

## **Tavernocracy: Tavern Culture in Ohio's Western Reserve**

Adam Criblez  
*Purdue University*

"I am sure the Americans can fix nothing without a drink. If you meet, you drink; if you part, you drink; if you make acquaintance, you drink; if you close a bargain, you drink; they quarrel in their drink, and they make it up with a drink. They drink because it is hot; they drink because it is cold. If successful in election, they drink and rejoice; if not, they drink and swear; they begin to drink early in the morning, they leave off late at night; they commence it early in life, and they continue it, until they soon drop into the grave. To use their expression, they way they drink, is 'quite a caution.' As for water, what the man said, when asked to belong to the Temperance Society, appears to be the general opinion: "It's very good for navigation"

Frederick Marryat<sup>1</sup>

In 1776, American colonists revolted against perceived inequities unjustly thrust upon them by a tyrannical English monarchy. After defeating the colonial power, Americans faced a new, perhaps more daunting, task; creating a new form of government based on tenants of freedom and a vague ideal known as republicanism. With limited precedent from which to draw, Americans heatedly debated what it meant to be an American citizen, what true virtue and republicanism stood for, and how this fledgling nation should be run. From the very beginning, this public discourse and private conversation poured forth from one of the nation's most important centers for the dissemination of information; the rural tavern<sup>2</sup>.

Within the tavern, men carried out the traditions of the revolution. They discussed

American politics, drank American beverages, and escaped their defined roles in society through the close, if often forced, intimacy of the early nineteenth century tavern. It was in these walls that settlers discussed what it meant to be American and parlayed words into action.

In 1796, Moses Cleaveland led an intrepid band of surveyors to the shores of Lake Erie as representatives of the Connecticut Land Company. The land under survey was termed New Connecticut by the company, but came to be known more commonly as the Western Reserve. Today this area occupies much of northeastern Ohio and provides an opportunity to view the early nineteenth century tavern in a unique social and cultural setting.

More specifically, this study focuses on Cleveland, later a sprawling metropolis but during the early nineteenth century a small pioneer village, and its surrounding rural area. While the chronological beginning of this study coincides with the arrival of Moses Cleaveland and the first surveying party of the Connecticut Land Company, it concludes with the presidential election of 1840. By 1840 the tavern had slipped from its position as the key information center in communities and Cleveland began its transformation into a leading population center. Faster newspaper coverage and the advent of rail travel forced changes in the tavern which changed the institution from a focal point of antebellum society into a member of the periphery. While still a vital institution up to and through the Civil War, the rural tavern, like stagecoaches and tri-cornered hats, became more history than current event. But between 1796 and 1840, the tavern occupied both the figurative and literal center of life on Connecticut's

Western Reserve.

Until recently, historians have either overlooked, vilified, or candy-coated the impact of taverns and have not given scholarly consideration to this key political, social, and cultural institution<sup>3</sup>. But within the last ten years, scholarship on this topic has increased dramatically. David Conroy, Peter Thompson, and Thomas Brennan demonstrate this transformation in their respective works on colonial Massachusetts, Philadelphia, and Paris<sup>4</sup>. Conroy argues that taverns served to usurp power from elites and transferred it to the masses, who then used it to foment and incite revolutionary ideals carried to the streets. Contrarily, Brennan views taverns as diffusing revolution, rather than encouraging it. In both studies, historians argue the centrality of taverns in dictating social and political objectives while presenting a unified position to elite leaders who remained fearful of the power wielded by taverns. Thompson veers from these two positions, contesting that instead the egalitarianism provided within the tavern led to the ideology and near-utopian idealism expressed in the Pennsylvania state constitution. These three historians constitute the pedigree from which this study is drawn and provide legitimacy for many of the ideas expressed herein. Yet unlike their analyses, this work focuses on a rural, rather than urban, setting in the nineteenth, rather than late eighteenth, century.

At the heart of the works of Conroy and Thompson is the implicit understanding that Americans used republican ideology both to legitimize the Revolution and to carry on

following its successful conclusion. Great debates took place in Philadelphia and Boston about the meaning of republicanism and the manner in which this nation should be run. Similar debates, though not as publicized, occurred in tap-rooms across the country. Indeed political debate dominated much of the conversation occurring within the walls of rural taverns on the Western Reserve.

