

The Dead Rabbit

Grocery and Grog

MORRIS PEASE · A MAN ON A MISSION · LEWIS
WINTER · SPRING · SUMMER · FALL

EIGHTEEN FIFTY - FIFTY ONE

THE DEAD RABBIT

MIXED DRINKS LIST

3RD EDITION



*When the rabbit escapes the hunter,
it is time to truly begin the hunt.*

— **Ancient Irish Proverb**

THE TRUE STORY OF
**LEWIS
PEASE**



A MAN ON A MISSION
TOLD WITH **MIXED
DRINKS**

EIGHTEEN FIFTY

EIGHTEEN FIFTY ONE



WINTER 1850

Pease contemplates the task entrusted to him. He is daunted by the scale of wickedness, misery and deprivation he finds in the Five Points, yet sets about his mission strengthened by faith and armed only with prayer.

{ PAGES }
2-7

SPRING 1851

Spring brings the clearance of the Old Brewery site – a foul nest of depravity and corruption to be razed for a new mission building. A fearsome battle ensues, revealing horror upon horror as the crumbling walls and floors are removed.

{ PAGES }
8-13

SUMMER 1851

Pease's doubts grow: prayer and sermon alone cannot deliver salvation, he realizes. The work of the Lord must be a practical, physical thing. He resolves to create workrooms that will allow women an exit from vice towards virtue.

{ PAGES }
14-19

FALL 1851

The Fall also brings Pease's fall. The Ladies of the Home Missionary Society dismiss him from his position for failing to preach, finding him more concerned with the practicalities of securing work and reward for the women who have left a life of sin for one of honest industry.

{ PAGES }
20-25

AN INTRODUCTION



Lewis Morris Pease was many things: Methodist preacher, social reformer, champion of the poor and dispossessed. And he believed in the power of faith to save and transform.

That belief would be sorely tested.

In 1850 Pease was appointed by the Ladies' Home Mission Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church to minister to the destitute poor of the Five Points. Few welcomed him. The gangs who ran the quarter conspired against him. The saloon-keepers and grog-shop owners despised him. And the Catholic Church opposed his efforts to convert the mostly Irish population of the slums to Methodism.

Undeterred, Pease went about his task. A realization dawned on him. Prayer and sermons were not enough: Real, practical action was required to make salvation possible. So he established sewing workrooms for women. In giving employment, he also gave hope.

Not everyone agreed with his methods. On a visit to the workrooms, his employers, the ladies of the Home Mission Society, were dismayed to find that Pease had not preached in several days, being more preoccupied with the practicalities of securing supplies of cloth and making deliveries.

He was dismissed. But Pease refused to leave the Five Points. He stayed and continued his work, establishing the House of Industry, helping the dissolute and destitute.

Lewis Pease was a key figure among many striving to bring about lasting social transformation in the city. Through their efforts, that movement gathered pace, and the demand for change became irresistible. Pease helped make the world of the Five Points a better place, little by little, one soul at a time.

Reproduced in these pages are extracts from Pease's recently discovered journal. They give an insight into the mind of a man beset on all sides with difficulty, yet who stays true to his calling – and his mission.



LEWIS MORRIS PEASE

August 25, 1818–May 30, 1897

Winter
1850



A burdensome task awaits me. I have been appointed by the New York Ladies' Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church to bring ministry to that quarter of New York they call the Five Points.

In truth it is a fearsome and terrible nest of thieves, murderers, cut-throats, Pickpockets, Beggars, Harlots and all manner of Reprobates and Degenerates. During my two years in Lennox, Mass., I Made several visits to New York, and spent much time looking into such abodes of misery.

I was sorely tested by the scenes of poverty and dereliction I have witnessed there, not least the afflictions visited upon the children, many of whom may have never seen daylight but suffer their existence in slums of unimaginable squalor surrounded by all manner of vice.

Iniquity is everywhere: every house is a Brothel, and every Brothel a hell.

This cradle of Misfortune is then to be my new Mission. I am to bring such redemption as I may through Prayer and sermons to these lowly and fallen and most in need. With my dear wife and companion in faith, Ann, I Envision my charge with humility, and no little trepidation.

L.M. Pease

DEUTERONOMY 9:27

Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin.



In the company of his employers, the Ladies of the Home Missionary Society, Lewis Morris Pease sees at first hand the realities of life in the Five Points, his new mission. This is a grim and sordid world of poverty, brutality, vice and dissolution; and it overwhelms him.



WINTER

A gentle blanket of calm covering the countryside. Or whipping gales that smash dead branches onto the ground. Both are winter.

By the Shaker

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Green Spot Irish Whiskey, Green Tea, Apricot, Pistachio, Coconut, Absinthe

DEATH KNELL

Nikka Coffey Grain Whiskey, Togarashi, Oloroso Sherry, Lime, Orinoco Bitters

MOBY DICK

Rémy Martin 1738 Cognac, Powers John's Lane Irish Whiskey, Pale Cream Sherry, Fig, Elderberry, Lemon, Orinoco Bitters

MASTER JUBA

Powers John's Lane Irish Whiskey, Dead Rabbit Cask Ale, Apple, Cinnamon, Cream, Egg, Mace, Pimento Bitters

WESTERN GATE

Powers Gold Irish Whiskey, Cranberry, Beet, Tangerine, Lemon, Pimento Bitters

MOCKINGBIRD

Boomsma Oude Genever, Cachaça, Manzanilla Sherry, Macadamia Nut, Vanilla, Lemon, Aromatic Bitters

STRONGHOLD

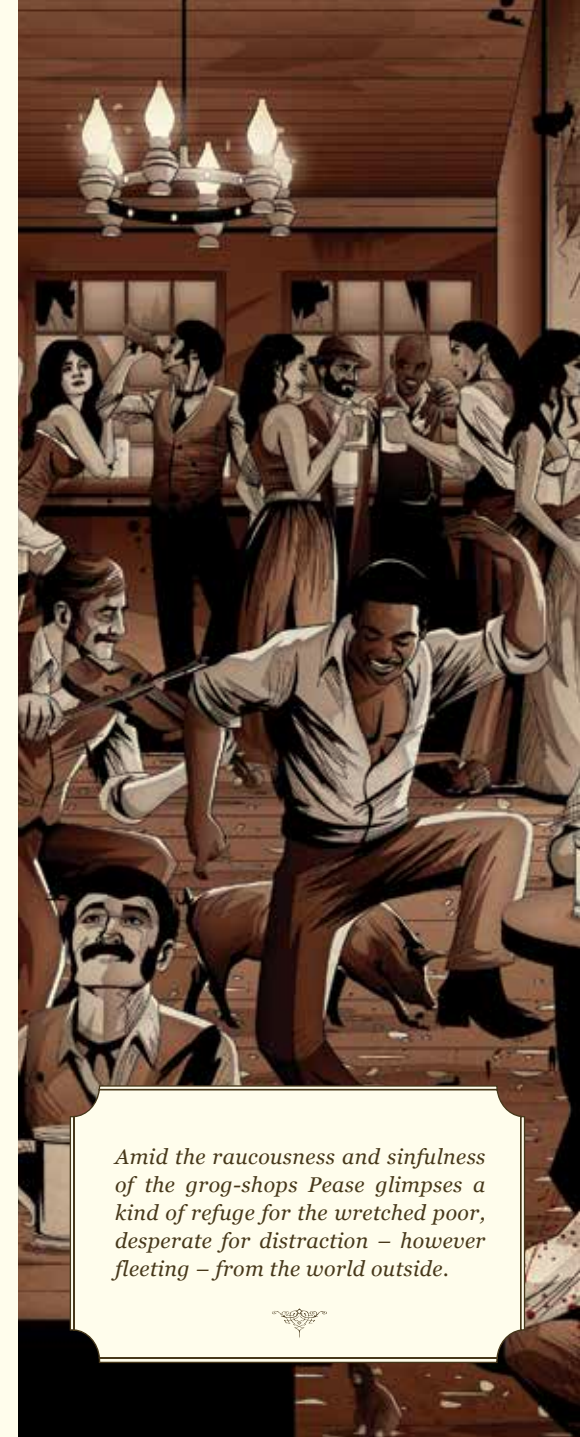
Connemara Peated Irish Whiskey, Powers Signature Release Irish Whiskey, Pear, Pistachio, Cocoa, Lemon, Orinoco Bitters

WANDERLUST

Jameson Black Barrel Irish Whiskey, Pear, Almond, Chocolate, Cream, Egg, Aromatic Bitters

All drinks \$15

Prices do not include 8.875% NYS Sales Tax.
A 20% service charge will be added to all parties of 6 or more.



