

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF PROHIBITION
IN OKLAHOMA,
1900-1920

By

JAMES EDWARD KLEIN

Bachelor of Arts
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa
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Master of Arts
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa
1990

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By

James E. Klein

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Thesis Approved:

Ronald A. Petter

Thesis Advisor

Michael G. Logan

Joseph P. Byrner

Carl Edgry

Timothy A. Pettibone

Dean of the Graduate College

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PREFACE

Oklahomans voted to prohibit the sale and giving away of intoxicating liquor in 1907. Despite this endorsement, liquor remained available in the Sooner state throughout the period prior to national prohibition. This study examines the social and cultural impulses that led Oklahomans to ban liquor and the immediate consequences of that ban. Sources included personal accounts from interviews conducted by the Works Progress Administration, newspaper reports from around the state, correspondence between state and local enforcement officials, publications and records of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Oklahoma, local histories, state government records, and census records.

Oklahoma contained a very diverse population at the turn of the century. Confusion over competing definitions of propriety and the region's reputation for lawlessness encouraged many, particularly the merchants and professionals of the middle classes, to adopt a rigid standard of respectability and to apply this standard to the entire population through the force of law. The region's liquor industry, at the margins of respectable society before statehood, found itself further alienated from the respectable core as it became the target of middle-class reformers who believed the saloon held no redeeming social value. Protestant ministers formed the vanguard of this middle-class reform effort. The illegal liquor trade persisted in the Sooner state because the region's large working-class population continued to patronize the liquor men despite admonitions from their middle-class neighbors. The saloon in Oklahoma, as elsewhere, had become a basic feature of working-class culture by the beginning of the twentieth century. The

continued demand for liquor encouraged bootleggers to exploit legal loopholes in the state's liquor codes. This, in turn, forced state officials and dry proponents to tighten those codes repeatedly, though with only limited results. By 1920, Oklahoma's illegal liquor industry remained vibrant, though far beyond the bounds of polite society. The conflict surrounding prohibition in Oklahoma, then, was a conflict between middle-class and working-class definitions of social propriety. The socially and politically dominant middle class succeeded in defining the saloon as improper and nonrespectable, but failed to extinguish it.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This work is a product of the most basic elements of historical inquiry--the desire to know what people did in the past and why. As this work is an examination of the prohibition movement in Oklahoma between 1900 and 1920, the questions addressed and the answers presented are related to early-twentieth-century America's attitudes toward the use of alcohol as a beverage, though some questions and some answers encompass much more than the liquor ban. No single reason or cause produced prohibition. Some of those who supported the ban believed the consumption of liquor was a small part of the larger social problems facing the United States by 1900, while others believed liquor was the primary cause of larger social problems. Still others, ignoring the social environment, saw the use of liquor as immoral and the campaign against it as a moral crusade to save men from evil. Similarly, the impact of the liquor ban in the Sooner state was multifaceted, impacting Oklahoma society and culture in a variety of ways by the third decade of the twentieth century.

This study argues that the issue of prohibiting liquor clarified the division between respectable and nonrespectable elements of Oklahoma society. This split fell roughly along class lines. Merchants and professionals, including evangelical ministers, formed the vanguard of the prohibition reform movement in the Sooner state. The Anti-Saloon League, in particular, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union organized and gave voice to the anti-liquor sentiment in the state. By contrast, the state's large working-class population tended to oppose the liquor ban. It continued to patronize saloons

after the state had declared them illegal, and it likely contributed to the sizable vote against prohibition in 1907 and 1910 referenda. Ethnicity and religion cannot be dismissed when discussing the liquor issue, but the ethnic and religious populations commonly associated with drink---European immigrants and Roman Catholics---remained so slight in early Oklahoma that they cannot, alone, account for the political opposition to prohibition nor for the extensive support that the bootlegging industry enjoyed following statehood. The continued market for liquor in Oklahoma encouraged bootleggers to defy prohibition, presenting an enforcement nightmare for state and local officials.

Before addressing Oklahoma prohibition, let us examine the historical context within which it occurred. The use of liquor has been a fundamental part of American culture and society since the earliest European settlements were established in the new world. Settlers traded it to the Indians for furs, skins, and food, and consumed it themselves regularly. Colonists considered alcohol a medicine, but also a beverage to be used in moderation. No less an authority of Puritan New England than Increase Mather preached that “the wine is from God,” while “the drunkard is from the Devil.”¹ Whatever their personal attitudes toward alcoholic beverage, members of the clergy often could not abstain publicly from drink if they wished; liquor was offered to them at public ceremonies such as baptisms as a show of respect and esteem. To refuse would be to insult the host. In the eighteenth century, the Methodists and Quakers condemned any use of alcohol rather than merely its abuse, though few Methodist laymen adhered to this policy. Abstinence remained a rarity among Americans in the closing decades of the century.²

During the early years of the American republic, educated people

¹ Norman H. Clark, *Deliver Us From Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1976), 9.

² Herbert Asbury, *The Great Illusion, An Informal History of Prohibition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1950), 16; John Allen Krout, *The Origins of Prohibition* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925), 66.

believed that the daily consumption of alcohol improved one's health (an idea that is regaining some credibility due to recent medical research). President James Madison regularly drank a pint of whiskey per day, most of it before breakfast. Dr. Benjamin Rush, George Washington's surgeon general during the Revolutionary War, began to attack the link between liquor and health. He called on ministers and other socially prominent people to curb consumption of liquor for health reasons. Jefferson, comparing the moderate effects of wine and beer consumption in continental Europe to the more drastic effects of the gin and rum favored in Britain and America, cultivated grapes and yeast at his home in hopes of spurring the production of wine and beer in America. Madison and Jefferson changed their views in their advancing years, urging total abstinence as beneficial for the human body and for American society.³

Liquor consumption in America changed in the early nineteenth century. While alcohol had been a part of American culture earlier, its cost had limited use among the poorer elements of society. In some regions, people saw liquor as a symbol or badge of wealth. Following the Revolutionary War, whiskey (produced from corn grown in America) replaced rum (produced from sugar grown in the British West Indies) as the preferred alcoholic beverage in the United States. The Northwest Territory offered a huge expanse within which to grow corn, though the crude transportation system limited the market for this corn or its whiskey by-product. After 1800 the use of steamboats and construction of canals allowed farmers to ship their corn to a broader market. The whiskey distilled from this corn dropped in price due to the increased supply and whiskey became sufficiently cheap for common laborers to purchase regularly. Whiskey in the early nineteenth century was cheaper than coffee or tea.⁴

The increased consumption of liquor, particularly among the laboring

³ Clark, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 21-24.

⁴ W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 69, 83-84, 89-90, 100.

classes, spurred the creation of numerous temperance societies in the 1820s and 1830s. These counseled the moderate use of liquor. Women and clergymen founded and dominated these societies, most of which were based in the northeastern portion of the United States. Some businessmen supported this anti-liquor crusade as they believed it would increase the productivity of their work force. Prior to the introduction of large machines and the building of factories, business owners often provided alcohol for their workers and drank with them while working or during breaks. As the scale of production increased, owners distanced themselves from the work-shop and from their employees, and hired a manager to oversee the work force. Fierce economic competition in the industrializing sector led many managers to discontinue the practice of providing liquor to workers. Wage earners increasingly turned to local taverns for liquor, and consumption moved from the work place to these designated retail outlets. The increased consumption of liquor also drew concern from some workers, who began to abstain from drink and urged others to do the same. The Washington Temperance Society (known popularly as the Washingtonians) formed in 1840 as an association of reformed drunkards, many of them working men, who pledged to abstain from liquor and acted as a support group for members (similar to the twentieth century's Alcoholics Anonymous). These efforts at education and persuasion significantly reduced the per capita consumption of alcohol in America.⁵

Nevertheless, reformers remained unsatisfied as some men continued to drink alcoholic beverages; increasingly they sought to prohibit the use of liquor by legal means. In the early 1850s, thirteen states of the northeast and the Midwest legally banned liquor beginning with Neal Dow's victory in

Maine in 1851. Very quickly, however, the anti-liquor forces, or dries, found

⁵ Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic*, 232. Rorabaugh indicates that per capita consumption of absolute alcohol was cut by more than half between 1830 and 1840 during the heyday of the reform movement. The Maine law and similar liquor bans in the 1850s had little effect on this consumption. A good case study on the Second Great Awakening and the prohibition movement it created is Paul Johnson, *Shopkeeper's Millenium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978).

these statutes inadequate to stem the rising tide of alcohol in America. Following the Civil War, frustration at the ineffectiveness of liquor bans to rid society of alcoholic beverages led to the formation of the Prohibition Party in 1869 and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in 1874. The latter organization grew out of a campaign by Ohio women in the winter of 1873-1874 in which they held prayer sessions in saloons to shame proprietors into closing their establishments. The immediate success of this campaign and the attention it received in state and local newspapers demonstrated to women the impact they might have if they banded together against the liquor industry. Through their campaign against liquor, members of the WCTU discovered that they possessed considerable political muscle, and the WCTU became the leading woman's organization in America in the late nineteenth century.⁶

Despite these efforts, Americans consumed increasing amounts of alcohol in the late nineteenth century. The dramatic increase in the consumption of beer (and to a lesser extent wine) offset a slight decrease in the consumption of distilled spirits containing considerably higher proportions of alcohol per volume. The increased fondness for beer reflected the growing presence of Irish and German immigrants, during the middle decades of the century, and immigrants from southern and eastern Europe later in the century. Public drinking houses also changed as the saloon replaced the tavern after the Civil War. This establishment attracted a customer base that primarily was male and, in many areas, working-class. Middle class men were more likely to drink at home, in private clubs, or to abstain than were members of the growing American working class.⁷

The lucrative American market for beer led to considerable growth and stiff competition in the brewing industry. Brewers, to ensure a protected retail market for their product, bought or built saloons that served only the

⁶ Ruth Bordin, *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), xviii.

⁷ Jack S. Blocker, *American Temperance Movements: Cycles of Reform* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 68-69.

brewery's brand of beer---Blatz, Schlitz, Pabst, Anheuser, etc. By the end of the century, brewers owned seventy percent of all saloons in America. In this competitive atmosphere, saloon operators often ignored legal restrictions on their trade: they sold beer to children and inebriates; sold beer near churches and veterans' centers; remained open after prescribed closing hours; and sold beer on Sundays. They allowed, and at times sponsored, prostitution and gambling in their establishments to draw customers, and they readily averted their eyes from the robberies, assaults, and murders committed on the premises.⁸

Anti-liquor efforts in the late nineteenth century brought only marginal results. States such as Kansas and Iowa and voted themselves dry in the 1880s due largely to political pressure applied by the WCTU and local men's temperance groups, but enforcement became so problematic, particularly in rough and tumble communities such as Dodge City and Sioux City, that the laws effectively became dead letters by the 1890s. Carrie Nation gained notoriety by attacking saloons with a hatchet, but her extreme measures and her desire for attention overshadowed the point of her crusade. By her death in 1911 she had become little more than a caricature.⁹ The Prohibition Party enjoyed limited success also. It did not seriously challenge either of the two major parties and failed to build on the momentum of the 1850s to increase the number of states that banned liquor.

Dissatisfaction with the Party's approach led Reverend Howard H. Russell, a Methodist Episcopal minister from Ohio, to form an Anti-Saloon League in that state in 1893. The League did not draw up a broad platform as the Party had, but announced opposition to the saloon as its sole issue and supported or opposed candidates based on their stance toward the saloon. The League enjoyed surprising success in Ohio's local and statewide elections, and

⁸ James H. Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 104, 110-111.

⁹ Clark, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 82.

in 1895 Russell formed the Anti-Saloon League of America. Russell determined that his league should remain non-partisan, supporting candidates based solely on their liquor stance and their likelihood of winning office. The League pragmatically supported heavily favored moderates against dry extremists who had little political support, and backed the driest candidate in close elections to gain a reputation as a difference-maker in politics.¹⁰

The title of Russell's organization was significant. The League singled out the saloon for attack, though it eventually sought and achieved a ban of all liquor. By targeting the saloon, the League focused attention on that element of the liquor industry least acceptable to the American middle class. Saloons in 1900 America could be rough, dirty places in which gambling, prostitution, and violent crime were commonplace. To be sure, not all saloon operators tolerated such behavior, but a sufficient number did allow and even sponsor these activities that the saloon became stained as an unsavory institution frequented by men of lax morals. The League might have taken aim at other facets of the liquor industry such as the production of intoxicating liquor by distilleries and the growing number of breweries, or it may have addressed the increasing consumption of liquor by the public. The first approach, however, would have created an anti-business stance, and the second would have demonized a significant part of the population---unacceptable outcomes for an organization that stressed political results. The League initially ignored these other components of the liquor industry and trained its sights on the saloon. The liquor industry unwittingly aided the League's campaign against the saloon by refusing to curb the worst activities in these establishments.

Anti-liquor forces, including the League, had reason for optimism in the early years of the twentieth century. Several states in the Northeast and Midwest had voted themselves dry (banned liquor) in the late nineteenth century, but challenges in the courts and inadequate enforcement had

¹⁰ Clark, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 93-94; Peter H. Odegard, *Pressure Politics: The Story of the Anti-Saloon League* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), 3-6.

negated most of these efforts. In 1900, Maine, Kansas, North Dakota, New Hampshire, and Vermont prohibited liquor statewide, though several of these allowed the personal importation of liquor through the mails. Also, the federal government's control of interstate commerce allowed liquor distributors to ship their product into these states. In 1907, Georgia and Alabama voted themselves dry and Oklahoma entered the union as a dry state. The next year, Mississippi and North Carolina banned liquor, followed by Tennessee in 1909. These states were not bone dry---some allowed the production and use of alcohol but outlawed its sale, while Oklahoma allowed the possession of small amounts of liquor and the limited sale of alcohol for medicinal and industrial purposes.¹¹

In 1913 Congress, under pressure from the Anti-Saloon League of America, passed the Webb-Kenyon Act, which ended the exemption liquor shipments into or through a dry state had enjoyed as a form of interstate commerce. Dry supporters followed this breakthrough federal legislation with several state bans on liquor: Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Arizona, Virginia in 1914; Idaho, Iowa, Arkansas, South Carolina in 1915; Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Michigan in 1916; and Utah, Indiana, and New Hampshire in 1917.¹² Several wet states adopted local option laws allowing cities or counties to ban the sale of liquor in their jurisdictions. During these years, the Anti-Saloon League, as well as other liquor opponents, were justifiably optimistic that they could exterminate the liquor industry from the entire nation and ultimately the world.

The League changed its approach following the passage of Webb-Kenyon in 1913. Previously, it had focused on creating or increasing saloon-free areas through local option legislation that allowed cities or counties to vote themselves dry and subsequently through statewide prohibition campaigns such as that in Oklahoma. Beginning in 1913, the League

¹¹ Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, 149, 154.

¹² *Ibid.*, 166.

broadened its goal to include a ban of all liquor and sought to extend that ban to the entire nation through an amendment to the United States Constitution. Toward this end the League involved itself in the 1914 and 1916 Congressional elections in support of dry candidates. It reaped the benefits of these efforts in 1919 when Congress passed a constitutional amendment banning the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicating liquor throughout the nation.¹³

American entrance into the war in Europe in 1917 aided the prohibition effort as the nation saw a greater need for industrial efficiency, which many assumed liquor consumption hindered. The war also heightened the desire to conserve grain (as a food supply) by disallowing its fermentation into spirituous liquors. Congressional investigation into the pro-German activities of the German-American Alliance during the war and its ties to the United States Brewers' Association increased patriotic opposition to the brewers and to beer. Amidst the anti-liquor mood during the war, Congress passed the War Prohibition Act in November 1918, forbidding the manufacture or sale of beer and wine after 1 May 1919, and banning the manufacture or sale of all liquor after 30 June 1919. By this time, Congress had passed the Eighteenth Amendment and thirty-six states had approved it. The War Prohibition Act banned production of liquor in America during the remainder of 1919, and the Eighteenth Amendment, through the Volstead (enforcement) Act, took effect 16 January 1920. The nation remained officially dry from 1920 until 1933 when the Twenty-first Amendment repealed the Eighteenth. By this time the noble experiment had been discredited not only by the uninterrupted flow of liquor in America, but also by the considerable efforts of the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment and similar organizations.

Historians have analyzed the campaign to prohibit liquor in America

¹³ Ibid., 172, 180-181; Clark, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 118.

since the period of national prohibition. Early works described the liquor ban as a mistaken policy brought on by puritanical fanatics, while the scholarship of the 1960s instead portrayed prohibition advocates as members of mainstream American society. Some recent studies have presented a more sympathetic view of the prohibitionists or drys as they were called in the political lexicon of the time. Most historians describe prohibition as a struggle between competing groups---rural versus urban, middle class versus working class, nativists against immigrants. Prohibition brought cultural issues to the fore in American politics, and has left a strong impact on both politics and culture. While many historians of the temperance and liquor movements focus on the liquor campaign to the exclusion of contextual topics, others attempt to place the noble experiment within the broad reform spirit of early-twentieth-century America commonly referred to as the Progressive movement.

Norman H. Clark and Jimmie Lewis Franklin have argued that prohibition is best understood when studied at the state level as the liquor ban experience varied widely from state to state. Oklahoma prohibition differed from that of many other states because it began before national prohibition, with the founding of the Sooner state in 1907, and because Oklahoma continued the ban on hard liquor until 1959, long after the nation and most states had abandoned it. The historical presence of American Indians and a notable African-American population also influenced Oklahoma's dry campaign. This study focuses on the struggle to achieve and enforce prohibition in Oklahoma before the implementation of national prohibition through the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act in 1920. Before concentrating on the Sooner state, a historiographical analysis of the liquor issue in America is in order.

Early studies of the prohibition movement often portray it as a failure and thus attempt to explain how and why Americans decided to make the liquor ban a part of the Constitution. John Allen Krout, examining what he believed

to be a permanent change in American attitudes toward liquor, traces the origins of the change back to the eighteenth century when Dr. Benjamin Rush and others began to debunk the belief that the daily consumption of liquor was beneficial to one's health. The religious temperance societies of the early nineteenth century adopted and built on his tactic of moral suasion to combat the problem of drunkenness. The failure of this approach led some to adopt coercive prohibition laws modeled after the Maine Law of 1851. While several states voted themselves dry in the late nineteenth century, few were able to enforce the liquor ban effectively. At the same time, prohibition gained greater political support as people became disgusted at the damaging and corrupting impact of liquor on American democracy. Prohibition, according to Krout, was not the result of early twentieth-century political or social conditions, but was the culmination of a shift in American attitudes that had been building for over a century.¹⁴

As opposition to prohibition mounted in the late 1920s, Peter H. Odegard produced the first comprehensive study of the Anti-Saloon League, arguably the organization most responsible for the national liquor ban.¹⁵ Odegard is highly critical of the League's excesses, particularly under the leadership of Wayne B. Wheeler in the 1920s, and argues that it was one of the best organized special interest groups in early twentieth-century America. The League provided an avenue by which Protestant churches could affect politics without entering the political arena directly. While the League claimed to represent all religious groups, its greatest support came from the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist churches. Few Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, or Jews joined the national league or any of the associated state leagues. Odegard asserts that the Anti-Saloon League did not achieve prohibition through trickery or deception of the American public. Rather the League, as a non-partisan, single-issue association, effectively

¹⁴ Krout, *The Origins of Prohibition*, 297.

¹⁵ Odegard, *Pressure Politics*.

organized those opposed to the liquor traffic, particularly the saloon.¹⁶ It supported dry candidates from either of the two main parties if it determined that a contender for office stood a chance of electoral victory. In many instances the League held the balance of power in elections, and it reminded sitting officials of its political clout during subsequent deliberations on liquor legislation. Odegard asserts that, following the implementation of prohibition in 1920, the League adopted many of the corrupt political practices of which it had accused the liquor industry earlier.

At the same time that Odegard was producing his broad examination of the Anti-Saloon League, Justin Stewart contributed a study of one of the most influential League operatives. Stewart had served as the publicity secretary for Wayne B. Wheeler: Superintendent of the Ohio Anti-Saloon League in the early years of the new century; the attorney for the Anti-Saloon League of America during the campaign for a national prohibition amendment; and, after 1920, the most powerful man in the League and a political force in Washington. Stewart's book, *Wayne Wheeler, Dry Boss: An Uncensored Biography of Wayne B. Wheeler* (1928) asserts that Wheeler, during the struggle for a prohibition amendment, believed the League should emphasize a program of compulsion (through national prohibition) over Ernest Cherrington's focus on educating the American public about the detrimental effects of alcohol. Wheeler wrote the Volstead Act that implemented the Eighteenth amendment and thereafter legislators and judges sought him out to interpret its ambiguous clauses.¹⁷ Wheeler defeated Cherrington for control of the Anti-Saloon League during Warren G. Harding's presidency and became a leading power broker in national politics. His image as a political boss hurt the League and prohibition, particularly after his death in 1927.¹⁸

Charles Merz took up the topic of prohibition in *The Dry Decade* (1930).

¹⁶Ibid., 78.

¹⁷ Justin Stewart, *Wayne Wheeler, Dry Boss: An Uncensored Biography of Wayne B. Wheeler* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1928), 150, 153.

¹⁸ Ibid., 281, 287, 295.

His work is similar to Odegard's, reflecting the soured American attitude toward prohibition in the late 1920s. Merz argues that prohibition was the result of the disproportional political influence of rural America and the immediate circumstances of the war in Europe, particularly the anti-German sentiment which stained the German brewers as unpatriotic. He acknowledges that prohibition was no longer enforced adequately because Americans opposed tax increases to pay for it and were suspicious of the growing power of the federal government.¹⁹ Officials in some areas enforced the liquor ban, but those in others did not. This uneven enforcement, in effect, created a new type of local option (under which some states before 1920 had allowed local populations to decide the liquor issue). Merz concludes that, by 1930, prohibition had produced greater disregard for the law, and indifference among federal and state officials who sought to avoid the thorny issue of liquor enforcement.²⁰

Herbert Asbury returned to Krout's approach of analyzing attitudes and policies toward liquor use throughout American history, though he focused on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from a chronological perspective that Krout did not enjoy. Asbury stresses the contribution of the Anti-Saloon League in organizing and thus increasing the political clout of those opposed to the liquor traffic.²¹ By comparison, the liquor industry was relatively unorganized as brewers and distillers remained at odds with one another. Additionally, the preponderance of saloons at the turn of the twentieth century led proprietors to condone and even support activities further outside the bounds of respectable behavior---prostitution, liquor sales to children, and the violation of laws regulating the closing hours of the saloon. When the United States joined the war in Europe in 1917, the Anti-

¹⁹ Charles Merz, *The Dry Decade* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1930), 24-25, 40, 42-43. The German-American Alliance, closely associated with brewers, was investigated by Congress in 1918 and found to be supporting Germany financially during the war.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 282.

²¹ Asbury, *The Great Illusion*, 96-101.

Saloon League pressured Congress into adopting wartime prohibition even though the war had ended long before the liquor ban went into effect in the summer of 1919. Drys reasoned that a wartime condition still existed in America. Asbury agrees with Merz that prohibition increased lawlessness, adding that the liquor ban created a large backlog in the federal and state judicial systems and spurred the development of organized crime.²² On balance, prohibition produced more corruption than sobriety.

Richard Hofstadter, in *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (1955), places prohibition in the historical context of the Progressive era. He argues that the Progressives, including those who promoted prohibition, were middle-class businessmen and professionals who were distressed at their perceived loss of social and cultural influence amid the late nineteenth century's waves of immigration, the related rise in social and political influence of the urban political machines, and the industrialists' accumulation of immense wealth and social status. By the turn of the century, these middle-class people began to strike back, to reclaim the social, political, and cultural supremacy they believed they had held in an earlier more pristine America. Prohibition, Hofstadter argues, was merely the most extreme attempt by the Progressives to impose their morality on everyone. He accepts Merz' rural-urban split, asserting that prohibition pitted middle-class professionals, grown out of the rural Populist movement of the late nineteenth century, against urban immigrant populations.²³

Building on Merz' work, Andrew Sinclair, in *Era of Excess, A Social History of the Prohibition Movement* (1962), returns to the theme of struggle between rural and urban cultures. Sinclair adds perspective to this argument, noting that prohibition was intolerant rural America's last victory over the more tolerant urban regions as the latter came to dominate national politics by

²²Ibid., 163, 172-173, 201.

²³ Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), 289.

the early 1930s when voters repealed prohibition.²⁴ He acknowledges prohibition's accomplishments, notably destroying the filthy saloon of the pre-prohibition era, and attributes the success of the anti-liquor campaign to the dry's superior organization and communication. Radical drys such as Wayne Wheeler gained greater influence in government under prohibition, and moderates, who had objected to the saloon rather than to liquor itself, consequently dropped their support for the ban by the early 1930s.²⁵

James H. Timberlake, in *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920* (1963) challenges Merz's portrayal of prohibition as a rural construct forced upon an increasingly urban America; some prohibition leaders came out of the urban Social Gospel movement of the late nineteenth century. Perhaps influenced by the New Left movement, which affected much historical research in the 1960s, Timberlake describes the liquor issue as split along class lines with middle-class reformers supporting prohibition and workers opposing it.²⁶ Prohibition, for Timberlake, was not a conservative anomaly among the progressive movements of the early twentieth century. Rather, middle-class Progressives sought to ban liquor to improve American society for the same reasons that they sought child-labor legislation, workers' compensation laws, and other progressive measures.²⁷

The Progressive impulse included nativists who feared immigrants were damaging American society and culture. The former sought to impose their American culture on everyone through measures such as prohibition. Timberlake emphasizes the role of clergymen, particularly through the Anti-Saloon League, in achieving the liquor ban. The League and other dry organizations emphasized recent scientific discoveries about the physiological effects of alcohol, the social cost of drunkenness, efficiency and scientific

²⁴ Andrew Sinclair, *Era of Excess: A Social History of the Prohibition Movement* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 5, 306.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 400.

²⁶ Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, 29-30, 152.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

management studies about the negative effects of alcohol on worker productivity, and the corrupting influence of the liquor industry on American politics when stating their case for prohibition. He attributes the success of the dries to their superior organizational structures, reflecting the prominence Samuel P. Hays gave the organizing impulse in his study of economic, social, and political change in America between 1885 and the First World War.²⁸ Middle-class Progressives, according to Timberlake, supported the attack on the saloon to improve the working classes despite the opposition of the latter.²⁹ Timberlake's work remains one of the most effective at integrating the prohibition issue into the concurrent issues and concerns of Americans in the early twentieth century.

Sociologist Joseph Gusfield joined the historical discussion of prohibition in his *Symbolic Crusade, Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (1963). He accepts Hofstadter's argument that the middle class was motivated by status anxiety to promote reforms in the early twentieth century. Gusfield places Protestant ministers at the head of the prohibition movement as they attempted to preserve or regain their social status by portraying liquor consumption as deviant behavior.³⁰ These reformers, then, were more concerned with prohibiting the sale and use of liquor than with the enforcement of that prohibition---the symbolic value of prohibition was greater than its practical effect as a deterrence to liquor consumption. In this way, Gusfield explains the broad support for the adoption of prohibition and the seemingly contradictory lack of support for those officials charged with enforcing the liquor ban. Gusfield notes the vital

²⁸ Samuel P. Hays, *The Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957).

²⁹ Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, 123-124.

³⁰ Joseph Gusfield, *Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement*, 2nd ed. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 68, 72. The first edition appeared in 1963 to which Gusfield made revisions and added a chapter for the 1986 edition. In this later edition, Gusfield points out the similarities between the symbolism and terminology of the prohibition campaign and that of the American abortion debate in the 1980s.

contribution of the Anti-Saloon League to the dry campaign and accepts Merz' argument that this campaign was driven by a rural American culture that was fast losing ground to its urban counterpart.

Historians of prohibition have been influenced by scholars examining the broader Progressive movement, particularly Robert H. Wiebe's *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (1967). This work expands on ideas put forth by Samuel P. Hays in *The Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914* (1957) to argue that Progressive reformers were not motivated by nostalgia as Hofstadter believed, but acted in reaction to the integration of the American economy. In 1877 American society was community-based as people relied on face-to-face associations. Urbanization and industrialization allowed and mandated distance interaction and a more depersonalized society. Concerning the anti-liquor campaign, Wiebe asserts that this social cause, like others of the period, linked supporters into a less personal, issue-based community that filled a void left by the loss of the old style immediate communities.³¹

While Wiebe's organization thesis remains one of the most important interpretations of the Progressive Era, other scholars have stressed the struggle between nativist and immigrant cultures as the most effective explanation of the period's reforms. Norman H. Clark, in *Deliver Us from Evil* (1976), applies this cultural struggle argument to the prohibition campaign. He sees the split over prohibition as one separating wage-earning immigrants or second-generation Americans (who retained much of their foreign culture and tended to belong to the Catholic or Jewish faiths) from middle-class white nativists (who were well-assimilated into American culture and tended to belong to Protestant faiths such as the Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, or Congregationalist churches).³² He notes that, while rural America generally opposed the saloons, some rural areas did vote wet while some urban areas voted dry.

³¹ Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 56-57.

³² Clark, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 102, 135.

Contrary to most earlier studies, Clark is relatively sympathetic to the noble experiment. Citing the special Congressional report of 1971 entitled *Alcohol and Health*, he maintains that prohibition initially limited the availability of liquor, particularly in rural areas and that it did not create an explosion of crime as observers of the 1920s often suggest. Organized criminals, such as Al Capone, would have risen to power without prohibition by offering other illegal products or services.³³ Enforcement efforts suffered more from a lack of funding than from unrealistic expectations. National prohibition ultimately failed due to the onset of the Great Depression as many people believed the re-establishment of the liquor industry would provide significant employment, to the cultural influence of popular films and novels that associated drinking liquor with individualism and moral courage, and to the active lobbying efforts of the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment.³⁴ Clark's approach represents a significant departure from earlier studies.³⁵ Using the quantitative methods common in the social histories of the late 1960s and 1970s, he sees prohibition not as a failure but as a success or at least a partial success that was denigrated and cut short by an organized opposition.

Not all historians agreed with Clark's assessment of prohibition. Jack S. Blocker also utilized the methodology of the social historians in his study of the Prohibition Party and the Anti-Saloon League entitled *Retreat from Reform: The Prohibition Movement in the United States, 1890-1913* (1976). Contrary to traditional representations of the two organizations, he asserts that the Prohibition Party and the Anti-Saloon League did not differ substantially in methodology. Each was willing to adopt whatever tactics were necessary to attain the goal of prohibition. Rather, the two groups engaged in

³³ *Ibid.*, 146, 148-150.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 162-163, 168-169, 173-174, 181. Clark's conclusions lose some of their impact as he chose to write his book as a synthesis of liquor use and prohibition and so included no citations beyond a general list of works consulted.

³⁵ See also John C. Burnham, "New Perspectives on the Prohibition 'Experiment' of the 1920's," *Journal of Social History* 2(1968): 51-68.

a petty battle for the leadership of the movement.³⁶ The League won this battle because it tapped the support of those dries who felt the Prohibition Party was too radical, too far to the political left. Blocker argues that the League's eclipse of the Party after 1905 ensured that prohibition would be separated permanently from the broader social reforms that the Party had sought. He echoes the sentiments of Timberlake and Gusfield that the dry leaders were not aberrant fanatics, but came from the urban middle classes of mainstream America.

Absent from many of these scholarly studies of the temperance and prohibition movements has been a thorough accounting of the role played by women in the anti-liquor campaign. Ruth Bordin addressed this vacuum in *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (1981), which focuses on the development and contribution of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union to the temperance campaign in the late nineteenth century. She notes that this organization, particularly under the energetic direction of Frances E. Willard from 1879 until her death in 1898, emphasized the social impact of drunkenness among men---poverty and violence against wives and children. After Willard became president she sought to broaden the WCTU platform to include a variety of other social issues. She made it a leading charitable organization under her "do everything" approach, and the Union became the primary conduit by which women expressed themselves in a political system that officially excluded them.³⁷ The WCTU, then, became the leading feminist organization in America in the late nineteenth century, though Willard successfully appealed to both conservative and liberal women. Her increasing support for the Prohibition Party led some dissenting members to form the Non-Partisan Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1889. After Willard's death, the WCTU lost some of its vigor and was supplanted by the

³⁶ Jack S. Blocker, Jr., *Retreat from Reform: The Prohibition Movement in the United States, 1890-1913* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 140.

³⁷ Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 26, 116, 32.

Anti-Saloon League as the leading temperance organization.³⁸

The impact of Wiebe's organization thesis is evident in K. Austin Kerr's *Organized for Prohibition: A New History of the Anti-Saloon League* (1985). The first to conduct a comprehensive study of the national Anti-Saloon League since Peter Odegard's *Pressure Politics* in 1928, Kerr agrees with Clark that prohibition was part of a broader evangelical Protestant campaign which grew out of the Social Gospel movement of the 1890s.³⁹ His study benefited not only from the scholarship produced since *Pressure Politics*, but also from greater access to the Anti-Saloon League archives. In 1974 the Ohio Historical Society acquired those records making them available to the public. Kerr argues that the organized structure of the League increased the political influence of prohibitionists at the state and federal levels and consequently made possible adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919. During the 1920s the League split into two factions, one led by Wayne Wheeler, which stressed League influence in appointments to enforcement posts, and the other led by Ernest Cherrington, which emphasized the League's leadership in educating the American public about the scourge of alcohol. Wheeler's victory over Cherrington for control of the League determined that organization's direction throughout the period of national prohibition.

Kerr asserts that the Anti-Saloon League, while billing itself as a grassroots organization of churches, actually was directed from the top down by such influential people as Reverend Howard H. Russell (founder), Purley A. Baker, Wayne Wheeler, and Edwin Dinwiddie (national legislative superintendent and Superintendent of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League from 1907 until 1908). The League, in battling the established political influence of the liquor industry, adopted many of the traits of successful political machines.⁴⁰ These characteristics, while responsible for the adoption of

³⁸Ibid., 71, 91-92, xviii.

³⁹ K. Austin Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition: A New History of the Anti-Saloon League* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), xii.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 81, 113, 146.

prohibition, ultimately discredited the League and by association the noble experiment. Kerr sees prohibition as a temporary success in that it reduced consumption of alcohol and broke up the established liquor traffic. In the end, the League's structure prevented it from working with more moderate dry proponents, dooming prohibition.⁴¹

Jack S. Blocker placed his earlier study of the campaigns by the Anti-Saloon League and the Prohibition Party in a larger historical context in *American Temperance Movements: Cycles of Reform* (1989). In this work he identifies five distinct anti-liquor movements in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries each of which progressed from persuasion to coercion because the former proved ineffective in stamping out the use of liquor. The prohibition movement of the early twentieth century, then, was merely the coercive phase of one of these reform movements. He notes that even the Anti-Saloon League, the most coercive of all the anti-liquor groups, promoted education alongside coercion until Wayne B. Wheeler gained primary control of the League in the 1920s.⁴² By the end of that decade, a growing number of Americans came to believe that coercion did not work and called for the repeal of prohibition. Following the end of the noble experiment, persuasion again became the preferred method of anti-liquor groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous. Blocker sees a cyclical return to coercion by anti-liquor groups in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴³

In the last decades of the twentieth century, many scholars have examined the issue of gender as a means of gaining greater insight into America's past. Catherine Gilbert Murdock took such an approach toward the study of prohibition in *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940* (1998). She argues that prohibition was a campaign against male activity as the saloon of the late nineteenth century was an

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 276-277, 282.

⁴² Blocker, *Cycles of Reform*, xv.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 154.

almost exclusively male establishment. The close association of men with liquor began in the early nineteenth century when liquor was incorporated into the workplace. During the latter half of that century, owners gradually forbid the use of liquor at work and so it came to dominate the increasing leisure time of male workers. The tavern became a primarily working-class establishment as middle-class men left under pressure from temperance groups. Set against the working-class saloon patrons were temperance supporters who epitomized the Victorian era's feminine ideal.⁴⁴

Murdock's thesis is that the introduction of women into public drinking establishments after 1910 did not represent the entrance of women into a masculine world but the domestication of the drinking world as women remained closely associated with the domestic sphere. Drinking lost its maleness during prohibition in the same way that many sectors of the workplace had when women entered these arenas as fellow workers. As drinking lost its masculine nature, increasing numbers of male voters began to see it as deviant behavior and so agreed to support prohibition. Prohibition's success in reducing the number of nonrespectable drinkers led to the glamorization of drinking by popular culture during the 1920s.⁴⁵ The historical study of the campaign to ban liquor in America, then, has evolved significantly over the past seventy-five years. Recent scholars tend to agree that the prohibition movement was not a cultural and political aberration, but the result of an organized effort by members of mainstream America to improve society.

Oklahoma's prohibition experience mirrored national events in some ways, but also contained distinct elements. Historians began studying Oklahoma prohibition in the 1930s. Grant Foreman, in "A Century of

⁴⁴ Catherine Gilbert Murdock, *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 4, 14, 17.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 8, 85-86, 95.

Prohibition in Oklahoma,” emphasizes liquor policy in Indian country during the nineteenth century as a prelude to prohibition movements in the next century. Walter LeGrand weighed in with “The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma,” a thesis completed at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1948, examining the campaign to achieve prohibition during the late territorial period.⁴⁶

Jimmie Lewis Franklin, in *Born Sober: Prohibition in Oklahoma 1907-1959*, presents an extensive analysis of the campaign to ban liquor in the Sooner state and the enforcement of that ban. Franklin notes that this campaign differed from that in other states due to Oklahoma’s American Indian population; attempts to ban liquor grew out of traditional attempts to deny Indians access to liquor. He also documents the contributions of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and the state Woman’s Christian Temperance Union toward final adoption in 1907.⁴⁷ During the fifty-two years that Oklahoma existed as a dry (prohibition) state, enforcement of the liquor statutes presented ongoing problems for law enforcement personnel. Franklin chronicles their struggles and the political maneuverings by dries to fend off numerous attempts at repeal. In similar fashion to national prohibition, Oklahoma’s liquor ban reduced respect for the law and placed enforcement officers in the awkward position of displeasing wets (those who opposed prohibition) or dries. In 1959, newly-elected Governor J. Howard Edmondson led the successful campaign to end the noble experiment in the state.

Franklin’s is an ambitious and comprehensive history of Oklahoma liquor legislation. The present study is not meant to challenge his central conclusions, but seeks to build on his work---to emphasize aspects of the

⁴⁶ Grant Foreman, “A Century of Prohibition,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 12:2 (June, 1934): 133-141; Walter LeGrand, “The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma” (M.A. thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1948).

⁴⁷ Jimmy Lewis Franklin, *Born Sober: Prohibition in Oklahoma, 1907-1959* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), xi-xiii.

campaign that Franklin did not stress, as well as the implications of prohibition for the various components of Oklahoma's populace. The extensive period of time that *Born Sober* covers, while providing a comprehensive view of prohibition, also creates limitations for it prevents or at least deters the study of prohibition in association with concurrent political, social, and cultural events unfolding in the Sooner state. Time and space constraints hinder Franklin's discussion of such topics as the development of state and local security organizations during the First World War, the efforts by bootleggers to continue their trade and the consequential effect on the legal code and its enforcement, and the growing significance of the oil industry in early Oklahoma and the problems it presented for liquor enforcement personnel.

A point on which this study disagrees with *Born Sober* involves the populations that supported and resisted prohibition in Oklahoma. Franklin states that dry support came from the rural sections of the state, while the growing urban areas posed the greatest obstacle to enforcement. He states, "While the wets may have carried Guthrie, Oklahoma City, Shawnee, and a few other large towns, the rural vote would have easily carried prohibition. And indeed if there was any real friend of prohibition, it was the farmer."⁴⁸ As mentioned above, other historians have challenged the notion that prohibition represented a struggle between rural and urban groups. This study argues that, while rural counties such as Greer and Tillman strongly supported prohibition, Coal, Creek, and Osage counties---also primarily rural---offered some of the most stubborn resistance to enforcement efforts. Voters in these locales regularly returned to office men who had failed to enforce the liquor ban, and juries regularly acquitted bootleggers despite substantial evidence of their guilt. Among prohibition supporters, merchants and professionals living in small and moderate-sized towns and even in Oklahoma's

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

few cities dominated the local Anti-Saloon League chapters and the associated Law and Order Leagues which campaigned for and labored to enforce prohibition. While Oklahoma City and later Tulsa presented significant hurdles to liquor enforcement, many of the state officers of the Anti-Saloon League resided in Oklahoma City. Rather than a rural-urban split on prohibition, this study asserts that the issue divided Oklahomans according to class as middle-class merchants and professionals sought to curb the public drinking habits of the working classes.

The issue of religion and culture also is examined in this work. Oklahoma's church population, though officially small, overwhelmingly belonged to those Protestant denominations that historian Paul Kleppner states contained a pietistic political culture.⁴⁹ Kleppner, Richard Jensen, and other students of late nineteenth century American politics have argued that denominations such as the Methodists, Baptists, Christians, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians formed the basis of a pietistic political culture that emphasized evangelism and reform and sought to achieve these goals through the political process. Opposing the pietists were the ritualists or liturgicals (Jensen's term) who emphasized religious tradition and ritual and generally did not actively recruit new members nor seek to reform the actions of others. Kleppner argues that these groups held considerable political sway independent of the two major parties and differed most strenuously over cultural issues such as the prohibition of liquor---pietists supported a liquor ban and liturgicals opposed it. The pietist-liturgical model presents limitations similar to those of the rural-urban model when considering Oklahoma prohibition. By either of these models, the Sooner state should have adopted prohibition by a wide margin as its voters were overwhelmingly rural and few belonged to liturgical denominations. As Table 1 in the appendix demonstrates,

⁴⁹ Paul Kleppner, *The Third Electoral System, 1853-1892: Parties, Voters, and Political Cultures* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979); Richard Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971).

referenda in 1907 and 1910, however, each indicate that more than forty-five percent of those voting on the question opposed prohibition. Further, the total number of people voting against prohibition in each election far exceeded the voting portion of the small immigrant and liturgical populations.⁵⁰

This is not to say that most of Oklahoma's liturgicals and recent immigrants from Europe voted in favor of prohibition. Likely most people in these groups opposed prohibition as an attack on a fundamental aspect of their culture: in addition to the threat to their periodic recreational use of alcohol, liturgicals would have opposed efforts to demonize alcohol as contrary to their use of wine in religious services. Early settlement patterns in the new state would seem to confirm this. The limited immigration to the Sooner state by Catholics, Episcopalians, and Lutherans---three of the largest religious denominations in America in 1900---indicates that the new state held less appeal for these religious groups than for Baptists, Methodists, members of the Church of Christ, and other pietistic denominations. The establishment of prohibition as a part of the state constitution when numerous other states adopted comparatively liberal liquor laws likely deterred liturgicals from settling in Oklahoma. The relatively low rate of immigration to Oklahoma also is noteworthy as the new state was established amidst the largest wave of immigration in American history. As with the liturgicals, the immigrants (many of whom belonged to these liturgical faiths) saw less appeal in Oklahoma than in other states. Prohibition was one of the most visible aspects of Oklahoma society after 1907 and likely discouraged many immigrants from seeking homes there. Rather than challenge these suppositions, this study suggests that the ethnocultural argument, formulated by Kleppner, Jensen, and others, is not sufficient in explaining support for and opposition to prohibition in early Oklahoma. A significant nonimmigrant, nonliturgical

⁵⁰ Pamphlet distributed by the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, Prohibition Files, Barde Collection, Oklahoma State Historical Society, Oklahoma City, OK. Victor E. Harlow confirms the totals for the state that the League reported. See Victor E. Harlow, *Oklahoma: Its Origins and Development* (Oklahoma City, OK: Harlow Publishing Corporation, 1935), 310.

population opposed prohibition at the election polls and in the saloons.

This study benefits greatly from the considerable scholarship on prohibition and on Oklahoma produced since *Born Sober* appeared. Early studies of the Sooner state focused on its political history. A noted exception is Angie Debo's *And Still the Waters Run* (1940), which concentrates on the plight of Indians belonging to the Five Tribes (Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, Chickasaw, and Choctaw) and the processes by which they lost their land. In recent decades historians have emphasized the experience of the working classes in early Oklahoma. Danney Goble and James R. Scales, in *Oklahoma Politics: A History* (1982), argue that Oklahoma was dominated by an anti-corporate spirit at its founding that gave way within four years to a progressivism favoring business.⁵¹ John Thompson's *Closing the Frontier: Radical Responses in Oklahoma, 1889-1923* (1986) asserts that Oklahoma became a refuge for people who could not conform to accepted political and cultural norms in the more settled regions of the United States. These radicals suffered increased repression following Oklahoma statehood as enforcement structures in the area solidified.⁵²

Kenny L. Brown's "Progressivism in Oklahoma Politics, 1900-1913: A Reinterpretation," which appeared in "*An Oklahoma I Had Never Seen Before*," *Alternative Views of Oklahoma History* notes the progressive impulse in the Sooner state, but argues that special interest groups used the platitudes of progressivism to achieve their own political ends. As a result, the state abandoned its ideas on labor reform for cultural reforms such as Jim Crow legislation and prohibition.⁵³

⁵¹ Angie Debo, *And Still the Waters Run: The Betrayal of the Five Civilized Tribes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1940); James R. Scales and Danney Goble, *Oklahoma Politics: A History* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 52.

⁵² John Thompson, *Closing the Frontier: Radical Responses in Oklahoma, 1889-1923* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 15.

⁵³ Kenny L. Brown, "Progressivism in Oklahoma Politics, 1900-1913: A Reinterpretation," in "*An Oklahoma I Had Never Seen Before*," *Alternative Views of Oklahoma History*, ed. Davis D. Joyce (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 29, 56.

Nigel A. Sellars emphasizes early Oklahoma's working classes and efforts by the International Workers of the World (IWW) and others to organize laborers in the Sooner state.⁵⁴ He agrees with Scales and Goble that workers played a prominent role in the establishment of the new state and that they lost much of this prominence within the first years of statehood. Studying both the endeavors of the IWW, or Wobblies, and actions by authorities against it, Sellars asserts that the political (and potentially economic) influence of the working class did not fade naturally. He notes the negative impact of the 1917 Green Corn Rebellion on radicals such as the IWW and the Oklahoma Socialist Party despite their limited involvement in this action. Rather, Oklahoma businessmen and politicians (particularly members of the Democratic Party) deliberately killed these class-based organizations to secure their control of the Sooner state. Associating labor activity with anarchism, authorities actively raided IWW locals in the oil towns of Cushing and Tulsa, particularly after America's entrance into the First World War and the Green Corn Rebellion.⁵⁵ The working-class movement in Oklahoma was more widespread than historians have indicated. The United Mine Workers entered the coal fields of Indian Territory before 1900, the Agricultural Workers Organization (AWO) attempted to organize the tenant farmers and harvest hands during the first years of the twentieth century, and the Oil Workers' Industrial Union sought to organized wage earners in the Oklahoma oil patch.

Sellars notes that groups in the IWW and the AWO attacked bootleggers hoping to maintain a clean image of the Oklahoma worker. He adds that the prohibition law pushed laborers toward the criminal element by eliminating the legitimate saloon that workers elsewhere continued to use as a social center, job agency, and occasionally as a bank. With the outbreak of the First

⁵⁴ Nigel Anthony Sellars, "Oil, Wheat & Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World in Oklahoma, 1905-1930" (Ph.D. dissertation., The University of Oklahoma, 1998).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2, 267.

World War, labor organizations became the targets of local councils of defense; by 1920, the Ku Klux Klan entered Oklahoma and went after labor organizers, as well as bootleggers and prostitutes, whom the Klan held to be insufficiently American. The work of the Klan and more respectable citizens of Oklahoma brought on a sharp decline in labor movements by 1923, though Sellars adds that the early organizing efforts by the IWW and others aided subsequent unionizing efforts in the 1930s and 1940s.⁵⁶

In addition to the overt attacks on labor organizers, which Sellars and other historians discuss, this study will demonstrate that state and local authorities, backed by the respectable (white, middle-class) element of Oklahoma's population, also attacked institutions and individuals responsible for public drinking in the new state. In some instances, communities went after bootleggers and illegal saloons when they believed local officials had failed to carry out their enforcement duties. Public drinking, whether at a legal saloon (before statehood) or at an illegal saloon or liquor joint, had become a central element of working-class culture in America by the turn of the century. Jon M. Kingsdale describes the saloon as "a neighborhood center, an all-male establishment and a transmitter of working-class and immigrant cultures."⁵⁷ Though his study focuses on the urban saloon, the conditions that led to its designation as a "poor man's club" also existed in Oklahoma---workers lived in cramped dingy rooms and sought human interaction and recreation in liquor joints. Those regions of the state that provided the greatest challenge to enforcement officials contained substantial working-class populations. This type of public drinking, along with most working-class culture, fell outside the realm of respectable activity in Oklahoma; the better element of society sought to eliminate this scourge to improve the lives of everyone. They were not entirely successful.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 443, 446, 501, 504.

⁵⁷ Jon M. Kingsdale, "The 'Poor Man's Club': Social Functions of the Urban Working-Class Saloon," *American Quarterly* 25:4 (October 1973): 472.

My thesis in this study is that prohibition in Oklahoma emphasized the cultural struggle between members of the middle class and the working class. The merchants and professionals (including clergymen), who comprised the first group, saw the liquor industry as fomenting crime, hindering social progress, and distracting men from their familial responsibilities. These members of the middle class sought to impose their ideas regarding liquor on the wage earners of the Sooner state by making prohibition a part of the state's constitution in 1907. That they were able to accomplish this is a testament to their organizing efforts, but also to their social standing locally and statewide. Supporters of prohibition were prominent in their communities, and this served them well when striving to attain and later enforce prohibition. Through their propaganda and by emphasizing their own social standing, they cast the retail liquor industry, its supporters, and its patrons outside the bounds of social respectability.

The supporters of prohibition in Oklahoma were not successful in eliminating the liquor trade from the Sooner state; it remained vibrant throughout the period before national prohibition became law in January 1920. Wage earners, in particular, continued to frequent saloons after the state declared such establishments illegal. The liquor ban did ensure, however, that this aspect of working-class culture would remain outside the bounds of polite, respectable society in Oklahoma. In fact, anyone friendly toward the liquor culture found themselves out of step with the social attitudes dominant in the state. Vestiges of this attitude remained long after voters repealed Oklahoma's liquor ban in 1959.

In adopting this approach to prohibition, I am indebted to the work of James H. Timberlake's *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920*. This work meticulously yet concisely documents and explains the prohibition campaign of the early twentieth century. Timberlake places the liquor issue squarely among the progressive reforms of the period, rather than portraying

it as an anomaly, and sees the liquor issue as pitting middle-class reformers against a resistant working-class population. Oklahoma contained a sizable wage-earning population, particularly in the oil fields, the mining districts, and in the urban centers, regions that posed the greatest difficulty to liquor enforcement personnel. I hope to further the view of prohibition as an attack on a basic element of working-class culture in early twentieth century America.

This study, then, disagrees with the premise of several important works on prohibition and politics. The urban-rural split, which Franklin, Sinclair, and Merz identify as the determining factor in establishing support or opposition to prohibition, does not work well in the Sooner state. Several primarily rural counties---Creek, Coal, Osage, and Carter for instance---demonstrated considerable wet sentiment; and, while liquor remained available in cities such as Oklahoma City, Muskogee, and Tulsa, these urban regions also produced the leadership of the Anti-Saloon League and other temperance groups. The ethnocultural arguments of Paul Kleppner, Richard Jensen and others prove incomplete in explaining Oklahomans' liquor stance because the Sooner state's immigrant population remained quite small as did the population affiliated with the ritualistic religious denominations.

This study has benefited also from those works on working-class culture as it developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Jon M. Kingsdale's article "The 'Poor Man's Club,'" Kathy Peiss's *Cheap Amusements*, and Roy Rosenzweig's *Eight Hours for What We Will* emphasize the vital role of the saloon in working-class culture. Lastly, this study has benefited from the work of Norman H. Clark, who emphasizes the importance of conducting state studies of prohibition and who, through a detailed examination of the topic, presents a more sympathetic view of the liquor ban and its supporters. While I question his conclusion that prohibition was effective in reducing liquor consumption (based on my examination of Oklahoma prohibition), his study

has given the field sorely needed balance and has given me a greater appreciation for the dry perspective in the liquor debate.

In chapter two, I will provide some background information about Oklahoma and the diverse population that resided there in the early-twentieth-century. Because the region began as a place within which to relocate Native American populations from other areas of the United States, Oklahoma's early history differs from that of other states in the union; and this unique heritage influenced subsequent events, including the discussion of the liquor issue. Once opened for non-Indian settlement in 1889, Oklahoma drew many black as well as white settlers who were anxious to make a new financial start on free parcels of land. By statehood, the region contained a number of black communities. African-Americans who had emigrated from the states of the former Confederacy and those who had been slaves of the Five Tribes before the American Civil War created and populated these black towns around the state. The presence of these communities complicated liquor enforcement issues. Early Oklahoma also contained several influential religious denominations, and these figure prominently in the campaign for and enforcement of the liquor ban. I examine these aspects of Oklahoma's population to establish for the reader the characteristics of the population that wrestled with the liquor issue. I also study the changes in Oklahoma's economy, particularly the development of the mining and petroleum industries. This aspect of the Oklahoma economy lent to the state a boom and bust mentality similar to that experienced in other regions of the American west, and provided special problems for liquor enforcement officials.

Chapter three examines the campaign to make Oklahoma a prohibition state. While Franklin and others have studied this process previously, they do not emphasize sufficiently the vital role that the Anti-Saloon League played in bringing Oklahoma into the union as a dry state. After 1900, it gradually overshadowed the more established WCTU as the leading temperance

organization in Oklahoma and Indian territories. The League was active not only in the two territories drumming up support for prohibition among residents, but also in Washington, D.C. appealing to members of Congress to ban liquor in the territories. Its assertion that saloons spawn crime and hinder the growth of respectable, stable businesses in communities resonated with many members of the region's middle class. Enforcement issues arose before statehood in Indian Territory, under a long-standing federal liquor ban. These foretold the problems state and local officials later would endure, though few recognized this at the time.

In chapter four, I study the changes in Oklahoma's liquor codes between statehood and 1920 and the efforts by state and local officials to enforce those laws. While adopted in 1907, the exact provisions of the liquor ban remained unclear in the early years of statehood and liquor dealers took advantage of this uncertainty to continue their trade. Persistent enforcement problems led some dry proponents to form popular enforcement organizations to support or monitor elected officials. By 1920, Oklahoma had closed many of the early loopholes in the liquor codes, yet liquor remained available in many communities. Oklahoma citizens's experience of prohibition, then, did not match the legal code regarding liquor. The state had achieved prohibition on paper, but not in the streets and along the roads of many Oklahoma communities.

Chapter five analyzes that portion of the state population that worked most strenuously for prohibition and its enforcement. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union organized in the region soon after the formation of the two territories, and became the leading temperance group in the region by the turn of the century. As statehood neared, however, the more recently organized Anti-Saloon League gained prominence in the territories and replaced the WCTU as the leading anti-liquor association. Clergymen--- particularly those from the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and

Congregationalist denominations---gained notoriety in the campaign against liquor, and the Anti-Saloon League of America and its state affiliate, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, facilitated this by placing ministers in positions of influence. These ministers were joined in the league by other professionals, such as lawyers and doctors, and merchants from around the state who shared the middle-class view that the saloon was without redeeming social qualities and so must be abolished. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and the county leagues it formed were led by men prominent in their local communities who believed the saloon to be a well spring from which flowed all manner of crime---assault, theft, prostitution, graft, and even murder. The social prominence of these men gave the dry camp an air of respectability and, by contrast, cast those who opposed prohibition as not respectable members of society.

In chapter six I turn to the wet side of the liquor issue in Oklahoma, examining the organized political opposition to prohibition, the saloon industry and culture as it developed in Oklahoma, and the customers of the saloon. The several groups that opposed the Anti-Saloon League in the prohibition debate suffered from inferior organization and from a failure to make their messages resonate with saloon patrons, and these shortcomings largely account for their lack of success against the League's propaganda and organizational onslaught.

Prohibition left a stamp on issues of social propriety in Oklahoma. A person's prohibition stance became a litmus test for respectability. Respectable people, righteous, established, and prominent in their communities, supported the liquor ban; hence those who did not support the liquor ban were stained as less virtuous, less than righteous. This certainly was true of Oklahoma's German population, which suffered from its continued adherence to German culture (including beer drinking) while the United States was at war with Germany. It also was true of the state's large working-

class male population, which provided much of the customer base for the bootlegger and blind pig operator. The saloon formed a prominent part of working-class culture in Oklahoma as elsewhere. Because prohibition posed a direct threat to that culture, most wage earners did not openly support the liquor ban and continued to defy it by patronizing the illegal joints as they had the legal saloons earlier.

In this study, I have relied on newspaper reports from around the region, local histories, the personal papers of reformers, correspondence between enforcement officials and state residents, and interviews conducted in the 1930s as part of several Works Progress Administration projects. As Franklin provides many accounts of activity in Oklahoma City, I have focused on newspaper accounts from the cities of the eastern portion of the state, Muskogee and Tulsa, and those from smaller communities around the state. I have utilized the Oklahoma State Historical Society's extensive index of newspaper topics in early Oklahoma in this process, and have supplemented this with a more careful study of prominent newspapers. I also have given greater attention to newspapers published in those communities identified by enforcement officers or dry proponents as problem areas, including two of the German newspapers published in early Oklahoma. *Harlow's Weekly*, a nonpartisan newspaper that covered events and issues from around the state, has been a rich source of information on the liquor issue. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, from 1908 until 1916, published a local edition to the national league's monthly newspaper, and this has given me both considerable information about the activities of both wets and drys and an excellent example of League rhetoric.

County and city histories also have afforded me a closer look at local conditions in those regions identified as problem areas. The papers of reformers such as Lilah D. Lindsey and Reverend C. C. Brannon have added to my understanding of the activities of the WCTU, the Anti-Saloon League, and

other groups. The governors' papers (those of Charles N. Haskell, Lee Cruce, Robert L. Williams, and James B. A. Robertson) and those of their attorneys general have been invaluable in providing me with a sense of prohibition activity and liquor conditions around the state. These communications also have given me insight into the social and economic status of those who sought increased enforcement efforts. The interviews collected in the Indian Pioneer History Series have yielded considerable information on the liquor industry and its patrons as has a similar collection of interviews with oil workers also conducted in the 1930s. This study, then, draws on a variety of sources to piece together a picture of prohibition in early Oklahoma as experienced by Oklahomans.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND: OKLAHOMA AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Before launching into the liquor issue in Oklahoma, let us examine the political and social conditions of the region at the opening of the twentieth century. Events of the nineteenth century produced the Oklahoma of 1900 and so merit some study to understand better the place and people into which prohibition was introduced in 1907. Oklahoma's population comprised a variety of cultures and these approached prohibition from different vantage points. The political and economic changes taking place in Oklahoma also influenced the perspective of those living in the Sooner state. Discussing these social, economic, and political conditions at the outset will reduce the need for distracting asides during the subsequent analysis of Oklahoma's prohibition experience.

The origins of Oklahoma distinguish it from other states. Designed initially as a place to relocate numerous Indian populations from the eastern United States to facilitate white settlement of the east, it also became home to numerous plains Indians in the late nineteenth century as the federal government attempted to secure these regions for white settlers. In the late 1820s and the early 1830s, the United States government had resettled the Cherokees, Creeks, Seminoles, Choctaws, and Chickasaws---the so-called Five Civilized Tribes---to present-day Oklahoma. The decision by some members of these tribes to support the Confederate cause during the Civil War provided the federal government with a reason to renegotiate its territorial treaties with them in the late 1860s.

These new agreements further restricted the land holdings of the Five

Tribes so that the government might locate other tribes in the region also. The federal government also pressured the tribes to reorganize and combine politically so that it might deal with them collectively. Congressional documents increasingly referred to the lands of the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole nations as Indian Territory. Figure 1 is a map of the the late-nineteenth-century Indian lands that would become Oklahoma. Figure 2 depicts the Oklahoma counties as they existed at statehood.¹

In the extreme northeastern section of the Cherokee lands, the United States government resettled smaller Indian tribes such as the Ottawa, Quapaw, and Peoria in the late nineteenth century. By 1910 the Cherokees were distributed among the several counties of their former territory and comprised nearly half the population of Delaware County; the smaller Choctaw population was concentrated in McCurtain and LeFlore counties; the still smaller Creek population was concentrated in Hughes, McIntosh, and Muskogee counties though the white population of the latter far outnumbered the Creeks; and the Chickasaws were most numerous in Garvin and Carter counties again as a small fraction of the white population. Among the western tribes, the Cheyenne and Arapaho populations were concentrated in Blaine County, and the Kiowas, Apaches, and Comanches were most numerous in Comanche County. With the exception of the sparsely former Cherokee lands, white settlers greatly outstripped these Indian populations.²

The lands of Indian Territory, while not officially opened to white settlement until after statehood in 1907, saw a growing non-Indian population in the nineteenth century. Religious missionaries had settled among the five tribes prior to the Civil War, seeking to convert the Indians to Christianity.

The Baptist church established Ebenezer Station at present-day Muskogee in
¹ John W. Morris, Charles R. Goins, and Edwin C. McReynolds, eds., *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma*, 3rd.ed. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), map 33, 59.

² U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, 3 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), 466-479. I have assumed that the Indian group residing in the region before statehood remained the dominant Native American group in that region after statehood.

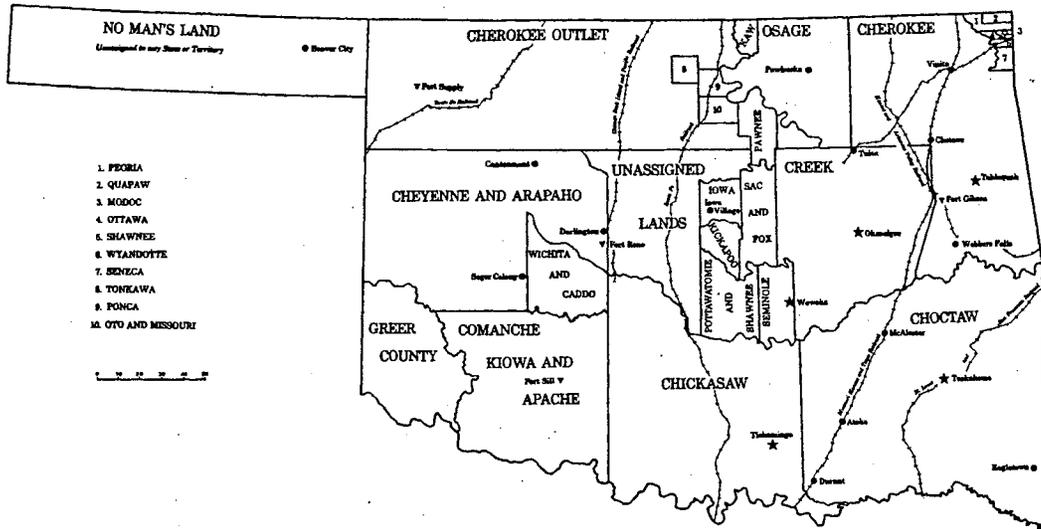


Figure 1. Indian Territory, 1866-1889

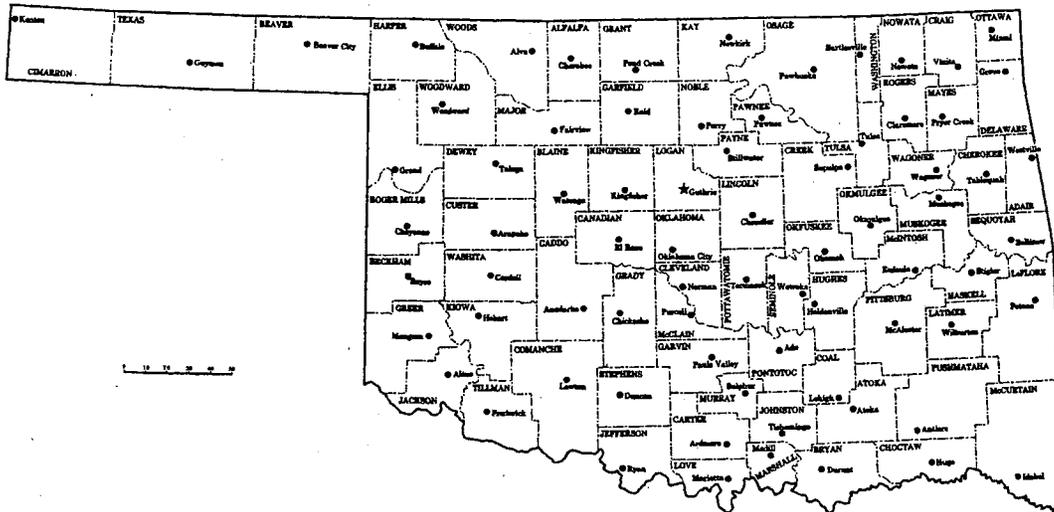


Figure 2. Oklahoma Counties, 1907

the Creek lands in 1832.³ Over the next five years, the American Board of Missions, supported by both Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches, established ten missions in the Indian country.⁴ The Methodists established churches among the Five Tribes in the 1830s, and the Church of Christ began missionary efforts among the Cherokees in 1857.⁵ The Roman Catholic Church, between 1840 and 1875, established a series of missions in Indian Territory.⁶ These religious groups gained a firm footing in the region by 1900. The Cherokees were most receptive to missionary efforts. Some Chickasaws and Choctaws and more Creeks and Seminoles resisted Christianity and other aspects of white culture such as dress.⁷ The Christian missionaries complained regularly of the illegal presence of liquor in Indian Territory.⁸

Economic opportunities drew other non-Indians to the region. Farmers as well as mining and timber companies leased lands from Indian residents, some whites squatted on Indian lands illegally, and railroad construction left behind strings of small towns to service the trains. Additionally, some blacks, former slaves of the Indians who the federal government had ordered emancipated following the Civil War, remained in Indian Territory after gaining their freedom. Some received lands as part of their emancipation, while most leased farm ground from their former masters. The Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws granted citizenship to whites who married members of the tribe. The Chickasaws were the most liberal in this practice and consequently acquired the largest white population in Indian Territory. The

³ *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Vol. II*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1958), 1029.

⁴ Elwood Michael Hinds, Jr., "A History of Congregationalism in Oklahoma from 1817 to 1942" (M.A. thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1942), 5-8.

⁵ Stephen J. England, *Oklahoma Christians: A History of the Christian Churches and the of the Start of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma* (n.p.: Bethany Press, 1975), 38.

⁶ *A History of the Parish of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church Edmond, Oklahoma, 1889-1989* (Edmond, OK: St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, 1989), xi.

⁷ Reverend Andrew E. Butterfield, *Comanche, Kiawa and Apache Missions: Forty-two Years Ago and Now* (Childress, TX: n.p., 1934), 7, 9, 22-23; Richard H. Harper, "The Missionary Work of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America, In Oklahoma, Part III: Work Among the People," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 19:3 (June 1941): 171.

⁸ Harlow, *Oklahoma*, 154-155, 156-157.

Cherokees, concerned about the growing non-Indian population, granted no property rights to whites who intermarried after 1877. By 1900, Indian Territory contained more non-Indians than Native Americans.⁹

After the Civil War, the federal government placed plains Indians such as the Osage, Pawnee, Ponca, and Iowa on former Cherokee lands to the west of Indian Territory, allowing the former homelands of these peoples to be opened for white settlement. The government located larger plains groups, such as the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Apaches, Kiowas, and Comanches on reservations in the southwestern portions of present-day Oklahoma. Concerned about the threat that these Indians posed to nearby white populations, the government also established some of the earliest military outposts in the area from which to monitor the actions of the Indians and to ensure that they remained on the reservation lands. Fort Sill and Fort El Reno were two of the more prominent installations. Religious missionaries, concerned about the spiritual health of the heathen Indians also located among the plains Indians. The Quakers began a short-lived mission at Fort Sill around 1870.¹⁰ John McIntosh, a Baptist minister, established a church on the Washita River in 1874.¹¹ The Methodists sent a missionary to the Comanches at Ft. Sill later that decade and another to Anadarko in 1892 as a missionary to the Kiowas.¹² The Roman Catholic church and the Presbyterian denomination established separate schools for the Indians near Anadarko in the 1890s, and Mennonite and Christian Reformed missionaries began work among the plains Indians in 1895.¹³ These religious men imparted to the plains Indians their ideas on morality, including a

⁹ Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, 11-13.

¹⁰ Butterfield, *Comanche, Kiawa and Apache Missions*, 4.

¹¹ Louise Haddock and Dr. J. M. Gaskin, *Baptist Heroes in Oklahoma (Grandfather Tells Tommy and Lee Ann the History of the Oklahoma Baptists)* (Oklahoma City, OK: Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 1976), 78.

¹² Butterfield, *Comanche, Kiawa and Apache Missions*, 2, 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4; Marvin E. Kroecker, *Comanches and Mennonites on the Oklahoma Plains: A. J. and Magdalena Becker and the Post Oak Mission* (Fresno, CA: Centers for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1997), 12, 15; Harper, "The Missionary Work of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America, In Oklahoma," 170. See also Hugh D. Corwin, "Protestant Missionary Work Among the Comanches and Kiowas," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 46:1 (Spring 1968): 41-57.

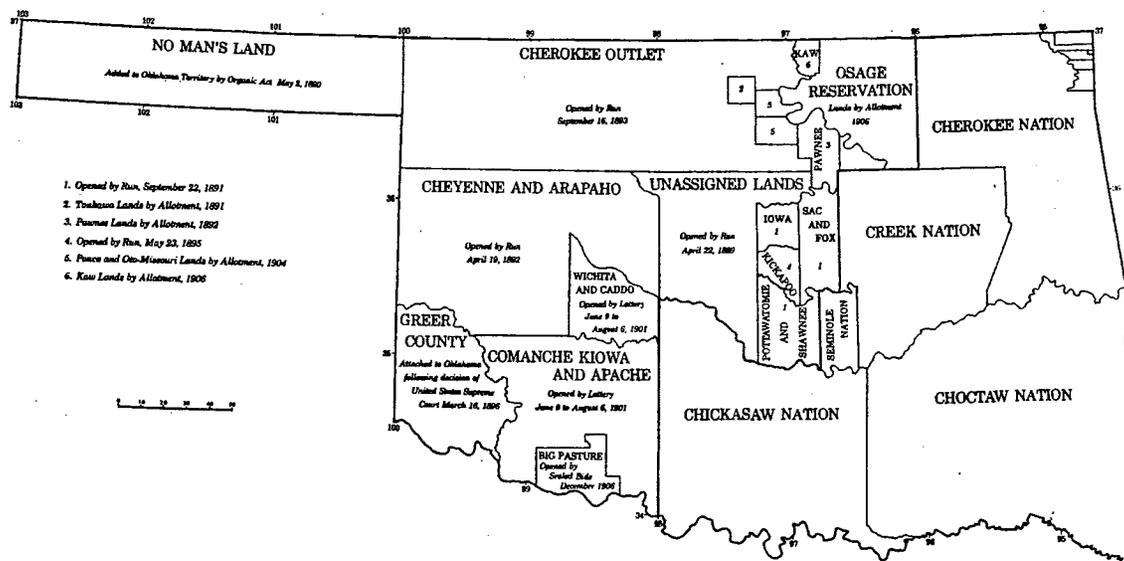


Figure 3. Land Openings in Oklahoma

general opposition to the Indian use of alcohol.

The missionaries persisted in their efforts despite limited conversions among the plains Indians. As in Indian Territory, religious leaders bemoaned the Indians' access to liquor. Reverend Andrew A. Butterfield served as a missionary for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South to the Indians near Ft. Sill for forty-two years. He discussed the influence of liquor on the Indians, stating, "Often they asked why the white man first taught them to swear, lie, steal, drink 'red eye,' and play cards before sending us the Bible? The task of counteracting the lives of the bad white men among a heathen people is the greatest task of all."¹⁴ Butterfield and his comrades perpetuated the belief among whites that liquor was primarily responsible for the plight of Native Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Interaction between the Indians and secular whites increased dramatically following the formation of Oklahoma Territory in 1889. As Figure 3 illustrates, Oklahoma Territory grew in size between 1889 and 1906 through a series of land runs and land lotteries that drew white and black settlers to the region.

The distinctions between the members of the Five Tribes and those of the plains tribes cannot be overemphasized. While traditional attitudes continued among some citizens of the Five Tribes, many had adopted commercial farming and the habits and dress of whites before their removal to the west in the 1830s. Historian Jeffrey Burton asserts that the designation of Indian as applied to the members of the Five Tribes was more political than racial by the late nineteenth century due to the frequent intermarriage between members of these tribes and whites over the course of the century.¹⁵ By contrast, the plains Indians to the west retained much more of the culture they had developed before prolonged contact with whites. The Sun Dance ritual and peyote use continued and spread, as did the relatively new Ghost

¹⁴ Butterfield, *Commanche, Kiawa and Apache Missions* 7.

¹⁵ Jeffrey Burton, *Indian Territory and the United States, 1866-1906: Courts, Government, and the Movement for Oklahoma Statehood* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), xiv.

Dance in the 1890s despite efforts by the federal government to deter this pan-Indian practice.

The growing white population eclipsed the Indian population of the region by 1900. Table 1 is compiled from the reports of the population census conducted by the federal government in 1910 and 1920.¹⁶ The population of the two territories increased dramatically from 1890 to 1910. The total American Indian population in 1890 declined slightly by 1900, rebounded somewhat in the following decade, and fell again by 1920. The total white population increased exponentially over the same period. Due to the influx of whites, the Indian population, as a percentage of the total population of the territories, declined from 24.9 percent in 1890 to 2.8 percent in 1920.

TABLE 1

RACIAL COMPOSITION OF OKLAHOMA

	<u>1890</u>	<u>1900</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>
Total Population	258,057 (100%)	790,391 (100%)	1,657,155 (100%)	2,028,283 (100%)
White	172,554 (66.9%)	670,204 (84.8%)	1,444,531 (87.2%)	1,821,194 (89.8%)
Negro 100%	21,609 (8.4%)	55,684 (7.1%)	137,612 (8.3%)	149,408 (7.4%)
Indian 100%	64,456 (25.0%)	64,445 (8.2%)	74,825 (4.5%)	57,337 (2.8%)

¹⁶ Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, 3:461; U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population*, 3 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923), 812.

American society generally was distrustful of Indians at the time, and it is likely that some Indians listed themselves as white to the census takers. Further, those Indians most suspicious of white society and the federal government may have evaded the census takers. Taking this into account, the sudden increase in the white population remains striking. By 1900 less than ten percent of the people in the territories were Indian. While the size of the Indian population in Oklahoma gradually recovered in the following decade, the white population would grow even faster. In a thirty year period, the Indian population dropped from twenty-five percent of the total population to less than three percent by 1920.

In the eastern portions of the state, Indian ownership of land desired by whites further complicated relations between the two groups. The federal government established the Indian Territory Dawes Commission in 1893 to conduct the confusing chores of establishing the official membership of each tribe and distributing the Five Tribes' lands among individual members of those tribes. Understandably many Indians resisted this as an attack on their tribal sovereignty. Ignoring the Indians' protests, the federal government passed the Curtis Act in 1898, which terminated the tribal tenure of land without the Indians' consent. The Seminoles had agreed to allotment a year earlier, but the other tribes resisted. The Creeks signed an allotment agreement in 1901, sparking a revolt by some full-blood Creeks under Chito Harjo (Crazy Snake) who refused their allotted lands and attacked those Indians who accepted. The federal government sent troops into the area and quickly put down this rebellion. Allotment among the Cherokees began the following year and among the Choctaws and Chickasaws in 1903. In each instance the process met some resistance. The irreconcilables removed themselves to remote areas and refused to acknowledge the allotment process. Consequently, these groups received the least productive lands in Indian Territory. In an ironic twist, the inferior allotments given the Creek rebels,

or Snakes as they were called, included those lands that skyrocketed in value after oil was discovered in what became the Cushing oil field in western Creek County.¹⁷

The allotment process officially ended in 1910, but the issue of Indian land ownership remained for some years after as whites, particularly those representing lumber, mining and oil interests, sought to lease or purchase allotted lands. The federal government, foreseeing such a development, initially restricted the sale of these lands, but soon relaxed its restrictions under pressure from lobbyists representing whites in the region. Historian Angie Debo states that land fraud became common during the late territorial and early statehood years as whites gained access to allotted lands in such highly valuable areas as the Glenn Pool oil field (southwest of Tulsa), the Cushing oil field, and the Healdton oil field (west of Ardmore).¹⁸

Table 1 also notes the increase in the African American population of the territories between 1890 and 1910. While some of this is the natural increase in the population of the freedmen---the former slaves of the five tribes---most of the change reflects the immigration to the territories of blacks from neighboring states, particularly Texas. According to the 1860 census, the Indians in the region owned 7,369 slaves.¹⁹ In the 1870s and 1880s stories circulated in the region that the federal government might designate the proposed Oklahoma Territory as a preserve for freedmen from around the nation. This never came to pass, but black boosters such as Edward P. McCabe of Langston utilized it when urging former slaves to resettle in Oklahoma

¹⁷ Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, 23,32-33, 53-58.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 116, 200, 273.

