

# How a Few Simple Things Changed History

Class 6

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## What We Will Cover Today

- The Impact of Tea
  - Consequences of Tea – Finish up this section
- The Impact of Rum
  - Origin & Spread of Rum consumption
  - Consequences of Rum
- The Impact of Whiskey
  - Whiskey & the Whiskey Rebellion
  - Whiskey & the Wild West
  - Whiskey & the Road to Prohibition

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## Consequences of Tea - 3

- Played a major role in touching off the American Revolution
  - Tea Act of 1773
  - Boston Tea Party
  - Continental Congress
  - Lexington & Concord
- Promoted the development of clipper ships
  - The profits of the tea trade fostered the development of faster sailing ships

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**Boston Tea Party** - In May 1773, the Tea Act came into effect, which imposed a duty of three pence per pound on all tea imported into America. This tax was intended to help the British East India Company through a flat patch of low prices, demonstrating once again that a London-based commercial organization carried more political clout than several million subjects on the other side of the Atlantic. Before it was singled out for a special duty, tea had been a popular drink in the colonies. However, as soon as tea was selected to carry duty, it became a symbol of oppression, and when three East India tea clippers arrived !! in Boston Harbor, the colonists resolved to take action. Notices were posted through the town to meet at the Green Dragon coffeehouse dressed as Indians. The Indians, went to the wharf, boarded the ships, and dumped 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor. The British countered this outrage with the Coercive Acts of 1774, which closed the port of Boston and filled the town with troops. Various Sons of Liberty, including Paul Revere, were dispatched posthaste to other colonies to inform them of the "rash, impolitic, and vindictive measures of the British Parliament." This led first to the convening of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia and later to the attempt of British troops to seize weapons and ammunitions stored at Concord – the event that led to the Battles of Lexington and Concord and the beginnings of the Revolutionary War.

**Clipper ships** - The American clipper ships, modeled after the finer hull lines of the swift privateers from the War of 1812, could make the run between New York and Canton in under a hundred days. In a matter of twenty years, these three factors—the end of Napoleon, the end of the East India Company's monopoly in China, and the entrance of the Americans into China shipping— accelerated the delivery of tea and revolutionized navigation under sail. The new ships, called tea clippers, were immediately recognizable by their long, low hulls that had a "fish head" stern hanging sharply over the water. They were square-rigged and triple-masted, "a perfect beauty to every nautical man," as one captain remarked. The tea clippers remain the fastest sailing ships in the world, in part because they were marvels of engineering and enterprise, and in part because there was never again a need for a big, fast sailing boat.

## The Opium War

- A major balance of payments problem between Britain and China
  - While Britain wanted tea and other products from China, China wanted very little from Britain
  - The one problem for which there was a potential demand in China was opium
    - Led to the illegal importation of opium into China

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**Balance of payments** - The only problem was that the Chinese merchants supplying the tea insisted on being paid in gold and silver bullion.<sup>95</sup> Since the only English goods to sell successfully on the Chinese market were chiming watches, clocks and music boxes, a serious trade deficit soon developed. In 1793 Lord Macauley went to China as ambassador, carrying samples of other British industrial goods, only to be told by Emperor Ch'ien Lung, "Strange and costly objects do not interest me. ... We possess all things. I set no value on strange and ingenious objects, and have no use for your country's manufactures." But some way to pay for the tea had to be found, because the deficit was hurting the British economy. The situation got steadily worse. Between 1761 and 1800 the British bought goods worth £34,000,000 in Canton (90 percent of it tea), but in return sold only £13,000,000 of British goods. For a while, sales of Indian cot-ton helped, but then in 1823 China began to produce her own. Fortunately for the British, who at the end of the eighteenth !! century were busy fighting a war with Napoleon<sup>96</sup> (and were therefore extremely short of bullion with which to buy tea), an alternative was at hand. In India there was one particular product used as an intoxicant by the aristocracy, taken by soldiers before battle to give them courage and consumed by many ordinary people simply to give them energy and endurance in their daily toil. The product in question was opium,<sup>97</sup> and the poppies from which it was extracted grew in profusion all over India (at this time controlled by the British).

**Opium** - In China the drug had been known for some time as a medicine but because of its addictive properties, its use was strictly controlled by the Chinese government. Imports were illegal, and the British East India Company (which had a trading monopoly) was warned that it would lose its trading privileges if it brought opium into the country. So the company simply found intermediaries to do the job. Sometimes they labeled their cargo "saltpeter," and sometimes they met offshore with Chinese smugglers who transferred the opium to their junks. Whatever the case, the British could plausibly deny their involvement. Early in the nineteenth century so much Indian opium was entering China that the earlier bullion drain had been reversed.

## The Opium War - 2

- Large scale opium imports led to:
  - Large-scale opium addiction (with its consequent addiction and social problems)
  - An outflow of silver stemming from a reversal of the balance of payments
  - A resulting decision by Chinese authorities to stop the opium trade by seizing opium imports
- Result: War between Britain & China

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**Origins of the Opium War** - Exports of opium to China increased 250-fold to reach 1,500 ton a year in 1830. Its sale produced enough silver to pay for Britain's tea; more than enough, indeed, since the value of China's opium imports exceeded those of its tea exports from 1828. The Chinese government's best efforts to stop the trade with new laws had little effect, since the Canton bureaucracy had been utterly corrupted. Eventually, in December 1838, the emperor sent Commissioner Lin Tze-su to Canton to put an end to the opium trade once and for all. The atmosphere was already highly charged when Lin arrived: Ever since the end of the company's monopoly in 1834, local officials had been bickering with the British government's representative about trade rules. Lin immediately ordered the Chinese merchants and their British associates to destroy their stocks of opium. They ignored him, since they had been given such orders before and had ignored them impunity. So Lin's men set fire to the stocks of opium, burning the entire year's supply. When the smugglers treated this as !! a temporary setback and resumed their business as usual, Lin arrested them, British and Chinese alike. Then, after two British sailors murdered a Chinese man in a brawl and the British authorities refused to hand them over, Lin expelled the British from Canton. This caused outrage in London, where representatives of the company and other British merchants had been putting pressure on the British government to force China to open itself up to wider trade, rather than forcing everything to pass through Can-ton. The volatile situation in Canton had to be addressed, the merchants argued, in the interests of free trade in general, and to protect the tea trade (and its associated opium trade) in particular. The government did not want to endorse the opium trade openly but instead took the position that China's internal ban on opium did not give Chinese officials the right to seize and destroy goods (that is, opium) belonging to British merchants. On the pretext of defending the right to free trade, war was declared

## The Opium War - 3

- The Opium War (1839-1842) resulted in a one-sided British victory
  - Chinese with medieval weapons were no match for British troops armed with state-of-the-art muskets
  - By mid-1842, British troops had seized Hong Kong, occupied Shanghai and several other cities, and took control of the major river deltas

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The Opium War of 1839-42 was short and one-sided, due to the superiority of European weapons, which came as a complete surprise to the Chinese. In the first skirmish alone, in July 1839, two British warships defeated twenty-nine Chinese ships. On land, the Chinese and their medieval weapons were no match for British troops armed with state-of-the-art muskets. By the middle of 1842 British troops had seized Hong Kong, taken control of the key river deltas, and occupied Shanghai and several other cities. The Chinese were forced to sign a peace treaty that granted Hong Kong to the British, opened five ports for the free trade of all goods, and required the payment of reparations to the British in silver, including compensation for the opium that had been destroyed by Commissioner Lin.

## The Opium War - 4

- War ended with the Treaty of Nanking (August 29, 1842)
  - Britain acquired Hong Kong
  - 5 Chinese ports (including Canton & Shanghai) opened to foreign merchants and missionaries
  - Chinese tariffs on imported goods limited to 5% ad valorem
  - China paid a £21,000,000 indemnity

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## The Opium War - 5

- The Opium War and the Treaty of Nanking
  - Greatly weakened the authority of the Manchu dynasty in China
  - The weakness and revealed military backwardness of China paved the way for subsequent European incursions
    - China became an arena in which Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, and the United States played out their imperial and commercial rivalries

## The Opium War - 6

- The Opium War and the Treaty of Nanking
  - Opened China's internal market to Western textiles and other manufactured goods
    - This undermined the economic position of China's poorer peasants and agricultural laborers

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Often lacking the land needed to grow the food to feed their families and buy needed items, poorer peasants and landless agricultural laborers earned their living by making and selling handicraft items on the side. Western manufactured imports undermined the handicraft economy, throwing many millions of rural Chinese into extreme poverty. This, in turn, led to many revolts and was instrumental (along with the Japanese invasion in 1937) in turning large sections of the Chinese peasantry toward support of the Communists, leading to the eventual triumph of the Communists in 1949.

