“Children in Misery” or Young Crusaders?: The Political Utilization of Children by the Women’s Christians Temperance Union
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This paper discusses the Women’s Christian Temperance Union’s use of children for political purposes during their fight for Prohibition. In an effort to sympathize their mission and to create a sense of urgency around the banning of alcohol, members of the WCTU created an image of children as victims in their propaganda. However, the WCTU understood the importance of creating future voters, and so often created propaganda that presented children as active heroes. This conflicting portrayal of children showed that the WCTU used children as political tools and used such contrasting portrayals to reach a political goal rather than aptly represent children of alcoholic families. To understand this relationship between the WCTU and children, I analyzed posters created by the WCTU that present children as victims of alcohol and then content produced directly for children by the WCTU.

Key Words: History, anthropology, women, children, alcohol, Women’s Christian Temperance Union, Prohibition.
The Women’s Christian Temperance Union (further referred to as the WCTU) utilized children in their challenge against alcohol and their fight for Prohibition. Throughout the political activism of the WCTU, this group uses children in their propaganda to promote an alcohol-free society. However, an examination of the culture, specifically the propaganda, produced by the WCTU paints a conflicting picture: while some of the propaganda produced by the WCTU depicts children as vulnerable and endangered, other propaganda shows children as responsible and autonomous. Looking at this conflicting message presents a confusing story of alcoholism in the late 1800s/early 1900s. Which representation portrays an accurate account of children within alcoholic families during this time period and place? Examining the evidence, it is clear that the WCTU did not attempt to portray children in an accurate way, but rather used the image of children to achieve their political goals, manifesting through two polar portrayals of children in their propaganda.

Bringing children into the equation of politics created a sense of urgency surrounding the situation: the WCTU argued that the family, specifically children, was at risk from alcoholic parents and utilized the child’s status as vulnerable to further their political cause. Comparatively, children represented the future and a valuable part of future voting populations. Children had some autonomy in their homes and the WCTU hoped the temperance of children would transfer to their parents. The WCTU used children in a dual fashion, presenting them to extremes in an effort to utilize their platform to the fullest extent. This paper seeks to merge the history of childhood with the history of temperance through an understanding of how children were portrayed in the culture produced by the WCTU. To accomplish this, this paper will take a
specific look at educational practices and the employment of children as both victims of alcohol and heroes in the fight against its use.

**Historiography**

The historical literature of the U.S. in the 19th century sorely underrepresents children, and that which specifically relates to Prohibition is no different. Historians of childhood attempt to understand the experience of children and how their culture viewed them; such an aim represents a difficult task, as children leave little to no historical data in their own words. However, other groups surrounding children leave more evidence, with women and families providing valuable historical data that give insight into the history of childhood. As such, past research surrounding the history of childhood is predominantly embedded in women’s history and family history. Understanding how political groups viewed children includes examining publications of specific social groups, women during this time period, and social views of the family. The Women’s Christian Temperance Union represents a historically valuable political group with a fair amount of literature outlining their agenda and the ways in which their rhetoric shaped cultural norms and values.

Historians of Prohibition leave children out of the historical record nearly completely. In the 1950s, historians believed WWI caused Prohibition. Historians such as Richard Hofstadter, in his book, *the Age of Reform*, look at Prohibition as a byproduct of WWI reform and refuse to recognize the historical impact that this legislation made.¹ Scholars in the 1960s view the Progressive Movement as a main factor in the fight for Prohibition and focus heavily on its failings, leaving children out of the literature nearly completely. Social issues resulting from

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alcohol abuse needed to be fixed and temperance groups responded to such issues by understanding the progressive nature of humanity and striving towards something better. One such historian is Joseph Timberlake, in his book, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920*, which finds Prohibition rooted intrinsically in the Progressive movement and aids scholars in understanding the ways such ideology led to Prohibition, rather than seeing it as a random mistake.²

Historians in the 1970s focus heavily on the causes of Prohibition, finding explanations predominantly in alcohol abuse. Historians hypothesize that groups acted out of both a Progressive framework, in an attempt to better society, as well as a real threat of alcohol abuse. Such abuse occurred as a result of alcohol surplus, saloons, and occurred at a time where alcohol was increasingly medicalized. Historians such as Jack Blocker, in his book *Alcohol, Reform, and Society: The Liquor Question in Social Context*, provides many explanations for temperance and Prohibition outside of just Progressive era motives.³ Leading into the 1980s, historians such as Thomas Pegram, in his book *Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800-1933*, focus on Prohibition as morality enforced by government and ties it to the national political structure of today.⁴ Jean-Charles Sournia, in *A History of Alcoholism*, touches on the role that women played through the WCTU, yet ignores the fact that children motivated this group to seek legislation.⁵ In Daniel Okrents, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*, he discusses Mary

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Hunt and her focus on childhood education, but writes mainly on the WCTU as a whole. Philip Pauly in his article, “The Struggle for Ignorance about Alcohol: American Physiologists, Wilbur Olin Atwater, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union,” studies Mary Hunt and her interaction with the medical world, yet focuses more on medical history rather than the history of childhood. As these examples demonstrate, children are predominantly embedded in literature on women and the family, lacking focus on children as a group.

Childhood history also fails to address children in interaction with alcohol. The study of childhood began in 1962, with the publication of Philip Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, which argues that the concept of childhood is a recent development. Aries argues that until the 20th century, families and communities thought of children as small adults. Though Aries brought the history of childhood into existence in the 1960s, the discipline developed in response to his ideas predominantly in the 1970s with counters to Aries’ theory of childhood. Rather than viewing childhood as a stagnant stage in life, historians rather see childhood as an active stage of life where children are formed and shaped. Historians such as DeMause analyze childhood as a complex and shifting stage in life, as seen in his work, “*The History of Childhood: the Untold Story of Child Abuse*” where DeMause discusses the stages of childhood through the lens of child abuse.