¹⁹ Quoted in Jimmie Lewis Franklin, *Journey Toward Hope: A History of Blacks in Oklahoma*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 4.

Territory after 1890.²⁰

While the black and white populations lived together in communities such as Muskogee and Okmulgee, a trend toward segregation grew during the first decades of the twentieth century. At times black Oklahomans chose to congregate in all-black communities for cultural reasons or to reduce the potential for violence that accompanied contact with whites.²¹ At other times, particularly following incidents of racial violence, white residents banded together and ordered all black inhabitants out of their communities. By this method, several previously interracial communities---such as the towns of Billings, Stroud, Sapulpa, and Waurika and the counties of Pottawatomie and Osage---became overwhelmingly white during the late territorial period.²² Black residents of these regions did not always leave quietly, and race wars broke out in Lawton and Shawnee in Oklahoma Territory in 1902 and in the Indian Territory community of Holdenville in 1904.²³

The result of these pushing and pulling forces was the formation of at least twenty-seven all-black communities such as Langston (which also contained Oklahoma's only black college) in the west and Boley and Rentiesville in the Indian Territory lands. By 1910, the black population in the new state was concentrated in the western counties of Logan and Kingfisher and in several counties formed from Indian Territory. Figure 4 indicates the distribution, by county, of Oklahoma's black population in 1910.²⁴

Race relations remained taut after statehood as white citizens continued to remove African Americans from their communities. The first act of the first legislature in 1908 was the passage of Jim Crow legislation, which

²⁰ Arthur Lincoln Tolson, "The Negro in Oklahoma Territory, 1889-1907: A Study in Racial Discrimination" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1966), iii, 2, 42; Franklin, *Journey Toward Hope*, 13. See also Jeremy W. Robinson, "Edward P. McCabe and the Langston Experiment," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 51:3 (Fall 1973): 343-355.

²¹ Mozell C. Hill, "Basic Racial Attitudes Toward Whites in the Oklahoma All-Negro Community," *American Journal of Sociology* 49:6 (May 1944), 519, 522.

²² Tolson, "The Negro in Oklahoma Territory," 34-40; Franklin, *Journey Toward Hope*, 33.

²³ Tolson, "The Negro in Oklahoma Territory," 36-38, 40-41.

²⁴ Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, 3: 465.

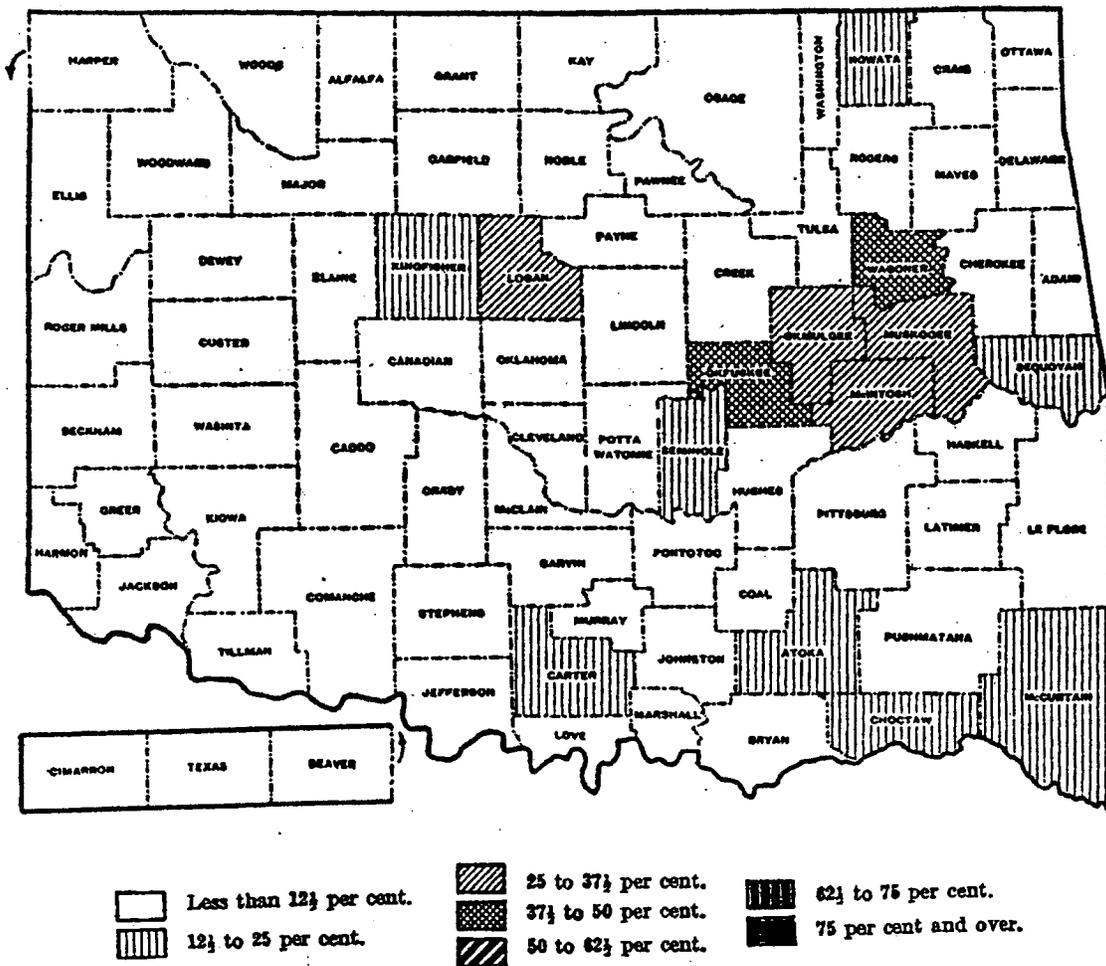


Figure 4. Percentage of population reported as African-American in Oklahoma counties, 1910

required separate facilities for blacks and whites on railroad cars and at railroad stations. In 1910 Oklahoma adopted a literacy test as a condition for voting, but grandfathered in those who had voted in any election in 1862 or whose ancestors had voted in 1862. This law disenfranchised most African Americans, some of whom had voted during the territorial period and initial statehood years, and posed a threat to whites whom local election officials deemed unsavory. As the literacy tests and grandfather clause were adopted by referendum in August 1910 at the primary election, whites utilized the general election three months hence to remove from office those few blacks who had gained seats in the legislature.²⁵ Black residents of Kingfisher challenged the legality of the grandfather clause in the court system. Eventually, their appeals went to the United States Supreme Court, which ruled in 1915 that the grandfather clause was unconstitutional. The following spring the state legislature passed a law creating a very brief voter registration period for those not already registered. This law remained on the books until the 1930s when two black men challenged it and the United States Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional as well.²⁶ Thus, through various methods, Oklahoma successfully deterred its black population from participating in the political process during the first three decades of statehood.

Economically, Oklahoma African Americans fared considerably worse than white residents. By 1920 the average size of a black farm in Oklahoma was approximately half that of a white Oklahoma farm. Education provided only limited opportunities. Until the 1950s two different tax bases supported Oklahoma schools. In 1919 the average expenditure per pupil was \$11.50 for blacks and \$22.60 for whites. Black students seeking higher education could attend the university at Langston, but it offered only a limited variety of degrees. Those seeking professional degrees had to do so out of state and

²⁵ Franklin, *Journey Toward Hope*, 44, 109.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 113, 116; Tolson, "The Negro in Oklahoma Territory," 149-150.

Oklahoma did not financially reimburse them for this until the 1930s. Oklahoma's black population increasingly resettled in small towns, and later in the state's larger cities seeking employment.²⁷

Extralegal violence against African Americans increased after statehood, as lynchings, which had not been race specific during the territorial period, became a common form of justice meted out against black men accused of murdering or assaulting whites.²⁸ White Oklahomans, then, sought to establish their dominance of the new state early on. Black Oklahomans adopted a guarded approach toward whites and kept to themselves or their separate communities as much as possible. The illicit sale and use of alcohol provided one of the few opportunities in which black and white Oklahomans interacted with each other and, the omnipresent issue of race also played a role in the adoption and enforcement of prohibition in Oklahoma.

Oklahoma's political heritage was influenced by and influenced its demographic makeup. The earliest form of government was that of the Five Tribes, each of which passed legislation pertaining to its members and established judicial systems to enforce those laws. Historian Jeffrey Burton notes that these legal systems, while well-crafted, suffered from "laxity, partiality, corruption in office amid political instability and social volatility. . . ."²⁹ Non-Indian residents of Indian Territory were not bound by the various Indian legal systems in the region, but could be expelled from the region at the behest of the tribal government. The tribes developed law enforcement groups called the lighthorsemen to police their own. As the development of mines and railroads in the late nineteenth century drew more non-Indians, the lack of Indian suzerainty over this growing population became problematic.

²⁷ Franklin, *Journey Toward Hope*, 87, 61-62, 91.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 129-131

²⁹ Burton, *Indian Territory and the United States*, xix.

The United States government established a federal court system in Indian Territory in the 1890s consisting of three judicial districts: the Northern District headquartered at Muskogee, the Central District headquartered at South McAlester, and the Southern District headquartered at Ardmore. In 1898 the federal government gave these courts jurisdiction to try all criminal cases and those civil cases that involved at least one non-Indian. The federal government had assumed jurisdiction in all liquor cases in 1877, even those involving only Indians. In 1902 the federal government created a Western judicial district to oversee the Creek, Seminole, and some Cherokee lands. These federal judicial districts remained the source of law in Indian Territory until statehood came in November 1907.³⁰

The federal legal structure established in Indian Territory included law enforcement personnel as well as judges, but was staffed sparsely and the courts soon were backlogged. Marshals and their deputies were expected to cover immense areas during a time when railroad travel was rare. By 30 June 1904 the federal courts of Indian Territory reported that they had terminated 3,661 criminal cases the past fiscal year, but had 4,178 more pending. Two years later the courts reported that they had resolved 3,612 cases in the past year leaving 5,512 cases unsettled.³¹ In Oklahoma Territory, Congress stipulated that federal and territorial courts be held in each county. The few judges in the territory, then, spent much of their time in transit and the courts in this region became overloaded also.³² Consequently, Indian Territory, and Oklahoma Territory when it was organized in 1889, became a haven for noted outlaws and desperados from neighboring states. The Doolin-Dalton gang used the region as a base from which to rob trains and banks. Jesse and Frank James resided in Indian Territory at times as did Belle Starr. A group known as the Cook gang committed a series of armed robberies in 1894

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 216, 202-203, 73, 241, 230-231.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 251.

³² *Ibid.*, 244.

throughout the territory. Lesser known criminals also flocked to the territories in the late nineteenth century, particularly the eastern portion with its wooded hills and thickets, and the region gained a reputation as an outlaw refuge. Other rough men followed the railroads into the territory and settled in the various towns created at the rail stations. As one historian notes, "It was rumored that there were 'more bandits, horse thieves, counterfeiters, whiskey peddlers, and train robbers per square mile (in the territories). . . . than any other place in the United States at that time.'"³³ While the federal government forbid the liquor traffic in Indian Territory, its insignificant enforcement presence allowed illegal saloons to operate in numerous sections of the region.

Congress created Oklahoma Territory in 1889 to satisfy the demands of white lobbyists for white settlement lands in the region, and it legalized liquor in the new territory. By the turn of the century, a thriving liquor industry had developed in such counties as Pawnee and Pottawatomie bordering the dry Indian Territory. Pottawatomie County, bordered by the Seminole lands to the east and the Chickasaw lands to the south, saw the incorporation of Corner, Keokuk Falls, and other towns so dependent on the saloon industry and their proximity to Indian Territory that they disappeared shortly after statehood. These communities experienced considerable liquor-related violence; fist-fights and shootings were common, and Indians formed a large part of their clientele.³⁴ The Cherokee Strip, jutting into the Osage and Creek lands, also saw the rise of liquor communities. Ponca City, by 1903, had fourteen saloons, three breweries, and a whiskey distillery. The liquor industry provided the early economic basis for such Pawnee County communities as Blackburn, Cleveland, Jennings, Keystone, Osage, Pawnee, Ralston, and Sinnett. Again,

³³ Murray R. Wickett, *Contested Territory: Whites, Native Americans, and African Americans in Oklahoma, 1865-1907* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 138.

³⁴ Blake Gumprecht, "A Saloon on Every Corner: Whiskey Towns of Oklahoma Territory, 1889-1907," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 74:2 (Summer 1996): 151-156.

Indians were frequent customers of the saloons in these towns.³⁵

Politically, Oklahoma Territory was very Republican. Many of its residents had come south from Republican Kansas; the territorial governorship was filled by presidential appointment, and beginning in 1897 the Republican party gained the presidency until after Oklahoma statehood in 1907. Congress allowed for a territorial legislature, which granted a voice to both local Republicans and local Democrats, but its work was subject to the Republican governor. Due to factional fighting among the dominant Republicans, Oklahoma Territory saw a great deal of instability in the executive position as seven men served as Governor of Oklahoma Territory between 1890 and 1901. In the latter year, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Thomas Benton Ferguson of Watonga as territorial governor and he retained the office until 1906. Liquor could be sold legally to whites and blacks in Oklahoma Territory, but the region continued the long-standing tradition of the federal government to ban its introduction to Indians.³⁶

By the turn of the century, the federal government had progressed far toward the destruction of all Indian government among the Five Tribes. This allowed it to consolidate its dealings with the various tribes and served as a first step toward statehood for Indian Territory. Some question existed whether Congress should combine it with Oklahoma Territory to form one state or allow separate states to develop from the territories. Many full-blood Indian leaders, still smarting from their loss of sovereignty during the previous decade, were distrustful of the government and whites and receded to less populated areas hoping to insulate themselves from the whites and their

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 157-159.

³⁶ Harlow, *Oklahoma*, 269-274; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 22 March 1907. This newspaper indicated that all the saloon keepers in Oklahoma City expected to be arrested by federal liquor officer, William E. Johnson, after a mixed-blood Indian had received whiskey at their establishments. For a brief study of each of the Oklahoma Territory Governors, see the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 53:1 (Spring 1975). LeRoy H. Fischer supervised the series of articles in this issue, each addressing one of the territorial executives.

government. Many of the Mixed-bloods who remained to negotiate with local whites preferred separate statehood for Indian Territory, believing such an arrangement would allow them greater influence in state government.³⁷

Influential whites in Indian Territory, such as Muskogee railroad promoter Charles N. Haskell and Tishomingo lawyer William H. Murray, began to meet with Indian leaders to discuss the inevitability of statehood. In 1905 Haskell arranged a meeting of leaders of the Five Tribes at Muskogee to contemplate separate statehood. Haskell and Murray attended representing the Creek and Chickasaw nations respectively. By the close of the Sequoyah Convention, delegates had determined that separate statehood was unrealistic and urged the people of Indian Territory to support a combination with Oklahoma Territory. Haskell and Owen gained notoriety and political support at this convention that they put to use at the convention for joint statehood held at Guthrie late in 1906.³⁸

The delegates to the Guthrie convention, fifty-five from Indian Territory, fifty-five from Oklahoma Territory, and two from the Osage Reservation named Haskell to the influential position of convention floor leader. Due to the efforts of these men, and to the organizing effects of the Sequoyah Convention, the Democrats from Indian Territory gained an edge over their Republican counterparts at the convention. The Democrats generally were less supportive of business than the Republicans, and so they benefited from the heightened anti-business sentiment in the territories following the collapse of a railroad bridge due to faulty construction. The accident killed nearly one hundred people. The delegates crafted a state constitution that reflected the progressive impulses of the era. It included provisions for workers and incorporated the initiative, referendum and recall

³⁷ Amos D. Maxwell, "The Sequoyah Convention, Part I," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 28:2 (Summer 1950): 176-177.

³⁸ Harlow, *Oklahoma*, 300; Maxwell, "The Sequoyah Convention, Part II," 332.

into the new state government.³⁹ The delegates, under pressure from the considerable lobbying efforts by the Anti-Saloon League and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, also called for a statewide ban on the sale and transportation of liquor. Concerned that this explosive issue might unravel their entire constitutional efforts, the convention arranged for the populations of the two territories to vote separately on the constitution and on prohibition in September 1907.⁴⁰

Voters approved both the constitution and prohibition in that referendum and both went into effect in November 1907. Charles Haskell parlayed his influence and prominence at the convention into a gubernatorial nomination for the Democratic party. The Republican party did not acquiesce and, until the November election, the political fortunes of the new state were very much in doubt. While both major parties remained quiet on the prohibition question, Haskell, as the Democratic candidate for governor, championed the dry cause, gaining the support of many Protestant clergymen as well as women's groups. The Republican party was supported by some businessmen and received the strong backing of the region's black population. The Democrats began a campaign of race-baiting, arguing the Republicans sought racial integration at the public and private levels. Fears that they were perceived as the party of integration had convinced white Republican leaders in the region to form a "Lilly White" movement in the 1890s whereby white party members distanced themselves from black Republicans. Beginning in 1896, black and white Republicans in Oklahoma Territory held separate party conventions.⁴¹

³⁹ Kenny L. Brown writes extensively of the progressive aspects of the Oklahoma constitution in "Progressivism in Oklahoma Politics, 1900-1913: A Reinterpretation," in Davis D. Joyce, ed., *An Oklahoma I Had Never Seen Before: Alternative Views of Oklahoma History* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 27-61.

⁴⁰ Harlow, *Oklahoma*, 309.

⁴¹ Von Russell Creel, "Socialists in the House: The Oklahoma Experience, Part I," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 70:3 (Summer 1992): 144-145; Fanklin, *Born Sober*, 22-23; Tolson, "The Negro in Oklahoma Territory," 84.

Early Democratic leaders remained concerned about their tenuous hold on the new state. The 1910 gubernatorial election attests to this insecurity. Democratic nominee Lee Cruce won the election, but the combined votes for the Republican and Socialist party candidates surpassed that which Cruce garnered. Haskell, Murray (the first Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives), and others could not know that their party would control the governorship for the next fifty years. The Democrats controlled the Oklahoma House of Representatives until 1920 and continued to control the Oklahoma Senate through the 1920s. The Democratic party cast itself as the white-man's party in Oklahoma when the Democratic-controlled state legislature passed and Haskell signed the Jim Crow bill early in 1908. Two years later, the Democratic legislature passed a bill, popularly known as the Grandfather Clause, to disenfranchise Oklahoma blacks, who had voted overwhelmingly Republican. Some whites in the state also opposed this law noting that it might be employed against anyone, white or black, with whom the local election officials disagreed politically. Some leaders of the Socialist party, which was gaining popular support in some local and state elections, became vocal in their opposition to the bill---to no avail.⁴²

Oklahoma politics was fraught with irregularities and outright illegalities. The Grandfather Clause helped the Democratic party solidify its control of Oklahoma politics. When the United States Supreme Court struck down the law in 1915, governor Robert Lee Williams called a special session of the legislature, which lost no time in passing the voter registration bill to continue its goal of disenfranchisement. Oklahoma voters voted, in 1916, on the twin questions of changing the universal voter registration law and altering the election boards to make them bipartisan. Each proposed reform would seriously weaken the hold the Democratic party had on statewide

⁴² LeRoy H. Fischer, ed., *Oklahoma's Governors, 1907-1929: Turbulent Politics* (Oklahoma City, OK: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1981), 53; Creel, "Socialists in the House," 145; Franklin, *Journey Toward Hope*, 108; Howard L. Meredith, "Agrarian Socialism and the Negro in Oklahoma, 1900-1918," *Labor History* 11:3 (Summer 1970): 281-282.

politics. Support for Oklahoma's Socialist party had grown steadily in recent elections so that it, as much as the Republican party, might pose a serious challenge to the Democratic party in the future. The Democrats, still in control of the election boards in 1916, practiced massive election fraud to defeat the proposed reforms and maintain their dominant position.⁴³ As a consequence, many blacks as well as supporters of radical politics were disenfranchised at least into the 1930s. Political leaders in Oklahoma justified this narrowing of the electorate by asserting that the Socialists were lesser citizens.⁴⁴ The adoption of Jim Crow legislation suggests that these leaders held African Americans to be lesser citizens as well. While these efforts to restrict the voting base in Oklahoma had no clear impact on the issue of liquor prohibition, the Socialists and the African Americans shared with the opponents of prohibition a nonrespectable outsider status vis a vis the political, social and moral leaders of the state.

Charles Haskell served only one four-year term as governor as the constitution stipulated. Lee Cruce, governor from 1911 until 1915, gained the enmity of a legislature suspicious of his attempts to augment gubernatorial power and that, along with much of the voting public, opposed Cruce's efforts to end the death penalty in the state. Cruce sought legislation allowing him to remove any local official who failed to enforce the law, but the legislature refused.⁴⁵ Robert Lee Williams, an ordained Methodist minister and former chief justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court, served as governor from 1915 until 1919. A Democrat less inclined toward reform than Cruce, he enjoyed better relations with the legislature than had his predecessor.⁴⁶ Williams

⁴³ Thompson, *Closing the Frontier*, 134-135; Garin Burbank, "The Political and Social Attitudes of Some Early Oklahoma Democrats," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 52:4 (Winter 1974-1975): 446.

⁴⁴ Garin Burbank, *When Farmers Voted Red: The Gospel of Socialism in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1910-1924* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 96-97.

⁴⁵ Orben J. Casey, "Governor Lee Cruce, White Supremacy and Capital Punishment, 1911-1915," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 52:4 (Winter 1974-1975): 464.

⁴⁶ Thompson, *Closing the Frontier*, 205. Thompson characterizes Williams as a conservative. His portrayal of state politics relies heavily on the newspaper *Harlow's Weekly*, which covered state events and politics in a less partisan manner than most Oklahoma newspapers of the time.

oversaw Oklahoma's effort in support of the Great War, appointing influential people to the Oklahoma Council of Defense. This organization, which coordinated its efforts with the National Council of Defense, arranged campaigns to finance America's war effort and served as the watchdog against potential seditious activity in the state.

James Brooks Ayers Robertson, governor from 1919 until 1923, faced labor problems early in his term as miners and others workers, who had foregone work stoppages during the war, sought to improve their situation in the postwar period. In September 1919, Robertson declared martial law in the oil field community of Drumright and sent the Oklahoma National Guard to quell the violence surrounding a strike by telephone workers. A strike in October by miners in the southeastern portion of the state drew a similar response from the governor's office. Robertson avoided impeachment by the Republican-controlled House by one vote in 1920, and increasingly came under criticism from Oklahoma's growing Ku Klux Klan organization. Robertson declared martial law in Tulsa in May 1921 in response to the race riot there that left at least thirty-eight dead.⁴⁷

Among the other issues that pressed on the early governors, each lamented his inability to effectively enforce prohibition in Oklahoma because the legislature refused to grant the governor sufficient funding for enforcement agencies. Robertson continued to experience problems with prohibition enforcement after the adoption of national prohibition through the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act in 1919. When national prohibition went into effect in January 1920, the federal government assumed greater responsibility for its enforcement. By the end of his term, Robertson

reported that enforcement of prohibition in Oklahoma had broken down
⁴⁷ Ibid., 205; Fischer, *Oklahoma's Governors, 1907-1929*, 107; Bob L. Blackburn, "A Conspiracy of Silence: On the Trail of Truth Behind the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921," lecture presented at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 7 April 2000. Blackburn, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Historical Society and Chairman of the Tulsa Race Riot Commission, noted that these figures were from official reports. Unofficial reports place the number of dead at more than 250.

entirely. Officials were arresting law-abiding citizens under the liquor laws while serious bootleggers went unpunished.⁴⁸

Jack Walton, Robertson's successor, did not finish the first year of his term as his political opponents in the legislature, many of them Ku Klux Klan members, impeached him and removed him from office in November 1923. Walton had gained prominence in the Democratic party as the champion of the Socialist-leaning Farmer-Laborer League during the 1922 campaign, but abandoned the underclass Oklahomans who had championed him and completely destroyed his base of support with his heavy-handed tactics against the Klan---he declared martial law in Okmulgee and later Tulsa counties to stop Klan violence in those areas. In the fall of that year he placed all of Oklahoma under martial law in an attempt to prevent the legislature from convening to impeach him. The Klan, which had entered Oklahoma by 1918, emphasized its slogan of One Hundred Percent Americanism. Racial minorities fell outside its definition of American as did Catholics, Jews, and immigrants. The Klan also sought to stamp out un-American activities such as bootlegging and prostitution. As with the earlier Klan, this group used intimidation, violence, and secrecy to achieve its ends. Following its ouster of Walton late in 1923, the Klan became discredited as a moral force in Oklahoma and across the nation due to a series of sexual and financial scandals among its leadership.⁴⁹

Religiously, Oklahoma had a small but vocal Christian presence at the time of statehood. As mentioned above, many members of the Five Tribes had embraced Christianity, particularly the Cherokees. A religious census conducted in 1906 indicates that, of the 1,414,177 people living in the

territories (according to the 1907 population census), 257,100 (18.1 percent of

⁴⁸ Fischer, *Oklahoma's Governors, 1907-1929*, 103.

⁴⁹ Sheldon Neuringer, "Governor Walton's War on the Ku Klux Klan: An Episode in Oklahoma History," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 45:2 (Summer 1967): 157-159, 162, 178; H. J. Haskell, "Martial Law in Oklahoma," *Outlook* 135 (26 September 26 1923): 183. For a close study of the Klan in one Oklahoma county, see James Lowell Showalter, "Payne County and the Hooded Klan, 1921-1924," (Ph.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 2000).

the total population) identified themselves as members of a church. A clear majority of church members of most denominations were female. The group with the most parity among the sexes was the Roman Catholic Church. The only denomination that reported more male than female members was the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Given further study, this may gain significance as these were two of the religious denominations that Kleppner characterized as ritualistic---emphasizing intellectual adherence to doctrine. By contrast, the Methodists, Baptists, and Christian (Disciples of Christ and Church of Christ) churches, which Kleppner termed pietistic, strenuously encouraged evangelistic efforts to extend the benefits of Christianity to others, strongly supported prohibition, and, in Oklahoma, contained greater numbers of female members. Of interest for this study is the fact that the pietists strongly supported prohibition while the ritualistic faiths remained luke warm in their support for the liquor ban.⁵⁰

Historians of prohibition have noted that pietists generally supported restrictions on alcoholic beverages, while the ritualists did not. Reflecting these attitudes, several pietistic groups discontinued the use of wine in their religious services in favor of grape juice by the middle of the nineteenth century. The Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopal churches continued to use wine in their services.⁵¹ The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, prominent in the state prohibition campaign, had numerous pietistic clergy members in leadership positions, but none from the ritualistic faiths. Also of note is the fact that the breakdown by sex is the same for the black churches listed as for the white churches. Table 2 lists church membership among Oklahoma's fifteen largest denominations according to the religious census of 1906.⁵²

⁵⁰ Paul Kleppner, *The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900* (New York: The Free Press, 1970), 73; Richard Jensen, *Winning of the Midwest*, 64-66, 68. Jensen uses the term liturgical when referring to the anti-pietistic groups.

⁵¹ Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, 12.

⁵² U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports, Religious Bodies: 1906 Part I, Summary and General Tables: 252-254*. Bureau of the Census, *Population of Oklahoma and Indian Territory, 1907*: 8.

TABLE 2

RELIGIOUS POPULATIONS IN OKLAHOMA AND INDIAN TERRITORIES, 1906

<u>Church</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Percent Female</u>
Southern Baptist Convention	49,978	19,370	29,314	60.2
Methodist Episcopal, South	40,473	13,336	20,821	61.0
Roman Catholic	36,548	15,974	16,149	50.3
Disciples of Christ	24,232	9,976	13,599	57.7
Methodist Episcopal	23,309	8,857	13,488	60.4
National Baptist Convention (black)	16,952	6,769	9,762	59.1
Presbyterian Church in the USA	9,667	3,565	5,664	61.4
Churches of Christ	8,074	3,434	4,640	57.5
African Methodist Episcopal	6,243	2,309	3,879	62.7
Cumberland Presbyterian	4,351	1,303	2,068	61.4
Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of America	2,907	1,514	1,377	47.6
Colored Methodist Episcopal	2,858	1,125	1,602	58.8
United Brethren in Christ	2,819	1,194	1,625	57.7
Congregationalist	2,677	956	1,721	64.3

While the 1907 population census indicates that the territories contained 752,402 males and 661,775 females, the religious census breaks down the total religious population (257,100) into 100,312 males and 139,515 females.⁵³ Thus, 13.3 percent of males in the territories were members of an organized faith and 21.1 percent of females. The preponderance of women in religious

⁵³ Bureau of the Census, *Population of Oklahoma and Indian Territory, 1907*: 9.

denominations was not peculiar to Oklahoma. Historians such as Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, Betty A. DeBerg, and Ted Ownby have argued that, by the end of the nineteenth century, religion had become the purview of women. Many religious leaders became convinced that they needed to change the approach of their institutions to attract more male members.⁵⁴

The religious census lists only those who were full members in one of the various faiths. In so doing it misses a much larger, though perhaps less committed religious population. Many early Oklahomans who did not consider themselves full members of a denomination might regularly support and attend a particular local church. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South of Oklahoma and Indian territories, at its 1906 conference in Tulsa, reported nearly 50,000 communicants or roughly the same number that the religious census related. The conference report also noted that the church enjoyed “a constituency of more than 150,000.”⁵⁵ The other Protestant denominations likely also received the support from a population beyond that with full membership, though the exact size of that broader constituency for each denomination is not known. The numbers that the Catholic Church reported to the census takers probably include all or most supporters as that church confers full membership at a very early age through infant baptism.

Oklahoma’s Protestant churches collectively, then, enjoyed a broader base of popular support than the 18.1 percent of the new state’s population that claimed full church membership. The Methodist Episcopal Churches, the Southern Baptist Church, and the Christian Churches---all of which officially opposed the use of liquor as a beverage---comprised three of the four largest denominations in the new state. The societal influence of these religious

⁵⁴ Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism & Gender, 1875 to the Present* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 16-17; Betty A. DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 21, 29; Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 129.

⁵⁵ W.F. Dunkle, ed., *Official Minutes and Annual Report of the Oklahoma Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South: For the Conference Year, 1905-1906*, 44.

institutions was probably greater even than their membership numbers and estimated additional supporters would suggest. Local religious leaders, with weekly access to the pulpit, possessed an influence over their communities that few others could match. Ministers, with prominent local businessmen and their wives, established standards of respectability and proper behavior and created a vision of the future toward which the community (town, neighborhood, county, or state) should aspire.

The religious denominations were not all evenly distributed throughout the state. The Sacred Heart Mission and Abbey in the Pottawatomie Indian lands served as an early center for the Catholic Church, though it enjoyed greater numerical support from the Oklahoma City region, according to the 1906 religious census, and to a lesser extent from the mining districts of Pittsburg County. Support for the much smaller Lutheran Church was concentrated in the north central county of Garfield. The larger Baptist, Methodist Episcopal, and Methodist Episcopal, South churches enjoyed support throughout most of the state. The Baptists' support was greatest in Oklahoma and Muskogee counties, which contained the state's largest cities, but also in the less populated Greer County. The Methodist Episcopal Church enjoyed greatest support from the relatively urban Oklahoma County, but even more from Kay County along the Kansas border. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South drew its largest membership from the southwest (Greer and Jackson counties) and from central and south central counties (Pottawatomie and Carter). Its membership among Oklahoma County's population of 55,849 was less than one thousand.⁵⁶

The census figures say very little about the non-Christian religious populations of Oklahoma. The 1906 report states that seventy-two Jews lived in the territories. Though this number had grown to 1,166 by 1916, the Jewish

⁵⁶ Reverend Hilary Cassal, "Missionary Tour in the Chickasaw Nation and Western Indian Territory," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 34:4 (Winter 1956-1957): 397; U.S., Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports, Religious Bodies: 1906 Part I, Summary and General Tables* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1910) 348-349.

population remained an extreme minority in early Oklahoma. No other non-Christian groups are mentioned. Some of the American Indian populations practiced non-Christian forms of religion. Newspapers and missionary accounts from the era report the persistent problem of peyote use in Indian religious ceremonies and the continued practice of such rituals as the Sun Dance and the Ghost Dance, most common among the plains Indians. The total Indian population represented less than ten percent of Oklahoma's population throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century and fell noticeably after 1910. These and other nature-based religious customs, then, were practiced only by an extreme minority of the total state population.

During the first decade following statehood, the denominational breakdown of Oklahoma's religious population changed slightly while the gender breakdown of this population remained largely the same. Table 3 lists the size of the fifteen largest denominations in Oklahoma according to the 1916 religious census.⁵⁷ Membership in most Protestant denominations increased by fifty percent or more of their respective 1906 census numbers. Churches associated with the Southern Baptist Convention continued to represent the largest population in the state, but Methodist Episcopal, Christian, Presbyterian churches, and others also experienced notable growth. The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Churches of Christ saw their respective memberships increase by more than one hundred percent during the decade. The exceptions to this pattern of growth are the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Lutheran churches, which saw significantly smaller growth, in the range of thirty to thirty-five percent.

Oklahoma's black church population also increased between 1906 and 1916. In fact, churches adhering to the black National Baptist Convention saw their membership explode from 16,952 to 42,408. Membership in the Colored

⁵⁷ U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports, Religious Bodies: 1916 Part I, Summary and General Tables* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1919), 210-212.

M.E. Church nearly doubled, while that of the African Methodist Episcopal Church increased by a modest amount. The numerical increase in Oklahoma's black Baptist churches is all the more striking given that the state's black population is not believed to have increased significantly during the period.

TABLE 3

RELIGIOUS POPULATIONS IN OKLAHOMA, 1916

<u>Church</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Percent Female</u>
Southern Baptist Convention	87,028	24,760	36,237	59.4
Methodist Episcopal, South	60,263	23,105	35,218	60.4
Roman Catholic	47,427	18,645	19,665	51.3
National Baptist Convention (black)	42,408	15,985	26,290	62.2
Disciples of Christ	41,811	12,250	18,456	60.1
Methodist Episcopal	40,148	12,850	19,880	60.7
Churches of Christ	21,700	9,059	12,641	58.3
Presbyterian Church in the USA	20,222	7,286	11,042	60.3
African Methodist Episcopal	7,250	2,655	4,595	63.4
Colored Methodist Episcopal	5,541	2,061	3,480	62.8
United Brethren in Christ	3,978	1,311	1,935	59.6
Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of America	3,899	1,823	1,893	50.9
Protestant Episcopal	3,566	859	1,566	64.6
Congregationalist	3,419	1,303	2,116	61.9

The total population of the state increased rapidly between 1906 and 1916 as the discovery of several large oil fields drew many working-class men to the state. The exact amount of this increase is uncertain; the 1916 religious census was six years removed from the most recent population census and thus a comparison of the religious population to the general population would not accurately reflect the percentage of the entire population that belonged to an organized church. Between 1907 and 1910 the state's population increased from 1,414,177 to 1,657,155. Population growth continued throughout the following decade, though at a slower rate. In 1920 the census bureau reported that 2,028,283 people lived in Oklahoma.⁵⁸ If one assumes roughly constant growth over the decade, the total population of Oklahoma for 1916 might be estimated at 1.85 million people. The 424,492 people listed by that year's religious census as members of a church would represent approximately twenty-three percent of the whole, a slight increase from the 1906 figures but not significant given the uncertain size of the general population. One can assume that the state's church population continued to comprise less than half of the total, though, again, these membership figures do not account for all those who attended or financially supported churches in Oklahoma.

Further comparison of the 1906 and 1916 figures allow additional observations. The state's largest pietistic faiths---the Southern Baptists, the Methodists, and the Christians (Disciples and Churches of Christ)---experienced sizable growth during that period. The Catholic Church, the largest ritualistic denomination in the state, saw considerably less growth than its pietistic neighbors. A comparison of the two tables also indicates that the preponderance of women in the pietistic faiths continued through 1916. The ministers who supported prohibition, then, must have been confounded at the persistence not only of the now-illegal saloon, but also at the relative

⁵⁸ Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, 3:466; Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population*, 3:812.

scarcity of men in church.

Oklahoma's religious leaders established numerous educational and medical institutions around the state. The Southern Baptists opened hospitals at Muskogee, Miami, Oklahoma City, Cushing, and elsewhere. Many of the religious colleges established early in the century closed by 1920 due to financial difficulties. Those that persisted include Oklahoma Baptist University (Shawnee), Oklahoma Christian University (later Phillips University, Enid), St. Gregory's College (Shawnee), Oklahoma City College (Methodist), and the Oklahoma Presbyterian College for Girls (Durant). Religious institutions such as orphanages and schools grew out of the tradition of missionary service to the Indians and continued well into the twentieth century. The churches also distributed many religious publications around the state such as *The Baptist Oklahoman*, *The Signal* (Baptist), the *Churchman* (Episcopal), *The Oklahoma Christian Voice*, the *Western Christian Advocate* (Southern Methodist), and the *Oklahoma Methodist*.

Most of the various Protestant groups in Oklahoma interacted in a spirit of camaraderie and cooperation. It was not uncommon for Methodist ministers to preach in Baptist or Presbyterian churches temporarily without a minister of their own. The accounts by religious missionaries mention the activities of other Protestant groups and downplay the rival nature of their work. As the twentieth century opened, leaders of the various Protestant denominations nationwide stressed the traits they shared and expressed a desire for synergy. The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South met jointly in Cleveland, Ohio in 1889 and formed the Epworth League by which lay members of the two church groups provided social services.⁵⁹ In 1906 the four associations serving white Baptists in Oklahoma and Indian territories combined to form the Baptist General Convention of the State of Oklahoma. In 1914 the Northern and Southern Baptist churches began to coordinate their

⁵⁹ Leland Clegg and William B. Oden, *Oklahoma Methodism in the Twentieth Century* (Oklahoma City, OK: Oklahoma Conference, The Methodist Church, 1968), 76.

mission work in Oklahoma.⁶⁰ The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League provided an opportunity for extensive cooperation as its leadership was comprised of clergy members from at least nine different denominations.

The cooperative spirit did not extend to the Roman Catholic Church, which many Protestants continued to view with suspicion and hostility. At the 1886 convention of the Enon Baptist Association in Southern Oklahoma, the committee on education reported: "Brethren, look at the rapid spread of Roman Catholicism all over this land and nation. We, as Baptists, must be up and doing in order to counteract that influence. The Baptists are the only people that can successfully meet and hurl back to old Rome this tide of Catholicism."⁶¹ That animosity continued into the twentieth century. The Episcopal Church also remained distant, equally critical of the other Protestant faiths and the Catholic Church. Religion figured prominently in efforts to achieve and enforce prohibition not only due to the interdenominational efforts of the Anti-Saloon League, but also because ritualistic denominations--- Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Oklahoma's small Jewish community--continued to use wine in their religious ceremonies reflecting their view that alcohol was not the social and moral evil that Baptists, Methodists, and other pietists claimed it to be.

To appreciate better the prohibition experience in Oklahoma, one also must consider the gender split and the position of women in the Sooner state. Women in early Oklahoma represented less than half of the total population, though the state's male majority narrowed between 1900 and 1920. Linda Williams Reese argues that most women, across racial boundaries, shared a desire for middle-class status that stressed "basic education, cleanliness, moral

⁶⁰ *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Vol. II*, 1031-1032.

⁶¹ Ralph Evans and Helen Evans, *The Cross to the Crown: A History of the Southern Baptist Churches of Enon Baptist Association in Southern Oklahoma* (Ardmore, OK: Enon Baptist Association, n. d.), 25.

behavior, respectability, cultural accommodation and social uplift. . . .”⁶² This sentiment led to the formation of such groups as the Oklahoma Territory Federation of Women’s Clubs, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, and the Oklahoma Suffrage Association. The state did not grant women the right to vote (except in school elections) until 1918, a year before the nineteenth amendment was adopted. Nevertheless, several women gained political prominence in the first two decades of the century. Kate Barnard gained prominence before statehood as head of the United Provident Association, a charitable organization that provided food and clothing for the poor.⁶³

In 1907 the people of the two territories elected Barnard, by the widest margin of any candidate for any office, the Oklahoma commissioner of charities and corrections.⁶⁴ She called for the passage of a child labor law in Oklahoma and uncovered negligent conditions in the prisons of Oklahoma and neighboring states. Her penchant for uncovering scandals requiring expensive solutions, her support for several working-class organizations in early Oklahoma, and her campaign to secure the estates of Indian minors gained her considerable political opposition among the male elected officials. Barnard’s deteriorating health forced her to retire in 1915, and Governor Robert L. Williams abolished her office.⁶⁵ Barnard did not endorse woman suffrage until late in the Oklahoma campaign. This issue split Sooner women as the Oklahoma Federation of Women’s Clubs endorsed it and the Oklahoma Suffrage Association formed to lead the campaign to gain women the vote in Oklahoma. An Anti-Suffrage League, comprised of both men and women, formed in the state as well. It charged supporters of the measure were

⁶² Linda Williams Reese, *Women of Oklahoma, 1890-1920* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), xvii.

⁶³ Suzanne J. Crawford and Lynn R. Musslewhite, “Kate Barnard, Progressivism, and the West,” in David D. Joyce, ed, *“An Oklahoma I had Never Seen Before”: Alternative Views of Oklahoma History* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 66.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 68. The Commissioner of Charities and Corrections was the sole office for which Oklahoma women were eligible in 1907.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 69-71, 73; Reese, *Women in Oklahoma*, 204, 213.

socialists, pro-German (during the First World War), and sought to destroy the institution of marriage. Edith Cherry Johnson, columnist for the *Daily Oklahoman* from 1915 until 1958, was vocal in her opposition to woman suffrage and wage-earning by women.⁶⁶ Barnard and Johnson focused on the traditionally female issues of family and home, though Barnard's support for the working class and Indian families distinguished her from other champions of the family who stressed middle-class respectability as the goal of all.

The new state of Oklahoma also contained several small immigrant groups concentrated in remote rural pockets around the state and, later, in the cities. During the first two decades of the new century, the foreign population remained very small. Oklahoma's combined foreign population (residents born in other countries and those whose parent or parents were born in other countries) totals less than ten percent of the total state population recorded in each of the three census reports. Oklahoma's population was overwhelmingly white and native. Table 4 indicates the total number of Oklahoma's immigrants and children of immigrants and considers the combined immigrant population (foreign-born and foreign stock) as a percentage of the total state population.⁶⁷

The largest immigrant populations came from Germany (10,089 in 1910, 7,029 in 1920), Russia (5,807 in 1910, 5,005 in 1920), and Mexico (2,645 in 1910, 6,697 in 1920). Both Oklahoma City and Tulsa contained substantial portions of the immigrant populations, but these comprised a very small part of the total population in these growing cities. The German immigrants also settled in the less populated north and central counties of Garfield, Kingfisher, and

⁶⁶ Reese, *Women of Oklahoma*, 227, 238. Regarding the question of woman suffrage at the time of Oklahoma statehood, see Louise Boyd James, "The Woman Suffrage Issue in the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 56:4 (Winter 1978-1979): 379-392.

⁶⁷ Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population*, 3:812. The 1910 census figures for Oklahoma should be used with caution as recorders failed to enter some districts of Oklahoma City. This omission seems unlikely to impact the overall message of Table 4--the minute nature of Oklahoma's immigrant population.

Canadian. The Russian population, much of which was Russian-German, was initially rural. These people located in the western portion of the state (Washita, Blaine, and Garfield counties). By 1920, some had settled in Oklahoma City and Tulsa also. Oklahoma's Mexican immigrant population was spread more evenly throughout the state with slight concentrations in Oklahoma City and in Kay County along the Kansas border.⁶⁸

TABLE 4

FOREIGN POPULATIONS IN OKLAHOMA

	<u>1900</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>
Total Population	790,391 (100.0%)	1,657,155 (100.0%)	2,028,283 (100.0%)
White Population of Native Parentage	601,552 (76.1%)	1,310,403 (79.1%)	1,679,107 (82.8%)
White Population of Mixed Parentage	23,579 (3.0%)	44,167 (2.7%)	49,036 (2.4%)
White Population of Foreign Parentage	24,683 (3.1%)	49,877 (3.0%)	53,083 (2.6%)
Foreign-born White Population	20,390 (2.6%)	40,084 (2.4%)	39,968 (2.0%)

⁶⁸ Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, 3: 461, 466-478. *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population*, 3:827. The Oklahoma Department of Libraries and the Oklahoma Library Association sponsored a series of books on several of the ethnic groups that settled in Oklahoma. Regarding the three groups mentioned above, see Richard C. Rohrs, *The Germans in Oklahoma* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980); Douglas Hale, *The Germans from Russia in Oklahoma* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980); and Michael M. Smith, *The Mexicans in Oklahoma* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980).

Many of the smaller immigrant populations---Italian, English, Austrian---were located in the coal mining regions centered around McAlester in the southeastern portion of Oklahoma. While these immigrants and their children might influence the culture and politics of small, relatively self-contained communities, their impact on the overall social milieu of Oklahoma was slight.⁶⁹ The state's small German population did become conspicuous during the prohibition debate for its wet sentiment, but the census figures suggest that it represented only a small portion of wet Oklahoma.

The region that became Oklahoma was very diverse economically with established agriculture, transportation, mining, and oil industries by statehood. Both Indian Territory in the east and Oklahoma Territory in the west had seen considerable agricultural development in the late nineteenth century. Many residents of Indian Territory, particularly the Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws, brought their sedentary farming habits with them when they resettled before the American Civil War. They grew corn and cotton and raised small amounts of livestock on their lands, some becoming quite prosperous. Blacks, many of whom were former slaves of Indians (emancipated in the late 1860s), also grew crops and raised livestock on small plots of land in Indian Territory. Beginning with the great cattle drives of the 1860s, white ranchers grazed immense herds on the leased grasslands of the central and western portions of the future state as they moved north from Texas to the rail heads in Kansas. The late nineteenth century development of commercial agriculture in the territories represented an opportunity for whites and blacks from other regions to become land owners. In Indian Territory, some whites obtained land legally by marrying into one of the Indian tribes, while others claimed and farmed Indian land illegally. The land

⁶⁹ Regarding Italian immigration to Oklahoma, see Kenny L. Brown, *The Italians in Oklahoma* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980); Steven Lee Sewell, "Industrial Unionism and the Oklahoma Coal Industry, 1870-1935," (Ph.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1992), 52-54.

runs of the 1890s brought white and black farmers from Kansas who planted wheat and corn in the northern and western regions of Oklahoma. In fencing off their fields, the farmers effectively ended the great cattle drives, which had declined anyway as the railroad terminus moved closer to the great cattle herds of Texas. Many farmers in the southern portions (east and west) fared less well than their northern neighbors and found themselves buried under increasing amounts of debt by the early years of the twentieth century. Their economic situation would make them receptive to the ideas of the Socialist party during the first two decades of the new century.⁷⁰

Agriculture also created a significant need for labor. The wheat-growing regions of Oklahoma drew a large, transient labor force that followed the wheat harvest from Oklahoma to Manitoba from May through October. The Industrial Workers of the World began organizing these migrant farm workers in the "jungles"---transient farm worker camps---near the town of Enid by 1915. Agriculture in Oklahoma at statehood represented the means by which many people earned a living, though a substantial number of these did not hold clear title to land. Also, like the oil industry, farming in Oklahoma drew a large work force to the area, but provided only itinerant or seasonal work for that work force. The regular presence of unemployed or sometimes employed men led many Oklahoma communities to pass vagrancy laws by which local authorities could arrest persons who appeared to be shiftless or drunk and assign them jail time (which often involved work building local roads) or require that they leave the area.⁷¹

The earliest industrial development in the region that would become Oklahoma involved the construction, operation, and maintenance of railroad lines. As Figure 3 illustrates, the territories at the time of the first land run in 1889, contained seven different trunk lines that carried, in addition to people,

⁷⁰ Burbank, *When Farmers Voted Red*, 5-6, 90-91; Howard L. Meredith, "A History of the Socialist Party in Oklahoma" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1969), 6-8; Debo, *And Still the Waters Run*, 11-12.

⁷¹ Sellars, "Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies," 103, 121.

agricultural products and minerals from the region. These rail lines also linked Texas to northern cities such as Kansas City and St. Louis and hence most lines ran north-south. The separate administration of Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory also may have inhibited the early development of east-west lines. Figure 5 is a reproduction of a map the Pittsburg, Oklahoma Commercial Club produced in 1913.⁷² While this map was designed to promote the town of Pittsburg and so de-emphasized rail road development in the western part of the young state, this map demonstrates considerable railroad development in the region since the first land run. Historian Nigel Sellars has gone so far as to claim that Oklahoma should not be classified as a frontier at the time of the land runs citing the region's extensive railroad network and mining operations.⁷³ Construction, operation, and maintenance of the various rail lines required a significant wage-earning population. Sleepy towns came to life as the rail heads moved through the vicinity; the transient construction crews, in their off hours, sought diversion at local liquor establishments. As the primary form of commercial transportation during the territorial and early statehood years, the railroads figured prominently in the enforcement of Oklahoma's liquor ban.

Large scale mining developed in Indian Territory after the Civil War. Coal mining had begun at North McAlester in 1870 and over the next three decades brought the first significant white population to Indian Territory. By 1900 coal mining dominated local economies in the Sansbois and Jack Fork Mountains around McAlester. Some of these miners were immigrants from Poland, Italy, and other regions of Catholic Europe who maintained much of their old-world culture including the regular consumption of liquor. After statehood, coal mining would support the local economy in the northeast county of Nowata as well, which also saw considerable bootlegging activity.

⁷² Bank of Pittsburg to Lee Cruce, 24 May 1913, Governor's Papers, Governor Lee Cruce: General Correspondence, Box 10, File 4, Oklahoma Department of Libraries Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

⁷³ Sellars, "Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies," 22.

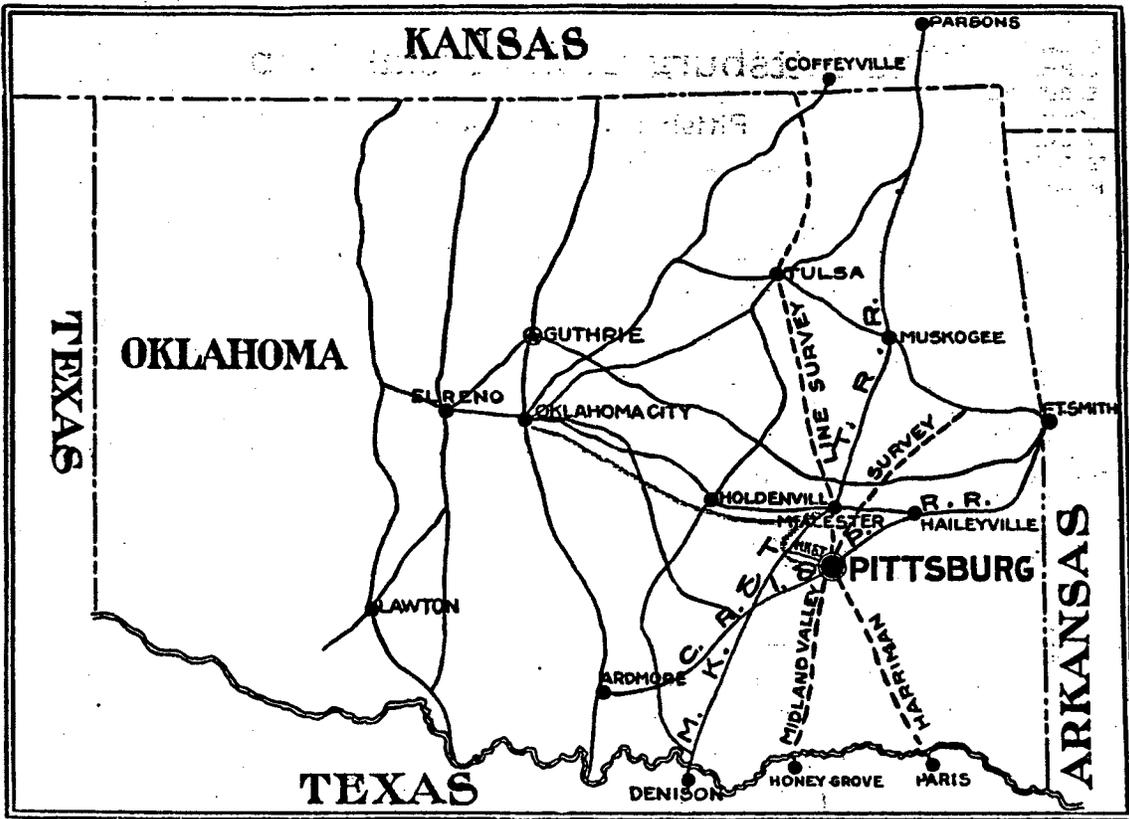


Figure 5. Rail lines in Oklahoma, 1913

Coal mining was one of the most lethal occupations in late-nineteenth-century America as an average of 2.6 persons lost their lives each day in mine accidents that maimed as many more. The coal mines in Indian Territory were among the most dangerous as the federal government did not inspect the region's mines until forced to following a mine explosion at Krebs in 1892 that killed one hundred miners and seriously injured two hundred more.⁷⁴ Two years later, coal miners staged Indian Territory's first strike in reaction to a ten percent cut in wages. Mining conditions in the region remained dangerous. By 1914, more than seven hundred men died in mine accidents in the territories. A 1912 coal mine explosion in the Sansbois Mountains killed seventy-three miners and left over three hundred women and children homeless and destitute. In 1914, thirteen men died in a mine explosion at Adamson, Oklahoma.⁷⁵ Despite these tragic events, the coal mining operations of southeast Oklahoma continued to flourish well into the twentieth century.

Other mining operations were sprinkled around the territories. Lead and zinc mining had developed in the northeast region of Indian Territory in the late nineteenth century drawing a significant number of whites to the communities of Peoria, Quapaw, and Miami. By statehood lead and zinc mining industries operated in the Wichita Mountains near Lawton, in the Arbuckle Mountains near Davis, and at Ada. After the turn of the century, surface coal was mined near Bluejacket, Dawson, Catale, Tulsa, Broken Arrow, and Pryor in the northeast. Kiowa County, in the southwest region of Oklahoma, also saw some mining activity giving the region a violent, wild-west atmosphere.⁷⁶

These various mining endeavors required a substantial work force and the hazardous work environment led many of the area's miners to join the United

Mine Workers union in 1898. After 1900, however, the region's mining

⁷⁴ Federal Writers' Project of Oklahoma, Works Projects Administration, *Labor History of Oklahoma* (Oklahoma City, OK: A. M. Van Horn, 1939), 1-4, 13;

⁷⁵ Sewell, "Industrial Unionism and the Oklahoma Coal Industry," 20, 31-33, 34.

⁷⁶ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 22 November 1912; Wilard Preston Smith, "The Agricultural Development of Kiowa County" (M.A. thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1939), 6.

industry was eclipsed by the discovery of massive underground reserves of oil.⁷⁷

Citizens of the five tribes had noticed some surface oil in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first commercial oil strike was made in 1897 in the Cherokee lands. The oil industry in the region began to take shape following moderate strikes at Red Fork (across the Arkansas River from Tulsa) in 1901 and near Cleveland (just beyond the southern boundary of the Osage Reservation) in 1904, wetting the appetite of wildcatters from around the country. Cleveland's population jumped from 1,000 to 7,000 people and the small town sported thirteen saloons and two distilleries within city limits at the height of its boom period.⁷⁸ The discovery of oil rapidly altered surrounding communities, drawing large numbers of wage-earners to the region. Oil men continued to drill, hoping to stumble upon a large oil field.

The wildcatters were not disappointed. In October 1905 Robert Galbreath brought in the Ida Glenn No. 1 oil well south of Tulsa opening a new huge oil field, the Glenn Pool. Within a year, oil field workers---rough neckers---were opening three new oil wells each day in the Glenn Pool field. Additional oil men flocked to the region bolstering the local economy, particularly that of Tulsa, a dusty town that ballooned from 1,390 people in 1900 to 18,182 by 1910 and to 72,075 by 1920. Illegal saloons and gambling halls abounded in Tulsa, such as the notorious Bucket of Blood Saloon. Production in the Glenn Pool peaked in 1908 at 117,000 barrels of oil daily.⁷⁹ Companies such as the Prairie Oil and Gas Company, a subsidiary of Standard Oil, Inc., built pipe lines to transport the black gold to the east and to the Texas gulf coast. The Glenn Pool boom not only transformed Tulsa into a city as increasing numbers of oil men and rough-neckers relocated there; it also fertilized the growth of numerous

⁷⁷ David R. Morgan, Robert E. England, and George G. Humphreys, *Oklahoma Politics & Policies: Governing the State* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 50.

⁷⁸ Kenny A. Franks, *The Rush Begins: A History of the Red Fork, Cleveland and Glenn Pool Oil Fields* (Oklahoma City, OK: Western Heritage Books, Inc., 1984), 34-35.

⁷⁹ Robert Gregory, *Oil in Oklahoma* (Muskogee, OK: Leake Industries, 1976), 5.

smaller boom towns that housed the rough-neckers and pipe line workers. Sapulpa, Kiefer, Mounds, and Jenks all experienced phenomenal, if unstable, growth. Housing became so short in Sapulpa that workers slept in tents, wagons, and other crude forms of shelter. Kiefer developed the region's worst reputation for vice and violence. Gunplay and murder were nightly occurrences giving the town a reputation as "the toughest town east of Cripple Creek, Colorado (the notoriously dangerous gold mining community of the 1890s)."⁸⁰

Oil eclipsed other aspects of Oklahoma's economy in wealth generated and consequently in attention by people from Oklahoma and elsewhere. As activity in the Glenn Pool calmed, Tom Slick, in 1912, discovered an even larger oil reserve a few miles to the west---the Cushing Oil field. Established oil men, such as Harry Sinclair, quickly moved into the region and began drilling. Within a year they were removing 300,000 barrels of oil from the Cushing field each day. The Cushing field also gained notoriety for violence and vice as saloons in the boom towns of Cushing and Drumright (and later Oilton) and rural road houses such as The Hump served the thirsty rough neckers. E. W. Marland struck oil in the Salt Fork River in 1911, though he would gain most of his wealth and fame in the 1920s from the Burbank oil field in Osage County. In 1913 the Healdton oil field was opened in the south central portion of the state. Production there peaked in 1916 at 95,000 barrels of oil daily.⁸¹ William G. Skelly would parlay his earnings from the Healdton field to create Skelly Oil Company in 1919. Numerous smaller oil strikes were made in the northeast portion of Oklahoma shortly after statehood in such areas as Muskogee, Washington, Nowata, Osage and Pawnee counties.

The oil patch, as locals labeled the fields, drew a large, itinerant, male, working-class population that supported a vibrant, if illegal, liquor industry

⁸⁰ Franks, *The Rush Begins*, 87, 94, 104.

⁸¹ Kenny A. Franks, *The Oklahoma Petroleum Industry* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 78.

before and well after statehood. Wages in the oil patch were relatively high. Drillers earned six to seven dollars per twelve-hour day. Such jobs were difficult to obtain as most drilling crews required only two men. Though oil men constructed numerous wells---in 1905 Oklahoma Territorial Governor Thompson Benton Ferguson reported 220 producing wells at tiny Cleveland, the oil patch did not provide jobs for all. Its boom atmosphere, reminiscent of the mining camps in California and Colorado in the previous century, drew many single men seeking work. Tulsa was estimated to contain 15,000 unemployed men in 1914 (out of a total population of 35,000).⁸² Those who could not find work as drillers sought to join one of the many crews building pipelines, storage tanks, or railway lines. Rural, make-shift, mobile pipeline camps, consisting of more than one hundred men, formed and followed the progress of the pipeline toward the northern, eastern, or southern borders of the state. Within the first two decades of the twentieth century, such crews had built numerous pipelines across the eastern and southern portions of Oklahoma for competing oil companies: among others, the Prairie Oil and Gas Company constructed a pipeline from Red Fork to Whiting, Indiana; the Texas Company built a pipeline from Glenn Pool to Port Arthur, Texas; the Gulf Production Company constructed a pipeline from Glenn Pool to Sour Lake, Texas. Crews of twenty men or more constructed the numerous storage tanks in the oil patch at places such as Cleveland and Kiefer. The booming oil industry also increased the demand for additional railroads to transport equipment and some crude.⁸³

Many jobs in the oil industry were transitory and only a fortunate few obtained long-term gainful employment. The oil patch, then, drew a large male working-class population, much of which was single, and provided a portion of that population with high-paying, short-lived jobs. These workers

⁸² Sellars, "Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies," 171-172; Franks, *The Rush Begins*, 30, 36.

⁸³ Sellars, "Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies," 178, 180, 194; Franks, *The Rush Begins*, 71, 81, 40-41, 76-77

found themselves with large amounts of money and, while between jobs, time in which to spend it. Saloons, brothels, and gambling houses comprised the backdrop of the working-class culture that developed in the oil patch. The mines, farms, and railroads also drew a significant wage earning population to the territories and then to Oklahoma. Jobs in these areas tended to be more permanent or at least regular. Workers in these industries also consumed alcohol as a beverage.

The economically diverse Oklahoma, then, was the product of numerous cultural and political heritages. The state's policies toward its black population were similar to those of the states of the old Confederacy, and a substantial portion of the Oklahoma population had moved from the states of the South. Indeed, well into the twentieth century, Oklahomans referred to the region surrounding McAlester in the southeast portion of the state as Little Dixie. At the same time, Oklahoma and Indian territories had been home to Jesse James and Belle Starr and seemed to accept its billing as the last of the frontier lands. Bill Tilghman, who earlier had worked as a law enforcement officer in the wild cow town of Dodge City, served as the Chief of Police in Oklahoma City during the early years of statehood. The presence of the American Indian population and the state's continued identification with its Indian heritage after that population had dwindled also linked Oklahoma with the states of the American west. Oklahomans sought to emphasize their western heritage through such entertainment spectacles as Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show and similar shows held at the Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch near Ponca City.

Oklahoma's demographic characteristics also suggests a mix of southern and western influences. The 1910 census indicates that less than one-third of Oklahomans listed the region that became Oklahoma as their place of birth. Texas was the next most common place of birth for Oklahomans, accounting for nearly thirteen percent of the total population, followed by Missouri (ten

percent), Arkansas (just over eight percent), and Kansas (slightly more than six percent).⁸⁴ The first three of these states formed the western border of the Old South while Kansas joins the American west to the Midwest. Religiously, Oklahoma reflected the influence of the South with its strong presence of Southern Baptist and Southern Methodist Episcopal churches. The non-southern Methodist Episcopal Church also was prominent in early Oklahoma, however; and the differences between the two Methodist churches seemed to be lessening. By 1939 the two would reunite.

Oklahoma also presents a mix of different environments. The eastern portion of the state continues the broken terrain of the Ozark Mountains that dominate western Arkansas. Prior to considerable human development and tree-planting in the twentieth century, the eastern wooded hills gave way rather suddenly to open plains in the western two-thirds of Oklahoma. The western portion of the state suffers from a scarcity of water, which many historians see as the defining characteristic of the American West. Early state agriculture reflected the region's environmental diversity. Farmers in the southern and eastern portions of the state grew cotton and corn. In the north central counties farmers were most likely to grow corn and wheat, while in western Oklahoma, corn and particularly wheat dominated agricultural efforts as did cattle grazing due to the limited amount of rainfall.

The discovery of oil in Oklahoma created a boom economy more akin to that of the late-nineteenth-century western states than to those of the South. Small towns such as Tulsa, Ardmore, and Cushing experienced phenomenal growth as well as the problems associated with such rapid growth. Public officials working to provide utilities service and law enforcement struggled to keep pace with the burgeoning population. The population of communities in the oil patch, like that of the early mining camps of the western states, was relatively unattached and transient. Many oil drilling ventures, like most

⁸⁴ Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*: 3: 461.

mining ventures, produced little of economic value, but those that did produced fabulous amounts of wealth. Oklahoma, then, became associated with wealth, though this was concentrated in the hands of a lucky few. The length and breadth of the oil boom deepened its influence on Oklahoma's population. Significant amounts of oil were found in Tulsa, Creek, Osage, Rogers, Nowata, and Pawnee counties in the first decade of the new century; in Creek, Payne, and Carter counties after 1910; in Seminole, Pottawatomie, and Kay counties after 1920; and in Garfield, Logan, and Oklahoma counties later still. The boom and bust nature of the oil industry left a deep imprint on Oklahoma.

Early Oklahoma enjoyed a diverse geography, economy, and population. The state contained numerous American Indian groups, a sizable African American population, and a smaller immigrant population. Numerous religious denominations competed for the souls of Oklahomans. The state's working-class population was sufficiently large to warrant consideration also when studying a social movement such as the effort to achieve and enforce prohibition. Geographically and demographically, Oklahoma contained elements of both the American South and the American West, which should be considered when examining state prohibition. Despite the state's demographic diversity, a white, middle-class, Protestant population dominated discussion of social issues that affected everyone such as the regulation of the liquor industry. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League assured the prominent position of evangelical Protestant ministers and local merchants in that discussion as will become apparent in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 3

OKLAHOMA GOES DRY

Oklahoma adopted prohibition as a part of its state constitution in 1907. This chapter will examine the process by which supporters of the liquor ban--or dries---gained influence in the territories and in Washington, D.C., and the strategies they employed to achieve their goals both locally and at the national level. While the Woman's Christian Temperance Union organized in Indian Territory in 1888 and in Oklahoma Territory in 1890, its supporters increasingly found themselves overshadowed by the Anti-Saloon League, which formed affiliates in the territories in 1899. The League and its supporters faced an entrenched liquor industry in Oklahoma Territory at the turn of the century, but by statehood, it had achieved local liquor bans in several counties and towns. Indian Territory also contained a thriving liquor business despite the long-standing federal liquor ban in the region. Federal officials encountered considerable opposition from the local populations when they attempted to enforce the ban strictly. Despite this stubbornly wet sentiment, the Anti-Saloon League continued to work methodically toward dry statehood. Oklahoma's adoption of statewide prohibition in 1907 was the culmination of a campaign by area ministers and others, organized through Anti-Saloon League affiliates, to restrict the availability of liquor in the territories. Through the efforts of these men and women, Oklahoma became the only state to enter union with a liquor ban in place.

Several of the issues driving Oklahoma's prohibition supporters date back to the early nineteenth century. The roots of the campaign against liquor reached back to 1819 when the Cherokees, residing in Georgia and

North Carolina, enacted the first liquor prohibition law anywhere within the boundaries of the United States.¹ In 1833 they established the Cherokee National Temperance Society in their new lands west of Arkansas that later became Indian Territory, and in 1849 they prohibited by law the sale and use of liquor by members of the nation in this region.² While these events indicate strong opposition to the liquor trade among the Cherokees, that opposition was not uniform---law enforcement officials seized and destroyed 1,700 gallons of whiskey at an international Indian council at Tahlequah in 1843.³ This seizure illustrates the strong commitment of authorities to liquor enforcement, but also the willingness of some to flout the ban and engage in the lucrative liquor trade.

The Cherokees were not alone in their opposition to the liquor industry. In 1842 the first Chickasaw temperance society formed.⁴ Whites also expressed concern at the effect of liquor on Indians. As one historian notes, "All crimes in the calendar were committed under its (liquor's) influence. Peaceable citizens were terrified in their homes and on highways by drunken Indians."⁵ The desire to keep liquor from the Indian populations remained a prominent argument for prohibition into the twentieth century, though the 1900 federal census indicates that Indians comprised less than ten percent of the population in the regions that became Oklahoma. Congress had banned the "introduction" of liquor into Indian country and all reservations in 1834 and, in the 1905 Enabling Act, stipulated that this ban would continue for twenty-one years following Oklahoma's entry into the union. In September 1907 a majority of voters in Oklahoma and Indian territories voted to ban the sale and giving away of liquor throughout the entire state. This ban, with a few

¹ Walter LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma" (M.A. thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1948), 1.

² *Cherokee Phoenix and Indian Advocate*, 7 December 1833; *Pauls Valley Enterprise and Valley News*, 26 July 1906.

³ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 7.

⁴ Arrel M. Gibson, *The Chickasaws* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 198.

⁵ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 6.

modifications, remained the basis of Oklahoma's liquor policy until 1959. Enforcement fell to municipal and county authorities, though the state occasionally stepped in if dissatisfied with the efforts of local officials. Federal liquor enforcement agents also remained in Oklahoma during the early years of the ban as a part of Congress's continued commitment to the Indian population there. Despite this apparent attention to prohibition by various levels of government, violations of the liquor ban remained a serious problem through the first decades of the twentieth century. The financial and political cost of adequate enforcement deterred some officials. When national prohibition took effect in January 1920 many Oklahoma officials gladly allowed federal authorities to take the lead in enforcement.⁶

The campaign for and enforcement of prohibition in Oklahoma was a part of several larger trends in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. One of these was the nationwide shift from voluntary temperance toward coercive prohibition. Prohibition also was wrapped in the broader issues of gender identification and working-class culture as a liquor ban would affect most significantly the saloon-going population---working-class men. When the federal government formed Oklahoma Territory in 1889 and opened the unassigned lands to non-Indian settlement, it allowed the sale and use of liquor in these regions, but continued to prosecute anyone who introduced liquor to an Indian whether in Oklahoma or Indian Territory. The federally-enforced liquor ban remained in effect throughout Indian Territory. Despite these legal restrictions, the liquor industry thrived in the territories. Many of the men and women sent to the territories by various religious missionary societies, in keeping with the views of their parent organizations, saw the Indians' access to illegal liquor as a moral cancer and the primary cause of their desperate poverty. Their complaints to federal officials had limited effect as a scant number of federal marshals and their deputies were required

⁶ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 78.

to cover the vast regions of the twin territories. Further, Indian Territory contained four federal courts staffed by eight judges so that "the reign of lawlessness and evil was almost unchallenged."⁷ Undeterred, opponents of liquor formed organizations associated with national temperance movements.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, in the vanguard of temperance activity in late nineteenth-century America, led the early temperance cause in the territories. Frances Willard, the dynamic president of the national WCTU, visited Indian Territory and organized a local chapter of the WCTU at Muskogee in 1888. Within two years, the WCTU organized in Oklahoma Territory as well.⁸ The Union was active in the territories in the 1890s as local unions organized in such communities as Vinita, Claremore, and Prior Creek in Indian Territory and in Oklahoma City, El Reno, Kingfisher, and other communities in Oklahoma Territory.⁹ The Indian Territory WCTU suffered significant setbacks at the close of the century when Mrs. L. Jane Staples, who had served as president of the territorial Union since its inception, died in 1899. The following year, Vice President Mrs. Tennessee M. Fuller also died.¹⁰

As the highly visible president of the national WCTU in the late nineteenth century, Frances Willard stressed activism and social arguments in support of a liquor ban---men spent their paychecks in saloons while their families starved, and intoxicated husbands often physically abused their wives and children. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, however, Willard had shifted her views on liquor and poverty. In 1887 she was inducted into the

⁷ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 3-4.

⁸ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 6. Franklin masterfully documents the political and legal history of prohibition in Oklahoma. As his study covers the entire history of Oklahoma prohibition, until 1959, it moves rather quickly through events in Oklahoma's early history which might be discussed further. *El Reno News*, 11 November 1900.

⁹ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 30, 31.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

Knights of Labor to the chagrin of conservative WCTU members.¹¹ In a 1895 speech in London she stated, "We once said intemperance was the cause of poverty; now we have completed the circle of truth by saying poverty is the cause of intemperance. . . ." This argument resembled those of the Socialist Party, which quoted Willard's London speech after 1900.¹² Her death in 1898 left a vacuum at the top of the WCTU; Lilian M. Stevens succeeded her as president, but never attained Willard's prominence. The WCTU, never fully committed to Willard's "Do Everything" approach, returned to an emphasis on restricting access to liquor as the surest means of curing social ills.¹³

The WCTU, after 1900, found itself in the growing shadow of the religiously based Anti-Saloon League, which also emphasized social and moral arguments against the liquor industry.¹⁴ The Anti-Saloon League organized in Oklahoma City in 1898 following a visit from Reverend Howard H. Russell of the Anti-Saloon League of America, and in the eastern Oklahoma community of Bartlesville by the end of 1899. The Congregationalist minister, Reverend H. E. Swan, of Oklahoma City, became prominent in the western territorial League. The rough and tumble frontier community of Perry, containing a large saloon district known locally as Hell's Half Acre, formed a league in the 1890s to curb the worst abuses of the liquor establishments.¹⁵ As in League organizations elsewhere in the nation, the Oklahoma leagues were started and led by local Protestant ministers, particularly those representing Methodist, Baptist, Congregationalist, and Presbyterian churches. Reverend Russell organized a convention at the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City 20 January 1899, at which the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League formed. The first officers of the territorial League were Tipton Cox of Hennessey as president, Reverend J. W.

¹¹ Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 106.

¹² *Constructive Socialist* (Alva), 29 January 1913.

¹³ Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 154-155.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, xviii.

¹⁵ Ethel Katherine Knox, "The Beginning of Perry Oklahoma" (M.A. thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1937), 55.

Sherwood of Kingfisher as vice president, Reverend Thomas H. Harper of the Oklahoma City Congregational church as secretary, F. E. McKinley of Guthrie as treasurer, and Reverend H. E. Swan of Oklahoma City as superintendent.¹⁶ These men attempted to restrict the availability of alcohol in the wet Oklahoma Territory by urging the enforcement of closing hours (typically midnight) and Sunday closing laws. The Perry League "stood for law and order enforcement in every line of business. Through its efforts a number of crooked slot machines were removed from the city and many saloons changed their mode of operations."¹⁷

The Oklahoma territorial government, pressured by the ministers and other dries as well as the liquor industry, authorized the Board of County Commissioners to grant liquor licenses to individuals or companies upon submission of a petition signed by thirty taxpayer residents of the township or voting precinct within which the proposed saloon would locate. Territorial statutes also required an applicant for a saloon license to post a notice of his intentions in the county's two largest newspapers two weeks prior to consideration of the application. In those counties that did not have two newspapers, applicants were required to post their intentions to seek a liquor license in five public places. Those petitioning for a license were to be of respectable standing in the local community. The Board was to consider carefully all objections to the issuance of these licenses. This allowed local dries considerable influence over the number of licensed saloons existed in a community.¹⁸

The territorial government placed other restrictions on the liquor industry to curb its least defensible practices. Liquor could not be sold to minors, habitual drunkards, past midnight on Sunday, before five o'clock in the morning, on election days, or in rooms containing chairs or seats, pool or

¹⁶ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 24.

¹⁷ Knox, "The Beginnings of Perry Oklahoma," 55.

¹⁸ W. F. Wilson, comp., *Wilson's Revised and Annotated Statutes of Oklahoma, 1903*, (Guthrie, OK: State Capital Co., 1903), 481, cited in Franklin, *Born Sober*, 5.

billiard tables, or gambling paraphernalia.¹⁹ Some county and municipal officers were conscientious in enforcing these laws, though enforcement varied from one region to the next. The territorial attorney general commissioned a report from county attorneys and district clerks on crime statistics between 1 June 1901 and 1 June 1902. This report indicates that, among other indictments, many county attorneys attempted to enforce the liquor laws. They handed down indictments for selling liquor on Sunday, for selling liquor to minors, and for selling liquor without a license. The figures in this report do not indicate counties of greater or lesser liquor violations as the resources and willingness of county officers to enforce such laws likely varied. Nor do these figures provide an accurate comparison of the county officers' commitment toward liquor enforcement as violations likely varied from one county to the next. However, it is curious to note that Oklahoma County, containing Oklahoma City and its numerous saloons, saw no indictments for liquor violations during the period.²⁰ The report makes apparent that at least some saloon operators regularly violated territorial liquor laws and so provided fodder for dries who called for the complete elimination of the liquor industry.