Amid the raucousness and sinfulness of the grog-shops Pease glimpses a kind of refuge for the wretched poor, desperate for distraction – however fleeting – from the world outside.





WINTER

Winter is the end of nature's cycle, but it turns again into its beginning. While we wait out the weather, we are comforted by the warming, spicy drinks of the hearth, and all the preserves we put away after the harvest.

By the Mixing Glass

PREACHER MAN

Powers John's Lane Irish Whiskey, Reposado Tequila, Amaro CioCiaro, Sweet Vermouth, Dry Vermouth, Cocoa, Absinthe

BANDITS' ROOST

Bols Genever, Amère Nouvelle, Yellow Chartreuse, Pineapple, Bay Leaf, Black Pepper

BROADWAY JUNCTION

Green Spot Irish Whiskey, Citron Sauvage, Falernum, Pink Grapefruit, Pimento Bitters

BLACK ROSE

Tullamore Dew 12 Year Old Irish Whiskey, Bergamot Black Tea, Curaçao, Averna Amaro, Walnut, Aromatic Bitters

LITTLE WATER

Tanqueray Gin, Old Tom Gin, Dolin Blanc, Green Chartreuse, Pear, Pennyroyal, Absinthe

CARGO THIEF

Bulleit Rye Whiskey, Sweet Vermouth, Curaçao, Absinthe, Orinoco Bitters

LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER

Teeling Small Batch Irish Whiskey, Jamaican Rum, Citron Sauvage, Falernum, Pink Grapefruit, Pimento Bitters

IRISH COFFEE

Powers Signature Release Irish Whiskey, Demerara, Coffee, Fresh Cream, Nutmeg

All drinks \$15

Prices do not include 8.875% NYS Sales Tax.

A 20% service charge will be added to all parties of 6 or more.

Spring
1854



There are good souls here, ready for redemption, I am sure, but they are poisoned by poverty. That may be the true nature of the task entrusted to me.

The Society has purchased the Old Brewery as a site for our mission, and it has had to be cleared of its current inhabitants, some 1000 in number for whom it is home, before we can prepare a New building thereupon for the work we are to do. Some few days ago a great many police officers gathered and entered the Old Brewery by force. Brutal combat ensued for many hours and through the night. Many inhabitants, no doubt weakened by depravity, were expelled. However, many more were Not and Scores of tenants and police officers were wounded. Through divine grace alone no life was lost. The police were also able to arrest some twenty wanted Murderers who had hidden themselves inside this foul Warren.

Once cleared of tenants, the building's destruction has begun. What we have found has shocked even the hardest of hearts — children living in the Sewers beneath the building and, and as the walls and foul floors have been removed, bag after bag of Human Remains entombed without the merest Christian comfort.

L.M. Pease



JEREMIAH 50:25

The Lord hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this is the work of the Lord God of hosts.



To make way for its new mission building, the Home Missionary Society has acquired the Old Brewery, a foul and squalid slum riven with crime and disease. Pease realizes that — in addition to the thieves and murderers holed up inside — families and children will be evicted. It is his private Gethsemane.



SPRING

Shoots appear through the snow. And soon spring is everywhere. We celebrate it with citrus from the trees, squeezing the first bright taste of springtide.

By the Shaker

DEBONAIR

Citadelle Gin, Blackcurrant, Lime, Vanilla, Menthe, Absinthe

MAGDALENE

Louis Royer "Force 53" Cognac, Cherry, Poppy Seed, Vanilla, Lemon, Apple, Piper-Heidsieck Champagne

LONE OAK

Jameson Black Barrel Irish Whiskey, Green Chartreuse, Lemon, Pistachio, Curry Leaf, Orinoco Bitters

PIRATE QUEEN

Plantation 5 Year Old Barbados Rum, Bols Genever, Honey, Ginger, Almond, Strawberry, Lemon, Creole Bitters

TWO TERM

Beefeater Gin, Moscatel Pisco, Dolin Blanc, Lemon, Apple, Tarragon, Green Grapes, Orange Bitters

BUNNY BOILER

Tanqueray No. 10 Gin, Cachaça, Manuka Flowers, Falernum, Lemon

PANHANDLER

Fortaleza Blanco Tequila, Barbancourt White Haitian Rum, Curaçao, Falernum, Lime, Tiki Bitters

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Old Forester 100 Proof Bourbon, Aquavit, Carrot, Lemon, Fennel, Dill

All drinks \$15

Prices do not include 8.875% NYS Sales Tax.
A 20% service charge will be added to all parties of 6 or more.



The Battle of the Old Brewery rages for hours, with scores of tenants and police officers wounded. Once cleared of inhabitants, the building begins to give up its shocking secrets, with many human remains found buried in walls and beneath floors.



SPRING

We celebrate the flowering all around us, turning buds into balms and elixirs to savor in the soft glow of a fine evening.

By the Mixing Glass

HUNGER STRIKER

Brugal Extra Dry Dominican White Rum, Banks 5 Island Rum, Dolin Blanc, Apple, Saffron, Boston Bittahs

LADY GOPHER

Knappogue Castle 12 Year Old Irish Whiskey, Calvados, Dolin Génèpy, Cocchi Americano, Pear, Peychaud's Bitters, Boston Bittahs

HERETIC

Bombay Dry Gin, Mezcal, Muscat, Pine, Elderflower

LOOKING GLASS

Green Spot Irish Whiskey, Mezcal, Dolin Blanc, Manzanilla Sherry, Gentian, Apricot

DOPPELGÄNGER

Powers John's Lane Irish Whiskey, Aquavit, Dry Vermouth, Green Chartreuse, Celery Bitters

PRECISION PILOT

Tullamore Dew "Phoenix" Irish Whiskey, Lillet Rosé, Campari, Pink Grapefruit, Peychaud's Bitters

TINY RIOT

Yellow Spot Irish Whiskey, Byrrh, Cardamaro, Earl Grey Tea, Orange Bitters, Piper-Heidsieck Champagne

JACK OF DIAMONDS

Rémy Martin 1738 Cognac, Oloroso Sherry, Verjus, Ginger, Almond, Peychaud's Bitters

All drinks \$15

Prices do not include 8.875% NYS Sales Tax.
A 20% service charge will be added to all parties of 6 or more.

Summer
1857



I must strive to understand more and condemn less. The Five Points is truly a terrible place, riven with all manner of vice and wretchedness. Yet there are also theaters and dance halls, prize-fights, gambling and all manner of lewd entertainment. Yes, there is misery but there is laughter too that comes from liquor and abandon. The saloons provide a kind of refuge, especially to those many Irish recently arrived to America or in search of fellowship. The raucousness and conviviality in these dens are false, but the poor desperates seize upon them for succor, and soon are lost to drink.


We must outbid the traders in souls, we must uplift the fallen and we must vanquish the tyrant — Rum. Such is our mission. But I cannot counter with prayer and sermon alone. Today I was jeered as I preached in the street. The saloon-keepers stood at their doors and laughed, along with the gang-members and their doxies. One poor woman spoke out and said, "Sir, we cannot hear the Bible when our stomachs are growling." All around her children wandered the streets, feral and lost, half-naked, begging and stealing, and starving, and perishing, body and soul. I am haunted by the piteousness of it all.

Thus am I resolved to put faith into action and create a place of work and lodging and education, all the better to hear the Word of God.

L.M. Pease

NEHEMIAH 2:18

Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me... And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work



Pease begins to realize that prayer needs to be put into practice, that the poor cannot be expected to raise their eyes to the heavens when they live in such squalor and their children go hungry. He formulates a plan.



SUMMER

As the mercury rises, so do our spirits. So let us tame temperature with refreshing draughts to help pass the muggy, misty nights.

