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“The Bewitching Tyranny of Custom”: The Social Costs of Indian Drinking in Colonial America¹

PETER C. MANCALL

Alcohol abuse has been the most significant ongoing health problem American Indians have experienced since the mid-seventeenth century. The social costs of Indian drinking in modern society are staggering: Deaths related to alcoholism (including cirrhosis) remain four times higher for Indians than for the general population; alcohol plays a role in perhaps 90 percent of all homicides involving Indians; inebriated Indians die while walking along roads, either hit by cars or succumbing to hypothermia; 70 percent of all treatment provided by Indian Health Service physicians is for alcohol-related disease or trauma.² Alcohol abuse at times appears among Indian children by age thirteen; most seek complete intoxication. There is even one reported case of delirium tremens in a nine-year-old boy in northern New Mexico, himself the son of an alcoholic father. Maternal drinking has contributed to the growing incidence of fetal alcohol syndrome and has led also to an increased rate of other neonatal problems.³ So intense is the desire to become intoxicated among some Indians today, especially on reservations in the West, that they mix cleaning solvents with other fluids in order to produce what is now known as “Montana Gin,” a concoction that can cause profound somatic disorders, including aspiration pneumonia and organic brain syndrome, which can lead

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to death.⁴ These social and clinical problems have occurred in spite of the fact that North American Indians, so far as clinicians and medical researchers can tell, are no more susceptible physiologically to abusing alcohol than other Americans.⁵

Yet in spite of the myriad problems associated with drinking, Indians' early use and abuse of alcohol have not been described in much depth. Some researchers, notably Nancy O. Lurie, Craig MacAndrew, and Roger Edgerton, have attempted to demonstrate the ways in which Indians have structured their drinking practices, but they have not focused on the social costs of the alcohol trade for Indians in early America.⁶ Historians, often following the documentary evidence, have recognized the catastrophic consequences of drinking; most today accept the fact that alcohol contributed to problems, particularly violence, in early Indian communities. Russell Thornton has even suggested that alcohol abuse contributed directly to mortality and thus to the depopulation of many groups.⁷ Historians have made these assertions because colonial sources make one indisputable point: From Canada to West Florida and from the Atlantic to the western margins of British America in the Mississippi Valley, alcohol reached diverse groups of Indians during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and most of the Indians who became involved in the liquor trade ultimately suffered as a result.⁸

But, although historians have recognized the outlines of the problem, virtually no substantial studies exist of alcohol use among the Indians who inhabited colonial British America. Such an absence is particularly noticeable given the existing work on Indians and alcohol in other parts of the Western Hemisphere, notably New France (Canada) and New Spain (Mexico). This work draws on the extensive documentation available for drinking practices in these Catholic colonies, much of it left by missionaries or church officials. Together, these studies describe, in more than general terms, the precise uses and costs of drinking in Indian communities in the colonies created by Europeans in the early modern period.⁹

This essay attempts to fill the gap by describing the ways that alcohol destabilized Indian communities in British America, the territory between the Atlantic and the Mississippi Valley from the mid-seventeenth century to the late eighteenth century. The sources for such study are vast; evidence of Indian drinking and the problems it created appear in colonial statutes, travelers' accounts, traders' ledgers, missionaries' diaries, and treaty negotiations, to

name only the most prominent locations. Though abundant, the surviving accounts are not, in themselves, necessarily the surest evidence of abusive drinking among Indians. Most important, colonial descriptions of Indian drinking appear to conform to certain formulae; the dominant image of the drunken Indian often seems more a projection of ubiquitous colonial anxieties than an accurate assessment of Indian drinking practices. Further, colonial sources emphasize the consumption of alcohol by hunters, typically young men, but reports of children drinking, women selling liquor as well as consuming it, and older men imbibing along with others suggest that drinking was not limited to trading sessions where hunters met with liquor purveyors. Finally, colonists who wrote about Indian drinking often ignored the many Indians who abstained, thus giving the mistaken impression that all Indians drank. Still, the surviving evidence, however flawed, points unambiguously toward one conclusion: In the opinion of many colonists, Indians suffered from the alcohol trade.