Members of the Anti-Saloon League and other dries took advantage of these statutes to stage informal local referenda on the saloon question through petitions against liquor licenses. The League was not above exerting social pressure on prominent individuals who were hesitant in their support of a local liquor ban. In 1900 the Anti-Saloon League of Hennessey circulated a petition against the issuance of a saloon license. When Reverend George N. Keniston refused to sign it, the League attacked him publicly. Keniston argued

¹⁹ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 28-29.

²⁰ J. C. Roberts, Attorney General and C. H. Woods, Assistant, *Report of the Attorney General of the Territory of Oklahoma*, (Guthrie, OK: State Capital Company, 1902), 26-36. According to George Plummer, Oklahoma City contained eighty-five saloons when he arrived in 1904. See Jimmie Birdwell interview with George Plummer, 19 July 1937, Oklahoma City, in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection*, 107, (Works Progress Administration Project S-149, 1937): 374.

that he had declined to sign the petition because he viewed the consumption of alcohol as an issue of personal liberty, but the League held fast in its rebuke of him. Anti-Saloon League Superintendent Reverend H. E. Swan took the occasion to send letters to citizens throughout Oklahoma Territory questioning the moral fortitude of anyone who signed a petition in favor of a saloon license.²¹ Through such actions, the League not only attacked the saloon in specific locales, but kept the issue in the minds of the voting public and hammered home its understanding of the liquor question as one pitting organized religion, championing the forces of good, against the liquor industry, representing the forces of evil.

The League also fought the saloon industry in the courts. Reverend Swan, in July 1900, filed a remonstrance with the Oklahoma County Board of Commissioners to block the issuance of a liquor license to James Marrinan of Oklahoma City. The board declared that the period of time within which an issuance might be challenged had expired and issued the license. Swan appealed this decision to the Supreme Court of Oklahoma Territory, which ruled that county boards were required to consider remonstrances and that the board should withhold the liquor license until it hears all the evidence.²² This decision established a precedent upon which subsequent rulings were based; it granted the opponents of the saloon greater leverage in blocking the issuance of liquor licenses against the desires of a county board. League members kept a watchful eye on the territorial courts, hoping to gain favorable rulings in all cases involving saloons and liquor.

Dry forces attacked the legal liquor industry in Oklahoma Territory at all levels of government. In 1900 the El Reno Presbyterian Church Temperance Committee petitioned President William McKinley to ban the sale

²¹ *Kingfisher Free Press*, 4 January 1900.

²² John H. Burford, *Oklahoma Reports, Volume X: Cases Determined in the Supreme Court of the Territory of Oklahoma at January 1901 and previous Terms and not Published in Former Volumes*, (Guthrie, OK: State Capital Printing Company, 1901), 547-555.

of intoxicants in all United States territories.²³ The newly formed Oklahoma City Anti-Saloon League threatened to file charges of corruption against police chief Hendry and others if they continued their lax enforcement of closing laws.²⁴ A Law and Order League formed in Oklahoma City early in 1900---at the same time that the Anti-Saloon League became active in the city---to aid elected officials in the enforcement of ordinances regarding nightly closing hours and the closing of saloons on Sunday. The Anti-Saloon League encouraged the development of these popular enforcement agencies and took a hand in organizing at least some of them. Those who failed to support these Law and Order leagues, such as Oklahoma City mayor Henry Overholser, the League smeared as anarchists.²⁵ From its inception, the Anti-Saloon League used pressure politics to tighten the enforcement of existing liquor laws.

Residents of other Oklahoma Territory communities also formed Law and Order Leagues. In the summer of 1900 an El Reno saloon brawl between the local marshal and city police after midnight, when the saloons were supposed to be closed, sparked the development of a Law and Order League in that community also.²⁶ Local leagues organized in Mangum and Chickasha in September 1900 and employed detectives to monitor (and expose to public scrutiny) those who patronized saloons, gambling houses, and houses of prostitution.²⁷ Early League meetings in Stillwater, held on a street corner with speeches and singing, resembled religious revival meetings.²⁸ Dry proponents in Oklahoma, then, not only pressured locally elected officials to enforce liquor laws, but also organized to aid that enforcement or to enforce those laws themselves if the officials proved insufficient.

The liquor industry in Oklahoma Territory recognized the threat posed by these dry organizations when it formed a Liquor Dealers' Protective

²³ *El Reno News*, 25 January 1900.

²⁴ *Daily Oklahoman*, 24 January 1900.

²⁵ *El Reno News*, 15 February 1900.

²⁶ *El Reno News*, 28 July 1900.

²⁷ *Chickasha Daily Express*, 17 September 1900.

²⁸ *Stillwater Gazette*, 23 August; 4 October 1900.

Association in Oklahoma City and in Guthrie, the territorial capital. Members vowed to involve themselves in local politics to counter the efforts of the Anti-Saloon League and other dry organizations.²⁹ At times, the dry forces got carried away in their attacks on the saloon business, as in October 1900 when saloon keepers filed defamation charges against the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. The League countered with a suit of its own against the saloon keepers. Both were dropped within weeks.³⁰ Local Anti-Saloon Leagues continued to form in the territories; by November 1900, the League claimed 15,000 members in Oklahoma Territory.³¹ As Jimmie Lewis Franklin notes, however, the League's base of support may have been much larger as many endorsed the League's work without formally joining.³² The exact constituency of the League in the territories and subsequently in Oklahoma is uncertain as no statewide membership lists remain. The limited information found on county and city leagues combined with the lists of state officers and trustees suggests that the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League was dominated by local merchants and professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and ministers. The latter held numerous positions of prominence in state and local leagues, which served as conduits by which local pastors achieved considerable political power.

The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League also interjected itself into territorial politics in an effort to restrict those areas in which saloon keepers might engage in their trade. The League drafted territorial legislation such as the 1901 liquor bill, introduced by Representative F. M. Ferguson, to provide for local option in the territory, allowing communities to vote to ban the retail liquor industry from their midst. The bill also set the annual liquor license at \$1,000, and banned saloons from a five-mile radius surrounding all territorial

²⁹ *Kingfisher Free Press*: 1, 15 March 1900.

³⁰ *El Reno News*, 18, 25 October 1900.

³¹ *El Reno News*, 1 November 1900.

³² Franklin, *Born Sober*, 8..

schools.³³ That bill failed to emerge from the Territorial House Committee on Intoxicating Liquors, as did another bill, which banned liquor throughout all of Oklahoma Territory. The House did allow Reverend D. W. Keller, on behalf of the Anti-Saloon League of Logan County, to address legislators concerning this prohibition bill.³⁴ In a separate action, League representatives lobbied the territorial government, unsuccessfully, to ban saloons from all towns opened to white settlement after the summer of 1901.³⁵ The Oklahoma League, then, became active in territorial politics soon after its inception, but did not enjoy much success initially. The ministers, however, did gain valuable political experience that they utilized during the campaign for statehood and statewide prohibition. They also had considerable success locally before 1907.

The local option efforts by the ministers and laymen of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League bore considerable fruit by 1906. The *Daily Oklahoman*, a leading critic of prohibition, admitted that an estimated forty towns in Oklahoma Territory had voted themselves completely dry.³⁶ The Sayre *Headlight*, late in 1906, placed the number of dry towns at one hundred. In fact, Washita County, in western Oklahoma, was completely dry except for one saloon in the small town of Bessie; the southwest town of Lawton remained wet, but the rest of Comanche County became dry following a ruling by Judge Gillette that saloon applicants must obtain a petition signed by thirty resident taxpayers of the ward in which the saloon proposed to locate; a similar ruling in Lincoln County dried up all of the towns in that county except Chandler and Stroud; all of Beaver County in the panhandle went dry; and Weatherford,

³³ *Stillwater Gazette*, 31 January 1901.

³⁴ Oklahoma, *Journal of the House Proceedings of the Sixth Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Oklahoma, Beginning January 8, 1901, Ending March 8, 1901*, 183-184.

³⁵ *Indian (Muskogee) Journal*, 2 August 1901. This measure applied to the Big Pasture region in the southwestern portion of the territory, which was opened to white settlement by sealed bids in 1906, to the Osage Reservation (subsequently Osage County), which was opened to white settlement following allotment of Indian lands there in 1906, to the Ponca and Oto-Missouri Lands and Kaw lands each of which were located just west of the Osage Reservation and which were allotted in 1904 and 1906 respectively.

³⁶ *Daily Oklahoman*, 4 May 1906 cited in Franklin, *Born Sober*, 10.

which had supported fourteen saloons in 1900, had closed all of its liquor establishments by the end of 1906.³⁷ The campaign by the Anti-Saloon League and the WCTU to ban liquor from the proposed state of Oklahoma, then, was not an ephemeral movement. Rather, it was the culmination of sustained efforts by dry advocates at the local and territorial level to make prohibition a political reality in the Sooner state. The League and the WCTU were joined in their anti-liquor drive by the Prohibition Party shortly after the turn of the century.

The National Prohibition Party had formed in 1869 when dry advocates from around the nation, dissatisfied with the influence the liquor industry had in the two major parties, met in Chicago to discuss the future of the anti-liquor movement. They modeled their single issue party on the early Republican Party. In fact, many of the founders had been abolitionists before the Civil War.³⁸ These men fully expected to end the liquor traffic in America just as the Republican Party had ended slavery earlier. Beginning in 1872, the Party began nominating candidates for President of the United States. The Party fared poorly in these contests, never garnering more than three percent of the popular vote and failing to capture any electoral votes between 1872 and 1924. Despite this lack of success, Party members remained convinced that prohibition could be achieved only by a single-issue proponent, such as their organization, which had no ties to the growing liquor industry. In the 1890s

³⁷ (Sayre) *Headlight*, 8 November 1906 cited in Franklin, *Born Sober*, 10-11. LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 20-21.

³⁸ D. Leigh Colvin, *Prohibition in the United States: A History of the Prohibition Party and the Prohibition Movement* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1926), 67-68, 59. Colvin presents a comprehensive history of the Party from its inception until the 1920s. His study portrays the Party as building momentum toward its eventual triumph with the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment. In this, he differs from most scholarly works on national prohibition, which assign primary credit to the WCTU and the Anti-Saloon League. His obviously partisan stance is understandable given the fact that the National Committee of the Party commissioned this study. Colvin was a professionally trained historian, but he also was the Party's candidate for Vice President of the United States in 1920. Toward the end of his thorough study, his work shades from historical account toward a thinly veiled promotion of Party objectives.

Frances Willard, president of the WCTU, provided a boost to the Party when she endorsed it and urged all Union members to support it against the major parties. The Party benefited temporarily from this support, though Willard's headstrong stance split the WCTU for several years. The Anti-Saloon League of America, as mentioned earlier, formed in reaction to the political failures of the Party and quickly overshadowed it in the political arena. Party leaders saw the League's support of local option as a compromise that distracted drys from the ultimate goal---national prohibition. As the League began shortly after the opening of Oklahoma Territory to white settlement, it entered the area at roughly the same time as and on a nearly equal footing to that of the Party.

The Prohibition Party organized its first territorial convention in Guthrie in June 1902.³⁹ Distinct from the Anti-Saloon League, the Party set itself as an alternative to the Democratic and Republican parties in the territories---banning the sale of liquor was the central plank of its Party platform. Like the League, the Party was led by Protestant ministers in Oklahoma. The 1902 convention elected Reverend E. S. Stockwell of Perry as the state Party chairman, and nominated Reverend L. T. Van Cleave of Oklahoma City as territorial delegate to the United States Congress. Contrary to the League's nonpartisan approach, however, the Party insisted that supporters swear off the Democratic and Republican parties and vote only for Prohibition Party candidates. The Oklahoma Prohibition Party remained very small and never seriously challenged the dominance of the two major parties. The Party also failed to challenge the Anti-Saloon League and the WCTU for leadership of the temperance campaign in the territories. It enjoyed significant support in Woods County in northwest Oklahoma, but little elsewhere and rarely drew a mention in the press following the adoption of statewide prohibition in 1907.⁴⁰

³⁹ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 17.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

Franklin quotes the Sayre newspaper's report that drys had successfully closed the Woods County saloons in all communities except Alva, Ingersoll, Carmen, Aline, and Helena.⁴¹ Given the relatively slight population of the county---15,517 in 1907 according to the federal census---the number of remaining liquor outlets per capita was comparatively high.⁴² The geographic distribution of these small towns around the county made liquor accessible to most county residents willing to undergo a short ride. This account of the seemingly remarkable achievements by Woods County drys might be seen better as evidence of the limited effectiveness of the Prohibition Party, given its prominence in that county before statehood.

The Oklahoma Party and the Oklahoma League, in contrast to their parent organizations, cooperated with one another to some extent. The 1908 convention of the Oklahoma Prohibition Party named among its delegates to the national convention Reverend J. M. Monroe, a member of the League's Headquarters Committee, Reverend J. J. Thompson, formerly the superintendent of the Oklahoma League, and Reverend I. C. Rankin, a trustee to the League. The Party also joined with the League in supporting a dispensary system (for scientific, industrial, and medicinal purposes) as a means of achieving effective prohibition enforcement.⁴³ The Oklahoma Prohibition Party made a very slight impression in the Oklahoma political scene, and perhaps for this reason sought common cause with the Oklahoma League despite its different approach.

The Anti-Saloon League, the WCTU, and the Prohibition Party were joined in their battles against the territorial liquor industry by Carry Nation, who had attained national prominence in Kansas for destroying saloon fixtures with a hatchet. She and her husband, David Nation, had homesteaded

⁴¹ (Sayre) *Headlight*, 8 November 1906 cited in Franklin, *Born Sober*, 10.

⁴² Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*: 3: 482.

⁴³ *Daily Oklahoman*, 16 April 1908.

in the region that later became Dewey County.⁴⁴ David served as minister of a local church, and Carry toured the recently established white settlements in the region, preaching the gospel to any who would listen and organizing charity groups. She spoke out against the use of liquor and tobacco and gained a reputation among the area's saloon keepers for stirring up trouble. In a preview of events to come, she traveled to Edmond in 1899 and proceeded to smash whiskey bottles beer kegs, and various furnishings in each of that town's six or seven saloons. Only two saloons chose to rebuild.⁴⁵ That same year, the Nations returned to Kansas where Carry took up her crusade against the illegal liquor establishments. Over the next two years, she applied her hatchet to saloons in Wichita, Topeka, Kansas City, Enterprise, and Holt.⁴⁶ After her husband divorced her in 1901, she made excursions to Oklahoma Territory, but received a chilly reception from the anti-liquor forces there. The local WCTU of Guthrie urged her not to come to that growing city and refused to endorse her work. No church granted her permission to take the pulpit so she spoke on street corners of the evils of alcohol. She entered several Guthrie saloons and denounced the proprietors as harmful to society, but did not attempt to destroy any property.⁴⁷

Carry became a national figure over the next two years, smashing saloons and being arrested in numerous regions of the nation. She returned to Guthrie in 1905 with the intent of establishing a Prohibition Federation in the territory. Through this organization, she sought to dismantle the liquor industry, achieve constitutional prohibition for the proposed state of Oklahoma, push legislation to outlaw cursing, and put a prohibitionist in the

⁴⁴ Mary Ann Blochowiak, "Woman with a Hatchet': Carry Nation Comes to Oklahoma Territory," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 59:2 (Summer 1981): 134.

⁴⁵ Mildred B. McFarland interview with Phamie Elizabeth Sheldon, 13 August 1937, Edmond, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 101, 259; Mildred B. McFarland interview with Mrs. Bonnie Doxsie Terry, 29 July 1937, Edmond, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 112, 95.

⁴⁶ Blochowiak, "Woman with a Hatchet,'" 135-136.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 138-139.

White House.⁴⁸ In communities such as Edmond, El Reno, Holdenville, and Wewoka, large crowds gathered to hear the famous saloon smasher. The editor of *The Shawnee News* granted her complete editorial control of his newspaper for one day. She brought nationally renowned anti-liquor speakers to Guthrie and enjoyed limited success in organizing her Prohibition Federation. She began printing her own journal, *The Hatchet*, in summer 1905. In it and her speeches, she urged Oklahomans to remove those elected officials who failed to enforce existing liquor laws.⁴⁹ She attempted to attend the grand opening of Tulsa's Robinson Hotel to protest the free flow of liquor there and elsewhere in the oil boom town, but was locked out of the ceremony. Her reception in the territories became increasingly frosty in 1906 as she became more militant and radical. In the summer of that year she was charged with sending obscene materials through the mails---in an issue of *The Hatchet* she had provided a lesson to boys on controlling their sexual urges that included a graphic description of the male body. She left Oklahoma Territory late in 1906, shortly before statehood, and settled in Arkansas.⁵⁰

Carry Nation's presence in the territories had a significant impact on the anti-liquor campaign in the proposed state. While she drew people to the cause initially, the novelty of her fame faded and Oklahomans grew tired of her radical positions. Her lack of support from established temperance organizations and churches suggests that these groups feared she would discredit their efforts against the liquor industry. Carry's extreme platform, however, allowed the WCTU, the Anti-Saloon League, and the Indian Territory Federation of Churches to portray themselves as moderate voices in the liquor debate. Already a caricature of the wild-eyed reformer from her national hatchet campaign, Carry served as the lunatic fringe of the temperance crusade in Oklahoma.

⁴⁸ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 14.

⁴⁹ Blochowiak, "Woman with a Hatchet," 140-144.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 146-149.

Franklin, in *Born Sober*, presents Carry Nation's Oklahoma reception as warm.⁵¹ While he describes the Anti-Saloon League and the WCTU as working closely with Carry's Prohibition Federation, Blochowiak, writing a decade later, asserts that she received a chilly reception from dry organizations. Upon hearing that she intended to come to Guthrie, Blochowiak states the local WCTU wired her, "Do not come; we cannot endorse you." Nation came to Guthrie anyway and adopted a similar stance toward the local dry organizations. As Blochowiak notes, "She berated the various WCTU's, temperance societies, and churches who refused to endorse her."⁵² Blochowiak's portrayal of the relationship between Carry Nation and local dries fits Robert Smith Bader's description of her stormy rapport with dry organizations in Kansas. Bader sees Carry as a radical who the more conservative WCTU and Kansas State Temperance Union believed "had passed beyond the pale so far as 'lady like' behavior was concerned."⁵³ Oklahoma dries, like many prohibition supporters in Kansas, were uncomfortable with the campaign conducted by this assertive woman. Her antics were fresh in the minds of the convention delegates who met in Guthrie late in 1906 to draft a constitution. The lobbying efforts by the ministers and the women of the WCTU would have seemed moderate by comparison.

Despite these efforts by dries, the liquor industry in Oklahoma Territory flourished. Within a year of the first land run, the Anheuser-Busch company established a series of breweries around Oklahoma. Guthrie, the territorial capital, sported breweries operated by Anheuser-Busch, the Ferd Heim Brewing Company, and the Schlitz Brewing Company in the 1890s.⁵⁴ In 1894 a Texas company announced plans to open a brewery in Hennessey, the home of

⁵¹ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 14-15.

⁵² Blochowiak, "Woman with a Hatchet," 138-139.

⁵³ Robert Smith Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas: A History* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1986), 142, 153.

⁵⁴ Jay R. Dew, "Moral Reform for the Magic City: Temperance in Guthrie, Oklahoma, 1889-1907," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 77:4 (Winter 1999-2000): 411-412.

the territorial Anti-Saloon League's first president, Tipton Cox, and Reverend George N. Keniston, the minister who refused to knuckle under to the local Anti-Saloon League. W. H. Baker operated a federally licensed distillery in Ponca City across the street from the justice of the peace office. The distillery was the cause of numerous court recesses and subsequent delays as judges, attorneys, plaintiffs, defendants, jurors, and witnesses treated one another.⁵⁵ N. Moss and Company opened the Oklahoma Brewery in Oklahoma City by 1902. Moss designed it to produce 25,000 to 30,000 barrels of beer annually, and intended to start a malt plant in the region to service breweries in the southwestern United States. The following year the Moss Brewing Company began construction of another brewery in Oklahoma City, advertised as one of the largest in the Southwest, at a cost of \$200,000.⁵⁶ Henry Braun, a local agent of the Pabst Corporation of Milwaukee, established beer wholesale operations in Guthrie and in Stillwater.

Oklahoma Territory also produced some wine. Territorial governor William M. Jenkins, in his 1901 report to Washington, D.C., asserted that wine was manufactured in many counties in the territory. The rocky, uneven ground was ideal for growing grapes, but farmers engaged in this saw much of their produce perish en route to market due to the region's crude transportation system. Following the logic that had led Illinois and Indiana farmers of a century previous to distill their corn into whiskey, the grape growers of Oklahoma Territory refined their bounty into wine to reduce spoilage and financial loss. Newspaper accounts say little about the region's wine industry suggesting that, while present in a number of counties, wine production comprised a relatively small part of the region's liquor industry, as

⁵⁵ *Norman Transcript*, 27 April 1894; *Blackwell Morning Tribune*, 17 October 1932.

⁵⁶ *Stillwater Gazette*, 2 May 1901; *Stillwater Advance*, 9 October 1902.

as was the case elsewhere in the nation.⁵⁷

The retail liquor industry also thrived throughout the territory. The community of Lawton, officially opened to white settlement by lottery with the rest of the Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache lands between June 9 and August 6, 1901, sported sixty saloons by August 22 of that year.⁵⁸ Shawnee, at the time of statehood and constitutional prohibition, contained thirty licensed saloons. The *Shawnee Herald* asserted in 1906 that the 12,474 residents of that community consumed seven hundred gallons of beer and twenty-five gallons of whiskey each day.⁵⁹ Saloons also were a standard feature of many smaller communities in Oklahoma Territory. Ponca City, with a population of 2,528, supported twelve licensed saloons in 1900.⁶⁰ Granite and Sayre contained thirteen saloons in 1901 and 1903, respectively, though neither community had accumulated 2,500 residents by 1910.⁶¹ El Reno supported twenty-one saloons in 1901, though its population was 3,383 in 1900.⁶² Weatherford, with a population of less than 2,500 in 1900 and 1910, contained eighteen saloons and seventeen gambling houses in 1903 according to one former resident.⁶³

⁵⁷ U. S., Department of Interior, William M. Jenkins, *Report of the Governor of Oklahoma to the Secretary of the Interior, 1901*, 84-85. The consumption of wine did not take off in the United States until the federal government implemented national prohibition in the 1920s. For a brief discussion of corn distilling in the early nineteenth century, see Clark, *Deliver Us from Evil* and W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: an American Tradition* (1979). George R. Taylor's *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (1951) remains a seminal work on the economic impact of improved transportation in the early nineteenth century and includes considerable discussion of the role whiskey played in the growth of a market economy.

⁵⁸ *Stillwater Advance*, 22 August 1901.

⁵⁹ John Fortson, *Pott Country and What Has Come of It: A History of Pottawatomie County*, (n.p.: Pottawatomie County Historical Society, 1936), 24; Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*: 3:481.

⁶⁰ *Stillwater Advance*, 21 March 1901; *El Reno News*, 7 June 1900; Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*: 3:482.

⁶¹ Virgil Coursey interview with R. L. Wilcox, 25 October 1937, Altus, Oklahoma, Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection*, 75, (Works Progress Administration Project S-149, 1937), :279, Oklahoma Historical Society; interview with Caroline Brown Cornells, n.d., Sayre, Oklahoma, *Indian Pioneer History Collection*, 77:483.

⁶² Nora L. Lorrin interview with Frances Mary Rakes, 12 April 1938, El Reno, Oklahoma, *Indian Pioneer History Series*, 81:476; Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*: 3:482.

⁶³ Interview with Ned Warren, 21 May 1937, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 67:27.

Oklahoma City sported a large number of saloons soon after its incorporation, and its retail liquor business remained vibrant throughout the territorial period. One early resident recalled that the city's Independence Day celebration of 1900 took on a carnival-like atmosphere due in part to the presence of Theodore Roosevelt, who gave a campaign speech as that year's Republican Vice-Presidential candidate. The downtown Oklahoma City saloons were so full with customers that several sawed additional door space in their front walls.⁶⁴ According to Albert McRill, an Anti-Saloon League speaker and later the City Manager of Oklahoma City, vice and crime reached a high point in 1901 and 1902. Mayor Henry Overholser had organized an anti-prohibition meeting in 1900 and drew 500 like-minded city inhabitants.⁶⁵ One resident later recalled that Oklahoma City contained eighty-five saloons when he arrived in 1904.⁶⁶ Among the more notorious establishments were Robert D. Kerr's Sasaric Saloon on Robinson Street just south of Main, Madam Daisy Clayton's Red Onion just off of Broadway Street, and Two Johns, all located in what became known as 'Hop Boulevard.'⁶⁷ Oklahoma City's liquor problem did not disappear following statehood. A June 1909 raid determined that thirty-four establishments sold liquor illegally in the downtown region of the capital city, near the junction of Main and Broadway streets.⁶⁸ Despite the efforts of the Anti-Saloon League and other dries, liquor remained available in many parts of Oklahoma Territory before statehood. One newspaper report estimated that the implementation of prohibition in November 1907 had forced the closing of 550 saloons statewide.⁶⁹ Those who sold liquor possessed a

⁶⁴ "My Experiences in the Old Indian Territory," Tom Cheney, 27 October 1937, *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 88:273.

⁶⁵ Albert McRill, *And Satan Came Also, An Inside Story of a City's Social and Political History* (Oklahoma City, OK: Britton Publishing Company, 1955), 74, 56.

⁶⁶ Jimmie Birdwell interview with George Plummer, 19 July 1937, Oklahoma City, *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 107:374.

⁶⁷ McRill, *And Satan Came Also*, 70, 28, 76.

⁶⁸ *Shawnee Herald*, 24 September 1907; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, July 1909.

⁶⁹ Jimmie Lewis Franklin, "That Noble Experiment: A Note on Prohibition in Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 43:1 (Spring 1965): 25.

considerable economic stake in maintaining the availability of liquor.

The coarse nature of the liquor men's opposition to prohibition likely aided the campaign for the liquor ban. The entrenched, lucrative liquor industry could become hostile toward those bent on destroying it. In the tiny community of Orlando in 1901, a three-week war ensued between supporters of the saloon and the local Anti-Saloon League over the issuance of liquor licenses. The contest culminated in an assault on Dr. Sharpe, a man of local prominence who supported the League's campaign. Two men beat him and seriously injured him with a knife. In reaction to this example of violence by liquor supporters, the League and the citizens of Orlando successfully blocked the issuance of a saloon license.⁷⁰ In Guthrie, saloon backers attacked and beat Reverend Swan so severely that he required two weeks rest at home to recuperate. In the summer of 1907, with the vote on prohibition nearing, saloon men assaulted Reverend J. J. Thompson of the Oklahoma Territory League on the steps of the Beaver County court house because he vocally opposed the issuance of another saloon license.⁷¹

To the east, ministers in Indian Territory, collaborating with the national Anti-Saloon League, labored in support of the federal liquor ban in that region. Dry organizations such as the Anti-Saloon League and the WCTU, while continuing their local campaigns to stamp out the liquor industry, also looked ahead to the impending establishment of a single state from the two territories. Ministers and women from the region lobbied Congress to restrict the availability of alcohol in the proposed state of Oklahoma. They enjoyed considerable support. Captain A. S. McKennon, a member of the Dawes Commission, served as president of the Muskogee Ministers' Association, as an officer in the Indian Territory Federation of Churches, and subsequently in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. One newspaper reported, in April 1902, the

⁷⁰ *Stillwater Gazette*, 2 May 1901.

⁷¹ *Beaver Journal*, 28 June 1907.

presence of a regional league in the territory led by Reverend R. J. Wooten of Memphis, Tennessee and based at South McAlester.⁷² This organization called for prohibition to continue should Congress grant the region statehood.

Indian Territory had a long-standing, if poorly enforced, ban on liquor, and most Indian leaders in the early twentieth century saw liquor as a leading cause of the social ills besetting them. In 1903 the governors of the Five Tribes met in Eufala, in east central Indian Territory, and called for a ban on liquor in any proposed state---at the time, it was not clear that the two territories would merge to form a single state. In fact, many Indian leaders desired separate statehood for Indian Territory, fearing that the white population of a single state would drown out the Indian voice in politics. The leaders of the Five Tribes implored the WCTU and local ministers to lobby Congress to ban liquor in any state constructed from the territories.⁷³

Dry proponents readily complied. Temperance workers from both territories held a convention in Oklahoma City late in 1903 and resolved to petition Congress for constitutional prohibition for the region when it became a state.⁷⁴ In September of 1904, the Muskogee Ministers' Association invited all Indian Territory ministers to a convention in McAlester to discuss prohibition. One hundred and sixty-seven territorial dries attended and launched the Indian Territory Church Federation for Prohibition Statehood. The convention named McKennon president of the federation and Reverend E. M. Sweet of the Muskogee Methodist Episcopal Church, South as secretary. The newly formed organization quickly raised \$1,700 to defray its initial costs and to finance trips by lobbyists to Washington, D.C. Congress was expected to formulate legislation that winter to enable the territories to seek statehood and the federation intended to pressure Congress to place a prohibition clause in the final

⁷² *Alva Review*, 24 April 1902.

⁷³ *Muskogee Democrat*, 28 July 1904.

⁷⁴ *Vinita Weekly Chieftain*, 10 December 1903.

version of the bill.⁷⁵

Attendees at the McAlester convention argued that the liquor industry hindered the already stunted development, from their perspective, of the Indian populations in the area. Like many reformers of the era, they sought to make the Indians productive members of white society and liquor retarded productivity. Rennard Strickland indicates that the desire among whites to assimilate Indians into white culture was strong among the Indian agents, those federal officials who worked most closely with the Native Americans. He notes, "Commissioner Hiram Price proclaimed that 'one of two things must eventually take place, to wit, either civilization or extermination of the Indian. Savage and civilized life cannot live and prosper on the same ground. One of the two must die.'" ⁷⁶ Price's statement also hints at the threat to white society posed by the unassimilated Indian.

The ministers at McAlester identified another threat to productive, respectable society in the region if liquor was legalized---the certain flood of unsavory whites to the area. They asserted that "the influx of this vicious class will keep out thousands of industrious, honest, intelligent homeseekers, who are wanting a safe, clean country in which to rear their families."⁷⁷ The ministers saw those engaged in the liquor industry as contributing nothing to the community and staining it as an area that welcomes vice industries. The liquor men's presence would attract others of the same sort and discourage respectable, stable community builders from settling in the new state.

In 1904 Reverend Purley A. Baker, general superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League of America, came to Oklahoma and reorganized the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League with the goal of banning the saloon throughout the

proposed state. The national League brought in Reverend J. J. Thomson,

⁷⁵ *Vinita Weekly Chieftain*, 6 October 1904; *Daily Oklahoman*, 25 November 1904; *Lexington Leader*, 16 September 1904; LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 25, 26.

⁷⁶ Rennard Strickland, *The Indians in Oklahoma* (Norman, OK: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 38. Price's statement is undated, taken from the Shleppey Collection, McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa.

⁷⁷ *Vinita Weekly Chieftain*, 8 September 1904; *Muskogee Democrat*, 28 July 1904.

assistant superintendent of the Toledo district of the Ohio League, as the new superintendent of the Oklahoma Territory organization. Baker also met with ministers from the Indian Territory in Muskogee and helped found the Church Federation for Prohibition Statehood under the direction of Reverend Sweet and Captain McKennon. This body held its own convention in 1905, but in 1907 merged with the other territorial organization to form the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League.⁷⁸ Before their merger, both organizations kept strong ties to Baker's Anti-Saloon League of America.

Oklahoma drys formed a Central Committee in 1905 to lead the campaign for dry statehood. Members of this committee lobbied the territorial government and organized the campaign directed at Congress. Reverend H. E. Swan of the Anti-Saloon League, Mrs. M. S. Fellow of the Alva WCTU, Leslie Baker of the Oklahoma City Order of Good Templars, S. W. McCann of the Oklahoma City Civic Federation, and Reverend Marion Porter of the Lawton Methodist Episcopal Church and future secretary of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League joined in this work.⁷⁹ Reverend J. J. Thomson of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League held weekly meetings around the territories in support of prohibition, and drys sent petitions with 20,000 signatures on them to Congress urging prohibition for the proposed state.⁸⁰

The Church Federation formed at McAlester in 1904 actively campaigned for prohibition before Congress, sending the politically influential Captain McKennon and others to Washington, D.C. for this purpose. McKennon earlier had gained an audience with Theodore Roosevelt and determined that the president was receptive to the idea. Dr. A. Grant Evans, president of Henry Kendall College in Muskogee and later a trustee in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, made several trips on behalf of a prohibition clause. Reverend J. S.

⁷⁸ "Oklahoma Report by League Superintendent Horatio T. Laughbaum," *Proceedings, Fifteenth National Convention of the Anti-Saloon League of America, November 10-13, 1913* (Westerville, OH: The American Issue Publishing Company, 1914), 317-320.

⁷⁹ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 25.

⁸⁰ *Muskogee Democrat*, 28 March 1905.

Murrow, a forty-year missionary to the Indians in the region, sent to members of Congress memorials from thousands of Indians praying for prohibition. Reverend Sweet attended the Lake Mohonk Indian Conference and gained its vocal support for prohibition in Oklahoma. This conference of Friends of the Indian, many of them ministers, met annually from 1883 until 1916 in the Catskill Mountains of New York to discuss ways to ease the Americanization of the American Indian. In 1905 Dr. A. Grant Evans attended and spoke at the twenty-third annual Lake Mohonk Conference.⁸¹

The Anti-Saloon League of America also took a direct hand in efforts to prohibit liquor in the proposed state. Its legislative superintendent in Washington, D.C., Reverend Edwin C. Dinwiddie, collected the petitions from the territories calling for prohibition in the proposed state and became the de facto leader of the prohibition campaign in the two territories. Dinwiddie and others presented these petitions to Congress in 1905 while it formulated the Enabling Act, by which Congress relinquished its authority over the Indian Territory and allowed for the creation of a single forty-sixth state from the two territories. Dinwiddie, as League agent, composed an amendment to the Enabling Act to prohibit the "manufacture, sale, barter, giving away, or otherwise furnishing. . . of intoxicating liquors" in the regions designated as the Indian Territory and the Osage Reservation for twenty-one years following statehood.⁸² A 1905 edition of the *Muskogee Democrat* attests to the influence of the League in this way, "There is no doubt but that the organized efforts of the Anti-Saloon people was (sic) responsible for the Gallinger amendment (calling for prohibition for the proposed state for twenty-one years) being inserted into the statehood bill. . . ."⁸³ Two years later supporters

⁸¹ *Daily Oklahoman*, 25 November 1904; Burgess, Larry E., *The Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian, Guide to the Annual Reports* (New York: Clearwater Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), 82.

⁸² *Daily Oklahoman*, 17 November, 1907; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, April 1915; January 1916; *Enabling Act*, McRill file, Frederick S. Barde Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society (hereafter cited as Barde Collection), 3.

⁸³ *Muskogee Democrat*, 28 March 1905.

of prohibition at the Oklahoma constitutional convention, such as Charles N. Haskell, based their argument for complete prohibition on the fact that Congress, by adopting Dinwiddie's amendment to the Enabling Act, had already banned liquor from the eastern portion of the new state for more than two decades. Haskell held that Oklahoma's laws should be uniform throughout the state and so pressed for statewide prohibition.⁸⁴ The prohibition clause of the Enabling Act, then, was not entirely the result of traditional Indian policy. . . . Certainly there was precedent for the liquor ban, though the census of 1900 made clear that the Indian population in Oklahoma, as elsewhere in the nation, was declining rapidly. Whatever perceived threat American Indians had posed to white society to justify the liquor ban also had declined. Prohibition became a part of the Enabling Act due to extensive lobbying activity by dry organizations in the territory and in Washington. The Anti-Saloon League had considerable influence in the creation of Oklahoma prohibition more than two years before statehood.

Following Congressional passage of the Enabling Act, League operatives in Oklahoma continued to work methodically toward prohibition. At the 1905 Sequoyah Convention held in Muskogee to consider separate statehood for the Indian Territory, delegates named as chairman of the prohibition committee Captain A. S. McKennon. In addition to his other prominent posts, he became Vice-President of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League in 1907. The 1905 convention's report went beyond the provisions of the Enabling Act and called for perpetual prohibition in the proposed state of Sequoyah. Though Congress rejected the idea of a separate state in the eastern territory, this convention's unanimous support for prohibition furthered dry sentiment at the subsequent constitutional convention in Guthrie in late 1906 and early 1907.

Indian leaders joined in lobbying the federal government to ban liquor in the new state. Chief Pleasant Porter, of the Creek Nation, spoke before

⁸⁴ *Daily Oklahoman*, 17 November, 1907; Paul Nesbitt, ed., "Governor Haskell Tells of Two Conventions," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 14:2 (June 1936): 215.

Congress late in 1905. He expressed the dismay of many Indians at the decision to extinguish the tribal governments:

Now, with that experience graven deeply in our hearts of our children, we feel that we must remind the Government of its obligations to us. If a new state is to be, if we are to be required to sacrifice our tribal governments, the White Father must remember our sixteen thousand dead and our travail, and his promises to us.

One of those promises you are now about to break; you cannot avoid it. We are asked to give up our right to govern ourselves.

But we do not submit to the breaking of the other promises, to a change that would fill our country with saloons, that would poison the bodies of our people and demoralize their souls with the white man's liquor.

The United States Government, as it gives us statehood, must also give us a guarantee that this thing shall not happen to us.

Will you do it? I believe you will.⁸⁵

Porter seems willing to surrender governmental authority if the federal government continued to protect the Indians from liquor. That not all Indians shared his concern over liquor is evident from an editorial by a full blood Creek Indian named Little Frog published in the Muskogee Times-Democrat in 1906. Writing on the decision to merge the two territories into one, contrary to the wishes of many Native Americans, Little Frog states, "He (Democratic speakers) say Publican broke all Injun treaties, wouldn't let him have the statehood what he wanted, but give him Oklahoma, and then refuse to give 'em Oklahoma whiskey."⁸⁶ In the eyes of this speaker, the liquor ban, rather than benefiting the Indians, merely represented another way in which the federal government acted against the wishes of the Indian.

Whites living in the two territories began to pressure Congress for single statehood soon after passage of the Enabling Act. Several in this group sought prohibition for the new state and were concerned that Congress might act to hinder their cause. Drys sent Reverend J. J. Thomson and Reverend E. M. Sweet, superintendents of the Oklahoma and Indian Territory leagues

⁸⁵ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 9-10.

⁸⁶ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 20 August 1906.

respectively, and Reverend Thomas H. Harper, future treasurer of the Oklahoma League. They secured a hearing before the House committee on territories through Thomson's close friendships with two members of the committee. By this hearing they prevented any congressional declarations against prohibition.⁸⁷ The Anti-Saloon League, both in the territories and at the national level, had worked hard to lay the groundwork for statewide prohibition long before supporters of statehood scheduled a constitutional convention for 20 November 1906 in Guthrie.

The ministers in the League did not rest as the convention drew near. In keeping with the nonpartisan approach of the Anti-Saloon League of America, they actively campaigned for dry supporters from either party as delegates to the constitutional convention. The national League sent its legislative superintendent, Reverend Edwin C. Dinwiddie, to Oklahoma to lead the campaign for dry statehood. He was familiar with the Oklahoma situation, having directed efforts to convince Congress to include a prohibition clause in the Enabling Act in 1905. Under his guidance, and that of men like Reverend E. M. Sweet, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League organized dries at the county and city level. The League sent circulars to all supposed prohibition supporters urging them to vote for dry convention delegates. By September 1906 the League had organized local Anti-Saloon Leagues in each Oklahoma County save Caddo, Dewey, and Washita counties. Each of these elected a vice president in charge of information and agitation---circulating literature and ensuring that League opinions were published in local newspapers; a vice president in charge of legislative matters---meeting with and advising city and county officials; and a vice president in charge of finances---soliciting funds for League work from churches and civic groups.⁸⁸ The Oklahoma WCTU also made its presence felt before the constitutional convention. Oklahoma Territory

⁸⁷ *Daily Oklahoman*, 17 November, 1907; Nesbitt, "Governor Haskell Tells of Two Conventions," 202. Thomson had become acquainted with the committee members while working for the League in Ohio.

⁸⁸ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 8 September 1906.

WCTU president, Abbie Hillerman of Cushing organized local chapters in each county of the territory. These pressured men to elect local officers and convention delegates sympathetic to the dry cause.⁸⁹

The Anti-Saloon League also continued to address existing conditions in Oklahoma Territory as the convention approached. As mentioned, one hundred towns in the territory had voted themselves dry by the end of 1906. In others, League operatives met with elected officials and the public to prevent the annual renewal of liquor licenses. By this means, they reduced or even eliminated the legal sources of liquor in numerous communities. In Anadarko, the League convinced the city council to raise the liquor license from \$300 to \$500, discouraging liquor men from maintaining a saloon there.⁹⁰ Drys were gaining considerable political might at the local level as statehood neared.

The success drys enjoyed at the local level did not extend to the constitutional convention initially. Either the wets eclipsed their efforts, or the League's campaigning turned off voters for most delegates elected to the convention opposed prohibition. Opponents of prohibition in the territories had formed several organizations before statehood that were active during the constitutional convention. The German-American Association of Oklahoma Territory, as early as 1897, had denounced a liquor ban as an affront to personal liberty. While devout in its opposition to prohibition, the association represented a relatively small portion of Oklahoma voters. Its 1897 convention drew fifty delegates from nine counties in the north central and central regions of the future state, and the area's German population remained

⁸⁹ *Shawnee Herald*, 1 July 1906.

⁹⁰ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 8 September 1906.

concentrated in these counties after statehood.⁹¹ In 1904, the Oklahoma Liquor Men's Association formed to combat efforts at prohibition. The Citizens League had formed also by the start of the constitutional convention. This small group of businessmen and professionals was critical of the saloon, but supportive of a system of high licenses and local option as the best means of controlling the nonrespectable liquor industry. They argued that a complete ban of liquor would reduce tax revenues significantly, discourage business investment in Oklahoma, and create a high disrespect for all law.⁹² Ledru Guthrie actively lobbied the state constitutional convention on behalf of the Citizens League, but ultimately managed only to require a referendum on any prohibition clause formed at the convention.⁹³

As the convention opened, with a seemingly wet majority in attendance, dry supporters gained some measure of comfort in the selection of William H. Murray and Charles N. Haskell, two dry delegates, as convention president and floor chairman respectively. These two men wielded considerable power in the convention, particularly Haskell as he influenced the drawing of county lines and the selection of county seats. In so doing, he gained the personal allegiance of many local factions. He drew upon this loyalty to aid in bringing about statewide prohibition. When the Anti-Saloon League's Dinwiddie and Sweet sought to settle for prohibition in the east and local option in the west, Haskell assured them he could achieve a liquor ban throughout the new state. The League had established headquarters in Guthrie during the convention and was peppering delegates to support dry measures. Haskell approached Dinwiddie and Sweet concerning the selection of members to the convention's

⁹¹ *El Reno News*, 6 August 1897. The counties that sent delegates were Canadian, Kingfisher, Kay, Blaine, Oklahoma, Garfield, Cleveland, Noble, and Logan. Jimmie Lewis Franklin, in *Born Sober*, asserts that the association formed in 1904, citing an article in *Daily Oklahoman*, 4 April 1907. It is possible the association reorganized itself in that year or that the *Oklahoman* article listed the year incorrectly. The association seems to have been quite small before 1904 as no mention of it was found in the newspapers other than the 1897 listing.

⁹² Franklin, *Born Sober*, 15, 18, 20.

⁹³ *Checotah Enquirer*, 9 August 1907.

Committee on Liquor Traffic. The committee he formed was identical to the list of names Dinwiddie and Sweet had provided.⁹⁴

Once the Committee on Liquor Traffic was set, the Anti-Saloon League, the WCTU, and other dries demonstrated organizational skills far superior to those of their opponents. Through December 1906 and January 1907, while the committee deliberated on the issue of liquor, dries inundated the convention and the liquor committee with petitions calling for statewide prohibition. They recruited, circulated, and submitted one hundred and six petitions for prohibition from seventy-six different communities scattered across the two territories. Some petitions contained more than one thousand signatures. During the same two-month period, the convention heard only four petitions favoring local option. Many of the petitions expressed the religious nature of the anti-liquor forces by explicitly stating that the signers were praying for prohibition. Of special note are a petition signed by 1,350 women from around Oklahoma; petitions from school children at Wakita, Cameron, Poteau, and Falls Sunday School; a petition from sixty-five Kiowa Indians at Mt. Scott; a petitions from the Preachers Association of Tulsa; a petition from 2,390 "young people" of Oklahoma; and a petition from students at Northwestern Normal School in Alva. All called or prayed for statewide prohibition. The Anti-Saloon League was active in the petitioning process. Reverend D. W. Keller, active in the Anti-Saloon League, and Reverend D. G. Murray, later a trustee in the League, requested that convention President William Murray present two of these petitions. Each of these petitions was read before the entire convention and then referred to the Committee on Liquor Traffic.⁹⁵

The one hundred and six petitions for prohibition, if compared to the four petitions for local option, do not provide an accurate measure of liquor

⁹⁴ Paul Nesbitt, ed., "Governor Haskell Tells of Two Conventions," 215.

⁹⁵ *Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of the Proposed State of Oklahoma, Held at Guthrie, Oklahoma, November 20, 1906 to November 16, 1907*, (Muskogee, OK: Muskogee Printing Co., n.d.), 59-200. In tallying the petitions for and against statewide prohibition, I did not consider the several petitions that failed to specify a stance, pro or con. These were described as relating to the liquor question.

sentiment in the territories. The subsequent referendum on prohibition--- 130,361 dry votes to 112,258 wet votes---indicates a much closer split over the liquor question. The imbalance in petitions more accurately reflects the superior organization of the dry forces in Oklahoma. At the local and county level and at the convention, drys created a network to pressure the convention, and the liquor committee specifically, to make prohibition a part of the proposed state constitution. Due to the lobbying of the League and the Oklahoma WCTU, and the efforts of Haskell and Murray, statewide prohibition became a tentative part of the Oklahoma Constitution, contingent on a popular vote on the measure in September 1907. Oklahomans were to vote on a state constitution at that time, but prohibition was not tied to it. Voters could adopt the constitution while rejecting the prohibition clause.⁹⁶ Writing prohibition into the constitution, however, would not stop the liquor traffic. Elected and appointed public officers bore the responsibility for prohibition enforcement. Residents of Indian Territory had experienced some of the problems associated with liquor enforcement. Before discussing dry Oklahoma statehood, let us first look at the enforcement of prohibition in Indian Territory before statehood.

Indian Territory had been under a federal liquor prohibition law before statehood. The Indian Territory Church Federation for Prohibition Statehood, in addition to its work toward dry statehood, called for strict enforcement of the existing federal liquor ban until statehood arrived. Abuse of this prohibition law was widespread among the growing white population of the urban areas and among the Indian populations as well. The official enforcement of federal prohibition in Indian Territory in the late nineteenth century was spotty at best. The tribal governments of the Five Tribes prohibited the sale and use of liquor. However, as the extensive legal systems

⁹⁶ *Daily Oklahoman*, 17 November, 1907; Nesbitt, "Governor Haskell Tells of Two Conventions," 214.

established by the Five Tribes applied to tribal members only, whites moved into the region and sold liquor to other whites and Indians alike with near impunity. In 1889 Indian Territory passed under the supervision of United States marshals, but, as very few were stationed in the region, enforcement of laws concerning liquor was quite lax. The fine for intoxication was \$1 or approximately a day's wages, while the penalty for "introducing" liquor into the territory was fine of \$25 and a jail term of thirty days. As word of the enforcement situation in Indian Territory spread, outlaws and desperadoes from neighboring states flocked into the region. Jesse and Frank James resided in the southeastern portion of the territory; Belle Starr toured the region selling whiskey and stealing horses; and the Doolin-Dalton gang used the town of Ingals, just outside Indian Territory, as a base from which to launch raids on banks and trains. Many less famous outlaws also moved into the area. Given these conditions, federal marshals and town sheriffs generally tolerated the presence of liquor establishments unless they aroused the ire of the local community as centers or violent crime.

The federal liquor ban in Indian Territory spurred the growth of numerous saloons in those regions of wet Oklahoma Territory closest to the dry regions. In this way, communities sprang up based primarily on the sale of liquor to thirsty residents of Indian Territory, both Indian and nonIndian. Blake Gumprecht notes that, before statehood, the liquor industry thrived in those parts of Oklahoma Territory bordering Indian Territory where liquor was illegal. A series of whiskey towns, with economies based primarily on establishments like the Old Corner Saloon, sprang up in these border areas shortly after the federal government organized Oklahoma Territory in 1889.⁹⁷ These included, among others, Lexington in Cleveland County (just north of the Chickasaw Nation); Corner, Keokuk Falls and Violet Springs in Pottawatomie County (immediately west of the Seminole Nation and North of

⁹⁷ Gumprecht, "A Saloon on Every Corner," 146-173.

the Chickasaw Nation); Prague and Stroud in Lincoln County (west of the Creek Nation); and Cleveland, Pawnee, and Keystone in Pawnee County (between the Creek nation and the Osage Reservation). Liquor was so vital a part of the Keokuk Falls economy that in 1899 the town trustees agreed to wave all taxes and fees for a distillery that located there. Prague, with a population approximating one thousand residents until the 1920s, sported thirteen saloons before statehood.⁹⁸ As in saloons elsewhere in the West and South, violence was a standard feature of these whiskey towns. Violet Springs experienced twenty-five murders during its short existence, and Corner witnessed fifty.⁹⁹ These were the type of businesses that the Anti-Saloon League, WCTU, and other drys sought to remove from Oklahoma society.

In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt, aware of the grave situation in the territories, gave William E. Johnson a \$2,500 yearly commission plus expenses as "Special Officer for the Suppression of the Liquor Traffic in Indian Territory."¹⁰⁰ Johnson, a member of the Anti-Saloon League of America and a former operative of the Prohibition Party, carried out his mission with gusto. Acquiring the nickname "Pussyfoot" for his ability to enter towns and liquor establishments unnoticed, Johnson smashed the furnishings of saloons, joints, and gambling halls (also illegal) throughout the territory. The liquor he found he dumped into the streets or nearby streams. One such raid led to the spectacle of thirsty patrons from a victimized saloon scooping the spilt liquor from the streets with their hands.¹⁰¹ Johnson quickly gained notoriety in the region.

Soon after his arrival in Indian Territory in August 1906, Johnson raided Tulsa's illegal saloons and, with the help of a dozen local deputy sheriffs, arrested eight men. He next raided the joints in the railroad towns of

⁹⁸ William Ray Tower, "A General History of the Town of Prague, Oklahoma, 1902-1948" (M.A. thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1948), 1.

⁹⁹ Gumprecht, "A Saloon on Every Corner," 153-154.

¹⁰⁰ Frederick A. McKenzie, *"Pussyfoot" Johnson: Crusader---Reformer---A Man Among Men* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920), 67.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

Eufala and South McAlester, dumping two thousand gallons of whiskey at the latter site.¹⁰² He dumped one hundred gallons of spiked cider at the McKee post office.¹⁰³ Johnson and his men destroyed gambling paraphernalia and liquor at Collinsville, Mounds, Tullahasee, Red Fork, and Sapulpa. In a later raid in Tulsa, the officers dumped 25,000 bottles of liquor into the Arkansas River.¹⁰⁴ Over the next year, Johnson became well known throughout the territory. He and his deputies conducted raids in Ada, Ardmore, Chickasha, Durant, Okmulgee, and smaller communities. They raided the joints of Tulsa, Muskogee, and McAlester on numerous occasions, demonstrating their determination to stamp out the liquor industry and, inadvertently, the resiliency of that industry. Johnson was not content to fight the liquor traffic in the streets. During his fourteen months in the territories, Johnson handled over six thousand cases in court, most involving liquor. He achieved a ninety-five per cent conviction rate in those cases he brought to trial.¹⁰⁵

While Indian Territory remained the focus of Johnson's attention while he was in the area, he did not limit his activities to the eastern territory. The federal law forbidding the sale or giving away of liquor to Indians applied not only to the entire Indian Territory, but also to individual Indians elsewhere, and Pussyfoot's mandate was to end the liquor trade among all Indians in the United States. Sizable populations of Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache Indians, as well as numerous smaller tribes, resided in Oklahoma Territory. Despite the federal law against it, liquor found these Indians also. In March 1907, Johnson traveled to Oklahoma City to inspect conditions there. He arrested thirty-six of the city's saloon keepers for introducing whiskey to a Native American patron.¹⁰⁶ For whatever reason, this seems to have been Johnson's only significant foray into the western territory.

¹⁰² Ibid., 68-70.

¹⁰³ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 7 November 1906.

¹⁰⁴ McKenzie, "Pussyfoot" Johnson, 95-96, 98.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 82.

¹⁰⁶ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 25 March 1907.

Johnson enlisted the aid of federal officers already stationed in the area, such as United States Marshal Bud Ledbetter, a large man known as a fighter and suspected of having killed eighteen men in gun battles.¹⁰⁷ Ledbetter, stationed in Muskogee before statehood, intercepted several shipments of liquor at the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad yard, which local citizens had ordered from Kansas City and St. Louis liquor distributors. Just prior to Christmas 1905 he arrested several prominent Muskogee businessmen when they picked up their holiday spirits at the depot. Still, Muskogee's liquor industry remained vibrant. When Johnson arrived in the area, raids at train yards increased and the amount of liquor coming into Indian Territory evidently declined. In December 1906 Johnson destroyed 1,920 bottles of alleged temperance drinks at the Ardmore express office. He next moved into the Choctaw Nation and smashed twenty-three separate consignments of liquor shipped to the Durant railroad yard from Texas distilleries and breweries.¹⁰⁸

In addition to Ledbetter, Johnson received assistance from Grant Cowen, Bass Reeves, Sam Cone, Frank West, and Sam Roberts, among others. He also enlisted the thirty-three Indian police scattered around the territory. These men were engaged in a dangerous profession. During the course of his stay in Indian Territory, outlaws killed eight of his fellow enforcement officers, and reportedly placed a \$3,000 bounty on Johnson's head. Two outlaws known in the region, Eugene and Ben Titsworth, were tried in court for offering this reward, but juries failed to convict either man despite testimony from other outlaws that the Titsworth had offered the bounty.¹⁰⁹

His actions encouraged other enforcement officials to take a harder stand against the bootleggers and blind tigers. Early in 1907, a grand jury began an investigation of liquor selling and gambling in Chickasha, near the

¹⁰⁷ McKenzie, "Pussyfoot" Johnson, 81-82.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 85-86.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 82, 88, 91-92; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 15 September 1906.

western edge of the Chickasaw Nation.¹¹⁰ For a time prohibitionists became hopeful that the territories might be cleaned up permanently. Before long, however, local enforcement campaigns lost momentum; liquor joints reopened in the larger towns such as Muskogee, Tulsa, and McAlester. Alcohol also remained available to many people in small towns and villages such as Kiefer, Drumright, Checotah, and Coalgate.

To enforce the liquor ban, authorities first had to define liquor---to determine the amount of alcohol a beverage must contain for officials to declare it intoxicating and thus illegal. Many people at the time did not consider beer or wine to be intoxicants, as most people did not become noticeably drunk unless they consumed generous amounts of these liquids. Indian Territory stores, saloons, hotels, and restaurants regularly sold near beers (Choctaw, Uno, Ino, Tintop, Hiawatha, Pablo, Long Horn, Short Horn) under the assumption that they were not intoxicating---they contained three percent alcohol by content.

In August 1906, federal judge William R. Lawrence, in Muskogee, ruled that any beverage containing two percent alcohol or more was liquor and thus illegal in Indian Territory, and special agent Johnson added the Uno and Choctaw joints to his schedule of liquor raids. Local authorities did not have the facilities to conduct an immediate chemical analysis of beverages served at suspicious establishments. A South McAlester proprietor of one such business claimed, when authorities raided his place, that the cider he served did not inebriate his customers. The marshal leading the raid determined that the cider was intoxicating by serving it to five farmers who had gathered to watch the raid. After consuming the cider, these five began to stagger about in a drunken fashion, and the marshal arrested the owner of the business.¹¹¹ While the federal officers raided several Uno and Choctaw establishments and seized numerous shipments of these products, they enjoyed only limited success in

¹¹⁰ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 12 January 1907.

¹¹¹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 2 August, 27 February 1906.

stamping out this trade. As of May 1907, more than eight months after Judge Lawrence had ruled that Uno was an intoxicating drink, the city of Muskogee continued to order the nine joints serving Uno and Mistletoe (another low-alcohol drink) within city limits to pay a twenty-five-dollar monthly license for permission to operate.¹¹² In September of that year, Lawrence refused Uno joint owner Joe Lightle the injunction he sought to block Johnson from raiding establishments that served Uno and other near beers. Emboldened by this decision, Johnson went after the near beer joints in Muskogee, Tulsa, and in smaller towns such as Coweta, Broken Arrow, Red Fork, Porter, and Clarksville.¹¹³

Johnson did not limit his activities to the area retail liquor industry. In September 1907, he arrested Sam DePriest in the Cherokee Hills near Melvin for keeping liquor distilling equipment at his home. The newspaper report of this event indicated that several stills operated in the hills, producing liquor that was sold in Ft. Gibson.¹¹⁴ In addition to raiding the Durant railroad yards for liquor entering the territory from neighboring states, Johnson crossed the Red River to speak with the brewers of northeast Texas. He informed them that he was aware they were selling beer in Indian Territory in violation of federal law and ordered them to discontinue such sales.¹¹⁵ Pussyfoot Johnson, then, attacked the illegal liquor industry from a variety of angles. The attention given him in the regional press indicates that his enforcement efforts exceeded those by the federal officers previously stationed in the territory. Despite McKenzie's glowing account of his campaign in the region, however, liquor remained available to those who sought it.

The methods that Johnson and other officers utilized created some angry reactions from the residents of the territories, and enforcement officers did not proceed unimpeded. In 1906 a resident of the mining

¹¹² *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 16 May 1907.

¹¹³ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 14, 24 September 1907.

¹¹⁴ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 5 September 1907.

¹¹⁵ McKenzie, "Pussyfoot" Johnson, 86.

community of Coalgate protested in the Muskogee newspaper that the liquor laws were enforced by “carpetbaggers” who possessed a “nonsensical disregard of common sense and decency. The homes of private citizens were entered and in some instances the lonely quart which was intended only as a remedy for the sick wife or aged parents, was ruthlessly confiscated.”¹¹⁶ At times, these protests became violent. Liquor men killed several of Johnson’s men in the line of duty and sought to have Johnson killed. The wife of a joint operator in Eufala hit Johnson with a beer bottle during a raid. Johnson was attacked at Chelsea while conducting a raid there.¹¹⁷

Johnson also encountered difficulties in the courts. In February 1907 the United States circuit court of appeals overturned the conviction of L. L. Ellis for introducing liquor to Indians. Federal authorities had arrested him when they found liquor in his house, but the court ruled that this did not constitute introduction of liquor. Rather, it determined that the perpetrator must be caught with liquor on his or her person or in a mode of transportation. As a result, authorities had to dismiss many of the cases pending against those accused of introducing.¹¹⁸ This limitation plagued enforcement officers only for the remainder of that year as the people of Indian Territory came under the jurisdiction of the Oklahoma legal system, which included statewide prohibition, in November 1907.

Some local officials also worked against Johnson and his ‘Booze Sleuths.’ In October 1907 Johnson and seven of his deputies conducted raids on the near beer joints in Muskogee despite testimonies from the owners of these establishments that their product was nonalcoholic. They began at the Mistletoe, owned by Joe Lightle, one of the more prominent joint operators in Muskogee. The day of the raid, word spread that the federal officers were coming, and the proprietors of several joints gave away near beer to the

¹¹⁶ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 9 October 1906.

¹¹⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 24 May, 30 September 1907.

¹¹⁸ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 4 February 1907.

crowded onlookers until Johnson and his men reached their establishments. The Muskogee police accepted the word of the joint operators that their drinks were nonalcoholic and arrested the federal officers for disturbing the peace and malicious destruction of property. Johnson was forced to post a five hundred dollar bond.¹¹⁹ Three days later, the Muskogee mayor discharged Johnson as all of the near beer had been dumped into the streets preventing a chemical analysis of the beverage that might have determined its alcohol content. Five days after the arrest in Muskogee, three of Johnson's deputies were arrested by the Tulsa police for conducting a raid on near beer joints in that city. Federal Judge William R. Lawrence put the matter to rest the following week when he ruled that Johnson and his men were under the jurisdiction of the federal courts only. All charges against them were dropped.¹²⁰ In the two largest communities in Indian Territory, then, elected officials chose to combat rather than cooperate with federal officials attempting to enforce strictly the region's liquor ban.

Lawrence's decision, while a reassertion of federal authority regarding the liquor issue, had a somewhat muted effect. Voters in the two territories had made prohibition a part of the new state constitution on 17 September 1907. The constitution, and prohibition, were to go into effect on November 16 of that year. At that point, the federal government surrendered responsibility for the liquor ban to the new new state government, or so most people in the region then believed. Johnson, a week after the fiasco in Tulsa and a month before Oklahoma statehood, returned to Washington, D. C. to discuss his future role with federal authorities. The *Muskogee Times-Democrat* stated that he would not return for some weeks. In fact, Johnson never returned to the region in the official capacity that he had enjoyed before statehood. He was given authority over all of the Indian reservations in the United States and his

¹¹⁹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 4 October 1907.

¹²⁰ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 7, 9, 12 October 1907. McKenzie, in his glowing biography of Johnson, mentions nothing of these events in Muskogee and Tulsa.

headquarters were moved from Muskogee to Salt Lake City, Utah. Johnson shifted his attention to liquor sales to Indians in California, New Mexico, and Idaho.¹²¹ Oklahoma had seen the last significant local activity by Pussyfoot Johnson.

The federal officers who had assisted Johnson, such as Bud Ledbetter and Sam Cone, continued to attack the illegal liquor industry in Indian Territory as October wore on. They arrested jointists and destroyed liquor in Glennpool, Bartlesville, Kiefer, Marlow, and Wewoka toward the end of the month. On the first of November, these federal marshals received word from Washington that, in lieu of the impending statehood date, they were to discontinue their raids. The *Muskogee Times-Democrat* noted that the liquor men were privy to this order and had announced that they would resume uninhibited liquor sales the following day.¹²² The jointists intended to test immediately the resolve of state and local enforcement officials regarding the new state liquor ban. The leaders of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and other drys also remained active. Men who recognized the importance of prohibition must be elected to office, and once elected, they must be reminded of its importance.

In the summer of 1907 the Anti-Saloon League of Oklahoma Territory and the Indian Territory Church Federation for Prohibition Statehood merged to become the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. Representatives at the meeting named Dinwiddie superintendent, while most of the remaining offices went to League supporters from the western territory. The new League immediately went to work for the nomination of dry candidates in the August primaries and for prohibition at the twin September referenda on the constitution and on prohibition. In May, John G. Woolley of Chicago, the Prohibition Party's candidate for United States president in 1900 and subsequently an operative of

¹²¹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 17 October 1907; McKenzie, "Pussyfoot" Johnson, 105-106.

¹²² *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 22 October, 1 November 1907.

the Anti-Saloon League of America, spoke at Muskogee's First Methodist Church as a part of temperance day activities in that city. R. N. Holsaple, Superintendent of the South Dakota Anti-Saloon League, spent a month in Oklahoma during 1907 campaigning (without compensation) for statewide prohibition. Area League leaders such as Reverend Dinwiddie, Horatio T. Laughbaum (attorney for the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League), Reverend Sweet, and Captain A. S. McKennon (former president of the Indian Territory Church Federation for Prohibition Statehood and later vice president of the Oklahoma League) also spoke in churches throughout the region.¹²³

League operatives also raised a sizable amount of money in Oklahoma churches. As was the case nationwide, the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregational churches of Oklahoma appear to have lent the greatest support to the anti-liquor campaign. The Anti-Saloon League of America also contributed a significant amount of money to the campaign. The *Shawnee Daily Herald* reported that Dinwiddie and the Oklahoma League had a million dollars at their disposal to finance the state prohibition campaign.¹²⁴ No other sources corroborate this figure. The *Daily Oklahoman* later reported that the Oklahoma League had taken in more than \$16,000 for its 1907 campaign, but remained \$6,000 in arrears a year and a half later. Other newspapers, including the League's own *American Issue*, substantiated the figure of indebtedness.¹²⁵ Whatever the exact figure, the League had access to a considerable sum of money to finance its Oklahoma operations in the summer of 1907. Democratic and Republican leaders agreed that Dinwiddie spent more money during the campaign than the two major parties combined.¹²⁶ It used this money to send anti-liquor literature to each county and to set up local press bureaus, which provided newspapers with dry material.

¹²³ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 18 May 1907; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, May 1916.

¹²⁴ *Shawnee Daily Herald*, 25 June 1907.

¹²⁵ *Daily Oklahoman*, 14 November 1908; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, 22 September, 1908; "Dr. Conger Tells of Liquor Strife," *Daily Oklahoman*, 5 December 1909, Prohibition Files, Barde Collection.

¹²⁶ *Daily Oklahoman*, 14 November 1908.

The Anti-Saloon League and other Oklahoma dries did not work unopposed in the months leading up to the prohibition referendum. The Citizens League, the German-American Association, and other groups campaigned against the liquor ban in the newspapers. The former spent freely on advertising, but many newspapers refused to run their ads.¹²⁷ These groups generally did not coordinate their efforts. Prohibition supporters, particularly the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, flooded the state with literature supporting a ban on liquor and charged that the Citizens League was merely a cover for the liquor interests in Oklahoma and neighboring states. Jimmie Lewis Franklin questions the prohibitionists' claim that the Citizens League was associated with the liquor interests. He describes this group as supporting temperance, though not complete prohibition.¹²⁸ The political impact of these charges likely was significant, particularly as the Citizens League produced no strong denial of the allegations at the time. It paid full advertising rates to place anti-prohibition literature in newspapers throughout the territories, suggesting considerable financial backing.¹²⁹ The *Muskogee Times-Democrat* reported that the liquor interests reportedly were spending \$300,000 to defeat prohibition in Oklahoma and that paid lobbyists were active in Guthrie during the constitutional convention.¹³⁰

In addition to their calls for prohibition, the Anti-Saloon League speakers paid particular attention to the Democratic nomination for governor as this office held considerable responsibility for enforcing state liquor laws. Due in part to League efforts, the very dry Haskell defeated the very popular Lee Cruce, a moderate on the liquor question, at the August Democratic Party primary. This was a significant victory, for most observers predicted that the

Democratic Party would dominate Oklahoma's first government and was likely¹²⁷ *Daily Oklahoman*, 17 November 1908, Prohibition Files, Barde Collection. Reverend J. J. Thomson, Superintendent of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League contributed this article to the *Oklahoman*.

¹²⁸ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 18, 20.

¹²⁹ *Daily Oklahoman*, 17 November 1907, prohibition files, Barde Collection.

¹³⁰ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 21 February 1907.

to capture the governor's office. Without pausing to relish this victory the League launched itself into a campaign in favor of the prohibition referendum to be decided at the September elections. As Reverend Thomson later reported,

Every county was organized and every city, village and rural community was reached by hosts of speakers and a flood of literature. Every county committee had its own list of speakers and the state office handled 40 other speakers who covered the whole state. About 10,000,000 pages of literature were printed and distributed by the local committees and by mail.¹³¹

Dry supporters, such as the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League operatives, then, did not leave the question of constitutional prohibition to chance. They actively campaigned for it. Drawing on their personal connections to the region's leading religious denominations, League speakers spread their anti-saloon message from church pulpits around the state. The role of the WCTU also should be noted. Local unions supported the efforts of the League and coordinated their own work with that of the ministers' organization. As women were not formally a part of the political process in Oklahoma until 1918, the unions accepted the League's leadership in this and other political campaigns on prohibition.

The League and the ministers reaped the benefits of their efforts when 53.7 percent of those voting on the prohibition question checked the affirmative box on 17 September 1907. The prohibition clause became a part of the state constitution. As noted earlier, the campaign strained the League's financial resources, and efforts to pay off this debt through contributions were not entirely successful. In September 1908 the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League still owed \$6,000 from the previous autumn campaign. By January 1909, it had whittled that figure to \$4,000 when Purley A. Baker paid another visit to Oklahoma and went on a brief speaking tour to raise \$3,000 for the

¹³¹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, January 1916; *Daily Oklahoman*, 17 November 1907.

League and reduce its debt to a manageable figure.¹³² The League brought the benefits of large-scale organization, fund-raising, and experience in state politics to the ministers of Oklahoma in their battles against the nonrespectable saloon. While the clergymen generally had opposed the liquor industry prior to the League's appearance, the Anti-Saloon League gave voice to their concerns, or, rather, placed a megaphone to their lips.

The prohibition vote was not uniform throughout the new state. Appendix A lists the results of the 1907 referendum broken down by county.¹³³ Of those voting on the question, 53.7 percent voted dry statewide. Calculation of the county figures determines the standard deviation from the state average of 53.7 percent to be 8.4. The vote in fifty-six of Oklahoma's seventy-five counties fell within the range of standard deviation. Of the remaining nineteen counties, eight reported significant opposition to prohibition while eleven reported significant support for the liquor ban. In Latimer County, in the southeastern portion of the new state, the vote ran more than two to one against prohibition. McIntosh County, in east central Oklahoma; Oklahoma County, dominated by Oklahoma City; and Coal County in the southeastern region of the state also reported results that were more than sixty percent wet. In five of the counties submitting significantly dry figures, more than seventy percent of voters chose prohibition.

The figures in Appendix A should be considered with some caution. As the final column indicates, voter participation varied widely throughout the state, from a high of 76.9 percent in Kingfisher County to a low of 42.2 percent in Cimarron County. Voter turnout was relatively high in most areas of the state, as sixteen counties saw participation by more than seventy percent of the adult male population and fifty-three counties reported voting figures in

¹³² Pamphlet distributed by the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, Prohibition Files, Barde Collection; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, 22 September, 1908; "Dr. Conger Tells of Liquor Strife," *Daily Oklahoman*, 5 December 1909, Prohibition Files, Barde Collection.

¹³³ Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League pamphlet, prohibition files, Barde Collection; Bureau of the Census, *Population of Oklahoma and Indian Territory, 1907*: 11.

excess of sixty percent of the voting population. In only two counties did less than half of the adult male population vote on the prohibition question.

The wide variation in voting results from one county to another suggests that Oklahomans differed regionally on the liquor issue. As Jimmie Lewis Franklin notes, pre-election concerns that Indian Territory residents would vote dry to "play a joke" on the western territory (the Enabling Act banned liquor in the eastern territory for twenty-one years after statehood regardless of the referendum) were unfounded as western counties gave the strongest support for prohibition.¹³⁴ National studies of prohibition published before the 1960s suggested that the liquor issue pitted dry rural areas against the wet cities, and the 1907 vote in Oklahoma appears to reinforce this.¹³⁵ Oklahoma County, the most urban county in the new state, voted very wet; the driest votes came from predominantly rural Jackson, Washita, and Beckham counties. The rural-urban dichotomy, however, does not explain the very wet votes in Coal, Latimer, and McIntosh counties---all of which were predominantly rural. The rural counties of Creek, Johnston, Logan, and Nowata returned more narrow majorities against prohibition. The wet sentiment expressed by voters in these counties suggests that factors independent of urbanity should be considered when studying Oklahomans' response to the issue of prohibition.

The prohibition clause that became part of the Oklahoma constitution was aimed at the liquor trade in the new state. Approved by the constitutional convention in April 1907 and adopted by referendum in September of that year, it states:

The manufacture, sale, or barter, giving away, or otherwise furnishing, except as hereafter provided, of intoxicating liquor within this State, or any part thereof, is prohibited for a period of twenty-one years from the date of the admission of this State into the Union, and thereafter until the people of the State shall

¹³⁴ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 21-22.

¹³⁵ See in particular Charles Merz, *The Dry Decade* and Andrew Sinclair, *Era of Excess: A Social History of the Prohibition Movement*, discussed in the first chapter.

otherwise provide by amendment of this Constitution and proper State legislation. Any person, individual or corporate, who shall manufacture, sell, barter, give away, or otherwise furnish any intoxicating liquor of any kind, including beer, ale, and wine, contrary to the provisions of this section, or who shall, within this State, advertise for sale or solicit the purchase of any such liquor, or who shall ship or in any way convey such liquors from one place within this State to another place therein, except the conveyance of a lawful purchase as herein authorized, shall be punished, on conviction thereof, by a fine not less than fifty dollars and by imprisonment not less than thirty days for each offense: Provided, that the Legislature may provide by law for one agency under the supervision of the State in each incorporated town of not less than two thousand population in the State; and if there be no incorporated town of two thousand population in any county in this State, such county shall be entitled to have one such agency, for the sale of such liquors for medicinal purposes; and for the sale for industrial purposes, of alcohol which shall have been denaturized by some process approved by the United States Commissioner of Internal Revenue; and for the sale of alcohol for scientific purposes to such scientific institutions, universities, and colleges as are authorized to procure the same free of tax under the laws of the United States; and for the sale of such liquors to any apothecary who shall have executed an approved bond, in a sum not less than one thousand dollars, conditioned that none of such liquors shall be used or disposed of, for any purpose other than in the compounding of prescriptions or other medicines, the sale of which would not subject him to the payment of the special tax required of liquor dealers by the United States, and the payment of such special tax by any person within the State shall constitute prima facie evidence of his intention to violate the provisions of this section. No sale shall be made except upon the sworn statement of the applicant in writing setting forth the purpose for which the liquor is to be used, and no sale shall be made for medicinal purpose except sales to apothecaries as herein above provided unless such statement shall be accompanied by a bona fide prescription signed by a regular practicing physician which prescription shall not be filled more than once. Each sale shall be duly registered, and the register thereof, together with the affidavits and prescription pertaining thereto, shall be open to inspection by any officer or citizen of the State at all times during business hours. Any person who shall knowingly make a false affidavit for the purpose aforesaid shall be deemed guilty of perjury. Any physician who shall prescribe any such liquor, except for treatment of disease which after his own personal diagnosis he shall deem to require such treatment, shall upon conviction thereof, be punished for each offense by fine of not less than two hundred dollars or by imprisonment for not less than thirty days, or by both such fine and imprisonment; and any person connected with any such agency who shall be convicted of making any sale or other disposition of liquor

contrary to these provisions shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one year and one day. Upon the admission of this State into the Union these provisions shall be immediately enforceable in the courts of the State: Provided, that there shall be submitted separately, at the same election at which this Constitution is submitted for ratification or rejection, and on the same ballot, the foregoing Article-----entitled "Prohibition," on which ballot shall be printed FOR STATEWIDE PROHIBITION and AGAINST STATEWIDE PROHIBITION: And provided further, That, if a majority of the votes cast for and against Statewide prohibition are for Statewide prohibition, then said Article-----shall be and form a part of this Constitution, and be in full force and effect as such, as provided therein; but, if a majority of said votes shall be against Statewide prohibition, then the provisions of said article shall not form a part of this Constitution and shall be null and void. I hereby certify that the above and foregoing provision and ordinance submitting the same separately to a vote of the people of the State as heretofore adopted on the 11th day of March, A. D. 1907, as above engrossed was adopted as engrossed, upon roll call for the purpose of such separate submission, on this the 22nd day of April, Anno Domini, 1907.

WM. H. MURRAY,
President,
The Constitutional Convention of
the proposed State of Oklahoma.

ATTEST:

JOHN McLAIN YOUNG,
Secretary.¹³⁶

The law made illegal the retail liquor business in the state, considered unrespectable in some communities before prohibition, but could not touch out-of-state purchases that might be shipped into Oklahoma via rail or road. Federal law placed such shipments under the purview of Congress alone. This traffic might have been addressed if the prohibition clause to the constitution, and the enforcement legislation adopted after statehood, had made possession of liquor an offense also. That it did not is a testament to the desire of Oklahoma's leading citizens to retain access to liquor for responsible imbibers such as themselves while they attacked the nonrespectable saloon.

The focus by prohibitionists on the retail liquor industry rather than the consumer was not unique to Oklahoma. The Maine prohibition law of 1851, the first such state law, banned the sale of liquor, but said nothing of simple

¹³⁶ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 13-15.

possession. It served as the model for prohibition laws in thirteen other states in the late nineteenth century.¹³⁷ Kansas, bordering the future state of Oklahoma to the north and thus influencing the Sooner state's stance toward liquor, adopted prohibition in 1881; the Kansas attorney general ruled that the law implementing constitutional prohibition banned the sale of liquor, but not its use.¹³⁸ The states that went dry after 1900, beginning with Georgia, Oklahoma and Alabama in 1907, also made no attempt to prohibit the possession or consumption of liquor. Given the precedent set in other states and the prominence of middle-class reformers in the Oklahoma prohibition campaign, the targeting of the liquor industry rather than the liquor consumer is not surprising.