By the Shaker

HIT AND RUN

Sheep's Dip Blended Scotch Whisky, Port, Blueberry, Almond, Lemon, Cinnamon, Pimento Bitters

ROMAN EMPIRE

Absolut Elyx Vodka, Aquavit, Apple, Dill, Mint

SANHEDRIN

Mount Gay Eclipse Barbados Rum, Macadamia Nut, Pineapple, Lime, Apricot, Mint, Mace

RAGGLE TAGGLE GYPSY

Bacardi Heritage Puerto Rican Rum, Pisco, Sumac, Lemon, Nectarine, Bokers Bitters

WHITE RABBIT

Tanqueray Gin, Pale Cream Sherry, Amère Nouvelle, Lemon, Parsnip, Orange Sherbet, Tarragon

RAG AND BONE

Basil Hayden Bourbon, Armagnac, Macadamia Nut, Lemon, Grapefruit, Strawberry, Aromatic Bitters

RAMSHACKLE

Rémy Martin 1738 Cognac, Santa Teresa Rhum Orange, Blackberry, Cherry, Lemon

BARE-FACED LIAR

Jameson Black Barrel Irish Whiskey, Dubonnet Rouge, Raspberry, Beet, Lemon, Toasted Fennel Salt, Decanter Bitters

All drinks \$15

Prices do not include 8.875% NYS Sales Tax.
A 20% service charge will be added to all parties of 6 or more.



Pease's doubts become an inner turmoil, as he is increasingly torn between his employers' view of his preaching responsibilities and his duty to the poor and wretched. Is he doing enough? Could he do more to alleviate the misery around him today – and tomorrow?



SUMMER

It's time for berries and melons, and the cooling, crackling ice ready in its straw nest in the cellar.

By the Mixing Glass

DRAWING BOARD

Cutty Sark Prohibition Blended Scotch Whisky, Laphroaig 10 Year Old Islay Scotch Whisky, Drambuie, Bénédictine, Decanter Bitters, Lemon Oils

VIGILANTE

Pisco Porton, Mezcal, Blanche Armagnac, Apricot, Vanilla, Orange Bitters

FALLEN ANGEL

Caña Brava Panama Rum, Rhum Agricole, Dry Vermouth, Grapefruit, Falernum

PSYCHO KILLER

Redbreast 12 Year Old Irish Whiskey, Campari, Banana, Cocoa

BROTHER JOSEPH

Powers John's Lane Irish Whiskey, Dolin Blanc, Maraschino, Suze, Verjus, Apple, Orange Bitters

SCARLET LADY

Bushmills Black Bush Irish Whiskey, Amaro Montenegro, Raspberry, Tiki Bitters, Piper-Heidsieck Champagne

GOLD DIGGER

Powers Gold Label Irish Whiskey, Cocchi Americano, Pale Cream Sherry, Curaçao, Sesame, Cinnamon, Pimento Bitters

SNEAK THIEF

Old Forester 100 Proof Bourbon, Amontillado Sherry, Sweet Vermouth, Apricot, Chile de Arbol, Absinthe, Mole Bitters

All drinks \$15

Prices do not include 8.875% NYS Sales Tax.
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Hall
1851

By the grace of God the workrooms have been flourishing. We have secured contracts for shirts and the women are paid, around \$2.50 a week. There is much to be done always, overseeing the work, delivering one order and transporting the bolts of raw cloth for the next.

Thus was I engaged when the Ladies of the Home Missionary Society visited today. They asked Ann where I was, and she told them the truth that I was unloading cloth. And has your husband preached today? No, ma'am. And what of yesterday? No, ma'am.

At this, the ladies were much offended. They contend that I am failing in my duty to them and under God to deliver redemption through prayer and sermons. They believe they have tolerated our efforts to provide labor, housing and education but we have been derelict in our spiritual duties, as prescribed in the conditions of my employ.

By way of justification, I quoted Ezekiel ("It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine."), but their response prompted thoughts in my mind of Mark ("some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth").

I am to be removed from my position and replaced. This is a sorrowful day for Ann and for me. Yet we are resolved to continue our work, with the help of God almighty.

L.M. Pease

JUDGES 6:8

That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage.



Within the Five Points Pease is a controversial figure, at times beset on all sides – by churches, by vested interests, by the grog-shop owners, by the gangs. However, despite this, he remains steadfast in his commitment to the true work of his mission.



FALL

At harvest time, we revel in the yields of nature. We drowse in the temperate days and nights, with the occasional bracing breeze.

By the Shaker

POCKET WATCH

Auchentoshan American Oak Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Apple, Pear, Lemon, Demerara, Pimento Bitters

VICEROY

Redbreast 12 Year Old Irish Whiskey, Reposado Tequila, Dry Sack Sherry, Sassafras, Vanilla, Lemon, Salt, Angostura Bitters

SPELL SPOKE

Jameson Black Barrel Irish Whiskey, Hibiscus, Lime, Ginger, Kaffir Lime, Boston Bittahs

FARO POINT

Teeling's Small Batch Irish Whiskey, Plantation 5 Year Old Barbados Rum, Pineau des Charentes, Banana, Almond, Lemon, Orinoco Bitters, Mole Bitters

BULLETPROOF

Black Dirt Apple Jack, Cointreau, Lemon, Orinoco Bitters

INSURRECTION

Bacardi 8 Year Old Puerto Rican Rum, Powers Gold Irish Whiskey, Gentian, Mango, Lemon, Tamarind, Tiki Bitters

CANNON BALLOT

Jameson Black Barrel Irish Whiskey, Pineau des Charentes, Apple Brandy, Absinthe, Tiki Bitters

TAX COLLECTOR (SERVED HOT)

Dewar's 12 Year Old Blended Scotch Whisky, Fig, Black Tea, Cardamom, Chicory, Pimento Bitters

All drinks \$15

Prices do not include 8.875% NYS Sales Tax.
A 20% service charge will be added to all parties of 6 or more.



Pease establishes sewing workrooms for destitute women. However, his dedication to the activity of the workrooms places him into conflict with his employers, and they dismiss him. Undeterred, he goes on to create the House of Industry, which flourishes and expands, year on year. For Pease, this is faith in action.

FALL

The apple from the tree becomes cider, becomes brandy. The full moon animates our late-night feasts, but a bitter turn in the air augurs another seasonal cycle waiting in the wings.

By the Mixing Glass

PUB THUG

Pierre Ferrand 1840 Cognac, Bulleit Rye Whiskey, Madeira, Meletti Amaro, Cinnamon

HELLFIRE

Templeton Rye, Sweet Vermouth, Aperol, Chipotle, Hopped Grapefruit Bitters

PRAYING MANTIS (SERVED HOT)

Teelings Small Batch Irish Whiskey, Pedro Ximenez Cordial, Créole Shrub

BLOODLUST

Ron Zacapa 23 Solera Rum, Fernet Branca, Ginger, Raspberry

NEW AMSTERDAM

Bols Genever, Sweet Vermouth, Vanilla, Aromatic Bitters

MEAN FIDDLER

Green Spot Irish Whiskey, Bowmore 12 Year Old Islay Scotch Whisky, Campari, Green Chartreuse, Sweet Vermouth, Cinnamon, Aromatic Bitters, Orange Oils

FORTUNE TELLER

Powers Signature Release Irish Whiskey, Braulio Amaro, Sweet Vermouth, Cranberry, Absinthe

IRISH PALADIN

Bushmills 10 Year Old Irish Whiskey, Royal Combier, Santa Teresa Rhum Orange, Nardini Amaro, Absinthe

All drinks \$15

Prices do not include 8.875% NYS Sales Tax.
A 20% service charge will be added to all parties of 6 or more.



House of Industry,
Five Points, New-York. 1859-1891



Pease became the figurehead in a crusade to transform the poorest and most deprived parts of the city.

By establishing the House of Industry and seeing it grow year upon year, he helped create a sustainable model for lasting change – one that would enable the lowest of the low to raise themselves up, and, ultimately, turn their gaze heavenward.





NEW-YORK'S BEST BARS

1850-1851 EDITION



By David Wondrich, Esq.

In the quarter-century since the opening of that greatest example of American enterprise, the Erie Canal, the City of New-York has grown beyond the bounds of reasonable expectation. From 166,000 souls in 1825, the year in question, the population of the nation's commercial metropolis has increased so prolifically that it now stands at 550,000. The pale of settlement that stood then at Tenth-street now stands at Fiftieth-street, and every month sees houses erected in the relative wilderness that lies beyond.

New-Yorkers have always been a thirsty lot, yet the cozy, cobwebbed taverns and simple, even Spartan bar-rooms that served our grandfathers would not

do for the New-York tippler of today. The order of the day is opulence, and modern Broadway "swells" will willingly drink in surroundings that would have made our ancestors blush at their presumption.

