



Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center  
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

# There Has Always Been Drinking in America

*Alcohol, History, Culture, and What it all Means for  
Prevention*

Rodney A. Wambeam, PhD

Promoting A Healthier Wyoming!

September 18, 2019



National History Day 2017



# Colonial America

“It was an age that considered alcohol safer than water.”

-Historians, Mark Edward Lender and James Kirby Martin



“Prohibition, Episode 1, A Nation of Drunkards” (2011)

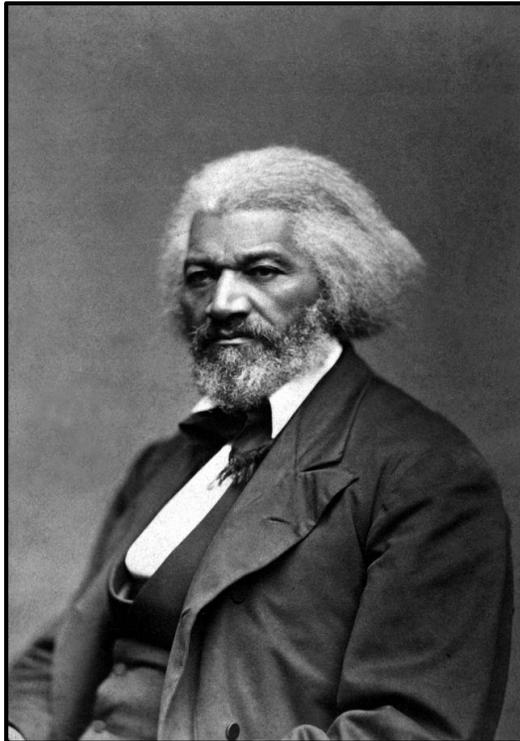
# Native Americans and the “Firewater Myth”

Local governments openly told their licensed trading agents to get the Indians as drunk as possible in order to wring the most out of them.



Drawing of the 1626 purchase of Manhattan from the Lenape (Popular Science Magazine, 1909)

# Slaves, the Exception



“So, when the holidays ended, we staggered up from the filth of our wallowing, took a long breath, and marched to the field, - feeling upon the whole, rather glad to go, from what our master had deceived us into believing was freedom, back to the arms of slavery.”

- Frederick Douglass



# Frontier America

“A house could not be raised, a field of wheat cut down, nor could there be a log rolling, a husking, a quilting, a wedding, or a funeral without the aid of alcohol.”

- Unknown Traveling Evangelist

# Social Standards vs. Individualism

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



John Wayne

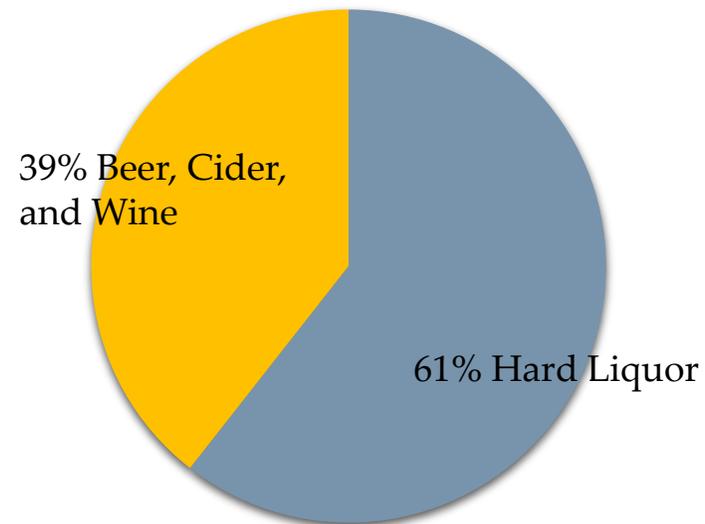
# From Beer to Spirits

By 1830...



The average American over the age of 15 drank the equivalent of 88 bottles of whiskey a year.

Americans spent more money on alcohol each year than the total expenditures of the federal government.