## Consequences of Tea - 4

- Led Europeans to seek to break China's monopoly over tea production by developing tea cultivation elsewhere
  - A Scottish gardener, Robert Fortune, brought plant and seed samples to India, which marked the beginnings of the Indian tea industry
  - Fortune found out that Chinese green tea producers were adding Prussian blue and gypsum to green tea to make it look green
    - This led British consumers to begin drinking black tea in place of green tea

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**Royal Horticultural Society** - Founded in 1804 by John Wedgwood, Charles Darwin's maternal uncle, the Royal Horticultural Society was in the process of naming, describing, and classifying every plant according to the plant classification system of Linnaeus. No longer confined to China's southernmost coast, the Opium War gave Britain greater access to the areas where tea was cultivated and processed. If the manufacture of tea elsewhere was to be successful, Britain would need healthy specimens of the finest tea plants, seeds by the thousand, and the centuries-old knowledge of accomplished Chinese tea manufacturers. Acquiring the necessary plants, seeds, and knowledge required a plant hunter, a gardener, a thief, and a spy -- Robert Fortune was the man. Robert Fortune was a self-taught horticulturalist from the Scottish borderlands who had worked at the Botanic Garden in Edinburgh and later at the Royal Horticultural Society's gardens in Chiswick. Based upon his skills at cultivating Oriental ornamentals, he was the Royal Horticultural Society's first choice to be dispatched to explore China at the close of the First Opium War.

**Green Tea** - Fortune found out that the Chinese were adding "Prussian blue [iron ferrocyanide], a pigment used in paints" to the tea along with calcium sulfate dehydrate [gypsum], a common component of plaster. !! "At low doses, cyanide leads to weakness, giddiness, confusion, and light-headedness. Exposure to even low doses of cyanide over long periods of time can lead to permanent paralysis. Fortunately for the tea drinkers of Britain, Prussian blue is a complex molecule, so it is almost impossible to release the cyanide ion from it and the poison passes harmlessly through the body. ... Gypsum produces hydrogen sulfide gas as it breaks down. While the gas is produced naturally by the body in low doses, in high doses it acts as a broad-spectrum poison, affecting many of the body's systems simultaneously, particularly the nervous system. At lower concentrations, gypsum acts as an irritant; it reddens the eyes, inflames the throat, and causes nausea, shortness of breath, and fluid in the lungs. Consumed over the long term, it might produce fatigue, memory loss, headaches, irritability, and dizziness. It can even induce miscarriage in women, and failure to thrive in infants and children. Fortune estimated that more than half a pound of plaster and Prussian blue was included in every hundred pounds of tea being prepared. The average Londoner was believed to consume as much as one pound of tea per year, which meant that Chinese tea was effectively poisoning British consumers. The additives were not included maliciously, however, for the Chinese simply believed that foreigners wanted their green tea to *look* green

## Consequences of Tea - 5

- As a result of the acquisition by Europeans of Chinese tea plants, seeds, and knowledge, the Europeans were able to create tea cultivation industries in India, Java, Ceylon, and Africa
  - In 2008, the world's leading tea producers were China, India, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Vietnam, and Indonesia.
  - Turned India, the Middle East, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland into nations of tea drinkers

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**Indian Tea** - Starting around 1850, the British began growing tea in the Darjeeling Mountains. "Today, Darjeeling is considered the champagne of black teas. It has the finest brew, the most delicate floral nose, the richest liquor, and the most opulent amber color. At auction, Darjeeling teas fetch some of the highest prices in the world. Within a generation, India's nascent Himalayan tea industry would outstrip China's in quality, volume, and price.

**Tea consumption** - In the global ranking of tea consumption per capita, Britain's imperial influence is still clearly visible in the consumption patterns of its former colonies. Britain, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand are four of the top twelve tea-consuming countries, and the only Western nations in the top twelve: apart from Japan, the rest are Middle Eastern nations, where tea, like coffee, has benefited from the prohibition of alcoholic drinks. The United States, France, and Germany are much farther down the list, each consuming around a tenth of the amount of tea per head that is drunk in Britain or Ireland, and favoring coffee instead.

## Consequences of Tea Drinking

- Led to the decline of urban mortality rates
  - Drinking boiled water in the form of tea was safer than drinking polluted water
- Stimulated a demand for sugar
  - Having sugar with tea (a beverage drunk every day) stimulated an increased demand for sugar
- Gave rise to such social innovations as
  - Tea Time
  - Tea parties
  - Tea gardens

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**Mortality rates** - Demographers and doctors had long noticed a drop in the mortality rate as the taste for tea became increasingly popular. With the growth of cities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came a rise in levels of pollution and disease. Countries such as England, where tea was preferred to coffee that was steeped in hot but not boiling water, reaped immediate health benefits from their drinking habits because boiling water killed the microorganisms that spread contagion at close quarters. Even under normal circumstances London's drinking water was far from sanitary, owing to the density of the city's population and lack of proper waste removal. A nation of tea drinkers was more likely than one of coffee drinkers to survive the repeated infestations that were a product of the global economy of the Victorian era. Cholera, which had long plagued the Indian subcontinent, made its first appearance in England in the 1830s when infected sailors drinking water from ships' barrels filled in India, returned to their home port and spread the deadly bacteria through local sewers. By midcentury, cholera epidemics were repeatedly wiping out Londoners by the tens of thousands; the outbreak of 1848-49 alone claimed fifty thousand lives—all from drinking water.

**Sugar** - Sugar was another key commodity in the economy of Barbados, Jamaica, and the Virgin Islands. Britain had a glut of sugar, and tea gave Britain somewhere to dump it. Tea with sugar provided Britons with a convenient source of calories. The urbanization of Britain meant that the poor no longer had easy access to farm products, and while tea was not inherently nutritious, it could be drunk with milk, a protein, and sugar, a cheap and dense source of energy.

**Social innovations** - In addition to tea parties, there emerged tea gardens – the first of which was Vauxhall Gardens in 1732 – a park with lit walkways, bandstands, performers, and stalls selling food and drink. The appeal of tea gardens was that they provided an elegant, respectable public venue that was a good place to meet members of the opposite sex. Tea gardens were especially popular with women, who had always been excluded from coffeehouses, which were in decline by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.

## Consequences of Tea - 6

- Encouraged the French to build the Suez Canal to cut sailing/steaming distances between Europe and the areas of Asia where tea was grown

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Trade with the Far East became so valuable that the French undertook the building of the Suez Canal. Although clippers couldn't sail in the waterway—the Red Sea's winds were too challenging—a steamship could reach China in half the time of a clipper. With well-placed fueling stations, the journey to China and India grew ever easier. By 1869, when the Suez Canal was complete, all the improvements in navigation brought on by tea would become a thing of the past. The ambitions of the British merchant fleet could be fueled by reliable and steady coal, not fickle wind.

Rum

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## Distilled Liquors

- Brandy = an alcoholic beverage distilled from wine or fermented fruit juice
- Rum = an alcoholic beverage distilled from a fermented cane product (as molasses)
- Whiskey = a liquor distilled from fermented wort (as that obtained from rye, corn, or barley mash)
- Gin = a colorless alcoholic beverage made from distilled or redistilled neutral grain spirits flavored with juniper berries and aromatics (such as anise and caraway seeds)
- Vodka = a colorless liquor of neutral spirits distilled from a mash (as of rye or wheat)

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There are five major types of distilled liquor – brandy, rum, whiskey, gin, and vodka. We will focus on rum and whiskey since these distilled liquors had a major impact on history and more of an impact than the others.