During the early Republic period of American history, politics transformed from an elite-controlled system of deference into one where politicians actively pursued votes. Political candidates recognized the importance of the tavern and harnessed its political activism through patronage of explicitly partisan public houses. Taverns were identified not only by reputation for strong drink, but also by the political backing of its owner. Scanning the Cleveland area newspapers from the first forty years of the nineteenth century demonstrates this partisan nature. Dunham Tavern, now an historic museum, gained notoriety as a Whig stronghold in Cuyahoga County. Rufus Dunham, its proprietor, held various Whig meetings and elections there, adamantly supporting Harrison in his bid for the presidency in 1840. Whig meetings important enough to garner newspaper coverage were also held at the Ohio House, Alonzo Pangburn's Tavern, Billings' Tavern, and Hildreth's. Although traditionally a Whig stronghold opposition parties did warrant some consideration on the Western Reserve as the Franklin House hosted meetings of the Democratic Republicans during the same electoral period<sup>5</sup>.

Famed traveler Alexis de Tocqueville recognized these moments declaring that "in the

West a candidate must go and harangue his partisans in the public places, and drink with them in the taverns.”<sup>6</sup> Over glasses of whiskey and beer, politicians lobbied for votes from the local populace. The tavern also served as a debating center for more unofficial political action.

In recollections written late in his life, Lora Case of Hudson related a story told by William McClelland, a frequent patron of David Hudson’s tavern that occurred during the early nineteenth century. McClelland, a “witty Irishman”<sup>7</sup> argued about the merits of slavery with fellow bar members. Although the story related by Case is somewhat anecdotal, its purpose is clear. McClelland was a staunch abolitionist and used the tavern as a forum for legitimate discussion of his political and moral beliefs.

Similarly, during the crippling financial Panic of 1837, a unique blend of tavern patrons encountered common ground on a nationally important topic. A group of men, including a local doctor and a traveler, discussed the Panic. The traveler “spoke contemptuously” of the script being circulated in place of currency and proceeded to tear several such notes apart, not realizing that those particular notes belonged his fellow patron the doctor. This brief glimpse into tavern conversation provides insight into political activism of the antebellum period. The traveler was so outraged at the lack of secure national financial institutions that he defaced money owed him.

In another rare insight into tavern conversation, the future of a Brooklyn Township doctor was debated and discussed within the walls of an unnamed tavern. One evening in early

1837, Nathaniel S. Ludington was called into the tavern by two men, one of whom was Abraham Williams. Williams revealed to Ludington that his wife, Ann Williams, had been sexually victimized at the hands of a local physician. Ludington suggested that the problem of the “abuse committed upon the body”<sup>8</sup> of Mrs. Williams be resolved without attracting unnecessary public attention. The case went to court and Mr. Williams received a monetary settlement from the unnamed doctor with the understanding that no public attention would be given to this occurrence. The importance of this incident cannot be understated. In this instance the tavern was used as a diffusive location where the situation could be calmly discussed and strategy developed to resolve this potentially explosive conflict. Whether or not Ludington and Williams consumed alcohol during their meeting remains unrecorded in the annals of history. Alcohol was, however, an inseparable part of early tavern culture.

One feature of the antebellum tavern that is often overlooked is what the tavern patrons chose to drink. Their tastes, while drawn from European backgrounds, are as different as America from England. Although a child of English law and custom, America blended together, if not always amicably, men and women of all nationalities. The Germans brought lagers to the United States and the Russians brought vodka.<sup>9</sup> From England came ales while rum was imported from the Caribbean. Despite the myriad of possibilities, especially as the nineteenth century progressed, Western Reserve settlers chose to drink two decidedly American beverages. Hard cider and whiskey dominated the palettes of early American tavern patrons and again

demonstrates certain principles of republican freedoms espoused in Revolutionary tradition.