The development of gender theory in the 1990s led to an in-depth examination of childhood as a stage in life: historians began to explore alternative views of children in the

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9Ibid
historical record. For example, Shulamith Shahar, in *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, counters Aries’ idea that children were simply small adults and shows how families did value their children.\(^{11}\)* Other historians recognize the respective treatment of children throughout time, such as Hugh Cunningham, who examines the development of the social category of “childhood” in Western society.\(^{12}\)* The subdiscipline of childhood history developed significantly in the 1990s, yet failed to focus literature on the interaction between children and alcohol: authors focus on the daily life of children and how they were viewed without writing on children in relation to alcohol. Additionally, this literature focuses predominantly on European history.\(^{13}\)* Though children and alcohol emerge in sociological and scientific texts, the historical literature of children in the United States in the 19th century ignores children as impacted by alcohol. Jacqueline Rainier's book, *From Virtue to Character: American Childhood, 1775-1850*, looks extensively at the spirituality, education, and experience of U.S. children without discussing the impact of alcohol in their lives.\(^{14}\)* Karin Calvert’s *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900*, discusses the changing experience of children and the material culture they leave behind but again does not touch on the topic of alcohol.\(^{15}\)*

Histories of the WCTU focus heavily on the legislation the WCTU created and how this contributes to women's history. However, in focusing predominantly on women, authors often


underrepresent children as political agents in this moment. Early historiography focuses predominantly on legislation and suffrage. W.J. Rorabaugh, in his book, *The Alcohol Republic: An American Tradition*, focuses on the WCTU on the legislative level rather than understanding them more holistically as a group that sought to spark social change on a local level. Another example of this is Andrew Sinclair, *The Better Half: The Emancipation of the American Woman*, which again, focuses primarily on social groups as exclusively working towards suffrage and legislation as a cure to immoral social behavior rather than understanding it as a localized effort. Gradually, historians shifted to understanding groups like the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union outside of suffrage and legislation, such as Barbara Leslie Epstein, in her book, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelicalism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America*, which looks at cultural factors and how women altered their view of men and of themselves during this movement and time period. Jack Blocker, in *American Temperance Movement: Cycles of Reform*, focuses a chapter of his book on the WCTU and the motivation of protection for the family, yet left out the role that specifically children played in motivating these women.

In terms of literature on the rhetoric of the WCTU, historians look at women’s oratory without bringing children into the equation. Historians have written on Francis Willard, the President of the WCTU, and her background of oratory, such as Amy Slagell’s 1992 dissertation, 

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“A Good Woman Speaking Well: The Oratory of Frances E. Willard.”

Another example is Carolyn DeSwarte Giffords, “Writing Out My Heart”: The Journal of Frances E. Willard. Others, such as Jack Blocker and Janet Giele write of the language employed by the WCTU, yet leave out how these women used children as a powerful rhetoric tool in their fight for Prohibition. Women's temperance rhetoric promoted progressive ideals in a traditional manner in an effort to appeal to many different groups. Carol Mattingly’s book, Well Tempered Women: Nineteenth Century Temperance Rhetoric, gives valuable and extensive insight into the rhetoric of the WCTU, showing how progressive and effective their ways of reaching the public were. Her book focuses on specific women, and then on how the rhetoric was received by the public, only briefly touching on rhetoric involving children. Another one of her writings, an article titled, “Woman-tempered Rhetoric: Public Presentation and the WCTU,” looks at the methods created by administration in the WCTU and does mention children, though it focuses more on how children became involved, not how children were utilized as an instrument in such rhetoric.

Literature on childhood interaction with the WCTU is scarce and lies in educational studies, as most of the primary documents from the WCTU are educational transcripts. Nancy Sheehan’s work on the WCTU’s educational strategies centers in Canada and covers how

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temperance was instituted into schools. Sharon Cook also studies Canadian history and the ways in which the WCTU used education as a way to promote Prohibition. Jonathan Zimmerman, in "'The Queen of the Lobby': Mary Hunt, Scientific Temperance, and the Dilemma of Democratic Education in America, 1879-1906," looks at education in schools and specifically at scientific temperance through the work of Mary Hunt. Norton Mezvinsky, in his article, "Scientific Temperance Instructions in Schools," gives a history of childhood education and Mary Hunt, yet again, through an educational lens. Each of these sources provides valuable insight yet lacks a historical focus on the way children were utilized as political instruments by the WCTU. The aim of this paper is to fill in the gap between childhood history and the history of alcoholism in the United States.

**History of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union**

Founded in 1874 in Ohio, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union sought to protect the unit of the family through the removal of the saloons and the repeal of alcohol. American women observed the growth of social problems in the years after the Civil War and credited alcohol as the root of such social problems that plagued society. Nancy Sheenan comments on this belief concerning social problems, stating, “Believing that alcohol abuse was the cause of

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unemployment, disease, sex work, poverty, violence against women and children, and immorality, the WCTU campaigned for the legal Prohibition of all alcoholic beverages.²⁸ Fundamentally, these women believed such social issues disrupted the ultimate unit of the family and prohibited social growth. The years of 1873-4 marked a shift in the way these white, middle class, Christian women viewed themselves in relation to the supposed evils of alcohol and the saloon: women united in direct action for change and embarked on the Woman's Crusade.

The Woman’s Crusade of 1873-4 represented all the political power women held at that time, manifesting in prayer, demonstrations, and hymn singing as public ways to spark social change. Though effectively closing saloons and gaining traction, the women involved in this movement understood the importance of unification and organization leading to the formal organization of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. The organization elected Annie Wittenmyer as president for the first five years and focused the energy and movement of the budding union on abstinence and education. In 1879, the organization elected Francis Willard President and through her guiding principle of “do everything” expanded their work into many new areas, including women’s suffrage and the moral reforms of prostitutes and prisons.

The WCTU focused women’s suffrage not in women’s rights, but in the protection of the home: with the vote, women could actively protect the private sphere of the home and the family. Willard began the “Home Protection” campaign, which argued the aforementioned point: women could enforce Prohibition through gaining the vote. Erin Mason argued that the Home Protection Ballot, “effectively appealed to women's fears of abuse by drunken husbands, without threatening traditional notions of family.”²⁹ In this way, women could stay within the realm of

the home while making a difference politically: they could remain in the gender norms of this
time and not threaten any cultural structures. In 1902, the WCTU successfully campaigned for
scientific temperance instruction legislation which was implemented in public schools across the
country. Throughout their work, the WCTU kept their focus on women, the home, and children,
centering their work around the protection of the family, with children specifically in mind.