## Distillation

- **Distillation** is a method of separating mixtures based on differences in their volatilities (boiling points) in a boiling liquid mixture. Distillation is a physical separation process, and not a chemical reaction per se, although chemical reactions may take place during the distillation process

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## Invention of Distillation - 1

- Distillation was invented by the Muslim scientist, Jabir Ibn Hayyan (721-815)
  - Considered to be the Father of Chemistry
  - Established the principle of classifying substances by their properties
  - Invented the alembic still
  - First to distill wine

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## Invention of Distillation - 2

- Al Razi (865-925), a Persian physician, described the process of distillation in his book, *Al Asrar*, and the isolation of a substance, he called "*al-koh'l of wine*"
  - Gave rise to the term "alcohol"
- Arnald of Villanova (died 1315) and his student, Raymond Lull, were the first Europeans to describe the process of distillation
- Distillation spread through the monasteries who produced brandy and whiskey for medicinal purposes

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## Dark, Spiced, & Light Rum



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## Origins of Rum

- Fermented drinks produced from sugarcane juice first occurred in ancient India or China
- Plantation slaves on Barbados discovered that refining sugar produced molasses as a by-product
- Initially, molasses was fed to hogs or used as fertilizer
- When water was added, molasses readily fermented
- When distilled, this mixture became rum
  - First mention of rum was in 1651

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**Precursors to Rum** - The precursors to rum date back to antiquity. Development of fermented drinks produced from sugarcane juice is believed to have first occurred either in ancient [India](#) or China,<sup>[3]</sup> and spread from there. An example of such an early drink is *brum*. Produced by the [Malay people](#), *brum* dates back thousands of years.<sup>[8]</sup> [Marco Polo](#) also recorded a 14th-century account of a "very good wine of sugar" that was offered to him in what is modern-day [Iran](#).

**Rum** is a [distilled alcoholic beverage](#) made from [sugarcane](#) by-products such as [molasses](#) and sugarcane [juice](#) by a process of [fermentation](#) and [distillation](#). The distillate, a clear liquid, is then usually aged in [oak](#) and other The manufacture of refined sugar for the home market created a by-product-molasses. Initially this was considered to be worthless and was fed to hogs, or dumped on the land as fertilizer. However, it was soon found that with the addition of water, molasses fermented readily. While the resulting brew had a few aficionados, further experimentation revealed that it was an ideal raw material for distillation, and *rum* was born. The first mention of the potation is contained in a description of Barbados, dating to 1651: "The chief fuddling they make in the island is *Rumbullion*, alias *Kifl-Devil*, and this is made of sugar canes distilled, a hot, hellish, and terrible liquor."

## Spread of Rum

- Rum was initially given to the English indentured servants and the African slaves who worked on the sugar plantations
- Rum was then adopted by the governing class of Barbados
- Finally, it was exported along with sugar back to England

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**Indentured servants & slaves** - By the time that rum had made its debut in the lexicon, Barbados had been deforested and plantations of the new wonder crop covered much of its surface. Its alcoholic by-product was used to perk up the indentured servants from Britain who comprised its initial workforce: "For when their spirits are exhausted, by their hard labor, and sweating in the Sun, ten hours every day, they find their stomachs debilitated and much weakened in their vigor every way, a dram or two of this Spirit, is a great comfort and refreshing to them."

**Rum exports** - "The governing class of Barbados also took to 'freshing themselves with rum. When Christopher Codrington arrived in the island in 1703 to commence his appointment as its governor, he complained that the local dignitaries thought "the best way to make... strangers welcome is to murder them with drinking." He also noted that their constitutions had been hardened by constant boozing to the extent that "the tenth part of that strong liquor which will scarce warme the blood of our West Indians who have bodies like Egyptian mummies, must certainly dispatch a newcomer to the other world." When the Barbadians began to export their embalming fluid alongside their cargoes of sugar, it quickly acquired a reputation as a superior drink on the other side of the Atlantic.

## Spread of Rum - 2

- In England, rum supplanted brandy as an alcoholic addition to punch
- From Barbados and England, rum spread to both the Caribbean pirates and the North American colonies
  - Pirates made rum a part of their pirate image
  - American colonists adopted rum as their main drink

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**Replacing brandy** - In 1708, the historian John Oldmixon recorded the appearance of rum in England, where it had "lately supplied the Place of Brandy in Punch" and was "much better than the Malt spirits and sad Liquors sold by our distillers." Indeed, Oldmixon rated rum on a par with French Cognac in terms of quality and more highly as a medicinal drink.

**Pirate's image** - Rum's association with piracy began with English privateers trading it. As some of the privateers became pirates and buccaneers, their fondness for rum remained, the association between the two only being strengthened by literary works such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. Thanks to *Treasure Island*, rum became as much a part of the pirate's image as the cutlass and the Jolly Roger.

**American colonies** - After rum's development in the Caribbean, the drink's popularity spread to [Colonial North America](#). To support the demand for the drink, the first rum distillery in the British colonies of North America was set up in 1664 on present-day [Staten Island](#). [Boston, Massachusetts](#) had a distillery three years later.<sup>[10]</sup> The manufacture of rum became early Colonial New England's largest and most prosperous industry.<sup>[11]</sup> New England became a distilling center due to the superior technical, metalworking and [cooperage](#) skills and abundant lumber; the rum produced there was lighter, more like whiskey, and was superior to the character and aroma of the West Indies product.

## A Note About Piracy

- Caribbean pirates flourished in the 1660s and again in the 1710s
  - Pirates could be divided into privateers (who preyed on enemy merchant shipping in wartime) and true pirates (who preyed on the ships of any nation at any time)
    - Sir Henry Morgan was the best known pirate of the 1660s, famous for his sack of Panama, a stint as governor of Jamaica, and as a consumer of rum
    - Edward Teach “Blackbeard” was the best known pirate of the 1710s.

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**Sir Henry Morgan** - Sir Henry Morgan (d. 1688) was the best known and most successful example of the first period. Strictly speaking he was not a pirate but a privateer, licensed by King Charles II to fight Spaniards on his behalf and to pay himself from their treasure. Morgan established a base at Port Royal in Jamaica and launched a series of lucrative raids, notable for their brutality, against Spanish possessions in Cuba and Colombia. In 1670 he outdid himself by sacking Panama and burning it to the ground, just after peace had been declared between Spain and England. He was arrested and sent back to England on the frigate *Welcome*, where he was acquitted of piracy, knighted, and returned to Jamaica as its deputy governor. He drank himself to death and was buried in Port Royal, which was wiped off the map by an earthquake four years later. His name and likeness still grace a popular brand of West Indian rum.

**1710s Pirates** - The second wave of Caribbean pirates appeared in 1713 as a result of a cessation of hostilities between the various European nations that held islands in the West Indies. Peace created a pool of unemployed seamen, ex-prisoners of war, impressed convicts, and adventurers of every nationality, who took to pillaging minor settlements and merchant shipping. They operated in loose confederations and regulated affairs between themselves according to written *articles*, which were, for the age, models of democracy. They wrote the right to rum into such agreements, as the following extract from the Articles of Captain Roberts illustrates: “Every Man has a Vote in Affairs of Moment; has equal Title to the fresh Provisions, or strong Liquors, at any Time seiz'd, and may use them at Pleasure.”

**Blackbeard** – Blackbeard was, in the words of one contemporary, “notorious for his cruelty, concupiscence, and drunkenness. This fiend cut an impressive figure. He was the “embodiment of impregnable wickedness, of reckless daring, a nightmarish villain so lacking in any human kindness that no crime was above him.” For a while, Blackbeard operated out of the Carolinas with the complicity of the colonial authorities, until a warrant for his capture, together with a handsome reward, was issued in Virginia by its governor, Alexander Spotswood. He and his crew were cornered in Okechokee Inlet by a superior force, and the pirate died defiant: “*Black-beard* took a Glass of Liquor, and drank... with these words: *Damnation seize my Soul if I give you Quarters, or take any from you*” He then stood his ground and fought “with great Fury, till he received five and twenty Wounds, and five of them by Shot.” He was beheaded after death, and his skull continued in service as a receptacle for alcohol. It was converted into a very large punch bowl, called The Infant, “which was used until 1903 as a drinking vessel at the Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg.

## American Colonists

- Rum constituted the American colonists' favorite drink
  - Far cheaper than brandy since:
    - It was made from leftover molasses rather than more expensive wine
    - It did not have to be shipped across the Atlantic, but could be made in America
      - After the late-17<sup>th</sup> century, Boston, Salem, and Newport became major rum distillers
    - It was stronger than brandy
  - Safer to drink than water

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**Rum consumption** – By the 1730s, yearly per capita consumption of rum was nearly 4 gallons .

**An inexpensive form of liquor** - Rum was far cheaper than brandy, since it was made from leftover molasses rather than expensive wine, and did not have to be shipped across the Atlantic. As well as being cheaper in North America, it was also stronger. Thus, rum quickly established itself as the North American colonists' favorite drink. Rum was generally drunk neat by the poor and in the form of a punch – a mixture of rum, sugar, water, lemon juice, and spices served in an elaborately decorated bowl – by the well-to-do. Punch, like the cruder naval drink of grog, was the forerunner of the modern cocktail.