Oklahoma officially was born dry, the only state to enter the union with a ban on liquor---but sober?---that was another matter. Drys who, in November 1907, clapped each other on the back at a job well done, came to find that liquor remained plentiful in the Sooner state despite prohibition and that the liquor ban was not politically secure. Wet organizations urged lawmakers to reconsider the liquor question and succeeded in placing prohibition before Oklahoma voters again in a 1910 referendum. The Anti-Saloon League and the WCTU remained active in the new state to address these problems.

¹³⁷ Clark, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 45.

¹³⁸ Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas*, 64.

CHAPTER 4

PAPER PROHIBITION

While Oklahoma, with great fanfare, entered the union as a dry state in 1907, liquor remained plentiful in the region thereafter. This chapter examines the changes in prohibition enforcement in Oklahoma between 1907 and 1920. The state expanded its liquor codes to clarify enforcement procedures and to address, with limited effect, the leaks that bootleggers repeatedly found in its enforcement net. The legislature initially set up a liquor dispensary system to provide alcohol for legitimate purposes, but discontinued it in 1911 due to its cost. Bootleggers continued to ship liquor into Oklahoma from other states. Local officials, caught between supporters and opponents of the liquor ban---drys and wets---often equivocated when enforcing the liquor ban. State authorities attempted to remove derelict officers, but met resistance from local populations. To stop the flow of liquor into Oklahoma from outside the state, the legislature adopted in 1917 a Bone-Dry Law, which made no exception for sacramental wine and so drew the Roman Catholic Church into the liquor fray. American entrance into the First World War allowed drys to portray liquor violators as a hindrance to the war effort and unpatriotic, but liquor remained available in the Sooner state throughout the war. When national prohibition took effect in 1920, state and local officials gladly surrendered to federal authorities primary responsibility for enforcing the liquor ban.

When Oklahomans adopted statewide prohibition in 1907, small businessmen, merchants, professionals, and others who obtained their liquor from outside the Sooner state initially felt little hindrance from the liquor

ban. Working-class men in Oklahoma also might order their liquor through the mails, though the transient nature of much of that work---particularly the construction of homes, rail lines, oil storage tanks, oil and gas pipe lines, and the seasonal agricultural work---as well as the considerable time demands of that work hindered their ability to order and receive liquor in this fashion. As Andrew Barr states regarding nineteenth-century prohibition efforts, "Obviously this loophole (allowing the importation of liquor into a dry state) much better suited those wealthy people who could afford to import wine from out of state in substantial quantity than poorer people who had become accustomed to buying their whiskey by the glassful or, at most, by the bottle."¹ Further, working-class men were drawn to the social setting of the saloon as an alternative to their small, rented rooms. Middle-class men joined professional or social clubs such as the Elks, the International Order of Odd Fellows, the Moose Lodge, or others. This option was not economically feasible for much of Oklahoma's working class. As historian Jon M. Kingsdale asserts and as early-twentieth-century sociologists recognized, the saloon served as the de facto working-class club.² Oklahoma prohibition made the saloon illegal, but it did not kill it.

The region's profitable liquor industry did not surrender with the adoption of prohibition. Bootleggers and blind pig operators, wise to the legal loopholes in prohibition, began shipping massive amounts of liquor into the state for sale to the working-class men who frequented the illegal saloons. Consequently, state and local authorities, prodded by dry advocates such as the Anti-Saloon League, searched for means by which the source of this illicit liquor might be choked off. Oklahoma's dry forces joined drys from around the nation to pressure Congress for legislation that would allow dry states to regulate or ban liquor shipped into their jurisdiction from out of state. They

¹ Andrew Barr, *Drink: A Social History of America* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1999), 177.

² Kingsdale, "The 'Poor Man's Club,'" 472-489.

accomplished this in 1913 with the adoption of the Webb-Kenyon Act. The Oklahoma legislature also took steps to improve the enforcement of prohibition. Once the United States Supreme Court declared the Webb-Kenyon Act constitutional in early 1917, the legislature passed a bone-dry liquor law, which banned all Oklahomans from receiving liquor directly or indirectly from common or other carriers. The only exceptions to this ban, which was intended to choke off the flow of liquor into Oklahoma from surrounding states, were alcohol purchased by doctors and pharmacists for medicinal purposes and denatured alcohol purchased for industrial uses.

Oklahoma became a dry state on 17 November 1907 and communities throughout the region held celebrations to mark statehood and prohibition. The retail liquor industry went through its death throws in the days before the seventeenth. Some saloon operators embraced the impending liquor ban by staging prohibition sales to liquidate their stock. Jimmie Lewis Franklin notes that an Oklahoma City saloon sold quarts of bourbon for a dollar and pints of Old Crow for fifty to sixty cents. The result was a drunken melee by the time all liquor establishments closed at midnight.³ Guthrie---the capital of Oklahoma Territory and of the new state of Oklahoma---experienced similar revelry in its various saloons. The Ferd Heim and the Pabst breweries dumped their excess beer into Guthrie's sewers.⁴ The New State Brewery Association did likewise in Oklahoma City. Its 75,000 gallons of beer proved too much for the city's sewer system and so the excess was piped into the city's gutters. As a newspaper noted, "Hence the street in the neighborhood of the brewery was the scene of a disgraceful scramble to keep the liquor from 'going to waste.' Buckets, barrels, vases, receptacles of all sorts, were utilized in carrying the beer away."⁵

Unplanned celebrations broke out in Oklahoma's smaller communities

³ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 24-25.

⁴ Dew, "Moral Reform for the 'Magic City'," 406-427.

⁵ *Eufala Indian Journal*, 7 February 1908.

also. In Cleveland, northwest of Tulsa, each of the eight local saloons conducted a rousing business on the sixteenth of November, selling between \$300 and \$1,100 worth of liquor. Their customers bought as much as ten quarts each and included people not known to have drunk in the past.⁶ In Okarche, northwest of Oklahoma City, local saloons conducted a "good business in the jug and bottle trade," and the Eischen Brothers, owners of the town's largest saloon, announced they would sell their considerable stock of liquor at wholesale prices.⁷ Oklahoma's saloon operators seemed resigned to the ensuing liquor ban; indeed, they emphasize it as a marketing device. The revelry in the saloon districts might be seen as indicative of the levity saloon operators held for the prohibition law.

Some in Oklahoma's liquor industry did take prohibition seriously and changed professions in November 1907. Okarche's Peter Eischen opened a pool hall---serving nonalcoholic drinks---in the building that had housed his saloon. He operated this until 1918 when he sold out to another man who operated a pool hall and barber shop there.⁸ Guthrie's Henry Braun, local representative of the Pabst Brewing Company, closed the breweries he managed for Gustav Pabst when prohibition went into effect. He redirected his attention to several Pabst ice plants in Oklahoma and later bought out Pabst's interest in these.⁹ Many Oklahomans got out of the retail liquor industry in November 1907. August Ille, a German immigrant, opened a saloon near Lawton in 1901. When prohibition came in 1907, he and his brother remodeled his establishment as Ille Brothers Hardware.¹⁰ Prague's thirteen saloons closed after prohibition; towns such as Keokuk Falls and Violet Springs, notorious as sources of liquor for the residents of nearby Indian

⁶ Gumprecht, "A Saloon on Every Corner," 146-173.

⁷ *Okarche Times*, 15 November 1907.

⁸ *Okarche Times*, 20 December 1907; 8 February 1918.

⁹ Henry Braun Papers, Vertical Files, Oklahoma Territorial Museum, Guthrie, Oklahoma.

¹⁰ *A Diamond Jubilee: History of Tillman County, 1901-1976, Vol. 1* (n.p.: Tillman County Historical Society, 1976), 345.

Territory, became little more than ghost towns shortly after statehood.¹¹

Despite these changes, liquor remained plentiful in the new state. Albert McRill, an Anti-Saloon League speaker who campaigned around the state in 1907 and again in 1910, asserted that the number of liquor sources in Oklahoma City increased tenfold following prohibition.¹² The city's saloon interests challenged the liquor ban in the courts. They appealed to the new state supreme court, sought an injunction against the law's enforcement until its constitutionality could be determined, and argued that the liquor permits they had purchased before statehood were legal contracts that could not be canceled until they expired. When these efforts failed, the city's saloon operators dumped 2,300 barrels of beer into the sewer. This did not end Oklahoma City's liquor industry. The following summer U.S. marshals seized 1,000 barrels of beer from the the city's Moss Brewing Company. Oklahoma City remained notorious for its available liquor, gambling, and prostitution. Attorney General Charles West, in 1908, described vice conditions in the city as worse than before prohibition.¹³ In the region around Shawnee, which had supported a vibrant saloon industry prior to statehood, liquor remained available after the implementation of the liquor ban. As a local history put it, "Statehood brought prohibition, but not for Pottawatomie County."¹⁴ Liquor violations in the area were sufficiently blatant that Governor Haskell sent Attorney General Charles West to investigate.

In the eastern side of the state, Muskogee officials accepted the presence of the illegal saloons and ordered them to pay a \$50 monthly license to the city. This practice continued as late as July 1909. City officials based this

practice on an 1898 law allowing the city to license taverns that sold

¹¹ Tower, "A General History of the Town of Prague, Oklahoma," 13; Gumprecht, "A Saloon on Every Corner," 165.

¹² McRill, *And Satan Came Also*, 140-141.

¹³ *Tupelo Times*, 28 November 1907; *Coalgate Courier*, 21 November 1907; *Muskogee Times Democrat*, 31 December 1907; 5 June 1908; McRill, *And Satan Came Also*, 119.

¹⁴ Fortson, *Pott Country and What Has Come of It*, 28.

nonintoxicating drinks.¹⁵ Tulsa, after statehood and prohibition, licensed its numerous saloons at \$100 per month, and Ardmore city commissioners looked into placing a \$500 annual tax on that city's near beer joints.¹⁶ The willingness of these cities to license establishments that violated the prohibition laws indicates that officials faced a daunting task---the availability of liquor so great that the local government sought to regulate rather than prohibit its sale.

Nor was this activity confined to Oklahoma's larger towns. Predominantly rural Coal County quickly gained notoriety among the new state's prohibition enforcement personnel as a region in which illegal liquor was freely available. *The Coalgate Courier* reported in 1907 that raids at Lehigh and Coalgate netted 1,000 gallons and 200 gallons of liquor respectively.¹⁷ Though the amount of liquor seized was less than that confiscated at larger raids in Tulsa or Oklahoma City, it is significant given the relatively slight populations of Lehigh and Coalgate, both of which fell under the federal liquor ban in pre-statehood Indian Territory. In Creek County, enforcement was so lax that State Enforcement Attorney Fred Caldwell personally investigated conditions there and prosecuted the county attorney for failing to enforce prohibition. He subsequently reported to Governor Charles Haskell, "Conditions in Creek County have, during my entire administration(1908-1910), been extremely bad, especially at Sapulpa and Kiefer."¹⁸ A resident of the small north-central town of Glencoe asserted that the state's small towns were havens for bootleggers as the local officials had

¹⁵ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 1 July 1909; 31 December 1907.

¹⁶ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 19 August 1909,

¹⁷ *Coalgate Courier*, 10 October 1907.

¹⁸ Fred S. Caldwell, Counsel to the Governor, "Report on Prohibition Investigation and Prosecution Covering Period December 1, 1908 to December 31, 1910," Governor's Papers, Governor Charles N. Haskell, 16 November 1907 to 9 January 1911, Box 11, File 13, Oklahoma Department of Libraries Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, OK. Caldwell was quite earnest in his job. As a former officer in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, his appointment in 1908 as state enforcement attorney met with strong League approval.

fewer enforcement resources than their urban counterparts.¹⁹ Caldwell admitted in 1908 that Oklahoma, in effect, contained wet and dry zones. The availability of liquor depended on the efforts by local officials to enforce prohibition and on the pressure these officials received from the local populace.²⁰

On 12 December 1907, Oklahoma's newly-elected first governor, Charles N. Haskell, sent his seventh special message to the legislature. Among other topics, Haskell expressed his firm commitment to constitutional prohibition and the pressing need for legislation to enforce the liquor ban. The liquor laws of Oklahoma Territory expired with that government and the federal liquor ban in Indian Territory also appeared to be superseded by the new state government. Many liquor retailers had made a big show of closing out their liquor stock by November 17, when prohibition went into effect. In the unsettled legal environment following the declaration of statehood, however, many liquor men had resumed sales. The authority of the federal marshals in the former Indian Territory was unclear following statehood and liquor sales seem to have increased. Muskogee County Attorney Crump vowed to drive the local jointists out of business, but admitted near the end of 1907 that he lacked sufficient enforcement power. He states publicly his desire for a law by which he could compel a person possessing liquor to testify as to the origins of that liquor.²¹

Crump and other county attorneys found little support for such broad measures. A majority of the voting public had supported prohibition at the polls, but considerable opposition arose when officers attempted to enforce the liquor ban. In Wetumka, the sheriff and deputies plied the intoxicated for

¹⁹ B.B. Ross to Lee Cruce, 14 January 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, 1911-1914, Box 10, File 4, Oklahoma Department of Libraries Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, OK.

²⁰ *Daily Oklahoman*, 31 December 1908.

²¹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 4, 28 December 1907.

information regarding illegal liquor sales. A newspaper account called into question their methods, stating, "when a man is found in an intoxicated condition some means are found to make him talk and tell where he got the cause of his trouble, and at once the guilty party is taken in hand. Some criticism has been made of the officers for their extreme activity in enforcing the prohibition law, but they are determined to give the people the real thing."²² Conscientious enforcement officers soon discovered that they were fighting a battle that could not be won unless the public agreed to expand greatly the police powers of state and local officials.

Early in 1908, Muskogee officials gave two bottles confiscated in a raid to the local high school science instructor to determine if the alcohol content of these beverages exceeded two percent. By this action, they ignored the ruling by federal judge Lawrence---issued sixteen months earlier---which had set the legal limit at one-half of one percent alcohol by content. The Muskogee officers, apparently believing that this recent federal ruling did not apply in the new state, reverted to an older legal definition of "intoxicating."²³ Other county officials made similar complaints to Governor Haskell, which he brought to the attention of the legislature in his December message: "County attorneys of many counties advise me of their inability to control what they say is a constantly growing violation of the prohibition law. That the condition in many localities is growing worse daily. Give us the needed legislation and we will enforce it."²⁴

The first legislature of the new state of Oklahoma tackled the thorny issue of enforcing the constitution's prohibition clause. This task was complicated by many Oklahomans' tendency to use alcohol as a medicine. In the nineteenth century, many Americans had believed that alcohol could cure or at least alleviate the symptoms of numerous ailments; and, though early

²² *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 14 December 1907.

²³ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 9 January 1908; *Lexington Leader*, 9 July 1909.

²⁴ Oklahoma, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Regular Session of the First Legislature of Oklahoma*, (Guthrie, OK: Leader Printing and Manufacturing House, 1908), 36, 37.

twentieth-century medical research labored to dispel the myths of alcohol's curative properties, the general public continued to purchase alcohol and substances containing alcohol as medicines. In similar fashion, many used the opiate laudinum as a curative. An effective prohibition enforcement statute in early Oklahoma, then, must include provisions by which alcohol might be sold as a medicine. The first state legislature went about drafting such a law when it met late in 1907.

Richard A. Billups, state senator representing Washita County and chairman of the Senate Prohibition Committee, introduced a bill in December that specified the penalties for violating the liquor ban and the exemptions from the ban---alcohol used for medical, scientific, and sacramental purposes. Reverend Edwin C. Dinwiddie, a veteran both of Anti-Saloon League's lobbying campaigns in Washington, D.C., and of its statewide prohibition campaign of the previous summer, wrote this legislation for Billups to present to the Oklahoma Senate. The Senate easily approved the measure, though a small minority of senators raised objections to it, and sent it to the House of Representatives for consideration. At the insistence of speaker William H. Murray, the house added an article calling for a state-operated dispensary.²⁵ This article provided a system by which Oklahomans might purchase as a medicine alcohol or products containing alcohol. Disagreement over the exact provisions of this dispensary held up the bill until after the new year. A committee of senators, house members, and Governor Charles Haskell met early in 1908 and drafted the final version of the bill. Governor Haskell signed it into law 24 March 1908. As the legislature attached an emergency clause to the law, it took effect immediately.

According to the final draft of the Billups Bill, as the enforcement legislation became known, persons seeking to purchase liquor (defined as any

²⁵ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 26-27. Franklin includes a good discussion of the senators' objections and the political maneuvering necessary before the bill became law. Murray modeled his proposed dispensary system after that of South Carolina created by Governor "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman.

substance containing one-half of one percent alcohol by content) from the dispensary would need to provide a sworn statement establishing the applicant's name and the purpose for which the liquor was to be used and a prescription signed by a licensed physician. Medicinal liquor would be made available to the public at a state-run agency in each town comprising at least two thousand residents. In those counties containing no towns of that size, the state liquor superintendent would select one community as the site of a dispensary so that all residents of the state would have access to liquor for medicinal use. The governor would appoint the state superintendent and all local dispensary officers.²⁶

The bill also provided the terms by which enforcement officers could collect evidence of violation and a range of punishments for those convicted of violating the new law. Judges of district or county courts could subpoena witnesses to testify against dependents and could issue search warrants allowing officers to enter the premises in question. Those who sold or provided liquor in violation of the ban could be convicted of a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of fifty to five hundred dollars and imprisonment for a term of thirty days to six months. Punishment differed for physicians who prescribed liquor for reasons other than medicinal and for local or state agents who sold liquor not provided by the state agency. The public consumption of alcohol combined with disturbance of the peace also became a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of ten to one hundred dollars and/or imprisonment for five to thirty days.²⁷

The Billups bill did little to reduce the confusion surrounding liquor prohibition in the Sooner state. While it defined the crime and the consequential punishment, the law remained vague regarding the methods by which officers could enter a private building in search of evidence or

²⁶ Oklahoma, *State of Oklahoma Session Laws of 1907-1908* (Guthrie, OK: Oklahoma Printing Co., 1908), 603, 599, 597. Newspapers referred to the law as the Billups bill, the Billups booze bill, or simply the Booze bill.

²⁷ Oklahoma, *State of Oklahoma Session Laws of 1907-1908*, 604, 605, 603, 608-609.

suspects. Officers were required to demonstrate probable cause to receive a search warrant, but these terms were left vague for judges to interpret. Search warrants were not to be issued for private residences unless these were used as a business or as a place of "public resort."²⁸ Members of the retail liquor industry were quick to criticize this portion of the law as unconstitutional and expressed confidence that the state courts would find accordingly. They did not have to wait long for an opportunity to test the liquor ban in the courts. In May 1908 Mrs. Mary Brown of Shawnee sued the Pottawatomie County sheriff for entering her home illegally and seizing a barrel of whiskey that presumedly was intended for personal use only.²⁹ In August, judges in Coalgate and Oklahoma City declared the search and seizure provisions of the prohibition law unconstitutional as they did not provide hearings or trials for the dependents, but merely allowed officers to confiscate the liquor.³⁰ By September 1908 enforcement personnel were anxious for the courts to rule on this. An Oklahoma City officer expressed concern that, "Oklahoma City is wide open and that nearly as much liquor is being consumed and (sic) in the days of free saloons."³¹

As Franklin states, the dispensary provisions of the bill also created some confusion. The act provided for a dispensary in each town registering a population of two thousand or more. Apparently to deflect criticism that the bill discriminated against rural citizens, the law allowed for the creation of a dispensary in each town of one thousand if the state population approved such an amendment by referendum at the 1908 general election. What ensued was a muddled campaign waged between dry proponents (including the Anti-Saloon League) in support of the dispensary and other dries (including initially some religious denominations that supported the League) in opposition to the dispensary. The latter believed the dispensary agency effectively nullified

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 606.

²⁹ *Lexington Leader*, 15 May 1908.

³⁰ *Eufala Indian Journal*, 21 August 1908.

³¹ *Lexington Leader*, 18 September 1908.

the prohibition law, while the former supported the agency as a necessary evil given the current beliefs regarding the curative powers of liquor. The wet organization the Sons of Washington opposed the dispensary system as hypocritical.³² Still others opposed the Billups bill due to its provision allowing the location of dispensaries in towns containing at least one thousand people. The Enabling Act had stipulated that dispensaries could be located in towns of two thousand people or more and the Oklahoma Constitution contained similar language. The dispensary provision of the Billups bill violated both the Enabling Act and the state constitution.

The final wording of the referendum created considerable confusion: it was presented as a question on the establishment of a dispensary agency and on whether the state should locate such dispensaries in towns of one thousand population or more. At the general election in November 1908, voters defeated the proposed amendment, 105,392 to 121,573. Governor Haskell took the vote as evidence that a majority of Oklahomans did not want the agency and closed all dispensaries throughout the state. The vote aside, Haskell may have based his decision on the infrequent use of the dispensaries by the public in 1908 and the cost of the agency to the public. Franklin notes that the more than fifty thousand people in Oklahoma City purchased a mere eight dollars of liquor from the dispensary there between May and August of 1908. Lawton residents purchased six dollars worth of liquor from the dispensary over the same period; those of Shawnee, just under ten dollars. Statewide, dispensaries took in \$3,811.88 from whiskey sales and \$1,000 from unspecified alcohol sales. The total cost of the dispensary system was \$25,051.95.³³

The existence of the dispensary system, and even the Billups bill that had brought it into creation, remained in doubt through the spring of 1909. Supporters of the agency, in reaction to Haskell's abolition of the agency, took

³² Franklin, *Born Sober*, 28-32.

³³ *Ibid.*, 34, 33. Franklin cites the Prohibition files of the Barde Collection at the Oklahoma Historical Society.

the issue to court, arguing that the referendum was confusing and that many voters believed they were voting against the establishment of additional dispensaries rather than the existence of the agency. On appeal, the state Supreme Court affirmed, in 1909, in *Robert Lozier v. Alexander Drug Company* that the Billups bill still held the force of law (and thus that the dispensary agency should remain in operation).³⁴ Scandal also damaged the integrity of the agency. In May 1908, less than two months after the agency system had begun operation, someone stole several wagon loads of liquor from the McAlester dispensary.³⁵ The agency's image was tarnished further when the state examiner reported irregularities in the financial record-keeping at the dispensaries. Haskell criticized the methods and financial record keeping of the agency's first state superintendent, Robert Lozier, though he saw no evidence of criminal wrong-doing. He replaced Lozier as superintendent of the dispensary agency with S.W. Stone in June 1909. The number of dispensaries remained low thereafter, never exceeding twenty. The state legislature closed the dispensary system in 1911.³⁶

Oklahoma's early liquor enforcement laws, then, were far from clear. The *Muskogee Times-Democrat* reported in March 1908 that the Billups bill made violation of the liquor laws a felony, though the bill explicitly states that violation constituted a misdemeanor.³⁷ Confusion over the future of the dispensaries and even the Billups bill (as well as providing enforcement powers for constitutional prohibition) might have contributed to the decision by several city governments to license saloons despite the liquor ban. Muskogee saloon keepers, following the 1908 election, claimed that the vote on the dispensary system demonstrated a majority of Oklahomans disapproved of prohibition. The following month, sixty-nine businesses were selling liquor

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

³⁵ *Lexington Leader*, 24 July 1908. The *Leader* reported that authorities in Tulsa had arrested George Mason for this crime.

³⁶ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 35.

³⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 21 March 1908.

in Muskogee.³⁸

Oklahoma encountered other problems in trying to enforce prohibition. Shortly after the dispensary system became operative in April 1908, Shawnee Democrats petitioned Haskell to remove O. C. Strode as local liquor enforcement agent because he was drinking (to obvious intoxication) bootleg liquor that local authorities had confiscated.³⁹ Shawnee's situation was not unique. Confiscated liquor disappeared on numerous occasions from officers in large and small communities around the state. In 1911, a complaint to Governor Lee Cruce indicated that Judge R. A. Keller and Deputy Sheriff J. Y. F. Blake had removed confiscated liquor from the Love County court house in Marietta and had drunk it with others.⁴⁰ The problem was so persistent that Senator Warren K. Snyder of Oklahoma City introduced a bill in 1919 that called for stiffened penalties against officials who gave away or sold confiscated liquor.⁴¹

In those areas where the officers on the streets enforced prohibition diligently, the courts quickly became backlogged with liquor violation cases and the costs of this enforcement began to grow. Late in 1908 the Muskogee court ruled that it would hold over until the next court term three hundred liquor cases. Defense lawyers saw this as, in effect, a dismissal of the charges as juries had voted to convict in only one of the six cases already tried and each of these cost the county fifty dollars.⁴² County Prosecutor W. J. Crump complained that he had achieved forty-three convictions in the fifty-four liquor cases he had tried during his thirteen months on the job, but each of these convictions had been appealed to higher courts and the dependents continued to sell liquor while awaiting the appellate decision.⁴³ The Oklahoma

³⁸ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 12 November 1908; 24 December 1908.

³⁹ *Enid Weekly Eagle*, 9 April 1908.

⁴⁰ W. F. Morton to Lee Cruce, 1 June 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, 1911-1914, Box 18, File 4.

⁴¹ *Harlow's Weekly*, 22 January 1919. The bill failed to become law.

⁴² *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 10 December 1908.

⁴³ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 15 December 1908.

criminal court of appeals became so inundated with liquor cases that it set aside a week in March of 1909 to hear liquor cases only.⁴⁴ Later that year, newspapers reported that the appeals court had heard twenty-three cases involving bootlegging. It affirmed seven of the convictions from lower courts, but overturned sixteen convictions.⁴⁵ Local and state court systems ground nearly to a halt in attempting to prosecute the varied liquor offenses. This backlog persisted. In 1911 the *Muskogee Times-Democrat* reported that the municipal police court had heard four thousand cases in 1910. Of this tally, nearly two thousand were for public drunkenness, an average of thirty-six such cases each week.⁴⁶

The cost of effective prohibition enforcement weighed heavily on the minds of many Oklahomans. An informal poll of county attorneys in 1909 indicated that most believed prohibition enforcement cost twice as much as the county collected in fines for liquor offenses.⁴⁷ Despite a strong tendency by judges and juries to exonerate liquor offenders, prohibition dramatically affected the state's prison population. The Oklahoma penitentiary at McAlester reported an inmate population of 531 during 1909. One hundred and thirty-seven of these prisoners were incarcerated on liquor offenses, easily the most common offense; larceny was the next most common conviction among the prisoners, responsible for the incarceration of eighty men.⁴⁸ Those Oklahomans who had opposed prohibition had predicted that it would make criminals of an otherwise law-abiding population. This report on the state's penitentiary population seems to confirm this prediction.

In the face of rising expenses, the legislature began to scale back its financial commitment to prohibition enforcement, effectively shifting responsibility from the state to local governments. Local police officers,

⁴⁴ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 5 March 1909.

⁴⁵ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 12 August 1909.

⁴⁶ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 13 January 1911.

⁴⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 13 September 1909.

⁴⁸ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 9 November 1909.

judges and county attorneys who diligently performed their duties found themselves spending a disproportionate amount of time on detecting, arresting, and prosecuting liquor offenders. The unwillingness of jurors in many areas to convict bootleggers meant that this expense often achieved nothing. Ignoring the limited financial resources of many Oklahoma communities, the state legislature severely limited funding for prohibition enforcement at the state level. It viewed the dispensary system as such a financial drain on state coffers that lawmakers discontinued it in 1911. Legislators also closed the prohibition enforcement office in 1911, thereafter allowing the governor to hire only one enforcement officer at state expense.

The legislature's aversion to an extensive state enforcement program stemmed both from two issues that stretched beyond the matter of liquor prohibition in Oklahoma: a desire to limit state expenses and a suspicion of gubernatorial power in Oklahoma. David R. Morgan, Robert E. England, and George G. Humphreys assert that early Oklahoma possessed an individualistic political culture that stressed reductions in taxes and government programs. This political culture originated in the old South and was transplanted in Oklahoma by the Democratic Party, which controlled the statehouse. They further note that early Oklahomans feared the concentration of political power in the hands of the governor and so severely limited his appointments--the state constitution made seventeen executive posts were elective.⁴⁹ This general suspicion of gubernatorial power must be considered when studying the Oklahoma legislature's decision to abolish the state dispensary system and prohibition enforcement office. Some governors experienced greater tension with the state legislature. Lee Cruce, governor from 1911 through 1914, stands out among early state executives for his difficulty with a legislature controlled by his own (Democratic) party.⁵⁰ The desire for smaller government and the suspicion of the governor's appointive power severely limited the ability of

⁴⁹ Morgan, England, and Humphreys, *Oklahoma Politics & Policies*, xxiv, 7, 16, 105.

⁵⁰ Fisher, ed., *Oklahoma's Governors, 1907-1929*, 7, 55, 58.

the state to enforce effectively the statewide liquor ban.

The shipment of liquor into Oklahoma from other states further complicated enforcement efforts. Sooner prohibition explicitly banned the sale, giving away or providing of liquor in the state (see chapter three). It did not address the issue of imported liquor. Such shipments constituted a form of interstate commerce and so were immune from state liquor bans. Federal circuit court judges Ralph E. Campbell and John H. Cotteral ruled that the state infringed on interstate traffic when seizing liquor shipped into Oklahoma while it remained in the possession of the shipper.⁵¹ Oklahoma bootleggers pounced on this loophole and began ordering massive quantities of out-of-state liquor that they then resold illegally. Some liquor men took prior orders from customers, purchased the liquor in other states, and delivered it to their customers.⁵² Drys and enforcement officers alike complained that these illegal sales might be stopped with relative ease if this flow of liquor could be dammed at the state's borders.

In March 1908, as the Billups bill was being completed and announced in the newspapers, Oklahoma Attorney General Charles West declared that interstate liquor legally could be taken from the railroad depot by the consignee to his or her residence. By this statement, liquor from outside the state kept its interstate designation (and exemption from Oklahoma liquor laws) until the person who had ordered it brought it to his or her home.⁵³ The federal courts agreed with West. State enforcement officer Fred Caldwell, also a trustee of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, argued in the federal appellate courts that the interstate shipment ended when the shipper released the

⁵¹ *United States Supreme Court Reports, Lawyers' Edition*, Vol. 55 (Rochester, NY: The Lawyers' Co-Operative Publishing Company, 1911), 431-437. The state of Oklahoma attempted to block these legal challenges to state enforcement through a writ of prohibition against such actions. The United States Supreme Court ruled in April 1911 that the state could not issue such a writ against the circuit courts and the challenges continued.

⁵² *Daily Oklahoman*, 15 April 1909.

⁵³ *Oklahoma City Times-Journal*, 29 March 1908.

liquor to the consignee. Receiving an unfavorable ruling there, he sought to bring the issue before the United States Supreme Court, but it refused to hear the case.⁵⁴ In January 1909 a Muskogee newspaper reported that the state supreme court had ruled that Oklahomans could ship as much liquor into the state as they wanted if it was for personal use only.⁵⁵ Such actions further hindered the enforcement efforts of officers seeking to prevent the resale of such liquor. Effective enforcement of prohibition would remain problematic unless Oklahoma judges began interpreting the powers of enforcement officers more broadly.

Oklahoma's liquor laws, almost from the outset, were murkier still in the eastern half of the state, in the lands of the former Indian Territory. In the Enabling Act of 1905, Congress had affirmed its role as guardian of the Indian populations of that region when it banned liquor from the area for twenty-one years following statehood. Was the state of Oklahoma bound to abide by this federal liquor ban? If so, was the federal government or state government responsible for its enforcement? In 1910, Attorney General West, mindful of the growing backlog of liquor cases in the Oklahoma court system and the mounting costs of enforcement, filed suit in federal court arguing that Congress retained authority over and responsibility for the prosecution of liquor cases in the former Indian Territory and Osage Reservation. Federal judge John Campbell, equally concerned about the growing number of liquor cases on the docket in his and other federal courts in Oklahoma, ruled that the former Indian Territory and Osage Reservation no longer were under federal law, and that state and local courts should handle the prosecution of the stubborn bootlegging industry.⁵⁶

This question remained unsettled until the summer of 1912 when the

⁵⁴ *Daily Oklahoman*, 15 April, 1909.

⁵⁵ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 14 January 1909.

⁵⁶ *Baptist Informer*, 26 May 1910; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 3 May 1912; *United States Supreme Court Reports, Lawyers' Edition*, 56, 1248-1261.

United States Supreme Court ruled that American Indians remained wards of the federal government and that its ban on liquor sales to Indians applied to everyone in eastern Oklahoma. The federal liquor ban was in effect still and the federal government was responsible for its enforcement. While the courts adjudicated this issue during the first years of Oklahoma statehood, the state's liquor men were quick to take advantage of the legal confusion. The final ruling in 1912 had a damaging effect on prosecutions in eastern Oklahoma. Many courts in the region invalidated all arrests conducted by state or local officials to date. Numerous cases, begun in municipal or county courts, were thrown out, and those who had been convicted in those courts were released from prison.⁵⁷

The Supreme Court, in continuing Congress's jurisdiction in the former Indian Territory and Osage Reservation, effectively defined shipment of liquor into these regions as the introduction of liquor to Indians---a violation of long-standing federal statutes. Thus, a double standard arose in Oklahoma as liquor shipments into former Oklahoma Territory remained legal under federal law and immune from state law as a form of interstate commerce, while liquor shipments into the former Indian Territory and Osage Reservation lands violated federal law. State and local authorities in the eastern region of the state surrendered primary responsibility for monitoring liquor shipments to the few federal marshals stationed there; liquor flowed freely in the region's largest cities, Tulsa and Muskogee, but also in rural areas such as the oil fields of Creek, Osage, and later Carter counties and in the mining districts of Coal, Latimer, and Ottawa counties.

Oklahoma drys turned hopefully to federal officers to stem the tide of liquor coming into the eastern region from beyond the state, but also from the former Oklahoma Territory lands of western Oklahoma. As liquor had been legal in Oklahoma Territory before statehood, established liquor transportation

⁵⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 10 June 1912.

routes had developed from the west to the east, and such towns as Keystone, Keokuk Falls, and Violet had based much of their economies on supplying liquor for thirsty residents of nearby Indian Territory. Bootleggers in the eastern region again began shipping large quantities of liquor from the west amidst the jurisdictional confusion of the early statehood years. In the Tulsa area, bootleggers shipped clear glass jugs of alcohol amidst jugs of nitroglycerin (used to blow open low production oil wells) to ward off enthusiastic enforcement officers. The 1912 supreme court ruling seemingly placed responsibility for stopping such shipments with federal officials, but in November 1912 the federal court in Muskogee ruled that liquor shipped from former Oklahoma Territory to former Indian Territory or Osage Reservation did not violate federal law unless prosecutors could prove that the liquor had originated from outside the current state of Oklahoma. As a consequence, three hundred indictments against Oklahoma bootleggers were thrown out.⁵⁸

The question of responsibility for liquor enforcement in eastern Oklahoma remained perplexing. In April 1913, a federal court of appeals in St. Louis ruled that liquor offenses in former Indian Territory committed on lands not owned by Indians should be prosecuted in state rather than federal courts. Federal officials ordered continuances in 115 cases resulting from federal indictments issued at Tulsa; authorities released liquor defendants on their own recognizance until their court date arrived. An article in a subsequent issue of the same newspaper reiterated the federal government's responsibility for liquor enforcement in former Indian Territory. It made no mention of the 115 defendants who had been released a few weeks earlier.⁵⁹ In 1914, the United States Supreme Court ruled that possession of liquor in former Indian Territory was not prima facie evidence (sufficiently compelling to shift the burden of proof from the prosecution to the defense) of intent to sell liquor. In reaction to this ruling, federal officials in Muskogee released from

⁵⁸ *Blackwell Times Record*, 7 November 1912; *Eufala Republican*, 15 November 1912.

⁵⁹ *Harlow's Weekly*, 26 April; 3 May 1913.

jail eighteen men accused of introducing liquor.⁶⁰ Such instances of confusion likely discouraged some enforcement officials; at any rate, many bootleggers returned to the streets to ply their trade.

Oklahoma prohibition pitted the state government against the federal government in other ways as well. In July 1908 special enforcement attorney Fred Caldwell sought to confiscate seven thousand dollars worth of beer from the Moss Brewing Company of Oklahoma City. The brewery argued that this beer possessed the federal liquor stamp sanctioning it for sale outside the state.⁶¹ Shipping companies found themselves in possession of illegal liquor because the consignee refused to step forward and pay for the contraband. The shippers sought relief in federal courts when state authorities attempted to seize the liquor without paying for the shipping costs.

At times, state and local officials seemed to work at cross purposes to the federal authorities. In a scene reminiscent of "Pussyfoot" Johnson's arrest by Tulsa officials in 1907, Tulsa police arrested Henry A. Larson, chief federal enforcement officer, and several of his deputies in 1913 after they had intercepted a caravan of liquor-laden vehicles on the bridge spanning the Arkansas River at Tulsa. Larson and his deputies, brandishing Winchester rifles, had stopped and searched all vehicles on the bridge, had seized seven wagon loads of beer and whiskey, and had arrested eleven men for introducing liquor to the territory. The city charged the federal officers with assault and jailed them over night until they could arrange bond.⁶²

Prohibition enforcement also put state and local officials at odds with one another. The state required county authorities across the state to ship confiscated liquor to Oklahoma City where state authorities arranged for its resale out of state; the county was to receive twenty-six percent of the proceeds from such sales to cover the salaries of enforcement officers.

⁶⁰ *Harlow's Weekly*, 5 December 1914.

⁶¹ *Lexington Leader*, 31 July 1908.

⁶² *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 27, 28 June 1913.

Muskogee County officials, in 1911, stopped shipping liquor to the state people because the state had not given the county its share of the proceeds from past sales. The state of Oklahoma, in turn, sued Muskogee County in court to get the sheriff to surrender the confiscated liquor in his possession.⁶³ By the following year Muskogee officials began dumping confiscated liquor into the city's sewer system, ignoring the state directives.⁶⁴ In this atmosphere of hostility between the various levels of government, the astute bootlegger could conduct business with some assurance that his product would not be seized.

Indeed, some local authorities refused to enforce prohibition, either because they accepted bribes from bootleggers or because they understood that local voters would turn on them at the next election if they took an aggressive stance against the liquor men. The *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, in November 1908, provided a telling statement on liquor enforcement, "Now that the election is over and conditions are becoming normal, Judge Lipscomb has resumed the work of securing evidence against bootleggers and other illegal whiskey sellers."⁶⁵ In the 1910 election, Oklahomans returned only eight incumbent county sheriffs to office, though all seventy-seven such seats were open. Many outgoing sheriffs blamed their defeat on the prohibition statute. In some cases, excessively strict enforcement had turned the voting public against them; in other cases, lax enforcement had doomed sheriffs at the polls.⁶⁶ Texas County officials guardedly increased enforcement of the liquor ban in Goodwell following public protests against their leniency shortly before the 1914 election. A local newspaper stated that these officials were attempting to "distinguish between what to do and what to let alone in the

⁶³ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 26 January 1911.

⁶⁴ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 24 May 1912.

⁶⁵ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 5 November 1908.

⁶⁶ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 7 January 1911.

effort to retain their offices. . . .”⁶⁷ Local enforcement officials, then, needed to monitor closely public sentiment toward prohibition if they wanted to remain in office.

Authorities in Oklahoma’s largest cities, Oklahoma City, Muskogee, and Tulsa, adopted a pattern of neglectful enforcement, followed by a crack down on the illegal liquor industry, followed by a return to inattentiveness. A regional newspaper noted in 1907 that Muskogee County had been wide open (allowing unrestrained liquor sales) in the past and speculated that it would become wide open again in the near future.⁶⁸ The situation in Tulsa was worse. Spurred by the opening of the nearby Glenn Pool oil field in 1905, this city experienced phenomenal growth as its population exploded from 1,390 in 1900 to 72,075 by 1920. William E. Johnson and his federal deputies met stiff resistance in their Tulsa raids. Johnson was attacked and nearly killed in one episode. The following year the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League optimistically reported that Tulsa had dried up.⁶⁹ This report proved premature, as in 1910 Tulsa’s liquor industry was again---or still---thriving. Bootleggers evaded the authorities by hiding their product in coffins, in wagon loads of corn, and amidst bottles of nitroglycerin. The dries, in 1912, admitted the short-comings in the city’s liquor enforcement stating, “Tulsa is a city that perhaps has more flagrantly violated the law than any other city in the state.” In November 1915 local authorities arrested the city’s leading bootleggers in a general clean-up.⁷⁰ Despite these efforts the illegal liquor industry remained vibrant in Tulsa into the period of national prohibition. When enforcement efforts by the city police picked up, the joints relocated to the outskirts of Tulsa or

⁶⁷ *Guyton Herald*, 29 October 1914.

⁶⁸ McKenzie, “Pussyfoot” Johnson: 66-67; *Lehigh Leader*, 10 October 1907; *Muskogee Democrat*, 22 December 1905; *Wilburton Gazette*, 11 October 1907; *Lehigh Leader*, 17 October 1907, noted that Muskogee’s liquor joint operators had buried their booze in the ground waiting for Johnson to finish his business and leave the city.

⁶⁹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat.*, 20 September 1907; *Lehigh Leader* 19 September 1907; *Wilburton Gazette*, 4 October 1907; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 6 February 1908; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, 22 September 1908.

⁷⁰ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, May 1912; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 25 November 1915.

beyond. These road houses, such as the famed Bucket of Blood Saloon, fell under the enforcement umbrella of the understaffed Tulsa County sheriff's department and so thrived.

Oklahoma City, by far the state's largest municipality with a 1910 population of 64,205, also experienced considerable liquor violation despite the additional scrutiny the city drew as the seat of state government. Like that of other municipalities, Oklahoma City's enforcement of liquor laws adopted a cyclical pattern of leniency followed by one of rigor and a subsequent return to leniency. A former city official noted, "When statehood came in the fall of 1907, with constitutional prohibition, seven hundred bootleggers soon supplanted seventy saloon-keepers. Vice was so rampant that State Enforcement Attorney Fred S. Caldwell and Attorney General Charlie West, at the direction of Governor Haskell, virtually took over law enforcement in Oklahoma County."⁷¹ Attorney General Charles West also described conditions in the city as deteriorating after the adoption of the liquor ban.⁷²

In late 1909, City Attorney John M. Hays began a crackdown on Oklahoma City's saloons. He notified over one hundred individuals that liquor was being sold on their property and held them responsible for these violations. Police Chief Charles Post led a series of raids that closed many of the joints or blind pigs.⁷³ The stubborn illegal liquor industry remained a problem, and in 1911 the city hired famed lawman William O. Tilghman as the new chief of police. He promptly arrested twenty-five bootleggers, which observers called the most significant enforcement effort in two years. Before the year was out, however, Tilghman told a newspaper reporter that he could

⁷¹ McRill, *And Satan Came Also*, 140-141. McRill's characterization of prohibition as worsening conditions in the city is similar to arguments made by anti-prohibition groups such as the Local Option and High License Committee and the United Civic League. Interestingly, McRill campaigned around the state for the Anti-Saloon League in 1907 and 1910.

⁷² *Tupelo Times*, 28 November 1907; *Coalgate Courier*, 21 November 1907; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 31 December 1907, 5 June 1908; McRill, *And Satan Came Also*, 119.

⁷³ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, October 1909. McRill, *And Satan Came Also*, 109, 110.

not enforce the liquor ban in Oklahoma's capital city.⁷⁴ Another stepped-up campaign, led by Oklahoma County Attorney John Embry and Mayor Ed Overholser, produced several arrests in 1915 and closed several of the most visible liquor joints. The liquor industry flourished in the city after 1920 (under national prohibition) prompting the police chief to echo Tilghman's earlier characterization of the liquor ban as unenforceable.⁷⁵ Liquor, then, continued to flow in Oklahoma City after 1907 with several brief interruptions.

The question of Oklahoma's commitment to prohibition arose again in 1910 when wet organizations such as the Sons of Washington and the German-American Association succeeded in placing the question of prohibition before Oklahoma voters in a second referendum.⁷⁶ They proposed a local option law to supersede prohibition. It would have granted counties and municipalities the legal authority to ban or license saloons. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League led the state's dry forces against this amendment in the ensuing election campaign.

Anti-Saloon League officials urged supporters to vote to continue prohibition by warning of the crime wave that would develop if liquor became legal: "Vote to open the saloons again in Oklahoma and you vote to open the sluice gates for a carnival of crime."⁷⁷ Bishop William A. Quayle, before Oklahoma's Methodist Episcopal Church Conference, urged attendees to "do what the Anti-Saloon League asks," and "do business for God. . . country and state."⁷⁸ The state Baptist conference characterized the campaign as a contest

⁷⁴ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 13 July 1911; F. M. Stevens to Lee Cruce, 15 August 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, 1911-1914, Box 23, File 1.

⁷⁵ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, August 1915; McRill, *And Satan Came Also*, 155, 166-167, 191.

⁷⁶ The Sons of Washington enjoyed a very narrow base of support and expired shortly after the 1910 referendum. It and other wet organizations are discussed further in chapter six.

⁷⁷ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, July 1910.

⁷⁸ *American Issue*, August 1910; Oklahoma Methodist General Convention, *Minutes*, 1910, 267-268, quoted in Franklin, *Born Sober*, 47.

between "Law, Order, and Righteousness. . . and Lawlessness and Sin. . . ."79 The Oklahoma Women's Christian Temperance Union distributed materials and Ernest H. Cherrington of the Anti-Saloon League of America and editor of *American Issue* spoke around the state.⁸⁰ Both wet and dry proponents actively campaigned on the liquor issue in the weeks before the November 1910 election. The League's superior organization again was instrumental in the majority vote for prohibition. During this campaign, the League spent \$4,684.71 on speakers and literature, each of which traversed the state; wets reportedly spent much more.⁸¹

The Anti-Saloon League charged large brewing interests with spending a massive sum of money in Oklahoma during the 1910 campaign on prohibition. The *Eufala Republican* reported that unnamed breweries had created a \$1,000,000 slush fund to finance the 1910 local option campaign.⁸² While the million-dollar figure was not substantiated, the charge is significant given the source. While the Democratic Party officially remained silent on the liquor issue, prominent party leaders such as Governor Charles Haskell championed prohibition as a vital part of progressive reform. In some areas of the state, the party downplayed the governor's stance, fearing a backlash at the polls. The Republican Party generally was more critical of prohibition because it identified the liquor ban with the Democratic Party. That the editor of the *Eufala Republican*, presumably opposed to prohibition, decided to run this story adds credibility to the charge that brewers were funding the local option campaign. The amount, while likely much less than stated, implies an out-of-state influence; Oklahoma's small breweries, operating illegally since 1907, likely could not afford such funding. The perception existed, then, that

opponents of prohibition received financial aid from large, out-of-state liquor

⁷⁹ Oklahoma Baptist General Convention, *Minutes*, 1910, 69-70, quoted in Franklin, *Born Sober*, 47.

⁸⁰ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 47-48.

⁸¹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, November, 1910; December, 1910; Pamphlet distributed by the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, Prohibition files, Barde Collection.

⁸² *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, December 1910; *Eufala Republican*, 11 November 1910.

interests who sought to influence the election for their own profits.

There was some truth behind that perception. Henry Braun of Guthrie, president of the German-American Association and former agent for the Pabst Brewing Company, received the following handwritten letter from Gustave Pabst shortly after the defeat of local option in November 1910⁸³ :

Nov. 18, 1910

My dearest Henry

I have just finished reading yours of the 16th addressed to Gandiuea (sp) & I feel with you the deepest regret, but have not one word of criticism to offer. I know that everything possible was done, that you were on the job day & night, and that only circumstances & conditions over which no control could be had is responsible for the majority recorded against us.

I am writing Gandiuea today & suggesting another attempt along the same lines employed in other states, eliminating methods employed heretofore as well as doing the work entirely from without the state.

There is only on person I have in mind to whom I give consideration, that one is you and therefore I am writing to you.

If Gandiuea should adopt my suggestions, I want you to know that there was no personal motive which prompted me, for I do not know of anyone for whose integrity, loyalty and intelligence (sic) I have a higher regard than that of Henry Braun.

With kindest regards and best wishes,

I am very Sincerely Yours,
Gustave Pabst

Pabst's letter implies a close working relationship between the two during the campaign prior to the election and a desire by Pabst to have Braun lead similar campaigns in other states. While the alleged million-dollar figure may not be accurate, brewers such as Pabst did exert some effort to defeat prohibition in Oklahoma.⁸⁴

Despite the efforts by wets, a majority of Oklahomans voted against local option at the polls; as Appendix B illustrates, the dry portion of the statewide vote increased slightly from 53.7 percent in 1907 to 54.6 percent in 1910.⁸⁵ As

⁸³ Vertical Files, Oklahoma Territorial Museum, Guthrie, Oklahoma.

⁸⁴ Little information is known of the exact financing provided by the large national breweries during prohibition campaigns. K. Austin Kerr, in his extensive study of the Anti-Saloon League of America, notes that no brewing or distilling company allowed him access to such financial records. See Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition*.

⁸⁵ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, July, 1910; November, 1910; December, 1910; Pamphlet distributed by the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, Prohibition files, Barde Collection.

with the 1907 referendum, the 1910 vote on prohibition varied from region to region. Some counties, notably Coal, Osage, McIntosh, Nowata and Latimer, voted very wet, while Harmon, Alfalfa, Jackson, and Tillman counties reported overwhelmingly dry votes. Voter turnout, however, was down significantly from the 1907 vote, making accurate comparisons between counties or between the 1907 and 1910 votes problematic. In the 1907 referendum, sixteen counties produced vote tallies for or against prohibition that represented more than seventy percent of the voting-age population (see Appendix A). By contrast, in the 1910 referendum, only two counties achieved voter turnout figures above seventy percent. Of those counties mentioned as reporting significant wet or dry votes in 1910, McIntosh, Nowata, and Latimer counties (wet), as well as Harmon and Jackson counties (dry) recorded vote totals representing less than half of the voting population. Statewide, only 51.7 percent of voting-age males voted on the prohibition question in 1910, down from 63.9 percent statewide in 1907. The election figures for 1910, then, reflect the prohibition sentiment of a still narrower portion of the state population and provide no information on the liquor stance of nearly half of the population eligible to vote, to say nothing of those disallowed from voting. As with most elections in Oklahoma before 1918, women could not vote (the exception being school board elections); and so the election results tell us nothing of how Oklahoma women felt about the liquor ban. The support that the Woman's Christian Temperance Union continued to enjoy during this period indicates that many Sooner women approved of prohibition, though Union members tended to come from Oklahoma's middle classes.

Several factors likely explain the low vote tallies for the 1910 referendum. The reduced figures might reflect a loss of interest in the liquor issue, but two other factors likely contributed also. As the 1907 election allowed adult men to vote not only on prohibition but on the state constitution (in clearly distinct questions), the election held greater importance than

subsequent elections, and this likely drew more Oklahoma voters to the polls. Another factor in the reduced 1910 vote might have been the grandfather clause, adopted statewide at the primary election in September 1910. It allowed the disenfranchisement of many black men and at least some whites who had demonstrated radical political leanings. Because the decision to enforce the disenfranchisement of black and radical Oklahomans took place at local polling places, it is difficult to measure this law's exact impact on voter turnout, though it certainly reduced the number of such voters.⁸⁶ The November 1910 election seemingly reaffirmed Oklahoma's commitment to prohibition. Bills calling for the resubmission of the liquor issue to voters arose again several times after 1910, but never received sufficient support to gain a place on the ballot. The liquor ban never again came before Oklahoma voters until after the repeal of national prohibition in 1933.

Both before and after the 1910 referendum on prohibition, state officials looked into instances of blatant nonenforcement of prohibition around the state. Attorney General Charles West, investigating liquor violations in Pottawatomie County, eventually forced the resignation of several officials in the area.⁸⁷ Fred S. Caldwell, as Governor Haskell's prohibition-enforcement attorney from 1908 through 1910, investigated the lack of enforcement by local officials in Creek, Ellis, Kay, and Nowata counties. In Creek County, he filed charges against County Attorney L. B. Jackson and Sheriff Henry Clay King in July 1909 for failing to enforce prohibition in their jurisdiction and sought to have them removed from office on this basis. King left office when Caldwell announced his inquiry, but Jackson remained to await the outcome of the investigation. In August, Caldwell called a grand

⁸⁶ Regarding the disenfranchising effect on black Oklahomans, see Phillip Mellinger, "Discrimination and Statehood in Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 49 (Autumn 1971): 340-377; also, Franklin, *Journey Toward Hope*. For the disenfranchisement of political radicals in early Oklahoma, see Burbank, *When Farmers Voted Red*; also, Sellars, "Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies."

⁸⁷ Fortson, *Pott Country and What Has Become of It*, 28.

jury to hear the case against Jackson rather than the presiding judge, a critic of prohibition. Jackson was formally charged with failing to prosecute approximately 190 indictments for liquor violations in Creek County between 15 September 1908 and 1 July 1909. The majority of these violations had occurred in Sapulpa, the county seat located amidst the Glenn Pool oil field, and in Kiefer, one of the rough and tumble boom towns in the oil patch. The grand jury found Jackson guilty of the accused misconduct, and Caldwell applied to the Oklahoma Supreme Court to have Jackson removed as county attorney. Jackson challenged this application, arguing that Caldwell had influenced the grand jury in its deliberations. The removal process ground to a halt while a trial court determined the validity of Jackson's challenge. As of Caldwell's dismissal from his enforcement post in December 1910, the trial court had not issued a ruling on the challenge and Jackson remained in office. Former sheriff King was indicted for liquor violations including acceptance of a bribe, but that trial ended in a hung jury.⁸⁸

Caldwell also aided investigations in other counties around the state. In February 1910, Caldwell went to Newkirk in the north central county of Kay to aid a grand jury investigation that brought approximately sixty indictments for the unlawful possession of liquor. In June 1910 he scheduled a hearing and recommended the removal of Ellis County Attorney C. B. Leedy for failing to act against bootleggers in that northwest Oklahoma county. Leedy promptly applied to the Oklahoma Supreme Court for a writ of prohibition to stop the hearing and the investigation ground to a halt. In November 1910 the Supreme Court denied Leedy's application, and he filed for a rehearing of his application. At this rehearing, the court again denied his application. As Leedy was nearing the end of his elected term (as was Caldwell), Caldwell chose not to pursue his investigation, counting on Ellis County voters to turn Leedy

⁸⁸ "Report by Fred S. Caldwell, Counselor to the Governor, for the Period Beginning with December First, Nineteen Hundred Eight, and Ending with December thirty-First, Nineteen Hundred Ten: Charles N. Haskell Papers, Administrative File, Box 11, File 13.

out of office the following spring. Caldwell aided a grand jury investigation of liquor violations in Nowata County in September 1910. Caldwell demonstrated that liquor joints had been operating openly in South Coffeerville, Lenapah, and Delaware for more than a year, and he presented overwhelming evidence that the county attorney, sheriff, and county judge knew of these activities and failed to act. Despite this, four members of the grand jury voted to exonerate the county officials and Caldwell left disgusted.⁸⁹

By the end of his term as Special Enforcement Attorney, Caldwell had traversed much of the state and had seen considerable variation in the devotion to prohibition enforcement. His efforts do not seem to have hindered seriously the liquor industry in the regions examined. Creek County, dominated by the Glenn Pool and later the Cushing oil field, remained a problem area for state enforcement officials through the first two decades of the new century. A district judge removed County Attorney Vic S. Docker and Sheriff John Berry in 1912 for allowing saloons to operate in Sapulpa, and similar investigations subsequently were undertaken in Nowata and Muskogee counties.⁹⁰ Attorney General S. Prince Freeling attempted to remove the Creek County sheriff in 1915, and conducted investigations of liquor enforcement in Tulsa, Nowata, Ottawa, and Sequoyah counties shortly after.⁹¹ In 1917, Attorney General Freeling convened a grand jury investigation into vice conditions in Muskogee. The leading area newspapers split over this issue, the *Muskogee Times-Democrat* supporting the investigation and the *Muskogee Phoenix* declaring it unnecessary.⁹² These various state investigations suffered from a lack of support from the local populace who continued to return to office men

⁸⁹ "Report by Fred S. Caldwell," Charles N. Haskell Papers: Administrative File, Box 11, File 13.

⁹⁰ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 17 February; 18 April; 19 December 1912..

⁹¹ Governor's Papers, Governor Robert L. Williams: Administrative File, 1914-1916, Box 1, File 4, Oklahoma Department of Libraries Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, OK; *The State of Oklahoma Ex Rel. Board of County Commissioners of the County of Ottawa, State of Oklahoma (Plaintiff) vs George O. Gibson (Defendant)*, Robert L. Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1916, Box 5, File 8.

⁹² *Harlow's Weekly*, 18 July 1917.

found to be derelict in the enforcement of liquor laws. The public's lack of support for prohibition also was expressed in court as juries often voted to acquit liquor defendants. According to a newspaper report, the ruling by a local judge that municipalities could not try people without a jury left ordinances in several eastern Oklahoma communities useless.⁹³

In some instances, this lack of support for prohibition could be attributed to the political influence of bootleggers. William J. Creekmore was one of the most powerful of the illegal liquor dealers. He had sold liquor in Sapulpa before 1907, but after statewide prohibition began, Creekmore expanded to become the largest liquor dealer in Oklahoma through a distribution agreement with a Kansas City wholesaler. He established a distribution center in Joplin, Missouri from which he shipped liquor (150-200 railroad carloads in 1913) to Enid and from there to Keystone where operatives loaded it onto wagons, hauled it to such communities as Sapulpa and Tulsa, and sold it at twenty-five percent above the price in Kansas City.⁹⁴ In Tulsa, Sapulpa, Oklahoma City, Muskogee, Miami, Claremore, Oilton and other communities, he bought immunity from the police for his saloons and paid officials to enforce the liquor ban against his competitors, allowing him to increase his operations. The Creek County sheriff, whom the attorney general investigated in 1915, was said to be working with Creekmore. In 1915, federal authorities convicted him of contempt of court and sentenced him to the federal penitentiary the following year.⁹⁵

Significantly, his ultimate arrest and conviction came at the hands of federal officials rather than state or local authorities. Creekmore held considerable political sway in Oklahoma. In 1912 state Commissioner of Labor Charles Daugherty passed along to Creekmore changes in the Democratic Campaign Committee's speaking assignments for that election year, and asked

⁹³ *Harlow's Weekly*, 15 August 1917.

⁹⁴ *Harlow's Weekly*, 20 February; 24 April 1915.

⁹⁵ McRill, *And Satan Came Also*, 175-178.

Creekmore for additional funds to continue his own stumping around the state.⁹⁶ Creekmore, reportedly worth a million dollars by the time of his conviction, had been arrested in 1912 by federal authorities and allegedly had paid James E. Watson, a member of the House of Representatives from Indiana \$20,000 to have his sentence reduced to thirty days in jail.⁹⁷ His 1915 conviction was not for violating the federal prohibition laws, but for jury tampering. Federal authorities compiled a strong case against him for introducing liquor, but Creekmore bribed one of the members of the jury who voted to acquit him. Federal officials became privy to this and subsequently convicted him of this act.⁹⁸ He ultimately served three years in a federal penitentiary before returning to Oklahoma. Reportedly, he abandoned the liquor business and began a pig livestock operation.⁹⁹ Creekmore's conviction did not end Oklahoma's illicit liquor industry. Numerous other bootleggers, in smaller liquor operations, moved in to take his place. Arch Wright became prominent in the Muskogee liquor and gambling business, and was described as worse than Creekmore in his conduct of the vice industries.¹⁰⁰

In addition to this and less blatant examples of corruption, however, Caldwell and other enforcement officers also pointed to another cause of the lax enforcement in some Oklahoma communities. Many people did not want the law enforced strictly. Caldwell often found himself facing juries that refused to convict liquor offenders, as happened in Nowata County. He also complained of this when investigating officials in Creek County. Henry Clay King, whose prosecution for dereliction of duty had ended in a hung jury, ran for sheriff of Creek County again in 1910 and lost in the primary by a mere fifty votes. Disgusted, Caldwell stated that this show of support for a man who

had demonstrated an unwillingness to enforce the liquor ban "is decidedly

⁹⁶ Charles L. Daugherty Collection, Box 1, File 3, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

⁹⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 7 July 1913.

⁹⁸ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, September 1915.

⁹⁹ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 44.

¹⁰⁰ *Harlow's Weekly*, 25 July 1917.

typical and quite characteristic of the citizenship of Creek County. . . .”¹⁰¹ In 1913, the nonpartisan newspaper *Harlow's Weekly* described the populations of Tulsa and other communities similarly, “The prevailing sentiment of the citizens is ‘wet,’” adding, “Tulsa isn’t the only city in the state where the majority of the people hold this view. . . .”¹⁰² Caldwell and other enthusiastic supporters of prohibition became exasperated with what they saw as the open disregard for the law in several parts of the state.

The impact of prohibition went far beyond enforcement personnel and liquor runners. The ban affected Oklahoma’s retail pharmaceutical industry also. As stated earlier, many Oklahomans considered alcohol a curative for a variety of ills; drug stores sought to meet this demand by selling beer---prescribed as a tonic---as well as patented medicines such as Duffy’s Malt Whiskey and Haniford’s Balsam of Myrrh (comprised of eighty-four percent wood alcohol).¹⁰³ Bootleggers labeled their establishments drug stores to give enforcement officers pause when they conducted raids. This problem was particularly acute in the eastern portion of the new state, and druggists who did not engage in the illegal sale of liquor gradually became concerned at the damaging effect these sales had on the legitimacy of the entire industry. The Oklahoma Pharmaceutical Association, formed in 1890, sought to act as a watchdog over the state’s retail drug business. It met shortly after statehood and called for all drug stores to be directed by a registered pharmacist (registered with the association) or lose their license with the association.¹⁰⁴

Oklahoma’s second governor, Lee Cruce, decided to involve directly the pharmaceutical industry in the state’s regulation of the medicinal liquor

market. Following the demise of the state dispensary system in 1911, Governor

¹⁰¹ “Report by Fred S. Caldwell,” Charles N. Haskell Papers: Administrative File, Box 11, File 13.

¹⁰² *Harlow's Weekly*, 5 July 1913.

¹⁰³ Lilah D. Lindsey Collection, Series III, Box 2, Folder 19, McFarlin Library, Tulsa University, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Lindsey was an officer in the Tulsa Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and, in 1908, reported these and other patent medicines as a concern of the WCTU.

¹⁰⁴ Foress B. Lillie Collection, Western History Collection.

Cruce designated the Alexander Drug Company of Oklahoma City as the state's wholesale distributor of alcohol to licensed druggists around the state. In this way, the state controlled and monitored the amount of alcohol sold by druggists. Concern over these sales led the governor, in 1913, to commission a report by Alexander Drug listing the alcohol purchases made by licensed druggists in Oklahoma. This report, covering three months in the summer of 1913, indicated that Oklahoma pharmacists were purchasing large, in some cases massive, quantities of alcohol. Numerous druggists and drug stores around the state bought more than fifty gallons of alcohol during this three-month period. The largest volumes were bought by the Cheyenne Drug Company of Tulsa (190 gallons of alcohol), the Red Cross Drug Store of Sapulpa (185 gallons), druggists Bryant & Keith and Burke & Son both of Collinsville (137 gallons each), and Brown's Pharmacy of Tulsa (111 gallons). Many other drug stores throughout Oklahoma bought lesser, though still abnormally large, amounts of alcohol.¹⁰⁵

The governor soon determined the size of that abnormality. He approached several reputable druggists requesting information on the amount of alcohol they bought each month to establish an appropriate limit on these purchases. Most of the respondents indicated that an average-sized drug store bought approximately five or six gallons of alcohol each month to create liniments and tinctures, and to sell to local hospitals.¹⁰⁶ These figures stood in stark contrast to the liquor purchased by pharmacists in Tulsa, Sapulpa, and elsewhere.

Cruce, while alarmed at the availability of liquor in drug stores, also was concerned about restricting business in Oklahoma and was generous in the

¹⁰⁵ Lee Cruce to Vic S. Decker, 25 November 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 1, File 8; Lee Cruce to Pat Malloy, 25 November 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 5, File 6; Lee Cruce to William Hall, 29 November 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 5, File 1.

¹⁰⁶ Frank M. Weaver to Lee Cruce, 15 November 1913, Westfall Drug to Lee Cruce, 20 November 1913, Roach and Veazey Drug Company to Lee Cruce, 17 November 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 1, File 8.

limit he placed on monthly alcohol sales to pharmacists. He informed Alexander Drug that it was to sell no more than ten gallons of alcohol each month to any druggist in the state. As a further concession, he allowed druggists to appeal to his office to increase their allotment. He checked the reputation of the petitioner in question with local residents, and, in the first months of 1914, approved most requests for additional purchases, instructing Alexander Drug to sell up to twenty gallons of alcohol each month to the druggists in question. At the same time, he contacted county attorneys asking them to investigate local drug stores to explain the amounts listed in the report and ordered Alexander Drug not to sell any alcohol to those drug stores that were known to resell it as a beverage.¹⁰⁷

The governor, then, experienced difficulty balancing his desire to effectively enforce prohibition with his desire to encourage legitimate business growth in the new state. The result was something very similar to the dispensary system that the legislature had abolished in 1911. The state regulated the sale of alcohol for medicinal and industrial purposes; and, given the generous amounts Cruce allowed many druggists to purchase, the state effectively sanctioned the sale by drug stores of some alcohol as a beverage.

Cruce's successor, Robert L. Williams, continued this regulatory policy throughout his term as governor (1915-1918). The Alexander Drug Company of Oklahoma City retained the state contract to provide alcohol to pharmacists, though the state added the Cardinal Drug Company of Muskogee as a liquor wholesaler for the eastern portion of the state by 1917.¹⁰⁸ Williams, like Cruce, sought from county attorneys information on druggists in their locale who applied for alcohol from the state-sanctioned wholesalers. While Williams

appeared less willing than Cruce to allow druggists greater amounts of alcohol,¹⁰⁷ *Muskogee Time-Democrat*, 21 November 1913; Various correspondence, 20 November 1913-14 October 1914, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 1, File 8; Box 5, File 1; Box 5, File 3; Box 5, File 6; Box 5, File 7; Box 56, File 5; Box 56, File 6.

¹⁰⁸ Chief Clerk to Governor to Alexander Drug Co., 18 December 1917, Chief Clerk to Governor to Alexander Drug Co. and Cardinal Drug Co., 31 December 1918, Robert L. Williams Papers: Administrative File, 1917-1919, Box 1, File 4.

the issue of pharmacists selling alcohol as a beverage continued to plague Oklahoma prohibition enforcement officials. In November, 1918 Mayor H. R. Kent of Woodward complained to Williams that druggists and grocers in that northwestern Oklahoma community were selling patent medicines that were at least half alcohol. He noted that men were becoming intoxicated from these medicines, and inquired whether the state might restrict the sale of extracts--- bay rum, Jamaica ginger, and others---that contained alcohol. Mayor Ed Linthicum of Hugo, in southeastern Oklahoma, echoed these concerns to the governor at nearly the same time.¹⁰⁹ Of course many more Oklahomans continued to sell liquor without the pharmaceutical pretense.

Interstate shipments of liquor posed a serious obstacle to prohibitionists and enforcement officials in dry states such as Oklahoma. In the 1898 case of *Rhodes v. Iowa*, the United States Supreme Court had ruled that states could ban the importation of liquor for resale but could not ban such liquor shipments if the liquor was for personal use.¹¹⁰ Bootleggers in Oklahoma and in other dry states followed the letter of this law and commenced importation of massive quantities of beer and whiskey claiming that these were for their own consumption. The Anti-Saloon League of America actively lobbied Congress for legislation to remove the immunity from state liquor laws enjoyed by interstate liquor shipments. Oklahoma's Fred Caldwell, state enforcement attorney and an activist in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, proposed such legislation to federal law makers in 1910.¹¹¹ Drys, organized by the Anti-Saloon League of America, maintained constant pressure on Congress to act on this issue until the Senate and the House of Representatives passed the Webb-

Kenyon Act in 1913. It banned the importation into a state of liquor intended

¹⁰⁹ Robert L. Williams to Attorney General's Office, 18 November 1918, Robert L. Williams Papers: Administrative File, 1917-1919, Box 1, File 9.

¹¹⁰ *Rhodes v. Iowa*, 170 *United States Reports, Supreme Court*, 412 (1898), cited in Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, 148.

¹¹¹ "Report by Fred S. Caldwell," Charles N. Haskell Papers: General Correspondence, Box 11, File 13.

to be used---sold, possessed, consumed---in violation of the laws of that state.¹¹² Drys lauded this as a great victory. Horatio T. Laughbaum, Superintendent of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, praised the decision as a “brilliant victory that gives impetus to the national fight,” adding that it could, “presage the beginning of the end of the prohibition fight---that is, the end of the liquor interests.”¹¹³ State and local liquor enforcement agents in Oklahoma City, Lawton, Guthrie, Perry, and other towns began seizing interstate liquor shipments from the railroad yards almost immediately.¹¹⁴

The drys soon tempered their enthusiasm when opponents of Webb-Kenyon challenged its constitutionality in the federal courts. President William Howard Taft had vetoed the bill in 1912 because he believed it violated the Constitution by delegating to the states the power to regulate interstate traffic. While Congress had assembled sufficient votes to override Taft’s veto in 1913, the future of the bill remained uncertain. The Anti-Saloon League of America stepped up efforts to ban liquor at the state level, but officials in the Sooner state awaited a final court decision before adopting new legislation on the issue. Following a lengthy appeals process, the United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the law 8 January 1917, and seven states--
-Kansas, North Dakota, Georgia, Montana, Tennessee, Washington, and Oklahoma completely banned the importation of liquor.¹¹⁵

The stiffened liquor law that Oklahoma legislators approved in February 1917 made illegal the importation of liquor into Oklahoma for any purpose other than scientific or medicinal, and it forbade the possession of liquor throughout the state, again with the aforementioned exceptions.¹¹⁶ Oklahoma’s

¹¹² Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, 162.

¹¹³ *Daily Oklahoman*, 10 January 1917, cited in Franklin, *Born Sober*, 65. *Harlow’s Weekly*, 15 March 1913.

¹¹⁴ Governor Lee Cruce to Reverend G. Lee Phelps, 8 March 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 48, File 5.

¹¹⁵ Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, 172.

¹¹⁶ *State of Oklahoma Session Laws of 1917*, (Guthrie, OK: Co-Operative Publishing Co., 1917), 350.

"Bone-Dry Law," as the law became known popularly, was challenged by a group that heretofore had been silent on the liquor issue---the state's Roman Catholic Church. The Church generally had not supported the prohibition campaign in Oklahoma, though some clergy members in other states did join the Anti-Saloon League. The Catholic Total Abstinence Union had preached moderation or abstinence throughout the nation, but it and the Church balked at a legislated ban on liquor. In Oklahoma, the Church had not campaigned openly against the liquor ban, though many of its members consumed liquor as a beverage; clergymen urged parishioners to abide by federal, state, and local laws. The Bone-Dry Law pulled the Church into the prohibition fray as the law did not exempt sacramental wine from its liquor ban.

The Roman Catholic Church in Oklahoma was composed of isolated communities in a sea of evangelical pietistic Protestantism, and members often found themselves at odds with much of the population regarding cultural issues. Catholics comprised two percent of the total population in the territories in 1906, concentrated in the coal mining regions of east and southeast Oklahoma (Okmulgee, Coal, and Pittsburg counties) and such northern and central counties as Osage, Noble, Kingfisher, and Oklahoma. The Church had a very strong immigrant flavor due not only to the presence of Catholic miners in the coal districts from Italy, Poland, and elsewhere in Europe, but also to the demographics of the Oklahoma clergy---sixty-one of the state's eighty-eight priests in 1907 were from continental Europe.¹¹⁷ Culturally and ethnically, then, Oklahoma's Roman Catholics found themselves at odds with the native-born, white majority that constituted the mainstream, respectable element of society. Prohibition's longevity in Oklahoma

contributed to this alienation and further marginalized the state's Catholic

¹¹⁷ Thomas Elton Brown, "Bible-belt Catholicism: A History of the Roman Catholic Church in Oklahoma, 1905-1945" (Ph.D. dissertation., Oklahoma State University, 1974), 7, 8-9, 25. The *Muskogee Times-Democrat* of 10 September 1906 argued that McAlester should become the sight of the bishop's see in the proposed state as the mining communities around McAlester contained more Catholics than any other region in the proposed state. The Church subsequently chose to locate the see at Oklahoma City.

population.

As it did elsewhere in the nation, the Roman Catholic Church in Oklahoma remained largely silent on prohibition unless it impinged on its religious services. The silence was conspicuous, particularly as clergymen from many faiths---as officers or trustees of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League---openly preached support for a liquor ban. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the Oklahoma League was staffed largely by ministers from the Presbyterian, Methodist Episcopal, Congregational, Baptist, and the smaller evangelical faiths. No Catholic clergymen served as League officers or trustees. The League also is not known to have contained clergymen from other liturgical groups, such as the Jewish, Episcopal and Lutheran faiths.

Shortly after the United States Supreme Court ruling on *Webb-Kenyon*, Horatio T. Laughbaum, Superintendent and Attorney for the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, drafted a stiffer liquor ban for Oklahoma Senator Walter Ferguson to introduce before the legislature. This became Senate Bill Fifty-Five---the Bone-Dry Law. The Oklahoma legislature approved it by overwhelming votes of eighty-nine to seven in the house and thirty-two to five in the senate. Governor Robert L. Williams had threatened to veto the measure as written, but, following the legislature's demonstration of support for the bill and amidst intense pressure from the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, Williams allowed the bill to become law without his signature in February 1917.¹¹⁸ As stated earlier, this law banned the importation and possession of liquor and made no exception for sacramental wine. The legislature had discussed an amendment to the bill that would have allowed the importation of sacramental wine, but Senator Ferguson refused such changes.¹¹⁹

That omission came to light at the end of the summer. In August, an agent for the Sante Fe Railroad in Norman refused to release a barrel of

¹¹⁸ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 65-66.

¹¹⁹ *Harlow's Weekly*, 19 September 1917.

sacramental wine to Father John Metter of that city's Saint Joseph's Church. Metter had shipped the wine into the state before the passage of the new liquor statute. He contacted Attorney General Freeling regarding this seizure and to determine the provisions by which he might order future shipments of sacramental wine; he stated that he would discontinue holding religious services if his supply of sacramental wine went dry. Freeling responded that the Ferguson law included no provision for such a shipment---sacramental wine, like beer and whiskey, could not be brought into Oklahoma legally.

Events took an embarrassing turn several days later as the Santa Fe agent reported to the attorney general that Cleveland County Sheriff Ben Wheelis had seized the barrel of wine consigned to Metter through a search warrant issued by Judge George C. Burke and that the wine had since been misplaced and was missing. The railroad agent suspected (later confirmed privately by Governor Robert L. Williams) that county officials, including Judge Burke, had drunk the sacramental wine. As the agent related to Freeling, within thirty minutes of having seized the wine, one of the county officers was "drunk as a Lord." Freeling and Governor Williams ordered a grand jury investigation of the matter later in the year, but the jury found insufficient evidence to prove who had removed the wine from the sheriff's custody. No indictments were brought in the matter.¹²⁰ The improper disposal of confiscated liquor by local officials was a recurrent problem throughout numerous Oklahoma communities during the early years of prohibition. Newspaper accounts and correspondence with state officials indicate that some officials consumed liquor they had seized while others resold it. Given the nature of the wine and the circumstances surrounding the seizure, however, Williams and Freeling must have been particularly chagrined at the actions by the Norman officials.

¹²⁰ Santa Fe Railroad Agent Baker to S. P. Freeling, 24 August 1917, Robert L. Williams to S. P. Freeling, 31 August 1917, Attorney General and Assistant A. G. Records, A. G. S. P. Freeling, Miscellaneous Correspondence, Box 1, File 4, Oklahoma Department of Libraries Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, OK.