The WCTU focused on the family in their political work. The members of the WCTU
believed that alcohol posed a serious threat to the family, focusing specifically on the protection
of women and children; such members believed that alcoholic fathers often injured the family
through physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and moral incompetence. The members of this
organization focused primarily on the social issues that would most injure the family, such as
alcoholic fathers giving a bad example to their children and abuse suffered at the hands of these
men. Part of this focus emerged from the lack of civil rights that these groups held: women and
children held essentially no political or legislative power and felt powerless in the rise of social
and moral issues in the late 1800s. This attention on the family is clear in the “Home Protection
Act,” previously mentioned, as a way to give women more power in the status of their homes. In
1877, Francis Willard focused on passing this ballot in the state of Illinois. This ballot would
allow women to vote with their husbands on the subject of local liquor licenses, giving women a
say about alcohol in their towns and homes. Speaking before the Illinois Senate on April 10,
1879, Willard stated, “we would like all who are to be affected in their homes and in their
happiness and in their personal property by these saloons, to have a voice in saying whether they
shall be among the institutions of the town in which they live.”30 After giving this address,

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30Francis Willard, “Address Before the Illinois Senate” (April 10, 1879).
Willard presented the petition containing over 170,000 names supporting this ballot. Though the ballot was denied, it exemplified the organizational power of the WCTU and their focus on families as a central motivation in their temperance movement.

The WCTU’s focus on alcohol emerged partly from the violence experienced by women in the home, specifically sexual violence. The women of the WCTU noticed a correlation between alcohol and both sexual and physical abuse. Alcohol sparked domestic violence and physically endangered the home as well as morally damaging this space. Eliza Daniel Stewart, a leader in the WCTU, focused her energy on dispelling violence in homes, raising awareness to this problem through temperance speeches: she emphasized the importance of what was thought to be a traditional and good family, and how the alcoholic father destroyed this. In Erin M. Masson’s article, “The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union 1874-1898: Combating Domestic Violence,” Masson summarizes Stewart’s outlook on domestic violence, stating, “(Stewart) … pointed to the harm inflicted on the wife: forced to work as a laborer to support her family, friendless and alone, and suffering from the stigma of being branded a drunkard's wife.”

One especially effective tactic of Eliza Stewart was the creation of a narrative, compiled of all the various stories Stewart had heard over the years that outlined the experience of a drunkard’s family and the damage on the family. The narrative stated, in fictional terms, yet with some truth, “Our clothing is so poor and scant that my children are no longer able to attend school, and if they were, the older ones are becoming unable to bear the taunts and jeers of the other more fortunate children, who call their father a drunkard, and them, drunkard's children.”

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32 Eliza Stewart, *Memories of the crusade*. (Columbus: Hubbard Press, 1888)
Stewart commented on her emotions towards the drunkard’s children, stating, “silent pondering of their little, burdened minds over it; . . . why their mamma is so sad and cries so much, and why their papa is not nice and manly, and does not love them like other men do their children.”

Stewart created many anecdotes and narratives such as these, which capitalized on the importance of protecting the home and the domestic sphere of women and children.

The protection of the family, particularly the youth, represented a main focus of the WCTU. Through the formation of organizations, the WCTU targeted youth as active political players and utilized their status as future voters and members of the familial unit. In 1895, the Loyal Temperance Legion officially joined the WCTU and promoted temperance in the youth of America. This group attempted to educate children on the dangers of alcohol and the benefits of temperance before they reach voting age. Alison Parker, in her article, “"Hearts Uplifted and Minds Refreshed": The Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Production of Pure Culture in the United States, 1880-1930,” coins the term, “pure culture,” arguing that the WCTU produced pure culture in an effort to produce pure children. Parker states, “Moral transformation of youth, activists argued, could only occur through the positive influence of a wholesome culture.”

The rhetoric surrounding children both targeted them as voters and utilized them as vulnerable members of the home. This organization capitalized on the role of children in the household and the political sphere, giving children autonomy both in the home and politics. Lucy E. Bailey, in her article on children’s activism in schoolbooks, comments on

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33Ibid
36Ibid, 136.
the role of children in the WCTU, stating, “the texts portray children as formidable weapons in the battle for a temperate society and temperate men: youthful male characters eschew alcohol with remarkable self-restraint and female characters coax men from their barstools with alluring visions of tidy homes.” From the years of 1880-1930, the Loyal Temperance Legion published a monthly magazine through the WCTU called the Young Crusader, which targeted children aged 6-12, with some articles geared towards young adults. The purpose of this magazine was to protect children against future alcoholism through temperance and morality. Children belonging to this league were expected to memorize anti-alcohol information and pledge to support temperance throughout their lives. The Loyal Temperance Legion focused predominantly on boys, encouraging them to step up and act as the men in their families and making temperance a central part of manliness.

Educational measures taken by the WCTU through the Scientific Temperance Instruction represented a large goal of this group. This temperance instruction utilized children as a way to promote the mission of Prohibition, capitalizing on their status as vulnerable units of the family in an effort to scare the population into enacting legislation. Education was presented to the school to impact the next generation of voters into promoting anti-alcohol legislation. Mary Hunt, the superintendent of the Scientific Temperance Instruction Department, played a main role in the creation of anti-alcohol textbooks that exclusively promoted complete abstinence in society. Hunt and other members involved in this project effectively lobbied to institute

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scientific temperance in every state by 1901. A huge focus of Hunt’s career was legislation to promote temperance education in schools, including the establishment of these textbooks into public school curriculums.

Hunt rejected the idea that alcohol could be used medicinally or in moderation and ignored scientific data that proved such points; rather, she promoted an abstinence only policy when shaping the voters of the future. Hunt desired to, “teach that alcohol is a dangerous and seductive poison; that fermentation turns beer and wine and cider from a food into poison; that a little liquor creates by its nature the appetite for more; and that degradation and crime result from alcohol.” Such “science” promoted by Hunt and the Scientific Temperance Instruction Department was not based in truth, but rather scare tactics. When observed by the Committee of Fifty, a group of scholars organized to analyze the impact of alcohol, they reported, “the text-books are written with a deliberate purpose to frighten the children, the younger the better, so thoroughly that they will avoid all contact with alcohol.” Not only did they hope to shape future voters, but hoped to reach the parents as voters as well. This agenda can be observed through the WCTU quote, “we have in embryo the future church, the future state, future society, and [we] may add future voters, who will we trust to be able to think and act on this question

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intelligently… we reach some homes and parents through these little ones.”