**New England rum** - From the late seventeenth century, rum formed the basis of a thriving industry, as New England merchants—primarily in Salem, Newport, Medford, and Boston—began to import raw molasses rather than rum and do the distilling themselves. The resulting rum was not thought to be as good as West Indies rum, but it was even cheaper, which was what mattered to most drinkers. Rum became the most profitable manufactured item produced in New England. In the words of one contemporary observer: "The quantity of spirits which they distil in Boston from the molasses they import is as surprising as the cheapness at which they sell it, which is under two shillings a gallon; but they are more famous for the quantity and cheapness than for the excellency of their rum."<sup>59</sup> Rum became so cheap that in some cases a day's wages could get a laborer drunk for a week. In addition to selling rum for local consumption, the New England distillers found a ready market among slave traders, for whom rum had become the preferred form of alcoholic currency with which to purchase slaves on Africa's west coast.

## Consequences of Rum - 1

- Rum had considerable influence on the drinking habits and trading patterns of the American colonies, especially New England
  - Led to a trading network that linked New England, Great Britain, Western Europe, West Africa, and the Caribbean
  - Fostered the development of the New England ship-building industry

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In the words of Iain Gately *Drink. A cultural history of alcohol*, “Rum had a considerable impact on the drinking habits and trading patterns of the American colonies. Its influence was greatest in New England, which became a mercantile nation in its own right as a consequence of the rum trade. One of the first New Englanders to sail down to Barbados had noted that its inhabitants were “so intent upon producing sugar that they had rather buy foods at very deare rates than produce it by labor.” In return for rum, molasses, and sugar, the Massachusetts settlements sent fish, flour, and timber in their own boats. A ship-building industry evolved to service this trade, and its captains ranged far and wide in pursuit of profits. As African slaving grew in importance, they entered in a major way into the business. In 1644, John Winthrop of Boston had shipped a cargo of wooden staves to the Cape Verde Islands, where they were exchanged for slaves, who in turn were traded for sugar in Barbados. Between 1680 and 1713, New England ships carried 1,300,000 gallons of rum to Africa which they exchanged for 60,000 slaves.

## Consequences of Rum - 2

- Rum played an unseen role in establishing British supremacy at sea
  - In 1655, the Royal Navy adopted grog as a substitute for the traditional ration of beer
  - Grog, which contained lime juice, protected seamen against scurvy on long voyages
    - This helped the British who drank grog as opposed to their rivals whose rations did not include liquids rich in Vitamin C
    - The inclusion of lime juice led to British Navy sailors being referred to as “limeys”

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Grog (a mixture of rum, sugar, lime juice, and water) in place of beer played an unseen role during the 18<sup>th</sup> century in establishing British supremacy at sea. The leading cause of death among sailors at that time was !! scurvy, a wasting disease caused by the lack of vitamin C. The best way to prevent scurvy was to administer regular doses of lemon or lime juice. The inclusion of lemon or lime juice in grog, made compulsory in 1795 (but common before that year), reduced the incidence of scurvy dramatically. Since beer contains no vitamin C, switching from beer to grog made British crews healthier overall. The opposite was true of their French counterparts, for whom the standard drink ration was not beer but  $\frac{3}{4}$  liter of wine. On long cruises, this ration was replaced by  $\frac{3}{16}$  liter of eau-de-vie. Since wine contains small doses of vitamin C but eau-de-vie does not, the effect was to reduce the French navy's resistance to scurvy just as the British navy's resistance was increasing.

## Consequences of the Molasses Act of 1733

- Laid a prohibitive duty of six pence per gallon on molasses from non-British colonies
- Effects of the Act
  - Led to large-scale evasion, smuggling, and bribing of officials responsible for collecting the duty
  - Made smuggling socially acceptable and undermined respect for British law
  - Set the precedent that colonists could defy any British law that set unreasonable duties on items they imported or exported

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**Why the Molasses Act** - New England distillers imported their molasses from the French sugar islands. Since France had banned the manufacture of rum in its colonies in order to protect its domestic brandy industry, French sugar producers were happy to sell their molasses to New England distillers at a low price. At the same time, British sugar producers happened to be losing out to the French in the European sugar market. The New England distillers' use of French molasses added insult to injury. The British producers called for government intervention, and in 1733 a new law, known as the Molasses Act, was passed in London.

**Molasses Act provisions** - The act levied a prohibitive duty of sixpence per gallon on molasses imported into the North American colonies from foreign (in other words, French) colonies or plantations. The idea was to encourage the New England distillers to buy molasses from the British sugar islands, since their exports were not subject to the duty. But the British islands did not produce anywhere near enough molasses to supply the New England rum industry; and the distillers, in any case, regarded the French molasses as superior. If it had been strictly enforced, the act would have forced the distillers both to cut production and to raise their prices, and would have brought a sudden end to New England's prosperity by removing the mainstay of its economy, since rum then accounted for 80 percent of exports.

**Evasion & smuggling** - American distillers ignored the law almost completely, smuggling in molasses from the French islands, and when necessary bribing the officials who were supposed to collect the duty, though most turned a blind eye. Customs officers were appointed in England and most of them stayed there, drawing their salaries and paying someone else to carry out their duties overseas. Accordingly, these junior functionaries had more sympathy for their fellow colonists than for their masters in London. Within a few years of the law's passage, the vast majority of rum produced—over five-sixths, according to some estimates—was still being made from smuggled molasses. At the same time, the number of distilleries making rum in America grew from eight in 1738 to 63 in 1750 and 143 in 1770. Rum continued to flow, maintaining its position in all aspects of colonial life. It played an important role in election campaigns: When George Washington ran for election to Virginia's local assembly, the House of Burgesses, in 1758, his campaign team handed out twenty-eight gallons of rum, fifty gallons of rum punch, thirty-four of wine, forty-six of beer, and two of cider—in a county with only 391 voters.

**Undermined respect for British law** - Although the Molasses Act was not enforced, it was resented. Passing the law was a colossal blunder on the part of the British government. By making smuggling socially acceptable, it undermined respect for British law in general and set a vital precedent: Henceforth, the colonists felt entitled to defy other laws that imposed seemingly unreasonable duties on items shipped to and from the colonies. As a result, the widespread defiance of the cry of "no taxation without representation" became a popular slogan. Advocates of independence, known as the "Sons of Liberty," began to mobilize public opinion in favor of a break with Britain. These campaigners often met in distilleries and taverns. One revolutionary leader, John Adams, noted in his diary that he attended a meeting of the Sons of Liberty in 1766 in "a counting-room in Chase and Speakman's distillery,"

## The Sugar Act of 1764

- The end of the Seven Years War ensured British dominance of North America but left Britain with an enormous debt
  - The British Government decided that the colonists should help foot the bill
  - This led to the Sugar Act of 1764 which included measures to ensure strict enforcement of the Molasses Act
  - The Sugar Act was followed by a series of other unpopular laws, including the Tea Act of 1773

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Victory ensured British dominance of the North American continent but left Britain with an enormous public debt. Reasoning that the war had been fought largely for the benefit of the colonists in America, the British government concluded that they should help to foot the bill. Furthermore, many of the colonists had continued to trade with the enemy, France, during the war. So the government decided to strengthen and enforce the Molasses Act. The sixpence-per-gallon duty on molasses was halved, but the government took steps to ensure that it would now be collected in full. Customs officers were no longer allowed to remain in Britain while others collected duties on their behalf. Colonial governors were required to enforce the laws strictly and arrest smugglers, and the Royal Navy was given the power to collect duties in American waters. The new act, with its explicit goal of raising revenues, rather than merely regulating trade, was deeply unpopular in America. New England's rum distillers led the opposition to the new rules by helping to organize a boycott of imports from Britain. Many Americans, not just those whose livelihoods were affected by the act, regarded it as unfair that they should have to pay taxes to a distant parliament where they had no representation.

**Rum and tea** – While the Tea Act and the resulting Boston Tea Party precipitated the American Revolution, rum played just as important a role in the decades leading up to the eventual outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1775. When Paul Revere made his famous ride from Boston to Lexington to warn John Hancock and Samuel Adams of the approach of British troops, he stopped off for a rum toddy (rum, sugar, and water, heated by plunging a red-hot poker into the mixture) at a tavern in Medford belonging to Isaac Hall, the captain of the local militia. Many years after the British surrender in 1781 and the establishment of the United States of America, John Adams, by then one of the country's founding fathers, wrote to a friend: "I know not why we should blush to confess that molasses was an essential ingredient in American independence. Many great events have proceeded from much smaller causes."