# Temperance

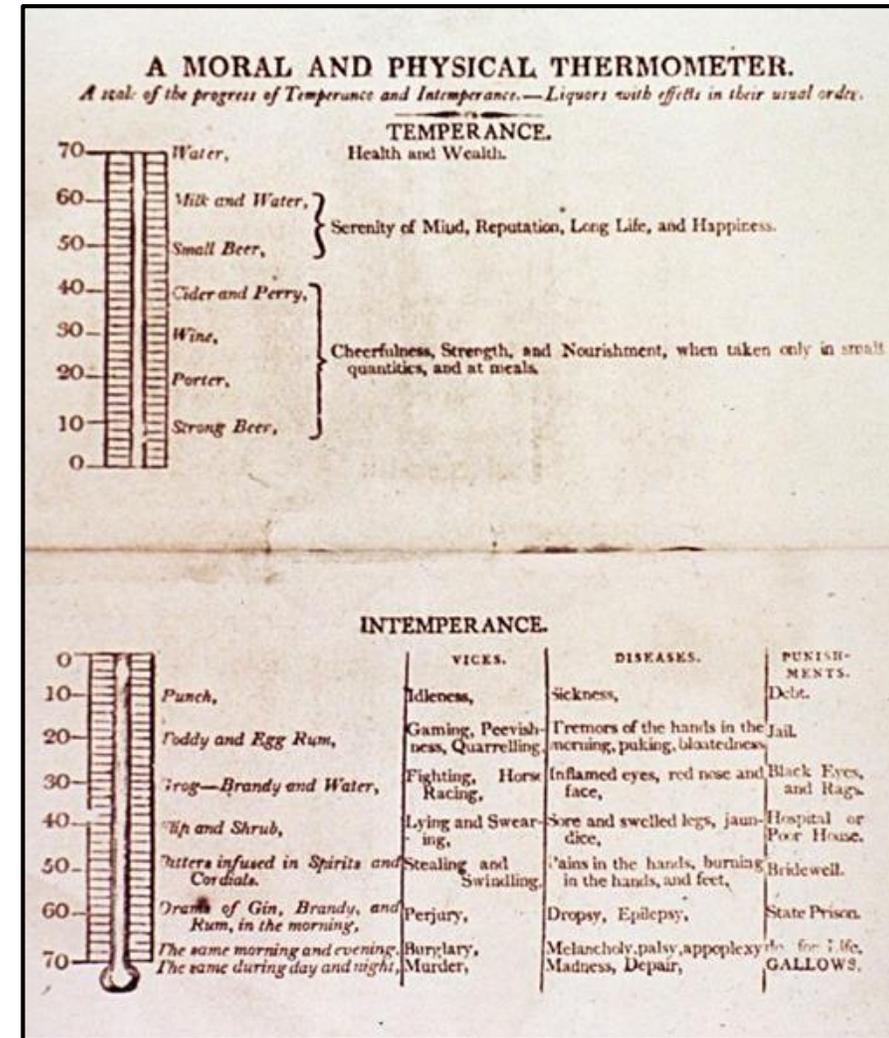
“Mothers and schools plant the seeds of nearly all the good and evil which exists in the world.”

- Dr. Benjamin Rush

# A Moral and Physical Thermometer

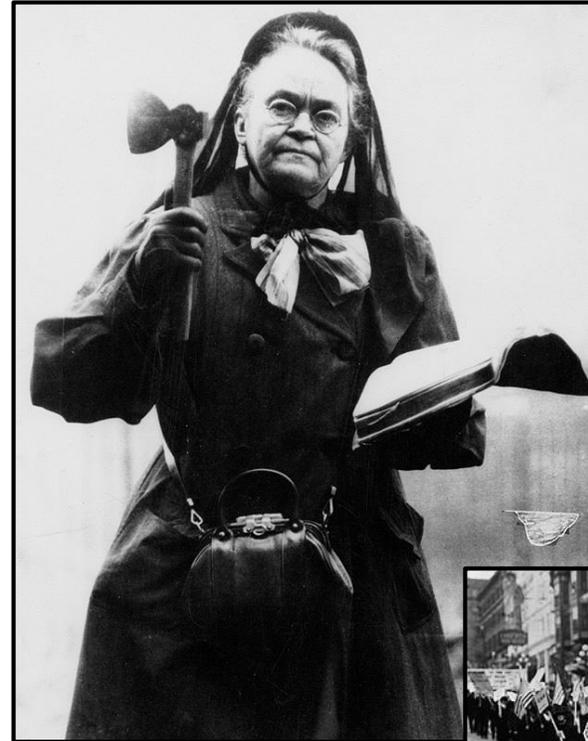
*An Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits on the Human Mind and Body*