In an effort to utilize their platform, the WCTU used rhetoric as a political strategy to promote Prohibition. To be taken seriously in a political environment, Francis Willard realized the importance of teaching women rhetoric in a different manner from men. During this time, men represented the main group receiving rhetoric training and Willard recognized the need for specialized training for women. The rhetoric employed by the WCTU was weighted, practiced, and calculated to effectively execute their mission. Carol Mattingly comments on the importance of rhetoric in the WCTU, stating, “WCTU leaders were uniquely equipped to teach rhetorical skills. Among the best-educated women in the country, many of them had been university teachers, often of rhetoric, or were active in professions that allowed them to hone rhetorical strategies.”

Though the WCTU focused primarily on rhetoric in terms of public speaking, rhetoric was taught in writing as well. This resulted in the creation of textbooks that outlined concrete ways to communicate the mission of the WCTU, which Carol Mattingly discusses, “In addition, leaders created their own texts for women, many of them published by the WCTU's own publication house, and made them available as conveniently and inexpensively as possible… including Willard's `How to Conduct a Public Meeting.'”

Womanliness represented a large aspect of this rhetoric education. In order to appeal to their audience, Francis Willard encouraged women to capitalize on their womanliness and remain in the harsh gender stereotypes of the day: to be taken seriously, women could not act in

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46Ibid
ways associated with men, but had to act as feminine as possible. Willard is reported to have often stated, “Womanliness first-afterward what you will.” Such training limited women to act only as wives and mothers, shying away from any behavior which appeared masculine. This training transferred to other departments outside of public speaking: the propaganda placed in schools through the Scientific Education Federation represents another outlet for feminine rhetoric. Many posters that were produced by the Scientific Education Federation center around children and the family. Within their role as political activists, women stayed within the bounds of the home and centered their rhetoric around the protection of the family.

The WCTU employed scientific rhetoric in an effort to legitimize the negative impact of alcohol. WCTU members such as Julia Coleman recognized the power of science in the rhetoric surrounding alcohol and, as Mattingly states, “deliberately identified the temperance movement with the broad public interest in science, further establishing her authority and credibility.” Coleman wrote on how to conduct a scientific experiment in an effort to make science available to the ordinary person. Though the experiments do not appear to actually be rooted in science, it was an effective strategy to validate the significance and seriousness of their cause.

Members of the WCTU employed children in their rhetoric; the idea that children represented future voters motivated members of the WCTU to target children in their rhetoric and propaganda, resulting in the creation of The Loyal Temperance Legion and the Youth Temperance Council. This contrasting message surrounding children can be observed through the culture produced both by the Loyal Temperance Legion and the Department of Scientific Instruction, which give insight into the power of children as political tools in the WCTU.

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48 Ibid
The WCTU, through images, documents, textbooks, and song, attempted a multifaceted goal of temperance: to create sympathy for their own cause through the utilization of children, and to prevent children from voting in support of alcohol in future polls. The Department for Scientific Temperance Instruction appealed predominantly to the schools, but hoped their words would travel through the home to the parents and effectively frighten the entire family into voting for their cause or pursuing an alcohol free life. Proof of this exists in the culture created by the Department of Scientific Temperance Instruction, manifesting predominantly in posters and textbooks; such production represents a sustained and extreme effort on the part of Mary Hunt to utilize children and appeal to them in schools and the home. For the purpose of this paper, I focus predominantly on posters created by the Scientific Temperance Federation and compare this to the propaganda created by the Loyal Temperance Legion: the WCTU produced a surplus of literature and images to impress on voters the importance of abstinence.

Posters of the Scientific Temperance Federation

In 1913, the Scientific Temperance Federation published 52 posters that outlined the dangers of drinking, 22 of which utilized children in their rhetoric. For this paper, I focus on 6 of these posters to show how significantly the Scientific Temperance Federation utilized children and portrayed them as weak and in danger. The first example is the 1913 poster, “Children in Misery,” from Ohio as seen in Figure 1.49

This poster states, “Children in Misery. Parent’s Drink to Blame in at least Three Cases out of Every Four.” Already, the text alone portrays a sympathetic view of children: children are in misery, the majority of them are in this misery due to the drinking of their parents. The text

49Children in misery: parents’ drink to blame in at least three cases out of every four, 1913, Brown Digital Repository, https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29649/.
goes on to state, “75% due to alcohol,” then, “The child’s birth rights are: to be well born, to be well cared for, to be well trained. Drink spoils all three.” Below this text, the words are legitimized by the association: the statistics have been compiled by the Superintendent of Chicago’s Juvenile Protective Association through the work of the Scientific Temperance Federation. The words alone show a fear of drink. What is drinking causing- the misery of children. Though the text seems frightening, it raises a question of scientific truth behind these words: misery is hard to define, and it’s even harder to pinpoint its source. Child birthright, defined here as well born, well cared for and to be well

Figure 1: Children in misery: parents' drink to blame in at least three cases out of every four trained, each implies that a drinking parent is unable to provide these services to their children. Misery is hard to define, and it’s even harder to pinpoint its source. The poster clearly states that children of alcoholic parents will be poorly born, presumably born into low income houses without access to the resources of higher classes. “Well cared for” implies that children of drinking parents will be poorly taken care of, even neglected through their parent’s habits.
Finally, “well trained” shows that alcoholic parents lack the ability to teach their children properly, leading to illformed adults.

The image accompanying the text portrays a man with a book and an inkpot, holding a pen and making marks in his book, presumably concerning the children of drinking parents. Below him are 4 children split into two sections: three children stand on the left, in ratty clothing, while one stands on the left in slightly better condition. The children on the left represent the children whose parents have left them miserable, while the one on the right is the lucky one who is miserable due to other reasons. The entire poster conveys a sense of pity to its readers: the viewer already feels sympathy towards the innocent children in the poster, who are ragged and reported to be “in misery.” Seeing children in such misery is pitiable enough, yet the poster goes even further to show how alcoholic parents are the cause of this misery, making their misery unnecessary and inexcusable. The parents of these children actively place their offspring in a state of constant misery as a result of their alcoholism. Children represent an already vulnerable portion of humanity and to exploit them in this manner shows a tactic of the WCTU to spark pity among voters to vote their way in the polls.