## Consequences of Rum - 3

- African desire for rum and other Western goods led African coastal rulers to stage slave raids on inland neighbors
- The salted fish that New Englanders traded in the Caribbean for molasses, sugar, and rum became a key element in both the slaves' diet and in subsequent Caribbean cuisine

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**Inland slave raiding** - in the hands of the New England merchants, rum soon became a double enslaver, both depending on the toil of slaves to make and being the main trade item to buy slaves in West Africa. To get their drinks, African coastal monarchs staged slave raids on their weaker neighbors. By 1679, French slave traders were already complaining that the brandy they had formerly used in trade for slaves in Africa had been flooded out by cheaper rum

**African consumer tastes** - The principal demand of Africans was for cloth, in very specific colors. The next most important item on their shopping list, more so than guns and gunpowder combined, was rum. It was no use turning up with the wrong goods and expecting to buy slaves. When, for instance, Captain George Scott of Newport arrived with a cargo of bonnets and ribbons, he found few takers, and confided to his diary: "I have repented a hundred times buying... dry goods. Had we laid out two thousand pound in rum, bread, and flour, it would have purchased more in value."

## Consequences of Rum - 4

- The high alcoholic content of rum (40% alcohol) made it a drink very facilitative of drunkenness and alcoholism
- This led to attempts on the part of authorities to place restrictions on drinking
  - This eventually gave rise to the Temperance and Prohibition movements

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## Consequences of Rum - 5

- Had a demoralizing effect on American Indian culture
  - Alcoholic beverages became a common item in the fur trade, with the Indians acquiring rum from the English and brandy from the French
  - Both Amerindian and European observers saw liquor as creating havoc in Amerindian communities
- Led to usually ineffectual attempts to ban sales of liquor to Amerindians and the stereotype of the “drunken Indian”

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Most of the indigenous peoples of North America possessed no alcohol before Europeans arrived in the Western Hemisphere. Only the Native peoples of the modern-day southwestern United States and Mexico consumed alcohol in any form. Thus, the majority of Native Americans were exposed to alcohol at the same time that they had to cope with the far-reaching changes in their lives brought about by European colonization. From 1650 onward, alcohol became a common item in the fur trade. Native Americans who had developed a taste for alcohol purchased [rum](#) from the English and [brandy](#) from the French. The trade had particular importance for the English, because North American colonists and American Indians had a greater fondness for rum than Europeans. In fact, colonists consumed far more alcohol than Native Americans—perhaps seven shots of distilled beverages each day by 1770 according to one estimate. But whatever social pathologies they suffered did not [undermine](#) their society, and thus no widespread movement for temperance took hold during the colonial period. As soon as the liquor trade began, colonists came to believe that it created [havoc](#) in Native communities. They were right. Indigenous and colonial observers reported that Native Americans who consumed alcohol did so only to become intoxicated. Those who became drunk fought with each other and with members of their families; they eroded the civility that normally characterized relations in indigenous communities.

## Relative Decline of Rum

- Rum was the dominant drink of the colonial era in America, but three factors led to whiskey replacing rum as the nation's dominant drink
  - Revolutionary War
  - Westward movement
  - Arrival of the Scotch-Irish
- By the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, rum accounted for only a fifth of all distilled spirits

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Rum was the drink of the colonial period and the American Revolution, but many of the citizens of the young nation soon turned their backs on it in favor of another distilled drink. As settlers moved westward, away from the eastern seaboard, they switched to drinking whiskey, distilled from fermented cereal grains. One reason was that many of the settlers were of Scotch-Irish origin and had experience of grain distilling. The supply of molasses, from which rum was made, had also been disrupted during the war. And while grains such as barley, wheat, rye, and corn were difficult to grow near the coast—hence the early colonists' initial difficulties with making beer—they could be cultivated more easily inland. Rum, in contrast, was a maritime product, made in coastal towns from molasses imported by sea. Moving it inland was expensive. Whiskey could be made almost anywhere and did not depend on imported ingredients that could be taxed or blockaded. Whiskey was also cheaper than rum – rum was 18 cents for two gills, while whiskey was only 12 cents for the same amount.

# The Impact of Whiskey

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# Whiskey

- Whiskey = a liquor distilled from fermented wort (as that obtained from rye, corn, or barley mash)
  - Wort is a sweet liquid drained from mash and fermented to make beer and whiskey

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## Whiskey in Europe

- Distillation spread through the monasteries who produced brandy and whiskey for medicinal purposes
- Between 1100 and 1300, distillation spread from Ireland to Scotland, with monastic distilleries existing in Ireland in the 12th century.
  - Since Ireland and Scotland lacked grapes with which to make wine, barley beer was used instead, resulting in the development of whisky
- First mention of consumption of whiskey as a beverage is in the Irish *Annals of Clonmacnoise* in 1405
- In Scotland, the first mention of whiskey production comes from an entry in the Exchequer Rolls of 1494

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[Mediterranean](#) regions to [Ireland](#) by Irish missionaries between the 6th century and 7th century. Distillation was brought from Africa to Europe by the [Moors](#),<sup>[3][4]</sup> and its use spread through the [monasteries](#),<sup>[5]</sup> largely for medicinal purposes, such as the treatment of [colic](#), [palsy](#), and [smallpox](#).<sup>[6]</sup>

In the Irish [Annals of Clonmacnoise](#) in 1405, the first written record of whiskey appears describing the death of a chieftain at Christmas from "taking a surfeit of aqua vitae". In Scotland, the first evidence of whisky production comes from an entry in the Exchequer Rolls for 1494 where malt is sent "To Friar John Cor, by order of the king, to make aquavita".<sup>[1]</sup>

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36

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## Types of Whiskey - 1

- Malt whiskey = made entirely from malted barley and distilled in a pot still
  - Malted grains are grains that have been made to germinate by soaking in water and then quickly dried with hot air
    - Malting produces enzymes that turn the grain's starches into sugars and break down proteins into forms which can be utilized by yeast
  - Malted grain is used to produce malt beer, malt whiskey, malted milk shakes, and malt vinegar

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[Malt](#) is whisky made entirely from [malted barley](#) and distilled in an onion-shaped [pot still](#).

[Grain](#) is whisky made from malted and unmalted barley along with other grains, usually in a continuous "[patent](#)" or "[Coffey](#)" [still](#). Until recently it was only used in blends, but there are now some single grain scotches being marketed. **Malting** is a process applied to [cereal](#) grains, in which the grains are made to [germinate](#) by soaking in water<sup>[1]</sup> and are then quickly halted from germinating further by drying with hot air.<sup>[2][3][4]</sup> Malting grains develops the [enzymes](#) that are required to modify the grain's [starches](#) into sugars including [monosaccharides](#) such as [glucose](#) or [fructose](#), and [disaccharides](#) such as [sucrose](#) or [maltose](#). It also develops other enzymes, such as proteases, which break down the proteins in the grain into forms which can be utilized by yeast. Malted grain is used to make [malt beer](#), [malt whisky](#), [malted shakes](#), [malt vinegar](#),

## Types of Whiskey - 2

- Grain whiskey = whiskey made from malted and unmalted barley or other grains, usually in a continuous “Coffey”
  - Different countries produce different kinds of whiskey
    - Scotch = whiskeys that are blends of malt and grain that are distilled in Scotland two or three times and stored at least 3 years and one day in oak casks
    - Irish = whiskeys that are blends of malted and unmalted barley that are distilled in Ireland three times and stored at least 3 years in wooden casks

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Grain is whisky made from malted and unmalted barley along with other grains, usually in a continuous "patent" or "Coffey" still invented in 1831. Until recently it was only used in blends, but there are now some single grain scotches being marketed.

## American Whiskey - 1

- American whiskey is whiskey distilled from a fermented mash of cereal grain. It also must be distilled to not more than 80% alcohol (most commercial whiskeys are 43% or 50% alcohol) by volume. They must then be aged in charred new oak containers, except for corn whiskey.
- There are several types of American whiskey

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## American Whiskey - 2

- The most common American whiskeys were (and are)
  - Bourbon = Made from mash that consists of at least 51% corn and is aged at least 2 years in charred oak casks
  - Corn = Made from mash that consists of at least 80% corn. Does not have to be aged
  - Blended = a mixture of a straight whiskey (or a blend of straight whiskies) with neutral spirits corn and is aged at least 2 years in charred oak casks
  - Rye = Made from mash that consists of at least 51% rye corn and is aged at least 2 years in charred oak casks

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The types listed in the federal regulations<sup>[10]</sup> are:

[Bourbon whiskey](#), which is made from [mash](#) that consists of at least 51% corn ([maize](#)).

