

Washington made his first attempt at such a position in 1755, at the age of twenty-three, seeking a seat in the Virginia Assembly. Although he would never express such a sentiment publicly, he believed that, despite his youth, he was the best man for the job in terms of both ability and attitude. The voters, however, did not; they rejected Washington overwhelmingly. There were several reasons for the defeat, but none more important than the fact that, a year or so earlier, the aspiring legislator had insulted the very people he hoped would elect him.

The French and Indian War was raging at the time, the two title groups allied against British territorial interests in the New World, hoping at the least to stop further expansion, at most to reclaim lands that the colonists had already usurped and settled. Washington distinguished himself quickly, forcing a French evacuation of Fort Duquesne, within the boundaries of today's city of Pittsburgh, and leading his men with a daring and grasp of strategy far beyond what could be expected from one with such limited military experience. Word of his triumph spread quickly; all who knew the young soldier assumed a bright future.

Shortly afterward, there was a lull in the fighting and Washington returned to his home colony of Virginia, hoping to rest, tend to his farm, and renew some friendships. It was not to be. Through one of those friends he learned that the nearby county of Frederick was about to be attacked by small, guerrilla-like bands of Native Americans. Some of them were already on the march, and were expected to join forces with others in a day or so, pooling their weapons and their wills. They would attack, Washington's friend told him, in less than a week.

The young soldier made his way to the county's largest town, Winchester, and not only warned the residents of the danger but urged them to resist it, to take up arms and hold their ground. He even offered to lead the local militia into battle himself, despite the fact that the jurisdiction was not his. He spoke to the men as inspirationally as he could, talking of duty and courage and responsibility to future generations.

Winchester wanted none of it. The militia colonel told Washington that his men had already heard rumors of the impending assault, and had decided on flight, not fight. Only if the natives cut off their routes of escape would they put up resistance, and most of them assumed it would not be enough, that the aggressors would overpower them and

they would die with their families. It was not what they wanted, they said to their colonel, but if it was what fate had in store, so be it.

Washington was incensed. What kind of soldiers *were* these? He berated them for their pessimism, their cowardice, their unwillingness to act in their own behalf; it was a monologue of uncharacteristic severity and passion. Biographer James Thomas Flexner tells what happened next:

Washington then went to a stable and tried to impress [the word, in this context, means to compel service for military purposes] a horse. The owner barred his way. He drew his sword and took the horse. Immediately, he was surrounded by a mob of inhabitants who, wishing to keep their animals for their own personal escapes, offered to "blow out my brains."

Washington managed to "stare them down," however, and rode out of Winchester as fast as he could, cursing the mob of inhabitants for their lack of fortitude.

But when the next election came along, the mob found itself with an unexpected chance to get even, for there on the ballot, next to the names of people that Winchesterites either admired or tolerated, was a single name they had lately come to revile: George Washington. For abusing them verbally, they avenged themselves electorally. Hugh West won the assembly seat that year with 271 votes. Thomas Swearingen came in second with 270. Washington finished a distant and discredited fourth with 40, which perhaps comprised the total number of Frederick Countians unfamiliar with the details of the Winchester incident. Washington was bitterly disappointed; he had not realized how deeply the feelings against him were running. He was also determined not to fail the next time.

Two years later, and two years wiser, Washington stood again for the Virginia Assembly, relying on the passage of time and the growth of his reputation to have eased hard feelings, and on rum, punch, cider, wine, and beer to have persuaded those who still *did* resent him to let bygones be bygones. Washington saw to it that 144 gallons of these beverages, in all their glorious potency, were delivered to as many polling places as possible, and he further made sure that supporters of his were stationed alongside the beverages to invite voters to indulge before making up their minds about the candidates.

Dip your mug, friend, one would say.

Colonel Washington does not want you to make so important a decision while suffering the pangs of thirst, another would chime in.

Yet another would urge that the mug be drained to the last drop, thirst being a malady known to return within seconds of what seemed a cure.

The voters drank. Still, the colonel was concerned, edgy. To the man who served as what we would today call his campaign manager, Washington had previously expressed the hope that he had not spent with "too sparing a hand."

He had not. The eventual father of his country got 68 more votes than runner-up Thomas Bryan Martin. West, seeking reelection, found himself 100 votes in arrears of the winner and Swearingen 350 behind. W. J. Rorabaugh analyzes the results of Washington's strategy as follows: "For his 144 gallons of refreshment, he received 307 votes, a return on his investment of better than two votes per gallon."

Washington did not originate the practice of trading booze for votes. It was a common one at the time, and was known to many, more colorfully than clearly, as "swilling the planters with bumbo." More often than not, the office-seeker joined the planters in swilling, the man and his constituents loading up their glasses and then tipping them back like friends of long standing, toasting the former's success at the latter's hands, and as soon as the glasses were empty refilling them and toasting again.

But it was not just the quantity of alcohol made available by a candidate that mattered at the time; no less important to the outcome of an election was his "manner and style of dispensing it." Rorabaugh writes of a contest a few years later than Washington's and many miles to the south. "The favored aspirant in one Mississippi election," he relates, "poured drinks for the voters with so much personal attention that it seemed like he would win. After his liquor was gone, his opponent, a Methodist minister, announced to the crowd that he also had whiskey to dispense, but that he would not be so stingy as to measure it out. 'Come forward, one and all,' he invited, 'and help yourselves.' The generous person won."

In addition to revealing generosity, a candidate supplied liquor to those at the polls, and drank a fair measure of the product himself in their presence, to demonstrate his "good nature and congeniality in his cups . . . thereby confirm[ing] his egalitarianism." In other words, he

showed that he was a leader by providing the spirits and that he was one of the boys by quaffing them openly and sociably. In a fledgling republic, it was an unbeatable combination.

Not to mention a much-appreciated show of gratitude. There was a feeling at the time "that voters deserved recompense when so many traveled so far to exercise the suffrage." The higher the proof, the greater the recompense. And the larger the turnout; as historian Arthur M. Schlesinger has written, the presence of alcohol at the colonial polling place had "the beneficial effect" of drawing large crowds to democracy.

Still, not everyone approved. As early as 1705, a Virginia statute forbade this kind of electioneering. In 1753, an editorial in the *New York Independent Reflector* "expressed dismay that so many persons should barter their franchise for 'Beer and Brandy.'" And in 1791, a Frenchman named Ferdinand Bayard was journeying through Virginia, keeping a sharp eye on the customs of the new nation and reporting back to his friends at home, who were in the midst of a revolution of their own. He took in the doings at the polls with dismay. He saw "the candidates offer drunkenness openly to anyone who is willing to give them his vote." He saw the voters accept the offers, the buying and selling of democracy, and for so ignoble a medium of exchange. He did not know that the United States, so admirable by most contemporary accounts, had so unsavory a side.