Another poster from the Scientific Temperance Federation, titled, “Child Death Rate Higher in Drinkers’ Families,” (Figure 2), warns families of the danger of drinking, stating that child death rate is higher in families who drink.\textsuperscript{50} The text on the poster reads, “Child death rate higher in drinkers’ families,” an extreme conclusion to come to. Below these words, which are large and bold, images of graves and children rest above and below each other, with percentages next to the cartoons. The words beside the images tell the reader that abstaining parents only lose

\textsuperscript{50}\textit{Child Death Rate Higher in Drinkers’ Families}, 1913, Brown Digital Repository, https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29655/
13% of their children, moderately drinking parents lose 23% of their children, while parents who drink an immoderate amount lost 32% of their children. Again, these words accompany small cartoons of gravestones with a depiction of an angel and the word “baby” engraved on the stone. Below rest the corresponding cartoons of living children with corresponding percentages. They are all the same child, a small, well-dressed girl holding a teddy bear, progressively growing smaller on the page. Below these images rests a definition of the different kinds of drinkers, followed by the words, “Excessive death rate in drinking homes cost 2407 children their lives.” Acknowledgements and organizational support rest under this text. This poster follows a similar strain to the last one: children are in great danger and need to be protected, as alcoholic parents will, without a doubt, kill their children at huge rates as compared to sober parents. The onlooker's sympathy is piqued by the gravestones, reading “baby,” and emphasized by the angel, which portrays a sense of innocence and lack of culpability. Reading the poster, the reader is struck with a sense that these children did not deserve this fate, but that it was forced upon them by the drinking habits of their parents. In comparison, the child who lives in this cartoon is seen as a healthy and happy little girl, attainable by parents who stay sober and do not kill their children. Percentages solidify the validity of these texts: the percentages appear to rest
in scientific data and therefore are objective and true. As the percentages grow, so do the images, showing proportionally the impact of drinking on families: the graves get bigger as drinking increases and the children get smaller. This poster creates a sense of urgency and importance through the text and images, as it conveys that alcoholic parents are killing their children through their drinking habits. Children are dying through alcohol use and this gives the reader a significant reason to prevent drinking and to vote for Prohibition. The Scientific Temperance Federation directly links drinking and alcohol with the death of children: what person would fight for alcohol when the stakes are so high?

Another poster, “Drinkers Children Develop More Slowly” tells a similar story of guilt and fear, seen in Figure 3. As with many other posters, this piece of propaganda is based on “scientific” data: it depicts graphs that argue for the Prohibition of alcohol and for abstinence. In bold letters at the top of the page is written, “Drinkers Children Develop More Slowly,” with a graph underneath showing statistics of teeth growth within drinking vs non drinking families. According to this poster, children with alcoholic families physically grow slower than children in non-alcoholic homes. As with previous posters, the families are separated by those who abstain from

Figure 3: Drinkers' children developed more slowly

51Drinkers Children Develop More Slowly, 1913, Brown Digital Repository, https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29686/
alcohol, those who drink moderately, and those who drink immoderately. Those who abstain, as expected, have the highest percentage of children who “had cut teeth at eight months of age.” Those who drink moderately have a slightly lower percentage, and those who are categorized as “drinkers,” have the lowest rate of children who cut teeth at eight months.

Here, the health of the child is again at stake. Rather than be in danger of an alcoholic father or suffering from poverty, the drinking habits of the family impacts the child, in this case, an infant, so severely that their growth is severely and significantly stunted. The second graph ranks families in a similar way, this time basing growth and health around the average number of teeth cut at 8 months. As with the previous graph, families who abstain from drinking produce the healthiest children and those who drink prevent their children from developing properly. Fear of stagnating a child’s growth emanates from the poster. Those who continue drinking while they have children and a family run the risk of harming their children, the most vulnerable members of their family. As with the past few posters, the actual science behind the facts are debatable, yet convey a sense of guilt and fear sure to scare parents into abstinence.

The next poster, titled, “Drink cuts into support of the family,” focuses again on the alcoholic father and his impact on the family (Figure 4).52

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52 *Drink cuts into support of the family*, 1913, Brown Digital Repository, [https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29650/](https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29650/)
Rather than approach alcoholic fathers through the lens of health, this poster accuses them of financial incompetence. Once again in large, bold text, the words read, “Drink cuts into support of the family,” then, in smaller text, “of 352 Able Bodied men who failed to support their families…” followed by a picture graph surrounding the rest of the sentence, “243 were Drunkards. 69%.” 69% of the graph is black and the rest red, showing the scale of men whose drinking prevents the support of their families. Next, the text states how most charity conferences pinpoint intemperance as the main factor that a man would not be able to support his family. Here, the health and wellbeing of the child is not capitalized on as much as the incompetence of the father. The Scientific Federation views the main purpose of men is his ability to provide for his family and the inability to do so represents a severe lack of good character. Alcohol prohibits men from accomplishing his main purpose in life, making abstinence appear an attractive
alternative. Though the poster focuses on the incompetence of the father, his actions are the most significant in relation to the family: men who can not support their families are injuring children and women and therefore should abstain from alcohol. In this case, men’s alcoholism holds less weight when it impacts exclusively the individual. When alcohol begins to impact the family and children, it becomes a serious problem that needs attention. The idea here is that men spend their money on alcohol rather than the support of their families, with alcohol actively taking money away from children and women. With such a problem, abstinence and outlawing of alcohol becomes a bigger, more significant problem that requires tending to.

The next poster, “Drink Burdens Childhood,” portrays the burden of drink on the child: according to this poster, drink is nearly the primary contributor to the abuse or neglect of children (Figure 5).  

![Figure 5: Drink Burdens Childhood](https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29648/)

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53Drink Burdens Childhood, 1913, Brown Digital Repository,  
https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29648/
Similar to the other posters, the text implies that the drinking of parents or guardians cause significant emotional distress on children. The poster reads, “Drink burdens childhood,” in bold, large text. Underneath these words, the poster states, “children in black abused or neglected because of intemperance of parents or guardians. 45.8%.” Below these words are three rows of children, a small girl holding her face or sucking her thumb. Half of each row is painted black to signify the amount of children impacted negatively by the drinking habits of their parents. As with previous posters, the Scientific Temperance Federation employed science (or what they consider to be scientific) to back up their points, showing how 45.8% of children are burdened by drink, though this term appears vague and hard to define. The Federation gives statistics to back up their points, yet these statistics appear to be based on charity, as it mentions that 45 cents from every dollar given to charity is given to children in alcoholic homes, which appears difficult to validate. The poster makes one thing clear, however: intemperate parents and guardians are abusing and neglecting their children as a result of their drinking habits. Families who disregard abstinence put their children at risk of neglect and abuse. As vulnerable members of society who depend on their parents for their wellbeing, voters viewed children as in need of protection and assistance, which aided the goal of the Scientific Temperance Federation. The number of children on this poster emphasizes how many children are impacted by their parents drinking. Nearly half of the 24 children on the poster are painted black, showing how important it is to abstain from drinking: so many innocent and guiltless children are burdened by the drinking of their parents.
The WCTU emphasized education in their poster, “Wine Drinking School Children did Poorer School Work than Abstintees” (Figure 6).54

![Figure 6: Wine Drinking School Children did Poorer School Work than Abstainers.](https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29647/)

Figure 6: Wine Drinking School Children did Poorer School Work than Abstainers.