- by Dr. Benjamin Rush (1784)



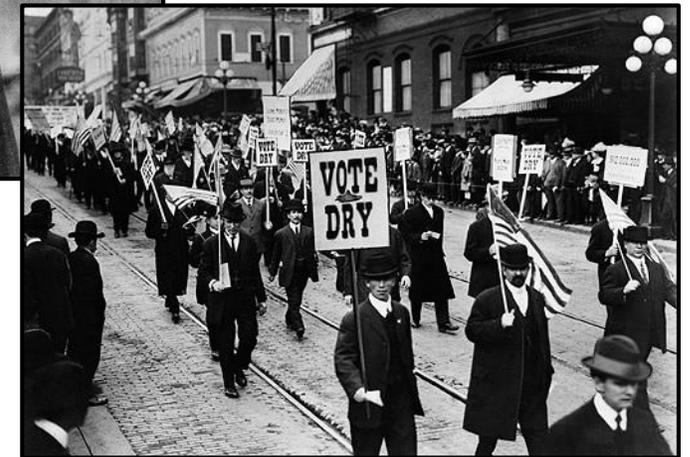
# The Dry Offensive

Woman's Christian Temperance Union

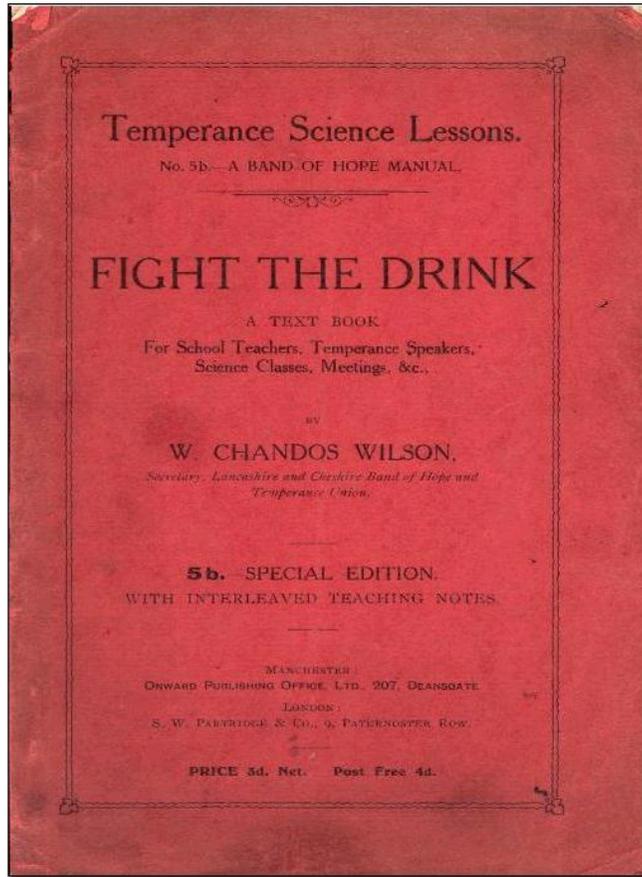


Carry Nation

Anti-Saloon League



# Scientific Temperance Instruction



“A thorough text-book study of Scientific Temperance in public schools as a preventive against intemperance.”