Had M. Bayard gotten to North Carolina in his travels, he might have been even more appalled. It was reported that, on one election day in the colony, a man seeking office drove up to his local courthouse in a wagon "with a couple of tin cups, and a ten-gallon keg between his legs." He jumped to the ground, secured his horse, and began energetically emptying the keg into the cups, circulating the cups among the voters until the keg was empty and he had won their virtually unanimous support at the polls. That it was registered with foggy eyes and shaky hands, and that some of the registrants did not remember their support the next morning, probably did not trouble the new electee.

And a few decades later, a fellow named George D. Prentice was asked to report on the polls in another southern state for a publication called the *New England Weekly Review*. It was an assignment he never forgot. "An election in Kentucky lasts three days," Prentice wrote, never having been exposed to such a marathon before, "and during that period

whiskey and apple toddy flow through our cities and villages like the Euphrates through ancient Babylon."

The most prominent foe of campaigning by whiskey and toddy in early America was James Madison, who, running for reelection to the Virginia Assembly in 1777, decided to take the high road: he would not debase the electoral process by bribing the voters with alcohol, would not create a carnival atmosphere at a serious venue. He explained that "the corrupting influence of spirituous liquors, and other treats" was "inconsistent with the purity of moral and republican virtues." It was an admirable position, a principled stand; Madison's reward was a smashing defeat at the polls, his first and only. Like Washington, he found a brilliant career in politics delayed by insufficient regard for constituent thirst.

Others objected to booze at the polls because it deemphasized the content of a candidate's character and granted him office for the content of his casks. "I guess Mr. A. is the fittest man of the two," opined a woman of the time in South Carolina, analyzing the results of a local race, "but t' other whiskies the best." It was the latter for whom the woman voted.

With the passage of time, the use of alcoholic beverages to purchase elective office became less and less common. Existing laws against it came to be enforced; new laws were passed and taken seriously by authorities; dignity and positions on issues began to count more than persuasion by potables. Yet the tradition persisted in a few races and in a few places, not only through colonial times but into the nineteenth century and even, in one comical instance, up to the dawn of the twentieth. In his book *The Big Spenders*, journalist and bon vivant Lucius Beebe tells of a man who went pointlessly, and expensively, overboard. It was "Montana's peerless Senator William Andrew Clark who, when seeking election to the United States Senate at the turn of the [twentieth] century, miscalculated by a comma the population of the city of Butte, Montana, and provided the free distribution among 45,000 enfranchised voters sufficient whisky for 450,000."

After his years as president, years when an estimated one out of every four dollars that Americans spent on household expenses went toward the purchase of alcohol, George Washington retired to Mount Vernon, settling into a routine to which he had aspired ever since his hiatus during the French and Indian War. He rose with the sun, ate and drank

breakfast, and rode across some of his 8,000 acres to inspect both crops and men, diligent about it, Cincinnatus in his natural habitat. Either before or immediately after the ride, he spoke with his gardener, asking him how the shrubs were doing, what flowers should be planted next and when, whether patches of the lawn needed to be fertilized or sections of the fence mended. The gardener was a man whom Washington respected greatly, and whom he compensated not only in cash, but with "a generous allotment of rum," if not the expensive Barbados variety.

Later, perhaps after a nap, Washington took a walk, retracing some of his morning paths. Most days, he followed the walk with a cup of tea. Upon finishing, he might receive visitors; he did so almost daily, and when night fell, he wrote letters by candlelight, keeping up as best he could with the voluminous mail he received himself.

He also made his own liquor, not only for personal consumption but for sale, a decision he owed at least in part to his estate manager, James Anderson, "who persuaded Washington to turn over one of his unprofitable small farms to raising rye for whiskey. Soon Washington had a thriving operation that turned a profit of £83 in 1798, producing not only whiskey but apple, peach and persimmon brandy."

In addition, Washington built a brewery on the grounds to produce a molasses-based beer, which he savored both in the tasting and the sharing with guests. They would drink it at meals, and sometimes unaccompanied by food, as they sat in large chairs on the veranda, looking out on the Potomac and across to the federal city, still under construction but already bearing the name of Mount Vernon's master.

Thomas Jefferson installed a brewery at Monticello, but seems to have paid little attention to it, especially after his wife died, for it was she who looked after its operations and most often partook of the beverage. Jefferson was a devotee of the grape, becoming an expert on both viticulture and vintages and advising not only the two presidents who had preceded him, but the two who followed, on their own wine purchases.

His cellar was a particular source of pride, probably the best-stocked in Virginia, if not the entire nation, and Jefferson designed and built a dumbwaiter specifically to ferry bottles of libation from its shelves to the dining room; without it, his staff would have had to make too many trips. Jefferson usually drank three glasses a day, surely agreeing with Galileo, whom he had read and long admired, that wine was "light held together by moisture," and delighting in its magical properties as he and his companions sipped and sipped and sipped.

Samuel Adams worked at, and later managed, his father's brewery in Boston.

John Hancock, in his college days, availed himself of Harvard's beer-making capabilities, many times sitting in his room and washing down his studies until late at night. His preference, though, was to imbibe more publicly; he was a frequent presence in the taverns that surrounded the school, and in later years became a fixture at a variety of others. "John Hancock drank here" was a claim that could probably have been made more often than "George Washington slept here."

John Adams "emptied a large tankard of hard cider" on most mornings, usually as early as 4 a.m., before either sitting down to breakfast or starting in on his books. Cider was, in fact, a beverage he had begun to appreciate during his own days at Harvard. "I shall never forget, how refreshing and salubrious we found it, hard as it often was." In later years, Adams would also come to appreciate the beer that was made in Philadelphia, and, partaking of that city's supply of Madeira, "found no inconvenience in it." He also spoke, although a little less directly, on behalf of rum, saying, "I know not why we should blush to confess that molasses was an essential ingredient in American independence."

Still later, and to Adams's everlasting sorrow, his son Charles, depressed by his inability to earn a living as a lawyer, would die of a number of ailments that seem to have been caused, at least in part, by alcoholism. It is perhaps for this reason that old man Adams rewrote his personal history. He said, contrary to the record, that in his younger years he had been "fired with a zeal against ardent spirits, and the multiplication of taverns, retailers and rum shops . . . and grieved to the heart to see the number of idlers, thieves, sots and consumptive patients . . . in those infamous seminaries."