Significantly, Indians agreed with colonists that liquor brought problems, but they drew their own conclusions about how alcohol changed their lives and who was responsible for liquor-related troubles. There are, to be sure, problems in interpreting Indian testimony, too. It has survived in documents written primarily by colonists and thus no doubt was constructed through certain culturally defined parameters. Further, colonists were not always aware that many Indians believed in the benefits of alcohol; in eastern North America, alcohol helped some to achieve highly valued dreamlike states of mind, and many Indians also incorporated alcohol into hospitality and mourning rites, marriages, and ceremonial dances.¹⁰

But although Indians throughout eastern North America often organized their drinking in culturally approved ways, many came to believe that liquor created tension and animosity in their villages, dangerously reoriented the economies of their communities, led to domestic violence, and further facilitated the conquest of eastern North America by colonists. Most important, while some Indians blamed other Indians for the ill effects of drinking, many placed the responsibility for their problems with colonists who either participated in the trade directly or allowed it to continue in spite of mounting evidence of its enormous costs. In the end, as many Indians discovered, the alcohol trade became perhaps the most insidious aspect of European colonialism in North America.

“A PECULIAR KIND OF INSOBRIETY”

Europeans first provided liquor to Indians in the sixteenth century, and, over time, alcohol became increasingly prominent in intercultural trade in British America. Hundreds of references to Indian drinking appear in the extant documents from the colonial period. Colonial accounts provide unambiguous evidence that spirits, particularly rum, threatened groups of Indians and thus made their survival, already at risk because of the spread of Old World pathogens, ever more precarious. Given the apparent impact of alcohol on Indians and the persistent colonial fears about the threats represented by disorderly Indians, it is not surprising that colonists often wrote about the destructive impact of liquor on Indians. These observations contain more than information about the consumption of alcohol. Taken together, they represent what colonists intended to be a devastating critique of Indian society. Yet, in spite of their cultural blinders, colonists left ample testimony about the social costs of alcohol for Indians, especially the way that drinking led to violence, accidents, community disruptions, poverty, and, on occasion, death. The diffusion of such information throughout the colonies had little impact on the trade. Colonists were so eager to trade with the indigenous peoples of America that they maintained the commerce in spite of its devastating impact on Indian communities.

The liquor trade developed and grew over time, because traders believed they could always sell liquor to Indians; unlike durable manufactured goods, it was depleted when used. Unfortunately, the paucity of exact information about the population history of Indians in eastern North America and the even less accessible information regarding the numbers of Indians who actually consumed alcohol when it was available make estimates of per capita consumption exceedingly vague and limited; the best that exist relate to local areas only and pertain to episodic drinking bouts.¹¹

Still, it is possible to estimate the extent of the trade, at least for the eighteenth century. In the northern reaches of European colonization, Hudson's Bay Company traders made brandy a staple of their fur trade. Although they sold only seventy gallons to Indians in 1700 from their post at Fort Albany-Eastmain, the volume increased to just over two thousand gallons of brandy sold each year from the four posts they operated in the late 1750s, and the trade continued well beyond the colonial period.¹² Further south, the trade was far more extensive, at least by the 1760s and

1770s, when the best evidence is available. In spite of problems associated with overland and water carriage of liquor from the coast across the Appalachian Mountains, George Morgan, a partner in the prominent Philadelphia trading firm of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, had almost eight thousand gallons of alcohol, most of it distilled spirits from the West Indies, at his trading post at Kaskaskia in the Illinois country in December 1767; he intended to sell most (if not all) of it to Indians.¹³ Traders brought at least sixty-five hundred gallons of rum to Fort Pitt in 1767, and Alexander McKee, the local commissary of Indian affairs at the post, believed that "double that Quantity is brought here by them exclusive of large Quantities brought up by Sutlers and others." According to Jehu Hay, the Detroit commissary of Indian affairs, traders brought over twenty-four thousand gallons of rum to that post in 1767. As both McKee and Hay informed Sir William Johnson, the fur trade prospered at both posts, with traders receiving more than 300,000 skins that year.¹⁴ Johnson was already well aware of the extent of the rum trade: In 1764, he estimated that traders sold fifty thousand gallons of rum to Indians in the territory under the auspices of the northern department of the superintendent of Indian affairs.¹⁵

