed 6/24/2013.

¹⁰⁴ *The Wichita Eagle*, Oct 29, 1874, 3.; Kansas State Historical Society, “Rowdy Joe and Rowdy Kate Lowe,” *Kansapedia*, Created February 2011, accessed 6/24/2013, <http://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/rowdy-joe-and-rowdy-kate-lowe/16526>.

¹⁰⁵ *The Wichita Eagle*, Aug 12, 1875, 3.

building found it exceedingly difficult to sell. After several months on the market the building remained unsold and was then offered for “cheap.”¹⁰⁶

Violence did not just come from drovers, and there were a few instances when some of the locals started trouble. One of these instances took place at one of the dance halls on the west side of the river when two of the dance hall girls fought over a man. Fortunately for these women neither of them was seriously injured in the event. However, it did further the argument against having such establishments in the area.¹⁰⁷

Delano vs Wichita

Wichita proper was not without violence when it came to saloons. In 1876, an article noted that “a disgraceful row occurred last Sabbath evening at a house of ill fame in this city in which two people were slightly hurt with pistols, details not described.”¹⁰⁸ Events like this were much less common in Wichita, or at least less reported, than they were in the more cattle trade oriented areas across the river and really show how important reputation was for saloon owners on the east side of the river. The tone of this article is much more serious than when similar events would happen in a place like Rowdy Joe’s on the west side of the river. Like gambling, prostitution, with all of its Victorian euphemisms, was something that was often kept to the west side of the river and continued to be developed with the cattle trade. In late October in 1872 “another “man trap” has just been built in West Wichita and is in full blast.”¹⁰⁹

Initially, gambling and prostitution took place in saloons on both sides of the Arkansas. The most well-known and conspicuous of these Wichita establishments was known as Keno Corner. Keno Corner was at the Northwest corner of Douglas and Main on the second story

¹⁰⁶ *The Wichita Eagle*, November 11, 1875, 3.

¹⁰⁷ *The Wichita Eagle*, June 21, 1873, 3.

¹⁰⁸ *The Wichita Eagle*, February 17, 1876, 3.

¹⁰⁹ *The Wichita Eagle*, October 31, 1872, 3.

above the citizen's bank established in 1872. The Keno Corner saloon was described as "not only gorgeous but magnificent, not only fashionable but quasi-respectable; when at midnight, throughout the silent town of 49, 85, 76, 32, 91, and 74, 'keno!'" To help attract customer live music was often played out on the balcony of keno corner.¹¹⁰ An order of the City Council around 1873 let all of the saloons in Wichita continue to operate but closed of the gambling and keno houses, forcing them to relocate across the river or go out of business.¹¹¹

As the 1870s progressed, however, local officials worked to quarantine the vice to the west side of the Arkansas. Gambling and keno were outlawed in Wichita in December of 1872. Shortly after the order by the city council was passed, officials decided that keno could continue with a regular "fine" taking place. For example, the keno fine of James Dagner was at seventy five dollars per month. Dagner was one of the first wholesalers of liquor in Wichita and had done a lot of work to advertise the city across the area. This is most likely the reason why he was able to stay in Wichita with a fine instead of being forced out like other gambling establishments. The fine of seventy five dollars a month would likely have been only a small portion of the revenue that he was bringing in while the cattle trade was still operating.

An order of the city council around 1873 let all of the saloons in Wichita continue to operate but closed of the gambling and keno houses, forcing them to relocate across the river or go out of business.¹¹² The passage of the Wichita anti-gambling law in 1873 furthered the gap in respectability between the east and west sides of the river. With gambling still legal and without fines on the west side of the river, the saloons were able to continue all forms of gambling instead of the keno and billiards that had been on the east side of the river.

¹¹⁰ "A Lawyers Reveries in Bentley," *History of Wichita and Sedgwick County, Kansas*, 133.

¹¹¹ *The Wichita Eagle*, December 12, 1872, 3.

¹¹² *The Wichita Eagle*, December 12, 1872, 3.

The removal of gambling from the city and the exclusion of houses of prostitution in 1872 were both measures to help prevent the reputation of Wichita from being tainted by the rowdy behavior of the cattlemen and their escapades in the saloons. However, keeping things out of Wichita proper was not enough to ensure that Wichita did not become known as a lawless settlement on the frontier. Marshall Murdock, editor of *The Wichita Eagle*, was one of the biggest players in making sure that the reputation of Wichita was protected and was always ready with a counter story to those published in other papers or rumors that were spreading around the area.

Although Wichitans looked with a wary eye at rowdy saloons in Delano, they were not against saloons entirely. In July 1873, Wichita, on the east side of the river, contained a dozen saloons, four billiard halls, three wholesale liquor and tobacco stores, and three breweries making a total investment amount of forty-five thousand dollars.¹¹³ Just between 1872 and 1874 on Douglas Street alone, the city saw the creation of three saloons, one wholesaler, and three billiard halls, with a total investment of about fifteen thousand dollars.¹¹⁴

Delano, too, seems to have had more than just rowdy establishments along Chicago Avenue. Along with the reporting on the spectacular events that took place west of the river there is some substantial evidence of the development of Delano. While there is a gap in the complete list of business west of the river, the city directories and occasional developmental update article suggest that legitimate business also took place in Delano. Before the trade was in full swing, Delano already had three blacksmiths and a restaurant.¹¹⁵ These establishments may have been created in expectation of the demand from the cattle trade. However, even without the cattle

¹¹³ *The Wichita Eagle*, July 17, 1873, p 3.

¹¹⁴ *The Wichita Eagle*, July 23, 1874, p 3.

¹¹⁵ *The Wichita Eagle*, July 5, 1872, p 3.

trade, these businesses could be respectable and useful. Along these lines there was also a butcher shop established in Delano by Sampson Miller which was opened in the early days of the cattle trade in Wichita.¹¹⁶ As early as January 1872, it was said that “West Wichita across the river business is lively goods fresh new and well displayed denoting thrift and enterprise.”¹¹⁷ This description of business in the area does not particularly fit the type of business typically thought of in Delano but instead refers to the businesses like the butcher shops and other respectable businesses that would have served the people living in the area more than the rowdy cattle traders that came to the vice district just to relax after a long cattle drive. Towards the end of the cattle drive era in Wichita it was said that “Delano township is happy, blessed even beyond her neighbors in the way of aid goods.”¹¹⁸

Delano was also less urban than Wichita, with elements of farming and agriculture also taking place, so there were several cases of people from Delano bring in their produce to Wichita and in many cases brought in some of their goods to the paper for the editor to sample. D. Peterson from Delano brought in a basket of “uncommonly fine peaches” to share with the printer who found them to be extremely delicious.¹¹⁹ Peterson was not the only one with peaches and “Mr. S.W. Richmond brought several peaches from him farm in Delano.”¹²⁰ Another farmer, L. D. Price, in Delano grew a sweet potato that measured four feet seven inches long and was kept on display at some time at *The Eagle* for those who did not believe such a potato could exist.¹²¹ Crossing the river to do some shopping in Delano for many Wichita residents could have been a very pleasant experience, with several shops along the river and in the spring the

¹¹⁶*The Wichita Eagle*, June 7, 1872 p 3.

¹¹⁷*The Wichita Eagle*, January 2, 1872 p 3.

¹¹⁸*The Wichita Eagle*, February 18, 1875 p 3.

¹¹⁹*The Wichita Eagle*, August, 28 1878, p 3.

¹²⁰*The Wichita Eagle*, July 22, 1880, p 3.

¹²¹*The Wichita Eagle*, September 14, 1876, 3.

river was lined with dogwood trees that bloomed and filled the whole area with a very appealing scent.¹²²

From newspapers of the time, therefore, it was apparent that there were different styles and types of drinking establishment, each of which carried its own public opinion. From Rowdy Joe's with a large dance floor and sinister reputation to Fritz Snitzler's establishment with fine dining and beloved by many citizens. Looking at the newspaper descriptions of these places helps refine and even disprove the myth that Delano was just the red light district of Wichita, showing that both sides of the river had their vices as well as their respectable establishments. With the rapid growth that Wichita was experiencing in the 1870s much of the establishment of new saloons, beer gardens, dance halls, billiard halls, and breweries is recorded in the newspapers.

The Business of Alcohol

In contrast to the articles about violence in Delano and Wichita, advertisements from those who sold and distributed alcohol, as well as saloons, suggest a different story than the violence that gets recounted again and again. There were a handful of saloon owners who chose to advertise their establishments in the papers. One of the first advertisements was that of J.H. Dagner, referred to as the "oldest whole dealer in the region."¹²³ Dagner, as a wholesaler, would have also acted as a supplier for many of the saloons in town, meaning that Dagner would have brought in liquors from outside the regions and distributed to all the different saloons and restaurants in town.

The widespread consumption and sale of alcohol in the area could be related to seemingly

¹²²*The Wichita Eagle*, May 6, 1875, 3.

¹²³*The Wichita Eagle*, April 12, 1872, 2.

unrelated businesses, as in the advertisement for McKnight's store on Main near First, which sold a combination of liquor, boots, and, shoes.¹²⁴ In 1872, there were already a number of saloons and well established wholesale dealers in liquor so for a business to be able to supply boots, shoes and liquor shows that there was a significant demand for intoxicants that was not being completely supplied by dedicated establishment. Perhaps McKnight opened a shoe store and was not getting the business he was hoping for perhaps he tried to switch his business over to focus more on the liquor side of things and was left with a supply of shoes that needed to be sold before he could completely switch over. However, if this is the case, his supply of footwear would have been immense because he continues to advertise the same way for over a year.¹²⁵

Not all of the advertised dealers in liquor had such a strange range of goods, however. One of the longest running advertising saloons in Wichita was C.E. Case's Little Brown Jug with advertisements on the front page of the *Eagle* for several years that described "malts, soft, sweet and creamy."¹²⁶ These malts and milkshakes were alcoholic drinks and a milkshake was commonly a type of whisky eggnog. It was said that "Little Brown Jug, you and me" was a popular song at Charley Case's Saloon on the east side of the river.¹²⁷

In one of the larger ads for a saloon demonstrates that, much like modern bars, there was more to do there than drink. The Reaves Brothers' Arcade Billiard Hall was advertised as having the "best wines, liquors, and choice cigars."¹²⁸ In a similar fashion to the rest of the West, this saloon in Wichita promoted how their establishment was different from the rest in the area and so they could appeal to a larger crowd and have a better competitive edge over the other saloons.