Hard cider, which gained national prominence in William Henry Harrison's historic 1840 presidential campaign, provided the Reserve with a readily available, inexpensive, high alcohol content beverage. Tavern keepers often held multiple jobs to supplement somewhat sporadic or sparse income provided by their public houses. These men usually turned to farming and regularly produced apples for both personal consumption and sale. Connecticut cider was considered "specially famous" in the years preceding the American Revolution and immigrants to the Reserve, often from this state, brought their love and knowledge of this American-style beverage to the area.<sup>10</sup> As evidenced by the imagery used to propel Harrison to the presidency in 1840, hard cider elicited distinctly American connotations.

The McIlrath account book, kept by Abner McIlrath of Cleveland, contains numerous entries of patrons buying barrels of cider from the tavern.<sup>11</sup> Cider consumption such as that recorded by McIlrath became closely tied to American virtues. It was a national beverage, relatively unpopular in Europe. Yet despite its impact on the presidential election symbolically providing chronological closure to this work and on Americanizing, republican society in general, cider was not the top beverage of the nineteenth century Midwest. That title goes to whiskey, the preferred choice of most Western Reserve settlers.

Unlike rum, a popular nineteenth century beverage in New England and in Europe, which required ingredients alien to northeastern Ohio, whiskey may be produced with relative

ease from excess grains, of which Ohio contained an abundance. Transforming grains into whiskey, especially before internal improvements brought rail and faster trade into the area, proved much more cost effective than transporting the entire excess to market or converting grains into more perishable products.

Not all of the whiskey produced on the Western Reserve was transported from the area. In fact local tavern patrons readily consumed much of it. According to William Cooper Howells, a middle class Quaker, men consumed whiskey more than any other beverage, including water. Although his religious society forbade its consumption and production, he astutely noted that, "the custom was for every man to drink it [whiskey], on all occasions that offered."<sup>12</sup> The McIlrath account book substantiates Howells' claims. Settlers and travelers alike consumed quantities from pints to quarts to gallons of the inebriating spirits. Howells' observations are further backed by the account book of John Brough.<sup>13</sup> The overwhelming majority of the entries in Brough's account book list "wiskee" or "wiskey" as the beverage of choice. Summing up her disgust with alcohol, one Western Reserve woman bemoaned that it was, "easier to get a gallon of whisky than an equal amount of rain water."<sup>14</sup>

Greater insight is provided into the culture fomented by antebellum taverns through observing their beverage choices. Rather than import pricey foreign beverages, as did the English with Caribbean rum, Western Reserve tavern patrons primarily consumed whiskey and cider, both readily produced from locally available goods. Although an important part of

English life throughout the 1800s, American taverns were decidedly less-socially rigid and, as with the whole of America, much more blended than its counterparts across the Atlantic.<sup>15</sup>

Observant European travelers noted this difference as Frederick Marryat once again relates:

To one accustomed to the exortion of the inns and hotels in England, and the old continent, nothing at first is more remarkable than to find that there are more remains of the former American purity of manners and primitive simplicity to be observed in their establishments for the entertainments of man and gorse than in any portion of public or private life.<sup>16</sup>

The tavern, like much of the Western Reserve, was “stamped...with a Yankee character, but the meld of more recent arrivals left it with an all-American look and feel.”<sup>17</sup> The Americanizing aspect of the tavern cannot be overlooked, but it relies heavily upon the blending together of social classes in what Paton Yoder aptly describes as a “stewing kettle” of various backgrounds and interests.<sup>18</sup>

If political and social matters gained disproportionate verbal attention from taverngoers deep in their cups, the underlying egalitarianism and meanings of their interactions should garner greater historical attention from astute scholars. James Walker, an early traveler, future preacher, and admitted temperance advocate, frequented bars for a unique reason. His rationalization provides a great deal of insight into the social, egalitarian, and ultimately republican aspect of the institution.

And as I boarded at the hotel, and he [an unnamed friend of Walker] spent a good share of his leisure time there, our drinking...may be supposed to have been a pretty extensive

patronage of the bar. Strange as it may seem, I never had, and never contracted, a taste for ardent spirits. I drank because it was universal social usage; and friendship and good fellowship were supposed to be indicated by the invitation to partake of the poisonous beverage.<sup>19</sup>

Walker admittedly did not drink to inebriation. Nor did he consume alcoholic beverage because he enjoyed the taste of the “poisonous beverage” or the feeling accompanying its ingestion.