The title of this poster is written at the top of the board in large bold letters and targets the negative educational impact of alcohol on children. Situated in Italy, the poster accuses European children of drinking enough to damage their ability to receive an education. A histogram below the title of the poster visually demonstrates just how impactful drinking is on the mind of a child. Out of the children sampled in Italy, 462 children abstain from alcohol, 1516 drink wine occasionally, and 2021 drink one glass of wine every day. Similar to previously discussed posters, these words split the population into those who abstain, moderate drinkers, and drunkards, with a predictable route into who has the most life success. In these Italian children, those who abstain from any sort of drink obtained the highest marks in school. Italian children who drink only moderately receive predominantly fair marks. Predictably, Italian children who

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54 *Wine Drinking School Children did Poorer School Work than Abstintees*, 1913, Brown Digital Repository, [https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29647/](https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29647/)
drink a glass of wine received mostly fair and poor marks. Below this graph lie the words, “Wine, Beer, or other Alcoholic Drink are Harmful to Children,” warning the reader of the danger that occurs to a child’s education when alcohol is consumed. Rather than target the drinking of the parents in this poster, the WCTU condemned the drinking of the child as harmful. As the danger of drinking drives further than just the parents, the impact that parents may have on children increases. Alcoholic parents may pass their habit unto their children and create small alcoholics without the ability to learn. The bottom line driven home by the WCTU in this poster is that alcohol prevents children from learning. What kind of person would root for alcohol when the stakes are so high?

Another poster, “Defective children increased with alcoholization of fathers,” also emphasizes the health risks for children of alcoholic parents (Figure 7). Here, the federation specifically targets fathers negatively impacting the health of their children. In large, bold text, the words, “defective children increased with alcoholization of Fathers.” Directly below these words is the text, “among the defects were epilepsy, feeble-mindedness, and St. Vitus Dance.” Graphs follow the text, showing how

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55 Defective children increased with alcoholization of fathers, 1913, Brown Digital Repository, [https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:31063/](https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:31063/)
the rate of defective children increases as fathers drink more. Fathers are categorized as occasional drinkers, regular moderate drinkers, regular heavy drinkers and drunkards. As the rate of drinking increases, the percentages of defective children increases as well, going from 2.3% in occasional drinkers, all the way to 19% in drunkards. Below these graphs rests a final warning: “Alcoholism and defects of the brain and nerves go hand in hand.” While the past posters focused only on physical health, here, the stakes are even higher. The poster references epilepsy, feeble-mindedness, and St. Vitus Dance, all of which are associated with neurological conditions. The message clearly states that alcohol in fathers actually causes mental trauma in addition to physical harm. Children risk not only neglect, abuse, and physical stunting of growth from the habits of their parents, but even mental deficiencies from such habits. While past posters left the guilty parent vague, this poster directly accuses the father of alcoholism and states that this problem severely injures the child. The fear accompanying this poster lies in the impact on the physical and mental health of the child: fathers with alcohol harm their children in significant, permanent ways and need to abstain.

Though most posters focused on fathers in relation to alcohol, some focused on mothers who drank. The majority of the posters, when speaking of males and females, reference them by their status as a parent rather than their gender, showing the ties between alcohol and children used by the Scientific Temperance Federation: the fact that fathers and mothers drank excessively made a bigger impact on viewers rather than simply men and women drinking. Bringing children into the equation heightens the severity of the political climate. The following poster capitalized on women's status of mothers and their relation to children, titled, “Drinking
Mothers Lost more than Half their Babies” (Figure 8). Focusing once again on health, the poster reminds viewers of the dangers of alcohol with a clear message: women who drink inevitably kill their children, presumably through neglect or abuse. The top of the poster, in large, bold letters, reads, “Drinking mothers lost more than half their babies, sober mothers less than one-fourth.” As with previous posters, the federation compares drinking individuals with sober ones in a hierarchy and places individuals who abstain highest. The federation utilizes fear of child death in this poster, arguing that drinking mothers kill their babies at twice the rate of sober mothers. Two images rest below the text comparing sober mothers to drinking mothers. Dolls are lined up in these images, some of which are black to represent children killed by the habits of their mothers: in the first image, which represented drinking mothers, half of the dolls are black. In the second image, only a fourth of the dolls are black, giving a visual of how significant the difference between these two groups of mothers are. Seeing a visual representation of how many children died from the habits of their mothers is shocking and frightening; it gives the viewer a representation of just how many children will be

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56Drinking Mothers Lost more than Half their Babies, 1913, Brown Digital Repository, https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29664/
killed by their mothers if steps towards abstinence are not taken. Mentioned below is the credibility of the source, coming from a doctor’s work on alcoholism, though the extreme nature of this study seems questionable. Again, the text references vague statistics: the cause of death is unclear, as is the term “drinking mother.” The reader is unsure if these babies are born or unborn, yet the vague threat of child mortality sparks action.

Feeblemindedness was targeted yet again in the poster, “Hand in Hand” (Figure 9). This poster targets the fear surrounding impacting the mental wellbeing of children and the impact that alcohol might have on such mental health. This poster, again, in large, black, bold text reads, “Hand in Hand: Feeblemindedness, Alcoholism,” with small drawings of pointed hands connecting feeblemindedness and alcoholism. Below this text states, “More alcoholism found in parents of feebleminded than those of normal children.” Graphs follow these words, pie charts that outline the percentage of alcoholics who raise feebleminded children. The graphs are bold, in red and black, with a frightening message to convey: out of 250 feebleminded children, 41.6% had one or two alcoholic parents. This percentage is incredibly high.