¹²⁴ *The Wichita Eagle*, April 12, 1872, 2.

¹²⁵ *The Wichita Eagle*, March 24, 1874, 2.

¹²⁶ *The Wichita Eagle*, front page May 3, 1872, 1.

¹²⁷ *The Wichita Eagle*, May 3, 1972, 3.

¹²⁸ *The Wichita Eagle*, April 26, 1872, 2.

It is likely that the Reaves brothers also sold local and imported beers as well but did not see the need to advertise that portion of their menu.

Most of the saloons advertised in the paper were in Wichita proper. None of the saloons in Delano took out advertising space in the papers. There are a few possible explanations for this. It could be that the reputation of these establishments across the river made it so that the owners of these papers did not want to be associated with them and as such would not sell them any advertisement space. Since the main clientele of these saloons were cattle drovers and not Wichita citizens, perhaps the saloon owners did not see the merit of taking out advertisement space in the local paper. It may well have been some combination of the two.

While there were a limited number of advertisements for saloons, there were articles that provided a wealth of information about the drinking and entertainment culture of Wichita. These articles ranged from new establishments opening or new equipment arriving or services made available at to articles about the problems that arose in and around saloons. Those articles that did not deal with violence or drunken behavior were often about saloons that were in operation on the east side of the river and portrayed these as more upright and respectable establishments, although they had their share of controversies. Unlike the shootouts and fights that seemed to define Delano saloons, east side Wichita saloons faced issues such as drinking on Sundays. One article simply declared that “Sabbath day strictly observed, no drunkenness.”¹²⁹ The reservations against drinking on Sundays caused some difficulties for the local beer gardens. Elsewhere in the country, Sunday had traditionally been the main day of business for beer gardens.¹³⁰ It was not until May 1, 1879, that it became illegal for saloons to operate on Sundays, just in time for

¹²⁹ *The Wichita Eagle*, April 12, 1872, 3.

¹³⁰ *The Wichita Eagle*, September 6, 1872, 3.

the temperance movement started to take hold in Kansas.¹³¹

Drinking itself was not necessarily a problem for Wichitans. The bigger issue involved indulging and being drunk in public. For many weeks, there was only a single case of drunkenness reported. This does not include anyone who was exhibiting drunken behavior on the west side of the river but is anyone drunk on the street in Wichita proper.¹³² Public drunkenness was not just a problem for Wichita and in Emporia a drunken man singing “Rock me to Sleep” was threatened by the police of being clubbed if he didn’t stop.¹³³

One way to be involved in the lucrative liquor business but avoid the perils of patrons’ drunken conduct was to be involved in the wholesale and brewing side of the liquor industry. That said, being involved in the liquor business in Wichita was largely dependent on reputation. If things got out of hand, serious problems with the local law and citizens could result. However, the production and distribution of alcohol was, in itself, more a matter of business than vice. A number of the more respectable men in Wichita were involved in the wholesale liquor industry. While none of the wholesales are ever particularly praised none of them are ever attacked in the papers.

The sale of alcohol was often advertised for its medicinal qualities. This was especially the case for aged whiskey, as when Dagner “received fifteen year old pure whiskey for medical purposes.”¹³⁴ The need to age medicinal whiskey is somewhat unclear but it was not just Dagner who was in the practice of medicinal whiskey. G. Fechheimer also received a cask of whiskey that was aged seven years that was advertised as being for medicinal purposes.¹³⁵ Whether or not

¹³¹ *The Wichita Eagle*, May 1, 1879, 3.

¹³² *The Wichita Eagle*, January 23, 1873, 3; *The Wichita Eagle*, January 30, 1873, 3.

¹³³ *The Wichita Eagle*, May 1, 1873, 3.

¹³⁴ *The Wichita Eagle*, May 29, 1873, 3.

¹³⁵ *The Wichita Eagle*, November 6, 1873, 3. It is likely that this “G. Fechheimer” was Gertrude Fechheimer, M.M. Fechheimer’s wife, suggesting that women may have been involved in the liquor business in Wichita.

they knew it at the time this practice would help to keep them in business when the temperance movement was able to pass a prohibition law in 1881. Under that prohibition bill, medicinal liquor was still legal and there were several wholesale dealers who changed from wholesale liquor dealers to druggists.

One of the key examples of the supply side of liquor was Adolph Weigand and Company, who opened the first brewery in Wichita. Weigand was born in Germany and moved into Wichita in the early 1870s. The first mention of the brewery is when it is established in August 1872.¹³⁶ This brewery was advertised as “Wichita beer and Ale A. Weigand and Co. proprietors wholesale and family use, Beer Depot. No. 20 Main Street.”¹³⁷ The location listed is on the east side of the river fairly close to the center of Wichita, suggesting that the brewery was an acceptable aspect of a respectable business community. The Weigand brewery was one of the few liquor related establishments documented fully in the *Eagle*. The first update on the status of the brewery was in 1872 and mentions new ale that the brewery was producing.¹³⁸ This brewery was so successful that it did not take long for a new large addition to the brewery in December 1872.¹³⁹ After about a year of brewing and becoming established in Wichita Weigand’s brewery expanded to offer drinks and a free lunch in his establishment for his patrons.¹⁴⁰ This establishment brought in money to Wichita through the sale of beer to other communities and help keep some of the money on the supply side in Wichita as well, resulting in a more positive reputation.

Another reason for the positive view of the brewery was that it offered a free lunch with

¹³⁶ *The Wichita Eagle*, August 23, 1872, 3.

¹³⁶ United States Census Bureau, “1880 United State Census” Sedgwick County, Kansas, Supervisors District 7, Enumerated district 277, Sheet 5, accessed through Heritage Quest, 6/24/2013.

¹³⁷ *The Wichita Eagle*, January 30, 1872, 2.

¹³⁸ *The Wichita Eagle*, October 17, 1872, 3.

¹³⁹ *The Wichita Eagle*, December 12, 1872, 3.

¹⁴⁰ *The Wichita Eagle*, June 5, 1873, 3.

the home brewed beer, creating it created an atmosphere where men would go for a good meal and to try out a local brew, but not somewhere where people would go to get drunk. News on the brewery was absent for a few years but picked up in 1877. That year, an advertisement in the form of an article noted that: “A. Weigand and Co.” were “the Wichita brewers” who made “a specialty of family beer, bottled for home use. It is mild, pure, and healthy, orders left in their P.O. Box will be attended to promptly.”¹⁴¹ A month after that article came out; another one announced that the company had enough ice to run the brewery for two years.¹⁴² Later that year, A. Weigand became the sole proprietor of the brewery.¹⁴³ By 1879, the brewery had produced around 2,400 barrels of beer each year for home use and for wholesale and used over five thousand bushels of barley,¹⁴⁴ That volume was not enough to keep up with demand and in April 1879, Weigand ordered a copper boiler capable of 30 barrels to add to the volume he was already producing. With the new copper boiler it was said that he made beer as good as anyone.¹⁴⁵

Weigand was not the only producer of liquor in Wichita. Henry Schweiter made over two hundred and fifty gallons of wine using grapes he grew on his property in 1879. Reports of the wine said it was rich and full of flavor. While two hundred and fifty gallons of wine was most likely not going to be enough to make a living, it would have been a nice bump to his yearly revenue. Because he was selling the wine out of his house, he never had to apply for a liquor license and so was able to avoid the twenty five dollar monthly “fine.”

One of the more poorly timed business endeavors was a distillery on Chisholm Creek. On August 21, 1879, the distillers picked a spot along the creek and three weeks later steps were

¹⁴¹ *The Wichita Eagle*, January 4, 1877, 3.

¹⁴² *The Wichita Eagle*, February 1, 1877, 3.

¹⁴³ *The Wichita Eagle*, November 1, 1877, 3.

¹⁴⁴ *The Wichita Eagle*, January 9, 1879, 3.

¹⁴⁵ *The Wichita Eagle*, April 10, 1879, 3.

being taken for the immediate construction of the distillery. The big problem with this distillery was that it was being constructed late in 1879, with prohibition in Kansas was passing in late 1880 taking effect on January 1, 1881, so even with a speedy construction the distillery would have had less than a year to start distilling and most liquors require a few years aging before they are sold.¹⁴⁶

Not all of the alcohol in Wichita was brewed or distilled in town. While there were some liquors made in Wichita in the late 1870s, in the early years, only beer and some wine was local; everything else came from somewhere else.¹⁴⁷ J.H. Dagner's establishment boasted that it provided "wholesale dealer in foreign and domestic wines! Liquors, tobacco and cigars! Bar glassware and fixtures, old post office building Main Street Wichita KS."¹⁴⁸ Likewise G. Fechheimer "sells only pure wines whiskies and brandies at the lowest possible rates at wholesale direct from California."¹⁴⁹

With the availability of both local and foreign beers and liquors, saloons were able to have a wide variety of different types of liquor, including a beer on tap at Fuller's fountain, known as Purvian beer, that was extremely popular.¹⁵⁰ "The Syndicate" advertised itself as "open to the public and fitted upon the latest and most improved style" with "samples of the different qualities of imported and domestic liquors and cigars at all times at market quotations." Shattner and Short's saloon had Blue Lick Water on Draught as well as a variety of Bandon and Kirmeyers celebrated Ales and Porters. Like today, purveyors showcased the unique beverages that could not be found at other locations. The volume of supplies used by saloons shows how

¹⁴⁶ *The Wichita Eagle*, August 14, 1879, 3; *The Wichita Eagle*, September 18, 1879, 3.

¹⁴⁷ *The Wichita Eagle*, advertisements and city directories

¹⁴⁸ *The Wichita Eagle*, February 6, 1872, 3.

¹⁴⁹ *The Wichita Eagle*, February 6, 1872, 4.

¹⁵⁰ *The Wichita Eagle*, May 8, 1879, 3; *The Wichita Eagle*, February 6, 1872, 4.; *The Wichita Eagle*, February 6, 1872, 4.; *The Wichita Eagle*, August 6, 1874, 3.

big of business these establishments were in Wichita even on the east side of the river. For example, Weigand ordered two train car loads of coke for a malt house being constructed, amounting to about twenty tons, which is an ambitious amount of supplies for anyone who was not sure that they would be able to use such a massive amount.