- Mary Hunt



# Immigration and Industrialization

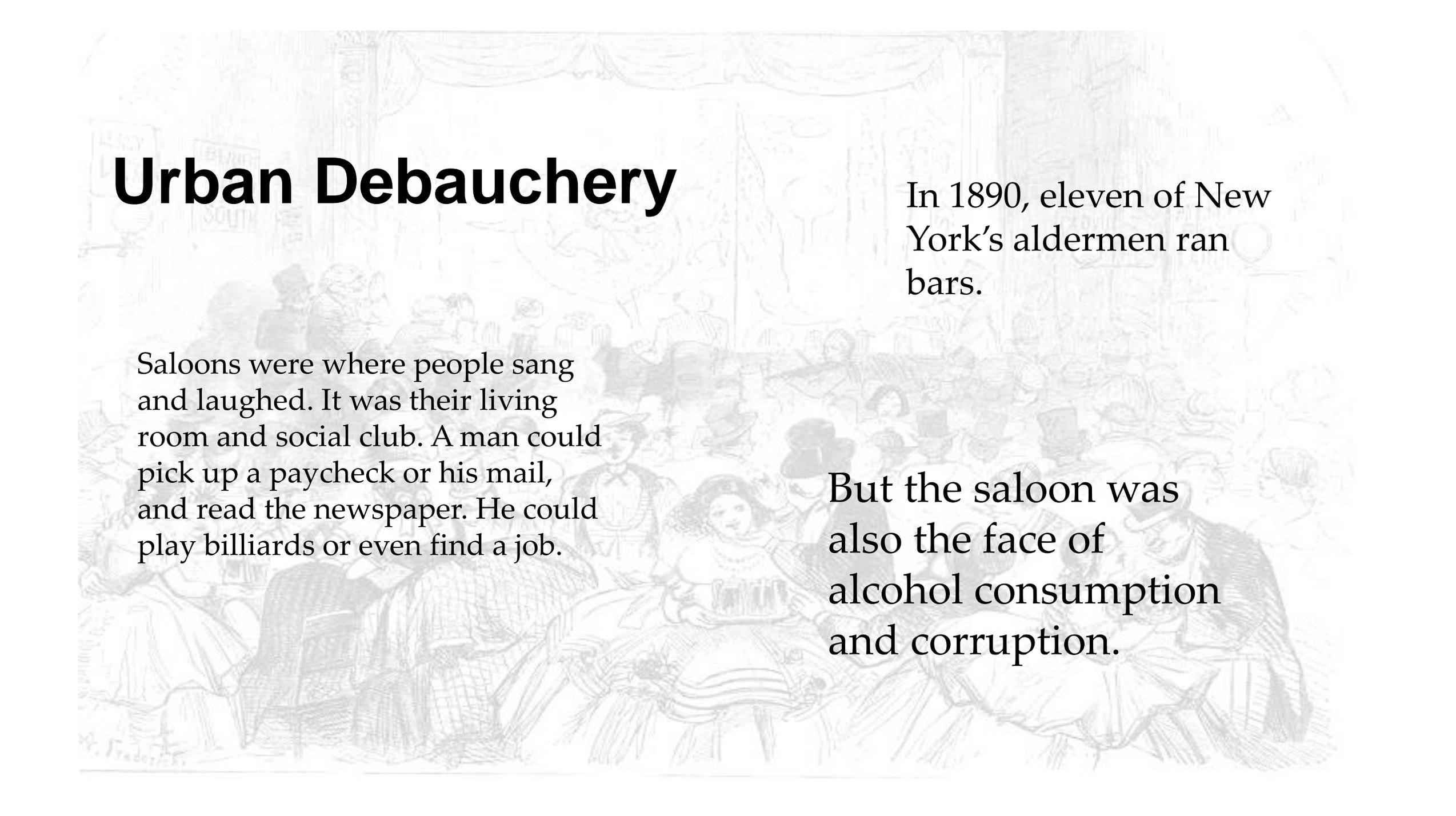
“Steadiness, thrift, and clear thinking were essential in an industrial world.”

- Historian, Richard D. Brown

# The Irish and Germans



# Urban Debauchery



Saloons were where people sang and laughed. It was their living room and social club. A man could pick up a paycheck or his mail, and read the newspaper. He could play billiards or even find a job.

In 1890, eleven of New York's aldermen ran bars.

But the saloon was also the face of alcohol consumption and corruption.



# Prohibition

“Once, during prohibition, I was forced to live for days on nothing but food and water.”