The state's liturgical faiths became alarmed at the ban against religious wine. Bishop Theophile Meerschaert denounced Freeling's ruling and vowed that the Church would continue to use wine in its services in violation of the Bone-Dry law. Dean Frederick Bates of the Oklahoma City Episcopal cathedral sided with the Catholic Church, stating that the prohibition of sacramental wine violated the principles of religious freedom. Reverend A. C. Dubberstein of Oklahoma City's Zion Lutheran Church and Reverend Oswald Helsing of that city's Unitarian Church gave similar statements of support for the Catholic Church's position.¹²¹

The Catholic Church also sought to challenge the ban in the courts. In October 1917, Father Urbane De Hasque, Bishop Meerschaert's chancellor, attempted to ship a small amount of sacramental wine from Oklahoma City to Guthrie. The Santa Fe Railroad refused to ship the wine and De Hasque sued the railroad company to compel shipment. De Hasque claimed to represent the interests of 42,000 Catholics in Oklahoma. Members of the smaller Episcopal Church also supported his cause.¹²² The district court sided with the state and the railroad, ignoring the Church's argument that the law infringed upon religious freedom, but the Oklahoma Supreme Court overturned this ruling in May 1918. The judges on the high court held that sacramental wine did not constitute intoxicating liquor and so was exempt from the provisions of the Bone-Dry Law.¹²³

Thomas Elton Brown, in his extensive study of the Oklahoma Bone-Dry Law and the Roman Catholic Church's challenge to it, argues that the law did not spring from anti-Catholic bigotry, which he admits was present in early Oklahoma. Indeed anti-Catholic organizations existed in Oklahoma at least as early as 1914. The Guardians of Liberty, located in the Shawnee area, and the

¹²¹ Thomas Elton Brown, "Oklahoma's 'Bone-Dry Law' and the Roman Catholic Church," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 52:3 (Fall 1974): 321, 322.

¹²² *Harlow's Weekly*, 17 October 1917.

¹²³ Brown, "Oklahoma's 'Bone-Dry Law' and the Roman Catholic Church," 324-328; Franklin, *Born Sober*, 67, 69.

Knights of Luther, in southwest Oklahoma, sought to foil alleged plots of Roman Catholics to take over the federal and various state governments.¹²⁴ Brown sees the creation of the Bone-Dry Law as independent of these conditions. Rather, it was the product of a conscientious effort by lawmakers to improve the enforcement of prohibition in Oklahoma as well as the Catholic Church's inattentiveness to the liquor issue during legislative debate over the law.¹²⁵ Brown's assertion assumes that the matter of sacramental wine was a novel issue in 1917, one that the state law makers and enforcement personnel had not considered previously. The issue, however, was not new.

In 1912, Bishop Meerschaert had contacted Governor Lee Cruce concerning the shipment of sacramental wine into former Indian Territory. A federal court of appeals recently had ruled that such shipments were illegal unless the consignee attained a permit from the War Department; the United States Supreme Court ruled in the summer of that year that the War Department had no authority to issue such permits. The railroads risked prosecution for introducing liquor to the region if they shipped sacramental wine into former Indian Territory. Cruce sought to reassure Meerschaert that sacramental wine would remain available in eastern Oklahoma, stating, "So far as the State is concerned, I will state without hesitancy, that there will be no attempt on the part of the Enforcement Officer or his deputies to enforce the federal statutes upon this subject, in dealing with shipments for religious purposes."¹²⁶ Federal officials gave similar reassurances that they would not attempt to enforce the federal liquor ban in former Indian Territory against consignments of sacramental wine. These pledges did not reassure railroad agents in the area. They continued to balk at shipping sacramental wine into

the area until August 1912 when the House of Representatives Committee on

¹²⁴ *Harlow's Weekly*, 25 July 1914.

¹²⁵ Brown, "Oklahoma's 'Bone-Dry Law' and the Roman Catholic Church," 316-330. See also Brown, "Bible-belt Catholicism."

¹²⁶ Lee Cruce to Bishop Theodore Meerschaert, 20 March 1912, Lee Cruce Papers, General Correspondence, Box 26, File 4; Lee Cruce to Reverend James Van Hulse, 25 July 1912, Lee Cruce Papers, General Correspondence, Box 32, File 4.

Indian Affairs announced a new policy of allowing, under church authority, the shipment of sacramental wine into any "Indian country reservation."¹²⁷

The issue, then, had arisen before in Oklahoma, though under slightly different circumstances. Other dry states also had considered the issue of sacramental wine. In April 1916 Arizonans voted themselves dry and the question of sacramental wine arose. The state attorney general filed an affidavit announcing publicly that he would prosecute no one for transporting or possessing such wine. The state legislature of Kansas set about drafting a bone-dry law early in 1917, at the same time Oklahoma law makers were considering such legislation. Signed into law 23 February 1917, the Kansas statute clearly exempted sacramental wine from the liquor ban.¹²⁸ It seems unlikely that the Oklahoma legislature, Governor Williams, Attorney General Freeling, and other enforcement personnel in the Sooner state all remained oblivious to the legislation being adopted by their northern neighbors.

Oklahoma's Bone-Dry Law, then, if not overtly anti-Catholic, at the least subordinated the interests of liturgicals---use of sacramental wine in religious services---to those of evangelicals---stamping out the liquor industry in Oklahoma. While many of the legislators who adopted the Bone-Dry Law in 1917 had not been in the legislature when the issue arose in 1912, the man who drafted the law had been crafting liquor legislation for the state since 1910. H. T. Laughbaum served the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League both as state attorney and superintendent until 1933. Laughbaum edited the *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, which reported Arizona's sacramental wine matter in 1916. As superintendent and attorney of the state organization, Laughbaum was in regular contact with Wayne Wheeler, general counsel of and a rising force in the Anti-Saloon League of America. In early 1917, Wheeler testified in Topeka before the senate committee that drafted the Kansas bone-dry law, which

¹²⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 27 June, 14 August 1912.

¹²⁸ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, April 1916; Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas*, 186.

included a provision exempting sacramental wine.

All of this points to Laughbaum's lack of consideration for religious principles central to liturgical faiths or his willingness to subordinate those principles to the goals of prohibitionists like himself. The comments by other religious groups that Brown includes to demonstrate widespread support for the Catholic Church actually indicates little support for the use of sacramental wine beyond the state's small liturgical population. The Baptist and Methodist churches, the state's largest, and the smaller evangelical denominations remained silent on the issue. They continued to associate closely with the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and are not known to have criticized Laughbaum's harsh response to the Roman Catholic Church's challenge of the law. In fact, Laughbaum addressed the Oklahoma City Ministerial Alliance when it met in 1917 to discuss the religious impact of the Bone-Dry Law. After Laughbaum stated that the law included no exemption for sacramental wine, the alliance decided to accept the law as written and allow authorities to enforce it as they saw fit.¹²⁹ The controversy over Oklahoma's Bone-Dry Law brings to light the growing rift between the state's liturgical and evangelical or pietistic populations. The former's stance toward liquor put it at odds with the numerically dominant evangelicals, and alienated it from the more respectable, mainstream elements of society in the Sooner state.

The liturgical-evangelical split in Oklahoma, by itself, cannot explain the persistent problem of bootlegging throughout the state before national prohibition as the liturgical population was too small to account for all or even most of the illegal liquor activity during the period. Oklahoma liturgicals were merely a portion of the population that fell outside the bounds of respectable society. Bootlegging continued on a large scale, though it never received the attention it had garnered during the Haskell and Cruce administrations.

¹²⁹ *Harlow's Weekly*, 19 September 1917.

Newspaper accounts and reports to the governors indicate that bootlegging lost prominence as an issue during the First World War. The conflict in Europe dominated state newspapers, particularly after the United States government joined the quagmire in April 1917, until the end of 1918. Oklahoma, like the rest of the nation, became caught up in the war. The state set up extensive military recruitment programs, liberty loan drives, and formed an Oklahoma Council of Defense with subsidiaries at the county level. At times, these wartime institutions exceeded their mandates---and the law---to accomplish their ends. Coercion was used to pressure reluctant Oklahomans to join the army and purchase liberty loans, and the state's small German-American population came under considerable pressure to discontinue its use of the German language in schools, churches, and newspapers. As elsewhere in the nation, the attack on German culture during the war weakened the cultural arguments of Oklahoma's German-American association against prohibition.

While liquor no longer was the dominant issue that it had been in the early years following statehood, sufficient evidence exists to indicate that the illegal liquor industry remained strong and expansive in Oklahoma into the 1920s. The *Guymon Herald* reported the arrest of a bootlegger late in 1916 in possession of thirty-five quarts of liquor. Reflecting a continued suspicion of enforcement officials, the account related that officers poured the liquor into the snow in the presence of three trustworthy church members.¹³⁰ A few weeks after America's war declaration the following spring, the Okeene marshal arrested a Kansas City man who was circulating through the town taking orders for liquor (to be shipped to customers). A regional newspaper noted, "We understand that quite a number in this vicinity gave him orders and paid cash, the amounts varying from \$2.50 to \$10.00."¹³¹ The grand jury investigation of vice conditions in Muskogee began in July 1917; the embarrassing situation involving Norman officers and the confiscated

¹³⁰ *Guymon Herald*, 25 January 1917.

¹³¹ *Okarche Times*, 18 May 1917.

sacramental wine took place in the fall of that year. In 1918, Governor Williams authorized Attorney General Freeling to investigate the nonenforcement of prohibition and anti-gambling laws in Okmulgee, Muskogee, Creek, Tulsa, Rogers, Ottawa, Carter, Pottawatomie, and Grady counties.¹³² Illegal liquor sales, then, continued in Oklahoma even after America's participation in the European conflict pushed the topic of bootlegging from many newspapers.

Nationally, the period of American participation in the First World War also saw a flurry of liquor legislation by the federal government, which affected dry states, like Oklahoma as well as wet states. Congress passed the Lever Food and Fuel Control Act in August 1917, which forbid the use of foodstuffs in the production of distilled liquor, adopted the Eighteenth Amendment in December of that year (to be submitted to the states), and passed the War Prohibition Act, which banned the manufacture and sale of liquor after 30 June of 1919.¹³³ The Oklahoma delegation to Congress unanimously supported the Eighteenth Amendment. In fact, Sooner delegates had supported national prohibition as early as 1914 when such legislation was first introduced.¹³⁴ These measures did not address the possession or consumption of liquor, though the amendment banned the personal as well as commercial production of liquor.

Even after Congress had bound prohibition to the patriotic war effort at home through such legislation, liquor continued to traffic in Oklahoma. Enforcement efforts also continued and, in some regions of the state, increased. In Lawton, provost guards, stationed in a five-mile radius around

¹³² Robert L. Williams to S. P. Freeling, 26 March 1918, 20 August 1918, Robert L. Williams Papers: Administrative File, 1917-1919, Box 1, File 9.

¹³³ Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, 174-176, 180. As Timberlake notes, War Prohibition effectively made the United States a dry nation as of July 1919, though national prohibition did not take effect until January 1920. Proponents of the wartime act successfully argued that the ban should take effect in the summer of 1919, despite the cessation of hostilities the previous November because the United States had not signed a peace treaty and portions of the American Expeditionary Force remained in Europe, leaving the nation in a wartime condition.

¹³⁴ *Harlow's Weekly*, 2 January 1915.

Ft. Sill in 1917, targeted bootleggers, gamblers, and prostitutes who had gravitated toward the base when it was designated the central military camp in the region.¹³⁵ In spite of these efforts, liquor remained available in the state. As one editor admitted shortly after Christmas 1917, "considerable liquor is still finding its way into Oklahoma, despite the federal and state anti-liquor laws. . . ."¹³⁶ The attorney general's investigation of vice conditions in the aforementioned counties began in August 1918. Two months later, Oklahoma's Assistant Attorney General R. E. Wood contacted J. M. White, chairman of the Oklahoma Council of Defense, informing him that druggists should not be allowed to sell Jamaica Ginger, Harter's Iron Tonic, Peruna, and several other patented medicines as beverages because alcohol comprised between twelve and eighty percent of their contents. Wood's letter and subsequent correspondence between the offices of governor and attorney general indicate that state enforcement officials were concerned about the sale of these medicines, and that the Council of Defense played at least some role in the enforcement of liquor laws during the war.¹³⁷

The standard enforcement departments also stepped up liquor enforcement during the war. The police departments in Oklahoma City and other cities conducted regular raids of rooming houses where illegalities such as drinking and gambling were suspected. Officers in these "axe squads" attained no search warrants prior to the raids.¹³⁸ Tulsa police seized one hundred gallons of Jamaica ginger in a July 1919 raid, and bootleggers engaged federal officers in a gun battle during a raid on the Arkansas River

¹³⁵ *Harlow's Weekly*, 10 October 1917.

¹³⁶ *Harlow's Weekly*, 26 December 1917.

¹³⁷ R. E. Wood to J. M. White, 22 October 1918, Attorney General and Assistant A. G. Records, A. G. S. P. Freeling, Miscellaneous Correspondence, Box 1, File 17; Robert L. Williams to S. P. Freeling, 18 November 1918, Robert L. Williams Papers: Administrative File, 1917-1919, Box 1, File 9. Little has been recorded of the Council's part in liquor enforcement. O. A. Hilton, "The Oklahoma Council of Defense and the First World War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 20:2 (March 1942): 18-42, does not mention liquor, nor does *Sooners in the War*, which the Council published regularly to inform the public of its activities. The final issue, from 4 January 1919, contains selections from previous issues and a final report from the Council.

¹³⁸ *Harlow's Weekly*, 8 December 1921.

between Noble and Osage counties. The liquor men, one of them wounded in the battle, eventually retreated, and the revenuers seized a moonshine still that they determined had been in operation for more than a month.¹³⁹ While these raids perhaps demonstrate a stronger commitment by enforcement officials to squelch the illicit liquor industry, they also indicate the tenacious nature of that industry in Oklahoma.

Despite attempts to portray bootlegging as unpatriotic, illegal liquor sales continued in several regions of the state throughout the war. In August 1918, a member of the Sanitary Corps informed Attorney General Freeling that liquor sales and prostitution were common in Muskogee, adding, "Such conditions as exist in Muskogee are not compatible with the full military efficiency of the Nation. I do not doubt that Muskogee is thoroughly loyal and patriotic, but it will not have proved so until it enforces the laws against prostitution and bootlegging more thoroughly."¹⁴⁰ The attorney general's 1918 investigation determined that liquor was readily available in Ardmore hotels and that Coal County contained at least one hundred sources of whiskey. Regarding Tulsa, an investigator reported, "I am satisfied from information which I secured that there are probably as many as one hundred places in the city of Tulsa where liquor can be purchased. I have some twelve or fifteen bottles of whiskey purchased during the last few days in Tulsa, without any difficulty whatever."¹⁴¹ While some Oklahomans may have detached themselves from the illicit liquor trade out of a sense of patriotic support for the war, others continued to buy and sell liquor.

The situation bred frustration among some enforcement personnel and

¹³⁹ *Daily Oklahoman*, 19 July 1919; H. R. Christopher to Mrs. Clara F. Hartsog, 5 September 1919, James B. A. Robertson Papers: General Correspondence, 1919, Box 15, File 4, Oklahoma Department of Libraries Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, OK.

¹⁴⁰ Paul Popewe to S. P. Freeling, 16 August 1918, Attorney General Civil Cases, Record Group 1-2, Box 19, File 940, Oklahoma Department of Libraries Archives and Records, Oklahoma City, OK.

¹⁴¹ J. J. Barnes, "Report on Ardmore, Healdton and Wirt," 10 September 1918, E. P. Hill to S. P. Freeling, 21 October 1918 and 26 October 1918, Attorney General Civil Cases, Record Group 1-2, Box 19, File 940.

led to some excesses on their part. In 1919, complaints arose from northeast Oklahoma after liquor officers, on two separate occasions, killed innocent men driving high-speed out-of-state automobiles. Officers, armed but unidentified as enforcement personnel, ordered the car to stop so that they might search it for liquor. The drivers feared a holdup was in progress, sped up instead, and officers riddled the car and occupants with bullets. Regarding this, the *Tulsa World* asserted, "To date, the enforcement officers have inflicted greater damage on the law-abiding population that (sic) have the holdups and bank robbers."¹⁴²

The passage of the Volstead Act in 1919 provided for the enforcement of national prohibition beginning 16 January 1920. Like the War Prohibition act, it allowed for the possession of liquor purchased or manufactured before the enforcement dates.¹⁴³ National prohibition brought joint enforcement by state and federal officials in theory. In practice, state and local enforcement officers in Oklahoma deferred to their federal counterparts. Newspaper editor Victor Harlow conceded this in 1921, "Following the passage of the Volstead act there was a disposition on the part of municipal and county authorities to rely more and more upon the federal authorities for the suppression of the liquor

¹⁴² *Harlow's Weekly*, 17 September 1919. Harlow reprinted the comments of the *Tulsa World*.

¹⁴³ Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, 154, 180, 182-183. Interestingly, the original draft of the Volstead Act, written by Wayne Wheeler of the Anti-Saloon League and presented to Representative Andrew Volstead of Minnesota for deliberation in the House of Representatives, prohibited the possession of liquor as well as its manufacture, transportation, and sale. Congress amended Volstead's (Wheeler's) act to allow for the possession of liquor purchased before the implementation of the liquor ban and for the production of fruit juices and cider which might be intoxicating. The first provision likely was a concession to middle-class and upper-class private clubs that had set aside large stores of liquor in anticipation of the ban, while the second provision likely was a practical matter as fruit juices might so easily be fermented as to make effective enforcement of a liquor ban impossible. The federal government, faced with the choice of exempting intoxicating cider and fruit juices from the liquor ban or banning all such cider and juices regardless of their intoxicating nature, chose the former to spare the fruit industry from the devastating effect of the latter policy option. Many urban wets accused Congress of targeting the urban dweller's beer and whiskey while ignoring the farmers' cider. Federal prohibition was less a rural trick on urban America than a result of the factors mentioned above. In any case, the production of intoxicating cider and fruit juices seems to have been of less consequence in Oklahoma as the newspapers and correspondence between state enforcement officials make slight mention of it.

traffic.”¹⁴⁴ Enforcement officials in the Sooner state had struggled to achieve the correct balance between enforcement and nonenforcement for twelve years and gladly surrendered this problem to federal officers. Oklahoma’s officials were not unique in this disposition. According to Robert Smith Bader, in his study of Kansas prohibition, “In practice, enforcement was left largely, or exclusively, to the federal government.”¹⁴⁵ Kansas, which also had banned liquor long before national prohibition took effect, gladly gave over its responsibility for liquor enforcement to the federal government.

The onset of federal prohibition brought no abatement of the liquor trade in Oklahoma. A March 1920 raid in McIntosh County by federal officers netted over three hundred gallons of grain alcohol from a series of stills in the area, but few arrests. One of the marshals asserted that the area contained a “nest of moonshiners” that he vowed to arrest.¹⁴⁶ The vast extent of liquor violations in Oklahoma is indicated by its impact on the federal courts. The *McAlester News-Capital* urged the formation of another Congressional seat and judicial district in eastern Oklahoma, noting, “Largely because of the prohibition business, the federal courts are crammed to the guards now and perhaps will continue to be until people lose the recipe for moonshine liquor. . . .”¹⁴⁷ In 1922, Governor James B. A. Robertson told the Oklahoma City Rotary Club that he believed enforcement of the liquor ban had broken down. Prohibition, he asserted, was “making criminals of thousands of good men who are decent citizens in every respect save one. Nearly every home in Oklahoma has its own hootch, or corn, or whatever you want to call it. You can get corn whiskey in every county in Oklahoma.”¹⁴⁸ The state’s liquor industry remained vigorous despite state and federal bans against it.

It should be noted, also, that most bootleggers in the Sooner state

¹⁴⁴ *Harlow's Weekly*, 28 October 1921.

¹⁴⁵ Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas*, 193.

¹⁴⁶ *Eufala Indian Journal*, 4 March 1920.

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in *Harlow's Weekly*, 9 September 1921.

¹⁴⁸ *Daily Oklahoman*, 26 April 1922.

engaged in this activity for profit. The persistent availability of liquor indicates a ready market for that product---a sizable portion of the Oklahoma population continued to consume alcohol after it had been banned by state and later federal statutes. The demand for liquor was sufficiently strong (and the potential for profit sufficiently great) that bootleggers found ways of circumventing the laws from the implementation of prohibition in 1907. Drys in Oklahoma focused on the liquor men as the source of this demand, and undoubtedly the liquor men did take advantage of some Oklahomans who were addicted to alcohol. The scope of the illegal liquor industry in Oklahoma, however, suggests either that the liquor men provided booze to more than just alcoholics or that the alcoholic population in Oklahoma reached epidemic proportions.

Dry proponents such as the leaders of the Anti-Saloon League and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union tended to de-emphasize the state's large population of liquor consumers and targeted the liquor producers and suppliers. This was a politically astute strategy as the producers and suppliers represented a much smaller voting population than the consumers. Further, the liquor industry, operating outside the bounds of Oklahoma and then federal law, attracted some very unsavory people who were willing to commit various other crimes that outraged the general population. At the same time, however, the Anti-Saloon League and other supporters of prohibition asserted that their goal was to destroy the retail liquor industry---the old-time saloon. This tactic allowed them to pit Oklahoma professionals and merchants, who formed the core of respectable society (and generally avoided the saloons), against the state's laboring men, who operated at the periphery of respectable society or beyond and who tended to support the saloon much more.

The confusing nature of Oklahoma's liquor codes further eroded effective enforcement. The 1908 referendum on the dispensary system led some to believe that voters had rejected prohibition. While the 1910

referendum seemed to settle that question, confusion continued over the whether the federal or state and local governments were responsible for liquor enforcement in the lands of the former Indian Territory and Osage Reservation; and liquor continued to flood into Oklahoma from other states. The Bone-Dry Law of 1917 addressed this issue and closed the personal use loophole many bootleggers had utilized to avoid conviction. Mention of distilling operations within the state increased toward the end of the second and into the third decades of the twentieth century, suggesting that the Bone-Dry Law, by banning liquor imports, inadvertently spurred the growth of whiskey production in Oklahoma. Compounding this confusion over the reach of the state's liquor statutes, was the uneven application of the liquor ban. Even the patriotic arguments used by dries during the First World War failed to desiccate Oklahoma, and liquor remained available into the 1920s when federal officials assumed primary responsibility for liquor enforcement.

The Anti-Saloon League's appeal to Oklahoma's respectable, middle classes did little to convince the laboring population that it should abandon use of alcohol, which had become a staple of working-class culture over the previous century. These men, in particular, continued to support the liquor industry even though it operated outside the law. Oklahoma prohibition between statehood and the onset of the national liquor ban, thus, was a paper prohibition. According to Oklahoma statutes, the sale of liquor was illegal, though liquor remained available throughout the period. The government attested to this by repeatedly tightening the prohibition code to block the efforts of the resourceful liquor industry. Despite these efforts, bootleggers found the means to meet the demand for their product. In an attempt to gain a further understanding of the motivations of those on each side of this thorny issue, the next two chapters will analyze Oklahoma's dry population---those who campaigned for prohibition, as well as the wet population---those who campaigned against the liquor ban and those who continued to engage in the

illicit liquor trade as vendors or customers.

CHAPTER 5

DRY OKLAHOMA

It is tempting to explain associations that worked to ban liquor in early twentieth-century America as groups of narrow-minded, wild-eyed ministers attempting to legislate morality and return America to a romanticized past dominated by religion. Such a portrayal is partially accurate, particularly in rough and tumble early Oklahoma, but fails to tell the entire story. Ministers did play a prominent role in the prohibition campaign in the Sooner state; and that campaign, like any political movement, had a radical fringe whose aims went far beyond the wishes of most supporters. The majority of dry proponents in Oklahoma, however, belonged to the less-than radical middle classes. They were merchants and professionals---leaders in their communities who believed the saloon possessed no redeeming social or moral value and must be destroyed. Middle-class women also were integral to the liquor reform movement, particularly through the widespread efforts of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which had local affiliates throughout Oklahoma. Despite this extensive organization, these Sooner women deferred to the ministers, lawyers, and merchants who led the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. The League claimed to speak and act for all who supported prohibition, and the women of the Union seem to have accepted this. As mentioned earlier, the Prohibition party in Oklahoma remained small and ineffectual beyond a few communities. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League was the flagship organization in the prohibition drive and deserves special attention when studying dry proponents in the Sooner state.

Before turning to the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, let us consider the

Oklahoma Woman's Christian Temperance Union. It easily was the most visible and most influential anti-liquor organization in the territories in 1900. The Union had organized in both territories by 1890, forming local unions in the eastern communities of Muskogee, Tahlequah, Atoka, Vinita, Wagoners, Claremore, Prior Creek, and Poteau during the last decade of the nineteenth century.¹ By 1904, local unions had organized in Bartlesville, Phillips, Sterrett, Howe, Tuskahoma, Antlers, Grant, Edwards, Calvin, Spiro, Quinton, Ravia, and Purcell.² The WCTU set up temperance day programs in all area Indian schools in keeping with the WCTU's emphasis on education, established a special evangelist to the Indians in the area, and began publishing *Our Helper*, the territorial Union newspaper, in 1903 at Muskogee.³ Chelsea and Tulsa Union members served coffee at polling places on election day; Muskogee, South McAlester, and Ardmore groups visited jails, distributing temperance literature and fruit to prisoners and holding services there.⁴

The Oklahoma Territory Woman's Christian Temperance Union also became active in the struggle against liquor during the late territorial period. It organized a school of methods in Norman by 1901 to train local Union members. The school's impact can be measured by the number of local unions that sent representatives to it---people came from the Tecumseh, Earlsboro, Oklahoma City, El Reno, Chandler, Perkins, Guthrie, Stillwater, Noble and Neal Dow unions to hear speeches by ministers, a Union activist, and an attorney.⁵ The Oklahoma WCTU also began publishing its own newspaper, *The Oklahoma Messenger*, shortly before statehood. The Union in the western territory, like its counterpart to the east, emphasized education and persuasion over coercion to end liquor consumption in the area. Nevertheless, the unions from both

¹ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 29-30.

² *Our Helper*, March 1904.

³ Lilah D. Lindsey, "History of Indian Territory Woman's Christian Temperance Union," 9 February 1918, Lilah D. Lindsey Collection, Series III, Box 2, Folder 17; LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 29-30.

⁴ *Our Helper*, May 1903.

⁵ *Chickasha Daily Express*, 4 June 1901.

territories strongly urged adoption of a coercive prohibition law for the future state of Oklahoma.

The WCTU organizations in the two territories lent their support to the drive for a constitutional liquor ban in the new state. In 1905, as Congress was deciding between single and twin statehood for the territories, the Indian Territory WCTU recommended that all members write the Congressional Committee on Territories pleading for prohibition statehood whether Congress decided to create one or two states from the territories. The Union also pressured local and regional officials for dry statehood. The Tulsa County WCTU sent a committee of women to convince the *Tulsa World* editor to remove a liquor advertisement from his newspaper, and, shortly after the constitutional convention had opened in Guthrie late in 1906, sent a formal petition to convention members urging the adoption of a statewide liquor ban.⁶ Union members did not let up after the convention closed. As the prohibition clause called for a referendum on the liquor issue to fasten the ban to the state constitution, the Union looked toward 17 September 1907 with great anticipation. The Oklahoma WCTU, formed by the merger of the two territorial unions in 1907, designated 17 September 1907 "as a day of fasting a prayer to Almighty God, that he lead the men of Oklahoma and Indian Territories, to vote for the Home. . . ."⁷ The WCTU also supported the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League's crusade to achieve prohibition in the new state.

When prohibition opponents in the Sooner state succeeded in placing the liquor ban on the ballot again in 1910, the Oklahoma Woman's Christian Temperance Union again took part in the campaign. The Tulsa Union placed editorials in area newspapers and, supported by local ministers, held a parade in the city the day before the election.⁸ The Alfalfa County WCTU sponsored

⁶ Tulsa County Women's Christian Union meeting minutes, 27 December 1905, 21 March, 11 December 1906, WCTU ledger, Lilah D. Lindsey Collection, Series III, Box 3, File 1.

⁷ *Oklahoma Messenger*, August 1907.

⁸ Undated (1910) resolution by Tulsa WCTU, Lilah D. Lindsey Collection, Series III, Box 2, Folder 20.

street meetings in Cherokee and at several rural sites at which local ministers spoke in support of continuing the liquor ban.⁹ The state and local unions coordinated much of their work during this campaign and after with efforts by local ministers and the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. League officers, such as Reverend H. E. Swan, Reverend J.J. Thompson, and H. T. Laughbaum, occasionally spoke at the annual convention of the Oklahoma Union.¹⁰

The Oklahoma Woman's Christian Temperance Union and local affiliates did involve themselves in the enforcement of prohibition at times, but its effort in this area did not reach the magnitude of that by the Anti-Saloon League. Members of a local union attended court in Nowata to make enforcement officials there aware that they were under scrutiny, and the Newkirk Union recommended the local sheriff to Governor Cruce as a state-employed detective.¹¹ More often, the WCTU coordinated its efforts with those of the League or left the matter of enforcement to the authorities and the men directing local leagues.

While the Woman's Christian Temperance Union remained prominent in the area's anti-liquor movement, it early on addressed other issues as well. The Tulsa County WCTU discussed, at a 1903 meeting, means by which they might convince city merchants to close their businesses on Sundays. In 1905, the Tulsa organization met to discuss enforcement of the city's sundown curfew for children. City beautification projects also occupied the attention of Union members, such as the physical condition of the city's streets and sidewalks. The group, in 1906, discussed methods by which the streets might be cleaned, drafted a petition to the city council to ban spitting on stairs and

⁹ *Cherokee Republican*, 4 November 1910.

¹⁰ Abbie B. Hillerman, *History of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Indian Territory, Oklahoma Territory, State of Oklahoma* (Sapulpa, OK: Jennings Printing and Stationery Company, 1924), 43, 53, 73, 99.

¹¹ Mrs. W. E. Roberts to Lee Cruce, 19 July 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 19, File 2; Mrs. F. M. Ward to Lee Cruce, 21 July 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 19, File 7.

sidewalks, and proposed installation of a fountain.¹² The Tulsa Union was not unique in adopting issues other than liquor. The Muskogee WCTU, at one point, arranged temporary housing for a local woman addicted to morphine, and then provided a lecturer for the separate statehood movement before Congress settled on single statehood.¹³

Following statehood, the Oklahoma Woman's Christian Temperance Union continued to support a broad agenda. Liquor and saloons---now a matter of enforcement---remained a concern; but, in the spirit of Frances Willard's "Do Everything" approach, the Oklahoma Union, like its national affiliate, also flexed its muscles concerning non liquor issues. Some of these were social concerns, though many included a moral impetus as well. A 1908 report to all Oklahoma WCTU members warned of the dangers that Mormon missionaries posed for state residents: "Here is a danger that is lurking in our beautiful state" and urged members to not be seen attending Mormon meetings.¹⁴ The Tulsa Union urged the formation of a local humane society and pressured the city council to appoint a police matron.¹⁵ In 1910, the Oklahoma WCTU, as part of a larger anti-smoking campaign, joined the effort to convince President Theodore Roosevelt's daughter to stop smoking.¹⁶ The state Union also came out against some sporting events such as a prize fight scheduled for July 1911. That year's state WCTU convention, at Shawnee, urged stronger prohibition enforcement, but also called for woman suffrage, action against prostitution, official censors for moving picture shows, and abolition of printed comics, many of which addressed adult themes.¹⁷ The last two issues dealt with two growing forms of mass media that the Union viewed as a

¹² Tulsa County Women's Christian Union meeting minutes, 20 October 1903, 5 May 1905, 18, 26 April 1906, WCTU ledger, Lilah D. Lindsey Collection, Series III, Box 3, File 1.

¹³ *Muskogee Democrat*, 20 December 1904, 13 April 1905.

¹⁴ Lilah D. Lindsey report to WCTU members, 1908, Lilah D. Lindsey Collection, Series III, Box 2, Folder 19.

¹⁵ Mrs. J. O. Misch, "Lilah D. Lindsey," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 33:2 (Summer 1955): 197.

¹⁶ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 12 August 1910.

¹⁷ Mrs. Abbie B. Hillerman to Lee Cruce, 4 June 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 17, File 4; *Daily Oklahoman*, 30 September 1911.

potential threat to decent society. As early as 1909, the Oklahoma Union endorsed woman suffrage as a means of achieving social reforms.¹⁸ The WCTU embraced a number of social and moral issues far afield from the matter of liquor consumption. In this it was markedly different from the Anti-Saloon League, which remained focused on achieving and then preserving and enforcing prohibition.

Mrs. Lilah D. Lindsey, holding several prominent offices in the Indian Territory and then Oklahoma WCTU, epitomized the diverse nature of the Union's goals. She served as a delegate to the conferences of numerous organizations during the first two decades of the new century: the 35th National Conference on Charities and Corrections; the National Republican League, the Oklahoma Federation of Women's Clubs; the Women's Relief Corps; the Oklahoma Betsy Ross Association; the Tulsa Tuberculosis Association; the Tulsa County Sunday School Convention; and the Tulsa Commercial Club, among others.¹⁹ Membership, and even positions of leadership, in these various organizations forced Mrs. Lindsey and others like her to divide their attention between their many interests. The leadership of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, by contrast, could focus on achieving and then enforcing the liquor ban in the Sooner state.

Despite the common assumption that the Woman's Christian Temperance Union was primarily responsible for prohibition in America, the defacto leadership of the prohibition movement in Oklahoma passed from the WCTU to the Anti-Saloon League between the League's entrance in the late 1890s and statehood. Perhaps this was due to the diffuse interests of the Union and its leaders. Another factor may have been the strong presence of Protestant ministers among the League's leadership and the deference shown by the Union to the clergy. Women's inability to vote in Oklahoma (until 1918) also may have convinced some Union members to allow the League primacy in the

¹⁸ *Oklahoma Messenger*, October 1909.

¹⁹ Lilah D. Lindsey Collection, Series III, Box 6, Files 1-11, 18.

anti-liquor campaign, though the Union had an established record, in Oklahoma and elsewhere, of affecting change among legislators.

Legal expertise and political connections also may have been factors. Captain A. S. McKennon---member of the Dawes Commission, president of the Indian Territory Church Federation for Prohibition Statehood, and later vice-president of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League---incorporated calls for a liquor ban into the final treaties between several Indian tribes and the federal government. He was part of the delegation that met with President Theodore Roosevelt to convince him that Oklahoma statehood, though dominated by the Democratic party, should go forward. McKennon and others cited the prohibition clause in the proposed state constitution as evidence that the region was worthy of statehood. Reverend Evander M. Sweet, secretary of the federation and later superintendent of the Oklahoma League, knew Charles N. Haskell personally, a relationship that paid huge dividends at the Constitutional Convention in 1906-1907.²⁰ The Anti-Saloon League of America's Reverend Edwin C. Dinwiddie, who had lobbied Congress to include a liquor ban in the 1905 Enabling Act, personally knew several members of Congress. Dinwiddie later came to Oklahoma to direct the prohibition campaign of 1907 and authored the enforcement bill introduced by Senator Billups the following spring.²¹ League superintendent and attorney H. T. Laughbaum penned the Bone-Dry law of 1917. The Oklahoma WCTU continued to support prohibition among its broad platform of goals, but its efforts concerning the liquor ban pale in comparison to those of the Oklahoma League.

The women of the Oklahoma Union remained active in the anti-liquor campaign, but increasingly deferred to the men of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League on the prohibition issue. The League encouraged this, claiming to speak for all those who opposed the saloon industry. The League also enjoyed

²⁰ E. M. Sweet, J.R., "C. N. Haskell and Oklahoma Prohibition," 1920, Charles N. Haskell Collection, Box H-26, File 5, Western History Collection.

²¹ *Oklahoma City Weekly Times Journal*, 20 December 1907; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 23 December 1907; *Shawnee Daily Herald*, 25 March 1908.

better funding than did the Union. Its close personal association with the evangelical religious denominations, which the League cultivated by placing ministers in several of its offices and encouraging all denominations to send representatives or trustees to the Oklahoma League, convinced many churches to back the League financially to the exclusion of other organizations such as the Oklahoma Union. One WCTU member complained that area churches gave all of their temperance donations to the League, hindering the Union's effectiveness. Her letter is not known to have altered this practice. Despite such isolated objections, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League gradually supplanted the Union at the forefront of Oklahoma's prohibition campaign.²²

That these women surrendered leadership on the liquor issue to the Anti-Saloon League is not peculiar to Oklahoma. Ruth Bordin, in her study of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, describes the Union under Frances Willard as the nation's leading temperance organization and women's organization, but admits that the Anti-Saloon League of America became the leading temperance organization after 1900.²³ K. Austin Kerr implies that the Union underwent fundamental changes after Willard's death when stating that cooperation between the League and the Union was doubtful while Willard continued to lead the latter.²⁴ Barbara Sicherman and Linda K. Kerber assert that the Anti-Saloon League replaced the WCTU as the leading anti-liquor organization in the twentieth century because men did not appreciate the inroads Union members had made into the male sphere of politics.²⁵ To the extent this took place in Oklahoma, one might describe this changing of the temperance guard as the masculinizing of the Sooner state's anti-liquor

²² Mabel R. Sutherland to Indian Territory Women's Christian Temperance Union members, undated, Lilah D. Lindsey Collection, Series III, Box 2, Folder 20.

²³ Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, xviii.

²⁴ Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition*, 89.

²⁵ Barbara Sicherman, "Separate Spheres as Historical Paradigm: Limiting Metaphor or Useful Construct?" comment delivered at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians, Los Angeles, April 1984, cited in Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75:1 (June 1988): 28.

campaign.

One constant during this transition was the middle-class nature of the reform movement. Bordin describes the Woman's Christian Temperance Union as a middle-class organization; some members were professionals---teachers, principals, college professors, administrators---while others were wives of clergymen or businessmen. Businessmen generally supported temperance; their wives, as members of the WCTU, promoted it and it reinforced the scientific efficiency campaign popular among business owners and managers at the time.²⁶ The Oklahoma Union was no different. Mrs. Lindsey, activist in Tulsa County and Oklahoma unions, had taught school earlier and was married to a Tulsa businessman. Mrs. George Mowbray and Mrs. C. W. Kerr, early organizers of the Tulsa Union, were married to Methodist and Presbyterian ministers, respectively. Abbie Hillerman, president of the Oklahoma Union at the time of statehood, was an attorney.²⁷

The broad platform of reform that the WCTU espoused also likely diluted its efforts in support of the anti-liquor movement. As with the Oklahoma Union, the national WCTU engaged in a variety of programs in the early twentieth century, many of which had little to do with liquor. Union leaders, by the early 1920s, had established twenty-six different departments, addressing such diverse issues as Americanization, child welfare, Christian citizenship, health, sabbath observance, as well as temperance.²⁸ The national Union remained committed to temperance, particularly temperance education, but relinquished its leadership role on this issue to the Anti-Saloon League.

The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League led the struggle to obtain and enforce prohibition in the Sooner state. It placed a number of ministers from around

²⁶ Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 168, 173.

²⁷ Misch, "Lilah D. Lindsey," 197.

²⁸ Elizabeth Putnam Gordon, *Women Torch-Bearers: The Story of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union*, 2nd ed. (Evanston, IL: National Woman's Christian Temperance Union Publishing House, 1924), 217.

the state in leadership positions. These men, however, did not seek to recreate the societal attitudes of an imagined golden past. Like most other reform groups of the Progressive period, the League was a forward-looking organization, hoping to improve society through a ban on liquor. Specifically, it sought to remove from the American landscape the old-time saloon, which it closely associated with a variety of unsavory activities such as gambling, prostitution, and violent crime. During its campaign against liquor, the League sought to convince the public that the saloon was the source of such crimes. Saloon keepers and liquor distributors remained so unconcerned by this criticism that they did little to limit the worst activities in their establishments.

As mentioned earlier, Reverend Howard H. Russell of Ohio brought the Anti-Saloon League to the territories shortly before 1900. In similar fashion to his organizing activity in other regions of the country, Russell contacted local ministers and professionals sympathetic to his mission of destroying the saloon. From those present at his organizational meeting, Russell (or later other national League leaders) selected steering committee to get the new enterprise started.²⁹ The Oklahoma Territory Anti-Saloon League and the Indian Territory Church Federation for Prohibition operated separately until statehood, though both were linked to the Anti-Saloon League of America. The Oklahoma League focused its attention on the territorial government, and both organizations lobbied for a dry statehood.

The territorial leagues adopted the organizational structure of state leagues and the Anti-Saloon League of America. Offices included president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and superintendent. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League convention, held at Oklahoma City in 1899, appointed to these posts Tipton Cox of Hennessey, Reverend J. W. Sherwood of Kingfisher, Reverend Thomas H. Harper of Oklahoma City, F. E. McKinley of Guthrie, and

²⁹ Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition*, 81-82. See also Odegard, *Pressure Politics*, 13-15.

Reverend H. E. Swan of Oklahoma City respectively.³⁰ As in other state leagues, the office of state superintendent (or territorial superintendent as in Oklahoma and Indian Territories prior to 1907) held most influence. Reverend Swan, with guidance from Russell and other national League operatives, directed early League activities in Oklahoma. The convention also named trustees to the League. Beginning in 1903, the Anti-Saloon League of America directed all state and local leagues to allow each religious denomination expressing interest in League work to select representatives to the board of trustees as well.³¹ These served as conduits of information from the territorial League to local supporting groups, such as evangelical religious denominations, and as a means by which those groups could make their wishes known to the League.

Leagues also formed at the local and county levels. Anyone willing to sign a pledge against the saloon could join. In this way, the League drew support from members of the WCTU, the International Order of Good Templars, the Prohibition Party, and other dry organizations. Locally, an executive council, consisting of the pastors of all supporting churches and representatives from various religious temperance society, directed activities, such as promoting local option referendums (in wet districts) and monitoring local saloons for violation of current liquor codes. Each local league sent representatives to a county league, directed by a superintendent.³²

K. Austin Kerr, in his examination of the Anti-Saloon League, asserts that the League was rather autocratic---national leaders provided directives that they expected local members to follow and local members provided funding and staffing for various League projects.³³ The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, however, enjoyed greater autonomy than was the norm according to Kerr. Certainly the national League made its presence felt, as when

³⁰ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 24.

³¹ Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition*, 118.

³² *Ibid.*, 94, 95.

³³ *Ibid.*, 81, 82.

Superintendent Purley A. Baker came to Oklahoma and reorganized the Oklahoma League in 1904 and again in 1909 (discussed below). The state officers, however, exercised considerable discretion between these visits by Baker, and adjusted their activities and speeches to appeal to the interests of the state. Horatio T. Laughbaum was the primary author of much of the liquor legislation debated and adopted in Oklahoma before 1920 (again, discussed below). Though he owed his position (as Legislative Superintendent and later as Superintendent) more to the national League than to the Oklahoma organization, he enjoyed some local control once in office. Much of the Oklahoma League's activity originated from Oklahoma City, rather than Washington, D.C. (home of the Anti-Saloon League of America), though the national League closely monitored anti-liquor activity from each of the states. Kerr notes that, particularly after the reorganization of the Board of Trustees in 1903 and again in 1913, that the League exhibited aspects of both authoritarian rule and representative democracy, though he believes the former a more accurate depiction of League structure.³⁴

The early Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, as indicated by the residences of its officers and trustees, held its greatest influence in the central and northern regions of the new state. Two officers were from Oklahoma City, and one each from Guthrie, Kingfisher, and Hennessey. Of the eighteen trustees, five were from Oklahoma City, four hailed from Guthrie, and one each from Hennessey, Kingfisher, Perry, Norman, Pawnee, Dover, Blackwell, Perkins, and El Reno. A number of League officers and trustees held professional titles. Three of the five officers (Sherwood, Harper, and Swan) were ministers as were seven of the eighteen trustees (Harper, Sherwood, and Cox served as trustees as well as officers and are counted among the seven). Harper and Swan were ministers in Oklahoma City Congregationalist churches; the religious affiliation of the other ministers is not known. Two trustees were

³⁴ *ibid.*, 118, 119.

doctors and one was a judge.³⁵ The presence of these middle-class professionals among the leadership of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League gave it instant credibility among respectable society and influenced the perspective of the League toward the saloon industry. These men did not frequent the saloon. If they drank liquor at all, they did so in their homes or in private clubs. They saw no redeeming qualities in the rough and often dangerous saloons of early Oklahoma.

From its modest beginnings, the League quickly grew until, by 1905, it had representatives across Oklahoma Territory, many of them doctors, lawyers, and ministers. Under Swan, the League worked locally to enforce existing liquor laws and lobbied the territorial legislature to block the passage of any new legislation that might allow the expansion of saloon operations. League activists campaigned against local officials who failed to enforce legal restrictions on the use of liquor; in at least one instance, the League filed charges against a justice of the territorial supreme court who subsequently was removed. Reverend Swan, during his seven years as League superintendent, conducted more than one thousand representations and prosecutions against saloon operators in court rooms around the territory. During the same period, he gave over 1,200 speeches before League supporters.³⁶ League efforts did not go unchallenged by the liquor industry, though the coarseness of its opposition did little to reduce support for a liquor ban.

While the League strove to limit the use of alcohol in the territory, it also quickly began to plan for a dry statehood. League members held a convention in Oklahoma City to which they invited members of the Oklahoma WCTU and other supporters of temperance. Either the movement languished

³⁵ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, April 1915. H. T. Laughbaum, superintendent and attorney for the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, provided a history of his organization in this issue.

³⁶ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, April 1915.

or drifted from the goals of the national League for late in 1904 Reverend Purley A. Baker, general superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League of America, came to Oklahoma and reorganized the territorial League, making prohibition statehood its central goal. With him he brought Reverend J. J. Thomson of the Ohio Anti-Saloon League, to replace Oklahoma City's Reverend H. E. Swan as superintendent of the Oklahoma Territory League. Records indicate that Swan dropped all of his league duties---his name does not appear again until 1916 when he became a field secretary for the Oklahoma League.

Baker also met with ministers from the Indian Territory in Muskogee and founded the Church Federation of Indian Territory for Prohibition Statehood. The group named Captain A. S. McKennon, one of those sitting on the Dawes Commission, president of the federation. For the all-important position of secretary (equivalent to superintendent in state leagues) the group tabbed Reverend Evander M. Sweet, of Muskogee's Methodist Episcopal Church, South. As mentioned earlier, men such as Dr. A. Grant Evans (president of Henry Kendall College in Muskogee), Reverend J. S. Murrow (a long-standing missionary in the region), and many other ministers from around Indian Territory were active in the church federation. Like the Oklahoma Territory League, the federation appealed to and organized dry sentiment among respectable members of middle-class society. This body held its own convention in 1905, but worked very closely with the Oklahoma Territory Anti-Saloon League and the Anti-Saloon League of America throughout the territorial period. In 1907 the two territorial organizations merged to form the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League.³⁷

The national League greatly aided local efforts to prohibit liquor in the proposed state, and this bound the Oklahoma campaign more closely its own movement. The efforts of Reverend Edwin C. Dinwiddie and other League

³⁷ "Oklahoma Report by League Superintendent Horatio T. Laughbaum", *Proceedings, Fifteenth National Convention of the Anti-Saloon League of America, November 10-13, 1913*, (Westerville, OH: The American Issue Publishing Company, 1914), 317-320.

operatives in Washington, D. C., were vital to the liquor ban in Oklahoma. They collected the petitions ministers and Indian groups sent them and presented these to Congress as it deliberated over legislation to allow the creation of the state of Oklahoma. Dinwiddie wrote the amendment to the Enabling Act of 1905 calling for prohibition in the former Indian Territory and Osage lands for twenty-one years after statehood. Baker's visit to the territories in 1904 exemplifies the desire by the Anti-Saloon League of America to maintain control over the state leagues. In replacing Reverend Swan as League Superintendent with Reverend J. J. Thomson of Ohio, Baker replaced an established Oklahoma City figure with a newcomer to the area. Thomson knew Baker and the national officers much better than he did the officers and trustees of the Oklahoma League and likely depended on the national officers for guidance.

Nor was this the last time the national League placed one of its operatives in charge of the Oklahoma organization. In the summer of 1907, when the two territorial prohibition groups merged to form the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, Reverend Dinwiddie was named superintendent. Dinwiddie had come to Oklahoma a year earlier to lead the regional campaign for prohibition statehood, but he owed much of his notoriety to his earlier work in Washington, D. C. A year after his appointment as superintendent, the national League told the Oklahoma organization to remove Dinwiddie after it discovered that he had campaigned for Senator Joseph Cannon of Illinois, an ardent opponent of the League and prohibition. Dinwiddie left to promote temperance and prohibition in England, and Reverend Evander M. Sweet of

Muskogee became interim superintendent of the Oklahoma League.³⁸ Though Reverend J. J. Thomson and Reverend E. O. Whitwell of Oklahoma City expressed interest in the job, the national organization sent George D. Conger to Oklahoma as Dinwiddie's permanent replacement early in 1909. He held the post for two years, giving way to H. L. Sheldon in 1911. When Sheldon resigned a year later, Horatio T. Laughbaum of Oklahoma City became superintendent. He had served as an attorney and legislative superintendent for the Oklahoma League since 1906 and now added the superintendency to his titles.³⁹ Laughbaum's election stabilized the leadership of the Oklahoma League as he served as superintendent until 1933. At the time that he gained the top office, however, he was still a recent emigrant to Oklahoma, having moved to the Sooner state from Ohio as a League operative six years earlier. Given his Ohio roots, Laughbaum likely was acquainted with many national officers. The Anti-Saloon League of America, then, by filling the superintendency with men whom it had trained as professional lobbyists, not only standardized and increased the effectiveness of the state organizations, but maintained ties to and some influence over state leagues such as that in Oklahoma. Other state leagues also changed superintendents regularly; many of these officers came from different regions of the nation.

The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League also was beholden to the Anti-Saloon League of America because of the financing the national organization provided the state League. The latter reportedly spent more than \$22,000

³⁸ *Daily Oklahoman*, 14 November 1908. Reports circulated that the Anti-Saloon League of America also was unhappy with Dinwiddie due to his free-spending methods during the 1907 campaign. A *Muskogee Times-Democrat* article of 4 December 1908, however, reported that the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League had exonerated him of any wrong-doing. Historian K. Austin Kerr asserts that the relationship between Dinwiddie and League Superintendent Purley A. Baker was strained because Dinwiddie's appointment predated Baker's assumption of the superintendency in 1903. See Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition*, 128-129. Whatever the cause, Dinwiddie had a falling out with the national League following Oklahoma statehood. The hard feelings in the Anti-Saloon League of America did not last long as Dinwiddie returned to America and lent his support to the national League's cause a few years later. He is not known to have spent significant time in Oklahoma after 1908.

³⁹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, April 1915.

during the 1907 prohibition campaign, more than the Democratic and Republican parties combined expenditures, but remained \$6,000 in debt at the end of 1908.⁴⁰ In January 1909, Purley A. Baker returned to Oklahoma and quickly raised \$3,000 for the indebted state organization at two speaking engagements. He again reorganized the Oklahoma League "in complete affiliation with the Anti-Saloon League of America. . . ."⁴¹ Dr. George D. Conger became state superintendent in February. The national League also made its presence felt in Oklahoma during the critical prohibition campaigns of 1907 and 1910 by recruiting men prominent in the Anti-Saloon League of America and in other state leagues to support the Oklahoma cause. R. N. Holsapple, superintendent of the South Dakota Anti-Saloon League, campaigned in the Sooner state for thirty days without pay in 1907.⁴² John G. Woolley, former presidential candidate on the Prohibition ticket and later an agent for the Anti-Saloon League of America, spoke in Oklahoma churches in support of statewide prohibition. Ernest Cherrington, editor of the *Oklahoma Issue*, also campaigned in Oklahoma. After prohibition had become an established part of Oklahoma, Laughbaum spent considerable time in Colorado campaigning for statewide prohibition there.

Despite the strong ties between the leadership of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and the national League, one should not assume that the League was an autocratic organization of elitists who dictated policy to the state and local bodies. Certainly the national officers worked to coordinate the prohibition campaigns in the various states, but they also allowed input from local supporters. The local, state, and national leagues gave a political voice to existing anti-liquor sentiments, and this convinced religious groups such as the Oklahoma conferences of the Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, Presbyterian,

⁴⁰ *Daily Oklahoman*, 14 November 1908.

⁴¹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, December 1909. C. L. Stealey, president of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, and Laughbaum recruited subscriptions from area supporters to pay off the balance of the debt by the end of 1909.

⁴² *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, May 1916.

and Congregational churches to continue their endorsement of the League.

As statehood neared, the Oklahoma Territory Anti-Saloon League and the Indian Territory Church Federation for Prohibition continued to press for the creation of a dry state. Attorney and League operative A. S. McKennon convinced Indian leaders to include a call for prohibition in their appeals to Congress. As chairman of the prohibition committee at the 1905 Sequoyah Convention, McKennon helped make perpetual prohibition a feature of that convention's final report. The Sequoyah Convention also put him in touch with other dry supporters such as Charles N. Haskell, the man who later served as floor leader at the Oklahoma constitutional convention and as the state's first governor.

While League supporters in both territories worked toward statewide prohibition, they also continued to address immediate conditions in the region. Enforcement efforts in dry Indian Territory increased dramatically in 1906 when William E. "Pussyfoot" Johnson arrived as a federal liquor enforcement officer. Johnson, whose efforts against the illegal liquor industry made his a household name throughout the territories, was a prominent member of the Anti-Saloon League of America and had served previously as editor of the official League newspaper, *American Issue*. Reverend Charles C. Brannon, one of Johnson's commissioned deputies as well as a Methodist minister in the northeast region of Oklahoma Territory, was active in the territorial and later the state League. The state Methodist Episcopal conference elected him as trustee to the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League in 1912 and 1913. Brannon took his federal post seriously, rooting out liquor violators during the week before taking the pulpit on Sunday.⁴³

League operatives in Oklahoma Territory were not content to wait for the vote on constitutional prohibition. They sought the immediate elimination

⁴³ Vertical Files, Oklahoma Territorial Museum, Guthrie, OK.

of the saloon at the county and municipal level by inhibiting saloon operators from renewing their annual liquor licenses. They dried up more than one hundred communities, most of them small, by late 1906. Asserting that the saloon was corrupting young people, the League targeted those towns that contained state educational institutions---Norman, Stillwater, Tonkawa, Alva, Edmund, and Weatherford. The latter had been a wide-open town in the past, but the League claimed that it had achieved a split in the liquor sentiment of Weatherford residents by the fall of 1906. In the southwestern town of Arapahoe, the Anti-Saloon League defeated efforts to open a brewery and blocked the renewal of saloon licenses for two saloons. The League persuaded the Anadarko city council to raise its annual liquor license from \$300 to \$500.⁴⁴ The League also pressured the territorial governor, Frank Frantz, to remove from office five or six county attorneys who were lax in liquor enforcement.⁴⁵ By June 1907 League officers claimed that they had helped reduce the number of saloons in Oklahoma Territory by one hundred.⁴⁶

In the fall of 1906, voters from the two territories elected delegates to a convention in Guthrie to draft a constitution for the proposed state of Oklahoma. Activists in the Indian Territory Church Federation for Prohibition and the Oklahoma Territory Anti-Saloon League, led by Reverend Dinwiddie, called for the election of men sympathetic to the prohibition cause regardless of their party affiliation. They sent circulars to known drys urging them to involve themselves in the selection of delegates.⁴⁷ Perhaps due to Dinwiddie's status as an outsider (he had come to Oklahoma that year when the prohibition question had shifted from the halls of Congress to the territories), the League and its supporters were able to place only a minority of confirmed drys in the convention as voting delegates.

⁴⁴ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 8 September 1906.

⁴⁵ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 13 September 1906.

⁴⁶ *Beaver Journal*, 28 June 1907.

⁴⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 8 September 1906.

When the constitutional convention opened in November 1906, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League sent lobbyists such as Dinwiddie and Sweet to attend, and established headquarters in Guthrie from which to organize their lobbying efforts. The League found some convention delegates very receptive to their arguments. William J. Caudill of Hobart, who represented southwestern Oklahoma at Guthrie in 1906 and 1907, supported prohibition. In fact, his views so closely matched those of the League that he became a trustee of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League in 1910 and again from 1912 until 1914. Reverend Thomas H. Harper represented Oklahoma City at the convention. He had served as secretary to the Oklahoma League prior to statehood and later served as treasurer of the state League until 1913. League operatives introduced to the convention some of the many petitions calling for statewide prohibition. Owing both to its superior organization and to its members' well-placed connections---the most obvious being Haskell's close ties to Reverend Sweet---the League achieved prohibition at the convention.

Sweet later recounted that Haskell brought the prohibition issue to the unchurched population of the territories and pulled the region's middle classes into the prohibition fold. As he stated, "I knew what the Church people as a class would do about it (prohibition). I knew what the saloon-keepers and gamblers of Indian Territory, together with the rough-necks who danced when they piped, would do about it. But between these two opposite classes were the great middle class, many of whom had not made up their minds. And I knew that victory or defeat was to come from these."⁴⁸ Sweet's comments encapsulate the arguments of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League---the prohibition struggle pitted organized religion against the liquor industry for the hearts and minds of middle-class men. No appeal was made to the region's laboring classes. In fact, his only mention of laborers was the reference to the rough-necks (semi transient workers in the oil fields) as the dupes of the

⁴⁸ E. M. Sweet, "C. N. Haskell and Oklahoma Prohibition," Charles N. Haskell Collection.

liquor industry, a lost cause in the eyes of Sweet and many other League supporters.

The prohibition issue was not yet final in March 1907 when the convention adjourned. Delegates decided that voters should weigh in on the prohibition provision at the September election before it became a permanent part of the state constitution. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, newly formed from the two territorial leagues in the summer of 1907, intensified its dry campaign in the months before the September vote on statewide prohibition. Local leagues had formed in all but three counties of the proposed state in the summer of 1906. Each of these arranged speaking engagements by local men and produced prohibition tracts addressing local issues for the newspapers. By the following summer the League had established press bureaus throughout the state, and ten million pages of literature blanketed the region in the weeks before the election. The League's state office sent forty speakers to barnstorm every region of the state.⁴⁹ To fund this massive effort, Reverend Dinwiddie asked Oklahoma ministers to speak before Sunday school and church meetings on the topic of liquor. Ministers were to send him all money collected in support of prohibition.⁵⁰ As indicated above, Dinwiddie spent money far in excess of the amount collected.

The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League not only achieved statewide prohibition in 1907, but also helped Democrats nominate the publicly dry Charles Haskell for governor. Lee Cruce also sought this nomination and he enjoyed considerable support. Cruce personally supported prohibition, but publicly took a moderate stance on the liquor question, making him less appealing to the League and other drys in the Sooner state. With the aid of drys, Haskell captured the Democratic nomination for governor and easily defeated his Republican opponent, Frank Frantz, at the general election in November. As the Sooner state's first governor, he gave the League a

⁴⁹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, January 1916; *Daily Oklahoman*, 17 November 1907.

⁵⁰ *Daily Oklahoman*, 14 November 1908.

powerful ally in its calls for effective enforcement of the liquor ban. As Reverend Sweet explained, "The nomination and election of C. N. Haskell as the first governor of Oklahoma was a great triumph for militant righteousness."⁵¹ Haskell's support for the liquor ban during the constitutional convention and during his term as Oklahoma's first governor helped marry prohibition to the Democratic party in early Oklahoma. This was a wise decision by the politically astute Haskell who understood that the respectable, middle-class elements of Oklahoma society were turning increasingly toward a liquor ban. For years after he finished his four-year term, Haskell remained one of Oklahoma's most popular governors. This marriage also benefited the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, which enjoyed considerable political influence and access to the governor's office not only during Haskell's term but during those of his Democratic successors as well.

Following the adoption of statewide prohibition in Oklahoma, the Anti-Saloon League continued to apply political pressure at various levels of government. Late in 1907, League Secretary Reverend Thomas H. Harper and Dinwiddie went to Washington, D. C. to meet with President Roosevelt regarding selection of federal district judges for the new state. Former Oklahoma Territory Attorney General Cromwell, a Republican, was a leading candidate for one of these posts, but, as Harper stated, "Cromwell was not acceptable to us. Cotteral was acceptable. Burwell also was acceptable. We did not try to dictate the appointment."⁵² Despite Harper's disclaimer, he and Dinwiddie had some influence over the selection; Roosevelt ultimately tapped John H. Cotteral to be the federal judge for the western district of Oklahoma. The eastern district judgeship went to John Campbell, who met with League approval. Cromwell is not known to have held a judgeship after statehood.

The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, to promote its views and inform

⁵¹ E. M. Sweet, "C. N. Haskell and Oklahoma Prohibition," Charles N. Haskell Collection.

⁵² *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 14 November 1907.

prohibition supporters of enforcement issues, began publishing its own edition of the national League's newspaper, *American Issue*, in September 1908 in Oklahoma City.⁵³ League officers were not content with the adoption of the liquor ban and used this monthly newspaper to marshal support for prohibition. Editorials urged supporters to get behind local and state candidates who demonstrated a willingness to enforce the ban strictly, and to campaign and vote against those candidates who did not enforce prohibition. In 1910, when opponents of Oklahoma prohibition succeeded in placing the liquor question on the ballot again, the state League used its edition of *American Issue* to urge all friends of the liquor ban to vote against the proposed local option measure. Editors kept supporters informed of prohibition successes in Oklahoma and countered arguments of the various wet organizations that formed following statehood and prohibition.⁵⁴

Leadership of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League remained fluid after statehood. In July 1908 Dinwiddie left Oklahoma to campaign for prohibition in England. Reverend Evander M. Sweet, former secretary of the Indian Territory Church Federation for Prohibition, replaced him, but only held the post until November of that year. When Purley A. Baker of the Anti-Saloon League of America visited the following January he brought with him Reverend George D. Conger and reorganized the Oklahoma League a second time, tying it more closely to the national body. Conger came to Oklahoma from Illinois where he had served as League Assistant Superintendent for the Chicago region. He retained the top post in Oklahoma's League for two years before moving on to the superintendency of the Washington state League. In

⁵³ The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League published the *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition monthly from September 1908 through December 1916. The national edition of the *American Issue* continued into the 1920s.

⁵⁴ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, September, November 1910; *American Issue*, November 1908; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, 1 September, 24 October 1908, May 1909, June, October, December 1912, February, December 1914, May 1915, August 1916. The *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition is sprinkled with comments lauding the accomplishments of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and answering the arguments of wet organizations. These specific citations are but a sampling of such reports.

his place came Reverend H. L. Sheldon who had served in the legal department of the Illinois Anti-Saloon League. Sheldon remained one year as in May 1912 the national League reassigned him to the Oregon Anti-Saloon League. The superintendency of the Oklahoma League stabilized when Oklahoma City's Horatio T. Laughbaum, League Attorney since 1906, succeeded Sheldon in the top post. He held that position in the Oklahoma League until 1932.⁵⁵

Throughout this period, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League worked closely with the government in an attempt to create effective enforcement of Oklahoma's prohibition law. Governor Haskell, whose views on prohibition mirrored those of the League, appealed to the legislature in December 1907 for legislation that would give him broad powers to end the flagrant violation of prohibition around the state. Toward that end, he asked League Attorney Laughbaum to draw up a bill to implement the constitution's prohibition clause. Laughbaum and Dinwiddie did so and then furnished legislators with briefs explaining the law.⁵⁶

William E. Johnson, the former federal liquor enforcement officer in Indian Territory and still active in the Anti-Saloon League of America, also claimed a portion of the bill's authorship. As he later recounted, "The Legislature seemed anxious to enact anything that was desired by the organized dry forces of the state."⁵⁷ The League's close ties to Governor Haskell and its political muscle gave it unprecedented input into the legislative

⁵⁵ *Daily Oklahoman*, 7 August 1908, 5 December 1909; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1909; *Illinois Issue*, 5 May 1911; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, June 1912; "Horatio T. Laughbaum," Laughbaum manuscripts, Oklahoma Historical Society.

⁵⁶ Charles N. Haskell, "Seventh Special Message of the Governor to the Legislature, 12 December, 1907," *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Regular Session of the First Legislature of Oklahoma* (Guthrie, OK, 1908), 36-37; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, March 1911. The state ordered those convicted of violating the prohibition law to pay a \$50 to \$500 fine and to serve a prison sentence of 30 days to six months. Against those convicted of subsequent violations, the state could levy a maximum penalty of \$2,000 and five years in the state penitentiary.

⁵⁷ William E. Johnson, *Ten Years of Prohibition in Oklahoma* (Westerville, OH: American Issue Publishing Company), 3. While this short book contains no publication date, Keith Tolman, in his notes to "The Sacramental Wine Case of 1917-18," 62:3 (Fall 1984) *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, dates Johnson's book to 1919. Johnson's inclusion of statistics and quotations from 1918 and his failure to mention the onset of national prohibition suggest 1919 as its likely publication date.

process when the topic turned to liquor enforcement.

Attorney Laughbaum continued to create legislation to tighten the state's liquor codes. In 1909, he addressed local concerns by drafting a model liquor ordinance for Oklahoma cities and towns that the League distributed to its supporters.⁵⁸ He also remained active around the halls of the state legislature. When bootleggers abused the personal use loop hole in the early liquor codes to bring massive quantities of liquor into the state, Laughbaum drafted legislation, adopted in 1911, which limited the amount of personal use liquor to one quart in places of businesses or recreation and to one gallon in homes. Laughbaum noted that the persistence of the bootleggers had forced he and the legislature to address this issue.⁵⁹

In 1915, when the Oklahoma Woman's Christian Temperance Union lobbied the legislature for a law requiring instruction in scientific temperance in the public schools, Laughbaum arranged an audience before the liquor enforcement committees of the state legislature for the WCTU president, Abbie B. Hillerman. Laughbaum joined Hillerman in authoring the bill to be presented to the senate and the house.⁶⁰ As noted earlier, Laughbaum was the principle author of the 1917 Bone Dry law. When subsequent court decisions hindered the effectiveness of that law, the Oklahoma League sponsored amendments to close the loop holes created in the courts.⁶¹

While the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League attacked liquor violations on a number of fronts, it also defended prohibition against attempts to remove it from the state constitution. In 1910, opponents of prohibition succeeded in putting the question of prohibition before Oklahoma voters a second time. League officials urged supporters to vote to continue prohibition as the alternative (local option) was:

“a long step backward---forestals progress, moral, social,

⁵⁸ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, December 1909.

⁵⁹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, June 1911.

⁶⁰ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1915.

⁶¹ *Harlow's Weekly*, 22 January 1919.

business. . . . Impeaches the integrity of our citizenship. . . . Amends the constitution wholly for the benefit of brewers and distillers outside the state. . . . Puts saloons of the state in the hands of a brewers' trust. . . . The criminal element of towns will mould the civic life of the community."⁶²

The League warned voters of the crime wave that would develop if the local option amendment was adopted: "Vote to open the saloons again in Oklahoma and you vote to open the sluice gates for a carnival of crime."⁶³ During this campaign, the League spent \$4,684.71 on speakers and literature distributed throughout the state. On election day, Oklahomans voted to keep prohibition as the dry portion of the vote increased slightly from 53.7 percent in 1907 to 54.6 percent in 1910, though some opponents of prohibition predicted victory for their cause once Oklahomans had experienced the liquor ban.⁶⁴

As early as April, the League began urging supporters to nominate candidates who championed the dry cause and to vote for those candidates at the primary and general elections. It announced the names of candidates who were soft on enforcement, such as Judge H. Doyle of Oklahoma's northern district criminal court, and urged voters to support the opponent instead, W. L. Eagleton, in this case. This blatant attempt at influencing an election led other justices of the court to accuse the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and Superintendent Conger of demagoguery.⁶⁵ The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League's influence on Oklahoma politics was not boundless as evidenced by the nomination of Lee Cruce for governor on the 1910 Democratic ticket. The League had endorsed William H. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray for the chief executive seat in the state as the other candidates, including Cruce, supported the resubmission of the liquor question to a popular vote.⁶⁶

Bills calling for the resubmission of the prohibition issue to voters

⁶² *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, November 1910.

⁶³ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, November 1910.

⁶⁴ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, December, 1910; Pamphlet distributed by the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, Prohibition files, Barde Collection.

⁶⁵ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, July, 1910; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 22 July 1910.

⁶⁶ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, July 1910.

arose again several times after 1910, but never received the support of the legislature and so the issue never again came before voters until after the repeal of national prohibition. The League, after 1910, focused its attention on electing officials who vowed to enforce the ban on liquor.

Concern over the continued importation of liquor into the Sooner state led Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League representatives to join drys from other states in Washington, D.C., late in 1912. An Interstate Shipment Conference opened there while the United States Senate debated the merits of a bill introduced a year earlier by Representative Morris Sheppard of Texas and Senator William S. Kenyon of Iowa. This bill evolved into the Webb-Kenyon Act of 1913, which allowed dry states to ban the shipment of liquor across their borders. Several Oklahoma drys were prominent at the 1912 conference, including the League's Fred S. Caldwell who drafted an early version of this bill.⁶⁷ Captain A. S. McKennon, vice-president of the League, also attended the conference as did H. H. Holman, a Wetumka banker who later joined the Oklahoma League's board of trustees, and W. J. Milburn, an Oklahoma City businessman who later served as League treasurer.⁶⁸ In fact, Governor Cruce, when asked to name Oklahoma delegates to the Interstate Shipment Conference, nominated all of those whom the League had suggested.⁶⁹

Even though Congress passed the Webb-Kenyon bill over President William Howard Taft's veto, the League sent representatives back to Washington, D. C. in December 1913. The Committee of One Thousand, as this group was known, pressured members of Congress for national legislation banning liquor. Liquor shipments into Oklahoma and other dry states

⁶⁷ "Report of Fred S. Caldwell, As Counsel to the Governor for the Period Beginning with December First, Nineteen Hundred Eight, and Ending with December Thirty-First, Nineteen Hundred Ten," Charles N. Haskell Papers: Administrative File, Box 11, File 13. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League asserted that Caldwell was the principle author of the Webb-Kenyon Act of 1913. See *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, July 1914.

⁶⁸ H. T. Laughbaum to Lee Cruce, 2 December 1912, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 39, File 1; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, April 1913, January 1914.

⁶⁹ Lee Cruce to William Bickle, 9 December 1912, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 37, File 4.

continued as liquor distributors challenged the Webb-Kenyon law in the courts. The United States Supreme Court did not confirm the law's constitutionality until early in 1917. Oklahoma dries thus formed a six-man delegation to attend the 1913 Committee of One Thousand at the nation's capital. Four of the six men---Reverend E. O. Whitwell, H. H. Holman, W. J. Milburn, and H. T. Laughbaum---were associated with the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. Laughbaum gained still greater national and even international prominence in the anti-liquor crusade when President Woodrow Wilson named him to represent the United States at the Fourteenth International Congress on Alcoholism in Milan, Italy in 1913.⁷⁰ This notoriety likely aided League operatives when seeking the attention of elected officials in Oklahoma.

Back in Oklahoma, the League was not content to involve itself in the legislative process. It also folded itself into various levels of the state enforcement bureaucracy. In late the summer of 1908 Haskell appointed attorney Fred S. Caldwell as special counsel to the governor concerning prohibition enforcement. The League noted its approval of Caldwell, stating, "as he is a trustee of the Anti-Saloon League and one of its legal advisors, the appointment is very satisfactory."⁷¹ For the next thirty months, Caldwell traveled around the state, investigating county and municipal officials suspected of failing to enforce the liquor ban. Caldwell served as a trustee to the Oklahoma League from 1909 through 1916. In April 1909, Haskell appointed League Attorney H. T. Laughbaum as special attorney for state law enforcement.⁷² These positions gave the League intimate knowledge of and influence over enforcement policy in Oklahoma.

Nonenforcement of prohibition at the local level remained a persistent thorn in the side of dry Oklahomans. As discussed earlier, local officials

⁷⁰ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 15 December 1913; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, January 1914.

⁷¹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, September 1908.

⁷² *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, April 1909.

struggled to find the proper balance in enforcement amidst competing pressure from drys and from those who favored a less stringent approach to the liquor ban. The League saw those officials who did not enforce prohibition strictly as fomenting anarchy. An editorial in the *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition stated in April 1910, "The supreme danger confronting the American people of today is official anarchy. . . the officer who refuses to enforce the law is an anarchist ten thousand times worse than the red-shirted bomb-throwing savages from the slums of our cities."⁷³ Placed in the context of the period, this warning might have generated considerable fear in some readers. President William McKinley had been assassinated nine years earlier by an anarchist, and anarchists had been very active in Europe attempting to topple the entrenched aristocratic monarchies there. The work of anarchists was a regular part of national and international news of which Oklahomans, particularly educated, middle-class Oklahomans, kept abreast. Local Oklahoma officials standing for re-election in 1910 likely also took the League's statement to heart.

The League held some sway in the enforcement and judicial branches of the state government as well. Governor Haskell publicly admitted that he consulted the Anti-Saloon League before appointing judges to the state criminal court of appeals.⁷⁴ Haskell's successor, Lee Cruce, also relied on League recommendations when appointing men to the Oklahoma judicial system. Late in 1912, T. E. Sisson, a minister from Tulsa and a recently elected member of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League board of trustees, wrote to Cruce urging him to name a Judge League to the Superior Court for the Tulsa area to "break the back" of the local bootlegging industry.⁷⁵ Like Haskell before him,

Cruce, saw fit to consult the League concerning liquor enforcement. When

⁷³ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, April 1910.

⁷⁴ "Address of Governor C. N. Haskell at the Southern States Anti-Saloon League Annual Convention (Atlanta, GA 3 April 1910)," Charles N. Haskell Collection, Box H-26, File 5, Western History Collection.

⁷⁵ T. E. Sisson to Lee Cruce, 9 December 1912, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 36, File 1.

informed that local officers were not enforcing prohibition, Cruce advised correspondents to contact the League, which would refer the matter to the state enforcement agency.⁷⁶ Cruce also granted commissions to local enforcement officers based on Laughbaum's recommendation, and allowed Laughbaum some role in training these local officials.⁷⁷ When the Bryan County attorney asked Cruce to send a detective to gather evidence against liquor violators in that locale, Cruce directed him to contact the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League as it had names of private detectives it recommended for such work.⁷⁸ Attorney General Charles West also recognized the League's importance. In 1911, he urged Cruce to utilize the state Bank Commissioner to attack those banks that allowed people to pay for shipments of liquor (from out of state) at their front windows. To add weight to his suggestion, West notified Cruce that the Anti-Saloon League's Reverend Dinwiddie supported this tactic.⁷⁹ The resistance of the Oklahoma legislature to additional expenditures and its desire to limit the appointive powers of the governor made the Oklahoma League indispensable to an effective enforcement of the liquor ban.

The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League continued to hold considerable political sway during the administrations of subsequent governors. Early in 1915, Laughbaum contacted Governor Robert L. Williams asking him to resubmit Fred S. Caldwell's name to the Oklahoma Supreme Court as a candidate for commissioner. To expedite this matter, Laughbaum told Williams, "I would suggest that you put it up to the Court that Mr. Caldwell's appointment to this position is not only your desire, but is backed by the Anti-Saloon League of

⁷⁶ Reverend J. W. Kendall to Lee Cruce, 23 June 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 17, File 7; Lee Cruce to Dr. B. W. Freer, 23 June 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 17, File 2.

⁷⁷ Lee Cruce to H. T. Laughbaum, 12 July 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 18, File 1; Lee Cruce to J. C. Tucker, 12 July 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 19, File 6.

⁷⁸ Lee Cruce to J. T. McIntosh, 21 November 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 35, File 3.

⁷⁹ Charles West to Lee Cruce, 16 March 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 11, File 3.

Oklahoma. . . .”⁸⁰ In Laughbaum’s view, at least, mention of the Oklahoma League with regard to appointments carried some political weight. The following month, the governor’s office contacted Laughbaum concerning the persistent issue of illicit liquor sales at drug stores in eastern Oklahoma.⁸¹ James B. A. Robertson, governor from 1919 through 1922, also included the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League in prohibition matters. In 1921, Robertson held a conference on law enforcement at the statehouse attended by ministers and members of the Oklahoma Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. Robertson addressed the conference as did League Superintendent Laughbaum and Josephine M. Buhl, president of the WCTU.⁸²

The executive branch of the state government, then, worked closely with the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League concerning liquor enforcement. When the state investigated the official liquor dispensary system for financial irregularities, the four-man investigating committee included George Conger, then superintendent of the Oklahoma League, and Muskogee’s Reverend W. S. Wiley, a trustee of the League who had actively campaigned for prohibition and its enforcement.⁸³ The presence of Conger and Wiley on the committee reflects not only Haskell’s close personal ties to League leaders, but also his desire to satisfy Oklahoma’s organized dries that the investigation was thorough. Through these men, the League gained the ear of the governor concerning prohibition enforcement policy, and joined in the implementation of that policy.