Rather he drank at the tavern solely for its redeeming social quality.

In fact, it is this leveling or socially equalizing feature of the tavern most often decried in newspaper articles promoting temperance on the Western Reserve. One such article claims that, “A man who, on meeting a number of friends or acquaintance at a Tavern...calls for his bottle and urges all to drink, and will accept no excuse: they *absolutely must* drink”.<sup>20</sup> Not surprisingly, taverns and shared drinking constituted a social event then as it does today. Although temperance advocates wanted readers to believe that these men were forced to sit at taverns and drink alcoholic beverages, statements made by men like Walker refute such claims. In fact, sifting through the anti-alcohol rhetoric written by such temperate souls provides even more insight into the shared social experience and equalizing effects of the rural ordinary. Later in this same article, the author asks rhetorically “Do we find those who are so noble in the bar-room and grog-shop, equally generous on other occasions?”<sup>21</sup> The tavern incited untypical behavior in its patrons. Within the tavern, all were equal and there was a level of respect for one another in reciprocal treating. The author of that essay answers his or her own rhetorical question with a pointed response.

Call on one of these liberal, urgent distributors of spirits, to take a share in a social library, to sign a dollar or two for the support of a school in a poor neighborhood, or even for the support of the Gospel; and he really cannot —he has nothing to spare. But he is a noble-spirited, whole-souled fellow, —he calls for his bottle, and does his full share at making Drunkards”<sup>22</sup>

The author’s disapproval of the tavern is clear, yet the very things which he or she abhors demand further examination. Tavern patrons were more generous while in their cups. In fact it was noted that, “people urge[d] each other into the habit of intemperance.”<sup>23</sup> The shared experience of the tavern entails far more than this author could ever understand. It transcended alcohol consumption and inebriation. This shared experience and the republican virtues extolled by the tavern spilled from the institution into the streets and into the hearts of its patrons. James Flint, a Scotsman, traveled through the area in 1820 noting that:

accustomed to mix with a diversity of company at tavern, elections, and other places of public resort, they do not well brook to be excluded from private conversations. On such occasions, they exclaim ‘This is a free country’ or a ‘land of liberty,’ adding a profane oath.<sup>24</sup>

Within the walls of the tavern, one could speak openly without fear of social position or ostracization from society. In fact they took umbrage to exclusion from discussions, public or private. Such social equality prompted noted alcohol historian W.J. Rorabaugh’s exclamation that, “All were equal before the bottle.”<sup>25</sup>

Despite the egalitarianism aspect of the tavern promoting republican values, it would be irresponsible to write an essay promoting the redeeming social and political qualities of the tavern without considering the social ills wrought by public drinking houses during the early

Republic. Rural ordinaries functioned as escapes from socially confining shackles and a place to espouse overtly republican, egalitarian ideals, but did so while promoting “a drunkard’s life, a drunkard’s grave, and a drunkard’s place in hell”.<sup>26</sup>

Emily Nash kept a diary during her childhood on the Western Reserve. In it she recorded her abhorrence of liquor and her increasingly frequent incidents dealing with those under its influence. In 1824, Nash and her beau, Peter Beals, traveled by sleigh to visit neighbors. Nash described the resulting events in her journal:

I noticed that Peter was fond of stopping at every tavern to get a glass of sling [an iced drink made with liquor, water, sugar, and usually lemon juice]. On the way home he stopped at every tavern. He began to feel lively and could not talk plain.<sup>27</sup>

Peter Beals’ frequent patronage of the taprooms on the Western Reserve ended the budding relationship between two young lovers. Nash concluded that, “he was fond of sling – too fond I think. I shall dispense with his company after the sleigh ride.”<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps even more telling is a report from “Cottager”, the pen-name of a regular columnist in the *Western Intelligencer*. Cottager relates the following story. “Two days since, while passing a bar-room door, I hear considerable loud talk, and profanity; the landlord said, ‘— if you do not leave the house, I will horsewhip you.’”<sup>29</sup> The unfortunate drunkard stumbled out of that particular tavern and into another whose keeper followed through on this threat. The man “benumbed by liquor...till quickened by the lashes which he received from the whip of the landlord.”<sup>30</sup> It would be difficult to somehow spin this incident into a pro-tavern argument.