[Rye whiskey](#), which is made from mash that consists of at least 51% [rye](#).

[Wheat whiskey](#), which is made from mash that consists of at least 51% [wheat](#).

[Malt whiskey](#), which is made from mash that consists of at least 51% [malted barley](#).

[Rye malt whiskey](#), which is made from mash that consists of at least 51% [malted rye](#).

[Corn whiskey](#), which is made from mash that consists of at least 80% corn (maize).

[Blended whiskey](#), is a mixture which contains straight whisky or a blend of straight whiskies or in combination, whiskey or neutral spirits.

## Major Impacts of Whiskey

- As a result of the taxes upon it, gave rise to the Whiskey Rebellion
- Whiskey helped make the frontier and the “Wild West “ wild
- It played a major role in the growth of the Temperance and Prohibition movements

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## Whiskey & the Whiskey Rebellion

- The Allegheny Mountain backcountry was largely settled by Scotch-Irish to whom free land and no taxes seemed utopian
- In the backcountry, whiskey was more valuable than grain, easier to store, and usable as a medium of exchange
- In 1791, Congress passed an excise tax on whiskey to fund a navy to fight Islamic pirates in the Mediterranean

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**Role of whiskey** - Whiskey had great practical advantages on the frontier. It was more valuable, easier to carry, and less likely to spoil than the grain from which it had been made. It also was freely convertible-whiskey could be exchanged for other commodities, for land, for weapons, labor, food, and for luxuries. In consequence, much of the farmland hacked out of the wilderness was planted with grain to produce whiskey, rather than bread. In the early days of settlement, stills were the largest, most complex, and most valuable man-made objects to be carried over the mountains. A still literally made money. People even traded slaves for them. A 1788 advertisement in the *Lexington Gazette* (by then a town !! of nearly a thousand souls) offered "a likely young Negroe" man, in exchange for "two copper stills one of about eighty gallons the other about forty gallons." When it was discovered that Kentucky was a heaven for horses, stud fees were also priced in "corn juice." For instance, according to the *Lexington Gazette* of March 17, 1792, the covering charge for "the celebrated swift horse, Ferguson's Gray" was nine shillings' worth of whiskey.

**Backcountry settlers** - In the decades prior to independence, and ever since, immigrants had been pushing inland, over the Allegheny Mountains, which had formed a notional border between British colonial limits and land reserved for Native Americans. A high percentage of these settlers were Scottish Irish, to whom free land and no taxes seemed a recipe for paradise, and the inconvenient presence of a few murderous indigenous tribes no worse than what they had left behind. Unlike most immigrants, who acclimatized themselves to their new homeland in its towns or in settled parts of the countryside, the Scots-Irish headed west, toward the interior of the continent, beyond government, where they might live as they wished, in as close to a state of independence as was possible.

## Whiskey & the Whiskey Rebellion - 2

- The Whiskey excise tax was supported by the Northern states and by the Philadelphia College of Physicians. It was strongly opposed in much of the South and in the western backcountry
- In 1794, settlers in western PA rose in revolt against the Federal Government's excise tax on domestic spirits and the attempts of federal officials to collect it

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**Excise Tax Opponents** – During the Senate debate, opponents mocked its declared purpose to raise funds for a navy to fight Islamic nations in the distant Mediterranean, which Senator William Maclay of Pennsylvania believed to be spurious: "The trifling affair of our having eleven captives at Algiers ... is made the pretext for going to war... !! and fitting out a fleet." If the government was allowed to fill its coffers with excise dollars, who knew what it would attempt next, whether abroad or at home? "Farewell freedom in America," he concluded.

**Origins of the Whiskey Rebellion** - In 1794, settlers in western Pennsylvania formed a rebel band named the *Whiskey Boys* and commenced an insurrection against the federal government. Their cause of war was an excise on domestic spirits, which had been imposed in 1791 and which was considered on the western edge of the United States to be unequal, immoral, and 'dangerous to liberty.' That freedom from British rule, so recently won, should not be considered liberty enough, was a matter of serious concern in Philadelphia

**Violent Beginnings** - The volatile mood that prevailed in western Pennsylvania exploded !! into violence in July 1794, when federal officials were told to collect the excise tax and to serve writs on those distillers who had refused to pay. It was harvest time, and most of the countrymen were engaged in reaping, so that some writs were served in the fields to men surrounded by their families, neighbors, and friends. Such high-handed treatment, reminiscent of feudal Europe, was intolerable to the harvesters, who composed themselves into armed bands and marched on the home of General Neville, the exciseman for Allegheny, Washington, Fayette, Westmoreland, and Bedford counties. They attacked, he killed a pair of them and drove them off, and thus began the *Whiskey Rebellion*. Instead of returning in peace to their fields, the harvesters sent out riders to gather support, and by the following day they numbered over five hundred. From this point onward, they are known to history as the *Whiskey Boys*, and their first collective act was to renew their attack on Neville. They burned his house and its barns and slave quarters to the ground and, true to their new name, emptied the general's cellar and drank its contents prior to putting the house to the torch. News of this outrage, or brave democratic act, spread through the countryside. Opponents of the excise hastened to join the Whiskey Boys at an assembly in Braddock's

## Whiskey & Whiskey Rebellion - 3

- Upon hearing of the rebellion, President Washington denounced the rebels and called out the militia
- Commissioners were sent to the rebellious areas to offer an amnesty to every insurgent who swore to accept the validity of the whiskey excise
- The Whiskey Boys decided to capitulate rather than fight

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**Reaction to the revolt** - President Washington decided that the firmest measures were necessary to enforce the powers of the United States. He issued a proclamation that labeled the Whiskey Boys traitors and sent orders to the governors of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia to call out their militias.

**Amnesty offer** - While these forces were being assembled, commissioners were sent to the fractious counties with the offer of amnesty to every insurgent who swore on oath the validity, and his acceptance, of the whiskey excise. The commissioners arrived while the Whiskey Boys were holding yet another meeting and delivered their ultimatum to the assembled masses: obedience or the noose. At stake was the power of the federal government to tax its citizens – even if the taxes it chose to impose were not so very different from those that had been the cause for war with Britain.

**Decision to capitulate** - This volte-face did not stem from cowardice-the rebels were happy to fight-but rather from the huge changes that had occurred in the short space of time between the excise bill becoming law and the fall of 1794. Settlement had proceeded at an astonishing pace around !! and beyond the Whiskey Boys. Moreover, they were isolated in their resistance: The Kentuckians, who might have been their allies, were focused on getting free navigation on the Mississippi, which was a federal matter, and potential friends in other states that did not suffer from the handicap of being landlocked simply avoided the excise by smuggling their spirits overseas.

## Whiskey & Whiskey Rebellion - 4

- When troops reached the heartland of the revolt, they met no opposition
- As a coda to the rebellion, Washington set aside February 19, 1795, as a day of national thanksgiving.
- The suppression of the Whiskey rebellion showed that the Federal Government could enforce its tax laws, and in so doing, ensured its survival

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# Whiskey & the Wild West

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# The Wild West - 1

- Geography of the Wild West
  - Arid grasslands of the Great Plains
  - Rocky Mountains & the High Sierras
  - Hot Deserts of the Southwest (AZ, western NM, southern CA)
  - Cold Deserts of NV, eastern WA & eastern OR

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The Great Plains are bordered by the Rio Grande, the Canadian subarctic boreal forest, the Rocky Mountains, and the forest hills of the Mississippi Valley. Annual rainfall is only 12"-20" and often comes in fits and starts. For both want of water and prevailing high winds, only a few species of trees grew – cottonwood & willow – grew on the Great Plains, and only along the narrow, sheltered margins beside the permanent rivers. Instead of trees, hardy and drought-resistant grasses covered most of the Great Plains. On the drier western half of the plains, known as the "high plains," buffalo and grama grasses, four to five inches tall, prevailed in a tough fibrous mat with deep roots. The slightly wetter eastern half, the low plains," sustained tall-grass prairies, with some grasses exceeding six feet in height. The tough grassland matting precluded agriculture prior to the horse and the iron and steel plow

## The Wild West - 2

- Westward Movement
  - In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a farmer's son with little hope of inheritance had four options
    - Learn a trade
    - Join the army
    - Go to sea
    - Seek his fortune on the frontier

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Native-born Americans moved West because they felt that the pressure of increasing population in the East was narrowing their opportunities. Immigrants were attracted by advertising campaigns run by states and steamship companies. They were dispersed throughout the West by railroads and labor bureaus. It was the railroad and telegraph that made possible the settlement of the West

## The Wild West - 3

- In 1865, there were very few settlements between the Mississippi Valley and the Pacific coast
  - Except for the Indians, it was largely uninhabited
- By 1890, the Census Bureau considered the frontier to no longer exist
- Settlement of the West took place in three waves – ranchers, miners, and farmers

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**Sparse settlements** – There were a few settlers around Santa Fe NM and the Mormons in Utah. The great prairies between Kansas and Nebraska in the East and the Rocky Mountains in the West had previously been considered unsuitable for settlement. They were sometimes called the !! Great American Desert owing to their inhospitable terrain and climate. These central plains had the most extreme temperature range in the United States: the mean temperature in Bismarck, North Dakota, fell to minus 45 degrees Fahrenheit in winter, whereas in Phoenix, Arizona, the mean temperature was 117 degrees in summer.