Although it seems unlikely that there was sufficient liquor to allow any Indian who wanted alcohol to be constantly inebriated if he or she so chose, the available rum did allow for fairly regular drinking bouts. Colonial observers often attended Indian drinking sessions, although they did not quite know what to make of the Indians' drinking practices. Missionaries and colonial officials generally believed that drinking led to the decay of Indian communities and that sexual excess, violent death, domestic strife, and poverty all followed in the wake of drinking. Some colonists particularly lamented the impact of alcohol on their efforts to convert Indians to Christianity.

Colonial descriptions of Indian drinking sprees began with the premise that intoxicated Indians followed a predictable pattern. François Vachon de Belmont, who became a missionary in the Sulpician Order in the early 1680s and traveled from France to New France to convert Indians to Christianity, observed drinking practices among Indians who inhabited the Northeast and wrote the most extensive critique of Indian drinking patterns. Liquor, he argued, caused three basic changes in Indians: First, he wrote, it "enlivens their natural sluggishness, dispels their timidity, their sense of shame and inferiority, which their dull nature gives

them." Second, liquor prompted Indians "to undertake with vigor and bravado almost any evil action such as anger, vengeance, or impurity." Third, drunkenness provided Indians with "a valid excuse for any evil which they might commit in such a condition." These changes were unique to Indians, or so he thought when he wrote that "this is a peculiar kind of insobriety."¹⁶

Indians "imbibe only to become drunk," Belmont declared. This was most evident when there was a limited amount of alcohol available to a particular group. Rather than share the liquor equally, presumably as Europeans would do in such circumstances, the Indians chose one of their number to consume all of the liquor and thereby become inebriated, while the others remained completely sober. There was, he wrote, "only one degree of drunkenness worthwhile, the sort which they call 'Gannontiouaratonseri,' complete insobriety. And when they begin to feel the effects of the brandy they rejoice shouting, 'Good, good, my head is reeling.'" Most of those who drank in this fashion were young men "who are professedly given to bravado, whose pride urges them to seek notoriety whereby they may receive attention for some deed or other."¹⁷ The Reverend John Clayton, rector of the parish at James City, Virginia, during the mid-1680s offered a similar view of the reasons Indians drank as they did. "[T]hey will allways drink to excess if they can possibly get [spirits]," he wrote in 1697, "but do not much care for them unless they can have enough to make them drunk. I have heard it said that they wonder much of the English for purchasing wine at so dear a rate when Rum is much cheaper & will make them sooner drunk."¹⁸

Along with the other horrors, Indian drinking proved particularly frustrating to clerics because drunkenness impeded conversion to Christianity. Inebriated Indians could not, they believed, make the rational choice to convert; made senseless by liquor, Indians were unable to realize the full import of the missionaries' teachings. Such views were common among Catholic missionaries in Canada,¹⁹ and British colonists had similar thoughts. At times, missionaries themselves came under fire for allegedly taking liquor to Indians and thus compromising the effort to spread Christianity. In a sermon published in Boston in 1704, Cotton Mather attacked an "Indian-Preacher" who possessed both scripture and liquor. "But he minded his Bottel more than his Bible," Mather declared, and thus weakened his ability to convert Indians to Christian ways.²⁰