The League enjoyed well-placed connections among local enforcement

⁸⁰ H. T. Laughbaum to Robert Williams, 26 March 1915, Robert L. Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1915, Box 3, File 4.

⁸¹ Chief Clerk of Governor Williams to H. T. Laughbaum, 19 April 1915, Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1915, Box 8, File 5.

⁸² *Oklahoma Messenger* (Stillwater), March 1921.

⁸³ “Investigation of State Dispensary (transcript),” Charles N. Haskell Papers: Administrative File, Box 11, File 7. Jimmie Lewis Franklin notes in *Born Sober* that the state examiner prompted this investigation when he described the dispensary’s financial records as incomplete. The investigation eventually exonerated the head of the dispensary, Robert Lozier, of any criminal activity, though it found fault with his accounting practices. See Franklin, *Born Sober*, 35.

officers as well. William J. Caudill, a League trustee from 1910 to 1914, was elected as the Clerk of the District Court in Frederick. Judge C. T. Bird of Tulsa helped organize local Anti-Saloon Leagues around the state in 1907.⁸⁴ As mentioned earlier, Reverend C. C. Brannon served both as a minister and as a federal liquor enforcement officer prior to and following statehood. The Methodist Episcopal Church of Oklahoma selected Brannon to represent it as a trustee of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. Reverend T. E. Sisson, holding a post as a Methodist minister in Tulsa and serving as a League trustee, also worked as a local prohibition enforcement officer.⁸⁵

The strong ties between Haskell and the prohibition cause benefited both dry supporters and Oklahoma's first governor. In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt publicly criticized Haskell amidst rumors that the national Democratic party was considering Oklahoma's chief executive to be the next national chairman of the party. Roosevelt and Haskell battled in the press for several weeks, and the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League came to the aid of their prohibition ally. Reverend J. J. Thomson, then superintendent of the League, contacted Haskell in October 1908 to inform him that President Roosevelt had violated federal liquor policy while on a 1905 hunting trip in the Big Pasture region of southwestern Oklahoma Territory. The Big Pasture, in 1905, was designated as an Indian reservation and so the federal government strictly prohibited liquor in the area. As Thomson related to Haskell, Roosevelt and a party of about a dozen men purchased liquor (legally) in the nearby town of Frederick and, in violation of federal law, brought that liquor with them into the Big Pasture area where they camped and hunted for five days. Haskell threw this story back at Roosevelt in response to the President's public criticisms of the Oklahoma chief executive.⁸⁶

Haskell proved a strong ally of the dry crusade and publicly

⁸⁴ *Frederick Enterprise*, 15 August 1907; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 12 August 1907.

⁸⁵ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 4 October 1913.

⁸⁶ Reverend J. J. Thomson to Governor C. N. Haskell, 15 October 1908, Charles N. Haskell Papers: Administrative File, Box 11, File 6.

demonstrated his strong support for the prohibition cause. In 1908, he spoke before the Oklahoma Prohibition Convention in support of the liquor ban and its enforcement. Describing the liquor interests in America as “monopolies of greed and graft,” he urged Oklahoma clergymen to involve themselves in politics so that the influence of the “good people of the United States” might be brought to bear against the saloonists.⁸⁷ Early in 1910, Haskell traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to deliver an address before the Southern States Anti-Saloon League Annual Convention. In it, he criticized the federal government’s continued collection of federal liquor license fees from residents of dry states such as Oklahoma.⁸⁸ Haskell’s support for prohibition and the Oklahoma League granted that organization a level of influence in the state government that few political pressure groups enjoyed.

League officers occasionally took part in enforcement of the liquor ban even if they had not been commissioned officially. In August 1908, the League’s Reverend Thomson joined federal officials in confiscating over forty gallons of liquor in Lawton.⁸⁹ Throughout the early decades of Oklahoma statehood, the League aided enforcement officers in collecting evidence against bootleggers, and Laughbaum’s appointment as special attorney for state law enforcement aided that activity. Late in 1909, Adair County Attorney E. B. Arnold, on Laughbaum’s order, seized ninety-one barrels of beer as contraband.⁹⁰ In 1913, Laughbaum traveled to the town of Cushing, amidst the oil field of the same name, to confirm reports that the liquor laws were flaunted there. Cruce referred Laughbaum’s report to Special Enforcement Officer Bert Tillotson for resolution.⁹¹ Laughbaum’s enthusiasm for strict

⁸⁷ “Address of C. N. Haskell, Governor of Oklahoma, Before the Oklahoma Prohibition Convention, April 15, 1908,” Charles N. Haskell Collection, Box H-26, File 5, Western History Collection.

⁸⁸ “Address of Governor C. N. Haskell at the Southern States Anti-Saloon League Annual Convention (Atlanta, GA 3 April 1910),” Charles N. Haskell Collection, Box H-26, File 5.

⁸⁹ *American Issue*, August, 1908.

⁹⁰ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, October 1909.

⁹¹ Lee Cruce to H. T. Laughbaum, 12 July 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 52, File 6.

enforcement of the liquor ban created some difficulty among other enforcement officers. State officer Fred Caldwell, himself an Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League trustee, grumbled to Governor Haskell that Laughbaum was overstepping the bounds of his appointed position as an enforcement field worker for the state.⁹²

The League also encouraged the formation of local enforcement leagues to assist local authorities gather evidence against and convict prohibition violators as well as officials who failed to enforce the liquor ban. The women of the WCTU and, increasingly after 1900, the ministers and other leaders of the Anti-Saloon League exerted pressure on local and territorial officials to enforce existing laws and to draft new legislation to restrict or even ban the saloon from the region. When these methods did not achieve the desired results, the League created local Law and Order Leagues to ensure that prohibition was enforced. Oklahoma City residents formed such a league in early 1900, shortly after a local Anti-Saloon League had organized there. Mayor Henry Overholser criticized the Law and Order League's methods as excessive, drawing charges that he was an anarchist opposed to sound law enforcement. The following summer in El Reno, a saloon brawl long after the midnight closing hour spurred residents of that community to form a local Law and Order League.⁹³ Community leaders in Lawton and Cashion also formed Law and Order Leagues in the early years of the new century.

The Anti-Saloon League organized these leagues around Oklahoma Territory to help local residents monitor the saloon industry. Many Law and Order Leagues hesitated to include vigilante activity in their mission of

purpose. Rather than act on their own, these groups aided enforcement

⁹² Report by Fred S. Caldwell, Counsel to the Governor, to Haskell covering period 12-1-08 to 12-31-10, 31 December 1910, Charles N. Haskell Papers: Administrative File, Box 11, File 13. Apparently, Laughbaum and Caldwell disagreed about the nature of the former's official position. Laughbaum stated in *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition (April 1909) that Haskell had appointed him as a special enforcement attorney. See note 57 above.

⁹³ *El Reno News*, 15 February, 28 July 1900.

officials. They provided authorities with evidence of liquor violations and pressured those officials to act on this information. Some leagues monitored saloons to identify patrons and passed this information to county attorneys. A few published the names of these people in local newspapers to shame neighbors into avoiding these establishments. Law and Order Leagues hired detectives to enter saloons and collect evidence against proprietors. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League facilitated this by putting local leagues in touch with detectives unknown in the community who were willing to testify in court. Some leagues sought to pressure elected officials to enforce the liquor laws. In 1905 the Oklahoma City Law and Order League formed a committee to address the city council concerning liquor violations. Specifically, the League was disturbed that saloons remained open past midnight and that drunken girls were seen within these establishments.⁹⁴

Law and Order Leagues formed in Indian Territory also, as the few United States enforcement officers proved inadequate to enforce the federal liquor ban in that region. McAlester residents formed such a league in 1906, announcing that they would invite Carry Nation to present an anti-liquor lecture. In 1907, the Muskogee Commercial Club voted to create a Law and Order League in that community.⁹⁵ Officers in these leagues tended to be merchants or professional men, often ministers.

Following Oklahoma statehood and statewide prohibition, Law and Order Leagues sprang up in numerous communities as law enforcement officials became swamped with liquor violations. Prominent men in the southwest Oklahoma town of Altus, upset at the continued operation of pool halls that illegally served liquor, formed a Law and Order League in 1908. Similar leagues formed in Sulphur, Andadarko, Bartlesville, and elsewhere.⁹⁶ By 1915, at least thirty Oklahoma communities, including the principal cities, had

⁹⁴ *Cherokee Messenger*, 19 May 1905.

⁹⁵ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 4 August 1906, 5 June 1907.

⁹⁶ *Altus Times*, 10 September, 17 October 1908.

formed Law and Order Leagues or equivalent groups. Typically, men prominent in a community called a meeting at which they organized a league and elected officers to the various committees. Officers of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League supervised this organizing process in towns around the state.⁹⁷

The influence of local religious leaders was unmistakable in some leagues. The Muskogee Law and Order League reorganized in 1908 under the supervision of the local Baptist minister, W. S. Wiley, subsequently a trustee of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. A resolutions committee called for the formation of a permanent executive committee, a legislative committee, a committee on law enforcement, a membership committee, and a finance committee. Each of these committees included at least one Muskogee minister. The city's Baptist, Methodist Episcopal, Southern Methodist, and Presbyterian churches were active in the League, which characterized its work as a "crusade for law enforcement." By 1910 city ministers had collected \$1,000 to hire a detective to gather evidence against elected officials who failed to enforce prohibition.⁹⁸ Preachers held offices in the Law and Order Leagues of Alva, Collinsville, Eufala, El Reno, and elsewhere. The prominent role played by ministers in these Law and Order Leagues, and the rhetoric they used, gave the prohibition enforcement campaign a markedly religious flavor. Other members of Oklahoma's middle class joined the clergymen in their efforts.

That these middle-class men were active in organizing these leagues should not surprise as they were the leading citizens in the community. Prominent Altus men spoke at the meeting to organize that town's Law and Order League. Several leagues listed physicians among their officers. In 1911, the League in the northeast Oklahoma town of Miami petitioned Governor Cruce to commission a special enforcement officer. To impress upon the governor the respectable nature of this request, several of the signatories

⁹⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 5 June 1907; Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 8, File 1; Box 9, File 4; Box 14, File 6; Box 16, File 5; Box 17, File 4; McRill, *And Satan Came Also*, 120-121.

⁹⁸ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 22, 29, 28 December 1908. *Boley Progress* 24 November 1910.

listed their occupations. These included the Ottawa County attorney, the Ottawa County judge, a private attorney, two merchants, and a real estate agent.⁹⁹

Notably absent from this and similar petitions are the names of wage-earning men, such as carpenters, miners, and rough necks from the oil fields.

These Law and Order Leagues worked to improve the enforcement of prohibition at all levels of state and local government. The Anadarko League petitioned Oklahoma's first governor, Charles Haskell, to refuse parole for two local bootleggers serving time in prison. Members feared these men would return to the liquor trade in Anadarko. The Apache Law Enforcement League submitted a petition to the second governor, Lee Cruce, to sign legislation making the sale of liquor a felony.¹⁰⁰ The rapidly growing oil boom city of Tulsa, sporting numerous saloons and roadhouses, belatedly formed an enforcement organization. In 1914, citizens there formed the Independent Law Enforcement Club to combat area bootleggers. This club contacted Governor Cruce and Attorney General Charles West, claiming that the liquor men had organized an extralegal combine or trust to better control local officials and to arrange a suitable division of the profitable liquor trade.¹⁰¹ Law and Order Leagues attended to other enforcement issues as well. The Afton League informed the governor that slot machines were in operation, illegally, in that community. A Law and Order League unsuccessfully prosecuted a case against the Muskogee and Pittsburg baseball teams, jailed for playing baseball on Sunday.¹⁰²

The Oklahoma government welcomed these popular enforcement efforts. Governors Charles Haskell and Lee Cruce relied heavily on the Anti-Saloon League and its local Law and Order Leagues to satisfy public demands for stricter enforcement. The state legislature stubbornly refused to grant the

⁹⁹ Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 4, File 33b.

¹⁰⁰ Charles N. Haskell Papers: Administrative File, Box 11, File 13; Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 48, File 6.

¹⁰¹ Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 62, File 2.

¹⁰² Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 19, File 8; *Lexington Leader*, 13 August 1909.

governor additional funds or greater executive powers with which to fight the liquor trade. Governor Cruce, responding to complaints from Reverend L. Q. Hargraves of Copan that several illegal saloons operated freely there, advised him that the legislature had tied his hands. He urged Copan residents to get involved in the enforcement of liquor laws, adding that he would deputize as enforcement agents local citizens of good standing who applied. On another occasion, the Bryan County Attorney requested that Cruce supply a detective to be employed against saloonists in this southeast Oklahoma district. The governor again stated that the legislature had provided no funding for enforcement, and advised the attorney to contact the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League regarding this matter.¹⁰³ Yet another time, Cruce personally contacted Reverend H. L. Sheldon, Superintendent of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, concerning enforcement problems in the small community of Packingtown. Cruce asked Sheldon, "Will you please have your men investigate this matter, and take steps toward correcting any existing evils?"¹⁰⁴ The Oklahoma government, then, enlisted the aid of the Anti-Saloon League and local residents in its ongoing struggle to stamp out the liquor industry.

The Law and Order Leagues scattered throughout Oklahoma did not work unopposed. The Sooner state's illegal liquor industry was very profitable and thus resilient. Drys frequently concluded that their efforts were insufficient to stem the tide of illicit liquor in Oklahoma. Particularly in the state's growing oil fields and mining districts, bootleggers found a ready customer base for their wares, regardless of the legal risks. Liquor remained plentiful in oil towns such as Cushing, Kiefer, and Ardmore as long as the oil boom continued. The mining camps of northeast Oklahoma supported such a vibrant liquor industry that state authorities intervened in 1916 to break it up.¹⁰⁵ The state intervened numerous times in several counties with limited results.

¹⁰³ Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 34, File 5, Box 35 File 3.

¹⁰⁴ Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 36, File 1.

¹⁰⁵ Robert L. Williams Papers: Appointments, Box 5, File 27; Robert L. Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1916, Box 5, File 8.

Investigating officials often complained that voters in some regions routinely returned to office men who failed to arrest or prosecute bootleggers.¹⁰⁶ The bootleggers also acted to hinder enforcement efforts. The liquor industry operated outside the bounds of the law, and thus attracted some very unsavory men, willing to take extreme measures to protect their source of income. Bootleggers injured or killed enforcement officers on a number of occasions. Many residents who complained to the governor of bootlegging in their area withheld their name for fear of reprisals from the liquor men. This violent defense of the liquor industry prompted angry demands from some drys that elected officials do more to stop this activity.

Oklahoma, then, contained both a population determined to end the liquor trade and a population---comprising bootleggers as well as their customers---who favored the continuation of that trade. Elected officials had to check the political winds of the local populace when enforcing prohibition. The reluctance of many officials to enforce the liquor ban and the sometimes brutal persistence of the bootleggers encouraged some Oklahoma drys to support more extreme measures. In 1913, John Harold Scott of Oklahoma City, an initiate of an organization called the Silent Brotherhood, sent to Governor Cruce a copy of the following announcement: "OFFICIAL WARNING TO LAW BREAKERS, PREDATORY CROOKS, GRAFTERS, POLITICAL AND BUSINESS SHARKS WITHIN THE CITY AND THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA WHOSE LAW SHALL BE MAINTAINED AS DEMANDED AND REQUIRED BY THE CONSTITUTION." Scott went on to threaten all law breakers with divine damnation.¹⁰⁷ Much of this law breaking centered around the city's expansive liquor industry. As one study of vice in Oklahoma's capital city notes, "The Attorney General declared (in 1908) that Oklahoma City was worse than before prohibition. 'More whiskey is packed in and more drunks packed out.'"¹⁰⁸ Local and state officials made

¹⁰⁶ Charles N. Haskell Papers: Administrative File, Box 11, File 13.

¹⁰⁷ Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 48, File 8.

¹⁰⁸ McRill, *And Satan Came Also*, 119.

concerted, but temporary, efforts to clean up the city in 1913, 1914 and 1915. The Silent Brotherhood, and likely others, were critical of the continued law violation in their city.

A persistent problem for the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League was the continued failure of officials in some locales to enforce the liquor ban, and the local voting public's willingness to return such men to office year after year. Regarding such officials, the League advised, "If they refuse, neglect or fail to enforce the law, recourse can be had in court and also at the polls. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League will be glad to furnish advice and assist in all such cases."¹⁰⁹ Under Caldwell, prohibition enforcement improved and several local officials were dismissed, but others remained who did not enforce the law. Haskell estimated in early 1909 that enforcement was adequate in seventy-five percent of the counties.¹¹⁰ Through various appointments of League officers to government posts and the willingness of League operatives to partake in enforcement, the ministers who formed the leadership of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League gained significant influence over public policy.

The formation of local enforcement bodies was not unique to Oklahoma. The Anti-Saloon League of America urged supporters to organize in support of strict prohibition enforcement. The League also reached out to adolescent boys, that section of the population that ministers and League officers believed was most susceptible to the temptations of drink. In 1912 League founder Reverend Howard H. Russell created the Lincoln Legion Patriots, a paramilitary organization of boys in Ohio. William E. "Pussyfoot" Johnson served as the first drillmaster and Russell hoped similar leagues would form throughout the nation.¹¹¹ There is no record of such an organization in Oklahoma, though League operatives did employ school children when

¹⁰⁹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, 17 November 1908, April 1909.

¹¹⁰ Charles N. Haskell, "First Message of the Governor to the Second State Legislature, 5 January, 1909," *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Regular Session of the Second State Legislature of Oklahoma* (n.p.: n.d.), 27-28.

¹¹¹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1912.

collecting petitions in support of the liquor ban.

Not content to influence the enforcement of existing liquor laws, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League also remained active in election campaigns, to fill state and local offices with men of dry sentiment. Reverend Sweet, succeeding Dinwiddie as Superintendent in 1908, promised a “vigorous campaign for the election of legislators favorable to prohibition.”¹¹² In Oklahoma City, League leaders announced that they would join with the local Civic League to offer a slate of candidates in the 1909 municipal elections.¹¹³ The League remained a prominent force in Oklahoma politics before 1920.

Between elections, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League used its political clout to pressure elected officials to shape their policies to meet League goals. In 1913, Laughbaum contacted Governor Cruce urging him to persuade the attorney general to prosecute to the fullest extent those cases then in the district courts against liquor joint operators and the owners of the property on which the joints operated. Cruce notified Laughbaum that he had forwarded his letter to the attorney general’s office.¹¹⁴ The following year, Laughbaum complained to Cruce of the Alexander Drug Company. He charged that this company, which the state had designated as a liquor wholesaler for drug stores throughout Oklahoma, was indiscriminately selling large amounts of alcohol to druggists. He threatened to introduce legislation to choke off all sources of liquor in Oklahoma, including liquor sold as a medicine, if Cruce did not act to rein in Alexander Drug.¹¹⁵ While Cruce did not alter his liquor policy as a

¹¹² *Enid Weekly Eagle*, 13 August 1908.

¹¹³ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 20 January 1909.

¹¹⁴ H. T. Laughbaum to Lee Cruce, 6 March 1913, Lee Cruce to H. T. Laughbaum, 10 March 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 47, File 5.

¹¹⁵ H. T. Laughbaum to Lee Cruce, 2 June 1914, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 59, File 3. Cruce responded that Alexander Drug exercised no discretion in the amount of alcohol it sold to druggists. The governor’s office determined this based on recommendations from local authorities. The governor added that some Oklahoma druggists were supplementing their alcohol purchases from Alexander Drug with out-of-state purchases as the constitutionality of the 1913 Webb-Kenyon Act remained uncertain.

result of Laughbaum's complaint, the latter's temerity in making such a statement speaks volumes on the League's political might in the Sooner state.

The League made its presence felt in local government as well. In 1914 Fred S. Caldwell, no longer an enforcement agent for the state, but still a member of the Oklahoma League board of trustees, filed an affidavit for the recall of Oklahoma City Mayor Grant due to his inability or refusal to reduce vice in the city. Caldwell submitted his petition, containing 125 signatures, on behalf of the Central Hundred, an Oklahoma City civic organization pledged to end bootlegging and gambling in the capitol city. In response to this threat on his job, Mayor Grant named a new police chief and stepped up vice enforcement. A series of raids soon netted the arrest of one hundred liquor men. Governor Cruce placed his attorney general, Charles West, in charge of vice conditions in Oklahoma City and named the League's Fred Caldwell as a special attorney to aid West in prosecuting bootleggers. In light of the increased vice campaign by the Oklahoma City police, the movement to recall Mayor Grant ended.¹¹⁶ In subtle and not so subtle ways, then, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and other dries pressured elected officials to enforce prohibition strictly.

Despite the League's claims of reduced crime and drunkenness, enforcement remained a contentious issue in Oklahoma during the period before national prohibition. Laughbaum, as League attorney and then as Superintendent, spoke throughout the state at religious services and conferences urging his audiences to involve themselves in prohibition enforcement. After 1912 the League hired professional detectives to gather evidence against and arrest bootleggers. Through the efforts of one such detective, the Kiowa County sheriff arrested four Hobart liquor men in the fall of 1913. Early the following year, investigations by League-referred detectives led to the arrest of seven bootleggers in Lawton and seventeen in

¹¹⁶ *Harlow's Weekly*, 31 January 1914.

Ardmore.¹¹⁷ Like its work during political campaigns and its efforts to organize enforcement groups at the local level, the use of detectives was not unique to the Oklahoma League. The Wisconsin Anti-Saloon League, for instance, also provided local dries with the names of detectives who might aid in the collection of evidence against violators of the liquor statutes.¹¹⁸ The Anti-Saloon League of America urged all state and local leagues to employ detectives in collecting evidence against liquor men.¹¹⁹

An inspection of the men who served as officers and trustees of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League reveals, as in the local Law and Order Leagues, a group of men of strong evangelical and middle-class backgrounds. Several Oklahoma Protestant denominations supported the League's efforts. Between 1909 and 1916, the League published endorsements by the Oklahoma Methodist Episcopal Church Conference, the state's Methodist Episcopal Church, South conferences, the state Baptist General Convention, the Oklahoma synod of the Presbyterian Church, and the general conference of Oklahoma Congregational churches.¹²⁰ The League shared much with these religious boards, including leadership. Laughbaum served as the attorney and later the superintendent of the League and as a member of the Presbyterian Temperance Committee. Reverend Evander M. Sweet, secretary of the Indian Territory Church Federation and subsequently superintendent of the state League, served as pastor in Methodist Episcopal South churches in Tulsa, Muskogee, and later Lawton. Reverend Thomas H. Harper, League treasurer and a member of the headquarters committee member from 1908 until 1913,

¹¹⁷ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, May 1915, July 1916, September-October 1913, March, May 1914.

¹¹⁸ *Wisconsin Issue*, December 1906. Unlike Oklahoma, Wisconsin never adopted prohibition as a state measure. Through the efforts of the Wisconsin Anti-Saloon League, however, several counties and cities in the Badger state banned liquor. It was in these dry areas that the League detectives were most active.

¹¹⁹ Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition*, 95.

¹²⁰ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, January 1909, December 1910, November, December 1912, May 1913, May 1914, November 1916.

was a minister in an Oklahoma City Congregational Church. During the same period, the annual state conferences of the Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Southern Methodist, Congregational, Friends, and Christian churches elected members, generally ministers, to the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League as trustees to represent the views of their denominations and to convey the League's message to their congregations. The League became the political arm of these churches, striving to ban liquor, but also gambling, and at times, smoking.

The League's exact composition is difficult to determine as only a few local membership rolls remain. However, lists of state officers and trustees are available and the religious affiliation of these is indicated in Table 5 and

Table 6. The positions included in the first table include president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, superintendent, assistant superintendent and attorney, and, beginning in January 1913, field secretaries, as well as the remaining members of the head quarters committee. League representatives at the annual state convention elected some trustees while the denominations elected others. As there was no discernible difference in their influence on League policy, they have been listed together. When one person was both an officer/committee member and a trustee, he was listed in the first table only.¹²¹

Table 5 indicates that members of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches held most leadership positions, while the second table shows that the Oklahoma League represented the interests of numerous Protestant churches with the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches holding greatest weight. The presence of Southern Methodist and Southern Baptist members among the

TABLE 5

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF OKLAHOMA ANTI-SALOON LEAGUE OFFICERS AND HEAD QUARTERS COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES, 1908-1916

¹²¹ The Oklahoma League listed its officers and trustees in each issue of the *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition from September, 1908 until December, 1916. Data has not been found for 1911.

Officers & Head Quarters Committee Members

	1908	1909	1910	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916
Presbyterian	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3
Methodist Episcopal	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Methodist Episcopal South	2	-	-	2	2	1	2	2
Baptist	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	1
Congregational	2	1	1	1	1	-	1	1
Christian	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1
unknown	3	4	3	-	1	2	2	2

Trustees

	1908	1909	1910	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916
Presbyterian	-	2	1	3	3	3	4	6
United Presbyterian	-	-	1	1	2	2	2	1
Methodist Episcopal	-	2	2	4	7	6	6	5
Methodist Episcopal South	-	3	3	3	6	6	6	5
Baptist	-	2	3	4	4	5	5	5
Congregational	-	1	1	2	2	2	1	1
Christian	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	3
Friends	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
United Brethren	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2
unknown	-	12	13	5	-	-	-	-

League's leadership is understandable as these were the largest denominations in the state according to the 1916 religious census (87,028 and 60,263 members respectively). If anything, these two denominations were under-represented among the League leadership given their numerical superiority in the state.

The prevalence of Presbyterians among League leadership is curious because the membership of the various Presbyterian denominations in Oklahoma was 25,825 in 1916, less than the number of members in the state's Southern Baptist, Southern Methodist, Methodist, and Christian churches. Despite the relatively slight number of Presbyterians in Oklahoma, at least three of the ten officers in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League (see Table 5) belonged to one of the Presbyterian churches in each year between 1909 and 1916. H. T. Laughbaum, occupying the all-important position of state superintendent from 1912 on, was Presbyterian.¹²²

The Congregational church also held influence in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League disproportionate to its number of members throughout the state. In each year save one, at least one member of the Congregationalist church served as one of the ten officers in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League (see Table 5 above). The small membership of the state's Congregational churches (3,419 in 1916) make its presence in League leadership positions noteworthy. Oklahoma's total churched population in 1916 was 424,492. The Congregationalists, then, comprised less than one percent of the state's religious population, yet consistently held one of the top offices in the Oklahoma League.

The denomination to which League members belonged is all the more important because the majority of trustees and at least a significant minority of officers were ministers as the next table of ratios shows. Again, if a person held more than one office or was both an officer and a trustee, he was counted only once---in the first row.¹²³ These numbers indicate that ministers occupied

¹²² Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports, Religious Bodies: 1916 Part I*, 210-212. The 25,825 figure listed above represents the combined membership of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the United Presbyterian Church of North America, the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Consequently, it differs from the figure listed in Table 3 (see chapter two), which represented only those members of the Presbyterian Church in the USA (20,222), easily the largest of the Presbyterian denominations.

¹²³ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, September 1908-December 1916.

most of the offices in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League in all but one year, and ministers consistently held most of the trustee positions.

TABLE 6

PROPORTION OF OKLAHOMA ANTI-SALOON LEAGUE OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES WHO WERE CLERGYMEN, 1908-1916

Number of officers who were ministers/ Total number of officers and committee members:	1908	1909	1910	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916
	6/10	6/10	5/9	3/10	2/10	6/9	7/11	9/12
Number of trustees who were ministers/ Total number of trustees:	13/23	15/26	16/28	20/29	19/29	22/29	21/29	

Also of note is the absence of Catholics, Episcopalians, Jews, and Lutherans among the League officers and trustees. Either these denominations were quite small in Oklahoma, they chose to ignore the League, or the League chose to ignore them. The former applies to the state's Lutheran, Episcopal, and Jewish populations---the Evangelical Lutheran churches reported a combined total of 5,230 members in the 1916 religious census, the Jewish congregations reported 1,166 members, and the Episcopal Church received no mention. Contrast these numbers with the membership figures of the Southern Baptist Church (87,028) and the Southern Methodist Church (60,263), both of which were well represented in the Oklahoma Anti-

Saloon League.¹²⁴ The lack of Episcopalian, Lutheran and Jewish support for the League can be explained by absence of a strong evangelical movement in these denominations and by the use of wine in their religious ceremonies. Members of these liturgical denominations generally did not support national prohibition and likely did not support it in Oklahoma.

By contrast, Oklahoma's Roman Catholic population was sizable (47,427 members in 1916), though, as noted in chapter two, the Catholic church granted full church membership more liberally than did the evangelical faiths. The Oklahoma League may have concluded that it could gain greater political support by not courting the Catholic church. As national studies of prohibition and the Anti-Saloon League indicate, most Catholics opposed prohibition and did not join the League's crusade. Bishop Theophile Meerschaert of the Roman Catholic diocese of Oklahoma publicly advised the moderate use of liquor, but opposed its prohibition.¹²⁵ Participation in the Anti-Saloon League reveals the clearest split between what Paul Kleppner has termed the pietist (evangelical and salvationist) and ritualist (liturgical) political cultures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

One last observation regarding the leadership of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League involves race. As was the norm in many southern states, religion split along racial lines in Oklahoma. The Southern Baptist Convention was exclusively white as were the smaller Free Baptist, Free Will Baptist, General Baptist, and Primitive Baptist churches in the state. The National Baptist Convention served the state's black Baptist population and Oklahoma's black Baptist churches associated with this convention rather than one of the white associations. The state churches adhering to the National Convention contained 42,408 members, making it the fourth-largest congregation in

¹²⁴ Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports, Religious Bodies: 1916 Part I*, 210-212. For the membership figures of the leading denominations in Oklahoma in 1916, see Table 3 in chapter two.

¹²⁵ *Daily Oklahoman*, 8 May 1910; Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, 461; *Daily Oklahoman*, 19 October 1910.

Oklahoma. Given the strong presence of ministers and elders among the leadership of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, the lack of any members from the state's fourth-largest denomination is striking. The smaller African Methodist Episcopal and Colored Methodist Episcopal churches (7,250 and 5,541 members respectively in 1916) also received no mention in League publications and correspondence.¹²⁶ Perhaps the League sensed that inclusion of African-Americans in its hierarchy would hinder rather than help its political fortunes as race was a charged issue in early Oklahoma (evidenced by the hurried adoption of Jim Crow legislation in 1908 and the implementation of voting restrictions against African Americans and others in 1910). Perhaps, also, the League officers internalized the racist attitudes common in Oklahoma and other sections of the United States at this time. League editorials and pamphlets make no direct statements on the issue of race.

The close ties between the League and the white, evangelical churches placed the former among the respectable elements of Oklahoma society. The Anti-Saloon League of Oklahoma Territory formed in Oklahoma City's First Baptist Church, and the decision to form an Indian Territory Church Federation for Prohibition was made by a group of ministers gathering in the Muskogee home of Reverend T. F. Brewer. In 1907, with statehood imminent, the ministers convened again in Brewer's parlor and decided to merge with the Oklahoma Territory League.¹²⁷ The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, then, was not an organization of radical reformers operating on the fringe of society. It was prominent in the state and in most communities, and it provided the means by which the supporting denominations exercised significant influence in state and local politics in early Oklahoma.

The ministers who were active in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League

¹²⁶ Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports, Religious Bodies: 1916 Part I*, 210-212.

¹²⁷ LeGrand, "The Temperance Movement in Oklahoma," 24, 26; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, April 1915.

were prominent in their respective denominations, reflecting the importance these churches placed on the League's work. Reverend Marion Porter, who served as treasurer of the Oklahoma League from 1903 until 1923, was named as the presiding elder in the Enid district of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1905.¹²⁸ Reverend W. J. Moore, a member of the League board of trustees from 1912 until 1918 and a member of the League's head quarters committee from 1920 until 1925, served as chairman of the Sunday school board for the Oklahoma Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Reverend Charles L. Brooks, named to the League board of trustees in 1915, was the Presiding Elder of the McAlester District Conference of Oklahoma's Southern Methodist church, and was put forward in 1920 as the Secretary of the Board of Church Extension for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky.¹²⁹ Reverend M. L. Butler was presiding elder of the Southern Methodist Church of Oklahoma City and later served as a League trustee.¹³⁰ Oklahoma's Christian churches also sent prominent men to serve as officers in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. Reverend D. A. Wickizer, J. M. Monroe, and A. L. Spicer each served as Corresponding Secretary from Oklahoma to the American Christian Missionary Society shortly after statehood. Wickizer was a member of the League board of trustees, while Monroe and Spicer were members of the League's headquarters committee.¹³¹

The Southern Baptist and Presbyterian churches of Oklahoma also selected men of note to represent it in the Oklahoma League. Reverend J. M. Clark, served both as a member of the League board of trustees and as the Superintendent of Evangelism and Home Missions for the Oklahoma

¹²⁸ *Lawton Constitution*, 11 May 1905.

¹²⁹ *Weekly Chieftain*, (Vinita), 24 September 1909; J. B. A. Robertson Papers: General Correspondence, 1920, Box 1, File 2.

¹³⁰ *Harlow's Weekly*, 3 October 1917.

¹³¹ Stephen J. England, *Oklahoma Christians: A History of Christian Churches and of the Start of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oklahoma* (n.p.: Bethany Press, 1975), 119; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1909 to December 1916.

Presbyterian Church.¹³² Reverend J. B. Rounds, who later served on the League's headquarters' committee and as a trustee, led devotional exercises at the 1907 Baptist revival camp at Sulphur and was president of the Baptist Young Persons Conventions in 1907 and 1908. Reverend W. S. Wiley, a member of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League board of trustees from 1909 until 1918, chaired the 1907 Sulphur encampment, served as the first Education Secretary of the Oklahoma Baptist University, and later served as state field secretary for the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.¹³³ Reverend E. D. Cameron, a member of the League board of trustees from 1913 to 1916, succeeded Wiley as Education Secretary for the Oklahoma Baptist University.¹³⁴

Many of the ministers who served in the Oklahoma League also were prominent in secular activities and organizations. Reverend Thomas H. Harper, one of the organizers of the Anti-Saloon League in Oklahoma Territory and treasurer of the state League 1909-1913, was a member of the Oklahoma City school board and a delegate to the statehood convention representing Oklahoma County.¹³⁵ Tulsa's Reverend T. E. Sisson, a member of the League board of trustees in 1913, also served as president of the Civic League of Tulsa.¹³⁶ Reverend W. S. Wiley admitted that he helped to draft the platform of Muskogee's local Democratic party.¹³⁷ Reverend E. O. Whitwell, a member of the

¹³² Mrs. G. T. Ralls, *Oklahoma Trails: A History of the Work of the Synod of Oklahoma of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Atoka, OK: Atoka Press, 1927), 26; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1909 to December 1916..

¹³³ *Baptist Sunday School Evangel* (Muskogee), August 1907; Leon W. Wiley to Robert L. Williams, 31 January 1915, Robert L. Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1915, Box 5, File 6; J. M. Gaskin, *Baptist Milestones in Oklahoma* (Oklahoma City, OK: Baptist General Convention of the State of Oklahoma, 1966), 195; Benny Carl Fox, "The Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and Higher Education: The Formative Period, 1906-1915" (M.A. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1965), 48; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1909 to December 1916..

¹³⁴ Fox, "The Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and Higher Education," 48; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1909 to December 1916.

¹³⁵ *Daily Oklahoman*, 8 May 1906; *Daily Oklahoma State Capital*, 9 July 1905; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1909 to December 1916.

¹³⁶ T. E. Sisson to Lee Cruce, 2 May 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 15, File 1; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1909 to December 1916.

¹³⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 3 April 1911; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1909 to December 1916.

Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League head quarters committee from 1909 until 1918, announced his candidacy for Oklahoma's Congressional seat representing the district surrounding Norman in 1913. One state publication described him as "an ardent progressive democrat. . . ."¹³⁸ Reverend J. E. Disch, treasurer of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League from 1914 until 1917, also chaired the Oklahoma County election board and later presided over the Washington County AntiHorse Thief Association.¹³⁹

League officers like Reverend I. Frank Roach held considerable influence in the state. The Methodist minister from Oklahoma City served as the secretary for the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and as a member of its head quarters committee from 1916 until 1922. That his prominence extended beyond the league is evidenced by his selection as a speaker for the Oklahoma Council of Defense during the First World War. Governor Robert Williams had called for the creation of defense councils at the state and county levels in August 1917 in light of the Green Corn Rebellion. The mission of this home guard was to support the war effort by organizing and promoting loan drives and by rooting out subversives around the state to prevent potential riots. Reverend Frank Barrett, a member of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League head quarters committee from 1916 until 1920, and Reverend H. H. Hulton, a member of the head quarters committee from 1914 until 1918, also toured the state speaking for the Council of Defense in 1918. Barrett also served on the Oklahoma County Council of Defense.¹⁴⁰ The atmosphere of intolerance, which thickened during the war through the efforts of the Council of Defense and similar bodies, continued after the shooting ended in November 1918. In 1919,

¹³⁸ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 8 October 1913; *Harlow's Weekly*, 25 April 1914; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1909 to December 1916.

¹³⁹ *Harlow's Weekly*, 8 May 1915; AntiHorse Thief Association Lodge 234 to J. B. A. Robertson, J. B. A. Robertson Papers: General Correspondence, 1921, Box 5, File 3; *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1909 to December 1916.

¹⁴⁰ Robert L. Williams Papers: State Council of Defense, Liberty Loans, Box 3, File 1; *Harlow's Weekly*, 15 August 1917; S. W. Hayes to Robert L. Williams, 20 August 1918, Robert L. Williams Papers: State Council of Defense, Homeguard, Box 3, File 2.

Governor J. B. A. Robertson created a state commission to promote the Americanization of Oklahoma's small immigrant population. The commission members included Reverend G. I. Gordon of Oklahoma City, who had served on the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League board of trustees in 1912.¹⁴¹

In 1919, Governor J. B. A. Robertson formed a commission to investigate the short-lived coal miners' strike and named Reverend Roach as a member of that three-person body. The other members of the commission likely also met with league approval. Judge W. L. Eagleton of Norman had received a very strong endorsement in the *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition in 1910 as an avowedly dry candidate for a seat on one of Oklahoma's district courts. The third member of the commission, John J. Gerlach, also had ties to the League as well as the Oklahoma Council of Defense. The report by these three men was unsympathetic toward the miners, stating that work conditions were good, though dangerous. They concluded that the strike was unjustified.¹⁴² Such a report should not surprise as the commissioners were a part of Oklahoma's respectable, middle-class society with little understanding of and appreciation for the life and work experiences of the miners. That Robertson selected these three men---to the exclusion of any working-class men---speaks to the governor's attitude toward organized labor. The work of recent Oklahoma historians indicate that Robertson was not unique in his bias against organized labor.¹⁴³ These ministers, then, held positions of respect in their communities and in the state, granting them influence beyond the church doors. Their posts in the Oklahoma League augmented the ministers' prestige, and tightened the League's hold on the moral high ground in its crusade against liquor.

¹⁴¹ Secretary to the Governor to Wentworth Stuart, 22 July 1919, J. B. A. Robertson Papers: General Correspondence, 1919, Box 1, File 4.

¹⁴² "Report of Commission Charged With Investigation of Matters With Reference to Coal Strike," J. B. A. Robertson Papers: General Correspondence, 1919, Box 11, File 10. Regarding the League's earlier endorsement of Eagleton, see note fifty-seven above.

¹⁴³ See Sellars, "Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies," Brown, "Progressivism in Oklahoma Politics," Thompson, *Closing the Frontier*, and Burbank, *When Farmers Voted Red*.

Like the men of the cloth who served in leadership positions in the Oklahoma League, those officers and trustees who were laymen held respectable, middle-class positions in their communities. Captain A. S. McKennon's notoriety as a member of the Dawes Commission and as a personal friend of Charles Haskell has been noted earlier. Dr. A. Grant Evans, a trustee to the League from 1909 until 1912, was active in the Oklahoma City Young Men's Christian Association and served as the second president of the University of Oklahoma. The Oklahoma State Sunday School Association elected the League's superintendent, H. T. Laughbaum, as the superintendent of the association's temperance department. Laughbaum also chaired the Temperance Committee of the Synod of Oklahoma Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.¹⁴⁴

Some secular League operatives, like Wiley and Whitwell among the ministers, became active in local and state politics. H. H. Holman, a League trustee from 1916 until 1918 and an Oklahoma delegate to the 1913 Committee of One Thousand in Washington, D.C., was a Wetumka banker who had served as a senator in the first state legislature. During the First World War, Holman served on the Hughes County Council of Defense, the local faction of the Oklahoma home guard that Governor Williams called into existence in the fall of 1917. W. J. Milburn, also a delegate to the 1913 Committee of One Thousand and League treasurer from 1918 until 1919, was involved in the growing oil and gas industry and served in the House of Representatives of the third state legislature.¹⁴⁵ H. S. Braucht, vice-president of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League from 1909 until 1910 and a League trustee until 1918, practiced law in the Newkirk area and briefly served as the Kay County Attorney. William H. Franklin, who served as a League trustee from 1922 until 1924, was a clerk for the state supreme court and was an officer in the Oklahoma Council of Defense

¹⁴⁴ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, April 1913, October 1914.

¹⁴⁵ Secretary to the Governor to H. H. Holman, 30 November 1917, Robert L. Williams Papers: State Council of Defense, Homeguard, Box 2, File 4; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 15 December 1913.

during the war.¹⁴⁶

C. L. Stealey, president of the Oklahoma League from 1909 until 1920, dealt in real estate in the Oklahoma City area. He also organized the Oklahoma Cotton Growers' Association in 1920 and served as general manager of that 52,000-member body during the first six years of its existence.¹⁴⁷ Five doctors held leadership positions in the League, including Dr. Thomas P. Howell of Davis, who also was active in the state Democratic party and served a term on the state Methodist Education Board and Dr. J. G. Street of Oklahoma City, who also was active in the Oklahoma Division of the United Confederate Veterans.¹⁴⁸

Nor was the prominence of Oklahoma's League officers limited to the Sooner state. Dr. A. Grant Evans, a League trustee, also was Provisional Secretary and Organizer of the Oklahoma State Branch of The Social Center Association of America. Among its national officers, this organization counted Josiah Strong and Louis D. Brandeis in 1912.¹⁴⁹ Evans also had attended and spoke before the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian in 1905. William E. Johnson attended this conference in 1907.¹⁵⁰ In 1915, Governor Williams named Dr. E. D. Cameron, a League trustee, as a delegate to that year's Southern Commercial Congress, and chose the League's Reverend J. W. Mosely and H. T. Laughbaum as Oklahoma representatives to the Southern Sociological Congress.¹⁵¹ These men circulated with some of the leading reformers of the day. Assessing Oklahoma's liquor industry from their educated, middle-class perspective, these men saw no redeeming value in that industry. Like other progressive reformers of the period, they sought to improve society, locally

¹⁴⁶ *Eufala Indian Journal*, 21 August 1919.

¹⁴⁷ *Blackwell Sunday Tribune*, 18 July 1926.

¹⁴⁸ J. G. Street and D. H. Hammond to Robert L. Williams, 28 October 1914, Robert L. Williams Papers: Appointments by County, Box 5, File 1.

¹⁴⁹ Dr. A. Grant Evans to Lee Cruce, 21 September 1912, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 29, File 6.

¹⁵⁰ Burgess, *The Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian, Guide to the Annual Reports*, 82.

¹⁵¹ Robert L. Williams to Dr. E. D. Cameron, 30 March 1915, Robert L. Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1915, Box 2, File 1; Box 8, File 5.

and throughout the state. The destruction of the old-time saloon and the liquor industry that supported it seemed a certain means to accomplish their goals.

While the information regarding the backgrounds of Oklahoma League operatives, incomplete as it is, indicates that many of these men were respected, middle-class leaders in their communities; notably absent from the lists of League officers and supporters is any mention of wage-earning men or working-class organizations in the Sooner state. Again, information regarding the socioeconomic background of these men is incomplete, but indicates that many were businessmen or members of the emerging professions. One community for which more information is available is Muskogee. Several ministers from this eastern Oklahoma community were active in the state League, including Reverend Asa P. Beal, Reverend D. R. Martin, and Reverend O. C. Bronston of the Methodist Episcopal churches; Reverend Charles L. Brooks of the M. E. Church, South; and Reverend W. S. Wiley and Reverend E. D. Cameron of the Southern Baptist churches.

The class nature of the prohibition issue is confirmed by the lack of vocal support for the liquor ban from Oklahoma's laboring classes. Muskogee's working class did not show much interest in local league affiliates. In 1907 the Muskogee Commercial Club voted to create a local Law and Enforcement League. As stated, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League urged the formation of such local enforcement bodies in all Oklahoma communities, and many of the officers of these leagues were active in the state League as well. Reverend W. S. Wiley presided over the Muskogee Law Enforcement League and Reverend Asa P. Beal sat on the membership committee. In all, the eighteen members of the various committees included six ministers and one doctor. These men pledged themselves to work toward 'civic riteousness'¹⁵² None are known to have been working-class men.

Muskogee's wage-earners also mobilized during this period, though for

¹⁵² *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 5 June 1907, 9 January, 29, 22 December 1908.

very different reasons. In November 1908, 106 of the city's public works employees signed a petition to Oklahoma Labor Commissioner Charles L. Daugherty urging him to investigate violation of the eight-hour law as it applied to public workers. None of these 106 men are known to have participated in or supported the Oklahoma League or its local affiliate, the Muskogee Law and Order League.¹⁵³ Similarly, the list of officers for the Oklahoma State Conference of Bricklayers and Masons International Union of America contained no members who are known to have associated with the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League.¹⁵⁴ The lack of common elements between these contemporary groups suggests that, in Oklahoma's second-largest city at least, wage-earners lent little support to the liquor crusade and that the liquor crusaders demonstrated little interest in working-class issues. Oklahoma was not an anomaly in this, according to Timberlake, as the prohibition campaign pitted middle-class against working-class groups throughout the nation in the early twentieth century.¹⁵⁵

Oklahoma's prohibition campaign, then, was waged by middle-class merchants and professionals (particularly ministers) who sought to improve their society locally and throughout the state by destroying the retail liquor industry and all of its associated sins. They saw no redeeming value in the old-time saloon. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, which had overtaken the Woman's Christian Temperance Union as the leading dry proponent, epitomized the class-based nature of the anti-liquor crusade. Men of position in their churches and communities held leadership posts in the League. Oklahoma's early governors relied on the League and its officers to create effective enforcement of prohibition, granting these men and the League considerable influence throughout the state, and the League directed the

¹⁵³ Dr. S. T. Peet to Charles L. Daugherty, 19 November 1908, Charles Daugherty Collection, Box 2, File 2, Manuscripts Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.

¹⁵⁴ W. A. Murphy to Charles L. Daugherty, 7 December 1912, Daugherty Collection, Box 1, File 11.

¹⁵⁵ Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, 92-94, 99, 115.

legislative evolution of prohibition in early Oklahoma.

The social cachet that League operatives possessed also is evident from their appointments to posts having little to do with liquor enforcement. Governors named them to state commissions dealing with labor strikes and national committees discussing sociological issues. Local party men included League officers and trustees in the administration of the political parties. Voters tabbed several League leaders for elected office. Religious organizations selected Anti-Saloon League men for instructional and administrative positions within their denominations. These men were a part of the respectable element of Oklahoma society that, as Garin Burbank asserts, opposed the more radical elements of the population.¹⁵⁶

Oklahoma's liquor industry was not synonymous with political radicalism, but the two shared the disparagement of the respected middle classes. In contrast to many of the issues that divided people along class lines, the differences over prohibition did not arise from economic but from cultural considerations. The respected merchants and professionals who supported the liquor ban, saw no redeeming value in the old-time saloon. Oklahoma wage earners placed considerable value on the saloon, legal or illegal, as a place to socialize and relax. Chapter six examines Oklahoma's liquor culture and its relation to the state's working classes.

¹⁵⁶ Burbank, *When Farmers Voted Red*, 161.

CHAPTER 6

WET OKLAHOMA

What was the nature of the liquor industry and its proponents that the Anti-Saloon League sought to remove from the economic and cultural landscape of Oklahoma? This chapter will examine the area's liquor industry and the culture that grew up around it, those wet organizations that led the unsuccessful campaigns against prohibition in the Sooner state, and the customer base of the liquor industry, which continued to purchase and consume liquor despite federal and state bans. First, the region's saloons, whether legal or not, were for-profit ventures. The vast majority of liquor men in the territories and later in the state of Oklahoma engaged in this traffic because they viewed it as a means to make money. This was particularly true of the larger liquor operations in the region, though many small-time bootleggers likely hoped to increase their operations and income if given the opportunity. These men and women either ignored those cultural impulses that led dries to campaign against the saloon or determined that the opportunities for wealth in selling liquor outweighed cultural considerations. Some women did engage in this illegal activity, though the majority of bootleggers---and their customers---appear to have been men.

Several organizations formed in the region at different times to campaign against the liquor ban. The Citizens League, the Sons of Washington, the German-American Association, and the Businessmen's League formed in reaction to the organized success of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and other dry groups. The brief existence of the wet organizations belies their inferior organizational structure when compared with the

Oklahoma league. Several of these organizations contained the same members, men who campaigned against constitutional prohibition in 1907 under one banner and for a repeal of the liquor ban in 1910 and after under different banners.

The economic considerations that drove the liquor industry did not motivate its customer base. Men entered saloons and blind pigs or purchased liquor on the streets for recreational purposes. For some, drinking alcohol was a part of their ethnic heritage, which they brought with them from Europe. However, as mentioned in chapter two, the immigrant population of the region that became the state of Oklahoma (including both those born in other countries and their children) comprised less than ten percent of the total state population in 1900, 1910, and 1920. If these were the only people consuming alcohol, area liquor men quickly would have gone broke or would have severely limited the size of their operations. The highly competitive nature of Oklahoma's liquor industry indicates that many saw wealth opportunities in it because they identified a large market for the sale of liquor. The saloon culture that was a basic part of Oklahoma had its roots not only in ethnicity but also in the region's large working class. The miners working in the coal fields of southeastern Oklahoma or in the zinc and copper mines of northeast Oklahoma, as well as the rough necks working in the Cleveland, Glenn Pool, Cushing, and Healdton oil fields patronized legal and illegal saloons with such regularity that enforcement officials were unable or unwilling to stem the tide of liquor in those regions of the state. Accounts and recollections by Oklahoma wage earners indicate that drinking was a basic part of working-class culture for many laboring men.

To begin, let us examine the saloon industry and culture prevalent in the territories by statehood, and which continued to flourish under prohibition. As mentioned earlier, liquor had been both illegal and easily

available in Indian Territory in the last part of the nineteenth century. Before the Federal Government split the region into Oklahoma and Indian territories, Frank James' Long Branch saloon dispensed liquor to Vinita residents and travelers. Bill Sennett's Coyote saloon at the junction of the Arkansas and Cimarron rivers was the first business in the bustling territorial town of Sennett.¹ Some liquor men, to evade the law, never established a saloon from which to sell liquor. In the rural areas surrounding territorial Tulsa, bootleggers visited houses at night, calling out to the occupants to inquire whether the residents desired to purchase whiskey.² Near Henryetta, a man sold whiskey to thirsty miners from his log cabin, located three hundred yards west of the Whitehead No. 2 mines. He purchased the whiskey in Stroud and Maud, two of the whiskey towns arrayed along the border between Indian and Oklahoma territories, and announced the arrival of another shipment by firing three shots into the air. As a local man recalled, "In those days three shots meant that a load of whiskey had come and all drinking men understood it."³

Some of these liquor dealers made a sizable income. One man bought Hines Beer in Kansas City for \$729 a lot and resold the same amount in Indian Territory for \$1,100. In a short time, he earned \$100,000 in this venture, bought a home in Arkansas, and moved out of Indian Territory permanently.⁴ William Creekmore reportedly accumulated a million dollars from bootlegging during the decade following Oklahoma statehood. Dating back to the early

¹ Interview with B. McAlpin, 3 January 1938, Comanche, Oklahoma, Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 60 (Works Progress Administration Project S-149, 1938), 307, Oklahoma Historical Society. Interview with R. S. Lewis and W. J. Nicholson, 5 July 1937, Tulsa, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 61, 286.

² Interview with Martha Campbell Lynn, 22 July 1937, Lone Wolf, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 61, 508.

³ Grace Kelley interview with Arnold McMullen, 11 March 1938, Henryetta, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 78, 478.

⁴ Interview with Bill Hart, 16 June 1937, Okmulgee, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 63, 458. While this sum seems quite large, Hart asserts that he kept the financial books for the liquor man in question, Al Simco, lending greater credibility to his statement.

territorial period, liquor men brought whiskey up from Texas along what became known as the Whiskey Trail. This narrow trail, which predated extensive railroad construction in the territories, commenced north from Gainesville, Texas roughly mirroring the current route of Interstate Highway 35, across the Red River and through the Arbuckle Mountains. One could load four barrels of whiskey onto a sturdy pack horse, making this a profitable trade. However, this endeavor also involved considerable risk as the Arbuckles served as the hideout for numerous outlaws who might see fit to unburden the erstwhile liquor man of his cargo.⁵ Some residents of early Oklahoma placed the Whiskey Trail further east, running from Denison, Texas, past Okmulgee, and north to Coffeetown, Kansas; others claimed the Whiskey Trail began at Ft. Smith, Arkansas and ran southwest into the Choctaw lands, terminating at the town of Kiowa near McAlester. These discrepancies suggest that a series of trails existed in the territorial period over which so much liquor was transported that locals began to refer to each of these different paths as "the Whiskey Trail."⁶

The liquor trade offered economic opportunity even to those of meager financial means. One Oklahoman recalled that whiskey peddlers in the early territorial days had little difficulty establishing their business even if federal authorities arrested them and destroyed their stock. Upon release from jail, they begged a loaf of bread from a bakery and then begged a nickel or dime on the streets explaining that they intended to buy meat to go with the bread. Once they had accumulated twenty-five cents, they bought half a pint of alcohol in Arkansas, poured it into a pint bottle and filled it with water. The

⁵ Interview with Dixie H. Colbert, 24 May 1937, Sulphur, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 51, 304.

⁶ Interview with Mrs. Rachel Hudson, 23 June 1937, Bartlesville, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 30, 79; interview with W. A. Jolly, 26 August 1937, Ardmore, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 31, 331; interview with J. P. Miller, 15 September 1937, Pauls Valley, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 36, 291; interview with Al Thompson, 29 July 1937, Okmulgee, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 46, 426; interview with L. F. Baker, 24 February 1938, Henryetta, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 51, 88.

peddler then slipped across the toll bridge over the Poteau River while the guard was changing to prevent discovery. In Indian Territory, where liquor was banned, bootleggers could sell the watered down pint of whiskey to African Americans working in the Poteau River bottom lands and in this way quickly build back their liquor trade.⁷ The territorial liquor trade, then, required little in the way of start-up costs. Anyone willing to risk capture by the authorities and possessing sufficient intelligence to reduce the likelihood of arrest was able to try their hand at meeting the growing demand for liquor in dry Indian Territory.

The limited number of federal marshals and deputies in Indian Territory prevented effective enforcement of the liquor ban in the region. At times, these officials used the liquor issue to serve their own ends. Marshals around McAlester regularly stopped travelers and planted bottles of liquor on them if they had none. The unfortunate migrants could pay the \$100 fine on the spot or travel to Ft. Smith, Arkansas to challenge the charge before a judge. Many chose to pay the fine rather than travel out of their way.⁸ Even if those charged chose to challenge the fine in court, the enforcement officials benefited financially. The government paid these men for their travel to court regardless of whether the defendant was convicted or acquitted. Many officers sought to augment their meager salaries by transporting people to court in Arkansas. In addition to the financial incentives that led some liquor officers to plant whiskey on unsuspecting travelers, some did so out of eagerness to demonstrate to judges and to the local community that they were enforcing the liquor ban.⁹ As this practice became well-known in the area, violence often resulted if an officer found liquor in a migrant's wagon or

⁷ Theodore R. Hamilton interview with Wilson Gunter, 21 April 1938, McAlester, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 84, 511.

⁸ Interview with T. P. Wilson, McAlester, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 11, 501.

⁹ Interview with J. R. Burleson, 13 July 1937, Rush Springs, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 17, 394; interview with George Tanner, 18 October 1937, Poteau, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 46, 196.

saddle bags. Before the end of the nineteenth century, then, the liquor ban in the region that would become Oklahoma was the source of considerable corruption by enforcement officials.

When Oklahoma Territory was formed and opened for nonIndian settlement in the last decade of the nineteenth century, licensed saloons became a regular part of the business district of many towns. As mentioned in chapter three, Oklahoma City contained a large saloon district by the mid-1890s centered at the junction of Broad Avenue and Grand Avenue. One resident later recalled that Oklahoma city's saloon district, called Hell's Half Acre, contained eighty-five saloons when he moved there in 1904.¹⁰ Among the more notorious saloons were the Cottonwood de Bastille, the Red Onion, Two Johns, and later the Southern Club. Albert McRill, an Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League speaker and later City Manager of Oklahoma City, described the saloon district as an "arrogant underworld, with its gamblers, prostitutes, and hordes of toughs, who swarmed about the unregulated saloons and dives, flourishing and ruling almost at their pleasure."¹¹ Guthrie, the Oklahoma Territory capital, saw forty-four saloons sprout within city limits shortly after the opening of the territory in 1889. These included the Reaves Brothers Saloon, Pady Shea's Saloon, the Blue Bell Saloon and the Same Old Moses Saloon. These were not marginal establishments. Territorial government offices were located on the second floor of the building that contained the Same Old Moses. Tom Mix, the cowboy actor, once worked as a janitor in the Blue Bell.¹²

Oklahoma's other sizable towns also contained vibrant saloon industries. Lawton supported sixty drinking establishments within a few weeks of its

¹⁰ Jimmie Birdwell interview with George Plummer, 19 July 1937, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 1-7, 374.

¹¹ McRill, *And Satan Came Also*, 28, 25.

¹² Don Moon, Jr. interview with Clyde Stanley Hyde, 3-5 February 1938, Guthrie, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 85, 411; Don Moon, Jr. interview with Red L. Wenner, 29 April 1938, Guthrie, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 95, 509; interview with Moses Weinberger, 5 August 1937, Guthrie, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 67, 70.

establishment in 1901. A former ice delivery man from Lawton recalled that, at one point, ninety-six saloons operated in that community.¹³ Lawton's population in 1907, when constitutional prohibition officially closed Oklahoma saloons, was 5,562. Assuming this was the city's peak population before statehood, territorial Lawton contained one saloon for every fifty-eight residents (at most), a much higher ratio than most large cities in early twentieth-century America. Temperance organizations sought to reduce the number of saloons to one for every five hundred residents in such wet urban areas as Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Shawnee, established near the border of the Seminole Nation, contained sixteen saloons in the 1890s. Its population reached 3,462 by 1900. At the time of statehood (and prohibition), Shawnee contained 10,955 and supported thirty saloons.¹⁴

Smaller Oklahoma towns also sported numerous saloons during the territorial period. Granite and Sayre each contained thirteen saloons just after the turn of the century, though the 1900 census does not list the population of these communities among those containing 2,500 people or more. The proportion of saloons to population in these towns, then, was less than one to two hundred. Lexington, along the Canadian River dividing Indian and Oklahoma territories, also contained less than 2,500 residents throughout the territorial period, yet supported eleven saloons in the 1890s. El Reno, with a stated population of 3,383 in 1900, contained twenty-one saloons in 1901, or one saloon for every 161 residents.¹⁵ The tiny community of Ralston, along the Cimarron River, which separated Oklahoma Territory from the Osage

¹³ Ophelia D. Vestel interview with W. H. Wilson, 26 January 1938, Lawton, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 94, 283. Wilson supported his saloon tally by stating that he delivered ice to eighty of the ninety-six liquor establishments.

¹⁴ Interview with Winifred M. Clark, 20 September 1936, Tecumseh, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 104, 325; *Shawnee Herald* 24 September 1907.

¹⁵ See chapter three and notes 53 through 58; Jasper H. Mead interview with B. M. Austin, 9 November 1937, Chickasha, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 99, 258; Mrs. Nora L. Lorrin interview with Mary Rakes, 12 April 1938, El Reno, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 81, 476.

Reservation, supported ten saloons prior to prohibition statehood.¹⁶ The list of saloon-laden communities goes on: Kingfisher (population 2,214 in 1907) contained sixteen saloons at one point; Woodward (population 1,500 in 1905) contained nine saloons; Enid (population 10,087 in 1907) contained nineteen saloons; Marshall (population 400 in 1903) contained five saloons.¹⁷ As noted earlier, several small towns along the border between Oklahoma and Indian territories, such as Corner, Young's Crossing, Violet Springs, Keystone, and Appalachia, relied so much on the saloon industry for their economic well-being, that they virtually disappeared following dry statehood.¹⁸

Keystone, situated in eastern Pawnee County, the eastern-most county in Oklahoma Territory and within a few miles of the Osage Reservation and Creek Nation, began as a post office on the south side of the Cimarron River and became a major conduit through which liquor flowed from Oklahoma Territory into Indian Territory. Bootleggers quickly determined that the enforcement officials would not work on Sundays, and so caravans containing as many as thirty-five wagon loads of whiskey left Keystone each Sunday bound for the Indian Territory. Economic circumstances added to Keystone's reputation as a whiskey town when oil was discovered nearby in 1909. Rough necks flooded into the area to work on the numerous oil wells, and these men became prime customers of the liquor men.¹⁹ Keystone remained a liquor transportation conduit following statehood, particularly once the federal courts determined that the federal ban on liquor in Indian Territory remained in effect for those lands and that bootleggers there would be tried in federal

¹⁶ Interview with Charles F. Stuart, 19 May 1937, Pawhuska, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 10, 192.

¹⁷ Augusta H. Custer interview with Henry Slight, 16 November 1937, Geary, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 101, 466; Jimmie Birdwell interview with T. G. Netherton, 9 September 1937, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 102, 327; biography of Edmund Frantz in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 3, 580; Angie Debo, "The History of Marshall, Oklahoma" in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 2, 495.

¹⁸ Gumprecht, "A Saloon on Every Corner," 146, 163.

¹⁹ Goldie Tumer, "History of Keystone," 20 December 1937 in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 58, 421.

courts. William J. Creekmore shipped whiskey and beer from Joplin, Missouri to Enid in north central Oklahoma, then east to Keystone, and from there to Tulsa and other regions where local liquor men distributed it to the thirsty oil workers and other patrons.

The physical appearance of Oklahoma saloons set off such establishments from other businesses in town. Typically, the saloon's front door was sandwiched by large picture windows looking out onto the street. Some of this was required by law, as officials stipulated that a saloon's interior---and its occupants---be visible to those on the street. Proprietors displayed varieties of whiskey, brandy, and wine in these windows to entice passersby. Upon entering the building, patrons encountered a large cigar case positioned next to the door. Often the saloon contained two bars, one at which whiskey was served, and one at which wine might be procured. Mirrors surrounded the wine bar and served to screen it from the rest of the room. Many saloons were bereft of furniture as Oklahoma Territorial statutes forbid chairs from saloons. Attached to the front of the bar, near the floor, was a brass rail or narrow shelf upon which patrons might rest a foot. Proprietors displayed still more bottles of liquor behind the bar. A side or rear entrance was utilized by African Americans who frequented the saloon, and they tended to gather separately near the rear of the saloon.

Many saloon operators also provided gambling facilities for their patrons. These were located in rooms at the back of the building. An arched doorway connected the saloon in front with these rooms. Common games included craps, faro, klondike, keno, and poker, which often warranted its own room to afford greater privacy. A roulette wheel also was a standard feature of these gambling rooms. An employee watched over or conducted each of these games, making the saloon a significant employer in town---particularly if the town was small. A saloon often employed as many as thirty men to provide its

various services to customers.²⁰ Obviously during the early stages of community settlement, saloons, like other town businesses, resided in more makeshift structures. Many saloons in new towns were nothing more than tents. Wooden planks laid across barrels served as a bar. The saloon often was one of the earliest establishments in new communities. The town of Shawnee contained thirteen tent saloons early in its development.²¹

The vast majority of saloon patrons were adult men. As one Oklahoman later recalled, "Not many women drank in those days and the ones who did never drank in public."²² By most accounts from former saloon operators, very few men under the age of twenty-one entered saloons. There was, of course, no identification check. Someone who claimed to be of age was considered thus, unless the proprietor was acquainted with the young man and knew otherwise.²³

The price of liquor varied in Indian Territory and later in the state of Oklahoma, each of which had banned the sale and giving away of liquor. In the 1880s, a former coal miner recalled, liquor men sold whiskey by the pint bottle for two dollars each. A local merchant from the Savanna region purchased whiskey from outside the territory and resold it to augment his grocery sales.²⁴ In this way, then, more established members of local communities also involved themselves in the clandestine liquor industry during the territorial period. No doubt the price of liquor varied according to

²⁰ Interview with Ed Coke, 27 July 1937, Kingfisher, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 51, 295-296. Coke operated a Kingfisher saloon before statehood and prohibition and provided a sketch of these establishments, which he asserts "is a very good description of what most of the saloons were like." Interview with T. J. Hicks, Purcell, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 29, 85. Hicks, a black ranch hand who moved to Indian Territory from Louisiana in 1897, frequented Lexington's Blue Front Saloon.

²¹ Interview with Ernest B. Morgan, 9 August 1937, Dewar, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 37, 204.

²² Interview with Tice Woods, 14 April 1938, Henryetta, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 75, 426.

²³ Interview with Ed Coke, 27 July 1937, Kingfisher, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 51, 295-296.

²⁴ Gomer Gower, "Experiences of Coal Miners in the Indian Territory, 1882-1891," 21 May 1937 in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 105, 432.

availability. In Guthrie, shortly after its establishment as the territorial capital in 1889, a mug of beer reportedly sold for a nickel, about the same price as a glass of water. Bottled beer sold for thirty-five cents in Perry saloons at the time that the Cherokee Strip was opened to nonIndian settlement in 1893. An Oklahoman who moved to El Reno in 1901 later reported that beer sold for fifty cents per bottle in that community's all-night saloons. An account book from a saloon in the small Oklahoma town of Burnett, dated from 1902, indicates that this establishment offered its patrons cigars, beer at twenty-five cents a glass or mug, and whiskey at fifty cents for a pint bottle.²⁵

The dramatic difference in the cost of whiskey---two dollars in the coal mining district versus five cents in Guthrie---might be explained by the fact that whiskey was legal in Guthrie and not in the east, though, as is shown below, the price of liquor dropped following statewide prohibition. A more plausible explanation is that Guthrie, situated along one of the early rail lines into Oklahoma Territory, enjoyed better access to liquor than had the coal mining district a decade earlier. By 1902, the growing railroad network servicing both territories allowed the easy importation of liquor (legally or otherwise) into communities such as Burnett, located near the geographic center of the territorial region.

The El Reno case illustrates how extenuating circumstances also influenced the price of liquor. Its saloons saw an unusual amount of business that year, as many men were in town to register for the 1901 drawing of lands in Caddo, Kiowa, and Comanche counties. Additionally, the construction of a rail line to Lawton brought a number of working men to the El Reno saloons in 1901. Liquor prices also varied according to the customers' ability to pay. A former bootlegger recounted that he sold whiskey to Cherokee Indians for ten dollars per quart on days when they received money from the government.

²⁵ Dew, "Moral Reform for the Magic City," 409-410; Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 6, 437; interview with Shea Powell, 22 April 1937, Chickasha, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 70, 327; G. D. Boirum Collection, Western History Collection.

The ledger for the Burnett saloon indicates that many customers were unable or unwilling to pay for their liquor purchases immediately. During the calendar year of 1902, sixty-one people established lines of credit with the saloon proprietor. The credit lines for some of these patrons were quite lengthy, suggesting that several were engaged in farming or in other endeavors that did not provide a regular paycheck. This seems likely also given the location of the saloon in a small community in rural western Pottawatomie County. Burnett, like the saloon located there, would cease to exist after statehood. Also of note is the gender of those customers to whom credit was extended. Of the sixty-one recorded, only one was female, reinforcing the popular perception of the saloon as a predominantly male institution.²⁶

The adoption of statewide prohibition in November 1907 had a significant impact on the price of liquor in Oklahoma. Within a month, the price of whiskey in Tulsa joints had fallen from twenty-five to fifteen cents per drink, and some establishments offered customers two drinks for a quarter.²⁷ By this time, liquor was easily available in Oklahoma despite the federal liquor ban that had applied to Indian Territory for decades. The falling liquor prices of late 1907 suggest that Oklahomans initially reduced their alcohol consumption once the sale of liquor became illegal. That they did not continue this abstinence is evidenced by the difficulty officials encountered when attempting to enforce the liquor ban during the early decades of the Sooner state's history. The price of beer rebounded and then dropped again in the autumn of 1910 to fifteen cents per bottle (or two bottles for twenty-five cents), possibly in anticipation of the impending referendum vote on prohibition at the November election.²⁸ In 1913, the price of liquor doubled in Oklahoma City---liquor men charged fifty cents per pint of beer, twenty-five

²⁶ Interview with George Tanner, 18 October 1937, Poteau, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Series* 46, 195; G. D. Boirum Collection, Western History Collection.

²⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 2 December 1907.

²⁸ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 25 August 1910.

cents per whiskey drink, and a dollar per half pint of whiskey. Newspaper editors, in reporting this, attributed the increase to a rising demand for liquor following the passage of the Webb-Kenyon Law, which allowed dry states to ban the transportation of intoxicating liquor across their borders.²⁹ That liquor prices gained the notice of the press indicates also the continued widespread availability of liquor in dry Oklahoma.

Bootleggers often selected odd, seemingly innocent sites from which to sell their product. In the oil boom town of Cleveland following statehood, one of the best known sources of liquor was a partially completed building near the rail road tracks. Liquor men stashed their contraband in this structure, and knowing men strolled by throughout the day to purchase whiskey and beer.³⁰ Near Okmulgee, a bootlegger concealed his liquor in a brush-filled area. Customers, for twenty-five cents, were guided toward select bushes and told that, for their quarter, they could suck once on a straw poking from the bushes. One former customer, wanting to get his money's worth, sucked as long as he could on the straw. He became so sick from the liquor, which he asserts contained some poison, that he had to miss the next two days of work while recovering.³¹ In Muskogee, small-time liquor men sold liquor by the drink on the streets from flasks they carried in their coat pockets. As many of these bootleggers were African Americans, local authorities began to question any black men who wore long coats. Oklahoma City authorities arrested at least one cab driver for selling liquor to passengers and to other motorists. This enterprising driver installed an ice box in his cab to keep drinks cold for his customers.³²

Reverend C. C. Brannon, a Methodist minister, a trustee of the Oklahoma

²⁹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 8 March 1913.

³⁰ Franks, *The Rush Begins*, 35.

³¹ Ned DeWitt interview with an oil pipe-line worker, Works Progress Association Historic Sites and Federal Writers' Project, Box 42, File 2, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma. Though this interview is undated, others in the collection are dated from 1938 or 1939.

³² *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 7 August 1911.

Anti-Saloon League, and a commissioned liquor enforcement officer under William E. Johnson, recalled that some of the more ingenious bootleggers were women. A woman near Prague passed by Brannon daily carrying an infant in one arm and a bundle of baby's clothes in the other, presumably going to a nearby stream to wash the clothes. Suspicious of her actions and of the local Indians' ready access to alcohol, the minister followed the woman into the woods one day and observed her pulling whiskey bottles from under her bundle and giving them to Indians whom she met on her walk. A woman in the Osage Nation hid bottles of whiskey under her loose skirts. Beneath her outer garments, she wore a belt from which several whiskey bottles hung on long strings. Having prearranged payment, this woman took regular walks in the woods, and when she came across one of her Indian customers, she reached beneath her dress and cut the string allowing the whiskey bottle to quietly fall to the ground with no break in her stride. Johnson's men also became suspicious in the summer 1905 when watermelons began selling very quickly in one Osage Nation town. Indians purchased many of these and officers later found that each watermelon contained a pint of whiskey. Other bootleggers hollowed out saddle horns and horse collars and poured liquor into these. Still others bought axles for wagons and then automobiles that were made of steel rather than solid iron. A hollow axle held several gallons of liquor.³³

The prohibition campaign had targeted for extinction the old-time saloon, a center of violence and crime. Some of the territorial liquor establishments drew dangerous patrons and became notorious as violent, even deadly, locales. The outlaw Belle Starr sold whiskey in a Scullyville saloon before the turn of the century.³⁴ The Oklahoma Territory community of Perry, shortly after its establishment, supported the Carolina Grocery, White

³³ *Daily Oklahoman*, 20 July 1919, B1.

³⁴ Interview with Mrs. Letitia Long, 13 April 1938, McAlester, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 78, 323.

Elephant, Ark, Old Crow, Original Blue Bell, Hawkeye, Antlers, Pawnee, Oriental, Anchor, Midland, and Board of Trade saloons. Locals referred to the region of town within which these businesses were located as Hell's Half Acre, and outlaws such as the Dalton Gang frequented this region during the early territorial years.³⁵ The towns of Asher, Avoca, Wanette, Earlsboro, and Keokuk Falls in what later became Pottawatomie County, contained some very rough saloons. If a man offered to buy everyone in one of these establishments a drink and someone refused, a shooting might result.³⁶ An Oklahoman who had participated in the land run in Washita County recalled that the town of Cloud Chief sprang up almost immediately, adding, "there were saloons, gambling houses, grocery and drygoods stores, also there was fighting and drunkenness galore."³⁷

As noted in chapter three, the saloons located along or near the line dividing Oklahoma Territory from the Chickasaw Nation were very rough places patronized by dangerous men. Shawnee saloons also were the source of much violence. One former resident recalled of that town in the 1890s, "There were sixteen saloons along the main street, with drunken brawls so frequent that it was not safe."³⁸ In 1906 the *Shawnee Herald* asserted that town residents consumed a staggering 700 gallons of beer and twenty-five gallons of whiskey each day.³⁹ The border town of Violet Springs became known as the "City of the Dead" and set aside a portion of its graveyard for those killed in saloon altercations. In the Cherokee Strip, Ponca City experienced so many shooting sprees, often at the hands of drunken cowboys as they rode out of town, that one woman put her baby in an interior closet at night to reduce the likelihood

³⁵ Knox, "The Beginning of Perry Oklahoma," 22, 26.

³⁶ Interview with Harve Lovelday, 17 September 1937, Okemah, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 61, 428.

³⁷ Ida B. Lankford interview with Laura R. Dean, 9 June 1937, Cordell, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 83, 161.

³⁸ Interview with Winifred M. Clark, 20 September 1936, Tecumseh, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 104, 325.

³⁹ Fortson, *Pott County and What Has Come of It*, 24.

of him being struck by stray bullets.⁴⁰ A former Lexington resident described that town's main street as a rowdy spot, "you could hardly get up and down it. I saw seven fights going on at one time."⁴¹

The town of Corner, perhaps, became the most dangerous of these border towns. Situated at the junction of the Chickasaw and Seminole nations and Pottawatomie County at a bend in the Canadian River, Corner was little more than a few saloons in the river's bottom lands. Its secluded and remote location made it a regular stop for outlaws such as the Doolins and the Christian Brothers. Violence was a common feature of Corner, often called Corner Saloon because of the prominence of the liquor trade there. A doctor living in the area for five years in the 1890s treated hundreds of men injured in fights at one of the three Corner saloons. A newspaper reported in 1905 that at least fifty murders had been committed at Corner since its founding twelve years earlier.⁴² On one occasion, a patron shot a man who had climbed to the top of his cotton gin during a flood, apparently for no reason other than to see the man fall into the water. Shortly after 1900, James M. McCarty bought the Old Corner Saloon. He was so concerned for his safety that he hired, as protection, two men from Texas who had crossed the law previously. The saloons at Corner, symbolizing the lawless West, was the type of dangerous magnet for criminal activity that Oklahoma's Anti-Saloon League and other dries hoped to close forever.

Even the less infamous saloons saw some violence. In the last years of the territorial era, Woodward's bustling saloon industry received a jolt that led to the closing of all liquor establishments in the town by statewide prohibition. Jack Garvey's had been one of the most prominent saloons in town, featuring an orchestra as well as gambling and drinks. In 1904, Jack Love, represented by Temple Houston, lost a court judgment on a large cattle

⁴⁰ Gumprecht, "A Saloon on Every Corner," 154, 156.

⁴¹ Quoted in Gumprecht, "A Saloon on Every Corner," 150.