**Census Bureau** - In 1890 the Bureau of the Census announced that the frontier was closed, that is, there was no longer any discernible demarcation between frontier and settlement. (p282) [Cashman\_America in the Gilded Age]

“Up to and including 1880 the country had a frontier of settlement, but at present the unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line. In the discussion of its extent, its westward movement etc., it can not, therefore, any longer have a place in census reports.” (p282) [Cashman\_America in the Gilded Age]

According to this pronouncement, westward expansion was now complete.

**Settlement** - In three decades they settled more land in America than their eastern predecessors had done in 250 years. Between 1607 and 1870 409 million acres of land had been settled and 189 million acres were cultivated, but between 1870 and 1900, 430 million acres were settled and 2.2.5 million acres were cultivated. The foundation of this final settlement was new technology, which improved communications, and the laying of transcontinental railroads.

## The Wild West - 4

- The Cattle Drives of the 1860s-1880s reflected:
  - Large herds of longhorns in Texas
  - Sizable post-Civil War migration to Texas
  - The coming of the railroad to Kansas
  - The knowledge that the Texas longhorns could sell for much less than eastern cattle

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**Herds** – During the Civil War, Texas was both cut off from the rest of the Confederacy and its men were at war. As a result, there were large herds of cattle which had fattened themselves on the grassy plains when the war ended. Climatic conditions in Texas were ideal for raising cattle and the state's land policy suited the owners. Texas had never ceded its public domain to the federal government and now it allowed ranchers to acquire land for grazing at 50 cents an acre. This generous policy encouraged mammoth ranches such as the XIT Ranch in the Texas Panhandle that contained over 3 million acres.

**Cowboys** – The arrival of ex-Confederates and ex-slaves from the economically-desolate South along with Mexican immigrants provided a ready pool of laborers to serve as cowboys.

**Cattle drive to railroad** - In 1867 Joseph McCoy devised a route whereby cattle would be driven north from southern Texas to Abilene, Kansas, along Chisholm's trail to the west of any settlement. The journey was known as the long drive. From Abilene, the Kansas and Pacific Railroad transported cattle to the slaughterhouses of Chicago. Between 1866 and 1885 a total of 5.71 million cattle went north by this route.

## The Wild West - 5

- Notes re the Cowboy
  - Out of 7 cowboys, 5 were Anglo, 1 was Hispanic, & 1 was Black
  - The cowboys formed the lower half of a two-class system of cattlemen and cowboys
    - Cowboys were generally lower-class hireling bachelor laborers in a risky line of work
  - The cowboy's picturesque dress was largely adopted from Mexican cattle herders
  - The nature of their work required fostered characteristic virtues and resulted in a unique sub-culture
    - A culture that was hard-drinking, brawling, and given to sprees

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**Cowboy social origins** - Many of the Anglos were Texans or post-Civil War emigrants to Texas (mostly Confederate veterans). The Blacks were mostly ex-slaves from Texas.

**Class structure** – The cattlemen were the capitalists and employers who owned the ranches and the cattle and generally were married. The cowboys were the almost always unmarried employees who tended the cattle and lived in the employer-provided bunkhouse.

**Hireling laborers** – As historian David Courtwright, in his *Violent Land. Single Men and Social Disorder from the Frontier to the Inner City* noted, “The cowboy in practice was and is an overworked and underpaid hireling, almost as homeless and dispossessed as a modern crop worker and his fabled independence was and is chiefly the privilege of quitting his job in order to go looking for another just as bad. That, or go outside the law, as some did

**Cowboy dress** – The cowboy's dress served very useful functions. The broad brimmed hat protected face and eyes from the sun. The brightly-colored bandanna around the neck could be pulled over the nose and mouth to filter out dust. Leather gloves protected hands from rope burn and the weather. The chaps protected legs from brush & briars and provided warmth in cold weather. The distinctive boots protected his feet and ankles from snakes and announced to the world that here was a horseman.

**Virtues and subculture** - The nature of their work -- rounding up cows, branding calves, castrating bulls, breeding and bronco-busting horses, rescuing animals in distress (especially during winter snow & ice storms), fighting brush fires, and conducting trail drives to railheads or northern pastures -- required strength, endurance, and cool courage. It also precluded drinking on the job, but the cowboys made up for it in payday binges. The fact that the cowboy was part of a free-floating mobile labor force, often with few family ties, living in bunk houses and fed in some sort of 'company mess, tend to create a subculture that was socially undisciplined, hard-drinking, brawling, and given to sprees of drinking, whoring, and gambling.

## The Wild West - 6

- While ranching opened the Great Plains, it was mining that led to the settling of the mountains and the desert
  - Between 1859 (when silver was discovered in Nevada) and 1880, \$292 million of silver bullion was mined
  - The 1870s saw gold, silver, and copper discoveries in Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, South Dakota, and New Mexico

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In 1859 gold was discovered in Pike's Peak, Colorado, and silver in Nevada. The gold rush of 1859 soon died away, for the precious lodes in Colorado were particularly heavy and required special, expensive machinery for the extraction of ore. However, silver was a different proposition, and the rush to exploit the Comstock Lode reached its climax in the Big Bonanza of 1873. Between 1859 and 1880, \$292 million of silver bullion was mined. Silver and copper were discovered in Montana at Butte in 1875 and 1876. The mines of Colorado yielded gold and silver at Silverton (1873), Leadville (1873), Ouray (1875), and Cripple Creek (1878). Idaho yielded gold in the Caribou !! Mountains in 1879; gold at Bonanza in 1875; and silver, lead, and zinc at Coeur d'Alene from 1882. Nevada yielded gold, copper, and lead in Eureka from 1872. In Arizona mines were opened at Prescott (1862), Lordsburg (1870), Globe (1873), and Tombstone (1879) for the extraction of gold, silver, and copper. Most dramatic of all, prospectors discovered gold in the Black Hills of South Dakota in 1874. In 1876 the Homestake mine was opened. It became the largest gold mine in the Western Hemisphere.

## The Wild West - 7

- Miners
  - Consisted of men working in remote areas without their families
  - Mining towns were normally rowdy places
    - In 1880, the silver mining town of Leadville Colorado had a saloon for every 80 persons, a gambling establishment for every 170, a bordello for every 200, and a church for every 5,000.
  - Crime rates in mining towns were very high

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## The Wild West – Law & Outlaws

- Crime rates in the West were high. There were several reasons for this:
  - The existence of an “Honor Culture”
  - High male to female gender ratios
    - Many men unable to find wives
  - Racism and ethnic hostility
  - Widespread ownership and carrying of firearms and knives
  - Widespread drinking of alcohol (especially whiskey)

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**High crime rates** – In addition to the crime rates in the mining towns, crime rates were also high elsewhere. In the 1870s, the sparsely-populated New Mexico Territory accounted for at least 15% of all murders in the nation. In 1880, the homicide rate in the New Mexico Territory was 47 times higher than the national average.

**Honor Cultures** – As David Courtwright in *Violent Land* notes, “Cultures in which men are sensitive about honor have much higher levels of violence. *Honor has been succinctly defined as a system of beliefs in which a man has exactly as much worth as others confer upon him. Good opinion is won or lost by the way a man handles himself in conflicts. To fail to respond to a challenge or an insult is to lose face and surrender self-esteem. The proper response to an insult or challenge is direct action, preferably action that displays physical courage, such as dueling or violent response.* Aggressive displays against outsiders or animals is also a source of status. Cultures which stress honor stress male competitiveness. Honor cultures typically flourish in remote rural areas where the State is weak (and this was the case with the Wild West). Also, these cultures honor martial virtues and warriors, and they possess strong social class-status group distinctions. A strong sense of personal honor was especially powerful among Southerners – a category of people strongly represented in the Wild West.