The colonists' critique of Indian drinking also included a great interest in the role liquor played in releasing Indians from their sexual inhibitions. Inebriated Indians' sexual behavior particularly fascinated natural historians. Nicholas Denys, during his travels in Acadia, and Bernard Romans, during his sojourn in East and West Florida, noted that consumption of alcohol had an immediate impact on Indians' sexual mores.²¹ So did William Bartram, who, while touring the Southeast in the early 1770s, found a rapid change in a group of Creeks near Mount Royal, in Georgia, after they had returned from St. Augustine with "a very liberal supply of spirituous liquors, about twenty kegs, each containing five gallons." Once they began to drink, they continued for ten days. "In a few days this festival exhibited one of the most ludicrous bacchanalian scenes that is possible to be conceived," Bartram wrote. "White and red men and women without distinction, passed the day merrily with these jovial, amorous toppers, and the nights in convivial songs, dances, and sacrifices to Venus, as long as they could stand or move; for in these frolics both sexes take such liberties with each other, and act, without constraint or shame, such scenes as they would abhor when sober or in their senses; and would endanger their ears and even their lives." Soon, however, the liquor ran out. Most of the Creeks, Bartram noted, were "sick through intoxication," and, when they became more sober, "the dejected lifeless sots would pawn every thing they were in possession of, for a mouthful of spirits to settle their stomachs, as they termed it."²²

While some colonists came to lament the way that liquor led to sexual license and thus interfered with the civilizing of Indians, most had more mundane concerns, especially related to the violent consequences of Indian drinking for both colonists and Indians. For this reason, colonists had feared Indian drunkenness from the start. On the eve of settlement, the governor and deputy of the New England Company forbade colonists going to Massachusetts Bay from selling liquor to Indians. "Wee pray you endeavor," they wrote, "though there be much strong water sent for sale, yett so to order it as that the salvages may not for lucre sake bee induced to the excessive use, or rather abuse of it, and of any hand take care or people give noe ill example."²³ William Bradford, ever wary of disorder that could threaten Plymouth, acted swiftly to limit what he believed were the dangerous excesses of Thomas Morton's antics at Merrymount. Among Morton's sins, along with providing the Indians with firearms and

scrawling salacious verse on a maypole, was his apparent provision of liquor to Indians.²⁴

Over the course of the seventeenth century, New England colonists repeatedly tried to limit the sale of alcohol to Indians. As early as July 1633, provincial officials in Massachusetts Bay ordered that "noe man shall sell or (being in a course of trading) give any stronge water to any Indean." Although the colony relaxed its statutes when it allowed Indians who brought in the head of a wolf to receive three quarts of wine for their reward and even allowed some traders to sell wine to Indians, problems of Indian intemperance prompted provincial officials in the late 1650s to stop the trade. Since the General Court lamented its failure to limit "excessive drinkinge & drunkenes among the Indians" and noted that "the fruits whereof are murther & other outrages," the elimination of the liquor trade was not surprising. Fearing the disorder that accompanied Indian drinking, provincial officials detailed severe fines and corporal punishment for Indians found inebriated and for colonists who provided them with liquor.²⁵

Nonetheless, over time the use of liquor spread throughout British America and led to violence, at least in the opinion of colonial witnesses who were quick to describe what they believed were the savage aspects of Indians' lives. Explorer and author John Lawson wrote in his widely reprinted account of early eighteenth-century Carolina that Indians "will part with the dearest Thing they have" to buy rum, "and when they have got a little in their Heads, are the impatient Creatures living, 'till they have enough to make 'em quite drunk; and the most miserable Spectacles when they are so, some falling into the Fires, burn their Legs or Arms, contracting the Sinews, and become Cripples all their Life-time; others from Precipices break their Bones and Joints, with abundance of Instance, yet none are so great to deter them from that accurs'd Practice of Drunkenness, though sensible how many of them (are by it) hurry'd into the other World before their Time, as themselves oftentimes confess." Lawson noted that "[m]ost of the Savages are addicted to Drunkenness," and that it contributed directly to the decline of southern Indians; combined with smallpox, rum "made such a Destruction amongst them, that, on good grounds, I do believe, there is not the sixth Savage living within two hundred Miles of all our Settlements, as there were fifty Years ago."²⁶