Adams's older, more distinguished son, John Quincy, did not quite achieve the alcoholic state. "All his life," though, writes Richard Brookhiser, "he would be a serious drinker—as an old man he would correctly identify eleven out of fourteen Madeiras in a blind tasting."

Patrick Henry tended bar in Virginia and happily yielded to requests from his customers to play the violin while they quenched their thirsts and altered their perceptions.

John Jay seldom went to a social gathering of any sort without taking up a position at the punch bowl, acting as unofficial greeter as he served cup after cup of liquid fire to himself and others.

James Otis "had a big eloquent mouth which looks, in his portrait,

capable of taking in all the liquor credited to him." In truth, it took in so much liquor that he was eventually stricken with gout, the drinker's curse, which was the major torment of his life until he lost his mind for a number of other reasons with fifteen years still to live.

Before his legendary ride, Paul Revere is reported "to have stopped at the home of Isaac Hall in Medford [Massachusetts]. Hall, a captain in the minutemen and a rum distiller by trade, gave Revere two drafts of rum to fortify him for his journey." His memory was not affected. It was *one* if by land and *two* if by sea, and Revere easily kept the numbers straight.

Martin Van Buren was born in his father's tavern.

John Marshall was "a hearty, gregarious fellow who liked to drink with his friends in the local taverns." And when he ran for a seat in the U.S. Congress, the taverns were his favorite campaign stop.

William Penn, on the other hand, did not care for such establishments. They were too noisy for him, too rambunctious. But he knew how important alcohol was to his fellow citizens, and did not disapprove. In fact, he would occasionally enjoy, or at least tolerate for the sake of amiability, molasses beer or a punch of rum and water.

Ethan Allen, a man of "gaudy legend" and a prodigious drinker, even by the standards of the time, was once said to have gotten even more potted than usual, knocking down one Stonewall after another at Stephen Fay's tavern in Bennington, Vermont, although not seeming the worse for wear to those who chugged along with him. Immediately afterward, he and his cousin Remember Baker said farewell to Fay and set out on a long, perilous journey through the woods. Thereupon sprang up one of those gaudy legends, which one believes at his own risk.

When the drinks began to wear off, the two lay down beside a sun-warmed rock and fell into deep sleep. Some time later, Baker was awakened by an ominous, dry, hissing sound. Turning his head, he saw to his horror a huge rattlesnake coiled on Allen's chest, striking again and again at the arms, the shoulders, and the neck of the still sleeping giant. Springing to his feet and grabbing his gun, Baker moved cautiously to prod the snake away. Before he could do so, however, the snake slithered onto the grass, its lifted head weaving, its body fantastically writhing. Utterly astounded, Baker saw that the snake was looking at him cross-eyed! Then, incredibly, it emitted a mighty hiccup and hiccupped again as it disappeared into a blueberry thicket. Baker was still staring in frozen astonishment when Ethan Allen

awoke and began to curse the “damnable blood-sucking mosquitoes” that had bitten him in his sleep.

James Madison might have disapproved of alcohol at the polls, but he welcomed it at other venues and on other occasions. Twelve years after losing his bid for a Virginia Assembly seat, Madison, now a member of the new nation’s House of Representatives, introduced a bill to encourage American brewing by placing a heavy tax on imported beers. It passed easily. Madison was among those who toasted the measure’s success, although perhaps too much; Gouverneur Morris thought the man “a fool and a drunkard.”

At the Washington, D.C. boarding house where justices of the Supreme Court resided when court was in session, an edict passed by the jurists themselves permitted wine to be drunk only in wet weather and then only for the sake of health. After his term in Congress, now serving his nation as chief justice, John Marshall dissented. From time to time, he would tell his associate Joseph Story to look out the window and check the skies. More often than not, Story reported sun, an absence of clouds, fair weather as far as the eye could see. Marshall adapted nicely. “All the better,” he told his younger benchmate, “for our jurisdiction extends over so large a territory that the doctrine of chances makes it certain that it must be raining somewhere.”

“The chief was brought up on Federalism and Madeira,” Judge Story later explained, “and he is not the man to outgrow his early prejudices.” Story went on: “The best Madeira was labeled ‘The Supreme Court,’ as their Honors the Justices used to make a direct importation every year, and sip it as they consulted over the cases before them every day after dinner, when the cloth had been removed.”

Benjamin Franklin was also fond of Madeira, and why not? It was a hearty beverage, holding up well to the rigors of importation from the West African island that gave the drink its name, and it was also able to withstand extremes of temperature better than other wines. Franklin’s preference was widely known among his companions. One day, one of them asked for advice, wanting to know how he could “preserve my small-beer in the back-yard? My neighbours are often tapping it of nights.” Franklin needed but a moment. “Put a barrel of old Madeira by the side of it,” he said, “let them but get a taste of the Madeira, and I’ll engage they will never trouble thy small-beer any more.”

Franklin knew as much about oenology as he did electricity and penny-saving. But he believed that the blessings of wine, and indeed

of all alcoholic beverages, could be realized only through moderation. Franklin warned repeatedly of immoderation’s perils. “Nothing more like a Fool,” he wrote as Poor Richard, “than a drunken Man.” And “he that drinks fast, pays slow.”

Chief among the blessings, he thought, was eloquence. “’Tis true,” he said, “drinking does not improve our faculties, but it enables us to use them; and therefore I conclude that much study and experience, and a little liquor, are of absolute necessity for some tempers, in order to make them accomplished orators.”

Franklin was known to put aside his Madeira from time to time in favor of other thirst-quenchers, long enough on one occasion to devise the recipe for “a passable spruce beer.” But it was wine that meant most to him, wine that captured his heart and tickled his fancy, wine that inspired him to write the lyrics for songs of praise. Among them may be found the following verses:

’Twas honest old Noah first planted the Vine,
And mended his morals by drinking its Wine;
And thenceforth justly the drinking of Water decry’d
For he knew that all Mankind by drinking it dy’d.
Derry down—

From this piece of History plainly we find
That Water’s good neither for Body or Mind;
That Virtue and Safety in Wine-bibbing’s found
While all that drink Water deserve to be drown’d.
Derry down—

Wine bibbers, Franklin believed, should thank their gods for the way they had situated elbows in human arms; because of it, “we are enabled to drink at our ease, the glass going exactly to the mouth.”