In an environment saturated with drinking establishments, proprietors struggled to provide entertainment and themes for their establishments to stand out, as when an article proclaimed that “Shattner and Short have added a story to their building which is occupied by Mr. Rupp, (and) ‘the keno there is supposed to be correct.’”¹⁵¹ With a small fee each month, keno was “allowed” within the city limits, there were several different establishments who provided keno and as such had to stand out from one another, one of these saloons tried to do this by providing music. “The old keno room, on the corner, not to be outdone in enterprise, has now regularly employed a brass band which every afternoon discourses music from the balcony on Main Street.”¹⁵² On several occasions reference to the fine music played at Schattner’s room.¹⁵³ James Dagner opened a billiard hall in the Occidental hotel. Some others opened a saloon and tobacco lounge which they called the Oriental which was both “the style and name if a new cigar and tobacco establishment opened in the Whitworth building by Cogdell and Pierce.”¹⁵⁴

Saloons often served food and in several instances, saloons and restaurants were connected, if separate businesses. Fritz Snitzler, along with having a saloon, also operated in the same building a hotel and a restaurant, the restaurant brought him the biggest share of his business. “Fritz Snitzler says some days he feeds as many as 70 men at dinner time.”¹⁵⁵ He also

¹⁵¹ *Wichita Eagle*, May 1, 1873, 3.

¹⁵² *The Wichita Eagle*, June 5, 1873, 3.

¹⁵³ *The Wichita Eagle*, January 23, 1872, 3.

¹⁵⁴ *The Wichita Eagle*, April 9, 1874, 3.

¹⁵⁵ *The Wichita Eagle*, July 1, 1875, 3.

advertised a “\$100 dollar reward to anybody who will beat him in running a popular restaurant, or will best his tables at the prices he charges.”¹⁵⁶

Wichita, in particular, developed a wide range of different saloons from the Oriental Billiard Hall to Emil Warner’s Beer Garden, (see appendix III for a complete list). Each saloon in Wichita had its own flavor and brand which made it unique to the other liquor stores and dram shops in the area. Emil Warner’s beer garden is one of the best described establishments that was built in Wichita:

Emil Warner will open Widder “Bark Garten[sic]” on Tuesday, Emil has fitted up the garden in splendid style until it outranks any other in the state. It is built and arranged on the Bavarian style of garden, with concert rooms, bowling alleys, dancing floors, &c. All under roof and built in fine taste. The enclosure is dark with shade trees and a whole brewery full of beer is at the west end of the large grounds rear of his main street house. Music and beer and beer and music will be the order for Tuesday. Free lunch then more beer go early to secure seats.¹⁵⁷

This article paints the picture of a full service establishment, having its own brewery, the facilities to serve lunch, a dance hall and even bowling alleys.

While his establishment was described as the best in the state, Emil Warner’s story illustrated what could happen when a saloon owner got a bad reputation in Wichita. One of the first instances of trouble for Warner was when one of his patrons was found on the streets of Wichita more drunk than was acceptable. When Marshal Mike Meagher told Warner that he could get into trouble getting people that drunk, Warner responded that he had paid his liquor license fine and he was not doing anything illegal resulting in Meagher and the deputy pistol whipping the saloon owner. This episode is only documented in the petition for reimbursement for damages that Warner submitted to the city council, but there is no record of how the situation

¹⁵⁶ *The Wichita Eagle*, August 12, 1875, 3.

¹⁵⁷ *The Wichita Eagle*, May 25, 1875, 3.

was resolved.¹⁵⁸

The contrast between Rowdy Joe Lowe getting away with murder and Warner's beating for getting a man drunk illustrates the difference between the east and west side of the river. Lowe may have been able to get away with more because he was outside of Wichita. Warner, on the other hand, was established in the middle of Wichita and any issues that were cause from his establishment reflected directly on Wichita. It also helped in the case of Lowe that the man he shot was another brothel operator. From the tone of the petition, the impression seems to have been that Warner talked back to Meagher when he came in, which probably helped elevate the situation to the violent outcome.

The situation with Mike Meagher was only the first episode that Warner had with his reputation. In 1879, just over a year before the passage of prohibition in Kansas, Warner was sued over the death of a J. Edmunston. His wife claimed that her husband died as a result of drinking whiskey that he got from Warner's establishment. In this case it was found in favor of Mrs. Edmunston and she was awarded a sum of twenty-five hundred dollars.¹⁵⁹ Whether or not it was the fault of Warner in this case is hard to say. It could have been from some bad whiskey or from drinking too much whiskey over time but given the atmosphere at the time it was not very likely that Warner had much of a chance of winning the case.¹⁶⁰

Perhaps even more telling was the case of Hon. Leland J. Webb, who shot and killed J.C. Page, a saloon keeper, over a forty dollar gambling debt in 1876. From the tone of the article, it is clear that Webb was the person who shot the saloon owner. However, when the case went to court Webb was found not guilty in the murder of J. Page, even though it was stated without any

¹⁵⁸ *City Council papers* Wichita Public Library Genealogy and Special Collections Microfilm, 1871.

¹⁵⁹ City Council Records, *Petition 1871.*; Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000*, 194

¹⁶⁰ City Council Records, *Petition Letter 1879.*

uncertainty three months previous it was stated that he was in fact the person responsible for the murder. A judge and an important figure in Wichita was able to get away with the shooting a saloon owner.¹⁶¹

For saloon owners in Wichita, reputation was important. A bad reputation meant extra fines, harassment, or even a lack of protection from local laws. However, with a good and solid reputation a saloon owner could expect to enjoy the life of a business man just as any other business owner would and in some case would even receive praise from local newspapers, even in the middle of the temperance movement.

Many Groups, Many Saloons

Saloons in Wichita also catered to different populations, with reputation being connected to the patrons served. The crossroads location of Wichita brought together European populations, both native born and immigrant, various Native American tribes, as well as Hispanics who came up with the cattle trade, a small number of Asians who came with the railroad and African Americans, continue to grow in the years after prohibition and become an important part of Wichita's culture.

Although Wichita began as a series of trading posts catering to Native Americans gathered on the Arkansas River, there was only a very small population of Native Americans living in the Wichita area during the 1870s. Even with the limited number of Native Americans in the area, liquor was among the major trading items such as coffee, sugar, flour, and tobacco. The one reference to alcohol with Native Americans was "with the vices they had acquired from their so-called civilized and Christian neighbors had brought to them a train of sickness, disease,

¹⁶¹ *The Wichita City Eagle*, June 6, 1878, 3.

and death.”¹⁶² In 1870, just a few years after James R. Mead traded with the Wichita at the confluence of the rivers, there were only a few Native Americans, including Margret McAdams listed in the census as keeping house, and Catherine Greiffenstein, who also kept house. In 1880, there were twenty four Indians living in Sedgwick County, many of these were children in the house hold of European Americans and four were listed as children of William Griffenstein. Because there were so few Native Americans even up to 1880 in the area, and the bulk of them living in Wichita were children over half of those listed in the county were under the age of 17. By the 1870s, the small numbers and young nature of the population of Native Americans probably had little impact on the development of drinking culture in Wichita, with only a handful of visiting individuals arriving periodically.¹⁶³

In general, the Mexican cattle drivers did not live in Wichita or the surrounding area but Latinos were very much part of the early saloon scene. Whether or not there was a sizeable population of Mexicans living in Wichita by the time the saloons closed in 1881 is unknown as their mention in the paper fades with the passing of the cattle drives. However, there was a sizable population of Hispanics coming up with the Texan cattle trade and Mexicans became associated with violence and rowdiness that came with the cowboys in general, a reputation reinforced by the fact that the Mexican drovers had a habit of carrying up to three guns and wandered the streets firing the guns into the air.¹⁶⁴ For example, the violence of fall 1873 did not end with the Rowdy Joe shootout but continued and in November a dozen “Greases (a slur for Mexican cowboys) ... beat constable Prentiss on the west side of the river with revolvers and in

¹⁶² J. R. Mead, *Hunting and Trading on the Plains 1859-1875* (Wichita Kansas: Rowfant Press, 2008), 254.

¹⁶³ United States Census Bureau, *1870 Census*, accessed on Heritage Quest, accessed November 15, 2011; United States Census Bureau, *1880 Census*, Accessed on Heritage Quest, accessed November 15, 2011; Clare V. McKanna Jr., *Alcohol, Handguns, and Homicide in the American West: A Tale of Three Counties, 1880-1920, The Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Winter, 1995), 470; James R. Mead, *Hunting and Trading on the Great Plains 1859-1875*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 254.

¹⁶⁴ Hoig, *Cowtown Wichita and the Wild Wicked West*, 113-114.

the morning were set upon by the sheriff with a posse to try and track down the men who perpetrated the crime.” Whether or not the men were ever found and captured is a mystery but it does show again that the law, order and the security of the citizens of Wichita was a serious concern for local government and law enforcement.¹⁶⁵ That said, across the river, there were a number of saloon owners who welcomed the drovers, regardless of background. Two of these saloon owners were Rowdy Joe and Red Beard.

Latino saloon proprietors faced image problems, as illustrated with the story of Charlie Cordiero, who owned and operated a saloon in Wichita. Although it is unclear if Cordiero was himself Mexican, he emulated the style of the Mexican cattle drivers. “He wore a large white sombrero with a wide brim and a tall crown that was covered over with silver binding and rosettes that sparkled in the sun. His shirt was a pale blue, being joined at the waist by a crimson sash with tassels hanging from it against his purple velvet trousers. A cartridge belt was strapped over the sash, giving support to an ivory-handled six-gun.”¹⁶⁶ Mexican cattle drivers had a habit of dresses fancy when they got into town, much in the same way that Cordiero did.