The violence attending Indian drinking sessions troubled colonists throughout British America. "Drunkenness hath occasioned

some *Indians* to be burnt to Death in their little Houses," declared Samuel Danforth, preaching at Bristol, Rhode Island, in October 1709 at the execution of two Indians who had committed murder while intoxicated. "Other *Indians* by their being drowned first in Drink, have been exposed to a second drowning in Water. Nor are these the first (who now stand in the midst of this great Assembly) who have committed Murder, when overcome with Drink, and have been Executed for it."²⁷ Charles Stuart, brother of the southern superintendent of Indian affairs John Stuart and an agent to the Choctaw, believed that liquor constituted four-fifths of the trade goods purchased by those Indians in 1770. Traveling among their settlements a few years later, he wrote that he "saw nothing but rum Drinking and Women Crying over the Dead bodies of their relations who have died by Rum." Liquor, he believed, fundamentally disrupted the social order because of the violence it seemingly released; it was "the cause of their killing each other daily" and the "[c]ause of every disturbance in the nation."²⁸ Stuart was not the only one in the southern Indian administration concerned with the violence committed by drunken Indians; the emissary to the Creek in 1771, David Taitt, often encountered intoxicated Indians seemingly always on the verge of attacking him or someone nearby. Taitt, like agents throughout the South, knew well that rum had become a staple of the skin trade in the Southeast in spite of the troubles it brought.²⁹

According to colonial observers, drinking often led Indians to injure or kill each other. Some colonists speculated that Indians feigned drunkenness in order to attack other Indians and not suffer any consequences.³⁰ Others described less deliberate assaults. The sale of rum by unlicensed traders throughout the South endangered "the general Peace and Tranquility" of southern Indians, agent Thomas Bosworth wrote in December 1752; a "general Peace and Quietness reigns among them," another agent wrote to South Carolina Governor Glen in August 1754, "excepting what Disturbance is occasioned by immoderate Quantities of Rum brought among them, which if a Stop put to, would very much contribute towards a good Harmony among the Indians."³¹ Trader and historian James Adair, writing on the eve of the Revolution, also noted decidedly self-destructive behavior. "By some fatality," he wrote in a description of the Catawba, "they are much addicted to excessive drinking, and spirituous liquors distract them so exceedingly, that they will even eat live coals of fire."³² William Byrd joined the chorus as well. "The trade [the

Indians] have had the misfortune to drive with the English," he wrote in his *History of the Dividing Line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina*, "has furnished them constantly with rum, which they have used so immoderately that, what with the distempers and what with the quarrels it begat amongst them, it has proved a double destruction."³³

The violence brought on by alcohol, combined with an apparent decline in the health of drinkers, led some observers to make direct links between the trade and Indian mortality. Drinking, familiar to the Powhatan Indians of the Chesapeake region by the 1680s, prompted the governor of Maryland to speculate that "the Indians of these parts decrease very much, partly owing to smallpox, but the great cause of all is their being so devilishly given to drink."³⁴ Almost a century later, Guy Johnson, who briefly served as superintendent of Indian affairs in the northern colonies after the death in 1774 of his uncle, Sir William Johnson, also believed that alcohol contributed to Indian population decline. "The State of Population is greatest where there is the least Intercourse with the Europeans," he wrote, in part because alcohol was "peculiarly fatal to their Constitutions, & to their Increase," especially when combined with smallpox.³⁵ Benjamin Franklin agreed. "[I]f it be the Design of Providence to extirpate these Savages in order to make room for Cultivators of the Earth," he wrote in his autobiography, "it seems not improbable that Rum may be the appointed Means. It has already annihilated all the Tribes who formerly inhabited the Sea-Coast."³⁶

Though such statements demonstrated concern on the part of colonists for the apparent plight of Indians, other colonists had more mundane concerns: They feared Indian drinking because of the potential for violence by inebriated Indians against colonists. Concerns about Indian assaults led numerous colonial officials to pass laws banning the sale of alcohol to Indians in virtually every British North American colony, although some of these statutes were short-lived.³⁷