Keepers are vilified here as brutal men that both serve the intoxicating beverage and then punish their patrons for its excessive consumption. Drunkenness, while an unromantic byproduct of tavern life, can be viewed in a positive manner and was by many observers in that it promoted republican freedoms and social leveling.

Frederick Marryat, unlike Cottager or Emily Nash, understood the possible positive cultural interactions incited by intoxicated Americans. Marryat eloquently detailed the potential positive impact of social drinking in his heralded diary, published shortly after his 1837 travels through the United States. "There is something grand in the idea of a national intoxication," Marryat began. "A staggering individual is laughable, and, sometimes, a disgusting spectacle; but the whole of a vast continent reeling...is an appropriate tribute of gratitude for the rights of equality and the *levelling spirit* of their institutions."<sup>31</sup> Although this statement was written in response to a Fourth of July parade in New York City, it very well could have described a similar occasion in northeastern Ohio. On the Western Reserve, drunkenness brought Americans together in a shared experience. Over pails of grog and barrels of ale, men discussed, debated and argued. Despite such irresolute behavior, many men, while intoxicated, stepped out of class bounds and broke down social barriers.

The Revolution, and the subsequent creation of a national character and identity, was seen by colonists as a revolt against the existing social order. Although certainly republicanism then, as now, evokes various reactions, it was generally agreed that social equality constituted a

main point in this vague overriding ideology. In the tavern, social disparity was blurred, if not entirely disappearing. Harry Ellsworth Cole eloquently describes such relative classlessness in the following statement.

About many a tavern bar of a stormy night there were assembled the neighborhood farmer, garbed in homespun; the prosperous squire, always conscious of his dignity; the tired traveler, welcome purveyor of distant news; and the parson, who had precious little influence when political debate became the storm center of conversation. All came to lend eager ears to happenings of the neighborhood, to meet new arrivals, and to exchange opinions.<sup>32</sup>

This indiscriminate blending of classes is supported by other early observers.

Henry Leavitt Ellsworth consistently decried rural accommodations in his journals detailing his travels through the region. At nighttime, when tavern life had finally subsided and the coals in the fireplace glowed low, guests used ordinaries as places of respite. According to Ellsworth, "they lie down wherever they [find] the most convenient place. All, however, in the same room, man and wife, children, acquaintances, strangers, and servant."<sup>33</sup> Such indiscriminate blending appalled Ellsworth, but provides scholars of the tavern with much needed insight into the nature of the institution. Tavern keepers and most guests did not comment on such blending and the information substantiating claims of egalitarianism is tenuous. Yet there are instances where keepers overtly displayed their classless patronage.

The Mansion House, kept by Amos Spafford and Noble Merwin, gained renown as Cleveland's most important public house. Distinguished visitors ranging from former New York Governor DeWitt Clinton, future Presidential candidate Lewis Cass, and Chief Black

Hawk reportedly patronized the establishment. Yet despite such esteemed clientele, the Mansion House also hosted Fourth of July parades, militia meetings, and a “grand dinner” open to the general population of Cleveland as well as itinerant travelers commemorating the opening of the Ohio Canal.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, when the North American House opened its Cleveland operation in 1838, proprietor J.E. Lake wanted to “inform the citizens of Cleveland and the traveling community in general, that he has taken the above house.”<sup>35</sup> Explicitly advertising to the general population, rather than to a particular class, strengthens claims of egalitarianism within the Western Reserve public house.