In the pages of his newspaper, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, which, by the way, would occasionally urge women to soak their breakfast toast in milk rather than beer, Franklin published an alphabetized list of more than 200 synonyms for the intoxicated state, phrases ranging from “he is Addled” to “he’s had a Thump over the Head with Sampson’s jawbone” to “he got the Indian Vapours”; from “he’s drunk as a Wheel-barrow” to “he makes Indentures with his Leggs” to “he has Sold his Senses”; from “his Head is full of Bees” to “he’s Eaten a Toad & a half for Breakfast” to “he Knows not the way Home.” As much as any other single piece of evidence, as much as the prevalence of taverns or the ubiquity of booze at polling places or the constant clanging of the bells that rang

for bitters, the extensiveness of Franklin's list testifies to the role of alcoholic beverages in colonial America, to their importance to people like himself and Washington and Jefferson, to Adams and Marshall, to Henry and Revere, to Jay and Hancock—in other words, to people who made up, in the words of Arthur Schlesinger Sr., “the most remarkable generation of public men in the history of the United States or perhaps any other nation.”

Eventually, Increase Mather's phrase came to be incorporated into law, several statutes in early America referring to alcoholic beverages as “a good creature of God” and insisting that they be treated with appropriate reverence. And some people seemed to credit them with the Almighty's own powers. One such fellow, his name lost to history and his use of language at times jabberwockian, wrote the following about rum or whiskey or hard cider:

It sloweth age; it strengtheneth youth; it helpeth digestion; it cutteth flegme; it abandoneth melancholie; it lighteneth the the mind; it quickeneth the spirits; it strengtheneth the hydropsie; it healeth the strangurie; it pounceth the stone; it expelleth the gravel; it puffeth away ventosities; it keepeth and preserveth the head from whirling, the eyes from dazling, the tong from lipping, the mouth from snaffling, the teeth from chattering, and the throat from rattling; it keepeth the weason from stifling, the stomach from wambling, and the heart from swelling; it keepeth the hands from shivering, the sinews from shrinking, the veins from crumbling, the bones from aching, and the marrow from soaking.

The belief that booze was medicinal—or, as in the preceding case, that it comprised an entire pharmacopoeia—was not unique to the first American settlers. It goes back at least as far as the ancient Greeks, who would steep mandragora root in wine and provide it to patients before surgery. They would also pour wine directly onto wounds, believing it to be a healing agent, and would at other times blend alcohol with opium as an analgesic. A similar faith in the curative powers of hooch is recorded in the Bible, where, to cite but one of many examples, Paul advises Timothy to drink wine for a recurring but unspecified illness. And in medieval times, there were physicians who prescribed beer or wine or brandy for longevity, among them the father and grandfather of the rabidly austere monk, Savonarola.

Thomas Jefferson was no less a believer. When his daughter Maria fell sick with an unrecorded malady, Jefferson saw to it that she ate lightly and drank sweet wine; no other course of treatment, he felt cer-

tain, offered a better chance for recovery. Other Americans turned to beer, thinking it the only sure cure for scurvy and the likeliest remedy for headaches and sore muscles.

More commonly, though, our forebears relied on stronger stuff for what ailed them, and few things ailed a woman as much as the pains of bringing new life into the world. In England, “from the moment she realized she was pregnant she had dutifully taken the advice offered by the renowned London midwife Mrs. Jane Sharp in her childbirth manual and drunk a glass of sage ale every morning to strengthen the womb.” When labor began, she sipped wine that had been warmed with sugar and spices, hoping “to keep up her spirits through the long ordeal.” In the New World, it was rum that she most likely imbibed, usually mixed with milk.

Rum-soaked cherries were the prescription for a cold, hot brandy punch for cholera, rye for the shakes, and rye or almost any other kind of whiskey for colic, laryngitis, and aging, as well as for “the trembles, the slows, the puking fever, the tires,” not to mention “snakebite, frosted toes, and broken legs.” Spirits taken in the morning would ward off malaria, according to the eighteenth century's conventional wisdom; later in the day, a good stiff belt would energize the lethargic, cheer the depressed, and soothe the beleaguered—or at least distract them for a while. Taken in quantity, large quantity, “horse doses of brandy or rum,” the good creature got even better, serving as an anesthetic, and it was enough to make many an early American get over his fear of surgery, if not actually long for the touch of blade to skin.

Nor was there a reason, thanks to alcoholic beverages, to fear excesses of temperature. Andrew Barr writes that “in the northern colonies, European settlers drank spirits in the belief that these would help to protect them against the extremes of the climate. In cold weather, they drank spirits because they gave them a feeling of warmth. In hot weather they thought that spirits warmed their bodies after sweating: They believed that sweat conducted heat from the inside to the outside of their bodies, leaving the inner parts in need of warmth and fortification.”

In the majority of cases, Americans poured their beverages into their mouths and allowed them to flow profusely south. Sometimes, though, they applied them externally, dipping pieces of cloth into a bottle of rum or vat of hard cider and attaching them to the afflicted parts of the body, permitting the liquor to seep through the skin, to work its wonders by absorption.

In fact, one searches in vain for a disorder which, in the view of the men and women of long ago, would *not* yield to the restorative powers of liquor. It was aspirin and penicillin, cortisone and antibiotic, all rolled into one—the first wonder drug, the great American hope against nature's perversities, the focal point for belief in a healthier life.

(Well, one does not search *entirely* in vain. It is a digression, but an irresistible one, to point to something that never occurred to the colonists, but did come readily to the minds of earlier Americans, specifically, to a remote tribe of Mayans known as the Huaztecs. More than a thousand years before the first white man appeared on their shores, they were treating certain kinds of diseases with wine enemas. The patients would "lie down and, extending their legs, have the wine poured into their anus [sic] through a tube until the body is full." Other tribes in this part of the world would administer enemas of tobacco smoke, the medicine men separating the rectal aperture as far as they could and exhaling their pipes like smokestacks into the regions just beyond. These practitioners, as is apparent, were a wildly experimental lot in their quest for health and vitality. Give them an opening . . .)

The reasons for the American belief in alcohol as tonic are easily discerned, and the possible divinity of its origin is only part of it. Because beer and wine and liquor had such potent tastes—because they puckered the lips, burned a path down the gullet, and exploded in the stomach like tiny powder kegs—it was thought that they would toughen the body and thus better enable it to fight off disease. And the stronger the beverage, the stiffer the fight it would provide. Hard work was, after all, better for a person than idling, and the principle seemed similar; swallowing most kinds of liquor was a form of intense labor for the internal organs, and would toughen them correspondingly.