Cordiero had some enemies in Wichita, chief among them was a man named O.J. Whitman. On a heavy drinking spree, on December 27, 1869, Whitman came to the conclusion that he needed to rid the town of Cordiero. Cordiero came into Doc Lewellen’s store when Whitman and his friend were waiting they tried to start a fight with insults and when that failed jumped on him anyway, after a short fight, Cordiero was able to make his escape telling that if Whitman came to his place he would kill him. After a few more drinks, Whitman came to Cordiero’s saloon and after, rapping on door, Cordiero pulled a pistol and tried to shoot twice without a round going off. When Whitman continued to the bar, Cordiero grabbed another gun

¹⁶⁵ *The Wichita Eagle*, November 6, 1873, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Stan Hoig, *Cowtown Wichita and the Wild Wicked West*, 79.

and shot Whitman in the torso. Whitman then stumbled out into the street where he died as a crowd gathered around. Fortunately for Cordiero, it did not take the courts of Wichita long to acquit him.¹⁶⁷ Cordiero's experience shows that Hispanic passer-byes had an effect on how that particular saloon owner operated. Delano developed for the service of the cattle drivers but a good portion of them Mexican in background.

In 1870, there were only two African Americans living in the area, John Akles, and Richard Robinson. However, over the next ten years, the population of African Americans increased to eighty seven, plus 186 "Mulattoes." These numbers are in addition to the cattle drovers who came into Delano and Wichita. Some estimates place approximately one third of all the cattle drovers as either Mexican or African American. That said, the largest influx of "Mulattoes," like came from the immigration of Exodusters, or African Americans moving out of the South as reconstruction policies ended.

Of these roughly 250 African American residents, there was not a single saloon owner among them. However, there were two African American bartenders working in Wichita in 1880. These two men, Richie Caphas and Adam Thomas, were both listed in the 1880 census as Mulatto. Although there were no Black saloon owners, that there were a couple of at least mixed raced bartenders it indicates that the drinking culture in Sedgwick County was not segregated like it would become in decades to come.¹⁶⁸

While Wichita did not have an African American newspaper before 1881, there were a few towns in Kansas that did such as Topeka, Fort Scott, and those papers give insights into how African Americans in Wichita might have interacted with local drinking establishments and

¹⁶⁷ *Wichita Tribune*, July 6, 1871; *Emporia News*, (Emporia, KS) January 21, 1870.

¹⁶⁸ Craig Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000*, 152; United States Census Bureau, *1870 Census*, accessed on Heritage Quest, accessed November 15, 2012; United States Census Bureau, *1880 Census*, Accessed on Heritage Quest, accessed November 15, 2012.

businesses. For example, in 1878, Fort Scott only had one wholesaler of alcohol advertising in it's the *Colored Citizen*. Because it was a wholesaling business and not a bar the implication was that in Fort Scott, the African American population did a portion of their drinking in the privacy of their own homes. Perhaps saloon owners open to Blacks did not publish their ads or did so in other venues in different newspapers. Topeka had no mention of liquor of any kind in its *Colored Citizen* publication throughout the entire year that it was preserved, 1878. Again, this could mean a number of things. It could be that the African American population in Topeka steered away from involvement in the vice industry and as such there was no one to advertise in the *Colored Citizen*. It could also be that the African American population there was not as interested in drink as some of the other subgroups living in Kansas. Both of these seem possible but the first option either by happenstance or by choice seems to be the more likely option.¹⁶⁹

There were, however, some tensions between the African American community and the European American community. One of these instances took place when a “drunk man of color shot at close range by a shotgun after repeatedly abusing neighbor.” It could be that this African American did pester his neighbor until he could no longer take it and resorted to violence. It is also possible that he did do physically abuse and the man shot his neighbor in self-defense. It is also possible however, that it was assumed that a white man would never shoot a black man unless he was provoked and there is a justification for the event. Unfortunately, the article is not clear on any particulars of the event.¹⁷⁰

Of the various ethnic and racial groups in 1870s Wichita, however, one in particular stands out in terms of shaping local alcohol-related establishments: the Germans. German saloon owners and liquor distributors seemed to have had a more proactive attitude when it came to

¹⁶⁹ *The Colored Citizen*, (Topeka, KS) “Advertisement” Fort Scott April 17, 1878.

¹⁷⁰ *The Wichita Eagle*, July 19, 1872, 3.

promoting drinking establishments as a welcome part of society. One of the most public saloon owners was Fritz Snitzler, who owned and operated a restaurant, saloon, hotel on Douglas and Main, and spent more time and money on advertisements than any of the other saloon owners in the County. Another was Emil Warner, who owned a saloon in Wichita and continually had problems with the law beyond the incident with Mike Meagher and his deputy. Yet another were the German Jewish husband and wife team of Mayo and Gertrude Fechheimer, who operated Fechheimer's Beer Garden.¹⁷¹

It was said that next to speaking German, drinking beer important to German culture alive in America.¹⁷² This may have been part of the reason why there were so many breweries in Kansas. One study found that there were over two hundred breweries in Kansas and over half of those were independent brewers with ninety three being corporate brewing companies, the majority of them having a German background.¹⁷³ In addition to creating alcohol, for ethnic Germans, drinking beer at the local beer gardens was a family event.

Fritz Snitzler was one of the most visible saloon owners in Wichita. He was also one of the biggest self-promoters in Sedgwick County. This is apparent in several different sources about him and his establishment. In many ways he was a larger than life character, including his physical size, although his exact weight is unclear, a scale with Snitzler and John Steele balanced out at 908 pounds. Snitzler's Apollo Saloon was the only saloon during the period of Wichita's history that has a surviving picture: featuring a wooden sidewalk out in front along with the adjacent store fronts each with a few wooden pillars holding up the overhanging roof. Fritz's building is two stories with two windows on the front of the second story; with standing room on

¹⁷¹ *The Wichita City Directory 1878.*

¹⁷² Cindy Higgins, "Kansas Breweries 1854-1911," *Kansas History*, Vol. 16 No. 1 (Spring 1993): 2-21, 4.

¹⁷³ Higgins, "Kansas Breweries 1854-1911," 5.

the roof of the building. On the front of the building next to the name of this restaurant/hotel/saloon is a portrait of Fritz Snitzler in a suit.¹⁷⁴

In the back of the 1877 Wichita Directory there is this entry about the Apollo Saloon:

Fritz Snitzler

Is the proprietor of a restaurant at Wichita. We will not attempt to describe his place, or tell who he is, or from whence he came. Everybody knows Fritz, and who ever visited Wichita knows him. Mr. Snitzler will pull down over two hundred pounds avoirdupois, and is full as liberal and jolly as he is heavy. It is worthwhile to look into his restaurant about 12 O'clock, and see the throngs that gather round his tables. He has two large dining halls, and frequently from one hundred to one hundred and fifty dines with him. Fritz knows how to run a restaurant and never allows his guests to go away dissatisfied when you go to Wichita take your dinner there.¹⁷⁵

The ad that appears in the next year addition does a bit less to stroke the ego of Fritz but still takes up about half a page in the book. This next edition also tells a little bit more about what is provided at the Apollo saloon:

Snitzler Restaurant, Hotel and Saloon. Douglas Avenue, near Cor. Market. In the Restaurant will be furnished clean meals in the Hotel clean beds in the saloon, Pure Liquors, wines, and beer. All at bed rock prices. The county people, the immigrants, and everybody and his wife all invited to call and see what Fritz and Fred can do toward supplying the inner man for a small amount of money.¹⁷⁶

This advertisement tells a bit more about what is going on in the Snitzler building. Although there is still no evidence regarding what kind of meals are being served, it does make mention of liquor, wine, and beer, which would indicate that the saloon portion of this establishment served many of the same products expected in a bar today. Still The Apollo Saloon was more of a

¹⁷⁴ Kansas State Historical Society, Kansas Memeory Photo, Accessed December 1, 2012; <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/208136/page/1>; *The Wichita Eagle*, May 1, 1879, 3.

¹⁷⁵ F. A. North, *Wichita City Directory 1877*, Sedgwick County Records Management Archives, 52.

¹⁷⁶ F. A. North, *Wichita City Directory 1878*, 64.

restaurant in image than saloon.

Turning to the newspapers it is possible to construct more of what is available at the Apollo. There is a reference in the *Wichita Herald* in 1877 that simply says “Fritz Snitzler sells the ‘Wichita Belle,’” a cigar that was manufactured in Wichita, voted the best cigar in Wichita. This particular cigar was then advertised as being sold in just about every saloon that was advertising in the *Wichita Herald* at the time. In another ad in the *Wichita Herald* described the type of drink available at the Apollo as follows: “if you want a good drink of pure wine, either Catawba. California or Rhine. Call on Fritz Snitzler. He keeps the pure stuff.”¹⁷⁷

While there were the famous saloon owners on the other side of the river, such as Rowdy Joe Lowe; who created a bad name for the saloon and drinking establishments, Fritz was in the middle of town operating a business, never showed up in the police record, and promoted himself as a respected business leader. Snitzler was a man who showed people that drinking could be civilized.

Another prominent immigrant saloon owner in Wichita was Austrian-born Emil Warner, who ran a saloon as well as a brewery. However, unlike Fritz Snitzler, Emil was constantly having trouble with the law in Wichita. As described above, Emil’s trouble started with his run in with Mike Meagher. At this point the city records are pretty scarce so all that is known is that Emil petitioned to be reimbursed for damages inflicted by Mike Meagher and his deputy. There was no record of Warner ever being paid by the city for this incident which could mean the record was lost or the city ignored his complaints.

The records that have survived noted that Warner operated the Clipper Saloon in Wichita. Although he did not advertise as much as Snitzler, Warner always paid his “fines” to the city for

¹⁷⁷ *Wichita Herald*, “Advertisement” February 5, 1878; *Wichita Herald*, “Advertisement” December 7, 1878.

operating a saloon starting in 1872 and continuing through 1878 when the records end. Because Warner was careful to follow all the laws of Wichita between 1872 and 1878 it is curious that in 1878 when gambling takes place in his establishment, the City Council minutes mentioned rumors that his saloon was going to be shut down. Normally, when gambling was found to take place unlicensed the establishment would be required to pay a fine, but in the case of Warner, there were some people with the city that wanted him gone. Although the attempts to revoke Warner's license were unsuccessful, he clearly had some enemies in the city. Warner's case was unique in Wichita proper, aside from some owners in Delano, no one else was pressured to leave the area.¹⁷⁸

The third German who helped to change the course of drinking history in Wichita was M. M. Fechheimer and his wife, Gertrude, who operated Fechheimer's Beer Garden. Traditionally, the beer garden was a place for German families to gather and socialize and was particularly big on Sundays. The problem with this is that in Wichita there was a law against drinking on Sunday. It was also an event for the whole family at a time when women of the proper persuasion were not meant to be in a saloon. Even with these Sunday laws, the advertisement for the Beer Garden read as follows:

Beer Garden! At Fechheimer's Grove, south of Mayor Griffinstein's (sic), on river bank. John Behrens' and Gene L. Schattner, Props. Open every Sunday afternoon and evening, icecream, lemonade, and c. Good music on the ground for dancing. Come one! Come all! The bus will run to and from the Garden.¹⁷⁹

Unlike the saloons of Delano, this establishment offered activities for everyone in the family, being a safe place for both women and children.