But, even when these laws were in force, traders quickly discovered ways to circumvent them, and some inebriated Indians acted exactly as colonists feared.³⁸ At times, colonists caused the trouble,³⁹ but more often, in the opinion of colonial leaders, Indians were to blame. Indians in Maine, purportedly inebriated, traveled to a colonial settlement and threatened to attack colonists and their livestock; other colonists apprehended them before they had done much damage, and the colonist who had provided them with rum

subsequently found himself facing a magistrate in Boston, charged with violating laws prohibiting the sale of liquor to Indians.⁴⁰ John Toby, a Nanticoke in Pennsylvania, purportedly sexually assaulted an eight-year-old colonial girl. According to the complaint of the girl's father, recorded in a deposition, Toby responded to the allegation by saying "that he had been drunk and did not Remember what he did with the girl." Three colonists then took him off to jail to await a trial.⁴¹ Readers of the first edition of *The American Magazine, or a Monthly View of the Political State of the British Colonies*, published in Philadelphia in January 1741, could read about a murder committed by a drunken Indian. "The Indians who live nearer the English, and, by Reason of that Vicinity, have more frequent Opportunities of intoxicating themselves with strong Liquors," the magazine reported, "are indeed more dangerous: so that it happen'd once in about fifty Years, that one of them, in a drunken Fit slew an Englishman." The murderer was, the readers were reassured, subsequently hanged, and "[h]is Country-men, instead of murmuring at, highly approved of that Act of Justice."⁴² For missionaries living among Indians, the risks seemed even more immediate, as the Protestant missionary Gideon Hawley discovered during a 1753 trip to Oquaga, a community of Indians from various tribes located alongside the Susquehanna River; there he encountered a number of inebriated Indians, one of whom, apparently by accident, nearly shot his head off. After his experiences with Indian drinking, it was no wonder that he refused to establish a mission in any community where Indians allowed alcohol.⁴³

Violence, however, proved only the most obvious risk of Indian drinking; the long-term economic consequences of the liquor trade appeared, to numerous colonial observers, just as devastating to Indians and, ultimately, to colonists also. In spite of a 1711 law in South Carolina forbidding the sale of rum by unlicensed traders, Indians there continued to fall into debt to liquor purveyors. The problem so exasperated southern colonial officials that they periodically forgave the debt of the Indians.⁴⁴ Yet the problems remained. Thomas Bosomworth, an agent to the Creek, noted in his journal that liquor continued to impoverish Indians. "Nothing worthy of Notice during our Stay here," he wrote in October 1752 in a discussion of a meeting of provincial agents with the lower Creek, "though I could not help remarking the extream Poverty and Nakedness of those Indians that are contiguous to the French Fort [where] they are supplied with Liquor for those Goods

they purchase from our Traders. The fatal Effects of which the Indians themselves are sensible off."⁴⁵ Northern commentators agreed. New England Indians "will part with all they have to their bare skins" to purchase rum, naturalist John Josselyn wrote in the mid-1670s, "being perpetually drunk with it, as long as it is to be had, it hath killed many of them, especially old women who have dyed when dead drunk."⁴⁶

By the mid-eighteenth century, the problems associated with the illegal rum trade, especially the economic plight of Indians apparently defrauded by liquor dealers, greatly troubled some colonists involved in the transatlantic skin trades. Charleston merchant Edmund Atkin, who became the southern superintendent of Indian affairs in 1755, believed that alcohol undermined the trade network and had disastrous consequences for the English. Rum traders working out of Augusta were particularly troublesome. These nefarious dealers placed "themselves near the Towns, in the way of the Hunters returning home with their deer Skins," he wrote. "The poor Indians in a manner fascinated, are unable to resist the Bait; and when Drunk are easily cheated. After parting with the fruit of three or four Months Toil, they find themselves at home, without the means of buying the necessary Clothing for themselves or their Families." In such a state, they were "dispose[d] for Mischief"; a "licentiousness hath crept in among [the young] men, beyond the Power of the Head Men to Remedy." Even the quality of the deerskins declined in such circumstances, since the rum peddlers needed to deal quickly and then leave with their wares, and Indians accustomed to trading lower quality skins for liquor proved to be less cooperative commercial partners: "[T]he Indians require the other Traders in their Towns to take [deerskins] in the same Condition." Drunken Indians, Atkin warned, became embittered when liquor was used to purchase their land, as he claimed it was among the Chickasaw on the Savannah River, and inebriated Indians proved easy prey to colonists who wished to murder Indians.⁴⁷ Northern officials also believed that colonists threatened the entire system of intercultural trade when they deceived Indians with alcohol.⁴⁸