The converse, meanwhile, seemed equally true. Water, because it was nondescript in taste, sliding into the stomach with little more than its temperature to call attention to it, barely more noticeable than the air a person breathed, would reduce strength. Because it was clear, it lacked nutritional value; because it was free-running and insubstantial, it could not perform any salutary duties for the body. These views were so widely accepted in the colonies that, at one point, a life insurance company raised its rates 10 percent for the *nondrinker*, believing him to be "thin and watery, and as mentally cranked, in that he repudiated the good creatures of God as found in alcoholic drinks."

But even if Americans had known the truth about spirits—that in

certain quantities they are more of a palliative than a cure, and in larger quantities not even a palliative but a likely cause of all sorts of physical malfunctions—they would have downed them anyhow, perhaps no less eagerly, and not just because the taste and aftereffects excited them. In addition, other beverages of the time frightened them, or at least gave them pause, and in most cases with good reason.

Water. More than just nondescript, it could be dangerously dirty, an invitation to diphtheria, typhoid, or at the very least an upset stomach. There were few means of filtration in centuries past and they were not reliable; and there was no way to purify other than boiling. People who lived close to rivers would drop buckets into them, scoop out the water, and let it stand until the sediment sank to the bottom. Only then would they dare to taste it, and the process sometimes took several hours, with the dirt finally drifting down to occupy a quarter or more of the container. Even so, enough contaminants remained to pose a threat to well-being, and for that reason others eschewed the method altogether and simply waited for rain. They collected it in cisterns and drank their supplies until they gave out, stale and dusty though the beverage eventually became.

The purest water of the time came from springs, but these were usually found in lowland areas, whereas most settlers, wary of malaria and other diseases associated with such terrain, not to mention various and unsavory insect hordes that infested such places, preferred to build their cabins on high ground, a location that also afforded them greater visibility, and thus protection, when the French or Indians or British chose to attack. As a result, if spring water was their beverage of choice, they had to carry it uphill, and for most Americans the hardships of transit far outweighed the pleasures of consumption.

In New York there was a different problem, caused by "shallow brackish wells [which] made it certain that the drinker of water would not only quench his thirst but also be given a 'physic.'" In addition, he would have to endure a taste that was metallic, or possibly acidic, and one that lingered unpleasantly in the mouth long after the body had absorbed the fluid. No wonder one New Yorker of the era said that water served primarily as "an excuse to many persons for continuing the excessive use of strong drink."

Residents of other large cities also had to contend with the problem of water-as-laxative, and in Washington, D.C., sometime after the colonial era, the populace chose to keep its water in that condition

rather than raise taxes to remove impurities. Why pay extra money to sanitize a beverage that no one wanted to drink in the first place? Why not just give up on the stuff and spend smaller amounts of money for safer, more stimulating drinks?

In thousands of smaller communities, the local stream did double duty as the local dump, and so contained almost as much garbage and human waste as it did water; the thought of drinking from such a reservoir did not even occur. Except, from time to time, as a punitive measure; forcing a few gulps of the stream down someone's throat was, on occasion, the legal response to civic offenses.

There were also those who objected to water because it appeared so commonly in nature. It was one of the few liquids human beings drank that did not require processing of some sort, and it was processing, many of them thought, which made a drink truly drinkable, adding flavor and color, aroma and punch. And as if all that were not enough, some of the New World settlers, among them men and women who would occasionally sneak a few sips of water in the privacy of their homes, refused to serve it to others, afraid that their guests would think them too poor to afford something from a bottle or mug or keg.

In short, water was dismissed by the majority of people in the colonial period as being "lowly and common; it was the drink of pigs, cows, and horses. Or, as Benjamin Franklin put it, if God had intended man to drink water, He would not have made him with an elbow capable of raising a wine glass."

Tea. In the words of a Pennsylvania pastor early in the eighteenth century, it was "a drink very generally used. No one is so high as to despise it, nor anyone so low as not to think himself worthy of it." Yet, for some people, tea was too expensive, especially when embargoes or warfare at sea reduced the flow of imports, and when taxes on the leaf, the result of a Parliament-sanctioned monopoly and the cause of the Boston Tea party, were too high.

In addition, tea had even more of an image problem than water. For of all the drinks available in the New World, tea was the one most associated with foreigners, especially the ever more despised British. Colonists pictured them drinking their spiced-up water in expensive china cups, their fingers curled daintily, sipping tiny portions through tightly drawn lips as they lazed in their parlors or drawing rooms and dreamed up new taxes for their brethren in America—it could not have been a more unappealing vision to the rough-and-tumble forgers of a

nation in the wilderness. And some of those forgers, in the years following the Revolutionary War, were so self-consciously proud of their independence that, regardless of what they thought about the taste of tea, they would no sooner drink it than they would smoke a pipe or take a pinch of snuff, which were also thought to be affectations of the haughty peoples across the ocean.

Yet even some of the British had begun to turn against tea. The author of *A New and Compleat Survey of London*, published in 1762, believed that too much of the liquid would be harmful to "the Stomachs of the Populace, as to render them incapable of performing the offices of Digestion; whereby the Appetite is so much deprav'd." And there were British and Americans alike who believed that "hot bread and too free indulgence in tea" would make a person's teeth fall out, which happened in those days with alarming frequency no matter what beverage he or she drank. The heat of the tea, people suspected, softened the gums and loosened the teeth. They also feared that it would wear away the enamel on the tooth, thus making a shambles of a mouth that had wanted nothing more than a few drams of refreshment.

Even among colonists who had once had a liking for tea, and it was said that in certain circles a gentleman or lady would find the time for two cups a day, the beverage eventually lost favor, especially after an American boycott of leaves from England. When it was over, some of the citizenry found themselves having so successfully adjusted to tea's absence that its presence no longer appealed.

Coffee. It is true that coffee had been gaining in popularity. It is true that the places in which it was consumed had begun to rival taverns in civic import. Scott Liell writes the following of the mid-1770s: "Many of the pressing issues that occupied the minds of Philadelphians found their fullest airing between the walls of the city's coffee houses, and it is no surprise that a frequent subject of discussion during that time was politics."

Yet coffee was even muddier than water, or so it seemed to many settlers of the New World, especially those unskilled at brewing it. It was even more expensive than tea in most of the colonies because it had to be imported from farther away. And since it was served just as hot as tea, people wondered whether it, too, in the long run, would diminish a person's dental capacities.