Unfortunately, there has not been an archeological study done for Sedgwick county so

¹⁷⁸ *City Council Records*, Wichita Public Library Gemology and Special Collections; *The Wichita City Directory* 1878, 40.

¹⁷⁹ *Wichita City Directory* 1878, 64.

apart from the little bit of information that can be gleaned from newspaper articles and other records that survive is all we can know about the types of food that were served in these establishments. Wichita's saloon era was a brief flourish during the 1870s, unlike Virginia City, where there was a longer period of drinking that allowed the saloons to develop into more segregated communities. The population of minorities and other groups was not large enough by the time drinking became illegal for the ethnic bar to fully develop. Wichita saloons were not the perfect melting pot of the West. There were still upscale drinking halls as well as the dark dirty brothels that would serve every vice a person could possibly have. However, divisions in this case were more a question of class than race. While drinking could be portrayed as a plague that soiled the city in many ways, it also brought together many different peoples and cultures who would have otherwise remained within their own circles.

CHAPTER III

PROHIBITION

In one sense, the Wichita saloon story ended when prohibition was passed in 1881. However, the process began in 1876, when the end of the cattle trade in Wichita caused the business district west of the Arkansas to fade and change. Delano became an average township in Kansas, until 1880, when it became a part of Wichita. There was no reason to pay to cross the bridge to Delano for a drink when it could be done on the east side of the river. The red light district remained a place for prostitution, but without the cattle trade to sustain it.

Along with the end of the cattle trade, saloon owners and patrons in Wichita and Delano alike faced perhaps an even more formidable threat: the temperance movement. The push against alcohol began as early as 1873, the first time in Wichita history that a decision was made to exclude liquor legally from a public event. In this case, it was the Fourth of July celebration, because it was an event for the whole family and alcohol was not seen as proper for women and children. An organized movement did not start largely until 1877.¹⁸⁰

The first American temperance movement started in 1810 with the idea that people should not stop drinking but instead limit the amount of alcohol they consumed. In the seventeenth century it is reasonable to understand a perceived need to limit the amount of alcohol consumed with a national average between 4 and 7 gallons, which compares with an average amount of 2.8 per year. During the mid-1800s, temperance leaders focus more on the moral argument, not trying to stop the production and sale of alcohol but instead appealing to individuals to drink less. When they did push for regulation it was to restrict the sale of alcohol

¹⁸⁰ Craig Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000*, 156; *The Wichita Eagle*, July 3, 1873, 3.

to children or on Sundays.¹⁸¹

What many people would recognize as the temperance movement started to take shape during the 1830s, when the focus of the temperance movement moved more towards banning of intoxicating substances instead of its regulation. Verbalized by Abraham Lincoln when he said that the harmful effects of alcohol did not come “from the abuse of a very good thing,” instead it came from “the use of a bad thing.”¹⁸² This view, although not popular with all the temperance supporters, continued to grow and spread across the New England region. Similar laws to the “Maine Law” almost passed many states in the area. It was this area that would also account for approximately seventy percent of the immigrants to Kansas.¹⁸³ On a national level the prohibition movement officially organized in 1869 and had a candidate run for president in 1872. Many of the secondary principles on the prohibition ticket, such as a federal income tax, direct election of senators, and woman suffrage would later be adopted by major political parties.¹⁸⁴

The temperance movement was not centralized to Kansas, and Kansas was not even the first state to have a prohibition law on the books, although the first to write prohibition into the state constitution. Maine in 1851 wrote the first prohibition law which prohibited the manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages, however did not prohibit the consumption of alcohol, and provided for the sale of alcohol for medical purposes through people appointed by the state. The temperance movement did not start with the “Maine Law” and although it was the first state wide law on the books there were several cities and towns that had local restrictions on the production and sale of alcohol, dating back to colonial times.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ Lisa M.F. Anderson, *The Politics of Prohibition: American Governance and the Prohibition Party, 1869-1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 10.

¹⁸² Robert Smith Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas: A History*, 15-16.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁸⁵ Robert Smith Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas: A History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986) 13.

Eighteen-fifty-five was the first year for territory-wide legislation to regulate alcohol. Coming out of the pro-slavery legislature, “An Act to restrain dram shops and taverns, and to regulate the sale of intoxicating liquor,” was stricter than similar laws in other slave states. This act created two year voting blocks to allow the sale of intoxicating beverages in each town and restricted the sale of alcohol to slaves and Indians as well as the sale of liquor on Sundays.¹⁸⁶

A growing movement against the sale and production of alcohol was, meanwhile, taking place across Kansas. Lawrence, in 1855, enacted the “Maine” law which prohibited the sale of alcohol within city limits, and was partially enforced by a posse of about a dozen women who smashed the local log cabin saloon. The result of this saloon smashing was a largely dry city until the following summer when the sale of liquor resumed.

It was in 1874 that the temperance movement started to organize itself in Kansas with a conference to address the “need” of a temperance presence in Kansas. While later, the temperance movement had particularly strong support from women, at this conference, women were in the minority, although among the women who did attend, Amanda Way and Drusilla Wilson were instrumental with the three person resolution committee. While some people at this conference wanted to start a state party then and there, it was decided to wait a week to see the outcome of the Republican conference, those who were hard line temperance movers were unsatisfied with the local Republican platform and worked to create the Kansas Temperance Party in that same year.¹⁸⁷

As of part of the restriction on liquor those who planned on selling intoxicating beverages were required to submit a petition signed by the majority of households in the area. Because of this law, many towns of less than 2,000 were legally dry, but still had alcohol. Since many of the

¹⁸⁶ Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas*, 20.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

providers of alcohol in these smaller towns were doing so illegally, it is difficult to know exactly how many establishments existed. However, in most larger towns and cities liquor was less restricted and was sold both legally and illegally and in the early 1870s there were 1,600 federal permits to sell alcohol in the state, approximately equaling one license for every two hundred and fifty people.¹⁸⁸

For a time, the establishment of prohibition laws ran up against the introduction of the railroad and the cattle trade to Kansas, as both of these industries came with a high volume of men, most of who were looking for places where they could buy a drink. During a time of boosterism and competition over town development, towns went to great lengths to try and establish both the railroad and the cattle trade in their towns over their neighbors. Saloons were just part of doing business.¹⁸⁹

Times were changing, however. In the 1870s, the laws that we have now over drinking age did not exist and so it was possible for younger people to drink more easily than today. To help keep children in check in 1873, Wichita passed a bill that created a seven p.m. curfew for any boy under the age of sixteen. It would have been up to the bartender to decide whether or not to serve them, which the keepers in Wichita would have been much more responsible than those who were on the west side of the river.¹⁹⁰

Therefore, those in the liquor trade had to make concessions to function. In Wichita, a wide spread interest in baseball and knife flipping resulted in Fredrick Schattner and George Browell securing “ Greenway’s grove which is amply provided with swings flying Dutchmen

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 22

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 23-24.

¹⁹⁰ *The Wichita Eagle*, December 7, 1876, 3; Jordan D. Jones, *The Wichita Police Department: The first century*.

seats, platforms and all kinds of things and fixings to interest and amuse yourself with.”¹⁹¹ It was the first amusement park the in area and had alcohol. Schattner was a wholesale dealer in liquor and opened up a room for drinking, but by contributing to community building projects such as this, he was able to stay on the good side of the press and the public.

Brewers and saloon owners did everything in their power to try and prevent the passage of prohibition in Kansas. One brewer in Leavenworth even sent a keg of beer to legislature to try and prevent them passing the prohibition law. Because their livelihood was at stake, brewers and saloon owners were willing to spend large amounts of time and money lobbying lawmakers to allow them to continue selling their products in the state. After the law was passed many saloon owners and brewers spent years trying to gain some compensation for all of their lost property, but were unable to gain any reprieve which caused more trouble for those involved in the production and sale of liquor when national prohibition came about.¹⁹²

For Wichita in the mid-1870s, the local temperance movement had to work with saloon owners and wholesalers to try and accomplish some degree of reform. In 1875, they were able to replace the current mayor, James G. Hope, a liquor dealer, with George E. Harris, a saloon owner. Even then Harris was only in office for one term before being replaced with James G. Hope, despite Harris being backed by local reformers.¹⁹³

A critical voice in removing liquor from public events came from the pulpit. One of the first messages on the topic, in 1873, came from Reverends Harsen, Strodill and Teutchel and was entitled “The vices that are endangering the interests of Wichita”¹⁹⁴ Many churches stood against such things as drinking in excess and gambling, so it is not surprising that there would be such a

¹⁹¹ *The Wichita Eagle*, June 26, 1873, 3.

¹⁹² Higgins, “Kansas Breweries 1854-1911,” 2, 15.

¹⁹³ Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas*, 24.

¹⁹⁴ *The Wichita Eagle*, July 3, 1873, 3.

lecture in Wichita when the cattle trade is being established. This was the same year that saw gambling removed from the city proper and relegated to Delano.

The first major event of local prohibition story came from the Murphy Pledge movement. It was in June, 1877 when temperance advocate Amanda Way, representing Franklin Murphy's blue ribbon temperance movement, came to Kansas. Franklin Murphy was a man who was once an alcoholic but was able to overcome his addiction and began to work with the temperance movement wearing a blue ribbon to show his sobriety, encouraging others to do the same. His philosophy said "there are no men in the world who are so much abused as liquor sellers (and) it is a mistake to denounce them. What they need is Christian charity." In late 1877, Murdock said that "the Murphy movement is doing wonders in some Kansas towns, Topeka lawyers are taking the case and everyone in Emporia wears a blue ribbon."¹⁹⁵ Those people who supported the temperance movement wore a blue ribbon, and it became so common in Wichita that one man commented "can't a man stop drinking without tying a blue ribbon to his coat?" although it was noted that he never thought to try and find out.¹⁹⁶ It did not take long after Way started the push in Kansas that there were thousands of new pledges across the state, Wichita leading the change with 2,500 signers.¹⁹⁷ By March 1878, "The Murphy Movement was fully inaugurated in Wichita...Saturday night there were many blue ribbons"¹⁹⁸ The event seemed justified as shortly afterward, a few drunken men crashed a wagon which they were driving at breakneck speed.¹⁹⁹ By the late 1870s, the temperance movement began to impact even Wichita's respectable liquor

¹⁹⁵ *The Wichita Eagle*, December 5, 1877, 3.