Figure 9: Hand in Hand: Feeblemindedness, Alcoholism

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57 *Hand in Hand: Feeblemindedness, Alcoholism*, 1913, Brown Digital Repository, [https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:31204/](https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:31204/)*
as compared with the “normal children,” who, out of 100 children, only 17% had alcoholic parents. Below these words reads, “5 times as many feeble minded as normal children had alcoholic parents.” As with all these posters, the mark of several organizations validate the statistics that likely do not represent scientific reality. These staggering statistics, likely false, take root in the idea that feebleminded children are abnormal and that these children are less than normal children.” Ultimately, alcoholism represents nearly the sole leading cause for the state of feeblemindedness in children. Without alcoholism, as stated by the poster, nearly half of all children suffering from feeblemindedness would be cured from their mental wellbeing. Observing the graph makes this discovery significant: seeing just how many children are mentally disabled due to their parents alcoholism creates a situation of distress. Alcoholics not only abuse their children physically, but prevent them from developing mentally as well.

Figure 10: Drink Impaired Scholarship
Another poster, titled, “Drink Impaired Scholarship” touched again on the mental capacity of children who interact with alcohol (Figure 10). Rather than blame the parents of children who engage in drinking, this poster discusses the actual act of children who drink and is unusual in that it caters to children rather than adults. Most of the propaganda produced by the WCTU refers to parents rather than children, as their goal of producing such propaganda centered around legislation rather than individual practice: the WCTU wanted to stop individual consumption of alcohol by outlawing it and so focused more on voters who had power over legislation. In this poster, however, the audience are children who are considering drinking and attempts to prevent children from making the decision to drink. This specific poster states in large, bold letters, “Drink Impaired Scholarship,” and underneath gives the study presented in the poster: comparing children who drank and those who abstain from drinking in Vienna. The purpose of the poster gives a harsh and large consequence to drinking, arguing that drinking prevents children from performing well in school. Next, the poster gives the “scientific” evidence for this study and gives credit to their argument, showing that a doctor conducted research on children in Vienna, giving them either wine, beer or rum in wine to test how alcohol affected their grades. The findings are reported in graphs, which give the argument of the poster legitimacy and appear to be scientific. The graphs give the grades of children who abstained from drinking, those who drank occasionally, those who drank once a day, and those who drank twice a day. The finding reports, rather predictably, that children who abstained from drinking had highest grades and the lowest number of poor grades. Those who drank occasionally had middling grades, those children who drank once a day had low grades, and those children who

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[58] Drink Impaired Scholarship, 1913, Brown Digital Repository. [https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:31129/](https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:31129/)
drank twice a day had the lowest good grades and the highest low grades. The data reported in Figure 10 argues to children that they should avoid drinking as abstinence will aid them in their school work. On a larger scale, the poster argues that alcohol stalls mental development, that it prevents children from developing properly or succeeding in life.

The final poster attempts to argue their anti-alcohol agenda by bridging the gap between humans and animals, arguing that alcoholic dogs produce feebleminded puppies (Figure 11).[^59]

![Figure 11: Alcoholic dogs had more Feeble and Defective Puppies.](image)

This poster uses an example of a dog, who was given alcohol in a science experiment, to encourage parents, especially mothers, to avoid alcohol in an attempt to keep their children safe.

It shows a graph that shows dogs on either side of it, with those dogs who were given alcohol

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[^59]: *Alcoholic dogs had more Feeble and Defective Puppies*, 1913, Brown Digital Repository. [https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29694/](https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:29694/)
during their pregnancy having the most feeble and defective puppies. Through posters such as these, the WCTU attempted to scare mothers into avoiding alcohol during their pregnancy.

The WCTU utilizes every aspect of the child: their physical health, mental health, education, virtue, etc. Portraying the child of an alcoholic as in significant danger posed a threat to society and spurred political action. These 11 posters represent the common portrayal of children as vulnerable victims in their families.

**Loyal Temperance Union Propaganda**

Though the WCTU often utilized children as political tools through their vulnerability, they simultaneously treated children as autonomous members of the family with power to transform their alcoholic family and vote their way to an alcohol free society. This goal occurs predominantly in their organizations that targeted children, such as the Band of Hope and the Loyal Temperance Legion. To analyze this contrast, this paper looks at a range of primary documents produced by the Loyal Temperance Legion: 1 pledge children took when entering the legion, 2 articles from the WCTU’s monthly publication “Young Crusader,” and 1 song for Young Crusaders. The Loyal Temperance Legion targeted especially young boys and gave them large responsibilities that counter the picture of vulnerability and despair outlined in the posters mentioned above. The motto of this group was, “Tremble, King Alcohol, We Shall Grow Up!” emphasizing children’s role as political players and power.60

Induction into the organization began with a pledge to temperance, stating,

God helping me
I promise not to buy, drink, sell or give
Alcoholic liquors while I live
From all tobacco I’ll abstain

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And never take God’s name in vain.\textsuperscript{61} This pledge gives insight into the responsibilities placed on the child who entered the legion: to abstain from alcohol for life was expected and promised through this pledge, giving the children a type of autonomy that counters the victimhood displayed in the posters. Children are tasked with abstaining from alcohol and refraining from any support of liquor, a large responsibility for children.

The Loyal Temperance Legion published a monthly publication called the Young Crusader. The name of this publication shows the importance placed on children in the Loyal Temperance Union: children who chose abstinence gained autonomy and power through their choice and acted as tiny crusaders for the mission of temperance. In this publication, stories abound of children with autonomy and responsibilities in their home. One example is the “The Little Captain,” a tale from 1911 of an alcoholic man who ruins his own life and the life of his family through his alcoholism.\textsuperscript{62} The story begins by informing the reader of the family troubles: the father has ruined the family economically through his drinking, losing his job and abusing the family. His son, Jamie, however, represents a model of temperance and morality. Throughout the story, Jamie is responsible for the wellbeing of his family and suffers the consequences of his father’s drinking. After a series of alcoholic events, Jamie’s father squanders the entirety of the family’s money and Jamie’s mother is forced to sell the family clock. Outraged by this act, Jamie’s drunk father attempts to kill the mother; Jamie steps in and protects his own mother at the cost of his own life. As a martyr, Jamie saves the entire family from the drunken actions of his father and even makes his father realize the wrongness of his actions. Later in the story,


\textsuperscript{62}Lynde Palmer, “The Little Captain,” \textit{Young Crusader}, 2, April 1911.
Jamie’s father has completely overcome his alcoholism and recognizes Jamie’s role in his own conversion. He states, “Our little Jamie began a great work in that wretched lane, and no, many a poor creature, whom the world regarded as utterly lost, is bravely struggling back to life and hope.” Here, even his father recognizes the power and influence of his own child as a martyr and hero.