Milk. Too perishable. In the days before refrigeration, it was almost impossible to ship or store, and in the days before pasteurization, it

was too often unhygienic. Americans were not a fastidious people in their early days, nor were they knowledgeable about, or in fact even remotely aware of, germs and bacteria and the microscopic worlds of menace that gave birth to them. But people drew the line at conditions that were obviously unwholesome, at beverages that smelled or changed color or seemed to harbor signs of pestiferous life. As J. C. Furnas writes, "Since neither the cows' rear ends nor the milker's hands got proper cleaning, the bacteriological content of all Colonial dairy products would probably have frightened a modern public-health laboratory into fits."

Not only that, milk was like the other nonalcoholic beverages of the period in that it provided a poor accompaniment to the monotonous regularity of the American diet. Hominy, hoe-cakes, porridge, bread, mush, grits, sometimes a seed cake or suet pudding—these were among the foods most commonly eaten by our colonial ancestors, and neither alone nor in combinations were they of much interest to the taste buds. Fresh fruits and vegetables were available, but only where, and when, grown; like milk, produce could not be safely transported or held for future use. Chicken and pork and beef could also be had, but not without inconvenience; salt was the only preservative widely used at the time and meat had to be slathered with it, virtually embalmed, if it were to keep for even a modest length of time. Other spices, which might have compromised the saltiness or enlivened the flavor of the meat, were hard to find and too expensive for the average budget.

Then there was the way the foods were prepared. The colonists did not have ovens; they either fried their meals over a fire or boiled them in huge pots, usually after dipping the individual courses into "extraordinary rivers of butter" or "oceans of grease." Afterward, they were tossed into the water and heated to the approximate temperature of perdition, so that the underlying food lost all semblance of taste and only the fat-laden coating, which by now could not decide whether to ooze like a wound or congeal like a rock, registered on the palate. Such a diet created a powerful thirst, and as far as the majority of Americans was concerned, only a special kind of beverage—distilled or brewed or fermented, not collected from rivers or rainstorms or the lower extremities of cows—had the zip and fortitude to slake it.

Ironically, no one slaked in the early days of the new nation as the clergyman slaked, servants of the Almighty also proving to be servants to

the grape or grain in liquid form. Sometimes it seemed as if sobriety troubled them more than Satan, as if they believed an empty bottle to be more of a threat to their earthly mission than an unrepentant sinner. Their souls might be bound for life everlasting, but their livers were not even going to make it out of *this* world in one piece.

Or *was* it ironic? Perhaps not. After all, with alcoholic beverages being perceived as their Boss's creature, men of the cloth might have believed it their duty to show a certain devotion to them, and in the process come to confuse intoxication with piety. Or they might have felt more acutely than most Americans the pangs of spiritual malaise in the forests and valleys of the New World, the Supreme Being sometimes seeming to be absent from an outpost as remote as theirs.

Whatever the reason, Reverend David Dudley Field of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, always served wine and brandy to his fellow clerics when they met to discuss the faith. There is no evidence that they imbibed to excess. But, said Leonard Woods, a cleric of the early nineteenth century as well as a professor of theology at Andover Seminary, "I could reckon among my acquaintances forty ministers . . . who were either drunkards, or so far addicted to drinking, that their reputation and usefulness were greatly impaired, if not utterly ruined." Some Americans, no less repelled by the situation than Woods, claimed that the reason church services were held but one day a week was that preachers were too nobbled the other six even to find the church, much less write a sermon and dispense salvation.

If they were not luses before pledging their service to the Lord, they might well achieve the status a few moments later. Records show that at one minister's ordination in Woburn, Massachusetts, the supply of beverages included "six and one half barrels of cider, twenty-five gallons of wine, two gallons of brandy and four gallons of rum." There is no indication that any was left over, nor is there reason to suspect this occasion of being atypical. In colony after colony, ordinations had the same kind of reputation for being rambunctious, if not even perilous, as do high school graduation parties or fraternity initiations of the present, and in Virginia the ceremonies so often turned unruly that clergymen were fined half a year's salary for such behavior, not just to teach them a lesson but to cover damages to church property.

In part, the man of God was so susceptible to alcohol because of the way he passed his days. In Herbert Asbury's words, "even if he had wanted to do so, he could scarcely have remained temperate and still

performed, satisfactorily, the duties of his office." During the week, those duties consisted mainly of calling on the families in his congregation to provide counsel, boost spirits, encourage belief, and remind people to worship with him on Sunday. But as was the custom in those days, and has been noted previously in this volume about people from all walks of colonial life, at each home he visited the preacher was offered a libation. "Add brandy to the amount of the capacity of the Bishop," says a recipe of the time for punch. If the bishop said no he was inhospitable; if he said yes he was soused. For most clergymen, the latter was not only the more politic choice, but the more pleasing. Those who did not want to admit this to themselves could rationalize their intoxication by believing it to be a means to an end: they were adopting the habits of the heathen to ingratiate themselves, and thereby increase the odds of converting them to the true faith. It was a stretch, to be sure, but some clergymen, especially the thirstier ones, were able to make it easily.

And besides, the cups were at least on a few occasions raised in the Almighty's behalf. How could a preacher refuse an opportunity to thank Him for blessings already bestowed or to ask for blessings in the future or to toast the prospects of dear ones recently departed? Just as the native tribes of America sent their prayers to heaven on trails of tobacco smoke, so did the first European colonists in the New World sometimes rely on streams of alcohol, the altered mental state thereby produced being so different from the normal condition of the psyche that it seemed to be evidence of divine visitations. Did such constant imbibing send "half the preachers round Albany to drunkards' graves," as was charged at the time? So be it. Nobody said the Lord's work was easy.

But neither was life an untroubled path for laypersons of the period. These were not just people who had left their homeland behind; these were people who had taken up arms against it, a far more drastic step. We might call the formal hostilities between America and England the Revolutionary War or the War of Independence, but it was in reality a civil war, with all of the angst and dislocation peculiar to that kind of conflict. One out of every four colonists alive during the struggle, or his or her parents, had been born in Britain, and for these people the pain was especially acute. Some of them welcomed the fighting, others were opposed, but almost all were, to one degree or another, horrified at the turn of events, amazed that war had actually broken out even though

they had long seen it coming and could calmly and comprehensively list the reasons. They felt irrevocably cut off from family and friends across the Atlantic, and separated as well by wrenching differences in ideology and outlook that were being expressed more and more violently all the time. Alcohol did not just accompany these men and women when they plotted their freedom; it consoled them for the plotting's dreadful necessity.