Faced with a growing body of evidence that drunken Indians threatened colonists, as well as other Indians, in a number of ways, some observers looked for the source of the problem. Many blamed selfish traders for undermining efforts to convert Indians and for supplying Indians with liquor. "While the present ill adapted measures are continued," Adair wrote in a plea for better

organization of the Indian trade, "nothing less than the miraculous power of deity can possibly effect the Indians' reformation; many of the present traders are abandoned, reprobate white savages. Instead of showing good examples of moral conduct, besides their other part of life, they instruct the unknowing and imitating savages in many diabolical lessons of obscenity and blasphemy." It would have been impossible for colonial commentators to imagine a worse group of people to be in constant contact with Indians.⁴⁹

Many colonists believed that Indians were ultimately accountable for their own behavior. Although high-ranking colonial officials periodically sought to limit the trade by passing laws making it illegal, they also repeatedly excoriated Indians for their drinking; their efforts to stop Indian drinking often seem little more than criticism of particular Indians' ways of life, especially their inability to control their appetites. Governor George Johnstone of West Florida, addressing a group of Chickasaw and Choctaw at a treaty in Mobile in March 1765, feared that liquor-bearing traders created animosity among the Indians. To prevent trouble, he urged Indians not to drink, stressing the economic and social plight that resulted from drinking. But, although the governor cast blame on the traders (those "Guilty of carrying that Liquor amongst you ought to be Considered as your real Enemies much more than if they lifted the Hatchet against you," he stated) he tried to shame Indians into avoiding liquor. "He who dies in War, his Time shall be remembered," he declared, "but he who is destroyed by Drunkenness shall be forgott like the Hog who has perished in the swamp."⁵⁰

Few expressed criticism of Indian life as effectively as Sir William Johnson, perhaps the best-informed colonial official in regards to the rum trade because of his many years living in the New York hinterland, where he was first a trader and then superintendent of Indian affairs for the northern colonies. Although he, like others, blamed traders for carrying rum into the backcountry, he ultimately believed it was the Indians' inability to resist liquor that caused their problems. "The Indians in general are so devoted to & so debauched by Rum," he wrote to James Abercromby in May 1758, "that all Business with them is thrown into confusion by it & my transactions with them unspeakably impeded. The Mohock Castles in particular are become scenes of perpetual riot, and the Indians selling the necessaries they receive from the Crown thro me for Rum, to the infinite detriment of His Majestys service & the increase of Indian Expences." But what, he

wondered, could he do about the problem. "Provincial penal Laws have been made, but to no purpose," he averred. "I have done all in my power against this universal Enemy, to indeed His Majestys service in general, but it is too subtle & too powerful a one for me to reduce within proper bounds as to the Indians."⁵¹

Nine years later, after he had defended the economic utility of the liquor trade in a report to the Lords of Trade,⁵² Johnson clarified his views further when he told a group of Indians who claimed they had been unable to control their desire for liquor that "[t]he best Medicine I can think of to prevent your falling into your former Vice of drinking is to embrace Christianity" and that they should follow the example of other sober Indians.⁵³ Johnson, it should be noted, was at the same time sending his own trading agents into the woods, often supplying them with little else but rum for trade with the Indians.⁵⁴

The reports of colonial observers, despite their biases, reveal certain similarities. Young men drank more often than other members of most communities, no doubt because they had the most frequent interactions with traders, especially liquor purveyors who worked beyond the bounds of legal trading posts. Further, in all likelihood, the costs of drinking, whether borne by the young hunters or the entire community, differed somewhat by season; mortality rates due to accidents were higher in winter when inebriated Indians ran a greater risk of exposure, especially in northern climates. In addition, regardless of the gender or age of the person who died as a result of an alcohol-related accident, Indian families suffered profoundly; the loss of family members disrupted the domestic economy and had a shattering impact on those who remained after the tragedy.⁵⁵