Yet the city's tippling-houses are many, and they serve many classes of men. Here I present fifteen of the city's most celebrated, ones that run the gamut from royal palace to pauper's hut. I do so not to suggest that my reader might patronize them all—indeed, to send a reader into several of these establishments would be nothing short of a criminal act—but rather that he be braced with the detailed knowledge one needs to intelligently guide one's custom.

I shall commence with the palaces, and that means above all with *Delmonico's*, at the corner of William-street and Beaver-street. This temple of Gastronomy, which now needs no introduction, is a temple indeed: Thirteen years ago, as if to underline that fact, the brothers Delmonico incorporated two marble columns from the Roman ruins of Pompeii in the elegant façade of their new "Citadel", as the building is known. But while they are perhaps chiefly known for their delectable *plats du jour*, the brothers have not neglected Bacchus. The bar-room on the ground floor is one of the very finest in the city, and their Whisky Punch is justly famous.

The Astor House, at Broadway and Vesey-street, across from the Post-Office, is indubitably the most excellent and most modern hotel in the city. Mr. Jas. P. Stetson, its proprietor, began his career as a bar-keeper at the celebrated Tremont House, in Boston, and it is perhaps due to that fact that the Astor House bar-room, secreted in the basement of the building, is unusually spacious and well-appointed. Its receipts are said to amount to \$250 a day—small wonder, as "Shed" Sterling, the principal bar-keeper, enjoys a wide reputation among sporting gentlemen as the "Napoleon II of the Bar".



On the east side of Broadway, just above Prince-street, you will find the entrance to the long-celebrated ***Niblo's Garden***. While the present age has seen the portions of its leafy walkways and rustic bowers that once faced Broadway subtracted for another use, which you will find detailed immediately below, and the rustic wooden "saloon" that formerly occupied the Crosby-street portions of the property replaced by a magnificent new Theatre and a fine Concert Room, there remains yet enough garden to please the eye and cool the work-heated brow. And, as ever, to receive a Sherry Cobbler from the fair hands of Mrs. Niblo, who oversees the bar, is to receive nectar from the very hands of Hebe herself.

One cannot mention Niblo's without mentioning the ***Metropolitan Hotel***, the large and elegant edifice now rising on what was in former days the Broadway frontage of Mr. Niblo's Garden, leaving him only a passageway to the rump of his property. Simeon and William Leland, the proprietors, have announced their intention to maintain one of the finest bar-rooms in the city, no matter the cost. It is anticipated that when this edifice is completed, it will take its place in the first rank of the city's accommodations, and its bar-room will set a new standard in its class.

Still further along Broadway stands the ***New-York Hotel***, at Washington-place. In the brief four years of its existence, this imposing brick edifice has established itself as a great favourite of New-York's Southern visitors, in large part due to the excellence of its bar. "Jo" Fernandez, the young Spaniard who attends the bar, enjoys a particular reputation in the city as a compounder of Whisky Cocktails.

While individual members of New-York's large and colorful "sporting

fraternity" are often to be encountered at all of these establishments, there are yet others that they truly call their own. ***Geo. E. Sherwood's Oyster Saloon***, at the corner of Broadway and Park-place, beneath Peale's Museum, enjoys a particular vogue, whether because it is a favourite with Captain Isaiah Rynders, the *éminence grise* of the fraternity, or because not long ago it was the scene of an impromptu prize-fight between two of the popular champions, "Tom" Hyer, favored by the so-called Native Americans—those who pride themselves on bloodlines untainted by the Irish immigrant influence—and "Yankee" Sullivan, the Irish paladin.

Five blocks further north, you will find Chris. Schaffer's ***Gem Saloon*** at 324 Broadway between Thomas-street and Worth-street, next to the Broadway Theatre. Mr. Schaffer, a fixture in Democratic-Party politics, has constructed one of the most opulent bar-rooms in the city, if not the whole country. Yet despite its intricately carved marble bar, with its vast, eagle-crowned mirror, and its elegant *habitués*, fisticuffs are as likely to break out there as at Sherwood's. The fraternity can be a hot-blooded one, particularly those members who are immersed in the tumult of party politics.

There are, however, other, less turbulent branches of the fraternity. Its theatrical branch may be found at ***Windust's Shakespeare House***, No. 11 Park Row at Broadway, beneath the famous sign, "NUNQUAM NON PARATUS". And indeed Edward Windust and his able bar-keepers are "never not prepared" to serve excellent oysters and fine liquors to the thespians and their admirers ensconced among the memorabilia—handbills, engravings, various *objets trouvés*—of a thousand theatrical performances.



Those whose devotion to the humble bivalve is yet more profound will be found across the street at ***Sandy Welch's Terrapin Lunch***, at Broadway and Ann-street, where they gorge not only on the titular delicacy, expertly prepared, but also the freshest oysters, and refresh the inner man with steaming mugs of the house's famous "Tom and Jerry". (Mr. Welch, who formerly prepared this himself, has joined the water-drinkers and prepares it no more.)

Yet more thespians congregate at ***The Shades***, a venerable old house now operated by the witty Charles Cox, so well known to the fashionable gentlemen of this city from his former occupation as a haberdasher. Nestled on quiet Thames-street, behind the site until recently occupied by the City-Hotel, the Shades is a bastion for Anglophiles, who can be found sitting at the plain deal tables, eating excellent beefsteak, drinking bright, foaming ale from earthen mugs, and, in short, out-Englishing the English.

"A rare old plant" is the ***Ivy Green***, No. 79 Elm-street, just behind the Tombs (as the city's prison is dolefully known), where the atmosphere is purely Hibernian. One might expect as much from an establishment created by Malachi Fallon, a son of Athlone. Mr. Fallon having departed for San Francisco and realms of gold, the Ivy Green—christened after Mr. Dickens's pretty and popular song of the same name—is now in the capable hands of Mr. Johnny Lord, who ensures that the principles of Irish hospitality are maintained and that the ale and good whisky continue to flow, much to the delight of the Democratic politicians who habitually congregate there.

Like the Ivy Green, Thomas Dunlap's ***Pewter Mug***, which stands at the corner of Frankfort-street and Park Row, acts as a sort of customs-post for the notorious Five Points, the tangle of low rookeries, sinkholes of vice, and general

filth and nastiness immediately to its east. Likewise, it is also an outpost of the Tammany wing of the Democratic Party, although to those who are consuming its famous turtle soup, considerations of party, interest, or indeed anything else at all are at a far remove.

It would be the height of irresponsibility to suggest that anyone visit the following three establishments, if they deserve the name—indeed, the impression these precarious places give is the very opposite of establishment. Yet they do exist, and to know of their nature is to be forearmed against evil counsel.

Almack's, at 67 Orange-street, derives its name from the celebrated London assembly-room on the principle of *lucus a non lucendo*, for indeed it is the opposite of its original in every way. "Pete" Williams, the colored gentleman who has charge of the place, seems to thrive in his surroundings, maintaining a self-satisfied air, a team of fast horses, and a wide acquaintance among the sports of the town. Indeed, it is one of those sports who famously lured Mr. Dickens to this place, where "Boz" bore witness to the heady atmosphere of Almack's, with its checkerboard clientele, its wild, Africanized music, and the devil-take-the-hindmost dancing that it drives. Notwithstanding the equivocal nature of Mr. Williams's patrons, it is said that every visitor is safe from robbery or maltreatment while under his protection.

The same cannot be said of ***James Dean's Porterhouse***, at 9 Little Water-street, in the very diseased heart of the Five Points, which belies its name by the noxious, adulterate strong liquors with which it entertains the young men, flush with the proceeds of recent robberies, and the degraded young women who provide its custom. The *décor* is nautical, dominated as it is by

an admittedly impressive model of a merchantman, full-rigged with suits of sail. In the evenings a great number of gamblers, many of them of a class who should know better than to patronize such a place, occupy the little wooden stools and round wooden tables that fill the bar-room.