- W.C. Fields

# What if...?

- Alcohol-related death rates decreased from 14.8 to 7.1 per 100,000 people
- Urban wage earners spent \$2 billion less on alcohol
- Alcohol consumption rates dropped from 2.6 gallons to less than 1 gallon a year
- Hospital admissions for alcoholism and for alcohol-related psychoses declined
- Less urban poverty and fewer broken homes
- Drunkenness arrests and national cost for incarcerating public inebriates declined
- More wages flowed into savings accounts and spent on family necessities



# The Volstead Act

The 36<sup>th</sup> state ratifies the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution in January 1919, and Congress passes the National Prohibition Act (the Volstead Act), which begins implementation on January 20, 1920.



# Unintended Consequences

“Because to pass a law in a real world means nothing,  
to enforce the law means everything.”

- Historian, Noah Feldman



“Flaming Youth” (1923)



Al Capone

# The Return of the “Demon”



**On December 5, 1933, Utah voted to ratify the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the Constitution and FDR signed an official proclamation of repeal.**

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Acceptance of the Democratic Presidential Nomination (1932)



# Modern America

“Of course you are a rummy, but no more than most good writers are.”

- Ernest Hemingway to F. Scott Fitzgerald

# The New Consumer

5 good reasons why you'll want to see this  
**New FRIGIDAIRE COOLERS**

1 Cold-Wall door—world's most advanced refrigerator! Chills more food into the refrigerator with more food. Long fresh, long longer—measured!

2 3 Cold-Wall shelves—keep your food fresh longer!

3 Cold-Wall shelves—keep your food fresh longer!

4 Motor drive is the simplest, most reliable, most uniform ever built. Line has correct fan velocity, light bulb, door, seal, rollers. Backed by 5 Year Freezer Plan.

5 A Frigidaire Dealer is near you. See General Motors' Frigidaire Store. Learn why the "Cold War" is here. Learn why the Frigidaire Store is the place to go for Frigidaire. Frigidaire is a General Motors Corporation. Frigidaire is made in the U.S.A. Frigidaire is made in the U.S.A. Frigidaire is made in the U.S.A.

**You're twice as sure with two great names**  
**Frigidaire made only by General Motors**

REFRIGERATORS • ELECTRIC RANGES • WATER HEATERS • HOME FREEZERS • KITCHEN CABINETS • AUTOMATIC WASHERS • COMMERCIAL REFRIGERATION AND AIR CONDITIONING EQUIPMENT

You mix 'em ...  
but **Old Thompson**  
makes them

Smoother because it's...  
**WED-IN-THE-WOOD**

**OLD THOMPSON**  
BRAND  
A GLENMORE PRODUCT FROM OLD KENTUCKY

**Your New Hoover**

*"Easy Cleaning is its middle name!"*

Rolls like a doll buggy.  
Keeps rug colors fresh.  
Picks up dog hairs and lint in a jiffy.  
No stooping or straining because the Hoover "stands up to you."  
Easy to get out—easy to put away.  
Never before so much Hoover at so low a price.

Converts instantly, with a simple push of the hand, from rug cleaner to upright—cleaner for carpets, upholstery, lamp shades, bare floors and linoleum.

**THE HOOVER**  
It booms... as it sweeps... as it glides.

THE HOOVER COMPANY, NORTH CAROLINA, OHIO  
MILWAUKEE, CHICAGO, CANADA

Don't worry darling, you didn't burn the beer!

**Schlitz**

A real Adventure in Good Living...  
*Just the KISS of the hops*

Just to explore that famous flavor found only in Schlitz—mellow and smooth, with never a trace of harsh bitterness—is in itself a thrilling adventure wherever you may be.

America's Most Distinguished Beer

**Schlitz**

**THE BEER THAT MADE MILWAUKEE FAMOUS**

**Budweiser**  
Where there's Life...there's Bud.

THAT WONDERFUL TIME of the year is here; and for entertaining, nothing beats cold, golden Budweiser. Take home several Holiday Time cartoons.