¹⁹⁶ *The Wichita Eagle*, November 29, 1877, 3.

¹⁹⁷ *The Wichita Eagle*, June 28, 1877, 3; Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas*, 34.

¹⁹⁸ *The Wichita Eagle*, March 21, 1878, 3.

¹⁹⁹ *The Wichita Eagle*, August 15, 1878, 3.

trade. In February 1878, Charles Lemeke even opened his own wholesale liquor store.²⁰⁰ In November of that year, it advertised that “it costs a gentleman twenty dollars to try the experiment of carrying a small keg of brandy out of Schattner’s wholesale room.”²⁰¹

In Kansas, the highest point of people in the temperance movement was the year 1879. In that year, people from both in and outside of Kansas attended the Great National Temperance Camp Meeting and agricultural show in Bismarck Grove near Lawrence equaling tenth of the state’s population. For Wichitans, at least one railroad company provided a special deal on round trip tickets to Lawrence for only \$7.15. Even with this wide spread support it was said that liquor could be found “if you knew where to buy it.” Along with a record turnout at the temperance camp, 1879 was had the highest number of temperance lodges at 207, the number of lodges quickly declined after the passage of the law.²⁰²

During 1879 and continuing through 1884, William Greiffenstein was the mayor of Wichita. While mayor, Greiffenstein largely tried to avoid the controversial issue of prohibition. With his focus more in line with business owners than moral issues. When asked about the liberal saloon owners of the city in 1883 he replied “it is not the owners of the saloon but the patrons of the saloon who compose the liberal element, for you will find the saloon owners as illiberal in one direction as are the extreme prohibitionists in the other.”²⁰³

By 1880, there was enough support for temperance that steps were taken to sign the temperance idea into law. In March, a call went out for “All good true temperance men are requested to meet at my office Tuesday march 23rd at 1 O’clock for the purpose of conferring together and making arrangements to begin the work in favor of the constitutional amendment

²⁰⁰ *The Wichita Eagle*, February 7, 1878, 3.

²⁰¹ *The Wichita Eagle*, November 28, 1878, 3.

²⁰² Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas*, 1, 27.

²⁰³ *The Wichita Eagle*, August 30, 1883, 3.

and fixing upon a time for holding a grand mass conversation in Wichita.”²⁰⁴ After this call for temperance men, the meetings of temperance people became common place, including when “prohibitionists have county meeting September 30th 1880.”²⁰⁵ The following week, there was a temperance speech by E.H. Crawford. Not everyone agreed. An article in the paper on Nov. 18, 1880 noted that without saloons in the county a large portion of the city’s income would be cut off.²⁰⁶

Prohibition was passed as an amendment to the constitution with a twenty four section act. “Prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors except for medical, scientific and mechanical purposes, and regulating the manufacture and sale thereof for such excepted purposes.” The first section stated that “Any person or persons who shall manufacture, sell or barter any spirituous, malt, vinous, fermented or other intoxicating liquors shall be guilty of misdemeanor, and punished as hereinafter provided: ‘Provided, however, that such liquors may be sold for medical, scientific and mechanical purposes, as provided in this act.’” This section in combination with the second “It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to sell or barter for medical, scientific or mechanical purposes any malt, vinous, spirituous, fermented or other intoxicating liquor, without first having procured a druggist's permit therefor from the probate judge of the county wherein such druggist may at the time be doing business.” This provided the main groundwork for prohibition.²⁰⁷

The majority of Kansas press and population were in favor of the regulation of alcohol. However, there were a handful of vocal individuals who spoke out against the prohibition

²⁰⁴*The Wichita Eagle*, March 18, 1880, 3.

²⁰⁵*The Wichita Eagle*, September 23, 1880, 3.

²⁰⁶*The Wichita Eagle*, October 6, 1880, 3; *The Wichita Eagle*, Sept 30, 1880, 3; *The Wichita Eagle*, November 18, 1880, 3.

²⁰⁷ Frank W. Blackmar, *Kansas: a cyclopedia of state history, embracing events, institutions, industries, counties, cities, towns, prominent persons, etc....* / with a supplementary volume devoted to selected personal history and reminiscence. Standard Pub. Co. Chicago : 1912. Volume 2, Prohibition.

movement. Charles Driscoll, a Wichita journalist, once wrote about prohibition that it was “merely a blunt instrument, used to extort blackmail from saloon keepers. It had no more force and effect than the Ten Commandments.”²⁰⁸ Driscoll was not the only journalist to take a view skeptical of prohibition laws. Marshall Murdock, years later in 1901, commented that Carry Nation “might with persistence and her little hatchet render the bed of the Arkansas River dry by diverting its waters, but she can never stay their flow or force them to run back up to their mountain source.”²⁰⁹

Even those in favor of a prohibition law, such as Governor John P. St. John, did not think that a prohibition law would stop drinking in Kansas. Instead, he hoped that the prohibition law would help prevent those who were uncertain about liquor, making it more difficult to obtain liquor would help to dissuade them from drinking. To the argument that a ban on alcohol would push people and money out of Kansas he felt that if liquor was required for growth than it would be better not to grow. As important as personal temperance was, the main goal was the business of making and selling alcohol. In St. John’s mind, there was no question that a prohibition law would bring about a decrease in crime seeing as the majority of people being kept in Kansas prisons placed the blame for their crimes on the intoxicant.²¹⁰ Even with the favorable news coverage leading up to prohibition it did not take long for the new law to receive criticism. Among other reasons the prohibition law and the backlash against it, was one reason for St. John’s failure to get re-elected in 1882.²¹¹

Alongside the Kansas Prohibition bill was a national one signed into law by President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1881 that prohibited the sale of liquor on military reservations.. While it

²⁰⁸ Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000*, 157.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 157.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 158.

²¹¹ Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas*, 92.

was much easier to enforce this prohibition than it was the one in Kansas, it also created the market for what became known as “pig ranches” or saloons established just outside of these military establishments, which often offered all the vices anyone could hope to find.²¹²

The vote for prohibition took place in Kansas in November 1880, resulting in a victory for the temperance movement. The law took effect in the following year, although for the next decade or two the laws were not strongly enforced. While prohibition made it illegal to operate a drinking establishment in Wichita, many of the already established saloons in Wichita continued to operate. The only real difference was that instead of being listed in the city directory as a saloon, they were listed as drug stores. How these businesses differed from saloons remains difficult to tell from surviving sources. It is clear that people were willing to work around this new law.

Once the constitutional amendment was passed in Kansas two things changed for the state temperance movement. First, Kansas became the poster child for the national temperance movement. At the same time the number of temperance clubs and memberships fell into a sharp decline. The decline of temperance groups in the 1880s in Kansas was largely because after the passage of the prohibition law many did not see a need for a strong presence of the temperance movement.²¹³

Responding to Prohibition

The prohibition laws altered, but did not stop Snitzler’s business. In the 1881 city directory, the Snitzler business changed from a saloon, as in the previous directories, to a drug store. Likely, it continued to function in the same way that it did before the law was passed and

²¹² Dary, *Seeking Pleasure in the Old West*, 100.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 92.

the enforcement was not in place to prevent the service of alcohol. However the Snitzler drug store was not in business very long. On Thursday January 13, 1881, the building was destroyed by fire. Fritz then stayed in Wichita and continued to promote himself joining in some new ventures over the years, one of which seems to have been a saloon. The citizens of Wichita still knew Snitzler's place as a saloon. When Governor George Washington Glick came to visit Wichita, he "spent a portion of his time at Fritz Snitzler's saloon. We have no objection to urge in this connection." Not only was it well known that Snitzler was still operating a saloon in Wichita but it was not even seen as a problem for the Governor to be seen there.²¹⁴ A late 1880s city directory, however, listed Snitzler as a capitalist.²¹⁵

The law did not bring an end to all production of liquor in Kansas and Adolph Wiegand is still listed as operating a brewery in the 1883 City Directory. Despite being a long time brewer, since he moved to Wichita in 1871, Wiegand was still seen as a strong pillar of the community and on his death in 1887 it was said "The city has lost a true and earnest supporter," "He was always found willing and ready to lend a helping hand to every enterprise of merit; he was very liberal in his support of churches and religion," and "Mr. Weigand was an honorable, upright man possessed of many sterling traits of character. Always generous, liberal and kind, he had many warm and true friends but no enemies."²¹⁶

Despite Wichita's support for the prohibition law, many of the city's problems with saloons and drinking came from owners of those establishments not taking efforts to help the community. Both Weigand and Snitzler were well known in their associations with liquor, however; both men were active in the community and were able to maintain a positive image

²¹⁴ *The Wichita Eagle*, October 25, 1884, 2.

²¹⁵ *The Wichita City Directory 1888; The Wichita Eagle*, January 13, 1881, 3; *Wichita City Directory 1881*, 15.

²¹⁶ *The Wichita Eagle*, August 3, 1887, 4.

throughout the city.