It is safe to say that no member of the privileged caste will be found in our final resort, **Crown's Corner Grocery**, at the south-west corner of Little Water-street and Anthony- street unless he—or, it must be acknowledged, she—has first reached the nadir of human degradation. The title of most vicious resort in the Five Points is regrettably difficult to award, yet informed observers nonetheless generally concur that Anthony Crown's groggery must hold the title. Indeed, so vicious is it that it has earned the nick-name, "The Gates of Hell". At first appearance nothing more than one of the unsanitary groceries that dot the poorer parts of the city, with their decayed vegetables, adulterate milk, moldy hams, and other such trash, it shelters a back room where acts of the greatest immorality are not only tolerated, but encouraged. Add to that the frequent murders, whether of the unwary innocent or the merely unwatchful, the cruelty of the owner, who has been seen whipping naked wretches of both sexes out onto the street of a morning, and the poisonous quality of its liquors, and you have a place to be avoided as assiduously as Delmonico's is to be cultivated.

But the reader of steady purpose and intact moral fiber need not trouble himself with such Dantean vistas as these, for in New-York, as we have seen, the "cup that cheers" may be partaken of in a great many establishments with which none but the most severe critic could find fault.

DAVID WONDRICH

David Wondrich is widely hailed as the world's foremost authority on the history of the cocktail and one of the founders of the modern craft cocktail movement. The longtime Drinks Correspondent for Esquire magazine, Dr. Wondrich (he has a PhD in Comparative Literature) is a five-time Tales of the Cocktail Spirit Award winner. He is the author of countless newspaper and magazine articles and five books, including the hugely influential Imbibe! (2007; revised edition 2015), which was the first cocktail book to win a James Beard award, and Punch, which came out in late 2010 to wide acclaim and did much to spark the current boom in punch-making. At present, he is working on the Oxford Companion to Spirits and Cocktails, a multi-year project. He is a founding partner in Beverage Alcohol Resource, America's leading advanced training program for bartenders and other mixologists. He also is a frequent guest lecturer at venues such as the Smithsonian Institute, the American Museum of Natural History and top bars on five continents and ships at sea. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

NEW-YORK'S BEST BARS 1850-1851

1 DELMONICO'S, at the corner of William-street and Beaver-street

2 THE ASTOR HOUSE, at Broadway and Vesey-street

3 NIBLO'S GARDEN, above Prince-street

4 METROPOLITAN HOTEL

5 NEW-YORK HOTEL, at Washington-place

6 GEO. E. SHERWOOD'S OYSTER SALOON, at the corner of Broadway and Park-place

7 GEM SALOON, at 324 Broadway between Thomas-street and Worth-street

8 WINDUST'S SHAKESPEARE HOUSE, No. 11 Park Row at Broadway

9 SANDY WELCH'S TERRAPIN LUNCH, at Broadway and Ann-street

10 THE SHADES, Nestled on quiet Thames-street

11 IVY GREEN, No. 79 Elm-street

12 PEWTER MUG, at the corner of Frankfort-street and Park Row

13 ALMACK'S, at 67 Orange-street

14 JAMES DEAN'S PORTERHOUSE, at 4 Little Water-street

15 CROWN'S CORNER GROCERY, at the south-west corner of Little Water-street and Anthony-street





MANHATTAN WET & DRY

A TALE OF 252 GROG-SHOPS



by Christine Sismondo

They were the best of bars, they were the worst of bars. Good or bad, though, at least there was no shortage of them. Antebellum New York was no exception to that enduring Manhattan tradition of being slippery-wet, even in challenging times. And, in 1850s New York, there were at least 5,500 places to get a dram, even though the city was in the midst of its first real brush with prohibition.

We hardly ever hear anything about this first booze ban. Many will be surprised to learn that there even was an attempt to dry out before the Volstead Act, which, beginning in January 1920, made the national sale of alcohol illegal for nearly 14 years. It's as if our obsession with the "noble experiment",

including the bootleggers, federal agents, and wild characters who ran the 10,000 speakeasies that kept New York afloat, has completely eclipsed this first attempt to get America to take the pledge.

That's too bad. Because as colorful as Jazz Age Prohibition was, the original was even more interesting. Admittedly, it's not as neat and clean a story, and it fails to deliver seemingly clear lessons about unintended consequences and forbidden fruit. The first time around, though, the liquor ban served as another stepping stone in the development of civil rights law; marked the birth of New York's corrupt Tammany Hall era; and led to a fracas that would make room on the political landscape for the rise of a new party—the Republicans.

That first prohibition was also fascinating in that it arrived through the efforts of radical utopian reformers who wanted to rid the world of, among other things, alcohol, capital punishment, and slavery. While their ideals were noble, the fight for temperance was marked by political turmoil, street brawls, reams of propaganda that paved the way for "yellow journalism", and bold disobedience from the other side. And, in the middle of all of this was Five Points, a major battleground in the war on booze and the poster-child that proved the urgent need for prohibition. The fact that the neighborhood's worst features were frequently invoked in the debate over the legality of alcohol is the reason we still know the name "Five Points" and have at least a passing familiarity with some of its most famous inhabitants: Lewis M. Pease, "Wild Maggie", and, of course, the infamous gang of thieving, brawling Irish-Americans known as the Dead Rabbits. We know about its prostitutes, dance halls, grog-shops,

and liquor groceries not because it was the worst slum in the world, but, rather, because it was a central talking point in America's first major national debate about whether or not to dry out.

That said, Five Points was still pretty bad. Not exactly the kind of place you'd dream of settling down and raising a family. While New York's *The Sun* is often said to have increased circulation with stunts like The Great Moon Hoax, it actually built its audience with lurid accounts in its "Police Reports" section of sex crimes and first-person "sketches" of the misery and vice in impoverished parts of New York. In his 1843 novel *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, Charles Dickens satirized the sensational penny press paper (and its many imitators) with descriptions of street hawkers selling "The New York Stabber" and the like:

“ Here's this morning's New York Sewer!" cried one. "Here's this morning's New York Stabber! Here's the New York Family Spy! Here's the New York Private Listener! Here's the New York Peeper! Here's the New York Plunderer! Here's the New York Keyhole Reporter! Here's the New York Rowdy Journal!"

The proliferation of tabloids inspired more slumming, including a notable early visit from Davy Crockett, who, in 1834, helped foster some of the most enduring tropes about Five Points when he observed "cellars jam full of people; and such fiddling and dancing nobody ever saw before in this world."



Figure 1 – The Great Moon Hoax. In 1835, *The Sun* published a series of articles claiming that, thanks to a new super-telescope, life had been observed on the moon.

And we all know what dancing leads to:

“*Black and white, white and black, all hug-em-snug together, happy as lords and ladies, sitting round in a ring, with a jug of liquor between them, and I do think I saw more drunk folks, men and women, that day, than I ever saw before,*” said Crockett in *A Narrative of the Life of Davy Crockett, Written by Himself*. *“In my country, when you meet an Irishman, you find a first-rate gentleman; but these are worse than savages; they are too mean to swab hell’s kitchen.”*

Crockett saw antebellum America’s worst fears realized in that scene – at least for those who worried about racial purity and moral degeneration, what with the country experiencing hyper-immigration and on the verge of a volatile debate over the morality of slavery. Even Dickens, who might not have been so invested in this American preoccupation with race, was similarly shocked when, on his visit to Five Points in 1842, he witnessed an interracial orgy at Frank McCabe’s “roughhouse tavern”. In a scene practically right out of post-apocalyptic zombie fiction, Dickens, in his *American Notes*, described McCabe’s as a dark retreat inhabited by figures crawling “half-awakened, as if the judgment hour were near at hand, and every obscene grave were giving up its dead”.

When he didn’t stumble into group sex, however, Dickens seemed pretty cheerful about interracial integration in Five Points. Unlike Crockett, who seemed content to glean what he could about the fiddling and dancing from the outside, Dickens actually ventured into Almack’s (a.k.a. Pete Williams’ Place), a dance hall on Orange Street where the famous Master Juba bested white American dancers in Irish jigs and clog dancing. Dickens made it abundantly clear that Almack’s was no dive: The “buxom fat mulatto” landlady had

“sparkling eyes” and wore a “daintily ornamented” handkerchief. The landlord sported “a smart blue jacket”, a “thick gold ring”, and a “gleaming golden watch-guard”. There, Juba performed a routine that Dickens described as the “dance of life”, possibly the early tap-dancing that he’s credited with inventing.

George Foster, author of *New York in Slices*, a book compiled from his articles for *The New-York Tribune*, didn’t see it that way. He hit the Five Points dance halls in 1849 and discovered an even more debauched scene than the ones Dickens and Crockett had witnessed. There, he found excessive drinking, “obscene anecdotes”, “ribald songs”, and “a fat and shining blackamore with his arm around the waist of a slight young girl, whose skin is yet white and fair, but whose painted cheeks and hollow glaring eyes tell how rapidly goes on the work of disease and death”.