⁴² Gumprecht, "A Saloon on Every Corner," 153-154.

range in the area to Tom Word, represented by Ed Jennings. The judge hearing the case was Jennings' father, and Houston and Love swore vengeance on the younger Jennings. They found him at Garvey's and tried to call him out into the street, but Jennings refused. Undeterred, Houston pulled his gun and shot Jennings, who also was armed, as he sat at a table. Love fired on Jennings also, shooting him in the head; the latter died of his wounds. At the resulting trial, a jury acquitted Houston and Love of all charges, and Woodward underwent a strenuous reform campaign to close the source of such violence---the saloons. Ministers drafted and circulated petitions to prevent the renewal of liquor licenses with considerable success. In this way, Woodward became completely dry before statehood.⁴³

The violence associated with liquor did not abate following the adoption of statewide prohibition in 1907. Durward Earl Newsom, in *Drumright: The Glory Days of a Boom Town*, vividly portrays several saloons in this Oklahoma oil town complete with rough characters reminiscent of romanticized images of the old West. One liquor joint, The Hump, was located near Drumright along the border between Creek and Payne counties allowing quick escape should enforcement officials from one county or the other come calling. It opened around 1915, amidst the oil boom in the surrounding Cushing oil field and quickly gained a reputation for violence and crime. The proprietor hired a man to sit in a bullet-proof gun turret at the center of the main barroom to deter both potential thieves and conscientious enforcement officers. Reports of criminality became so common that state and federal officials closed it for good and destroyed the structure to make difficult any reopening. In so doing, they found several human skeletons, the remnants of people who had met untimely deaths at The Hump.⁴⁴

Drumright was not unique. Sapulpa, in the Glenn Pool oil field, became

⁴³ Linnaeus B. Ranch interview with L. E. Moyer, 2 October 1937, Gage, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 108, 481-485.

⁴⁴ Durward Earl Newsom, *Drumright: The Glory Days of Boom Town* (Perkins, OK: Evans Publications, Inc., 1985), 50, 52-54.

so overcrowded with oil workers that men slept in tents, wagons, and shacks. Several shootings took place on main street, and the authorities found that they needed a larger jail as their existing facility could not accommodate all of the drunks arrested nightly.⁴⁵ Kiefer, also in the Glenn Pool, was even more violent. Gunplay and knife fights, often lethal, became regular occurrences. As Kenny Franks notes, "the lure of work and high wages attracted a horde of young men to Kiefer. Most were single. Few of those who were married were willing to bring their families with them to what one described as 'A lawless hole of oil field workers.' With few of the conventional social restraints in place, many workers spent 'their pay with utter abandon' to the benefit of a host of gamblers, prostitutes, bootleggers, and con men in a section of town called the Bowery."⁴⁶

Franks adds that Kiefer did not settle down until some of the oil workers began bringing their families to the region. "With the 'respectable women' came a demand for law and order. . . . When the Bower's worst offenders opposed the 'civilizing' of their community, Kiefer's more respectable citizens formed a vigilance committee and drove them out of town."⁴⁷ The use of the word respectable points to the heart of the struggle between Oklahoma wets and dries. The latter, partially due to the antics of saloon patrons in such wide open towns as Kiefer, captured the mantle of respectability in that struggle and used it against the opponents of prohibition. Oklahoma dries painted the saloon, its patrons, and its defenders as nonrespectable, as a hindrance to progress both nationally and at the community level.

Despite the notoriety that the Oklahoma saloons, legal or otherwise, gained with the general public, many patrons recounted local saloons as relatively peaceful places operated by reasonable people. A longtime Clinton resident recalled that the town's first Sunday school was organized in a local

⁴⁵ Franks, *The Rush Begins*, 87, 94.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 104, 105.

saloon.⁴⁸ This suggests not only that this saloon was a respectable establishment in Clinton, but also that the dichotomy and apparent competition between the saloon and organized religion, which so worried the ministers of the Anti-Saloon League, did not exist in the early years of this community. An El Reno resident later asserted that, though she recalled that town supporting twenty-two saloons when she arrived there in 1893, she preferred open regulated saloons to prohibition because the town contained more drunks (under the liquor ban) than it had during the territorial days.⁴⁹ A former grocer in the Osage Reservation echoed these sentiments, "There were plenty of saloons in those (territorial) days, but they didn't drink heavy as they do now (1937), because you could go in the saloon and take a drink; but after the saloon days were over, there was lots of drinking and plenty of it as they realized they couldn't just get it any time."⁵⁰ These arguments were lost on the middle-class reformers who supported the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, the Oklahoma Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and other dry organizations.

There were, then, incidents of violence at many of the territorial saloons and later at the illegal saloons in the Sooner state; and this violence received a great deal of attention from the general public. Accounts from some people formerly associated with the saloon industry, however, paint a much more staid, peaceful picture of the region's saloon industry prior to prohibition. The more notorious saloons created a reputation for violence that much of the public attributed to all retail liquor establishments, and this likely convinced many to support prohibition who otherwise might have remained neutral on the issue. As Durward Earl Newsom recounts in discussing support

for the liquor ban in the oil patch community of Drumright, Oklahomans were

⁴⁸ Maude M. Fink interview with J. L. Avant, 15 April 1937, Clinton, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 99, 285.

⁴⁹ Interview with Mrs. Belle Gunn, 9 June 1937, El Reno, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 27, 82.

⁵⁰ Interview with David Newton Hatfield, 23 April 1937, in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 4, 470.

anxious to put behind them the coarse violence of the territorial period and some saw prohibition as a means to achieve this end.⁵¹

Other descriptions of Oklahoma saloons counter sharply the violent reputation of area saloons, liquor men, and their customers. A former journalist and postmaster in El Reno described the saloons in small towns and rural areas as quiet establishments. "In the farming communities the saloon more often was a drowsy unoffensive little place where the majority of people drank moderately; it was a sort of drug store where people went to get whiskey or bitters."⁵² Early residents of Keokuk Falls, one of the infamous saloon towns near the border between the territories, asserted that their community's wild reputation had been exaggerated. They insist that most people were law abiding, and saloon men often taught Sunday School.⁵³ Firsthand accounts also challenge the image of the rough, greedy saloon operator. A Bartlesville resident remembered Ernest Lewis, operator of an illegal saloon in that community before statehood, as a good man. Lewis was popular in the community and formed friendships with many who disliked his occupation as he "had a kind, sympathetic heart and was a friend to the poor." He died from wounds suffered during a liquor raid by two United States Marshals; described as overzealous in their work.⁵⁴ A former McAlester resident noted that, before statehood, people occasionally paid her father for music lessons with ten-gallon cans of White Mule whiskey.⁵⁵

Not all Oklahoma saloons, then, were as wild as those that regularly garnered headlines in local newspapers. These accounts suggest that at least some saloons were relatively staid establishments, providing a place for

⁵¹ Newsom, *Drumright*, 50-54.

⁵² Anna R. Barry interview with Charles G. Watson, 21 January 1938, El Reno, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 95, 432.

⁵³ Fortson, *Pott County and What Has Come of It*, 79.

⁵⁴ Interview with Ike Nicholson, 18 May 1937, Bartlesville, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 38, 16-18.

⁵⁵ Alene D. McDowell interview with Mrs. Ruth Gilmore, 26 April 1938, Bartlesville, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 80, 140.

patrons (predominantly men) to gather and socialize. The dry argument that the licensed saloon industry of Oklahoma Territory produced legions of drunkards also is challenged by some firsthand accounts, though little mention was made of these observations during the prohibition campaigns of 1907 and 1910. Liquor was a normal part of life in many communities, and some liquor men held places of standing in their towns before prohibition. Despite this, dry organizations sought to paint all saloons as breeding grounds for crime and immorality and all saloon operators as despicable leeches on society. Further, the explicit dichotomy between liquor and religious establishments, which the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League made a primary feature of its dry campaign, was much less clear during the period of early settlement in the region. Drys enjoyed considerable success in redefining the liquor industry as nonrespectable.

When liquor sales in Oklahoma became illegal on 16 November 1907, many of those who had operated saloons moved into other lines of work or left the state. Guthrie's Henry Braun, local agent for the Pabst Brewing Company and manager of several breweries and saloons in the area, initially announced that he would move to St. Louis. He chose to remain in Oklahoma, closed his liquor businesses, and focused on a series of ice plants that he operated in Oklahoma. J. B. Leech, a saloon operator in Edgewood, moved to Comanche after statehood and opened a grocery store.⁵⁶ Bush N. Bowman of Perry closed his five saloons in Perry, Guthrie, and Blackwell, and opened a cigar and billiard parlor in Perry.⁵⁷ Jim Williams, who had worked in a Guthrie saloon until prohibition, went to work in a Denver, Colorado saloon for a year. He then returned to the state, locating in Oklahoma City and later Guthrie where he served as a police officer and operated a restaurant.⁵⁸ August Ille and his

⁵⁶ Interview with B. L. Bennett, 9 July 1937, Durant, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 14, 353.

⁵⁷ Interview with Bush N. Bowman, 12 June 1937, Perry, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 16, 65-66.

⁵⁸ Interview with Jim Williams in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 46, 527.

brother, who had operated a saloon near the town of Sterling since 1901, converted their business into a hardware store when prohibition came in 1907 and later moved out of the area.⁵⁹ Moses Weinberger, owner of seven Guthrie saloons including its oldest, sold his saloon equipment for a pittance and went into the transfer business.⁶⁰ Many of the respected members of local communities, then, left the liquor industry at the end of 1907. As has been demonstrated, however, the demand and hence the supply of liquor remained in Oklahoma after prohibition took effect.

The liquor ban, then, turned over the liquor business to less respectable people in these communities or prompted previously respectable people to engage in activities now deemed illegal. Peter Eischen and his family were well-established members of the small German community of Okarche, receiving regular mention in the social activities columns of the local newspaper, and their business, Eischen's Saloon, was a prominent part of the main street business district. When prohibition took effect in November 1907, the Eischens announced that they had purchased a billiard table and would open a pool hall where their saloon had been.⁶¹ While drys suspected many such pool halls of selling liquor, the local press made no mention of liquor violations at Eischen's. An Okarche newspaper does indicate that wet sentiment remained strong in the area. In 1910, amidst the campaign prior to that year's referendum on the liquor ban, a meeting designed to drum up support for the local option measure was canceled because the local population already strongly favored the measure.⁶² When, in 1917, a Kansas City liquor dealer was arrested for taking orders for out-of-state liquor shipments, the local newspaper stated, "We understand that quite a number in this vicinity

⁵⁹ *A Diamond Jubilee: History of Tillman County, 1901-1976, Volume I*, 345. The Ille brothers moved their hardware store from Comanche County to Tillman County in 1919.

⁶⁰ Interview with Moses Weinberger, 5 August 1937, Guthrie, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 67, 70.

⁶¹ *Okarche Times*, 15 November, 20 December 1907.

⁶² *Okarche Times*, 21 October 1910.

gave him orders and paid cash. . . ."⁶³ In 1933, following the repeal of national prohibition and Oklahoma's legalization of drinks containing 3.2 percent alcohol or less, Peter's son Nick and his grandson Jack opened a beer bar known as the Tap Room, to this day one of the oldest bars in Oklahoma.⁶⁴ The demand for liquor in Okarche remained, then, despite the liquor ban, and those who attempted to meet that demand engaged in a business upon which respectable society frowned.

The prohibition question, then, was tied closely to the issue of respectability in early Oklahoma. Respectable citizens, those who owned significant property and were long-standing members of a community, looked upon the liquor industry with growing disdain. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and its dry supporters emphasized the distinction between their own supporters---ministers, merchants, prominent farmers, and professionals---and those of the various short-lived wet organizations in the state. The first group was the picture of respectability, while the second, according to the League, contained outlaws, drunks, and those who the corrupting liquor industry had duped or bought off. Certainly, the supporters of the wet organizations in Oklahoma saw themselves as respectable members of the community also, but their message in favor of regulating rather than banning the saloon was drowned out by the League and other dry proponents during the 1907 and 1910 campaigns, casting the entire liquor establishment out of the realm of respectability.

The leaders of the organized opposition to prohibition in the territories and in the very early years of statehood tended to be businessmen and professionals such as Isaac B. Levy of Guthrie, Z. T. Barton of Tishomingo, W. D. Cardwell of Oklahoma City, and Dr. John Threadgill of Oklahoma City. This

⁶³ *Okarche Times*, 18 May 1917.

⁶⁴ Margaret Tulp, ed., *History of Canadian County Oklahoma* (El Reno, OK: Canadian County History Book Association, Inc., 1991), 144.

opposition was poorly coordinated and stained with allegations of financial ties to out of state brewers and liquor wholesalers. Threadgill, in particular, lent a social legitimacy to the wet cause. He had been a member of the Oklahoma Territorial House in 1903 and later joined the territorial council. Early in 1907, he became the major general of the Oklahoma Confederate Veterans Association, a body which enjoyed considerable social prestige in much of Oklahoma.⁶⁵ He also belonged to the International Order of Odd Fellows, the Shriners, and the Knights Templar.⁶⁶ He owned the Hotel Threadgill in Oklahoma City, which brought him some grief as well as profits when reports surfaced that the proprietors leasing the building from Threadgill were selling liquor after midnight and on Sunday in clear violation of territorial law. Threadgill maintained that he had warned these men against such activity in the past and knew nothing of subsequent violations.⁶⁷

The first prominent wet organization to form in the region was the Citizens League. Isaac B. Levy, president of the Oklahoma State Bank of Guthrie and a representative to the territorial house from that district, and J. P. Goulding, an Enid real estate agent, formed the League in May 1907 and served as its first chairman and secretary respectively.⁶⁸ It enjoyed some support in the larger towns of Oklahoma Territory. The League campaigned actively against prohibition before the September referendum that year, drawing the ire of many dries. An open letter published in the Muskogee newspaper accused the League of serving as a front for saloon keepers.⁶⁹

The Citizens League suffered from poor organization against the better established Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. At its first meeting, the wet group adopted an anti-prohibition resolution as the center piece of its efforts, which

⁶⁵ *Purcell Register*, 10 January 1907.

⁶⁶ *Oklahoma City Times*, 19 February 1909.

⁶⁷ *Daily Oklahoman*, 27 January 1907.

⁶⁸ *Mangum Star*, 8 August 1907. The *Star* article lists the League's formation date as 16 May 1905. This likely is a typographical error as the *Daily Oklahoman* of 17 May 1907 states that the League formed the previous day.

⁶⁹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 21 June 1907.

included these statements: "Resolved: That it is the sense of this meeting that prohibition is detrimental to the best interests of true temperance. The habitual disregard of the prohibition law engenders disrespect for the law. . . . It (prohibition) will not prohibit. Experience everywhere demonstrates that regulation which can be made effective is better than prohibition which cannot be enforced."⁷⁰ Another anti-prohibition organization, unnamed, formed in McAlester in the summer of 1907. Under the direction of attorney Z. T. Burton of Tishomingo and W. F. Gilmer of Durant, this group claimed to represent opponents of prohibition in twelve counties.⁷¹ There is no indication that the two wet organizations coordinated their efforts or even spoke to one another.

The Citizens League also suffered from the perception that it was merely the puppet of the liquor industry. Prohibition supporters, particularly the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, flooded the state with literature supporting a ban on liquor and charged that the wet group was merely a cover for the liquor interests in Oklahoma and neighboring states. While these charges were not proven, their political impact likely was significant, particularly as the Citizens League produced no strong denial of the allegations. It paid full advertising rates to place anti-prohibition literature in newspapers throughout the territories, suggesting considerable financial backing and this may have repulsed some Oklahoma voters.⁷²

The prohibitionists' claim that the Citizens League was associated with the liquor interests is questioned by Jimmy Franklin. In *Born Sober*; he describes this group as supporting temperance, though not complete prohibition. These anti-prohibitionists argued that banning liquor would reduce tax revenues significantly, discourage business investment in

⁷⁰ *Daily Oklahoman*, 17 May 1907.

⁷¹ *Checotah Enquirer*, 9 August 1907. As the organization was based in Durant near the Texas border, its support likely came from the southern and eastern part of Oklahoma.

⁷² *Daily Oklahoman*, 17 November 1907, prohibition files, Barde Collection.

Oklahoma, and create a high disrespect for all law.⁷³ They insisted that they were not defenders of the saloon, but felt the liquor industry, as well as the saloon, could be controlled best through a policy of local option (allowing counties or municipalities to permit or prohibit the sale of liquor) and high license (requiring saloons to purchase a license from local government to regulate the number and activities of such establishments). The Citizens League distributed literature around the state before the September 1907 vote.⁷⁴ The Anti-Saloon League continued to associate the Citizens League with a vested liquor interest, and in September 1907 a clear majority of voting Oklahomans adopted prohibition as part of the state constitution. Having failed to defeat the dries at the polls, the Citizens League sought, again unsuccessfully, to challenge the legality of prohibition before the Attorney General.⁷⁵ Within a year of the adoption of prohibition in Oklahoma, the Citizens League dissolved.

Interestingly, the Citizens League insisted that it did not support the saloon. It accepted the arguments made by dries that the saloon was an evil---a necessary evil according to the wets, but one that should be controlled and regulated rather than banned. Supporters of the Citizens League saw little redeeming value in the legal saloon beyond its contribution to state and local coffers through licensing fees. There appears to be a clear disconnect, then, between this wet organization and the patrons of the saloons. It seems improbable that many of those customers viewed the saloon with the same disdain that even the Citizens League publicly expressed toward liquor establishments. Despite the respectable background of its leaders, the League suffered under the impression that its members were mere foot soldiers for a self-serving liquor industry, which contributed little to development and progress in Oklahoma. This message, crafted by the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon

⁷³ Franklin, *Born Sober*: 18, 20.

⁷⁴ Prohibition petition from Durant, Indian Territory, Purdum (Helen) Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Libraries.

⁷⁵ *Lehigh Leader*, 24 October 1907.

League and repeated by its supporters---many of whom were ministers---drowned out the dire predictions of the Citizens League, predictions that were born out in Oklahoma after 1907 and in the nation as a whole after 1920.

As the Citizens League disappeared, another anti-prohibition organization formed. In July 1908, Dr. John Threadgill, J. M. Haley, and Lewis Eichop, all of Oklahoma City, formed the Sons of Washington. Threadgill, in addition to his service in the territorial legislature, was president of the Oklahoma Bank and Trust company and was a director at the State National Bank.⁷⁶ The organization's stated purpose was to "protect the personal rights and liberties as American citizens as guaranteed by the Constitution,"⁷⁷ but its goal was the resubmission of the prohibition question to Oklahoma voters. Toward that end, the leaders of the Sons campaigned across the new state seeking the required 60,000 signatures on a petition to get the liquor question placed before the people in a general referendum. The previous March Governor Charles N. Haskell had signed Oklahoma's first liquor enforcement legislation, the Billups Bill, into law. As discussed in chapter four, this statute also created a state dispensary system under the governor's direction by which Oklahomans might purchase liquor with a doctor's prescription. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League strongly supported the dispensary system as a vital part of effective prohibition; the Sons of Washington opposed it charging the prohibitionists with hypocrisy.⁷⁸

More systematic in its campaign than its predecessor, the Citizens League, the Sons of Washington built a small base of support around the state in the summer of 1908. By October of that year it claimed to have local organizations in each town and city and two in Oklahoma City, though its stated goal of attracting 50,000 members statewide within a year suggests limited support. Even this projection proved overly optimistic; by September 1909 the

⁷⁶ *Daily Oklahoman*, 15 May 1915.

⁷⁷ *Enid Weekly Eagle*, 16 July 1908.

⁷⁸ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 27-35.

Sons were able to claim only 20,000 members.⁷⁹ The Sons campaigned against the state liquor dispensary system prior to the confusing 1908 referendum on that agency, hoping that closure of the dispensaries would turn more voters against prohibition. Beginning in 1909, they focused on gathering sufficient signatures to call for a second referendum on prohibition. This they accomplished by 1910, though, as discussed in chapter four, the results of that referendum likely disappointed the Sons.

The Anti-Saloon League portrayed the Sons as a secret political society, describing its initiation ceremony in which candidates were blind-folded and bound and asked to recite an oath.⁸⁰ The *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, a good party newspaper and ardent supporter of prohibition, betrayed its position when it ran an editorial on the Sons of Washington, stating,

“In this country no persons, or clique of persons, ever resort to a secret political organization to effect a change of laws or to work their non-enforcement, except in cases in which their designs are so objectionable to the great mass of the people that men of character will not publicly advocate them. It appears that the so-called ‘Sons of Washington’ belongs to this class of organization.”⁸¹

This staunch opposition to secrecy is curious given the swift growth and widespread popularity of the secretive Ku Klux Klan in Muskogee as well as the rest of the state a little more than a decade later.

The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, despite the supposed secrecy, succeeded in identifying some leaders of the Sons of Washington---Oklahoma City attorney William D. Cardwell (secretary of the organization), state senator Henry Beeler of the Muskogee area, and state representative Leslie P. Ross of Lawton. The Sons formed a legislative committee charged with petitioning the governor to resubmit prohibition to a popular vote. Cardwell announced plans to pool his organization’s resources with those of the Sons of Washington of Kansas to create a national anti-prohibition organization, but nothing came of

⁷⁹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, September 1909.

⁸⁰ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, 3 October 1908, September 1909, 24 October 1908.

⁸¹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 21 October 1908.

the proposal.⁸² The organization's secrecy may also speak to the concern members felt at publicly announcing their opposition to prohibition. The leadership of the Sons included some established members of Oklahoma communities, even some legislators.

Despite some setbacks, the Sons of Washington continued to work toward resubmission of the prohibition question. The Muskogee chapter of the Sons experienced problems when authorities discovered that the local organization had a keg of beer at its meeting and raided the event. In February 1909, Threadgill, one of the more respected leaders of the Sons, was stricken with an unexplained paralysis that incapacitated him for a time.⁸³ By early 1910 the Sons had collected 59,000 signatures on their petition, sufficient to place the issue before Oklahoma voters again in that year's general election. Cardwell drafted a local option amendment to the state constitution, which he presented to Governor Charles Haskell. The governor, an ardent dry and supporter of the Anti-Saloon League, initially refused the petition, but the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled that the executive office must receive it.⁸⁴

The Sons sent 5,000 copies of this amendment around Oklahoma and announced that their speakers would canvas the state in support of the amendment. Their central arguments were that prohibition, having been tried for over two years, remained ineffective in stemming the flow of liquor in the state. Further, legalization of liquor would provide the state with additional tax revenues through licensing fees. The Sons, like the Citizens League before them, bought advertising space in newspapers around the state claiming that prohibition had increased rather than decreased the number of liquor sources; and like the earlier Citizens League, the Sons suffered from criticism that they were allied with major breweries and distilleries.⁸⁵ After

⁸² *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, May 1909.

⁸³ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, May 1909; *Oklahoma City Times*, 19 February 1909.

⁸⁴ *Vinita Weekly Chieftain*, 13 May 1910.

⁸⁵ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, July 1909, March 1910, November 1910; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 25 October 1910.

the 1910 campaign, newspapers and Anti-Saloon League publications, which had kept close tabs on the Sons, ceased to mention the organization, indicating that it dissolved in similar fashion to the demise of the Citizens League.

The Sons of Washington leadership contained some ties to wage earners in the state. Attorney William Cardwell prosecuted businesses in the Oklahoma City area that illegally blacklisted workers.⁸⁶ This friend of labor served as secretary of the Sons and was the principal author of the local option amendment. While organized labor remained officially silent on the liquor question in Oklahoma, Cardwell's efforts toward and vocal support for local option likely sat well with many workers.

Aiding the Sons of Washington in the 1910 campaign against prohibition were the German-American Association and smaller, local organizations. The Oklahoma High License and Local Option Association formed in late spring 1910. John Threadgill served as president, W. D. Cardwell as secretary, and Henry Braun as treasurer.⁸⁷ As Threadgill and Cardwell were active in the Sons of Washington, and Braun was the president of the German-American Association, this newly-formed organization likely served to coordinate the efforts of the two better established groups.

An Oklahoma Business Men's League formed before the November referendum, and claimed 30,000 members and representation in all counties of the state during the height of the 1910 campaign.⁸⁸ It purchased advertising space in area newspapers to criticize prohibition and its supporters. One such ad attempted to make a religious argument when it charged the prohibitionists with "destroying the very foundation of Christianity by delegating to the policeman the work formerly performed by the church."⁸⁹ In another ad, the Business Men's League described prohibition as a "Nightmare of Frenzy and

⁸⁶ Charles L. Daugherty to Moman Pruiett, 9 July 1909, Charles L. Daugherty Collection, Box 2, File 2, Western History Collection.

⁸⁷ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, May 1910.

⁸⁸ Franklin, *Born Sober*, 48.

⁸⁹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 1 November 1910.

Hysteria.” In using the word hysteria, a psychological condition ascribed primarily to women during this period, the League sought to paint the dry campaign as dominated by women or inherently feminine. Henry Overholser, former mayor of Oklahoma City and a confirmed wet, served as the president of this league, Nathan A. Cole served as secretary, and John Threadgill acted as treasurer. Other members included Isaac B. Levy, who had organized the earlier Civic League.⁹⁰ Threadgill’s presence again suggests considerable overlap and coordination of the efforts by these various wet organizations.

The presence of Threadgill not only fostered cooperation between the wet organizations, but improved their image as well. Physician, banker, businessman, and prominent member of the state Republican party as well as several social organizations, Threadgill brought an air of respectability to the wet cause. He publicly confronted the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League charging it with demagoguery and misleading voters though he felt the ministers who promoted League doctrine were sincere men who believed they were telling the truth.⁹¹ This was one of the very few attacks on the Anti-Saloon League, tied closely to several prominent religious denominations in Oklahoma. Most wet leaders did not enjoy Threadgill’s social and political cachet in the state and so did not address the League directly. In a second open letter, dated 28 September 1910, Threadgill challenged the Anti-Saloon League to join his organization in calling for an investigation of Oklahoma’s prohibition law. He predicted such an inquiry would establish the futile nature of the ban on liquor sales, noting that the Internal Revenue Service granted nearly 1,900 federal liquor licenses to Oklahoma establishments in the previous year.⁹² Wets also circulated a letter recruiting people to work at the polls on election day

⁹⁰ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 5 November 1910.

⁹¹ Prohibition files, Barde Collection. Threadgill’s delicate criticism of the ministers heading the League illustrates the predicament facing Oklahoma wets. While arguing against their methods, Threadgill dare not attack the ministers personally as this might alienate members of particular denominations and perhaps the public at large if it perceive this as an attack on all Christian religion.

⁹² Prohibition files, Barde Collection.

promising to pay each person \$3.00 in advance. This tactic brought a storm of protest from the Anti-Saloon League that the wet forces were attempting to buy the election and severely damaged the respectable image Threadgill and others had cultivated.⁹³

The larger German-American Association, claiming to represent approximately 40,000 Oklahomans of German extraction, threw its support behind the Sons of Washington at its 1910 convention in El Reno. Henry Braun, a Guthrie wholesaler for the Pabst Corporation, served as its president. Braun also operated at least one saloon in downtown Oklahoma City, in the region known as Hell's Half Acre.⁹⁴ The association resolved that prohibition was not effectively enforced leading to hypocrisy and "the criminality of the people," that prohibition targeted the poorer elements of society, that prohibition robbed Oklahoma of the tax revenue from liquor establishments, which continued to proliferate, and that "prohibition is an outrageous infringement of fundamental human rights. . . since the question whether the use of liquor is right or wrong is one of individual conscience."⁹⁵ The association's emphasis on personal liberty as a prime argument against prohibition had limited impact in Oklahoma, possibly because many were unsympathetic toward and increasingly suspicious of the state's small German population as America drifted toward armed confrontation with Germany.

The German press in Oklahoma touted a decidedly anti-prohibitionist line, though it stopped short of encouraging open violation of the law. In their observations of the liquor ban in Oklahoma and in other states, editors criticized excesses in enforcement and asserted that prohibition did not prohibit the consumption of alcohol, often because the liquor ban was not enforced. The *Oklahoma Neuigkeiten*, published in Perry, described

⁹³ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, December 1910.

⁹⁴ *Daily Oklahoman*, 1 May 1907.

⁹⁵ Prohibition files, Barde Collection. This resolution by the German-American Association is dated to September with no year mentioned. Its endorsement of the Sons of Washington indicates that the document dates from 1908, 1909, or 1910.

prohibition conditions in northern Minnesota as tyrannical, and presented the German-American Society of that state as a bulwark against the infringements on liberty there.⁹⁶ The *Oklahoma Staats Zeitung* of Enid criticized the arrest of a man for possession of alcohol. The man in question had come to Drumright from Arkansas to be married and had brought with him a quart of liquor for the wedding celebration. The wedding was interrupted when "the fangs of the law got hold of him because of illegal possession of booze."⁹⁷ The *Staats Zeitung* also reported William L. Haines's unintended shooting of a motorist in Kay County during an attempted liquor raid. Haines, as Kay County Sheriff, fired at the tires of a car believed to be carrying liquor. The shot went awry and fatally struck the driver. To compound matters, the party in the car possessed no liquor, but were returning from a funeral in Kansas.⁹⁸ By contrast, these newspapers portrayed bootleggers as relatively restrained businessmen.

Despite these excesses, enforcement officers, in the eyes of the Oklahoma German press, were incapable of stemming the flow of liquor. The *Neuigkeiten* reported in 1916 that national whiskey production that year had increased by seven and one half million gallons over the previous year though seven states had adopted prohibition.⁹⁹ The following year the *Staats Zeitung* ran a story from Washington state asserting that the production of illegal whiskey continued to increase since the implementation of that state's liquor ban.¹⁰⁰ Oklahoma prohibition, the Enid newspaper asserted, was no more effective: "Christmas Toddies and 'Tom and Jerry' (a type of eggnog containing liquor) will be in full supply this year in Eastern Oklahoma. . . ."¹⁰¹ The Oklahoma German press, writing for an audience that was decidedly against

⁹⁶ *Oklahoma Neuigkeiten* (Perry), 2 July 1914. Professor John Tevelde of the Oklahoma State University German Department was kind enough to translate these articles for me. I am in his debt.

⁹⁷ *Oklahoma Staats Zeitung* (Enid), 23 August 1918.

⁹⁸ *Oklahoma Staats Zeitung* (Enid), 24 October 1919.

⁹⁹ *Oklahoma Neuigkeiten* (Perry), 1 June 1916.

¹⁰⁰ *Oklahoma Staats Zeitung* (Enid), 11 May 1917.

¹⁰¹ *Oklahoma Staats Zeitung* (Enid), 16 November 1917.

prohibition, played to its readers and emphasized the short-comings of the liquor ban. The German-American opposition to Oklahoma prohibition seems to have cut across class lines. Rather, it was rooted in a shared ethnic identity championed by the German-American Association.

The earliest mention of the German-American Association in Oklahoma is 1897, when more than fifty delegates from Canadian, Kingfisher, Kay, Blaine, Oklahoma, Garfield, Cleveland, Noble, and Logan counties met in El Reno. They resolved to oppose prohibition, support equality before the law, and oppose lynching.¹⁰² Regarding prohibition, the association vowed to protect the rights of its members to engage in the liquor industry and to work against candidates of either party who supported a ban on liquor. As statehood and the first vote on prohibition neared, local associations or bunds sprouted in those Oklahoma communities containing a sizable population of German extraction.¹⁰³ The German-American Association's support for the Citizens League in the 1907 campaign is unclear, though the organizations sought similar goals. Its emphasis on personal liberty distinguished it from the Citizens League and the Sons of Washington, which focused on the regulation of the liquor industry and the negative economic consequences of prohibition. At its 1907 meeting in El Reno shortly before the liquor ban referendum, the association resolved that prohibition was fundamentally unAmerican and at odds with the reform spirit of the time.¹⁰⁴ These arguments, like others pushed by the association had little impact beyond its immediate membership.

Following the adoption of statewide prohibition, the German-American Association remained active in Oklahoma. President Henry Braun advised all saloon operators "to adhere rigidly to the prohibition law and in so doing in my opinion, they (opponents of prohibition) will be able in the course of a few

¹⁰² *El Reno News*, 6 August 1897. Jimmie Lewis Franklin, citing the *Daily Oklahoman* 4 April 1907, indicates that the German-American Association organized in Oklahoma in 1904. It is possible that the association disbanded after 1897 or that the *Oklahoman's* information was inaccurate.

¹⁰³ *Shawnee Daily Herald*, 25 June 1907.

¹⁰⁴ *Okarche Times*, 30 August 1907.

years, to secure an amendment to the constitution which will give us local option."¹⁰⁵ At its 1908 meeting in Shawnee, the association---25,000 strong---resolved to continue its work against prohibition. Members pledged "to vote only for liberal candidates or state, national, county and city officials who were opposed to sumptuary laws. . . ."¹⁰⁶ Recognizing the hindrance to their cause created by anarchists whom the general public associated with all recent immigrants, the association also called for changes in the national immigration laws to exclude "all immigrants of anarchistic tendencies."¹⁰⁷

The association remained active in Oklahoma politics, then, but its political clout in the Sooner state was quite limited to a few primarily rural counties. The 1910 federal census puts Oklahoma's total population at 1,657,155, its German born population at 10,089, and its German stock population (those whose parents were born in Germany) at 17,510. Thus, the 27,599 German Americans represented 1.7 percent of Oklahoma's total 1910 population.¹⁰⁸ Richard C. Rohrs, in *The Germans of Oklahoma*, states that much of that population collected in the north central counties of the former Oklahoma Territory.¹⁰⁹ In the prohibition referendums of 1907 and 1910, the populations of these counties did not vote noticeably wet, indicating that the German-American population there was not large enough to influence elections at the county level, or that its presence brought forth considerable anti-German

¹⁰⁵ *Lehigh Leader*, 24 October 1907.

¹⁰⁶ *Enid Weekly Eagle*, 9 April 1908.

¹⁰⁷ *Enid Weekly Eagle*, 9 April 1908.

¹⁰⁸ Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, 3: 466. The census figures concerning Oklahoma's German population fall far short of the numerical support that the German-American Association claimed. This discrepancy cannot be explained definitively. The association may have inflated its numbers or it may have enjoyed the support from some Oklahomans who were not of German descent.

¹⁰⁹ Rohrs, *The Germans in Oklahoma*, 1, 18-19.

sentiment at the polls.¹¹⁰

Oklahoma's German population increasingly found its culture under attack in the Sooner state, and prohibition should be viewed in light of this cultural assault. Rohrs notes that the state's German population saw prohibition as part of a larger nativist stance against them; the Presbyterian churches of Oklahoma stated publicly that members equated "all German-Americans with gamblers, bootleggers, and anarchists."¹¹¹ The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League accused the German-American Association members of "being in reality Germans who refuse to become Americanized. . . ."¹¹² In this way drys effectively countered the cultural arguments of Germans that beer, in particular, was a vital part of their European heritage. The Anti-Saloon League turned this argument back on the German-American Association, insisting that they must abandon this aspect of their German heritage if they wished full acceptance into American society. Such pronouncements made Oklahoma's German and German-American populations acutely aware that they resided beyond the bounds of respectability in the opinion of many Oklahomans.

Oklahoma's various wet organizations also suffered from the perception

¹¹⁰ The counties that Rohrs identifies as containing significant German and German-American populations were Alfalfa, Garfield, Grant, Kay, Kingfisher, Logan, Noble, and Payne. Of these, only Logan County produced a wet majority in 1907 (44.3 percent supporting prohibition). The percentages of prohibition sentiment for each county as well as its voter turnout are tabulated in Appendix B. I calculated these figures from a report on these votes compiled by the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and from the voting-age male population listed in the 1910 federal census. All but Logan and Alfalfa counties reported slight majorities (50.1 to 60 percent) for prohibition in 1907. All reported a dry majority in 1910 with Alfalfa and Grant counties voting extremely dry (73 percent and 68.2 percent for prohibition respectively). These elections provide a reasonably accurate assessment of prohibition sentiment in these counties. Given the voting age population statistics of the 1910 federal census, 63 percent or more of the voting population of each county, except Logan County, turned out for the 1910 election. Logan County was an exception as only 42.3 percent voted on the prohibition question. This figure might be explained by the size of that county's black population, which the state had disenfranchised at the 1910 August primary elections. Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League pamphlet, prohibition files, Barde Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, 3: 467, 471, 473, 475, 477.

¹¹¹ Rohrs, *The Germans in Oklahoma*, 28.

¹¹² *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, May 1909.

that they were mere fronts for a vested liquor interest that sought only to increase its profits at society's expense. The Anti-Saloon League portrayed the German-American Association and the Sons of Washington as tools of the brewers and certainly President Braun's position as a regional wholesaler for Pabst did little to counter this image; drys charged out-of-state brewers with funding Oklahoma's anti-prohibition campaigns. Governor Haskell, in a speech supporting prohibition, claimed that St. Louis breweries had poured \$30,000 into the 1907 campaign to keep prohibition out of the Oklahoma constitution.¹¹³ One newspaper reported that the "managers of the whiskey campaign" had advanced \$8,000 to the state organization for black suffrage in 1907 to gain black support against prohibition.¹¹⁴ The Anti-Saloon League stated that the brewers spent even more money in Oklahoma during the 1910 campaign on prohibition. The *Eufala Republican* reported that unnamed breweries had created a \$1,000,000 slush fund to finance the 1910 local option campaign.¹¹⁵

These charges had some basis in fact. As indicated in chapter four, Gustavus Pabst did lend some support to Braun's anti-prohibition efforts in 1910, though an exact dollar amount is not known and the specifics of this never became public. Additionally, John Threadgill, organizer of the Sons of Washington, had received a \$70,000 loan from Adolphus Busch and Anheuser-

¹¹³ Charles N. Haskell Papers: Correspondence, Box 1, File 6. The speech is undated and so might refer to either the 1907 or 1910 campaign. As Haskell mentioned the campaign of the previous summer, I infer that he spoke of the earlier contest as it was decided in a special September vote. The 1910 campaign, ending with the November vote, did not peak until the autumn.

¹¹⁴ *Lehigh Leader*, 18 July 1907.

¹¹⁵ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, December 1910; *Eufala Republican*, 11 November 1910. While the \$1,000,000 figure was not substantiated, the charge is significant given the source. By 1910 prohibition was very much a part of the state Democratic Party platform though it tried to downplay this stance in some areas fearing a loss of political support. The Republican Party generally was more critical of prohibition because of its Democratic support. That the editor of the *Eufala Republican*, presumably opposed to prohibition, decided to run this story adds credibility to the charge that brewers were funding the local option campaign. The amount further implies an out of state influence as Oklahoma's few small breweries, operating illegally in 1910, likely could not afford such a figure.

Busch Company of Oklahoma when he built the Hotel Threadgill in 1904.¹¹⁶ As the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League never publicized this fact in its barrage of criticism directed at Threadgill and the Sons, it seems likely that this information also was not publicly known. Despite the unsubstantiated nature of the prohibitionist charges, the perception was strong that the opponents of the liquor ban received financial aid from liquor interests who sought to dupe Oklahoma voters for their own ends. Further damaging the wets' cause was the suspicion that much of this money came from out of state, leading to charges by the dries that their opponents were outsiders seeking to loot Oklahoma. The efforts by the various anti-prohibition organizations proved insufficient as Oklahomans rejected the local option amendment in November 1910 by a vote of 105,041 in favor to 126,118 opposed. The dry vote represented 54.6 percent of the state vote, a slight increase from the 1907 results. The wet cause suffered from the perception that it was self serving, while the dry cause appeared to be much more altruistic.

The wets' second defeat in three years did not end efforts to again submit the liquor question to Oklahoma voters. Another Local Option association formed in 1911 vowing to pressure the governor for resubmission. Like its predecessors, it was dominated by substantial citizens including the former mayor of Shawnee (also a former member of the Sons of Washington) and a real estate businessman from Oklahoma City. They, again like their predecessors, argued that prohibition increased rather than reduced crime and lawlessness.¹¹⁷ Also, as liquor conditions varied widely across the state, this group argued that liquor policy should be made at the local level. The public's fatigue over the liquor question and a lack of unity between the local option supporters hindered the efforts of this association as it failed to garner the

¹¹⁶ Interview with Fred Ellsworth Sutton, Kansas City, Missouri in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 73, 117. Sutton stated that he had access to this information as the financial agent of Busch and Anheuser-Busch Company in Oklahoma.

¹¹⁷ Newspaper article, prohibition files, Barde Collection.

required number of signatures for its initiative.¹¹⁸

Subsequent efforts at resubmission were made by the Business Men's Protective League, formed in 1913, and the United Civic Association, formed in 1914. The latter group, based in Oklahoma City, was led by Henry Crosby, A. M. Goldstandt, and F. Burleigh Johnson. Crosby had been a member of the Oklahoma Business Men's League during the 1910 campaign. The association claimed 4,000 members in the capital city in the spring of that year and announced its intention to broaden and organize supporters around the state. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, ever vigilant about its opposition, assessed this new group in this way: "We have an organization in Oklahoma City calling themselves the 'United Civic Association.' In plain English this is the booze organization."¹¹⁹

By June 1914, the association claimed 30,000 members statewide and expected to gain an additional 75,000 in the near future.¹²⁰ Its officers circulated another petition calling on the state government to resubmit the liquor question at the next election. The association also sought out-of-state funding through a letter, which the Anti-Saloon League obtained and published. By the end of summer 1914, the association abandoned its campaign for resubmission citing a lack of support. The League claimed that its appeal for money from sources outside Oklahoma had turned the public against it.¹²¹ None of these organizations, then, enjoyed sufficient popular support and organization to challenge the state's liquor code. An attempt in 1915 to introduce local option legislation in the state senate met with similar defeat. Local option did not receive serious consideration in Oklahoma again until after the repeal of national prohibition in 1933. The Sooner state kept prohibition until 1959, though it redefined banned liquor in 1933 to exempt drinks containing 3.2 percent alcohol or less. The Anti-Saloon League and its

¹¹⁸ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, February 1912.

¹¹⁹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, September-October 1913, April 1914, May 1914.

¹²⁰ *Harlow's Weekly*, 13 June 1914.

¹²¹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, June 1914, September 1914.

dry supporters was very effective, then, in casting their opposition as fronts for the nonrespectable liquor industry.

The cultural and civil liberties arguments against prohibition made by the German-American Association sounded increasingly hollow to greater Oklahoma as America drifted toward war with Germany and all things German became suspicious. Criticism of and even attacks on German Americans in the state grew dramatically following America's entrance into the war in April 1917. German schools around the state were ordered closed. School children in the northwestern community of Carmen burned German books in a street bonfire amidst a spontaneous anti-German celebration.¹²² Residents of Collinsville, in the northeastern part of the state, formed a mob and lynched Henry Rheimer because he had vocally supported a local German school that the larger citizenry had ordered closed recently. Fortunately, the police chief came upon this scene and convinced the mob to cut down Rheimer before he died. The incensed citizens vowed to try him for expressing pro-German sentiment.¹²³ Earlier, the Oklahoma Council of Defense had encouraged vigilante activity against pro-German sentiment, stating, "A blank wall and a firing squad may soon be the remedy for pro-Germanism in Oklahoma in the few sections where it exists."¹²⁴ This virulently anti-German atmosphere squelched wet arguments that stressed beer drinking as a fundamental part of German culture as well as those that accused prohibition of destroying civil liberties.

Historians of the national prohibition movement argue that the drys' victory over the wets was due to their superior organization.¹²⁵ This argument also applies to Oklahoma as the Citizens League, the Sons of Washington, the Business Mens' Protective League, and the Local Option and High License Committee existed briefly with little continuity or cooperation between them

¹²² *Daily Oklahoman*, 18 April 1918.

¹²³ *Daily Oklahoman*, 20 April 1918.

¹²⁴ *Harlow's Weekly*, 14 November 1917.

¹²⁵ Merz, *The Dry Decade*, 212; Andrew Sinclair, *Era of Excess*, 4.

despite the overlap in membership. If anything, the latter characteristic hurt the wet cause by allowing the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and its supporters to claim that each group was merely the reincarnation of earlier organizations, each serving as a front for a shadowy liquor interest. The German-American Association enjoyed longevity, but its base of support in Oklahoma was quite small relative to the total population. Oklahoma's German-Americans lost even that limited influence after American entrance into the First World War as the nation adopted an intense antagonism toward all things German.

Another hindrance to the wet cause, though less measurable, was the sudden death in 1915 of Dr. Threadgill who, as an accomplished businessman and solid member of Oklahoma society, had lent respectability to the wet cause.¹²⁶ By comparison, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League coordinated the efforts of all anti-liquor organizations in the area after 1900 and kept ministers at the forefront of its work. The leadership of this organization stabilized when Oklahoma City attorney Horatio T. Laughbaum assumed the superintendency in 1912 and remained in that capacity until 1932.¹²⁷ In the contest for respectability, the wet forces could not compete with the Anti-Saloon League led by Protestant ministers throughout the period. The links that prohibitionists drew between the wet organizations and wealthy liquor interests also likely hurt the local option cause. Further, the dries often characterized the local option people as bootleggers and saloon backers---the least socially acceptable portions of the liquor industry. While the wet cause enjoyed some measure of respectability during the territorial period, it lost this shortly after statehood. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League's message, that it spoke for respectable Oklahomans and that all opponents of prohibition came from nonrespectable segments of society, drowned out Oklahoma's various wet organizations.

¹²⁶ *Daily Oklahoman*, 15 May 1915.

¹²⁷ "Horatio T. Laughbaum," Laughbaum manuscripts, Oklahoma Historical Society.

The issues of respectability and prohibition in Oklahoma also were affected by economic considerations. As demonstrated in chapter five, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and its supporters were predominantly middle-class merchants and professionals. Tying their campaign to organized religion---specifically Oklahoma's evangelical faiths, dries captured the mantle of respectability for their cause and made support for prohibition a litmus test of respectability in Oklahoma by 1920. Wage earners in the Sooner state generally opposed prohibition, if not at the election polls, then by their continued patronage of blind pigs and bootleggers despite the liquor ban. Oklahoma's illegal liquor industry, less concerned with cultural matters than with turning a profit, understood that a significant part of its customer base was working class and catered to this population by focusing its activities in regions containing high concentrations of wage earners. As liquor selling was illegal, much of it remains undocumented. However, comments by state and local enforcement officers indicate that bootlegging and later moonshining were particularly persistent problems in the mining districts of southeast and northeast Oklahoma, in the oil fields of northeast, east central, and south central Oklahoma, and among some itinerant agricultural workers, though documentation of this population is sketchy at best.

The region that became Oklahoma contained a sizable working-class population before statehood. As Nigel Sellars notes in his study of the Industrial Workers of the World in Oklahoma, the railroad, coal, and later oil industries drew many wage earners to the territories. Miners opened the first coal mines near McAlester in 1870, and the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad soon reached McAlester so that, by 1899, twenty-two coal mines operated in the Choctaw and Chickasaw lands of Indian Territory. Railroad companies owned many of these and paid royalties to the Indian governments

for the right to mine coal.¹²⁸ Sellars asserts that the frontier stage of the region's development had passed already by the time of the first land run in 1889 because corporations had moved into the area and gained control of much of the natural resources by this time.¹²⁹

Personal accounts corroborate the presence of a large number of wage earners in the territories and their proclivity for drinking. A Poteau resident recounted that the area that later formed Le Flore County, along the Arkansas border, became much more raucous in the late 1880s when the San Francisco Railroad and the Kansas City Southern Railroad were built through the region. He noted that gamblers, bootleggers, and prostitutes followed the railroad work camps, adding, "The laborers employed in their construction were not, in all cases, of the best element."¹³⁰ A former bootlegger recalled that he made a handsome profit selling liquor to African American farm workers in extreme eastern Oklahoma during the later territorial years. Earlier, he had sold liquor to the men building the San Francisco Railroad, "who were eager customers and free spenders."¹³¹ A former councilman and police chief for the town of Collinsville recalled the presence of both a large working-class population and a large illicit liquor industry in that community. The town's smelters and brick plants drew large numbers of wage earners, and Collinsville supported a considerable amount of bootlegging, particularly at the dance halls.¹³² A man who had moved to the small western Oklahoma community of Mountain View in 1901 recalled that town as prosperous---supporting four saloons, one store, and one blacksmith shop---because construction on a nearby rail line drew

¹²⁸ Federal Writers' Project of Oklahoma, *Labor History of Oklahoma*, 22.

¹²⁹ Sellars, "Oil, Wheat, and Wobblies," 22.

¹³⁰ Gomer Gower interview with H. Lee Jackson, 23 April 1938, Poteau, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 86, 15.

¹³¹ Interview with George Tanner, 18 October 1937, Poteau, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 46, 192-193, 195.

¹³² Interview with Roderick Dhu Perry, 1 April 1938, Collinsville, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 70, 187.

wage earners to the area.¹³³ Area liquor men had identified the working-class population as a primary market for their product by the turn of the century. Where large work gangs went in the territories, saloons and/or bootleggers followed. This also pertained to the more stationary workers manning the mines of Indian Territory.

Railroad building continued to provide employment in the region after statehood. One newspaper reported that, with the possible exception of Texas, Oklahoma led the nation in rail construction in the first eight months of 1912. During that time, work crews added just under two hundred miles of track in the Sooner state, and the state corporation commission estimated that another two hundred would be added by year's end. These figures included new lines or extensions of existing lines from Wagoner to Miami in the northeast, from Henryetta to Oklahoma City across east central Oklahoma, from the panhandle town of Beaver to the western end of the panhandle, and from the central region of the state to the western community of Cheyenne. All told, workers laid more than five hundred miles of rail in Oklahoma in the first five years following statehood.¹³⁴

Railroad construction projects continued as the young state improved its infrastructure. In 1913, workers built lines from Henryetta to the surrounding mining camps, from Coffeerville, Kansas to Tulsa, and from Ardmore west through the Healdton oil field to Byers, Texas. The following year, workers extended a branch line of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad from the eastern portion of the state into the Cushing oil field.¹³⁵ In 1915 talk began of building an interurban rail line between Tulsa and the town of Cushing.¹³⁶ Wage earners flooded into the state not only to construct these rail lines, but also to maintain the state's growing rail network and to

¹³³ Ruby Wolfenberger interview with Mack Wafer, 23 March 1938, Sentinel, Oklahoma in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 95, 201.

¹³⁴ *Harlow's Weekly*, 7 September 1912.

¹³⁵ *Harlow's Weekly*, 1 March 1913, 7 November 1914.

¹³⁶ *Harlow's Weekly*, 3 April 1915.

operate the locomotives that used it. These railroad workers also provided a solid customer base for the liquor industry, whether legal or not.

As indicated in chapter two, development of the coal fields around McAlester had drawn the first significant white population into Indian Territory in the 1870s, and coal mining in this area remained a significant part of the Oklahoma economy well into the twentieth century. Despite the introduction of the United Mine Workers union and federal regulation of the Indian Territory mines in the late 1890s, coal mining remained a very dangerous profession. In 1905 a mine explosion near Wilburton buried fifteen miners, in 1908 an oil lamp explosion entombed thirty miners near Haileyville. Only one of the thirty lived through that traumatic experience.¹³⁷ In 1912, Governor Lee Cruce was informed that an explosion in the Sansbois mine had killed eighty-five. Though the death toll later was reduced to seventy-three, it still served as Oklahoma's most devastating work accident to date.¹³⁸ Miners endured smaller incidents of violence on a more regular basis, though these did not receive as much press. Men and boys lost eyes, broke or severed limbs, and lost their lives due to faulty equipment or materials, inexperience in using those materials, or geographic factors of which they had little knowledge or control. Given the violent nature of their work place, where they spent the better part of most days, workers would have tolerated in saloons and blind pigs a level of violence that generated alarm in local professionals and merchants.

Mining was an important part of local and regional economies outside the southeast portion of the state also. By 1912, the United Mine Workers had formed a local organization at Midway, northwest of Shawnee.¹³⁹ Significant

¹³⁷ *Boley Progress* 11 May 1905; *Muskogee Times-Democrat* 26 August 1908.

¹³⁸ Earnest P. Bicknell to Lee Cruce, 21 March 1912, Lee Cruce Papers, General Correspondence, Box 24, File 2.

¹³⁹ United Mine Workers petition of Governor Lee Cruce for appropriation for a school of mines at Wilburton, March 1912, Lee Cruce Papers, General Correspondence, Box 27, File 5.

sources of coal were developed in Nowata County, in the northeast.¹⁴⁰ Mining companies had developed surface coal mining operations at or near the northeast Oklahoma communities of Blue Jacket, Collinsville, Dawson, Tulsa, Broken Arrow, and Pryor.¹⁴¹ Lead and zinc mining operations had begun near Peoria in the northeast in the 1890s; after the turn of the century, lead and zinc operations began near the northeastern towns of Quapaw and Miami, in the Arbuckle Mountains and near Ardmore in the south central portion of the state, and in the Wichita Mountains near Lawton in the southwest.¹⁴² Each of these operations required a sizable work force, and several of these regions became notorious among liquor enforcement personnel for their persistent liquor violations. In 1912, the state mine inspector reported that Oklahoma's population of miners had grown to more than 12,000.¹⁴³

The close association between miners and the liquor industry predates statehood. In 1907, William E. "Pussyfoot" Johnson, the federal liquor enforcement officer sent to Indian Territory, raided a village post office in the mining district of the southeast for distributing liquor to area miners. He destroyed sixty bottles of Boranica, a liquor popular in the mining camps. As a Muskogee newspaper reported, the post office had been conducting "a thriving business in Boranica, which sells more readily than postage stamps in that vicinity. Payday at the mines being at hand, the postmaster had consigned to a bank at another nearby town, alot of the Boranica. . . ."¹⁴⁴ The following spring, authorities boarded a train at Durant and arrested an Italian man carrying twenty-five pints of whiskey. Fellow Italian laborers in the mining district had paid him to bring this whiskey up from Texas.¹⁴⁵

Steven L. Sewell, in his study of labor activism among Oklahoma coal

¹⁴⁰ Felix M. Gray, "History of Nowata County" (M.A. thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1937), 31.

¹⁴¹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 22 November 1912.

¹⁴² *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 3 December 1912.

¹⁴³ *Harlow's Weekly*, 14 September 1912.

¹⁴⁴ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 8 February 1907.

¹⁴⁵ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 2 May 1907.

miners, notes that miners regularly drank Choctaw beer when not at work. Many believed that beer held medicinal properties that would improve one's health. Some argued that choc beer was more palatable and safer than the questionable water supply in the mining camps. Much of the choc beer was produced by local women while the men of the community were in the mines. A more expensive alternative was whiskey sold by bootleggers in the area or shipped into the region on the Muskogee, Kansas & Texas Railroad.¹⁴⁶

Federal officials became acutely aware of illegal liquor activity in the mining communities in what became Coal and Latimer counties. In 1906, officers raided the tiny community of Gowen and destroyed several hundred gallons of beer.¹⁴⁷ *The Coalgate Courier* reported in 1907 that raids at Lehigh and Coalgate netted 1,000 gallons and 200 gallons of liquor respectively.¹⁴⁸ While the amount of liquor seized was less than that confiscated at larger raids in Tulsa and Oklahoma City, it is significant given the relatively sparse populations of Lehigh and Coalgate. In 1907 *The Wilburton Gazette* complained that law enforcement personnel did not execute federal liquor statutes evenly: "In Wilburton the Choctaw beer and cider joints are spasmodically raided while other concerns who sell the real stuff are never molested."¹⁴⁹ More so than the railroad crews, these miners provided a geographically stable customer base for the enterprising bootlegger.

Liquor violations among the mining districts continued after statehood. A Hartshorne resident complained to Governor Lee Cruce in 1913 of an extensive liquor operation in the mines of the Jack Fork Mountains. On payday at the mines, liquor men shipped their product by train to a deserted

¹⁴⁶ Sewell, "Industrial Unionism and the Oklahoma Coal Industry," 57-58. Choctaw beer was an inexpensive, low quality, low alcohol content beverage sold in Oklahoma before and after statehood. Sewell notes two recipes for the drink, one containing barley, hops, tobacco, fishberries, and a small amount of alcohol; and another containing malt, oats, corn, hops, yeast and sugar, which was allowed to ferment.

¹⁴⁷ *Muskogee Times Democrat*, 5 April 1906.

¹⁴⁸ *Coalgate Courier*, 10 October 1907.

¹⁴⁹ *Wilburton Gazette*, 5 July 1907. The *Gazette* was the Republican newspaper in the community.

railroad stop, off loaded it in this secluded area by arrangement with railroad employees, and then distributed it to the various mining camps in the mountains by pack mule.¹⁵⁰ State liquor enforcement official Caldwell reported to governor Haskell late in 1908 that Coalgate, Coal County's largest community with a 1910 population of 3,255, contained twenty-two establishments that had paid the federal liquor tax during that year, while Lehigh, composed of fewer than 2,500 people in 1910, contained ten such establishments.¹⁵¹ Paying this tax might leave one more susceptible to prosecution in state and local courts, but it guaranteed immunity from federal officials (until the 1912 ruling that the former Indian Territory remained under the earlier federal liquor ban).

Liquor violations remained a persistent problem in the mining communities of Latimer County also. A Wilburton newspaper reported in September 1910 that twenty-seven of the forty cases on a recent criminal docket for Latimer County involved liquor violations. Of the twenty-seven charged, local officials convicted eight. The remainder were dismissed or held over on continuance leading the editor to conclude that officials largely ignored prohibition.¹⁵² As in 1907, the editors complained that officials did not enforce prohibition evenly, noting that Jasper Crites, who was "not a favorite," was arrested for liquor trafficking while other bootleggers continued their operations.¹⁵³ Another newspaper was more alarmist, declaring that a state of emergency existed in the area due to the flagrant violations of liquor codes.¹⁵⁴ Thus, liquor remained accessible in predominantly rural Latimer and Coal counties; and local authorities living and working among these miners exercised discretion when enforcing the

¹⁵⁰ Mrs. Rose Gavin Brunson to Lee Cruce, 12 February 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 55, File 4.

¹⁵¹ Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, 3: 482; Fred S. Caldwell, "List of Persons who Paid the Special U.S. tax for Liquor Dealers Compiled by Fred S. Caldwell up to 12-2-1908," Charles N. Haskell Papers: Administrative File, Box 2, File 14.

¹⁵² *Wilburton Gazette*, 23 September 1910.

¹⁵³ *Wilburton Gazette*, 30 September 1910.

¹⁵⁴ *Wilburton News*, 7 September 1910.

liquor ban.

The lax liquor enforcement in these mining communities does not seem to have disturbed the local voting public greatly. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, in 1908, expressed its concern over the lack of enforcement in Coal County.¹⁵⁵ The League blamed this neglect on a local judge who had been the first to challenge the search and seizure clauses of the prohibition statutes. Coal County voters retained this official in office despite the protests of the Anti-Saloon League. A 1910 editorial in an area newspaper noted the liquor violations with some concern, asking, "Is there a reason for the lawlessness and lack of law enforcement in this county and in this state?"¹⁵⁶ The same editorial asserted that ninety-eight percent of the people in this mining district sought to evade the prohibition codes and added, "We have lost respect for the law. We have allowed our sympathies to drift by degrees to the law breaker."¹⁵⁷ Coal County contained significant wet sentiment and a corresponding willingness to violate Oklahoma liquor codes, though this received much less attention from state enforcement authorities and prohibition supporters than did similar violations in larger communities such as Oklahoma City, Muskogee, and Tulsa.

The obvious opposition to prohibition in the coal fields of the southeast might be attributed to the presence of a significant immigration population in the area. Miners came from Italy, France, Poland, and elsewhere in Europe to work the mines of southeastern Oklahoma, and these populations traditionally resisted prohibition. This ethnocultural explanation for liquor opposition breaks down, however, when examining other regions of the state that experienced considerable bootlegging. One such area was the mining district of Ottawa County in northeast Oklahoma. Liquor violations became acute in this county after statehood as the lead and zinc mines expanded and more wage

¹⁵⁵ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, 22 September 1908.

¹⁵⁶ *Lehigh Leader*, 20 October 1910.

¹⁵⁷ *Lehigh Leader*, 20 October 1910.

earners moved into the region to extract the ore. Unlike the coal mining district of the southeast, however, Ottawa County contained a very small immigrant population. According to the 1910 census report, the foreign-born population and the native born population of foreign or mixed parentage, combined, represented less than four percent of that county's total population. By 1920, these populations had grown only slightly, accounting for less than five percent of the county's total population in that year's census.¹⁵⁸

Despite the lack of immigrant population in the county, Ottawa encountered acute liquor difficulties in its mining camps. This problem first came to the attention of the governor's office in 1911, when a Miami resident wrote Cruce to complain of area bootlegging and to request a paid liquor enforcement commission so that he might aid local officials against the liquor men.¹⁵⁹ While the letter writer may have exaggerated the problem to gain a commission, Cruce's successor placed great veracity in the complaints from Ottawa. Governor Robert L. Williams, though, believed the demand for liquor among the miners to be so great as to make effective enforcement unlikely. As he told Reverend C. S. Stubblefield of the Miami Baptist Church, "I am just a plain, reasonable man and I know that the laws against whiskey selling cannot be enforced to the same degree in Ottawa County that they can in Bryan and Pontotoc Counties. . . ."¹⁶⁰ A Miami attorney fingered the county's mining camps as the hub of liquor activity when he asked Williams to commission a state investigator to look into lax enforcement by the county sheriff. He added, "but I think that if you want to select a man to assist in the matter that it would be better to appoint some man who is not engaged in business in the heart of the mining camp and dependent in a large measure upon the support of the

citizenship, a large part of whom are not in sumpathy (sic) with the

¹⁵⁸ Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, 3:476; Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population*, 3:822.

¹⁵⁹ E. H. Post to Lee Cruce, 30 July 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 18, File 7.

¹⁶⁰ Robert L. Williams to Reverend C. S. Stubblefield, 20 January 1916, Robert L. Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1916, Box 6, File 8.

enforcement of the prohibition and anti-gambling laws.”¹⁶¹ Eventually, the county commissioners did collect sufficient evidence against the Ottawa County sheriff to convict him of failing to enforce the prohibition laws in the mining camps of Commerce, Cardin, Picher, and Lincolnville. The trial report asserted that each of these camps contained establishments that sold liquor illegally and made no attempt to conceal their illicit business.¹⁶²

The presence of the bootleggers in Ottawa County indicate a strong demand for liquor among the area’s mining communities, and the attorney’s statements on enforcement indicate that the local populace sympathized with the liquor men over the officials attempting to curb their activities. As in the Chicago saloons, which turn-of-the-century sociologists and later historian Jon M. Kingsdale studied, the illegal liquor establishments of Ottawa County were an integral part of working-class culture among area miners. Contrary to early historical studies of prohibition, which presented the liquor issue as a part of a larger urban-rural clash, the worst liquor violations in Ottawa County occurred outside the prominent towns among the makeshift camps that miners constructed near their places of work.

Liquor remained a fundamental feature of mining communities in the Sooner state through the First World War. Late in 1919, when Oklahoma’s coal miners joined a nationwide coal strike, the state sent investigators into the coal fields to assess conditions there. These men noted that liquor remained available to the miners even during the strike. While many of the illegal Choctaw beer joints had closed when Governor James B. A. Robertson sent state troops into the coal fields to break the strike, at least one joint remained open at Hartshorne throughout the short-lived labor action. The undercover investigators described John Petee, who sold whiskey to miners from his

¹⁶¹ S. C. Fullerton to Robert L. Williams, 20 January 1916, Robert L. Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1916, Box 5, File 27.

¹⁶² *The State of Ok Ex Rel. Board of County Commissioners of the County of Ottawa, State of Oklahoma (Plaintiff) vs George O. Gibson (Dependent)*, Robert L. Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1916, Box 5, File 8.

Hartshorne store, as "an agitator of the most dangerous kind, being especially bitter in his abuse of government."¹⁶³ Such reports supported claims by dries that liquor not only inhibited a worker's productivity and a man's ability to provide for his family, but also fostered the type of radicalism that increasing numbers of middle-class people defined as unAmerican in the years after the First World War.

While the railroads and coal mines attracted many workers to the territories and subsequently the state, they were not the sole draw to the region. Late in 1906 the *Muskogee Times-Democrat* reported that a \$500,000 dam would be built in the area over the next year.¹⁶⁴ In 1913, the legislature authorized construction of a dam across the Grand River near Ft. Gibson.¹⁶⁵ As little of this work was mechanized, projects such as these required a considerable number of workers, workers who resided in Muskogee or the surrounding area and who became prime customers for local liquor men. American entrance into the First World War stifled construction projects in Oklahoma, but these enjoyed a resurgence at the war's conclusion. Reflecting the eclipse of the railroad by the automobile as the preferred method of transporting goods and people, the state proposed an extensive system of improved roads and highways. In the days following the war, the legislature called for construction of a bridge over the Canadian River linking Oklahoma and Canadian counties, a bridge spanning the Arkansas River near Ft. Gibson, and road-building projects in Tulsa, Okmulgee, Bryan, and McCurtain counties valued at \$1,700,000, \$800,000, \$200,000, and \$200,000 respectively.¹⁶⁶ Again, large numbers of workers were needed to complete these projects---workers who formed a large part of the customer base for area bootleggers.

The liquor men also paid attention to the booming oil industry in

¹⁶³ Lt. J. H. Carey to Commanding Officer, 5 November 1919, J. B. A. Robertson Papers: General Correspondence, 1919, Box 11, File 5.

¹⁶⁴ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 2 November 1906.

¹⁶⁵ *Harlow's Weekly*, 23 August 1913.

¹⁶⁶ *Harlow's Weekly*, 20 November 1918.

Oklahoma. While most oil wells, once in operation, required only two men to maintain them, the number of oil derricks sprouting up in the Glenn Pool, Cushing, and Healdton oil fields, as well as smaller fields in Muskogee, Osage, Pawnee, Nowata, and Okmulgee counties, drew a sizable number of working-class men. Before statehood, nearly 250 oil wells operated in the vicinity of Kiefer, notorious for its violence and vice.¹⁶⁷ The small boom town of Mounds, also in the Glenn Pool field, was surrounded by approximately two hundred producing oil wells.¹⁶⁸ Oil wells in the relatively small Boynton field produced 2,500 barrels of oil daily in 1915, and the various wells in the Cushing oil field produced 300,000 barrels of oil each day.¹⁶⁹ This impressive production created a corresponding need for storage and/or transportation facilities.

The construction of oil storage tanks and pipelines also drew a large working-class population, typically male, to the oil fields. The pipeline crews formed rural work camps that followed the progression of the pipeline across the state. In 1906, construction began on an oil pipeline from Indian Territory to Port Arthur, Texas.¹⁷⁰ Because the transport and refining of oil was as important as its production (at the oil wells), competing oil producers built their own pipelines to ship their crude to refineries in the east or along the gulf coast. In 1909, the Prairie Oil and Gas Company began construction of an oil pipe line from the Glenn Pool and Muskogee fields to Baton Rouge, Louisiana.¹⁷¹ All of these projects associated with the oil industry required laborers. As the work was not steady, the oil fields drew single men who could afford periods of unemployment. Those married men who came to Oklahoma as drillers, tankers, or pipeline cats often left their families behind until they established themselves and to shield them from the vice and violence of the boom towns.

¹⁶⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 6 February 1907.

¹⁶⁸ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 2 March 1907.

¹⁶⁹ *Harlow's Weekly*, 12 June 1915.

¹⁷⁰ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 15 November 1906.

¹⁷¹ *Daily Leader-Guthrie*, 16 August 1909.

Many oil workers found that communities did not want them. Only those engaged in the vice industries felt free to mix with these workers. The mobile pipeline camps not only placed the cats next to their job sites but also away from the townspeople. Bootleggers shadowed the pipeline crews, setting up crude shanties or tents from which to dispense their stock to the cats. Pipeline crews typically comprised several dozen men who cleared brush, dug the ditch for the pipe, and moved nine hundred pound lengths of pipe into place. The work was strenuous and the conditions often poor. One former pipeline worker or "cat" recalled laying pipe through a swamp in southern Oklahoma.

"I only made three days of it. I thought I could do a man's work till (sic) then but I found out different. We were stringing that pipe out in a big deep swamp, with mosquitoes, snakes, mud, and misery. A man could slip down in the mud and before he could get up six men would have walked all over his face."¹⁷²

These oil workers viewed the violence of the saloons from a very different perspective than did the merchants, ministers, and other professionals who protested most loudly for a liquor ban.

While jobs in the oil fields paid better than most work, this did not insure that the workers could salt away a good portion of their paychecks. Injuries were quite common, and often these were sufficiently serious to require an extensive absence from work. Some early Oklahoma oil companies began to provide injury insurance for their employees, but this was granted only grudgingly and might result in a man being fired and blacklisted from future employment in the oil patch. In addition, the cost of normal goods and services in the boom towns of the oil patch matched and often consumed the high wages that the rough neckers earned. A man who had worked in the Burbank oil field recalled that wages were between \$12 and \$18 per day, easily the highest offered to semiskilled or unskilled workers in the state. Despite earning good money, he was able to send little back to his family in Indiana.

¹⁷² "The Work's Safer Now'days," Ned DeWitt interview with an electrician at Seminole, Oklahoma, Works Progress Association Historic Sites and Federal Writer's Project, Box 43, File 9, Western History Collection.

Shoes cost \$15, work boots cost \$30, work pants cost \$10, shirts cost \$5, and a night's stay in a boarding house cost \$2 or more.¹⁷³ The boom towns of the Oklahoma oil patch took on not only the violent qualities of the nineteenth-century mining camps, but also the economic qualities of those earlier boom towns as local merchants adjusted their prices according to the wages in the region. Arguments by prohibitionists that the liquor industry robbed workers of their hard-earned wages had little impact on the oil workers.

Liquor was a basic component of life for these oil workers. As one man recalled, "Fighting and getting drunk were part of the job then, and if there wasn't somebody handy to mix it with they'd fight among themselves."¹⁷⁴ Another man recalled that he worked twelve-hour days, midnight until noon, on the oil derricks. He and his coworkers labored for seventeen days to open one oil well, "During the seventeen days we worked on that well we couldn't get all the oil off of us and everything we ate or handled smelled and tasted like crude oil. If it hadn't been for plenty of whiskey we probably wouldn't of (sic) made it, and we stayed half-drunk all the time."¹⁷⁵ This man saw liquor as something more than merely a recreational drink, and the matter-of-fact manner in which he described liquor consumption suggests that his approach to drinking was not a novel one in the oil patch.

The boom towns in the oil fields supported numerous liquor joints and houses of prostitution. Fights were commonplace and killings surprised few. One oil driller described Kiefer as the roughest town in Oklahoma, a place where the law had little impact. He added, "We voted in Oklahoma as a dry state, but that didn't mean a damned thing in a boom town in those days; you could buy anything you had the money to buy, and whiskey and beer were fairly cheap." Commenting on the violence in Kiefer, this man noted that the

¹⁷³ "Hot Oil," Ned DeWitt interview with an ex-convict from the oil fields, Works Progress Association Historic Sites and Federal Writer's Project, Box 43, File 1.

¹⁷⁴ Ned DeWitt interview with a pusher (foreman), Works Progress Association Historic Sites and Federal Writer's Project, Box 42, File 28, Western History Collection.

¹⁷⁵ "Refinery Worker," Ned DeWitt interview with a refinery worker in Cyril, Oklahoma, Works Progress Association Historic Sites and Federal Writer's Project, Box 43, File 21.

local authorities found more than twelve bodies, each presumedly a murder victim, in the slightly more than two years he spent in Kiefer.¹⁷⁶ Oil boom towns such as Kiefer and Mounds provided a solid customer base for the enterprising bootlegger, but they also provided an environment of violence that dries attributed to the liquor industry when campaigning for prohibition in the Sooner state. Kiefer and Mounds were not unique among the boom towns of the Oklahoma oil patch. A resident of Quay, in the Cushing oil field, complained to Governor Robert Williams about the booze joints there in 1915, stating, "I have been in the Oklahoma oil fields for the past eight years. Nearly all of the citys (sic) and towns have Booze joints and Gambling House (sic)." ¹⁷⁷

Enforcement officials recognized the different circumstances in the oil patch. Fred Caldwell, Governor Charles Haskell's state prohibition enforcement agent, complained bitterly about the lack of enforcement in the Sapulpa region in his 1910 report to the governor. While this laxity might be attributed to local officials rather than the general populace, Caldwell saw the problem as deeper than a few wayward officials. He noted that the voting public regularly returned these officials to office despite their demonstrated unwillingness to enforce the liquor ban. Sapulpa, the Creek County seat, contained very slight ethnic populations, which traditional studies of prohibition have identified as opposing a liquor ban. The region also did not contain inordinately large liturgical religious populations---Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, or Jews---which might account for the very wet sentiment.

The Sapulpa area did contain a large working-class population, much of which labored in the nearby Glenn Pool and Cushing oil fields. Pauline P.

Jackson attests to the presence of a large number of wage earners in Sapulpa

¹⁷⁶ Ned DeWitt interview with an oil driller, Works Progress Association Historic Sites and Federal Writers' Project, Box 42, File 26, Western History Collection.

¹⁷⁷ Dan Clifton to Robert Williams, 14 July 1915, Robert L. Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1915, Box 11, File 1.

before the big oil strikes in the region, noting, "Organized labor was strong in Sapulpa with the Frisco railroad employing a large majority of the town's breadwinners, and the Farmers Union was an active and powerful political force. Hence, Labor Day was another occasion for well attended parades, picnics, and speeches."¹⁷⁸ The presence of this population accounts for the lack of support for strict liquor enforcement. The enforcement problems in Sapulpa did not abate over time. In 1912, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, of which Caldwell was a trustee, echoed his complaints about Sapulpa: "Sapulpa is the center of the oil region of Oklahoma. It has been made up of a population, the majority of whom are opposed to prohibition and the enforcement of law."¹⁷⁹ The leading dry organization in the state attributed the situation in Creek County not only to corrupt officials, but also to the general public, much of which worked in the nearby oil fields.

The general public, like the enforcement officials, was well aware of the continued availability of liquor in the oil fields. A resident of Bristow, another oil boom town, complained to Governor Lee Cruce in 1913 about the legislature's decision to abolish the state liquor enforcement office, stating, "I especially regret the action of the body on account of conditions of this (Creek) county, and other adjacent oil counties. I feel that if the office is abolished, we shall be absolutely at the mercy of bootleggers, gamblers and others of like ilk."¹⁸⁰ Newspaper accounts also reinforced Caldwell's impression of the oil towns. The *Sapulpa Herald* reported in 1915---as activity in the nearby Cushing oil field picked up---that liquor violations in that community had never been worse. *Harlow's Weekly*, known for its impartial reporting, noted that liquor violations had not abated in Cushing and Drumright despite renewed enforcement efforts there, adding, "Sapulpa seems

¹⁷⁸ Pauline P. Jackson, "Life and Society in Sapulpa," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 43:3 (Autumn 1965): 303.

¹⁷⁹ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, March 1912.

¹⁸⁰ Charles E. Helphrey to Lee Cruce, 6 March 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 47, File 1.

to be the center of liquor disturbances at this time. . . ."¹⁸¹ Oklahomans recognized the close relationship between the oil workers and the liquor men. This working-class population presented special problems for enforcement officials and for those---many of them merchants or professionals---who championed prohibition.

Even wet Sapulpa illustrated the class-based division among Oklahomans over the liquor question. Certainly not all residents of the Creek County seat approved of the continued liquor violations in the area. In 1915, several Sapulpa residents signed a petition to Governor Williams asking for state assistance in the enforcement of the bans on liquor and gambling that were "openly, publicly and flagrantly violated in this city and throughout Creek County."¹⁸² Many of the petitioners, apparently in an effort to demonstrate their status in the community to Williams, listed their occupations. Of the thirty-three signatures on the document, eight identified themselves as merchants, four as attorneys, four as religious ministers, three as businessmen in the oil industry, two as contractors, and one each as a newspaper editor, a physician, a hotel manager, and a marble works manager. The occupations of eight of the signatories was not listed or was unreadable. These people sought to reassure state officials that not all Sapulpa residents approved of the liquor violations. They also demonstrated the middle-class nature of the city's dry sentiment. With perhaps one exception (the marble works manager) these men were merchants and professionals---members of the middle class. Their view on the prohibition question was similar to the middle-class perspective of dry organizations such as the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League.

The defiance of the liquor ban in Sapulpa was not unique to that community. State officials identified other oil field boom towns as problem

¹⁸¹ *Harlow's Weekly*, 22 May 1915.