It also stimulated the desire for freedom. In 1733, after many decades of disagreement over a variety of issues, virtually all of which involved money in one way or another, the British Parliament decided to tax one of the most important of all colonial foodstuffs. "Without molasses," writes John C. Miller in his book, *This New Man: The American*,

New Englanders could not have enjoyed such delicacies as Boston baked beans, brown bread, and Indian pudding; Pennsylvanians would have been the poorer for want of shoofly pie and apple pandowdy; and Southerners would never have known the delights of molasses jack [and] corn pone. . . . Molasses was also used for medicinal purposes, curing meat, and pickling fish, and it was one of the basic ingredients of the soft drinks popular everywhere in the colonies.

But even more important, molasses was the basic ingredient of rum; in fact, almost half of the molasses brought to the New World from the West Indies went to the distilleries that produced the American national beverage. As a result, people were so upset about the tax that they did not even bother to protest or overtly rebel. Rather, they gave the Molasses Act the ultimate sign of disapproval; they ignored it, pretended it did not exist, neither seeing nor hearing nor speaking of the evil. They refused to pay the assessment and turned instead to product that they obtained illegally. "Far from being considered a crime," it has been written, "smuggling became an act of patriotism, and New England's sea captains became artists at sneaking their cargoes past British customs inspectors. In a single year, 1763, some fifteen thousand hogsheads of molasses were imported into Massachusetts, but taxes were paid on only a thousand."

The following year, the Molasses Act was repealed, although the tax was partially reinstated later in a different form, thereby keeping this particular set of hostilities alive.

But the British were not through. Seventeen-sixty-four was also the year in which Parliament passed the Sugar Act, one of the purposes of which was to impose so steep an excise duty on such sweet wines as

Madeira that Americans would stop drinking it and turn instead to port. It was the Portuguese who profited from Madeira; proceeds from the sale of port would go to England.

The colonists were irate. "Some of them boycotted both port and Madeira," Andrew Barr reports, "declaring that they would 'think themselves better entertained with a good glass of beer or cider.' Others drank smuggled Madeira instead." Let the British disregard the American thirst; the Americans would disregard the British mandate.

It was all to be expected. The citizens of the New World colonies needed their Madeira. They needed their rum. They needed their beer and cider, their syllabubs and manathans, needed them when ties with the Motherland were fraying even more than when they were strong. For they had started life anew in a part of the world in which every person was displaced, every institution untried, every parcel of land untamed and forbidding. Some goods could not be had; some services did not exist. England was a nation fully developed and efficient in its functionings; the colonies, in their youngest days, were more like an obstacle course. How were the settlers to cope? Where was the reassurance provided by familiar scenes and customs of long standing? Why had the Americans put an ocean between themselves and the only homes they had ever known?

There were insecurities of other kinds as well, more narrowly related to specific occupations, and these too led the colonists to beverages of serious intent. Farmhands drank because of the transitory nature of their employment and their unfamiliarity with the soil in this distant landmass. Laborers drank because their tasks seemed harder in a such a place, unlubricated by routine. Stagecoach drivers drank because of their rootlessness and their passengers because of the uncertainty of their destinations, the coach stopping "every five miles to water the horses and brandy the gentlemen."

Doctors drank because they cured so few patients. Patients drank because they were so seldom cured. City dwellers drank because rapidly growing populations left them in turmoil and countryfolk drank because of loneliness and students drank because, as is the case at present, they were living their rebellious years.

And then, as the nineteenth century turned, a new anxiety appeared at the horizon, a giant with an even more gigantic shadow, a presence without precedent in all the world's history. It was the Industrial Revolution, and some Americans, although not knowing what to call it—the

term, in fact, does not seem to have been coined until 1848—or even precisely when it appeared, cowered at their initial intimations of it, reacting instinctively, sensing at some level that in time it would steal their jobs and their ways of life and never return them again. Its galloping technology seemed not only relentless but totally oblivious to consequences; new textile machinery was being invented, as was the cotton gin, the power shovel, the cast-iron plow, the cutting torch, the sliding rest lathe, the thresher, the steamboat, and the submarine—one of them right after the other, from the beginning of the century to the end. Factories were springing up to process cotton, refine sugar, roll brass, manufacture cold-cut nails, and mill flour, the latter in some cases equipped with a wondrous thing called an automatic production line. It was a brave new world, the first one ever, and living in it, even in its very first days, seemed to require as much courage as it had taken years before to fight the war for independence.

Each of these developments was a kind of death knell. Each of them weakened the value of a previously existing trade by enabling it to be performed faster and more cheaply, and usually with fewer people involved, than had been possible in the past. Human beings had never expected such a thing, this obsolescence of the individual rather than of the object. What were they to do? Was there any place to turn for consolation?

In fact, there was. There were a lot of places, and the colonists turned to them desperately: to bottles and barrels, to cups and glasses and mugs, to taverns and inns that were tried and true and comforting. And, as things worked themselves out, the very kinds of industrial processes that were distressing Americans and making them even thirstier than they used to be were at the same time improving the quality of drink to which they now felt so driven. "The Industrial Revolution touched the distilled spirits industry as well as other manufacturers," writes Oscar Getz. "New and better methods of distillation were invented. Distillers, whether on farms or in towns, expanded their facilities, using more and larger stills, more and larger mash tubs and running the finished product into larger barrels instead of into jugs and crocks."

Technology taketh away; technology giveth.

It has been said that, for all these reasons, Americans of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were more in need of psychiatric assistance than any generation before or since. But, of course, there *were*

no psychiatrists at the time—with the possible, unofficial exception of bartenders with generous ears—nor were our forebears the kind of people to have relied on psychiatrists even if they *had* existed. They were too self-reliant, too inner-directed. What they could not accomplish themselves, they assigned to their God; what their God could not accomplish, they would leave undone, assuming that that was what He had intended all along. They did not turn to booze because it provided answers, but because it made the questions easier to ignore.

In time, the importance of alcoholic beverages to Americans was reflected in the marketplace. At the end of the eighteenth century, a bushel of corn brought the farmer who grew it twenty-five cents. More often than not, this was barely enough to justify the time and effort. But if the farmer converted his grain to whiskey, he could sell it for four times as much money, and sometimes more than that. “Even if the farmer did not do his own distilling,” we are told, “and had to give a commercial distiller half the output in payment for his service, he could increase the value of his corn by 150 percent.” Since the eighteenth century was a bountiful time for American agriculture, most farmers had more than enough grain available after providing for their families and livestock to make the production of whiskey an irresistible prospect.

In addition, whereas dampness or mildew could destroy grain in storage, booze would not spoil no matter how long it was kept. Sometimes its taste would even improve with age. And when the potion was ready to be sold, it could be transported with relative ease. A horse that carried only four bushels of grain to market could carry the liquor made from twenty-four bushels.