Advertisements from the 1940s and 1950s

# The Rise of Movies, Radio, and Television



First on Screen Advertisement (1898)

Lucky Beer (1940's)



Angels with Dirty Faces (1938)

# Is Alcohol Funny or Tragic?

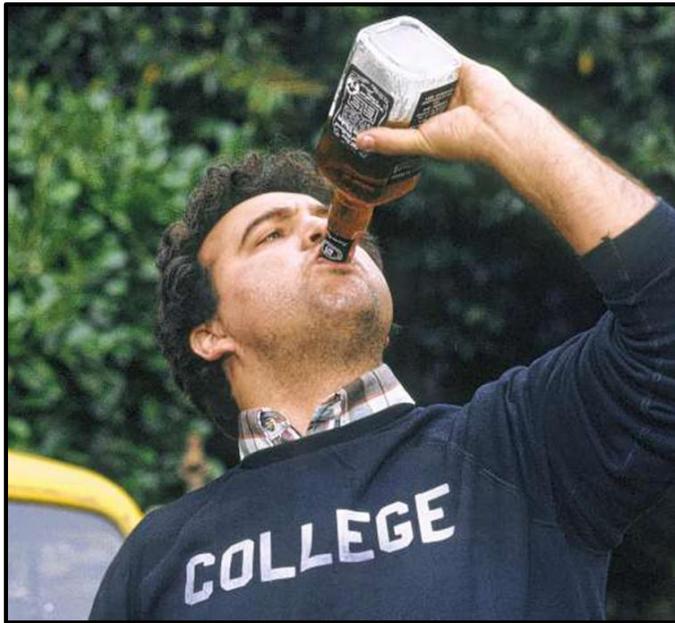


“One A.M.” (1916)



“Days of Wine and Roses” (1962)

# American Archetypes



“Animal House” (1978)

**An ideal or very typical example of a certain person or thing.**



# Postmodern America

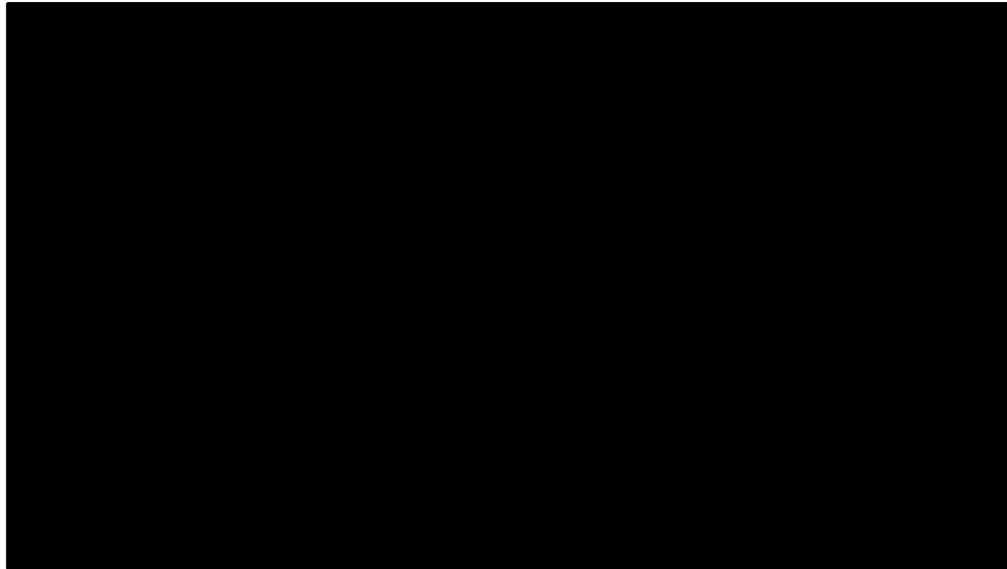
“Red solo cup, I fill you up, Let’s have a party.”

- Toby Keith

# What is Postmodernism?

A broad movement in reaction to modernism that encompasses the arts, architecture, philosophy, and criticism. Postmodernism rejects meta-narratives and the assumptions of enlightenment rationality.