¹⁸² Sapulpa residents' petition to Robert L. Williams, 30 April 1915, Robert L. Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1915, Box 8, File 7.

areas in prohibition enforcement as well. Complaints from the recently incorporated town of Cushing, in eastern Payne County, led Governor Lee Cruce to respond that he had received many complaints about the liquor violations in that community, but was perplexed at how to improve conditions there.¹⁸³ Cruce's successor, Governor Robert L. Williams, admitted that liquor enforcement officials encountered greater resistance in the oil fields, whether in Creek, Muskogee, Osage, or other counties. Late in 1915, he responded to complaints from a Muskogee minister, stating, "In the oil fields and in the cities it is more difficult to enforce the laws against the illicit sale of whiskey and gambling than in the rural communities and small towns."¹⁸⁴ Oklahoma's top enforcement official, then, recognized the special circumstances in the oil fields with regard to liquor enforcement.

Less is known of the prohibition stance adopted by the heads of Oklahoma's burgeoning oil companies. The emphasis on efficiency in all aspects of industrial production in the early twentieth century melded nicely with the message by dry organizations that liquor hindered worker productivity, but Oklahoma's oil leaders are not known to have discussed this publicly. After the adoption of statewide prohibition, rumors circulated in Tulsa that the leading oil men would vacate the city for other locales if officials attempted to enforce prohibition strictly, and several were known to drink regularly. Their seeming silence on this contentious issue suggests that they were focused the business of oil discovery and production to the exclusion of other issues. One suspects that these businessmen allowed revelry and carousing among their employees as long as these activities did not interfere with the work in the oil fields. The Creek County oil men did involve themselves in liquor enforcement as the Cushing field expanded, indicating that bootlegging had become so rampant there as to create a nuisance to them.

¹⁸³ Lee Cruce to Mrs. E. M. Larmer, 28 July 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 52, File 6.

¹⁸⁴ Robert L. Williams to Reverend Robert Van Meigs, 29 October 1915, Robert L. Williams Papers: General Correspondence, 1915, Box 17, File 5.

A Bristow resident, in a 1913 letter to Governor Lee Cruce, stated that the Creek County oil operators had spent considerable sums of money to enforce prohibition.¹⁸⁵ These oil men, while for the most part neutral on the liquor question, also recognized the preponderance of bootlegging in the Cushing field.

The association between liquor violations and oil workers continued and stretched beyond the oil patch. In early 1917, officials in the panhandle town of Tyrone arrested two employees of the Praire Oil and Gas Company on liquor charges. These men had been sent to that area to build oil storage tanks and brought with them six quarts of liquor. While en route to the county jail in Guymon, the two men threw the evidence (the liquor) out the window of the moving train, and one of the two escaped upon arrival in Guymon.¹⁸⁶ Cushing once again came to the attention of the governor's office following the conclusion of the First World War. A local minister complained to Governor James B. A. Robertson, "It is the opinion of the good people of this town that there is a systematic booze selling program being carried on here."¹⁸⁷ Other Cushing residents, in a subsequent letter to Robertson, attempted to downplay liquor violations in their town noting that conditions were much worse in nearby Oilton.¹⁸⁸ Also in 1919, the Payne County Attorney contacted Governor Robertson regarding liquor violations in Yale, which he described as "an oil town."¹⁸⁹ More than ten years after the adoption of statewide prohibition, enforcement of the liquor ban remained a problem in Oklahoma, particularly

¹⁸⁵ George McMillan to Lee Cruce, 29 September 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 52, File 7.

¹⁸⁶ *Guymon Herald*, 29 March 1917.

¹⁸⁷ Reverend W. A. Roach to James B. A. Robertson, 14 June 1919, J. B. A. Robertson Papers: General Correspondence, 1919, Box 27, File 5. Reverend W. A. Roach, of Cushing, should not be confused with Reverend Frank I. Roach of Oklahoma City. As noted in chapter five, the latter served in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, the Oklahoma Council of Defense, and on the governor's panel investigating the coal strike of late 1919.

¹⁸⁸ William Noble to James B. A. Robertson, 3 July 1919, J. B. A. Robertson Papers: General Correspondence, 1919, Box 27, File 5.

¹⁸⁹ C. C. Suman to James B. A. Robertson, 21 March 1919, J. B. A. Robertson Papers: General Correspondence, 1919, Box 12, File 1.

among the oil workers.

In his 1915 comments, Governor Williams identified both the state's urban regions and the oil patch as problem areas for liquor enforcement, and one might ask if the populations of these diverse regions shared a common element. While much of Oklahoma's small German population located in rural areas and small communities in the north central portion of the state rather than in the cities and the oil fields, and Oklahoma's liturgical religious populations also were not concentrated in the oil fields; the oil patch, as well as the state's growing urban areas, contained a notable working-class population. The bootleggers recognized this. They dug in their heels against enforcement agents in these regions to continue their lucrative, if illegal, business.

The Creek County oil fields were not the only part of the Oklahoma oil patch to experience stubborn resistance to prohibition. Washington and Nowata counties contained the Hog Shooter oil field, and the latter also contained the Alluwe oil field as well as sizable coal deposits in the southwestern portion of the county.¹⁹⁰ All of these drew a sizable working-class population to the region; state officials and the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League pointed out these counties as containing an inordinate number of liquor violations. When drilling activity picked up in the Healdton oil field in south central Oklahoma, liquor violations increased there as well. Governor Lee Cruce was aware of this and urged the Jefferson County sheriff to act against bootleggers shipping liquor from Wichita Falls, Texas to Waurika for resale to liquor men from the Healdton field.¹⁹¹ Even the spirit of sacrifice during the First World War and the arguments, pressed by the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, that the liquor industry hindered America's war effort had little effect on the availability of alcohol in the oil fields. Within days of the

¹⁹⁰ Gray, "History of Nowata County," 31, 36.

¹⁹¹ J. W. Biffle to Lee Cruce, 5 June 1914, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 57, File 1.

1918 armistice, Governor Robert L. Williams passed along to Attorney General S. Prince Freeling a letter condemning the blatant violation of the prohibition statutes in the oil towns of Ardmore and Wirt. The author, a resident of the latter community, noted, "for it is known throughout the state that whiskey is sold at Ardmore. Whiskey can always be procured at Wirt in the Healdton Oil Fields."¹⁹² The prevalence of liquor in the Healdton field mirrored the situation in other oil fields around the state.

Early the following year a resident of the town of Healdton, also in the oil field of that name, complained to newly seated Governor Robertson that the wets had won recent municipal elections in that oil community and, as a result, liquor was widely available.¹⁹³ Liquor violations remained common in the Healdton field into the 1920s, prompting a petition from area dries to Governor Robertson for state intervention.¹⁹⁴ The bootleggers in Ardmore and Healdton, like their counterparts in Sapulpa and Cushing, found ways to elude the authorities and continue their trade in liquor because the oil workers provided a ready market for their product. The populations of these towns regularly returned to office sheriffs, county attorneys, and judges who had proven unable or unwilling to enforce the liquor ban because a large part of the voting public did not want prohibition enforced.

As wild catters opened new oil fields in Oklahoma in the 1920s, liquor violations spread to these areas also. The town of Seminole, in the central Oklahoma oil field of the same name, gained a reputation for drunkenness and violence. As one rough necker recalled, "That (Seminole) was the widest-open town I ever heard of even; fighting and shooting and people getting drunk all

¹⁹² Robert L. Williams to S. Prince Freeling, 20 November 1918, Robert L. Williams Papers: Administrative File, 1917-1919, Box 1, File 9.

¹⁹³ Ben C. Heald to James B. A. Robertson, 25 March 1919, J. B. A. Robertson Papers: General Correspondence, 1919, Box 15, File 4.

¹⁹⁴ J. G. Martin et. all. to James B. A. Robertson, 23 November 1921, J. B. A. Robertson Papers: General Correspondence 1921, Box 6, File 3.

the time. . . ."¹⁹⁵ The Tonkawa region, in northern Oklahoma, experienced a minor oil boom in 1921 when oil man Tom Slick began drilling in the area. A boom camp named Three Sands sprouted nearby, which had no police or jail but numerous saloons. The oil men hired a saloon operator as sheriff of the camp and he and his deputies forced all competing saloons to pay them protection money.¹⁹⁶ The flow of liquor, then, followed the flow of oil in early Oklahoma.

While the association between the oil workers and drinking has been documented extensively, indications are that other wage earners also ignored the liquor ban. Much less is known about the itinerant farm workers who moved about Oklahoma, following the cotton and corn harvests in autumn and the wheat harvest in late spring. This population, though shadowy and shifting, was quite large. The state labor commissioner reported in 1912 that some areas of the state had placed requests with his office for 1,200 cotton pickers as the state anticipated a harvest of 750,000 bales of cotton.¹⁹⁷ The following year a minister in the southwestern town of Frederick contacted Governor Lee Cruce complaining of liquor being sold among the cotton picking crews in that region. The bootleggers not only sold liquor to individuals in these crews, but also staged dances in the work camps every Saturday night at which they sold liquor to those attending.¹⁹⁸ Liquor was available in the rural lumber camps of southeast Oklahoma as well. In 1909 federal authorities, in reaction to criticism that they had failed to act against the liquor men among the lumber camps, raided several illegal stills in the Jack Fork Mountains that supplied area lumberjacks with whiskey.¹⁹⁹ These

¹⁹⁵ Ned DeWitt interview with a rough necker, Works Progress Association Historic Sites and Federal Writers' Project, Box 42, File 21, Western History Collection.

¹⁹⁶ "I Take A Small Profit," Ned DeWitt interview with Cappy, Works Progress Association Historic Sites and Federal Writers' Project, Box 43, File 18, Western History Collection.

¹⁹⁷ *Harlow's Weekly*, 14 September 1912.

¹⁹⁸ Reverend W. E. Harris to Lee Cruce, 27 November 1913, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, 1911-1914, Box 5, File 1.

¹⁹⁹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 5 May 1909.

workers, like the wage earners in Oklahoma's mines and oil fields, associated liquor consumption with recreation despite the admonition of local ministers.

Oklahoma's other wage earners and the groups that represented them also seemed, at the least, divided on the liquor question, though none were willing to state publicly that they or their organization opposed the strict enforcement of prohibition. Prior to the 1910 referendum on liquor, however, some Socialists, as champions of the working class, did openly urge its supporters to vote in favor of local option rather than state-wide prohibition. In October 1910, the *Working Man*, a Socialist newspaper published in Lawton, offered the following advice to its readers concerning the liquor issue, "the third amendment to the constitution substituting local option for prohibition can be carried by the working class of Oklahoma. And it should be carried by that class because it means jobs. Do not vote your brother out of a job. It is up to the working men of Comanche County and Oklahoma to make an organized effort to defeat prohibition this fall."²⁰⁰ This defense of an industry in the name of jobs seems odd coming from a publication that carried the subheading "Workers of the World Unite" and endorsed candidates from the Socialist party. In opposing prohibition, the newspaper seemed to support a very wealthy liquor industry. There is no indication that the *Working Man* supported the continuance of other industries in the name of jobs. Nor does the editorial state that brewers, distillers, or retailers were unusually generous toward their workers. The editorial's apparent incongruence disappears if one accepts the assertion of Garin Burbank that Oklahoma Socialists---in this case the editor of the *Working Man*---tailored their message to their readers' attitudes in order to broaden their support. The working classes of Lawton wanted legal liquor and this publication found the means to justify opposition to prohibition. Had the editorial been directed toward Oklahoma's more respectable middle class, its stance on the liquor question likely would have

²⁰⁰ *Working Man* (Lawton), 6 October 1910. The newspaper reprinted this anti-prohibition editorial on October 20 and October 27 as the referendum on prohibition drew near.

been quite different.

Other labor newspapers and organizations were less definite in their position in the prohibition debate. The Oklahoma Farmers' Union did not mention the liquor issue at its 1906 convention, though prohibition had been a lively political issue as statehood neared. Marvil J. Stowe, the Union's nominee to the state constitutional convention in Guthrie, endorsed statewide prohibition, but the *Indiahoma Union Signal*, the newspaper of the Oklahoma Farmers' Union, ran beer advertisements as late as the fall of 1906.²⁰¹ As the state constitutional convention opened in December of that year, the *Union Signal* ran an editorial stating that most Oklahomans were opposed to both drunkards and prohibition. It advocated the "safe middle ground" of regulated saloons over an absolute liquor ban.²⁰² The Farmers' Union, then, adopted a wet stance late in the anti-liquor campaign after equivocating on the issue.

The Farmers' Union maintained its position as the first referendum on a statewide liquor ban drew near in late summer 1907. The *Union Signal* ran a series of editorials opposed to prohibition, arguing that each man should resist the temptation of liquor and that prohibition robbed men of that choice. The newspaper also printed an editorial by Isaac B. Levy, chairman of the anti-prohibitionist Citizens League.²⁰³ After prohibition had been confirmed by the 1910 referendum, the Farmers' Union resumed its earlier policy of neutral silence on the liquor question. Prohibition and its enforcement received no mention at the 1914 convention of the Oklahoma Farmers' Union though these were contentious issues in many sections of the state. Similarly, the state federation of labor, meeting in Henryetta in August 1914, made no mention of liquor enforcement.

Oklahoma's cities witnessed the conjunction of working-class culture and liquor consumption first-hand. Lawton contained both a large wage-

²⁰¹ *Indiahoma Union Signal*, 23 August, 25 October 1906.

²⁰² *Indiahoma Union Signal*, 13 December 1906.

²⁰³ *Indiahoma Union Signal*, 28 August, 5, 12 September 1907.

earning class and a vibrant liquor industry. Not only was *The Working Man* published there, but several unions located there as well. These joined in 1909 to sponsor a large Labor Day celebration in the city.²⁰⁴ The city contained a disproportionate number of saloons during the territorial years, and attempts by a local judge to close these establishments had decidedly less impact in Lawton than in the surrounding area.²⁰⁵ Bootlegging became a major industry in the Lawton area after the passage of statewide prohibition, so much so that the city chose to collect license fees from the city's illegal saloons. Shawnee also earned a reputation as a center of wet sentiment. As noted earlier, saloons formed an important part of the local economy, and the imposition of the liquor ban had little effect in that city. Shawnee earlier had gained a reputation as a center of labor organizations as well. Unions were so prevalent in that city that, in 1905, they announced their intent to build a labor temple in Shawnee to serve as the headquarters of all labor movements in the territories.²⁰⁶ Similarly, Oklahoma City, Muskogee, and Tulsa contained large wage-earning populations and experienced extensive liquor violations also.

State and local officials did not enforce the liquor ban evenly in all sections of the state toward all individuals. At times, this uneven enforcement took on a class bias. In 1908, the state liquor dispensary ordered its local agents to sell beer only in packages of twelve bottles or more. The dispensary held that beer possessed medicinal value only if administered over an extended period of time. A single bottle of beer was of little medicinal value.²⁰⁷ In an age when personal refrigerators or ice boxes remained rare among wage earners, this caveat allowed middle-class and upper-class men to purchase beer as a medicine, while making sales to wage earners less practical as many

²⁰⁴ *Lexington Leader*, 3 September 1909.

²⁰⁵ W. T. Holland interview with Mary Gillette Engle, 14 March 1938, in Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian Pioneer History Collection* 91, 144.

²⁰⁶ *Boley Progress*, 27 July 1905.

²⁰⁷ *Lexington Leader*, 24 July 1908.

possessed neither the funds nor the storage facilities necessary.

In a few instances, officials were blunt concerning liquor enforcement. Judge Walrond, in his Muskogee court room, lectured drunks brought before him to discourage repeat offenses. The *Muskogee Times-Democrat* reported this on its front page, and noted, "He (Judge Walrond) added that no one except a rich man and one in good health should drink liquor."²⁰⁸ Here was a prominent local enforcement officer stating that those who were not well-to-do should avoid drink. Assuming this was an accurate assessment of the judge's opinion on liquor consumption (no retraction was printed in subsequent editions), this report speaks volumes on his court conduct and the fate of those---both the wealthy and the less than wealthy---who appeared before him on liquor charges. Oklahoma's prohibition statutes at this time banned the sale or provision of liquor, but said nothing of simple possession or consumption of liquor. Nevertheless, Judge Walrond, and one of the leading newspapers in eastern Oklahoma, put wage earners on notice that his court did not tolerate the consumption of alcohol. Working-class men should expect to be prosecuted to the full extent of the law despite the court's actions toward men of a higher social status.

Similarly, a Watonga man contacted Governor Lee Cruce in 1911 concerning lax liquor enforcement in that community, particularly with regard to wealthy residents. Complaining of liquor shipped into that community from outside of Oklahoma, he states, "It seems that the moneyed men of this town. They are never handled for handling liquor."²⁰⁹ This man felt that local officials were favoring or even exempting the well-to-do of Watonga when enforcing the prohibition statutes. This and the Muskogee example indicate that enforcement officers did not enforce the liquor ban evenly against all offenders. These men, hired to keep the town peace, either

²⁰⁸ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 31 January 1910.

²⁰⁹ Alfred Baker to Lee Cruce, 27 February 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 7, File 2.

saw liquor consumption by the poor as a greater threat to that peace or were moved to leniency by the social prominence of some offenders. Regardless of the intent, the result was the same for the wage earners who fell outside this circle of prominence---a demonstrated inequality before the law.

Certainly some prominent and respected men were arrested for liquor violations, but these pale in comparison to the attention focused on the working classes in the mining camps, oil fields, lumber camps, migrant farm labor camps, and the working-class districts of Oklahoma's cities. Federal liquor officials, before statehood, arrested several socially prominent Holdenville men for liquor violations, and area newspapers made the assessment that, "The law, blind in its justice, visits condemnation without regard to the state of its victim, and ignores entirely his own personal opinion as to the venality of his crime."²¹⁰ Such grand pronouncements of legal equality, however, often went unheeded by enforcement officials, particularly state and local officers who were established members of the community within which they resided or who might be swayed by a timely telegram from a state legislator.

Federal officials seem to have enforced the liquor ban with less bias toward locally prominent men. In 1912, amidst the legal controversy to determine whether eastern Oklahoma remained under the enforcement jurisdiction of federal officials (as per the federal liquor ban in Indian Territory) or under that of state and local officials, the *Muskogee Times-Democrat* reported that a popular movement was afoot in the region to influence the courts toward the latter alternative. Several men wished to end federal jurisdiction in the lands formerly designated as Indian Territory despite the provisions of the Enabling Act. As the reporter noted, "And it is not the bootleggers who are behind this movement, but many business and professional men who like to keep cold ones on ice in their refrigerator at

²¹⁰ *Vinita Daily Chieftain*, 9 February 1904.

home and who want their toddy night and morning.”²¹¹ These socially prominent men recognized a clear distinction between federal liquor enforcement and that conducted by state and local officials. Federal statutes held simple possession of liquor to be illegal, making these respectable businessmen and professionals potential targets of the marshals; the Oklahoma statutes banned the sale or provision of liquor, placing the enforcement focus on the less-than-respectable bootleggers. The actions and statements of Muskogee’s Judge Walrond indicate that the less-than-respectable wage earners who purchased liquor from the bootleggers also should consider themselves warned that the authorities would not tolerate such activities.

Some respectable members of society did find themselves in court on liquor charges. The court dealt with these men quite differently, however, than it did men of meager means. Late in 1908, an investigation of liquor violations in Muskogee seemingly targeted violators of all classes. As the *Muskogee Times-Democrat* reported, “Among the witnesses to be called are many prominent and well-known citizens of Muskogee.”²¹² The inquiry went nowhere as massive raids, conducted a day after the *Times-Democrat* carried a page one story on the impending investigation, produced no liquor.²¹³ In Nowata, Judge Van Leuven sentenced a convicted bootlegger to a \$300 fine and ninety days in jail. The young man, whom the press described as belonging to “one of the best families in the city,” threw himself on the mercy of the court. The judge ordered him to leave town or he would have the sheriff enforce the jail sentence against him.²¹⁴ One can but speculate whether the judge would have granted such leniency to a less prominent, less respectable member of the community. Area newspapers make no mention of judges demonstrating such mercy for wage earners who ran afoul of the liquor laws.

At times, the authorities blatantly demonstrated their uneven approach

²¹¹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 29 July 1912.

²¹² *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 9 October 1908.

²¹³ *Muskogee Times-Democrat* 10 October 1908.

²¹⁴ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 14 October 1908.

to the enforcement of the liquor ban. In 1908 Ardmore officials arrested Dr. J. M. McRae for illegally prescribing liquor, the first doctor in the state to be arrested for such an offense. He was acquitted of the charges.²¹⁵ The following year, in a case involving the Oklahoma City Eagles Club, the state courts ruled that an individual could purchase liquor from out of state for an organization to which he belongs.²¹⁶ The courts, then, sanctioned liquor in recognized clubs. As John Kingsdale asserts, working-class men generally did not belong to these clubs because they could not afford the dues or because they did not know any members who might sponsor them. An Oklahoma City judge reinforced the sanctioned provision of liquor in clubs in 1910, ruling that local authorities should return liquor seized at an Elk's Club as the Elks broke no laws in allowing members to drink in the club rooms.²¹⁷ Those wage-earning men aware of such activity in the courts felt keenly this duplicity regarding liquor enforcement. Clubs in other Oklahoma cities also avoided prosecution despite making liquor available to members. A Muskogee resident complained to Governor Lee Cruce of that city's Elks Club, the members of which were nothing more than "aristocratic bootleggers."²¹⁸ Local authorities, backed by legal rulings, allowed liquor in these prominent clubs.

The social organizations to which Oklahoma's middle classes belonged were not alone in receiving preferential treatment regarding the liquor ban. Muskogee authorities arrested a drug store clerk and charged him with bootlegging after they found several bottles of expensive apricot brandy in the drug store. As mentioned previously, Oklahoma drug stores became a leading source of illicit liquor in the early years of statehood, and many proprietors were prosecuted for selling liquor. In this case, the prosecutor was unable to prove that the defendant intended to sell the brandy and the

²¹⁵ *Lexington Leader*, 19 June 1908.

²¹⁶ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 8 March 1909.

²¹⁷ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 9 February 1910.

²¹⁸ A. V. Johnson to Lee Cruce, 14 August 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 20, File 10.

clerk was found innocent.²¹⁹ While the amount of liquor was relatively small, it should be remembered that Muskogee prosecutors had no difficulty demonstrating intent to sell in those cases against bootleggers who possessed a single bottle of liquor. The type of liquor that the drug store clerk possessed when arrested suggests that he sold to an affluent clientele and suggests an explanation for his different treatment in court. Federal authorities adopted a similar stance when they raided Tulsa's Oil Exchange and Turf Exchange in 1912. Though they confiscated and destroyed 3,500 bottles of beer at this upper-class establishment, they arrested no one as all of the liquor (evidence) was destroyed and no one had claimed ownership of the beer.²²⁰ Area wage-earning men who had been caught up in other liquor enforcement strikes must have read of this raid with some bitterness.

Socially prominent men who engaged in vice activities received preferential treatment from the authorities; and, as evidenced by the newspaper reports, this was commonly known by the reading public. Shortly before Christmas in 1912, the *Muskogee Times-Democrat* reported that city authorities had raided a high-class party at which both liquor and prostitutes were present. The article noted that six, "society sports who were in the crowd were taken home in an automobile, and will be asked to appear in court."²²¹ A local businessman paid their bond, and speculation was strong that these prominent men would not appear in court and so would forfeit their bonds. Again, this treatment of social prominents who engaged in vice differs markedly from the experience of wage earners who came in contact with the authorities while selling, purchasing, or consuming liquor.

The exemption from prosecution that some locally prominent Oklahoma men enjoyed extended to some nationally prominent men also. In 1912, Congress called for an investigation of the Indian Service in Oklahoma.

²¹⁹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 9 May 1911.

²²⁰ *Vinita Weekly Chieftain*, 13 September 1912.

²²¹ *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 21 December 1912.

Federal authorities charged Robert G. Valentine, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with introducing whiskey on Indian lands. Valentine had organized and led a hunting and fishing trip into Osage County for oil company officials seeking oil leases in the area. Reportedly, the party drank and gambled extensively while on this trip.²²² Prosecution of the commissioner for this activity seems to indicate a desire by federal officials for even enforcement, regardless of social class or prominence. However, the investigation did not seek prosecution of the oil company officials on the trip, even though federal statute prohibited even the possession of liquor. The timing of the investigation, well after the hunting trip took place, also suggests a softer approach to enforcement than would have been adopted had the hunting party comprised pipe line workers or storage tank builders.

All of this indicates a willingness by enforcement officers and the courts to enforce the liquor ban differently toward respected men in a local community as against wage earners in Oklahoma. These two groups, then, experienced the liquor ban in different ways: the first saw it as a reasonable law that sought to end the violent liquor culture producing headlines in local newspapers; the second saw it, instead, as a subjective law that seemed to target those of meager income while overlooking liquor usage by respected members of the community. The perception by working-class men that prohibition was a punitive measure primarily aimed at them grew as they looked at those who supported the dry measure. The leaders of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League were merchants and professionals---ministers, doctors, attorneys, teachers---who sought to impose their definition of propriety and even of manhood itself on men of the lower classes. Not surprisingly, these wage earners resisted these attempts to control their behavior; they continued to patronize the liquor men after prohibition became state law in 1907, confounding drys who sought to change this aspect of male working-class culture.

²²² *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 29 February 1912.

Several historians have identified liquor consumption as a central feature of male working-class culture in America. Michael Kaplan traces the connection between liquor (and violence) and working-class ideas of manhood back to the taverns of antebellum New York City.²²³ These taverns, in providing working-class men with a place to recreate and socialize among men of similar economic stations, helped create a male identity distinct from that of middle-class men. The patrons of these taverns not only consumed large quantities of alcohol, but also engaged in regular bouts of violence against strangers who entered a group's neighborhood.²²⁴ Drinking in local taverns became a common recreational activity for American wage earners in the nineteenth century; and many workers, despite the efforts of reform groups, continued this practice into the early twentieth century.

While the saloons of early Oklahoma were removed chronologically and geographically from those of Kaplan's analysis, the conditions he discusses resemble those of working-class life in the Sooner state---a dearth of recreational opportunities and job security, which cast doubt on the working-class male's role as family provider. Tenant farmers were in an equally tenuous position. The Socialist party organizer Oscar Ameringer described conditions among Oklahoma's tenant population in this way: "They were worse fed, worse clothed, worse housed, more illiterate than the Chicago packing house wops and bohunks Upton Sinclair described in *The Jungle*, and whom I had seen with my own eyes while doing my bit in one of their strikes."²²⁵ Oklahoma's lower class men sought relief, if only briefly, from their dreary existence in local saloons.

The saloon life that prohibition groups such as the Anti-Saloon League and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union sought to stamp out was a

²²³ Michael Kaplan, "New York City Tavern Violence and the Creation of a Working-Class Male Identity," *Journal of the Early Republic* 15 (Winter 1995): 591-617.

²²⁴ Kaplan, "New York City Tavern Violence and the Creation of a Working-Class Male Identity," 592, 595, 614, 601

²²⁵ Thompson, *Closing the Frontier*, 44. Thompson quotes from Ameringer's *If You Don't Weaken*.

fundamental part of working-class culture in early Oklahoma. Certainly the saloons in the boom towns could be very rough places filled with all sorts of vice and violent crime. Anyone who entered might be seriously injured in a brawl and might be killed if a fight turned ugly. Kaplan's study suggests that this violence also was a fundamental part of working-class male culture, at least among some workers. The violent nature of these liquor establishments, seemingly without redeeming qualities, helped to galvanize middle-class support for prohibition. While those with good sense knew to avoid saloons, the unsuspecting---such as the sons of middle-class families---might find themselves the target of criminals or the unintended victims of violence in the saloon.

From the point of view of the workers in the oil patch, in the coal mines, or in countless other manual labor occupations, however, the risks of injury in a saloon were acceptable and likely less than at the job site. Wage earners in the oil fields worked with heavy machinery in precarious places (on uncertain wooden derrick frames or on narrow oil-covered ledges) and, to blow open low production wells, often employed nitroglycerin---a substance noted for its unstable nature. As one oil worker later recounted, "There were lots of accidents in the booms (booming oil fields) and a man was lucky if he could work ten months without having to take off two and go to the hospital."²²⁶ Coal miners faced a constant risk of mine collapse or explosion from gases or coal dust igniting. A 1905 mine explosion in Latimer County left fifteen miners dead; as mentioned earlier, a 1908 explosion entombed and suffocated twenty-nine miners in Pittsburg County; and a 1912 explosion in the Sansbois Mountains killed seventy-three miners and seriously injured another twenty-five.²²⁷ On a more mundane, daily level, these workers used heavy equipment that might mangle limbs or damage vital organs, even when used correctly.

²²⁶ Ned DeWitt Interview with a farm boss (in charge of an oil field), Works Progress Administration Historic Sites and Federal Writers' Project, Box 42, File 20, Western History Collection.

²²⁷ *Boley Progress*, 11 May 1905; *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, 26 August 1908; Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 24, File 2.

Long hours increased fatigue, which led to accidents as well as violent quarrels. To these men, the dangers of the saloon were comparatively slight.

Turn-of-the-century sociologists, studying the saloons of Chicago, argued that these establishments served important social functions for working-class men. Wage-earners lived in dark, cramped, dingy rooms that offered little more than a place to sleep. They escaped this in the saloon.²²⁸ Kathy Peiss also speaks to the social role of the saloon for wage earners. Studying the habits of working-class New York at the beginning of the twentieth century, she notes that local saloons acted as social centers for wage-earning men. As the sociologists found in Chicago, Peiss states that New York working men patronized these saloons to escape the dreariness of their lives, if only temporarily.²²⁹ According to Roy Rosenzweig, the saloons and taverns of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Worcester, Massachusetts provided that city's wage earners places to congregate after finishing work. Rosenzweig asserts that most Worcester saloons drew a specifically working-class clientele as middle-class men tended to drink at home, in private clubs, or at expensive hotels.²³⁰ These various scholars identified a strong link between the neighborhood saloon and area working men.

While similar studies were not conducted among the working classes of early Oklahoma, these people---including not only oil workers and miners but itinerant farm workers, brick layers, teamsters, and others---enjoyed no better living conditions and sometimes endured much worse. Oil pipe line workers and farm laborers, in following the progression of the pipeline or the harvest, often formed crude camps away from all towns, sleeping in makeshift tents on the ground. The local liquor joint---often little more than a

²²⁸ Kingsdale, "The 'Poor Man's Club,'" 476, 479.

²²⁹ Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 17.

²³⁰ Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 36, 51.

shack or tent hurriedly erected near a work camp---offered a diversion from this dismal life and so became a staple of working-class culture in early Oklahoma as elsewhere. Similarly, Oklahoma's saloons---legal or otherwise---attracted considerably fewer middle-class men than wage earners, particularly in the oil fields, the mining districts, and the growing urban centers of the Sooner state.

Oklahoma's dry champions recognized the connection between working men and the public consumption of liquor. The mayor of the northeast community of Dewey complained to Governor Lee Cruce in 1911, stating, "The laboring men and many others are spending about all their money with the jointist and the bootlegger. . . ." ²³¹ The *Oklahoma Messenger*, published by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, ran an article on labor and liquor in 1907, asserting "Saloon keepers say their largest support comes from the men of labor. . . ." ²³² Two years later, the editor reminded readers, "The liquor industry, as you know, draws its support and power largely from the wage-earning class." ²³³ The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League also addressed the connection between wage earners and the liquor industry. The editor of *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, noted in that publication, "The liquor business is the workingman's worst enemy, but those engaged in it pretend to have a great interest in the laborer." ²³⁴ Though these dry supporters may have overlooked some liquor consumption by the middle and upper classes, their assessments fit those of state enforcement officials who targeted the boom towns of the oil patch, mining communities, and even itinerant work camps for special attention by liquor enforcement officials.

Despite the clearly ethnic sources of liquor opposition among Oklahoma's German population, the state's German press also conceded the

²³¹ J.K. Green to Lee Cruce, 22 July 1911, Lee Cruce Papers: General Correspondence, Box 17, File 3.

²³² *Oklahoma Messenger*, August 1907.

²³³ *Oklahoma Messenger*, October 1909.

²³⁴ *American Issue*, Oklahoma Edition, November 1911.

relationship between liquor and working men. In 1919 the *Oklahoma Staats Zeitung* quoted from an anti-prohibition speech in which the speaker stated, "I myself don't drink anything strong that (sic) water,' he explained. 'I am nevertheless against prohibition because I believe that the worker is entitled to his beer. If you force a man into abstinence from something so that he perceived it as the loss of his person (sic) freedom, then he will look for means to get it back. It is exactly such measures that incite Bolshevism, which is spreading among numerous working classes, and I hope that the law does not go into force.'"²³⁵ Even the German press, representing and reflecting the stance of an ethnic group that opposed prohibition, recognized that liquor and the liquor establishment held special meaning for American wage earners.

Many historians conducting national studies of prohibition have asserted that ethnicity was a prime element in deciding a person's stance on the liquor ban. Rosenzweig and Peiss, in their studies of Worcester and New York City, emphasized the ethnic quality of the neighborhood saloons there. The ethnocultural argument does not hold for Oklahoma, however, as it contained a very small foreign population and only a slight population belonging to those religious denominations (the Roman Catholic, German Lutheran, Episcopalian, and Jewish faiths) that traditionally provided the least support for a liquor ban. The opposition to Oklahoma prohibition in the coal mines of the southeast might support this contention as many of the miners in this region were immigrants or the children of immigrants. However, opposition to the liquor ban was as strong, if not stronger, in the oil fields north and west of Tulsa, near Muskogee, west of Ardmore, and after 1920 near Seminole; and these areas contained very few ethnic groups and no over-representation of ritualists. The common demographic element between the mining districts and the oil fields, as well as the growing urban regions, was a

²³⁵ *Oklahoma Staats Zeitung* (Enid), 28 March 1919.

sizable wage-earning population.

This study does not attempt to discredit the ethnocultural argument of earlier prohibition studies. Immigrants and Catholics in Oklahoma likely frequented the saloons in greater numbers than their native-born and evangelical counterparts, and the German-American Association was an integral part of the organized opposition to prohibition in Oklahoma. This study does propose, however, that the ethnocultural argument fails to explain the depth and variation of the resistance to prohibition in Oklahoma. Except for the coal mining districts of the southeast and the few German communities in the north central portion of the state, Oklahoma contained a very slight immigrant population. Nevertheless, considerable opposition to prohibition existed in the Sooner state, both at the election polls (in 1907 and 1910) and at the illegal saloons, many of which continued to conduct a lively business throughout the period of statewide prohibition (1907-1920). Prohibition was a cultural rather than an economic issue. Few if any men went to the saloons because they believed they would become wealthy by doing so. The saloon culture, as it developed in early Oklahoma, evolved from class as well as ethnic and religious origins; the opposition to the liquor ban came as much from a culture particular to the wage-earning class of Oklahoma as to any ethnic culture.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The campaign to prohibit liquor and the enforcement of that ban came to Oklahoma in the state's infancy. That fact, combined with the longevity of the liquor ban, afforded this cultural issue considerable influence on the political and social makeup of the Sooner state. In chapter two, I discussed the region's political, social, ethnic, cultural, and economic structure at the opening of the twentieth century, and the changes in these during the next twenty years. The region claimed a long heritage of liquor restrictions, dating back to the arrival of the Five Tribes in the 1830s. Though the influx of new settlers to the area in the 1890s had allowed the white population to eclipse the Native American population of the territories by 1900, the Indians' presence remained a spoken rationale for statewide prohibition in the latter territorial years.

The territories also experienced a significant increase in the African American population as former slaves and their descendants sought a new start in the West. Oklahoma never saw the overt race baiting associated with the liquor ban that was evident in some of the states of the former Confederacy. Nevertheless, the presence of African Americans in the region should be considered when analyzing Oklahomans' decision to adopt prohibition. Race relations were tense in the territories and exploded into violence in numerous communities both before and after statehood. When voters reconsidered the liquor question in the 1910 referendum, most African Americans were prevented from casting a vote, in keeping with the grandfather clause adopted at the previous primary election.

The small immigrant populations in Oklahoma remained concentrated in a relatively few communities. Prohibition intruded on these insular communities as officials faced the task of enforcing liquor laws with which many of their constituents disagreed. In the mining camps of southeastern Oklahoma, consumption of alcohol remained a standard feature not only of the Italian immigrant culture that blossomed in towns such as Krebs, but of the nonimmigrant working-class culture that enveloped these communities regardless of ethnicity. The German immigrant population in the north-central counties of the state expressed strong opposition to prohibition and likely continued to consume liquor after the ban, though few newspaper accounts document this. Mention of liquor violations requires both a violating party and a party sufficiently upset at this violation to bring it to the attention of editors or enforcement officials. The silence concerning liquor violations in the German communities might indicate a lack of violations or a harmonious opposition to prohibition at the local level. Perhaps most remarkable concerning the liquor question and this immigrant population is the fact that it was far too small and concentrated to account for but a fraction of the opposition to prohibition, exhibited both at the election polls and at the illegal saloons throughout the first two decades of the new century.

Cutting across ethnic lines was Oklahoma's growing working-class population. Though many saw the region as a frontier, largely devoid of a white population and commercial activity, Jeffrey Burton asserts that several industries had established ventures in the region by 1900. Railroad companies led the way as construction of rail lines continued in the late territorial and early statehood years at a pace unmatched in most regions of the nation. Mining interests entered the eastern region in the 1870s, leasing lands from the Native American residents to extract coal and other minerals for profit. After the turn of the century, the petroleum industry began significant exploration efforts at Red Fork, Cleveland, and Ralston. The opening of the

profitable Glenn Pool, Cushing, and Healdton oil fields in the first two decades of the new century produced an oil boom in Oklahoma. These activities not only affected the region's economy, but also drew a large wage-earning population; various vice industries---including an illegal liquor industry---took root in locales containing large numbers of wage earners to provide services that the more respected middle classes disdained.

Many of the leaders of the anti-liquor campaign in Oklahoma had strong ties to evangelical religions. Numerous religious denominations were active in Oklahoma, with evangelical faiths enjoying a decided numerical advantage. The Southern Baptist Convention attracted the most members, followed by the Southern Methodist, Roman Catholic, Disciples of Christ, and Methodist faiths. The National Baptist Convention, representing the state's African American Baptist churches, experienced phenomenal growth during the first years following statehood. The prohibition campaign unintentionally served an ecumenical purpose, as Southern Baptist, Southern Methodist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Christian (Churches and Disciples of Christ) leaders joined forces in support of the liquor ban.

At the same time, this campaign alienated these groups from members of those denominations that were less supportive of the liquor ban. Oklahoma's Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopal churches never sent representatives to the Anti-Saloon League. Prohibition was a cultural issue for most proponents, then. However, that culture originated not only in organized religion but in the middle-class, respected status that these men held in their local communities. While the liturgical clergy held respected status in their communities similar to that of their evangelical counterparts, the slight size of Oklahoma's liturgical islands amidst a sea of evangelicalism limited their influence. This became more pronounced as the prohibition statutes aged and became better established as a standard element of the Oklahoma legal code. While the number of Catholics in the region increased by roughly 10,000

members between 1906 and 1916, the number of Southern Baptist members increased by 37,000 and the number of Southern Methodist members increased by 20,000 during the same period (see Table 2 in chapter two). Catholics found themselves increasingly marginalized in the Sooner state. Their refusal to join the League in its fight against the liquor industry left them out of respected social circles in Oklahoma.

In chapter three, I examined the campaign to achieve prohibition in Oklahoma. Considerable popular support for prohibition existed in the territories by 1900. Indian Territory remained under a federal liquor ban intended to keep liquor from the Native Americans, but which applied to all residents of the territory. Despite this, liquor was widely available throughout the region because the few United States marshals and their deputies could not monitor activities in all communities at the same time. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union formed a local chapter in 1888 in Muskogee and quickly spread to other communities in the territory, but enjoyed only limited success against the liquor men. Liquor violations became so rampant that the federal government, in 1906, sent William E. "Pussyfoot" Johnson into the territory to break up the entrenched retail liquor industry. While Johnson made his presence known in the area, the liquor industry did not dry up. Liquor men hid their wares until Johnson was safely out of the area and then resumed business. As the prospects for statehood increased, ministers and other middle-class professionals organized to urge that the liquor ban continue after Indian Territory passed from federal to state jurisdiction.

Liquor sales became legal in Oklahoma Territory at its formation in 1889, and a vibrant saloon industry quickly developed in many communities. In some instances, this industry supersaturated a region; a dozen or more saloons opened in communities of a few thousand people. As elsewhere in the nation, the saloon operators in Oklahoma Territory often ignored statutes that required them to close at midnight, refuse sale to minors and Indians, and

remain closed on Sundays. The WCTU organized in Oklahoma Territory soon after its creation. These middle-class women, like their counterparts in the eastern territory, met with only limited success. The perception grew among merchants and professionals of many communities that the regulated saloon spawned all manner of criminality. These men joined local affiliates of the Anti-Saloon League to see that local officials enforced existing liquor regulations, and to urge adoption of municipal ordinances that would ban the retail liquor industry from their communities. They enjoyed considerable success as, by one count, forty communities voted themselves dry and ordered the saloon men out of town by 1906. The Oklahoma Ant-Saloon League also pressured territorial officials to enforce existing statutes and to pass new legislation to restrict further the liquor industry throughout the region.

While attentive to existing conditions, dry proponents in the two territories also looked to the future. As statehood became increasingly likely, these men and women, energized and organized by the Anti-Saloon League, strove to make prohibition a part of the new state government. In 1904, ministers met in Muskogee and formed the Indian Territory Church Federation for Prohibition Statehood. The Federation allied itself with the Anti-Saloon League of America and later joined the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. Representatives from the Federation and the Anti-Saloon League of America traveled to Washington, D.C. to urge Congress to extend the liquor ban covering Indian Territory into the distant future. They achieved success when Congress included in the Enabling Act of 1904 a clause dictating prohibition for the next twenty-one years in the Indian Territory region.

The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League continued to campaign for prohibition statehood during the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention held in Guthrie from November 1906 until March 1907. Through the personal connections between League officers and such key Convention officials as Charles N. Haskell and William H. Murray, dry proponents made prohibition a

part of the Oklahoma Constitution. Concern that wet sentiment might doom the entire constitution convinced delegates to submit the prohibition question to voters in a referendum separate from that concerning the constitution. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League campaigned actively throughout the summer of 1907 and celebrated the fruits of its labor when a slight majority of Oklahoma voters approved prohibition and Oklahoma entered the union as a dry state.

Chapter four studied the changes in Oklahoma's liquor codes from statehood until 1920, when national prohibition took effect. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and other dry proponents remained active following the adoption of the liquor ban in 1907 as state and local officials struggled to enforce prohibition. Oklahoma prohibition, targeting the retail liquor industry (saloons) that drew a disproportionately working-class clientele, banned the sale or giving away of liquor, but said nothing of simple possession. The federal courts had ruled previously that interstate shipments of liquor fell under the purview of Congress, and thus Oklahoma officials could do little to stop the flow of liquor into the state via the mail system. Liquor remained available in the Sooner state throughout this period because resourceful bootleggers exploited this and other legal loopholes in the law or allied themselves with local enforcement officials to avoid prosecution. State officials investigating local instances of corruption complained that local populaces too often returned men to office who had demonstrated an inability or an unwillingness to enforce the liquor ban.

Drys believed they had achieved another significant victory in 1917 when the United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Webb-Kenyon Act. By this law, Congress allowed dry states to regulate the shipment of intoxicating liquor across their borders. The Oklahoma legislature, at the urging of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, promptly adopted the Bone-Dry law, which made illegal the shipment of liquor into the state as well as the possession of liquor. The wording of the bill and the

attorney general's interpretation of it made no exception for sacramental wine, as the Roman Catholic Church discovered when Norman officials seized a shipment of such wine. After considerable publicity, which served to further alienate the Catholic Church from the much larger evangelical Protestant population in the state, the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled that the law did not ban shipment of sacramental wine. Legal challenges to the other aspects of the Bone-Dry law significantly weakened its effectiveness.

American entrance into the First World War provided the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and other drys with the opportunity to criticize liquor violations as unpatriotic and a hindrance to America's war effort. Grains needed to feed America's troops were being squandered in the production of liquor instead, and liquor's dulling impact on the senses was hindering war production and war readiness programs in America. The Oklahoma Council of Defense and its county-level subsidiaries expressed concern about the continued production and sale of liquor in the Sooner state during the war. The councils involved themselves, to some degree, in the enforcement of the liquor ban. Despite the patriotic mood of the nation, liquor remained available during and after the war, particularly in those regions that contained large numbers of wage earners.

Oklahoma's anti-liquor movement contained a strong religious element. As discussed in chapter five, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union began to organize in the region almost immediately following the organization of the twin territories in 1889, and the Anti-Saloon League moved into the territories by 1900 and soon overshadowed the Union as the leading dry organization in the region. In fact, the League saw itself as an umbrella organization, representing all other dry organizations, and the Unions, with some irritation, generally accepted the suzerainty of the League in the dry campaign. The prominence of Protestant ministers in the leadership of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, ensured that religion and culture would be prime factors in

settling the liquor question. The League went to great lengths to portray its struggle as one pitting organized religion against the liquor industry. These men, however, were motivated not only by cultural issues specific to their faith, but also by cultural issues associated with their social position as respected, middle-class members of their communities.

Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League members did not satisfy themselves with campaigning for prohibition and for officials who vowed to enforce the liquor ban. They also involved themselves in the enforcement process, both at the state and local levels. Several League officers held positions, formal or informal, of influence in the state capital. Oklahoma's first governor, Charles N. Haskell, commissioned Fred S. Caldwell (a member of the Oklahoma League board of trustees) as the state prohibition enforcement official from 1907 until 1910. Horatio T. Laughbaum, long-time Attorney and Superintendent of the Oklahoma League, served as an enforcement consultant to governors Cruce and Williams and was the primary author of the 1908 Billups bill and the 1917 Bone-Dry bill. At the county and municipal level, the League urged the formation of local Law and Order Leagues to aid officials in enforcing the liquor ban. Some League officials took an active role in liquor enforcement. Reverend C. C. Brannon held a federal enforcement commission and spent considerable time raiding illegal liquor joints and tracking bootleggers.

The many League officers who were clergymen also belonged to the educated professional portion of Oklahoma's middle class. They were respected members of their communities, given to speaking authoritatively in public, and they utilized their positions of social prominence in support of prohibition. Reverend I. Frank Roach, a member of the League Head Quarters Committee, served on the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce and the Oklahoma Council of Defense. Reverend John R. Abernathy, a League Trustee, was President of Oklahoma Central College at Tulsa. Reverend M. L. Butler, a League Trustee, was a Presiding Elder for the Oklahoma City district of the

Southern Methodist Church. These ministers held positions of influence and respect in their churches and in the larger community.

The leadership of the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League also contained numerous lay professionals who held positions of status at the local and state level. Captain A. S. McKennon, League Vice President, had been a member of the Dawes Commission and a delegate to the Sequoyah Convention in 1905. A. C. Brewster, a League Trustee, served as a district judge. William Franklin, also a League Trustee, clerked for the Oklahoma Supreme Court. M. M. Kerfoot, a member of the League Head Quarters Committee, was active in the Oklahoma Young Men's Christian Association. W. J. Milburn, League Treasurer, was elected to the third Oklahoma House of Representatives. These men brought their considerable social influence and respect to the state's dry movement.

The League's most evident opponents, the various wet organizations and bootleggers detailed in chapter six, were motivated primarily by economic considerations. Many of the wet arguments stressed the cost of effectively enforcing prohibition, the ban's harm to local and state economies, and the resulting loss of licensing revenues without a corresponding drop in crime. While these arguments resonated with Oklahoma voters, the Citizens League, the Sons of Washington, the German-American Association, and the Businessmen's League suffered from inferior organization when compared to their dry counterpart, the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League. Their ephemeral nature, with the exception of the German-American Association, deterred widespread cooperation between those opposed to the liquor ban. The Association, though possessing deep roots in Oklahoma, suffered from the perception that it was insufficiently American and that it was merely a cover for Oklahoma's brewing interests. Its arguments that prohibition threatened a fundamental aspect of German-American culture received little support beyond the ethnic population it represented, and became a mill stone about the neck of wets once the United States declared war on Germany in 1917.

These various wet organizations endured charges from the Anti-Saloon League that they were closely tied to a corrupting liquor industry. While sources indicate that some of these accusations contained an element of truth, the dry propaganda inflated the amount of financial backing the liquor men sent to these wet organizations.

The bootleggers, for their part, were businessmen and served a strong customer base in Oklahoma. They engaged in the liquor trade to make money rather than to make a social or cultural statement. The persistence of that trade is a testament to the continued demand for liquor in Oklahoma, particularly in the oil fields in Tulsa, Creek, Osage, and Carter counties and in the mining camps in Coal, Latimer, and Ottawa counties. The customers of the bootlegger, a less vocal but larger component of Oklahoma's wet population, were motivated primarily by cultural issues stemming from their status as wage earners. No doubt, some became addicted to alcohol and sought out the bootlegger for that reason. Many more wage earners, however, drank socially because they had seen working men do this as they grew up and because their co-workers drank. They frequented the saloons, legal or not, because the saloon had become a vital part of working-class culture in America by 1900. Reports indicate that those who supported and enforced the liquor ban had little success in changing this behavior among wage-earning men in the early years of the Sooner state. The prohibition campaign did drive this industry and the culture that supported it underground, beyond the bounds of respectability. The Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League and other dry organizations--paragons of middle-class respectable character---labeled the consumption of alcohol as immoral or depraved. Their success in defining the issue in this way goes far toward explaining social attitudes toward liquor in the Sooner state throughout the rest of the twentieth century, and it is an aspect of the anti-modernism that persists in Oklahoma and produces an extreme social conservatism in a portion of the population.

The issue of respectability, while difficult to define exactly, must be discussed to gain a more complete understanding of prohibition in Oklahoma. The territories contained a diverse population at the turn of the twentieth century. Racially, the region was overwhelmingly white, but it contained a burgeoning African-American population and a Native-American population that, while shrinking, produced a strong cultural heritage in the Sooner state. Oklahoma also contained a small but visible immigrant population. Italians settled in the coal mining communities of the southeast, German immigrants established communities in the north-central counties of the state, and after the First World War a growing Mexican population moved to Oklahoma. Oklahoma was diverse religiously also, as the Methodist, Southern Methodist, Southern Baptist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic churches each drew large numbers of supporters, and the Indian populations continued, with some difficulty, continued the religious practices of their ancestors. Economically, Oklahoma's early residents came from all manner of social classes. Some farmers prospered, while others fell deeper and deeper into debt. Merchants and professionals became prominent residents of the towns and cities. The railroad, mining, and oil industries attracted wage earners to the region. The diverse nature of society and culture in the early years of the Sooner state unnerved some of the socially prominent and convinced them that Oklahoma needed societal and cultural standards that mirrored their own concepts of respectability. Prohibition was one way in which these community leaders sought to impose their criteria of behavior on the rest of the state's eclectic population.

Richard Hofstadter, in *The Age of Reform, From Bryan to F. D. R.*, describes the middle-class reformers who formed the backbone of the Progressive movement in the early twentieth century as respectable and

substantial.¹ These people were prominent in their community, though many were not notably wealthy. Some of these middle-class reformers targeted the saloon for extinction. As James H. Timberlake notes, the prohibitionists were an integral part of the larger middle-class Progressive movement rather than an anomaly.² This study does not accept Hofstadter's status anxiety thesis as an adequate explanation for the anti-liquor campaign in Oklahoma, though some dries likely believed that their social standing had been overshadowed by that of the growing legion of wealthy businessmen engaged in oil, railroad building, and other economic endeavors in the region. Other dries readily accepted the social and economic changes of the early twentieth century, and labored to steer these changes toward a new, improved society---one devoid of the liquor scourge. The writings of the Anti-Saloon League indicate an acceptance of scientific and technological developments that contradict Hofstadter's thesis.

The Anti-Saloon League of America focused on the growing scientific evidence of alcohol's harmful effects on the human body and argued that those areas that licensed saloons rather than prohibiting them experienced higher rates of poverty and insanity, lower rates of home ownership, and smaller families.³ In its 1915 year book the Anti-Saloon League of America included tables of figures demonstrating that prohibition states averaged less than half as many persons placed in mental institutions per 100,000 population than did states that licensed saloons, implying a strong correlation between liquor consumption and mental illness.⁴ These statistical studies ignore all other factors such as income level, population concentration, and accessibility

¹ Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*, 211-212.

² Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, 1-3.

³ *American Issue*, August, 1908.

⁴ Cherrington, Ernest H., ed., *The Anti-Saloon League Year Book 1916: An Encyclopedia of Facts and Figures Dealing with the Liquor Traffic and the Temperance Reform* (Westerville, OH: The American Issue Press, n.d.), 93-95; Cherrington, Ernest H., ed., *The Anti-Saloon League Year Book 1915: An Encyclopedia of Facts and Figures Dealing with the Liquor Traffic and the Temperance Reform* (Westerville, OH: The American Issue Press, n.d.), 70-71.

to mental health professionals, but demonstrate that the prohibition campaign married proponents of technological innovation and scientific study to those suspicious of these changes as detrimental to the human condition. This latter group, many of them ministers, worried over the perceived decline in societal morals. Proponents of a liquor ban, particularly the Anti-Saloon League, de-emphasized the philosophical differences between their supporters in the interest of unity and political influence at the local, state, and national levels.

Timberlake's contention that liquor reformers primarily came from the middle classes rings true for early Oklahoma. These respectable, stable community pillars sought to blot out the saloon industry because they saw it as nonrespectable. By contrast, liquor consumed in the home or in private clubs, while still frowned upon by the most extreme prohibitionists, was not the focus of the dry campaign in Oklahoma. The prohibition clause adopted in 1907 forbade the sale or giving away of liquor in the new state. It said nothing of possession, though possession of large quantities of liquor might be construed as evidence of the intent to "introduce" liquor. Liquor remained available in Oklahoma after 1907 from out-of-state suppliers who shipped their product into the Sooner state on its extensive rail system. The United States Supreme Court had ruled in 1890 that shipment of liquor across state boundaries constituted a form of interstate commerce and so was immune to state prohibition laws. This remained the stance of the federal government until Congress passed the Webb-Kenyon bill in 1913 that allowed dry states to ban shipment of liquor across their borders. The issue remained unsettled until 1917 when the United States Supreme Court ruled that Webb-Kenyon was Constitutional. Between 1890 and 1913, state and local authorities could do little to hinder the flow of liquor across their borders. This source of liquor concerned Oklahoma drys much less than the retail industry within the state--the saloon---as many middle-class men, and likely a sizable number of women, purchased and received liquor through the mails that they consumed

at home.

Garin Burbank, in his study of the Socialist party in early Oklahoma, also addresses the issue of respectability. Asserting that the Socialist party drew considerable support from rural populations in the Sooner state, Burbank posits that their opponents, the townspeople of the region, desperately sought to shed the wild west image the territories had acquired in the previous century. The Socialists drew their support from the less respectable rural populations. They, and all other opponents of this respectable class, threatened to prevent Oklahoma from assuming its rightful place as the equal of all other states in the union. As he notes,

They (Oklahoma townspeople) became a marginal middle class seeking to wrest for themselves a firm moral respectability in the eyes of their countrymen. But their state's reputation for radicalism, violence, and immorality undermined their aspirations. Wounded by the sneers that said that Oklahomans were people who had fled their crimes and failures elsewhere, the townspeople sought all the more to be the most moral and the most 'American' of their countrymen.⁵

Prohibition became the centerpiece of this moral canon as liquor had been a central part of the untamed territorial past---the fistfights and gun battles in saloons, the visible presence of prostitutes in saloons, and the drunken cowboy shooting out lights and windows as he left town. In this mind set, those who opposed prohibition also fell outside the bounds of respectability. Wet leaders such as John Threadgill of the Sons of Washington answered that their platform was equally respectable, that regulation of the liquor industry rather than its ban was the surest means of curing the social ills associated with the saloons. The wet cause in Oklahoma suffered an irreparable blow when Threadgill, a respected businessman in Oklahoma City, took ill and died a few years after statehood. The dries strengthened acceptance of their meaning of respectability and extended it to the entire state. The liquor issue became an important factor in determining one's social standing.

⁵ Burbank, *When Farmers Voted Red*, 161.

Early Oklahoma's Protestant ministers claimed the mantle of respectability for the dry side of the liquor issue. Businessmen and other professionals also supported the campaign against the saloon, arguing that it stunted the economic growth of local communities and the future state because it reduced productivity and siphoned off a portion of the working man's income that might be spent on more vital and respectable purchases at stores selling dry goods, hard wares, etc. A few businessmen and professionals countered these sentiments with economic arguments in support of licensing rather than banning the saloon. They asserted that prohibition, as an example of governmental interference in business, would deter future entrepreneurial efforts in Oklahoma and that effective enforcement of prohibition would strain the budgets of state and local governments. Wets, however, had no effective answer to charges by the clergymen serving in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League that prohibition would improve the morality of the population. The German-American Association of Oklahoma came closest when it opposed prohibition as an infringement on civil liberties, but this argument did not resonate beyond the small German population in the region. Many people believed this stated rationale to be a cover for the self-serving interests of the sizable German-American population involved in various aspects of the brewing industry.

The ministers, in focusing on the unsavory saloon, pitted religious institutions against an industry that they claimed countenanced theft, prostitution, gambling, fistcuffs, and often murder. The crass image of the saloon---an accurate portrayal of some high-profile saloons but inaccurate when describing many other liquor establishments---revolted many merchants, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and other respectable members of local communities. The Anti-Saloon League and other dry organizations tapped into this revulsion to stamp the entire industry as inherently corrupt, dirty, and parasitic---as evil. Members of the liquor industry, whether brewers,

distillers, or owners of saloons did little to counter this criticism in Oklahoma or elsewhere. The industry did not organize to clean up the more unsavory aspects of the liquor business until after the prohibitionists had gained considerable political support by making such arguments.

To understand more clearly the concept of respectability, one must also look at those populations that fell outside its parameters. Racial minorities would comprise a portion of this nonrespectable population. Indians might achieve respectability by negating their Native American heritage and adopting the language, culture, and economic structure of white society---by learning English, adopting Christianity, and pursuing gainful employment or purchasing property. Jeffrey Burton suggests that this process was largely complete by the turn of the century with regard to many members of the Five Tribes as most had intermarried with whites for generations.⁶ Many of the leaders of the Five Tribes at the time of statehood were prominent land owners and businessmen. By contrast, traditionalists remained separated from respectable white society. Chito Harjo, or Crazy Snake, and other traditional Creek Indians, rejected white society so completely that many ignored their allotted lands in the old Creek Nation. When oil prospectors discovered oil under these lands (the Cushing oil field in Creek County) these prospectors and real estate developers desperately searched out the Snakes to obtain leases. These Indians, less willing to assimilate into white society and culture, remained beyond the limits of respectability.

Recent immigrants to Oklahoma from Europe and other nations also fell outside the bounds of respectability; they brought with them customs radically different from those whose families were firmly established in America, such as the tendency to congregate in public establishments on Sunday for the purpose of drinking liquor. While this activity might have seemed perfectly respectable within Oklahoma's few immigrant communities, the state's large

⁶ Burton, *Indian Territory and the United States*, xiv.

native middle-class population strongly disapproved of such activity.

The black population of the territories encountered difficulty in achieving respectability due to the racial attitudes prevalent among the white population, particularly that in the eastern portion of the new state. The urge to segregate the population, black from white, was so strong at the state Constitutional Convention at Guthrie that only the fear of President Theodore Roosevelt vetoing the document kept delegates, popularly elected by district, from including Jim Crow provisions in the Oklahoma Constitution. The Oklahoma government acted quickly in 1908 to enact such legislation. African Americans might achieve respectability among others in the black community if they established themselves economically and socially. In Oklahoma's all-black towns such as Boley in the east-central portion of the new state, the comparatively small black middle class produced community leaders opposed to the liquor industry for reasons similar to those given by whites in other communities---saloons attracted rough men who held little concern for the well-being of the town, and they attracted crime. This issue was of added importance to black community leaders who sought to keep white law enforcement authorities from entering black communities. The people of Boley expressed concern that blacks could not be assured due process and fair treatment by white authorities amidst the rash of lynchings in the region shortly after statehood.⁷ The relationship between race and liquor policy in Oklahoma requires added scrutiny beyond the bounds of this project.

Religious belief also played a role in determining standards of respectability in early Oklahoma. The liturgical population (Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Jews, as defined by Paul Kleppner, Richard Jensen and others) held relatively liberal views on the use of alcohol; as noted earlier, evangelicals (particularly Southern Baptists and Methodist Episcopal) far out-numbered Oklahoma's liturgicals and held much stricter views on

⁷ *Boley Progress*, 4 January 1912.

alcohol. Evangelical leaders, such as the many ministers who served as officers in the Oklahoma Anti-Saloon League, determined that the only respectable stance toward alcohol was absolute avoidance. Thomas Elton Brown, in writing on the Roman Catholic Church in early Oklahoma, notes that the church remained an extreme minority in the state, concentrated in a few counties.⁸ The church also had a strong immigrant flavor as Theophile Meerschaert, a Belgian priest who served as bishop in the territories and in the state until 1924, appointed fellow Belgians to high church posts in Oklahoma. Brown states that anti-Catholic sentiment was strong in Oklahoma by the First World War, and that the state's laws on liquor and the teaching of evolution in the public school system ran counter to the opinions of the Catholic Church.⁹ The traditional animosity that evangelicals such as the Methodists and the Baptists felt toward the Roman Catholic Church and the prominence of Oklahoma's evangelical population stained Catholics and other liturgicals as less than respectable elements of society in the Sooner state. The split between evangelicals and liturgicals over the liquor question reinforced this.

Garin Burbank asserts that the Socialist party also fell outside the purviews of respectability. The Socialists appealed to the poor, indebted, often landless farmers, while the more respectable Democratic operatives represented the middle-class populations of the small towns in south central Oklahoma.¹⁰ In his study of the Socialist party in that region, Burbank notes that many of the Socialist writers and speakers criticized the liquor industry as immoral and the product of the two major parties.¹¹ Though the people who supported the Socialist Party did not come from the respectable element of society, they accepted the anti-liquor attitudes that clergymen spread to both rural and town populations. Other Socialist editors spoke out against

⁸ Brown, "Bible-belt Catholicism," 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 32-33, 74, 28-29.

¹⁰ Burbank, *When Farmers Voted Red*, xvi.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

prohibition as robbing Oklahoma of jobs. As Burbank notes, the Socialist party operatives in Oklahoma adapted their message to their target audience. If that audience favored licensed saloons, the speakers did as well, regardless of community-wide or state-wide standards of respectability. The articles on prohibition in the *Working Man* shortly before the 1910 prohibition referendum suggest that its working-class readership did not approve of the liquor ban.

These various nonrespectable groups, while accounting for the diversity and richness of early Oklahoma culture, enjoyed significantly less influence in the establishment of societal norms. Established members of the local community---professionals such as ministers, lawyers, teachers, engineers, etc., and local business owners---held greater influence in determining correct behavior as they held a greater stake in the future of the community due to their prominence and education. By contrast, the working classes, whether rural or urban, enjoyed less economic security and were more likely to uproot themselves in search of future employment. Many in the middle classes saw liquor as detrimental to the future of their community. Legal liquor sales would foster political corruption, place white women in danger from the drunken leers of black men, continue the downward spiral of the American Indian population, and hinder the state's effort to shed its wild west tradition of drunken cowboys. As the saloon was associated closely with the working class, middle-class Oklahomans opposed it as a nonrespectable institution without redeeming qualities.

Thus, the campaign for and against prohibition was a contest between competing standards of respectable behavior. By making the saloon illegal, the respectable middle classes went far toward imposing their standard on the entire state population. Prohibition gained drys the support of some who previously had not held strong feelings on the topic, but who supported the enforcement of the law. As men were much more likely than women to

frequent the saloon, the prohibition campaign pitted competing standards of male respectability against one another. Working-class men, as well as middle-class immigrants and some liturgicals, saw the saloon or beer hall as an acceptable establishment. They did not feel that they neglected their manly duties when they frequented such places. Oklahoma's immigrant and liturgical populations were so small as to have little impact on this discussion of respectability beyond certain locales. The working-class population, however, was larger; working-class culture revolved around the saloon in Oklahoma as elsewhere in America. The Sooner state's middle classes, by contrast, saw the saloon as fostering crime of all sorts, and some held that merely going to a saloon robbed a man of his manhood as money spent there limited his ability to provide for his family financially.

Oklahoma's dry proponents, particularly clergymen and women, worried about the close association between liquor and manhood, seeking instead to define masculinity according to a man's level of devotion to familial responsibilities. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union provided the means for women to effect change in this behavior of men, and the Anti-Saloon League gave Christian clergymen an influential voice regarding the saloon. As the League came to overshadow the WCTU after 1900 the prohibition campaign took on a much more masculine demeanor. The League saw to this, promoting itself as "the church in action" and urging men to lend their support to this manly endeavor. The League's emphasis on action fit Victorian middle-class attitudes toward acceptable male and female behavior. Men were to be active and aggressive while women were to be passive. If WCTU activism seemed to challenge these attitudes, the stance of the League seemed to right the societal ship by placing middle-class men at the forefront of the prohibition movement. The relationship between Oklahomans's attitudes toward liquor and accepted gender roles also warrants further study.

APPENDIX A

OKLAHOMA PROHIBITION REFERENDUM, 1907

county	Dry vote	Wet vote	Total vote	Per- centage voting dry	Total voting-age male population	Percentage voters voting on prohibition
Adair	766	534	1300	58.90	2174	59.80
Alfalfa	1923	1023	2946	65.30	4295	68.60
Atoka	1082	945	2027	53.40	3290	61.60
Beaver	1220	1206	2426	50.30	4165	58.20
Beckham	2091	791	2882	72.60	4391	65.60
Blaine	1721	1531	3252	52.90	4745	68.50
Bryan	2293	1870	4163	55.10	6830	61.00
Caddo	3356	2507	5863	57.20	8257	71.00
Canadian	2034	1853	3887	52.30	5846	66.50
Carter	2004	2095	4099	48.90	6702	61.20
Cherokee	1196	1033	2229	53.70	3380	66.00
Choctaw	1337	1261	2598	51.50	4581	56.70
Cimarron	545	357	902	60.40	2137	42.20
Cleveland	1991	1167	3158	63.00	4356	72.50
Coal	899	1371	2270	39.60	4185	54.20
Comanche	3178	2467	5645	56.30	9154	61.70
Craig	1456	1477	2933	49.60	3899	75.20
Creek	1238	1614	2852	43.40	5848	48.80
Custer	2128	1242	3370	63.10	4790	70.40
Delaware	782	544	1326	59.00	2361	56.20
Dewey	1518	1048	2566	59.20	3408	75.30
Ellis	1494	1045	2539	58.80	3945	64.50
Garfield	2688	2639	5327	50.50	8139	65.50
Garvin	2184	1715	3899	56.00	5500	70.90
Grady	2569	1315	3884	66.10	6595	58.90
Grant	1979	1459	3438	57.60	4767	72.10
Greer	2327	967	3294	70.60	5520	59.70
Harper	728	650	1378	52.80	2358	58.40
Haskell	1548	1410	2958	52.30	4087	72.40
Hughes	1835	1318	3153	58.20	4943	63.80

county	Dry vote	Wet vote	Total vote	Per- centage voting dry	Total voting-age male population	Percentage voters voting on prohibition
Jackson	2186	700	2886	75.70	4251	67.90
Jefferson	1302	932	2234	58.30	3494	63.90
Johnston	1094	1491	2585	42.30	4422	58.50
Kay	2603	2496	5099	51.00	7154	71.30
Kingfisher	1906	1855	3761	50.70	4892	76.90
Kiowa	2795	1377	4172	67.00	6124	68.10
Latimer	443	960	1403	31.60	2555	54.90
Le Flore	1957	1766	3723	52.60	6073	61.30
Lincoln	3543	3260	6803	52.10	9384	72.50
Logan	2589	3255	5844	44.30	8749	66.80
Love	972	728	1700	57.20	2606	65.20
Major	1242	1172	2414	51.40	3667	65.80
Marshall	1060	807	1867	56.80	3106	60.10
Mayes	1221	759	1980	61.70	2773	71.40
McClain	1259	959	2218	56.80	3323	66.80
McCurtain	1124	1010	2134	52.70	3358	63.60
McIntosh	1114	1759	2873	38.80	4321	66.50
Murray	939	893	1832	51.30	3043	60.20
Muskogee	3576	3356	6932	51.60	10783	64.30
Noble	1526	1342	2868	53.40	3882	73.90
Nowata	855	1175	2030	42.10	3099	65.50
Okfuskee	1121	1046	2167	51.70	3907	55.50
Oklahoma	4143	6899	11042	37.50	18301	60.30
Okmulgee	1388	1374	2762	50.30	3963	69.70
Osage	1156	1585	2741	42.20	4646	59.00
Ottawa	1181	1147	2328	50.70	3342	69.70
Pawnee	1915	1356	3271	58.50	4559	71.80
Payne	2355	1939	4294	54.80	5678	75.60
Pittsburg	2679	3216	5895	45.50	10547	55.90
Pontotoc	1938	1301	3239	59.80	5530	58.60
Pottawatomie	3513	3005	6518	53.90	11271	57.80
Pushmataha	601	664	1265	47.50	2162	58.50
Roger Mills	1355	918	2273	59.60	3455	65.80
Rogers	1219	1511	2730	44.70	4294	63.60
Seminole	1403	1155	2558	54.80	3560	71.90
Sequoyah	1631	1758	3389	48.10	5264	64.40
Stephens	2013	1247	3260	61.70	4915	66.30
Texas	1839	1005	2844	64.70	5162	55.10
Tillman	1414	589	2003	70.60	3581	55.90
Tulsa	2089	1783	3872	54.00	6954	55.70

county	Dry vote	Wet vote	Total vote	Per- centage voting dry	Total voting-age male population	Percentage voters voting on prohibition
Wagoner	1353	1390	2743	49.30	4949	55.40
Washington	1164	1505	2669	43.60	4285	62.30
Washita	2486	903	3389	73.40	5176	65.50
Woods	1534	1158	2692	57.0	4222	63.80
Woodward	1452	1298	2750	52.80	4144	66.40
statewide	130361	112258	242619	53.70	379568	63.90

APPENDIX B

OKLAHOMA PROHIBITION REFERENDUM, 1910

county	Dry vote	Wet vote	Total vote	Per- centage voting dry	Total voting-age male population	Percentage voters voting on prohibition
Adair	679	412	1091	62.20	2518	43.30
Alfalfa	2354	870	3224	73.00	4914	65.60
Atoka	879	835	1714	51.30	3641	47.10
Beaver	1253	1044	2297	54.60	3991	57.60
Beckham	1819	999	2818	64.50	4948	57.00
Blaine	1686	1307	2993	56.30	4867	61.50
Bryan	2288	1354	3642	62.80	7370	49.40
Caddo	3234	2527	5761	56.10	9392	61.30
Canadian	1937	2350	4287	45.20	7061	60.70
Carter	1537	1817	3354	45.80	6165	54.20
Cherokee	1107	1123	2230	49.60	4008	55.60
Choctaw	1048	969	2017	52.00	5628	35.80
Cimarron	569	338	907	62.70	1472	61.60
Cleveland	1609	1009	2618	61.50	4695	55.60
Coal	587	1515	2102	27.90	4066	51.70
Comanche	2975	3075	6050	49.20	11687	51.80
Craig	1583	1133	2716	58.30	4590	59.20
Creek	1329	2174	3503	37.90	7821	44.70
Custer	2637	1208	3845	68.60	5988	64.20
Delaware	1042	556	1598	65.20	2819	56.80
Dewey	1835	808	2643	69.40	3680	71.80
Ellis	1492	1257	2749	54.30	4039	68.10
Garfield	3425	2613	6038	56.70	9388	64.30
Garvin	1596	1543	3139	50.80	6404	49.00
Grady	2199	1315	3514	51.30	8262	51.90
Grant	2461	1145	3606	68.20	5113	70.50
Greer	1466	731	2197	66.70	3983	55.20
Harmon*	844	261	1105	76.40	5843	43.40
Harper	970	610	1580	61.40	2548	69.60
Haskell	1371	1298	2669	51.40	2270	59.00

county	Dry vote	Wet vote	Total vote	Per- centage voting dry	Total voting-age male population	Percentage voters voting on prohibition
Hughes	1702	1155	2857	59.60	4527	48.90
Jackson	2219	876	3095	71.70	6368	48.60
Jefferson	985	1281	2266	43.50	4751	47.70
Johnston	852	1409	3113	37.70	3955	57.20
Kay	2918	2194	5112	57.10	8018	63.80
Kingfisher	1939	1423	3362	57.70	5009	67.10
Kiowa	1675	950	2625	63.80	7151	36.70
Latimer	505	843	1348	37.30	2986	45.10
Le Flore	1372	1290	2662	51.50	7077	37.60
Lincoln	3302	2076	5378	61.40	8569	62.80
Logan	1918	1850	3768	50.90	8827	42.30
Love	628	349	977	64.90	2354	41.10
Major	1582	947	2529	62.60	3997	63.30
Marshall	794	865	1659	47.90	2692	61.30
Mayer	1280	910	2190	58.50	3459	63.30
McClain	1205	938	2143	56.20	3894	55.00
McCurtain	1062	715	1777	59.80	5215	34.10
McIntosh	752	1315	2067	36.40	4976	41.50
Murray	877	962	1839	47.70	3263	56.40
Muskogee	2525	2422	4947	51.00	15746	31.40
Noble	1556	1205	2761	56.40	4127	66.90
Nowata	675	1143	1818	37.10	4193	43.40
Okfuskee	1109	806	1915	57.90	4736	40.30
Oklahoma	5143	6631	11774	43.70	30535	38.60
Okmulgee	1284	1307	2591	49.60	5833	44.40
Osage	1047	2392	3439	30.50	6137	56.00
Ottawa	1304	1275	2579	50.60	4147	62.30
Pawnee	2025	1022	3047	66.50	4706	64.80
Payne	2548	1350	3898	65.40	6188	63.00
Pittsburg	2250	3127	5377	41.90	14004	38.40
Pontotoc	1710	1293	3003	56.90	5947	50.50
Pottawatomie	2847	3107	5954	47.80	11440	52.10
Pushmataha	538	812	1350	39.90	2589	52.10
Roger Mills	1222	863	2085	58.60	3218	64.80
Rogers	1475	1344	2819	52.30	4806	58.70
Seminole	1123	1015	2138	52.50	4774	44.80
Sequoyah	1509	1018	2527	59.70	5896	42.90
Stephens	1907	1324	3231	59.00	5229	61.80
Swanson*	619	440	1059	58.50		
Texas	1641	826	2467	66.50	4076	60.50

county	Dry vote	Wet vote	Total vote	Per- centage voting dry	Total voting-age male population	Percentage voters voting on prohibition
Tillman	1904	758	2662	71.50	4861	54.80
Tulsa	2242	2626	3768	46.10	11198	43.50
Wagoner	1219	684	1903	64.10	5633	33.80
Washington	1331	1638	2969	44.80	5594	53.10
Washita	2085	999	3084	67.60	5838	52.80
Woods	2102	1190	3292	63.90	4777	68.90
Woodward	1800	1114	2914	61.80	4779	61.00
statewide	126118	105041	231159	54.60	447266	51.70

*Harmon and Swanson counties were new counties in the 1910 census.

Census takers reported population statistics for Harmon county, but not for Swanson.

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#2
VITA

James Edward Klein

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF PROHIBITION IN OKLAHOMA, 1900-1920

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Worthington, Minnesota, January 28, 1964, the son of Paul Anthony Klein and Frances May (Bents) Klein.

Education: Graduated from Spalding High School, Granville, Iowa, in 1982; received Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Journalism from the University of Iowa in 1987. Received a Master of Arts degree in American History from the University of Iowa in 1990. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in History at Oklahoma State University in May 2003.

Experience: Teaching Associate at Oklahoma State University, 2001-2003; Graduate Assistant at Edmon Low Library, 2001-2003; Adjunct Faculty Member at Oklahoma Christian University, 2001-2002; Teaching Assistant at Oklahoma State University, 1998-2001; Adjunct Faculty Member at University of St. Francis, 1996-1998; English Instructor for Hess Language School in Taiwan, 1994-1995; Adjunct Faculty Member at Eastern Iowa Community College, 1994; Adjunct Faculty Member at Kirkwood Community College, 1992-1994.

Professional Memberships: Society of Gilded Age and Progressive Era Historians; Organization of American Historians; American Historical Association; Southern Historical Association; Oklahoma Historical Association; Phi Alpha Theta, NU Chapter.