Once the 1881 amendment was in the Kansas Constitution, it took another two decades for an environment to develop where prohibition was wide accepted and enforced. In 1887, the state legislature, outraged at the lack of enforcement of the prohibition law in certain cities, enacted the Metropolitan Police Law, which took the power of police away from local governments in Leavenworth, Kansas City, and Wichita and instead, had the state Executive Council (a body created in 1879 and consisting of the governor, secretary of state, auditor, treasurer, attorney-general and superintendent of public instruction) appoint a commission of three local individuals to oversee the police force. A bill that was particularly unpopular in Leavenworth and Wichita and was declared unconstitutional by the Kansas Supreme Court Judge Robert Crozier of Leavenworth said “if there ever was a piece of vicious legislation it was certainly the metropolitan police bill.” The opinion of Crozier was shared by Wichita citizen Marshall Murdock who called it “the most infamous enactment of modern legislation.” That same year saw the creation of a pharmacy law to weed out drug stores that were just fronts for saloons. Along with the continued demand for liquor during the late 1880s was an economic recession particularly in the western counties of Kansas which brought local attention away from the drinking problem.²¹⁷

Even with the ease of operating an illegal saloon during these times, there was still a sizable group of individuals who worked towards the abolition of the prohibition law. They were called “resubmissionists,” and felt that the vote for prohibition should be held a second time, were active in Kansas since the time the law first passed. *The Wichita Eagle* was a voice for resubmission in Wichita and across the state saying “we believe that this prohibitory legislation

²¹⁷ Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas*, 88; *The Iola Register*, September 30, 1887, 1; *The Wichita Eagle*, June 18, 1887; Miner, *Kansas* 163.

is not in the best interest of the general welfare of society.” In addition, *The Wichita Eagle* Published several lists of people who were resubmissionists which included a majority of people in Nickleson Kansas, a large portion people in Marion, Kansas and farmers throughout the Wichita area, both Democrat and Republican. By 1890, resubmission became more popular and the idea of a revote looked the most likely to that date. The apex of the resubmission movement was in Wichita. In Sedgwick County alone there were more than eighteen hundred members of the resubmission club, still lower than the number of Murphy movement members two decades before. The Sedgwick County resubmission club, consisting of Republican businessmen, stated that prohibition “brought a cloud of officials, with consequent costs that had become far too great for the suffering public to bear, and had put many a blathering hypocrite into office.” The populist movement also helped give resubmission movement some steam, with the argument that the Republican Party could win the election without prohibition on their platform or lose the election with it.²¹⁸

Then, in 1894, came Carry A. Nation to enforce the prohibition law. Carry Nation was born in Garrard County, Kentucky in 1846. In 1867 she married Dr. Charles Gloyd, who was an alcoholic. This seemed to have started her strong feelings for temperance. Her tactics were extremely visible; smashing barrooms with a hatchet to get attention. In order to raise attention to the lack of enforcement for the prohibition law. For the most part, Carry Nation did not spend a lot of time in Wichita; however, on one of her few visits to the peerless princess of the plains Mrs. Nation on December 27, 1900, threw rocks to break the mirror of the Carey Hotel Bar (Image ten). A surviving picture shows mirror is completely smashed, however the rest of the establishment is in surprisingly good shape. While the mirror is clearly destroyed, Carry Nation

²¹⁸ Ibid., 112; *The Wichita Eagle*, August 29, 1889; *The Wichita City Eagle*, November 27, 1889.; *The Wichita City Eagle*, December 21, 1889; *The Wichita Eagle*, December 3, 1889.

made no effort to damage any bottles of liquor that were being stored a few feet away. This could be because she only had time to throw a single rock before she was forced out of the establishment, but it also could show that Nation had a focus on easy, high impact actions to make her cause more public. Her smashing of the Carey Hotel Bar resulted in Nation's arrest and spending three weeks in jail after refusing bail. After another prisoner was infected with small pox, there was a case made for Carry Nation on Habeas Corpus but the county officials had the opinion she should remain in jail.²¹⁹

Mrs. Nation did not spend a lot of her time in Wichita; it was larger issue than merely a set of local problems. Because she was getting so much state and national attention, her actions become an important part of the liquor history of Kansas and all of her cities. After her raid on the Wichita Carey Hotel Bar, she then turned her attention towards the capital and made it a point to protest, and smash up the bars in which the Kansas legislators were known to frequent, the Senate Saloon. Although an "elderly" grandmother; she made life difficult for Governor Henry Stanley, who was fairly apathetic about the prohibition laws to take a stand against her, particularly when he had aspirations for more government positions. However, local judges were not so hesitant to prosecute Nation and Judge Dale made the decision to prosecute Carrie Nation.²²⁰

With the introduction of national prohibition in 1920, it became possible to compare the efforts Kansas put forth at the turn of the century with current efforts from the rest of the country. Although it had a rough start by the 1920s Kansas, by comparison, had a much smaller

²¹⁹ Carry Nation, *Use and Need of the Life of Carry A. Nation* (Topeka Kansas: F. M. Stevens and Sons, 1908), 11,62; *Carey Hotel Bar, Wichita, Kansas*, Kansas State Historical Society, item number 207850. The Carey Hotel Bar is now the lobby to the Eaton Apartment Complex.; McKenna, Michael E. *A History of the Wichita Police Department*. Wichita Public Library Genealogy Reference material; Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas*, 135. *The Wichita Eagle*, April 20, 1901, 5; *The Wichita Eagle*, January 19, 1901.

²²⁰ Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas*, 206

problem with violators of prohibition than any of the surrounding states, and many of the east coast states. During national prohibition 6,658 gallons of liquor were seized in Kansas, the next closest amount seized in the Midwest was Oklahoma which had 11,908 gallons seized.²²¹

To this day, in Kansas and throughout the nation have mixed feelings on Nation. Some praised her for what she did, and would even send money, she had a large enough following to publish her own small newsletter and would print the opinions of both people who agreed with her and those who didn't. Governor Stanley, trying to protect his political career in Kansas decided to take the approach of doing nothing, which gained him no favor on either side of the debate. While Nation came into the story after the era of the saloon was largely over, her efforts show that prohibition was not largely enforced until she started to make enough trouble to bring the issue of drinking and vice into the forefront of public focus. The result of Carry Nation's bar smashing campaign was a much stricter prohibition law passed in 1917, which stayed on the books until Kansas got rid of prohibition in 1948. Even with the relaxing of these new liquor laws, it was until the mid-1980s that it was possible to operate what would be considered a normal bar in Kansas, where a person could walk in and buy a drink without being a member of the club.²²²

²²¹ Ibid

²²² Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000*, 156-157; *Wichita Beacon*, January 15, 1901, 3. *Wichita Beacon*, February 20, 1901, 3.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The saloon sits one building down from the end, set back from the street by a narrow wooden boardwalk. On the face of the saloon above the door there is an image of the owner heavy set next to a keg of beer. The windows are large and read “Fritz Snitzler’s Saloon.” There are no swinging saloon doors, just a normal latching door. Inside, there is a long bar with a brass rail running along the bottom of the bar. On either end there is a spittoon and there is a table set up for cards and a keno wheel. The room is largely empty except for a large amount of seating and chairs, at the front of the saloon is a slightly elevated stage where visitors can catch a show and possibly even see the saloon girls dancing (Image 9).

The paragraph above does not describe the scene from the 1870s, but instead is the reconstructed saloon at Old Cowtown Museum. The front of the saloon is modeled off of one of the only surviving pictures of a Wichita Saloon in the 1870s. The interior is more difficult to gauge for accuracy, the large mirror behind the bar and nice bar top are possible fixtures in a saloon of the period and Fritz Snitzler’s was likely outfitted much nicer than many of the saloons on the other side of the river.

The interior of the Fritz Snitzler saloon is an attempt at a generic saloon. It has the brass rail, gambling equipment and a stage. While employees and volunteers serve some food at the Old Cowtown Museum, it is not the same meal that would have been served at the Snitzler saloon, a wide variety of different meats, from beef to lamb, as part of a full meal instead of the hotdogs and chips served at the cowtown saloon. The set up for their saloon is geared more towards the drinking aspect of the saloon business and less focused on the food service that was a major part of the Apollo Saloon. In an effort to illustrate what saloons were like, Old Cowtown

Museum fell back on some of the items in saloons that have become standard through their portrayal in Westerns.²²³

This structure attempts to show a “typical” saloon, even though the actual story was much more complicated. The convergence of the cattle trade and the railroad made for a volatile situation, with cattle drovers spending their hard earned money over the cattle drive on all the vices that could be bought. The location on the Arkansas River allowed Wichita to keep this less savory aspect of drinking outside of city limits and managed to keep Wichita with the illusion that it was proper and safer than it would have otherwise been. The placement—or perception—of the worst of the saloons on the other side of the river outside of city limits also helped to protect the reputation of Wichita as a proper Victorian City. Because much of the vice in the area was quarantined, or at least portrayed as such, on the other side of the river, Wichita was able to maintain appearances of propriety while also profiting from all aspects of the cattle trade and the unsavory behavior that it encouraged.

The history of the Wichita saloon is a complex story that involves different cultures and ideas, and while saloons were involved in some violent events it was mostly a peaceful history and provided a gathering place for much of the city’s population. Of the historiography on the topic perhaps Erdoes put it best with the idea that every phrase that could be said about a saloon and a contradictory statement could be true at the same time.

Like the West in general, Wichita’s drinking culture was not as simple as it was often portrayed in popular culture or even in the sensational articles that formed the basis of Hoig’s book *Delano* did not contain all of the bars of Wichita, just as it was more than a drinking center for the area. For many the first two names that come to mind for *Delano* are “Rowdy” Joe, and

²²³ Jay M. Price, “Cowboy Boosterism: Old Cowtown Museum and the Image of Wichita, Kansas,” *Kansas History* 24 (December 2001): 300-317.

Redbeard, and while it is true both of these men did become infamous around Wichita for the antics in Delano, they were only two businesses out of many and were not in Delano for more than a few years. Wichita had its fair share of bars, saloons, and breweries just as Delano was home to farmers, blacksmiths, and general goods stores. Through its laws and procedures, Wichita tried to keep all the “sin” associated with the cattle trade outside of the city, along with gambling, fighting, drinking, and prostitution. Wichita was only successful in this regard in a small way. Much of the more extreme saloons did end up on the other side of the river, however keno was still plentiful in Wichita and there were a number of incidences of gambling within the city. Drinking was in no way kept out of the city, and there were far more saloons in Wichita than there were in Delano. The main success of Wichita was generally keeping these vices out of the public view. Depending on the perspective of who was commenting, drink -- and provided the saloon owners paid the required “fines.” In most, cases the penalty for these infractions was a small fine but it encouraged people to keep up a good appearance.