# Pop Culture



“Flip Cup” with Margot Robbie  
The Tonight Show (2015)



“The Bachelor in Paradise” (2016)

# Women



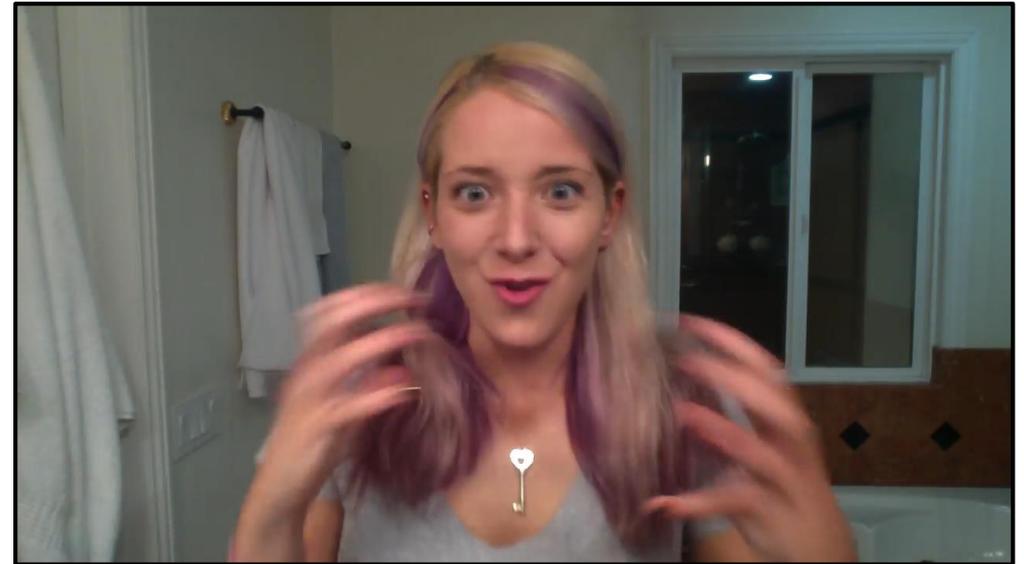
The most expensive part of having kids is all the wine you have to drink.



An advertisement for Mad Housewife wine. It features a woman's face in the foreground, looking thoughtful. Behind her are two bottles of wine: one labeled 'MAD HOUSEWIFE' and 'HOUSEWIFE'. The text reads: "Look, darling, I've had a Makeover!" and "MAD HOUSEWIFE. New look. Same great wine." The background has a sunburst pattern.

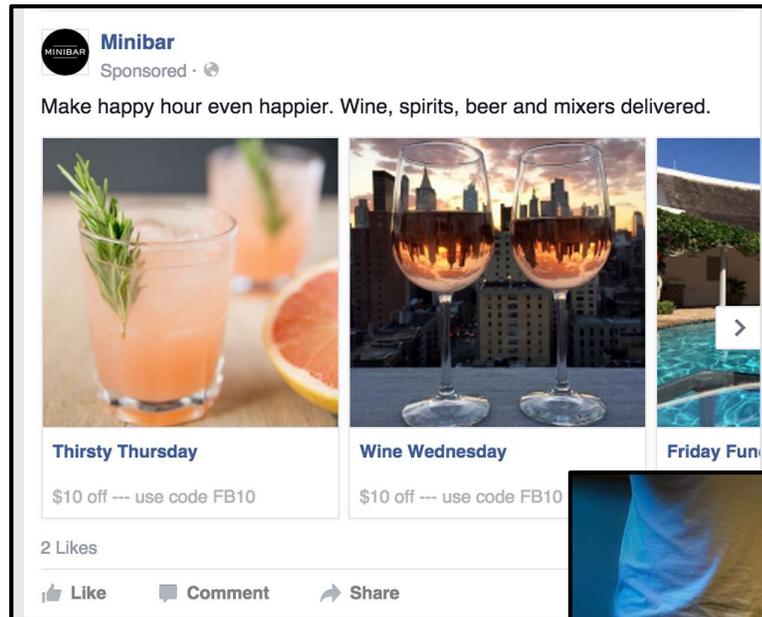
# The Digital Age

YouTube



“Drunk Makeup Tutorial”  
Jenna Marbles (2013)  
More than 23 million views

Facebook



Snapchat





# Conclusion

# Culture Matters

“Different societies not only have different sets of beliefs and rules about drinking, but they also show very different outcomes when people do drink...”

- D.B. Heath, *Sociocultural Variants in Alcoholism*



# Culture Can and Will Change



“Dazed and Confused” (1993)



# Thank You !

*Rodney A. Wambeam, PhD*

*rodney@uwyo.edu*

*307-760-8928*