Even without the racial complications, sex itself was heating up in urban centers. A new cohort of single, wage-earning women were supplementing their income by selling sex and; by the end of the 1840s, prostitution was poised to become the next great moral panic. And, with “every house a brothel and every brothel a hell”, according to Methodist reformer Lewis M. Pease Five Points was ground zero. The prostitution in Five Points was legal, out in the open, and one of the chief attractions for those who liked to go slumming in the area. Aside from solicitation in the streets and in grog-shops, there was a plethora of brothels, and many of the “dance halls” resembled modern-day strip clubs. Those with more refined tastes could head over to places like the second floor of Monroe Hall to check out the “tableaux vivants” or *poses plastiques*—living statue reenactments of iconic scenes from literature, classic paintings, and history—but peopled with “model artists”, or, more simply, naked women.¹

¹ For further reading on this, check out *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* by Christine Stansell.

THEATRE ROYAL, BIRMINGHAM.
PELL'S SERENADERS
AND
BOZ'S JUBA
✦ **POSITIVELY THE LAST 2 NIGHTS.** ✦
THIS EVENING, THURSDAY, DEC. 21, 1848,
BENEFIT OF BOZ'S JUBA.
TO-MORROW EVENING, FRIDAY,
BENEFIT OF G. W. PELL



Figure 2 – From Juba's British tour.



Foster's books contain character sketches of "sluttishly-dressed" women, whose voices once "rang" and eyes once "flashed", but became deadened by a life of vice. Foster loved respectability-to-ruin tales of women who had been tempted into affairs with rakes, then abandoned and left to a life of wretched poverty. The fact that the city's most dazzling attractions, such as Niblo's Garden, the Crystal Palace, and the modern boulevard, Broadway—all also featured in Foster's stories—were so close to Five Points only made the stories of fallen women more scintillating. Many writers of that era delighted in teasing out the "moral geography" of the city, where a lurid demi-monde teemed under the surface, invisible from Broadway but lurking only steps away from respectable entertainments. Of course, that was something plenty of wealthy gentlemen who frequented this red light district already knew. Danger was always looming *just* around the corner, and, for the fashionable young men and women of the upper classes who stepped out for some fun at the lively oyster cellars and brilliant saloons, the threat of their impending descent into misery was outlined in Foster's darker chapters: "A Night Ramble" or "The Golden Gates of Hell". Here, formerly respectable bankers and businessmen who had taken their first drinks in splendid hotels wound up dissolute and bankrupt, drinking at Crown's Grocery across from Cow Bay.

There, wrote Foster, shelves were lined with casks of "rum, whisky, brandy, and all sorts of cordials", served across a "long, low, black counter, armed at either end with bottles of poisoned fire-water, doled out at three cents a glass to the loafers and bloated women who frequent the place". Many worried over the fact that owners of the 250-some liquor groceries in Five Points were doing pretty well for themselves by applying a 500 percent markup, a point that Foster repeatedly makes in his description of immigrant businesses. And the victims of the licentious



lifestyle weren't just the fallen women and bankrupt rakes, but also their "deformed" and "idiotic" offspring. Foster's daguerreotype-influenced sketches were cautionary tales to be sure, but they also expressed the deep ambivalence many had about life in the modern city. New York was, to some, the pinnacle of human society; to others, it was the scene of America's regression from a noble "race" of idealists into drunken animalism.

This ambivalence was, of course, exacerbated by another fearsome group in Five Points, the new wave of Irish Catholic immigrants who were, by many, considered a threat to the American way. The newcomers were frequently dehumanized and denigrated in cartoons that depicted them as ape-like. As a result of this new-found prejudice, the term "Scots-Irish" gained prominence in the rest of the country, so that second-generation Irish Protestant families could differentiate themselves from the influx of these recent arrivals.



Figure 3 – A disparaging depiction of the Irish settler.

On top of everything else, Five Points was located in a swampy sinkhole of a neighborhood that was built on the site of one of America's first environmental disasters. Once a wealthy and respectable district, Collect Pond, the freshwater source for the area, was destroyed by pollution from tanneries and abattoirs. The contaminated pond was drained, but a botched landfill job left the area a muddy disaster, which added to the perception that the moral squalor grew out of the muck and grime. Between the occasional cholera outbreak, the era's intolerant ideas about race and religion, the endemic poverty, and the terrain itself, Five Points became a poignant symbol of degeneration, something that undermined a defining characteristic of America—the belief in progress.

At the center of all of this was the grog-shop and grocery, such as Five Points' Crown's Grocery, with its poisoned liquor selling for pennies a glass. From the reformers' perspective, alcohol was the common thread that seemed to connect all of these separate vices. So, beginning in the 1830s, reformers, particularly in the Northeast, ramped up their campaign against the urban dram shops, focusing on those that catered to the poor, the Catholics, and recent immigrants—in some cases, all three at once. Unlike the swank hotel bars and new breed of fancy saloons that catered to the rich, groceries were identified as the root of all evil, and were used as a justification for the "No License" votes that were meant to turn wet towns and counties dry.

Popular support was strongest in upstate New York, where many regions opted to go dry. The area was one of several stomping grounds for a cluster of associations of idealists working on a number of progressive reforms with complicated relationships to one another. These reforms included women's



Figure 4 – There were many versions similar to The Tree of Intemperance (Currier and Ives, 1849) in which “Brandy” and “Rum” lead to branches of “Disease” and “Misery”—but this one also features a violent scene spilling out of a liquor grocery.

rights, Indian (Native American) rights, Methodist conversion, the abolition of capital punishment, and an end to the institution of slavery.

(Stop here for a moment and try to fathom the ambitious nature of any one of these goals. These reformers didn’t just pray, preach, and write pamphlets, they broke laws and risked their lives by engaging in radical political action, including the establishment of safe houses and routes to help fugitive slaves escape. These days, we consider it a small moral victory if we manage to buy a fair-trade coffee in the morning.)

Unlike reform-minded upstate New York, Manhattan had little interest in temperance. Although reform had some support from the local branch of the anti-immigrant Know-Nothing political party (also known as The American Party or the Native American Party) plus those in more moderate camps, such as New-York Tribune publisher Horace Greeley, much of the rest of the city, instead of worrying about temperance, was getting caught up in the beginning of the “golden age of drinking”. New York was also growing at an alarming rate, with the number of English, German, and Irish immigrants nearly tripling in two decades—from 300,000 in 1840 to over 800,000 by 1860. This helped give rise to the Know-Nothings, an upstart party that challenged the existing two-party system dominated by the Democrats and the Whigs (the latter, itself, relatively new and sparked by opposition to Andrew Jackson in 1833). Not only was the saloon the first stop for many newcomers looking for work and housing, grog-shops would continue to act as community centers where people would gather to exchange news and information. Not to mention the fact that, for many immigrants, opening a grog-shop or liquor grocery would have been one of the only entry-level business prospects open to them—the

Nineteenth-century equivalent of convenience stores—and one of the only alternatives to a life of wage labor.

But none of this would have mattered to the grog-shop’s Whig and Know-Nothing opponents, who were only too aware that the bar-room served multiple purposes. In fact, from the point of view of some temperance societies, these other uses for the grog-shop were probably the most dangerous things about them. In the 1852 Annual Report of the American Temperance Union, for example, the

author complained about the “operation of intoxicating liquors upon our elections”.

“First, the caucus is held in a grog shop... there the rum-seller nominates a candidate and the rum drinkers ratify it. Then, if a delegate goes to a convention, that is held in the grog-shop. And then, the election! Nine chances in ten, this is held in the grog-shop, with rum-drinking, smoking and swearing.”

The fact that the grog-shop was a place where politicians (especially Democrats) could campaign and buy thirsty voters was one of the major factors involved in nudging temperance over the line from fringe to mainstream. “Local option” (to vote a town or county dry) became an increasingly popular vote in towns dotted all over the United States.

As those who have traveled through Kentucky know perfectly well, though, a dry county isn’t such a terrible hardship, since there’s plenty of liquor just two towns over. But in 1851, Maine residents changed the game by voting the entire state dry. Buoyed by the support of the Know-Nothings, more than a third of the existing 31 states—Maine, obviously, but also Delaware, Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, Ohio, Vermont, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Indiana, Iowa, and even Texas—would follow suit and implement their own versions of a “Maine Law” to hamper the sale of alcohol. Given population density, this meant half of all Americans lived in a dry state at some point. Texas, admittedly, allowed alcohol, so long as it was sold in quart-sized containers. So it seems everything really is bigger in Texas, including moderation.