As time passed in Wichita, the distinction between an acceptable saloon and a lewd saloon begin to fade. In the early years, with characters like Rowdy Joe and Red Beard, it was possible for people to look at the establishments of Warner, Dagner, and other Wichita saloons as respectable businesses by comparison. As the cattle trade left Wichita and bawdy houses in Delano were no longer supported by the cattle trade and were driven out of town, more focus was given to the Wichita saloons. The evolution of the public views of Emil Warner illustrate this point. When his beer garden was first established, it was given outstanding reviews, but as time moved on, there were more and more complaints and lawsuits. The temperance movement grew in 1870s Kansas partly because the people of Kansas saw what happened in the cow towns and saw saloons in general as contributing to the toxic environment. While Red Beard and

“Rowdy” Joe were run out of town, there were other saloon owners who were beloved by the people of Wichita and were happily allowed to continue their businesses well into the prohibition years, such as Snitzler and Weigand. By 1880, the distinction between a good saloon and a bad saloon had all but faded away, and the feeling of many Kansans was that all saloons, regardless of location, activities, or services were bad.

The story of saloons across the West will most likely always be in conflict with what entertainment portrays saloons to be. Although academic writings may disagree to some degree about the reality of the saloon in the American West, the amount of violence that took place there was minimal. While some may have been the fancy saloons with all polished brass fixtures and a giant mirror running the length of the hundred foot bar, most saloons were much simpler than that. Regardless, they remained an important gathering place for local groups, provided shelter, food, drink, and entertainment for anyone who wanted it. In many ways the saloon was the cornerstone for several of the western towns and often one of the first establishments.

Each author who writes about saloons across the West has a different perspective ranging from the social-economic impact that Dixon talks about all the way to a survey of violent acts from Hoig. It is not possible to get a complete picture of saloon culture in Wichita or any other location without taking a look at several aspects of the culture. To say that any one of these authors is wholly right or wrong would not be true; however, they all tell a piece of the tale and when combined with primary sources a more complete picture emerges.

Saloons were not without violent incidences. There are clearly a number of violent episodes in both Delano and in Wichita proper, but these were fairly rare throughout much of the Wichita saloon history. Instead, the bulk of the story was more about the drinking community and the saloon owners reputation among the citizens of Wichita, the city’s efforts to control the

amount of vice that developed along with both respectable and rowdy establishments within the city limits, and Wichita's ability to capitalize off the Delano district while simultaneously keeping the city civilized.

Erdoes said everything that can be said about a saloon the opposite can also be said. This is definitely true for Wichita. Some of the saloons were places that were respectable. Others were places one would not want the family to know about. Some were places of social gathering while others were simply places to get a drink and a prostitute. All of them were part of the unique story that made up the history of saloons in Wichita.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

IMAGES

Images one through eight from West, Elliot. "The Saloon: A Frontier Institution." *The American West* (Buffalo Wyoming, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1980) volume XVII number

1. Images nine and ten are from the Kansas State Historical Society.

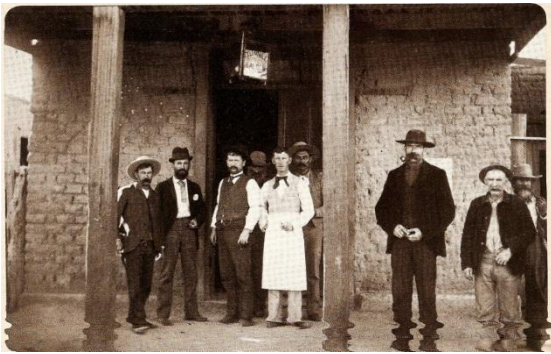


Image one

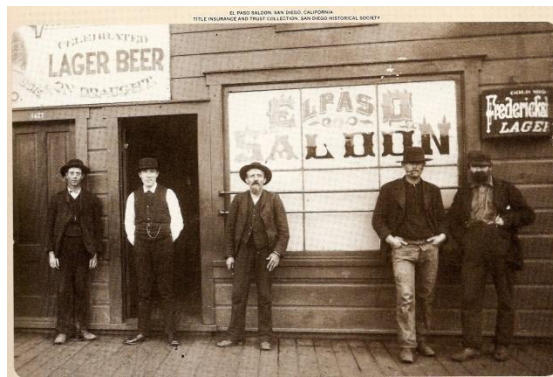


Image two



Image three



Image four



Image five



Image six



Sometimes the barroom floor provided the only available sleeping place for its patrons. As a sometimes hotel, meeting place, entertainment center, theater, and even church, the saloon was the town's most versatile institution.



Image seven



Image eight

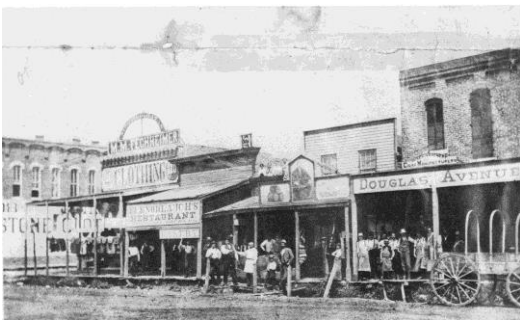


Image nine



Image ten

APPENDIX II

The following list is known saloons in Wichita and the surrounding area based on primarily the Wichita Eagle and Wichita City Directories. Sources also point to a number of saloons, gambling halls, and brothels that left no traceable evidence, particularly a handful in Delano.

Table I

Name	Location	Known Years	Owner	Features
Bowling Alley & Saloon	Wichita (76 Douglas Av.)	1873	J.W. Brown	Bowling
Newcomb & Co.	Wichita (62 Douglas Av.)	1872-1877	James H. Dagner	Billiard
Oriental Billiard Hall	Wichita (Douglas Av.)	1873-1878	W. W. Dill	Billiards
Lewis W. Saloon	Wichita (Douglas Av.)	1877	Lewis Ditmann	
Star of the West	Wichita (Main, 4 doors West of Douglas)	1870-1880	Farrow and Parker (Chase Gardiner 1878)	
Hides and Liquors	Wichita (81 Douglas Av.)	1873-1877	G. Fechheimer	Hides
Fowler & Parker Saloon	Wichita (Main and Douglas)	1873-1874	Fowler and Parker	
C. C. & Co. Groceries	Wichita (Douglas Av. North fourth St.)	1877	C. C. Hartwig	Groceries
Fred's Saloon	Wichita (76 Douglas Av)	1877	Fred Ille	Cigars
Wines, Liquor, Cigars	Wichita (Douglas, between Market & Lawrence)	1874	Chase Lemcke	Cigars
O. H. Smith Saloon	Wichita (Douglas Av. E of Depot)	1877	O. H. Smith	
Apollo Saloon	Wichita (112 & 114 Douglas Av.	1876-1881	Fritz Snitzler	Hotel, Restaurant
Tom Jewell's Pool Room	Wichita (105 Douglas Av)	1874-1878	Tom Jewell	Billiards

Table I Continued

Arcade Restaurant	Wichita (Douglas between Main & Water)	1878	Edward Loke	
Little Gem Saloon	Wichita (Emporia between 1 st and Douglas Av.)	1878	Jason C. Beach	
City Hall	Wichita (Main between 1 st and 2 nd)	1878	Jacob Ritter	
Clipper Saloon	Wichita (Main across from Post Office)	1878	Emil Warner	
Custom House Saloon (The Syndicate)	Wichita (Main between 1 st and Douglas Av.)	1872-1878	Schattner Brothers	Billiards
Dill's Saloon	Wichita (Douglas between 4 th and 5 th)	1878	W. W. Dill	
Liquor Dealer	Delano	1878	R. Farmer	Wholesale
Long Branch Saloon	Wichita	1878	Paul Hoover	
Phoenix Saloon	Wichita (Douglas Av. Between 4 th and 5 th)	1878	Gustave Koehler	Beer Garden and Wholesale
Fechheimers Grove	Wichita (River Bank)	1873-1878	John Behrens & Gene L. Schattner	Beer Garden
Little Dutch Saloon	Wichita (Douglas Av. Between Main and Water)	1874-1878	J. W. Brown	
Occidental Saloon	Wichita (Occidental Hotel)	1878	Valentine Roland	
	Wichita	1878	William Lillie	Wholesale
Olive Branch Saloon	Wichita (Main near Douglas Av.)		George Parker	
Star Saloon	Wichita	1873-1878	E. F. Richter	
Weigand Brewery	Wichita	1873-1881	J. Weigand	Brewery
Lowe's Saloon	Delano	1872	Joe Lowe	Brothel

Table I Continued

Red Beard's Saloon	Delano	1873	Edward Beard	
Apex Saloon	Unknown	1874	Unknown	
Little Brown Jug	Delano	1872-1876	C.E. Case	Malts
Aldrich Dance Hall	Delano	1871-1872	Aldrich	Dancing
	Wichita	1874-1877	Hope and Richards	1877(Beds)

Saloon Owners with Only a Record of Dram Shop Licenses Paid

Table II

License Applicant	Years Applied	Location
H. W. Black	1873-1874	Wichita
L. N. Sage	1873-1875	Wichita
Chris Kimmerly	1873-1875	Wichita
J. R. Walters	1873-1874	Wichita
Harris and Co.	1873	Wichita
G. W. Garger	1873	Wichita
George C. Boland	1873-1874	Wichita
J. M. Martin	1873	Wichita
Hubbard and Co.	1873	Wichita
W. H. Palmer	1873	Wichita
J. D. Hale	1873	Wichita
M. S. Soots	1873	Wichita
M. R. Cordeirs	1873	Wichita
G. Bery	1873	Wichita
Clark McFoor	1873-1874	Wichita
Davis Comeort	1873	Wichita
J. R. Morreson	1873	Wichita
Thayer & McFaddin	1873	Wichita
Alligan & Co.	1874	Wichita
Jack Hillard	1874	Wichita
Lumber and Henderson	1874	Wichita
Ryan & Reddick	1874	Wichita
Clements	1874	Wichita
Hugh Dangleman	1874	Wichita
W. M. Levitt	1874	Wichita
Thomas Shannon	1874	Wichita
Goukly	1874	Wichita
Bernstein	1874	Wichita
Bernard Rogneier	1874	Wichita

Table II Continued

J. Shayer	1875	Wichita
John Fink	1875	Wichita
J F Miller	1876	Wichita
C. Whitfield	1878	Wichita
M. M Young	1878	Wichita
M. O. Keeffe	1878	Wichita
Daw Hoover	1878	Wichita
George E Clark	1870	County
Jessie Vanderwood	1870	County
James Shea	1871	County (Park City)
J. C. Higgins	1872	County (Delano)
Hattie Morris	1872	County (Wichita)
John Faruier and William Hellswick	1873	County