Despite the relative classlessness and lack of elite control, the tavern was not a utopian escape from all social barriers. Though its “roll call” included a vast array of people, “ranging from the foreign nobleman to the tavern hangers-on who could not hold a job even in the early Midwest,” there were certain distinctions that produced a distinct effect on the “tavern democracy” of the Western Reserve public house.<sup>36</sup>

Women were publicly excluded from the robust claims of egalitarianism and republicanism espoused in northeastern Ohio rural taverns. Except as barmaids, domestic assistants, or in rare cases, as the sole proprietor of the institution, women remained outside the social sphere of the public drinking house. That is not to say, however, that they served no purpose in the tavern. Tavern mistresses cared for itinerant travelers and local clients as she would her own family by feeding them, providing a soft bed in which to sleep, and handing out

drinking to those wishing to imbibe. Several women even rose to modest local prominence as tavern-keepers, challenging the stereotypical dependent female archetype. Paulina Kellogg became the official tavern keeper of Kellogg's following her husband's death in 1830. Instead of leasing the property, as had Minerva Merwin after her husband died one year earlier, the Widow Kellogg "continued to keep the tavern, managed the business and settle[d] the estate."<sup>37</sup> Women like Kellogg were in the vast minority. Rather than be included into this dominantly male sphere, women fought it. They were, however, "fighting an uphill battle against the very public institution that had made both the Revolution and the ascent of republican ideas possible in the first place."<sup>38</sup>

Women were among the most vehement opponents of the tavern, and especially of the drinking occurring therein. This poisonous beverage, in their opinions, eroded the moral character of the men in society. Despite their potential impact as tavern mistresses or barmaids,<sup>39</sup> women are not mentioned in any tavern account books or by any observers except as overnight guests. If they did engage in the heated debates or unique social climate of the tavern, their voices are silent and little, if any, evidence exists that they participated as more than mere bystanders in the tavern democracy of the early nineteenth century.

Certainly there is substantial evidence through which to vilify the tavern as nothing more than a house of ill-repute and as a social blemish on republican progress. There are scholarly interpretations taking this perspective. These historians side with the temperance

advocates of the early nineteenth century and discredit taverns as anti-republican centers slowing the transformation of America from a loose collection of colonies to a world power.<sup>40</sup> There is, however, greater evidence supporting the claims that taverns symbolized important republican values despite their potentially socially disruptive qualities.

The earlier studies of Conroy, Thompson, Brennan, and others, substantiate the central claim of this essay; that taverns were exceedingly important community centers where the public at-large wielded tremendous political and social power. Village leaders dictated tavern location and operation. They licensed reputable keepers, often community leaders, and punished men selling liquor without their permission.<sup>41</sup> That is not to say, however, that taverns were manipulated by elites as a form of social control. In fact, elites often feared taverns as hotbeds of insurrection. The American Revolution was, in a large part, carried out from within its walls and the government understood its potential power.<sup>42</sup>

Although the keepers were generally community leaders, records indicate that they were almost always elected or appointed following tenure as a tavern keeper. A multitude of men ran for political office and used their positions as information connoisseurs to vault themselves to high community standing. Philo Scovill, for instance, ran the Scovill Tavern, which "sustained an enviable reputation for clean beds and sumptuous fare."<sup>43</sup> In 1826, Scovill lost an election for sheriff but rebounded by gaining election the following year as County Commissioner. Less than a decade later, Scovill ran on the Whig ticket and won a position as

the state representative for the area. Similarly, Nathaniel Doan immigrated to the Reserve, opened a tavern, and soon gained renown as a postmaster, Township Clerk, Militia Lieutenant and Captain, and justice of the peace.<sup>44</sup> Such men vaulted to public office through their positions as tavern keepers. Thus taverns were not the domain of the elite, but rather a vehicle used by Western Reserve settlers to further their political careers or to simply debate the merits of such matters.

As the 1830s came to a close, rapid changes swept Ohio's Western Reserve. The first tracks of rail were laid in that decade, revolutionizing the newspaper industry. With such rapid news travel, taverns lost some of their importance as vital information centers. Rather than congregate at the local bar to hear the latest news from England or the eastern states, or perhaps for a bit of local gossip from the tavern keeper, interested residents could read the Herald or the Herald-Gazette, or a number of similar publications.