Although Maine Laws had broad support and reflected the wishes of the majority of the electorate in the 13 states in which they were implemented, most



Figure 5 – The Seven Stages of the Office Seeker, by Edward Williams Clay. This 1852 satire of New York politics shows how the saloon was used by politicians. Stage One: “He proves to thirsty loafers he’s the man, / And drowns their judgment in the flowing can.”

were also hotly contested and did not pass easily. To some, they were evidence of the “tyranny of the majority”, and the manifestation of the greatest fears of Founding Fathers like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, who were, from the start, concerned that democratic rule would trample on inalienable rights. To others, though, Maine Laws were nothing less than the logical extension of Manifest Destiny. How could America be a shining city upon a hill if its citizens were drunk and deprived?²

In New York, this argument began in earnest in 1853, when Whig party member Myron H. Clark introduced a bill in the state legislature that proposed making the sale of alcohol illegal as of July 4, 1854. That specific date, Independence Day, was meant to remind everybody that the law was in keeping with the original goals of the utopian republic. While the debate over the constitutionality of the law was taking place in Albany, the state capital, temperance supporters were busy flooding the country with propaganda. Greeley, the *New-York Tribune* publisher, did his part by sending his agricultural reporter, Solon Robinson, back into the neighborhood George Foster had previously mined for sensationalism, and Robinson pointedly chronicled the ravages of alcohol in Five Points.

Robinson called on Reverend Lewis M. Pease, who introduced the writer to the victims of alcohol in Five Points. In 1853, the paper ran a story about “Wild Maggie”, a tale of resistance and redemption involving a sassy, orphaned girl who was initially hostile to Pease, despite his efforts to help her. Tribune readers were thrilled to follow Margaret Reagan’s transformation and, eventually, her move to the countryside, where she was adopted into a wholesome new life.

² For further reading on this, try Kyle G. Volk’s *Moral Minorities and the Making of American Democracy*.



Figure 6 – Uncle Sam’s Youngest Son, Citizen Know-Nothing. 1854. Library of Congress.



Figure 7 – Know-Nothing Soap advertisement. 1854. Library of Congress. The Know-Nothing Party identified as “Native” Americans who objected to immigrants, even though they were mostly second- or third-generation immigrants who were increasingly taking over the land once inhabited by actual Native Americans.

The story was so well received that Robinson went back to Pease to collect more morally instructive tales from the area. These were assembled into *Hot Corn*, a book that took its name from the cries of the children who hawked...well, hot corn on the streets to earn a few pennies for their drunken, undeserving mothers. Pease’s stock went up. Significantly.

None of this is to suggest Pease wasn’t worthy of beatification. He was a remarkable character who seems to have lived his religion, not merely preached it. He must have understood how the hopelessness that stemmed from poverty would undermine any attempts at reform. In response, he risked (and, ultimately, lost) his position with the Ladies’ Home Missionary Society by helping establish the House of Industry, where Five Points denizens learned skills and secured employment. By establishing the possibility of a brighter future, Pease gave some residents a reason to reform. It’s worth noting that he funded much of the shortfalls out of his own pocket and that his system anticipated many aspects of the modern welfare system.³

If Pease was the hero, *Hot Corn*’s villains were also clear. These would be the grog-shop, liquor grocery and saloon, all equally accountable. Although the groggeries that catered to Irish and German immigrants fueled much of the initial energies directed towards prohibition, Solon Robinson didn’t just take aim at dives. Little Katy, one of the “delicate little girls” who sold hot corn to support a “drunken mother”, might have been subsidizing the “bad man” at the corner grocery with her meager earnings, but, Robinson conjectured,

³ To learn more about Five Points and Pease, read Tyler Anbinder’s book, *Five Points: The Nineteenth-Century Neighborhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World’s Most Notorious Slum*





"HOT CORN! HERE'S YOUR NICE HOT CORN!"

Figure 8 – Illustration from *Hot Corn* — *Life Scenes in New York Illustrated*, including the story of little Katy Madalin, the bag-picker's daughter.

her mother's first glass had been taken in a "fashionable saloon" or "first-class liquor-selling hotel". The rabbit-hole from Broadway to vice- and poverty-ridden Five Points was easy to fall down but to Robinson, there was actually no difference between the grog-shops and the "palatial splendors" of the "metropolitan saloons" on Broadway. In fact, their proximity to one another only illuminated the connection between the two:

“*...as I turned the corner of Spring street, the glare and splendor of a thousand gas lights, and the glittering cut glass of that, for the first time lighted-up, bar-room of the Prescott House—so lauded by the press for its magnificence—dashes our eyes and blinds our senses, till we are almost ready to agree, that first class hotels must have such Five Point denizen-making appurtenances, as this glittering room, shamelessly, invitingly open to the street; when that watch-word cry, like the pibroch's startling peal, came up from the near vicinity, wailing like a lost spirit on the midnight air—*"Hot corn, hot corn!—here's your nice hot corn—smoking hot—hot—hot corn."

Okay, so maybe the book isn't exactly an exercise in literary excellence. And if it seems surprising such a blatant and clumsy piece of propaganda as *Hot Corn* should sell so well, consider it in the context of other best sellers of the day. This would be a list that omitted *Moby-Dick*, *Leaves of Grass*, and *Walden*, but included *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the lesser-known *The Wide, Wide World* and *Ten Nights in a Bar Room*—all three novels of moral instruction with strong temperance messages. People didn't just read them, either; they were adapted for stage and performed all over the country, making these stories as



well-known and popular as any contemporary blockbuster. When people weren't attending temperance plays, they might pay to hear orators like John Gough speak on "The Dangers of Moderate Drinking". Gough, a *mostly* reformed drunkard, was one of the most successful orators of his time, delivering nearly 10,000 temperance lectures, all well-attended despite scandals resulting from his occasional slips. These included one notorious spree in 1845 that discovered him in a Five Points brothel. It didn't hurt his career much, since the country was insatiably hungry for instructive and inspirational literature akin to the modern self-help genre. Instead of being narrowly aimed at individual self-improvement, though, this literature aimed to heal the entire country. It was also enormously profitable.

Hot Corn fit in well with the genre, and, while it was hardly the only piece of temperance literature that held Lewis Pease up as a paragon of virtue while vilifying the grog-shops of Five Points, it was some of the most far-reaching. The one person it didn't seem to reach, though, was New York Governor Horatio Seymour, who had the most power in deciding the fate of Myron Clark's 1853 prohibition proposal that was being debated in Albany and in public discourse. Seymour vetoed the bill on April 3, 1854, three months before it was to take effect. The governor, a "soft" Democrat, said it was unconstitutional; *The Tribune's* Greeley said the governor had been pressured by New York City liquor interests.

That might have been the end of that story, but Clark wasn't about to take no for an answer. First, he tried to pass the bill over the veto, but couldn't manage to rally the support of two-thirds of the legislature. Undeterred, he decided to run for governor himself. And won. His first order of business? To introduce



Figure 9 – Temperance, But No Maine-Law 1854. Library of Congress. By Augustus Fay. Satire of "temperance" supporters like Fernando Wood (said to be the man in the hat shaking hands) quaffing drinks and engaging in a range of bad behaviors.

a new law prohibiting the sale of alcohol to replace the previously vetoed one. The Maine Law debate resumed but, this time, Clark's new law was pushed through quickly. And on April 9, 1855, New York State went dry.

Well, sort of. Almost all New Yorkers simply ignored the law. If any of Manhattan's 5,500 bars were charged with breaking this law, there doesn't seem to be any record. With saloon owner Matthew Brennan acting as a police captain, it's hard to imagine that many of the saloons in the Sixth Ward were penalized for selling liquor. Support for grog didn't end with the police, either. With ex-saloon owner Mayor Fernando Wood at the helm of city government, non-compliance went straight to the top, where Wood's stalwart refusal to enforce prohibition is said to have been the stance that won him the eternal support of the Dead Rabbit gang.