Getting smashed was even being kind to animals!

In 1791, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, himself an infrequent drinker, got an idea. The new country was spending a lot of money to defend itself against attacks from the people who were its original inhabitants. Why not raise that money, at least in part, by placing a tax on whiskey? Why not, in other words, make revenue dependent on thirst? It seemed to Hamilton, and to others who shared his notion, that this would ensure all the men and materiel the United States ever needed to keep angry natives at bay.

Hamilton also thought that the tax would have other beneficial side effects. For one, it would even eliminate the advantage that whiskey had recently gained in the marketplace, as the previous year a tax had been

imposed on molasses and rum. For another, it would force at least a few of his countrymen to cut back on their guzzling. “The consumption of ardent spirits,” he once said, “is carried to an extreme which is truly to be regretted, as well in regard to the health and morals as to the economy of the community.”

The proposal, though, was a controversial one. Some people opposed it on principle, as they had opposed similar taxes originating in the British Parliament over the years. Others opposed Hamilton’s measure on the grounds that defense was already financed by existing levies; better to spend those monies more prudently than to seek new sums. Jefferson, who tended to dislike anything Hamilton supported, called the tax “an infernal one,” and Albert Gallatin, who lambasted the bill in the Pennsylvania Assembly, claimed it would be an unfair burden on farmers, whose importance to the nation was such that the government ought to be easing their loads.

The opposition failed, however, and Congress initially set the levy at seven and a half cents for each gallon of whiskey that was distilled from domestic grain. Before long, it went to nine cents, and climbed to eleven cents per gallon if the liquor was produced from an imported product like molasses. An additional charge of sixty cents a year was added for each gallon of capacity in a farmer’s still. Hamilton thought these numbers perfectly reasonable.

Farmers did not. As Gallatin had predicted, they were outraged. They had just fought a war to free themselves from a government that taxed them excessively without their consent; were they now to allow the same thing to be done by another government, one which had ostensibly been created to right the previous wrongs? Were they to accept injustice because their new oppressor had a familiar face and a nearby address? They were not, they decided, and several of the farmers wrote to Congress to explain their opposition, claiming that the new law

appears unequal in its operation and immoral in its effects. Unequal in its operation, as a duty laid on the common drink of a nation, instead of taxing the citizens in proportion to their property, falls as heavy on the poorest class as on the rich; immoral in its effects, because the amount of duty resting on the oath of the payer, offers, at the expense of the honest part of the community, a premium to perjury fraud.

The farmers also complained that “the powers necessarily vested in the officers for the collection of so odious a revenue are not only unusual but incompatible with the free enjoyment of domestic peace and private

property." Specifically what they objected to, in the words of historian Bernard A. Weisberger, was the tax's intrusiveness. "It allowed collectors to snoop in barns, closets, and cellars looking for hidden untaxed spirits," Weisberger writes. "And anyone wishing to challenge an assessment had to leave home and farm untended in order to take his case to the federal court in distant Philadelphia."

The opponents' case was a strong one, they believed, and they had expressed it eloquently and persuasively.

Congress paid no attention.

In southwestern Pennsylvania, where an estimated 25 percent of all American stills were located, and where the liquor trade was especially profitable and the Scotch-Irish citizenry more than usually obstreperous, the farmers vowed to fight the legislative indifference. They warned tax collectors that the law would be no protection for them; they should stay away, not try to enforce it. When they showed up anyhow, the farmers took after them with a vengeance. According to Alice Fleming, "a federal marshal in Allegheny County was attacked for trying to enforce the hated law, and an angry mob set fire to the home of the regional tax inspector and threatened to march on Pittsburgh." And there were other attacks, other fires, other threats, all too many of them acted upon; revenue agents became as despised in whiskey country as the British had been a few years before.

A more common tactic against them, though, was tarring and feathering, the farmers keeping themselves well stocked with both of the necessary ingredients and applying them at will. They were also quick to punish those among their neighbors who cooperated with the authorities. The rebels would plunder their crops and scatter or butcher their animals and damage their homes or barns and sometimes even tear the clothes right off their bodies. When a colonist named William Faulkner offered his house to the government as an office for the revenueurs, his former friends set out with sharpened blades to give him the closest haircut of his life.

Hamilton was furious. He ordered the farmers to obey the law and to obey it promptly, citing the common weal, citing also the fact that the federal government, through its purchases for the military, was the biggest single customer of western Pennsylvania hooch; thus, he explained through gritted teeth, it was in the best interests of those who manufactured it not to treat the government's agents with such brutal disregard.

The farmers would not listen. They not only continued their resistance, but stepped it up. "They formed an army, several thousand strong, marched on Pittsburgh and took it. They approached the governments of Britain and Spain with plans for a separate republic." Neither nation was interested, but the western Pennsylvanians would not allow themselves to be discouraged. As soon as one plan failed, they came up with another, and they gave their all to each in its turn, forming themselves into small, roving bands of marauders and making life as miserable as they could for their foes.

Not until President Washington, at Hamilton's insistence, sent a force of 15,000 militiamen to confront the insurgents, more than the number which had fought in any single battle of the Revolutionary War, was order finally restored. Leading the force was General Henry "Lighthouse Harry" Lee, father of Robert E., and he was eager for the command, spoiling for a fight. As George Brown Tindall explains, he did not get one.

To his disappointment the rebels vaporized like rye mash when the heat was applied, and the troops met with little more opposition than a few liberty poles. By dint of great effort and much marching they finally rounded up twenty prisoners whom they paraded down Market Street in Philadelphia and clapped into prison. Eventually two of these were found guilty of treason.

The Whiskey Rebellion, this episode in American history is called, and it is an even more appropriate name than it seems. There is some dispute over the derivation of the word "whiskey," but it more than likely hails from the Scottish *qubiske*, which means to move away rapidly, and refers, in the words of Oscar Getz, "to a light chaise apparently invented by the Scotch-Irish whiskey smugglers to escape tax collectors" a long time ago in their homeland.

But in this land, which in fact as well as name wanted the rest of the world to think of it as united, the rebellion was the most embarrassing of incidents. The end came in 1794. Washington pardoned the two traitors, and most of the other farmers in western Pennsylvania agreed to start paying the tax, although they were not happy about it, and in most cases, when they handed over the money, not even civil. They believed that the tax was a hostile act imposed by a thoughtless and arrogant and pusillanimous assembly of improperly elected officials who did not care in the least about the citizens they claimed to represent.

Which was yet *another* reason for them to drink.