Compared with the stories of children in misery portrayed in other propaganda, Jamie shows intense autonomy: he has control over his family, over alcohol and even over his father. While the posters discussed in this paper portray children at the mercy of their alcoholic fathers, Jamie stands up to his father and cures his alcoholism. Rather than portrayed as victims, Jamie is the hero. This contrast illustrates the variety of ways that the WCTU utilized children in their political quest for Prohibition. Willard solidified this aspect of utilizing children, stating, “the great hopes of….temperance reform lies in the thorough training of the youths of the land.”

Again, rather than portray children as the WCTU often did, as victims, here, the children are given great responsibility and awarded autonomy as valuable members of the family and the political field.

Post repeal of Prohibition, the WCTU continued to fight against alcohol and continued to depict children as political figures. Another story from the Young Crusader in the 1930s portrays this portrayal. This publication from 1934 is titled, “Good Times and Bob,” and tells a story of peer influence in a young friend group. In this story, 3 young boys, Kenneth, Gerry, and Bob, are on their way to school when they pass a store selling beer; Kenneth comments on the sign by

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63Ibid, 3.
64Frances Willard, Women and Temperance. (Hartford:Park Publishing Co, 1883).
saying even though they are selling beer, he knows that beer is wrong as it hurts people. Gerry responds defensively by reminding Kenneth of Gerry’s uncle, who is a lawyer that supports beer as it is not as strong as the alcohol produced during Prohibition. Kenneth has no way to respond to Gerry’s claims, but is helped by Bob, a quiet boy who argues that alcohol, “‘taint bringin’ good time to our house.”

Bob shares the story of his family, sharing the alcoholism of his father. He tells his friends that his father recently got a good job, yet is squandering all the money on beer. While his father's alcoholism began with just a beer, it quickly consumed his life and siphoned money away from his wife and child, unable to provide even a bike for his son Bob. The other boys listen to Bob and sympathize, but Bob goes even further by educating the other boys on the danger of alcohol, reminding them that beer is intoxicating. He then gets very emotional as he remembers his father coming home drunk. After Bob finishes his story, Kenneth and Jerry recant their previous views on alcohol. Now, Kenneth understands why he was right to originally believe alcohol is wrong, and Gerry takes back his previous belief that beer is good. Bob has successfully convinced his friend group that beer is dangerous and leads to alcoholism.

This story portrays Bob with great authority and autonomy, acting as a powerful leader in his friend group. Despite his young age, Bob is able to convince his friends that alcohol is evil and that they should avoid beer at all costs; he is able to validate his authority through his personal encounters with alcohol and warn his friends to steer clear of this substance. Throughout this story, Bob successfully accomplishes his mission as a Young Crusader, namely, to bring others to a mutual conclusion about alcohol. Rather than portray children as powerless,

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66Ibid
here, Bob as a young person is able to lead his community towards an alcohol-free society. Despite the fact that Bob’s father is addicted to alcohol, Bob is able to take control of the situation when his parents are not. While Bob’s father remains addicted to alcohol and his mother powerless in this situation, Bob steps up and takes control in his own life, making the conscious decision to avoid alcohol in the future and to urge others to do the same. The story has a legislative tone, with Bob focusing on the fact that while law-makers feel as though the repeal of Prohibition brought good times back, he knows the truth and consequences of this legislation. Bob clearly represents a future political player; he steps into a powerful position of authority in his friend group. The WCTU portrayed children as small political players that were able to have an impact within their families and friend groups.

The WCTU produced a wide range of culture in an effort to reach as many voters and families as they could. Music represented another creation of the WCTU, many of which focused on children and was produced for their youth temperance groups. One such song from 1885, titled, “Song of the Young Crusaders,” focuses on children as future voters and as able membered contributors to the fight for Prohibition. The first verse states,

Oh, we are young Crusaders in the Army of the King!
We'll shout and sing for temperance, and we'll make the nation ring,
We fight for Home Protection and the battle we shall win.
The saloon shall surely go.\(^67\)

Here, in the first verse, the children are immediately identified as young crusaders fighting for God’s will in America. They are tasked with the job of promoting an alcohol-free society, through “shouting and singing for temperance,” and fighting for the Home Protection act. Through these children, the WCTU hoped that the saloon would be abolished in the U.S.

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Children have a big responsibility as stated in this song: they are given the task of fighting for legislative change and getting rid of the saloon. Verse 3 follows the same pattern, stating,

Oh, the rum-men think they'll beat us since high license won the day
But wait till we are voters and we'll have the right of way
We'll save the homes and children from the rum-fiend's awful sway
The saloon shall surely go.  

Once again, this song gives children the responsibility of changing legislation, targeting them specifically as political players. The song mentions how once children can vote, they will be able to change legislation and save the home from alcohol; children are strong, competent political players with both the power and autonomy to spark social change, a harsh contrast to the view of them in the other culture produced by the WCTU.

Conclusion

The WCTU utilized children in a number of different ways to further their political case, exaggerating the role of children and showing them in extreme positions to drive home the importance of their political agenda. Rather than represent an accurate depiction of childhood in an alcoholic home, the culture produced by the WCTU represents exaggerated political plays that utilize childhood politically. Such an agenda can be observed through the polar opposite culture produced by the WCTU. One version, as seen through the posters created by the Scientific Instruction Federation, portrays the child as a victim and incredibly vulnerable. This is seen through posters such as “Children in Misery,” which credits alcoholic parents with making their children miserable, or through the posters concerning feeblemindedness, which argue that alcoholic parents produce feebleminded children. Through this tactic, the WCTU planned to earn sympathy towards their political position and create a sense of urgency surrounding alcohol, as

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68Ibid
alcohol injured children. The other version, as seen through the culture created by the Loyal Temperance Legion, portrays the child as an autonomous figure in the household, with responsibilities and the ability to make a difference in their own future and the future of their family. The story of Jamie shows this, as Jamie is shown as a hero who is able to finally end his father’s alcoholism. Here, the WCTU attempted another approach, utilizing children as future voters and as able to have an impact on their parents. Children grew to be future drinkers or practitioners of temperance and the Loyal Temperance Legion attempted to capitalize on the autonomy of the child as a future voter and a valuable asset to hold in the family. The WCTU used children as a political tool in dual manners to reach their goal of abstinence without truly regarding the accurate experience of children living in an alcoholic home.
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