In addition, taverns transformed from rural jack-of-all-trades into more specialized institutions. Where taverns had once dominated, now separate hotels, bars, and restaurants dotted the industrializing landscape of northeastern Ohio. Instead of the local public house serving slow moving horse-drawn carriages, rail tracks sped travelers to major city centers. While Cleveland and Akron boomed with increased patronage to city taverns, the rural institutions so fundamental to daily life earlier in the nineteenth century faded into memory. On the Western Reserve, as in David Conroy's Boston and Peter Thompson's Philadelphia, taverns

underwent a fundamental transformation. Even travelers recognized these shifts as James Flint astutely noted that “the larger towns having taverns of different qualities, and different rates of charges, a distinction of company is the natural consequence.”<sup>45</sup>

Lorenzo Carter’s first humble ordinary would have seemed backward and perhaps uncomfortably socially blended to a canal voyager eager to see William Henry Harrison speak from the steps of the American House in 1840.<sup>46</sup> More telling are the specific calls for varied patrons at the Railroad Hotel and Commercial House near the end of the 1830s. The Railroad Hotel advertised for railroad employees and passengers while the Commercial House sought out “cattlemen and farmers” rather than an indiscriminate clientele<sup>47</sup>

Taverns also chose to relocate or close if they were not near enough a suitable thoroughfare. Small, rural ordinaries were forced to either shut down operation or face massive decreases as, prior to rail travel, “the American stage coach stop[ped] every five miles to water the horses and brandy the gentlemen!”<sup>48</sup> The tavern and stage-coach were forever tied; they reached their glory together. Once travel conditions improved, taverns on old stage coach roads suffered.<sup>49</sup> Thus, although public drinking remained an important aspect of American culture, it no longer occurred in the same setting studied herein.

The early nineteenth-century tavern provided a situation not regularly seen outside its walls. It enabled men from all social classes to gather in economically and socially diverse company to debate the problems of the day over glasses of whiskey while approaching

intoxication. The equitable nature and pro-republican ideology promoted through this shared social interaction gained importance to settlers and travelers alike. There, one could discuss what it mean to be American, drink freely from the cup of liberty, and groggily extol the virtues of republicanism. The tavernocracy created in this unique institution, perhaps more than any other similar establishment, demonstrates the fundamental importance of the tavern to both the Western Reserve and the early Republic of the United States of America.

NOTES

1. Frederick Marryat, *A Diary in America With Remarks on Its Institutions* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 389.
2. Throughout this work I will interchangeably use the terms 'tavern', 'bar', 'ordinary' and 'public house'. I avoid using the terms 'saloon' and 'hotel' because they elicit decidedly post-bellum connotations.
3. Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969). Wood is one of many vilifying taverns as restricting republicanism following the American Revolution and argues that they served to tear apart, rather than unite, Americans.
4. David W. Conroy, *In Public Houses: Drink and the Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). Thomas Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution: Taverngoing & Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).
5. *Historic Sites of Cleveland: Hotels and Taverns*, (Columbus: The Ohio Historical Records Survey Project, 1942).
6. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey to America*, trans. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer. (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1971).
7. Lora Case, *Hudson of Long Ago: Reminiscences* (Hudson: The Hudson Library and Historical Society, 1963).
8. Works Progress Administration Professional and Service Division District Four, *Annals of Cleveland Court Record Series. Vol. 1, 1837-1850* (Cleveland: Cuyahoga County Archives Survey, 1939), 45-6.
9. Gregg Smith is one of the pre-eminent beer historians active today. His insights into the effects of beer throughout American, and world, history are truly fascinating. See Gregg Smith, *Beer in America: The Early Years—1587-1840* (Boulder: Siris Books, 1998).
10. Alice Morse Earle, *Stage-Coach and Tavern Days* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1930),

126.

11. "McIlrath Tavern. East Cleveland. Account Book, 1809-1846," MS 1165, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland.

12. William Cooper Howells, *Recollections of Life in Ohio, From 1813 to 1840* (Cincinnati: The Robert Clarke Company, 1895).

13. "Brough, John. 1802-1821. MSS 565. Collection of Account Books, 1770-1920," Container 2, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland.

14. Gertrude Van Rensselaer Wickham, *Memorial to the Pioneer Women of the Western Reserve* (Cleveland: The Judson Company, 1924), 199.