Those New York City "liquor interests" hadn't given up, either. They were merely waiting for an arrest, since there were a number of grounds on which the law could be contested, namely, a lack of provision for due process and a lack of respect for private property. With nobody enforcing the law in Manhattan, it was beginning to look as if it was going to be quite the wait for a test case. It eventually did happen, though, in Buffalo, where saloon owner James Wynehamer was arrested for selling liquor. His appeal, granted in March 1856, established that he had not been tried by a jury of his peers and that the liquor (which he had apparently bought *before* the statute had become law), was private property and, therefore, his inalienable right to sell it. The law was overturned.

Manhattan's immigrant population must have celebrated heartily, since some 2,000 of them were directly employed in liquor sales, distillation, or brewing. For them, the repeal of the law was very much about the right to earn

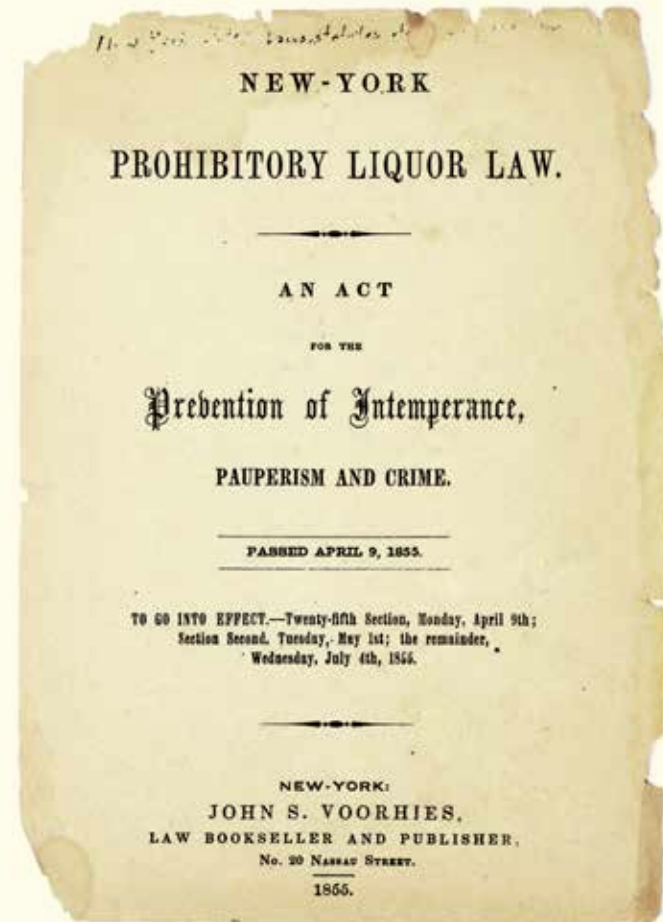


Figure 10 – Myron H. Clark wasted little time getting this law passed once he became governor.

T H E

LIQUOR DEALER'S RIGHTS.

Air—"Wait for the Wagon."

Come, all you loyal freemen, wherever you may be,
Just listen to the lines I write, and with me you'll agree,
It's of a tyrant liquor law, as you may understand,
But good liquor was ordained above for the use of man.

CHORUS.

Liberty Forever,
Liberty Forever,
Liberty Forever,
For Freemen we are all!

It was in our State Capitol the deciding vote was cast,
That on the Fourth day of July we could not sell a glass.
These Maine Law men in Albany together did combine,
Did impose for violation, imprisonment and fine.
Liberty Forever, &c.

This law was first invented up in the State of Maine,
And they who did propose it must have been insane.
To our glorious constitution we mean to stand till death,
The man who will infringe on it has reason for to fret.
Liberty Forever, &c.

On the day of our Independence this law will take effect,
To trample down our freedom, what we never did expect,
As the Father of our Country did grant to each and all,
That on that day each one should say, FREEMEN WE ARE ALL.
Liberty Forever, &c.

If this is our freedom which I do here explain,
For vending of the liquors which in our stores remain;
Our houses to be searched, and our property consumed,
As murderers and burglars we are taken to the tombs.
Liberty Forever, &c.

Now all you friends of Liberty, rally for your cause,
Washington, our hero, did frame and make our laws,
And by his laws, which are our guide, forever we shall stand.
The fanatics who oppose us shall be driven from our land.
Liberty Forever, &c.

Andrews, Printer, 38 Chatham St., N. Y., Dealer in Songs & Toy
Books. Motto Verses, &c., Wholesale and Retail.

a living. On the other side of the fence, both the Whigs and Know-Nothings were devastated and once the divisive slavery issue started to splinter already weakened political allegiances, both parties were doomed. "Bleeding Kansas", the eruption of violence over slavery in the Kansas/Missouri border towns from 1854 to 1861, signaled the seeming inevitability of the Civil War, and reformers channeled most of their efforts into the most urgent problem—stopping the expansion of the "peculiar institution" of slavery.

Myron H. Clark's party, the Whigs, might have been decimated by political disputes over temperance and other hot issues, but he emerged relatively unscathed and went on to become a prominent man in the new Republican Party, a party championed by the *New-York Tribune* under Greeley's direction.

The Democrats, meanwhile, were diminished as a result of their own internal strife but in New York City, under the command of the newly-elected mayor Fernando Wood, it was the dawn of a new, more cynical era. Wood had played all sides, getting support from "hard" Democrats, "soft" Democrats, and even from the anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic, prohibitionist, nativist Know-Nothing supporters—a bizarre coalition of unlikely bedfellows. Wood's election in 1854 marked the end of the "federal era" of New York's history and the beginning of Tammany Hall control, an era dominated by saloon-based campaigns, gang violence, and the consolidation of political support in bars—pretty much the reformers' worst nightmare about the grog-shops come true, with a vengeance. Although Tammany owned municipal politics, Wood's hold on the city was tenuous and controversial. A protracted feud between Wood and the Republicans in Albany led to one of the most infamous civil uprisings in

Figure 11 – Those opposed to prohibition invoked notions of personal liberty. Image found in Kyle G. Volk's *Moral Minorities and the Making of American Democracy*.



New York's history—the two-day Dead Rabbits Riot that, starting on July 4, 1857, saw massive gang brawls, businesses looted, untold injuries, and eight people killed.

Wood ultimately wound up serving in Congress.

And Lewis M. Pease? A few years after the end of the Civil War, he moved from New York to Asheville, North Carolina, where he established four schools for the poor and the children of recently freed slaves. And Five Points soldiered on without him. Pease was hardly the last reformer to hit the streets there, nor was Greeley the last sensationalist to chronicle the squalor to make a political point. Muckraking pioneering photojournalist Jacob Riis would expose the horrors of tenement housing in his 1890 book, *How the Other Half Lives*, a reform-minded attempt to raise awareness of urban poverty. And Herbert Asbury successfully kept the notoriety of the neighborhood alive, writing exaggerated accounts of the vice and crime of the area in his infamous *Gangs of New York*. Between George Foster, Solon Robinson, Riis, Asbury, and a handful of others, Five Points' reputation as a squalid, vice-ridden hell-hole seemed impossible to shake, even in the face of archeological evidence that contradicted popular lore. Excavations in the 1990s turned up artifacts suggesting that, while the area certainly played host to more than its fair share of brothels and groggeries, it was also lived in by plenty of average, perfectly respectable, working-class families.

The reputation of Five Points would forever be tarnished by that battle to make the state dry. But the city, overall, fared better. New York would not only survive that prohibition, it would become known for fostering the bars that were the face of the “golden age of drinking” and the central birthplace of the American cocktail. And it still has no shortage of bars—some average, some fine, and some of the best in the world.

God bless them, every one.



Figure 12 – The Great Republican Reform Party, Calling on their Candidate. Louis Maurer, 1856. Library of Congress. On the left, the temperance man says: “The first thing we want, is a law making the use of Tobacco, Animal food, and Lager-bier a Capital Crime.”





Figure 13 – Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, July 18, 1857. “View from the ‘Dead Rabbit’ barricade in Bayard Street, taken at the height of the battle by our own artist, who, as spectator, was present at the fight.”



CHRISTINE SISMONDO

*Christine Sismondo believes just about everything interesting that ever happened in America started in a bar. From dives to swank lounges—and everything in between—bars are the spaces where people meet, fall in love and make plans to change the world. And this is the point Sismondo makes in her love letter to the local, *America Walks into a Bar: A Spirited History of Taverns and Saloons, Speakeasies and Grog-Shops*.*

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David Wondrich and Christine Sismondo.

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