**Gender ratios** – In 1870, California had a gender ratio of 166 men to 100 women. In Nevada, the ratio was 320 men to 100 women. In Idaho, it was 433 men to 100 women. In contrast, the New England states, the Southeastern states, and the urban areas of the East had more females than males. Thus, most western men lacked the violence-restraining impact of family life.

**Racism** – Racism fostered violence in three distinct ways. First, it inspired and rationalized inter-racial attacks. Second, it blocked intermarriage between white men and Indian & Hispanic women and family formation – an especially important factor given the sex imbalance between white men and white women – thus removing the restraining influence that family life has on male behavior. Finally, it impoverished, isolated, and socially marginalized minority groups – thus impelling them to criminal

## Homicide Rates

Name	Years	Homicide Rate (per 100,000)
Nevada County CA (gold rush country)	1851-56	83.0
Leadville CO (silver mining town)	1880	105.0
Bodie CA (gold mining town)	1878-82	116.0
Henderson County IL (rural farming county)	1859-1900	4.3
Boston MA	1860-82 1990-92	5.8 19.1
Philadelphia PA	1860-80 1990-92	3.2 28.6

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For comparison, in the U.S. as a whole, the homicide rate per 100,000 population was 9.4

## The Wild West – Law & Outlaws

- Reasons for high crime rates (cont)
  - The widespread presence of lower-class male cultural norms that:
    - Fostered gambling and drinking
    - Led to recreational association with other men in commercial establishments linked to vice, such as saloons, gambling halls, and brothels
  - The presence of a large number of:
    - Civil War veterans – both Union and Confederate
    - Young men aged 15-24
    - People who had been in trouble with the law back East

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**Saloon** - Wild West towns had high ratios of saloons to population. Frontier drunkenness was widespread, and, if newspaper accounts were accurate, involved in about half of all the homicides and a good deal more than half of all the assaults and brawls. Fights often took place in saloons, gender-segregated institutions of sociality and vice, where drinking men came together. Saloons multiplied occasions of conflict due to the presence of gambling, prostitution, prizefighting, and other activities which inspired drunken competition and arguments. Saloons drew gamblers and pimps anxious to relieve other patrons of their money.

### **The crime-prone –**

Post-war eras, and the Civil War was no exception, have often seen crime waves as veterans brought back psychological traumas, acquired vices, lethal skills, and war-surplus guns into civilian society. 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of all the men in northern state prisons in 1866 were Civil War veterans.

As one historian noted, “A mixture of alcohol and kids with guns always causes problems.”

## The Wild West – Law & Outlaws

- Alcohol (especially whiskey) played a major role in the epidemic of violence
  - Lincoln County war in New Mexico (in which Billy the Kid was a major player) was aggravated by the presence of alcohol
- To sum up: “The frontier attracted armed bachelors filled with dangerous substances and dangerous ideas: whiskey, racial contempt, and homicidal sensitivity about honor.” David Courtwright *Violent Land*, p66.

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**Alcohol & the Lincoln County War** - A mixture of alcohol and kids with guns always causes problems, and that was sure the case in the Lincoln County of the 1870s," explained Jack Rigney, for-mer manager of the Lincoln State Monument. "There were plenty of hard drinkers out of control. Alcohol was the drug of choice back then, and it was everywhere. All sorts of strong drinks were available throughout New Mexico Territory, rang-ing from Taos Lightning to cactus wine made from a mix of tequila and peyote tea.<sup>6</sup> Beer, served warm since there was no ice to chill it, was also popular, particularly with soldiers, but straight whiskey was the beverage most in demand. In the words of Michael Wallis *Billy the Kid. The endless ride*, “The regular consumption of hard liquor also contributed to the epidemic of violence in Lincoln County. Liquor was a frontier staple that was always in great demand. Although the Kid seldom, if ever, had a drink of alcohol, many of those who took part in the Lincoln County War were hearty imbibers.”

## The Wild West – Women

- As time passed, there was a growing presence of women and children. This
  - Changed the population structure
  - Changed the moral climate, since most of them were moral conservatives
    - Moral reaction against the saloon led to the movement for Prohibition
    - Having their reform efforts blocked by politicians allied to the vice industries led to support for female voting enfranchisement

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**Population structure** - As time went on, there was an increasing proportion of married farmers who emigrated to the West, bringing their wives and children with them. Meanwhile, the generation of gun-toting, hard-drinking bachelors either died off or were killed off. This slowly balanced the sex ratios.

**Moral conservatives** - 19th Century America was composed on the one hand of moral conservatives who were church-going, decent, and self-denying -- they tended to be either native-born Protestant women or middle class married men, and on the other hand of moral libertarians who paid no attention to religion, were self-assertive, and enjoyed recreations considered by the moral conservatives to be self-destructive and sinful (such as horse-racing, gambling, drinking, and prostitution) -- they tended to be either unmarried men of upper class background (especially from the South) and lower-class laborers. Frontier women (overwhelmingly moral conservatives) opposed the violence and vice associated with the saloons and brothels. So did married men (who in their bachelor days may have tolerated or even frequented a saloon or a brothel) but who, faced with the responsibility of raising children, came to see commercialized vice as a threat. With a growing population of women and married men, churches were formed and these became local bases from which masculine vice was attacked. Women and their male allies (generally husbands, clergy, and newspaper editors) used a variety of means to protest Sabbath-breaking, brothels, dance halls, gambling palaces, and saloons. Many women joined the WCTU, and when their reform efforts were blocked by male politicians allied to the vice industries, they pushed for female enfranchisement. It might be noted that the first states to give women the vote were in the West.

# Whiskey, Temperance, & the Road to Prohibition

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## Whiskey & the Advent of Prohibition

- Up to the 1820s, the U.S. was a nation of drunkards
  - Per capita annual consumption of absolute alcohol was over 7 gallons (more than 3 times today's per capita consumption)
- This along with three other factors gave rise to the Temperance movement
  - Founding of the American Temperance Society in 1826
  - Popular literature, such as *Deacon Giles' Distillery* (1836) and Timothy Shay Arthur's *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* (1854)

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**A Nation of drunkards** - Up until the 1820s, America was a 'nation of drunkards.' The average American in the mid-1820s consumed over seven gallons in absolute alcohol annually – more than three times today's per capita consumption. Some form of liquor – mostly whiskey, wine, beer, or hard cider – was served at virtually every social function. Alcohol, said the Methodist circuit rider James Finley, was 'regarded as a necessary beverage. 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.' Walt Whitman recalled in old age, 'IT is very hard for the present generation to understand the drinkingness of those years – how the 'gentlemen' of the old school used liquor; it is quite incommunicable, but I am familiar with it: saw, understood it all as a boy.' In 1820, Americans' expenditures for liquor -- \$12 million – exceeded the total expenditures of the Federal government

**Temperance** - One consequence of widespread drunkenness and alcoholism was the growth of the temperance movement, with some groups calling for moderation and others calling for complete abstinence. "The advent of democracy and the spread of evangelical religion gave rise to a more stringent stance on alcohol. Widening suffrage among Americans raised the question, How can the citizens of a republic vote !! responsibly while under the influence of liquor? As perfectionism spread, Protestants increasingly demanded that individuals take steps to clean up their lives. Temperance rode the wave of popular revivalism. Emotional sermons detailing the horrid wages of alcoholism yielded tens of thousands of pledges of total abstinence. In the 1830s, membership in the American Temperance Society reached 1.5 million. Popular literature, such as George B. Cheever's *Deacon Giles' Distillery* (1836) and Timothy Shay Arthur's best-selling *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* (1854), spread the temperance cause.

## Whiskey & the Advent of Prohibition - 2

- In the West, drunkenness and violence was often connected to the saloon & saloons were plentiful
- The link of saloons with drunkenness, violence, and prostitution provoked a moral reaction which led eventually to the formation of the Anti-Saloon League and nationwide Prohibition

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**Saloon** - Wild West towns had high ratios of saloons to population. In 1880, the silver mining town of Leadville CO had a saloon for every 80 persons, a gambling establishment for every 170, a bordello for every 200, and a church for every 5,000. Frontier drunkenness was widespread, and, if newspaper accounts were accurate, involved in about half of all the homicides and a good deal more than half of all the assaults and brawls. Fights often took place in saloons, gender-segregated institutions of sociality and vice, where drinking men came together. Saloons multiplied occasions of conflict, both because of the imperative of guarding one's honor before other men, and because of the presence of gambling, prostitution, prizefighting, and other activities which inspired drunken competition and arguments. Saloons drew gamblers and pimps anxious to relieve other patrons of their money.