15. See Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200-1830* (London: Longman, 1983). See also Micheal Chevalier *Society, Manners & Politics in the United States* (Boston: Weeks, Jordan and Company, 1963) and Marryat, *A Diary in America* for further information on the differences between public houses in the Old World and in the New.

16. Marryat, *A Diary in America*, 373.

17. Harry F. Lupold and Gladys Haddad, *Ohio's Western Reserve: A Regional Reader* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1988).

18. Paton Yoder, *Taverns and Travelers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969).

19. James B. Walker. *Experiences of Pioneer Life in the Early Settlements and Cities of the West* (Chicago: Sumner & Co., 1881).

20. *The Western Intelligencer* (Hudson), 15 November 1828.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Early Western Travels: 1748-1846*, vol 9 (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904).

25. W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979)
26. *The Western Intelligencer* (Hudson), 5 December 1827.
27. *The Journal of Emily (Nash) Patchin Halkins Pike from Plainfield, Massachusetts in 1812/3 to Troy Township, Geauga County, Ohio, 1812-1888*, (Chardon: Chardon Library); quoted in Robert A. Wheeler, ed., *Visions of the Western Reserve: Public and Private Documents of Northeastern Ohio, 1750-1860* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000)130.
28. Ibid.
29. *The Western Intelligencer* (Hudson), 5 December 1827.
30. Ibid.
31. Marryat, *A Diary in America*, 62.
32. Harry Ellsworth Cole, *Stagecoach and Tavern Tales of the Old Northwest* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1930).
33. Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, *A Tour to New Connecticut in 1811: The Narrative of Henry Leavitt Ellsworth*, ed. Phillip R. Shriver (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1985); quoted in Wheeler, *Visions of the Western Reserve*, 105.
34. *Historic Sites of Cleveland: Hotels and Taverns*, 452.
35. *Herald* (Cleveland), 15 November 1839.
36. Yoder, *Taverns and Travelers*. Yoder's work is quite scholarly and does touch briefly on taverns in northeastern Ohio. He studies such a vast geographical area, however, that his conclusions merit reconsideration. He, like Rhea Masnfield Knittle, require a fresh look and are in need of re-analysis. Their works, while dated, should not be discredited merely on age. See Rhea Mansfield Knittle, *Early Ohio Taverns: Tavern-sign, Stage-coach, Barge, Banner, Chair and Setee Painters* (privately printed, 1937).
37. *Biographical History of Northeastern Ohio* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1893).
38. Kevin C. Murphy "Public Virtues, Public Vices: On Republicanism and the Tavern". On-line. [www.kevincmurphy.com](http://www.kevincmurphy.com) Accessed 13 April 2004.

39. David Hudson's daughter Anner "often presided as barmaid" in his Hudson tavern as did many other family members of tavern keepers. Taverns were a family-run operation for the duration of this period of study and represented a unique opportunity for women to act as a type of entrepreneur while safely within the confines of the cult of domesticity. Their roles, however, did not spill into political discussions or republicanism, the two central themes of this work. See Grace Goulder Izant *Hudson's Heritage* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1985), 109-110 and Kym S. Rice, *Early American Taverns: For the Entertainment of Friends and Strangers* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1983).
40. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787*; Dan Rodgers, "Republicanism: the Career of a Concept," *Journal of American History*, June 1992.
41. *Historic Sites of Cleveland: Hotels and Taverns*. See also Adam Criblez, *From Grog-Punch to Hard Cider: Tavern Culture on Ohio's Western Reserve, 1796-1840*. Thesis, Kent State University, 2003.
42. Smith, *Beer in America*.
43. Gertrude Van Rensselaer Wickham, *The Pioneer Families of Cleveland: 1796-1840* (Evangelical Publishing House, 1914), 176.
44. *Historic Sites of Cleveland: Hotels and Taverns*.
45. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*.
46. Major Lorenzo Carter opened the first tavern in Cleveland in 1798. His served the first generation of settlers who moved to the area in search of land and opportunity.
47. *Historic Sites of Cleveland: Hotels and Taverns*, 204.
48. James T. Austin, *An Address Delivered before the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance* (Boston: privately printed, 1830), 6; quoted in W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 18.
49. Earle, *Stage-Coach and Tavern Days*, 253.