In the end, many colonial descriptions of Indian drinking reveal that liquor played a key role in the effort to colonize British America. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, missionaries, traders, and government officials were engaged in a campaign, not always successful, to convert Indians to European ways.⁵⁶ Indians needed to trade, colonizers argued, to become civilized. And even though the liquor trade was destructive, it had to be maintained. Without it, Johnson informed the Board of Trade in October 1764, in a moment of remarkable frankness, "the Indians can purchase their cloathing with half the quantity of Skins, which will make them indolent, and lessen the fur trade."⁵⁷ Legislators who tried to ban the liquor trade because they believed that Indians were unable to control their thirst for alcohol took a

different approach, to be sure. But their inability to stop the commerce revealed that many other colonists believed the trade should continue, and these commercial interests prevailed. However diverse the existing views on the liquor trade, colonial observers shared one belief: Indians needed colonists to guide them in a world seemingly awash in liquor. Many Indians saw the situation quite differently.

“THE ACCURSED USE WE MAKE OF RUM”

Despite some colonists' fears, Indians suffered more than colonists did from drinking and from the alcohol trade. The survival of their testimony on the subject leaves little doubt that the social problems observed by colonists—including poverty, domestic violence, and even fatalities—were far more desperate than colonists could understand. But, although Indians who have left records of their beliefs about alcohol did not always agree with one another, they also did not necessarily agree with colonial commentators. While many acknowledged that they could not control alcohol consumption and thus needed assistance in their battle against liquor, they also believed that colonists bore ultimate responsibility for the havoc alcohol brought to their communities. Colonists, not Indians, had initiated what an anonymous author, purported to be a Creek Indian, termed “the bewitching Tyranny of Custom.”⁵⁸ Such logic led many Indians to condemn the alcohol trade and those colonists who let it continue.

To be sure, some Indians, perhaps following the lead of colonial leaders, blamed themselves for the ill effects of drinking. “[W]hen we drink it, it makes us mad,” declared several leaders of Delaware Valley Indians in the late seventeenth century. “[W]e do not know what we do, we then abuse one another; we throw each other into the Fire, Seven Score of our People have been killed, by reason of the drinking of it, since the time it was first sold us.”⁵⁹ Alcohol, some Indians believed, eroded the ties needed to maintain communities. A group of Chickasaw informed a colonial official in 1725 that they were unable to keep members of their village under control because “if the Young Men were drunk and Mad,” they “could not help it,” but they would do their best to minimize the problems.⁶⁰

In what became the most famous printed assault of any Indian on the liquor trade, Samson Occom, a Mohegan who became a

missionary and who himself purportedly had problems with liquor, exhorted his "Indian Brethren" to stop drinking. Occom's attack on Indian intemperance clearly shows the influence of his Christian teachings. Writing in response to the execution of Moses Paul, a Christian Indian who, when drunk, had murdered Moses Cook, Occom wrote a broadside in 1772 warning of the dangers of alcohol. "My kindred Indians, pray attend and hear," he wrote in verse form, "With great attention and with godly fear;/This day I warn you of that cursed sin, That poor, despised Indians wallow in." The sin was drunkenness, and it led to a host of social problems in addition to this particular murder.

Mean are our houses, and we are kept low,
 And almost naked, shivering we go;
 Pinch'd for food and almost starv'd we are,
 And many times put up with stinking fare
 Our little children hovering round us weep,
 Most starv'd to death we've nought for them to eat;
 All this distress is justly on us come,
 For the accursed use we make of rum."

Occom continued his attack on liquor in sixteen verses, most often noting the social costs of drinking: Drunken Indians, he wrote, were unable to "go, stand, speak, or sit"; they risked increased chances for being defrauded and scorned; children and women also became inebriated; Indians who drank descended to a lower order of existence, "On level with the beasts and far below / Are we when with strong drink we reeling go." Not surprisingly, Occom concluded his remarks with an appeal that Indians convert to Christianity and thus presumably shed the barbarous traits that had led to drunkenness in the first place.⁶¹ His sermon on the subject covered these points in greater depth, often echoing the tone of Puritan assaults on excessive drinking; it proved so popular that it was published in a ninth edition by 1774.⁶² As Occom no doubt knew well, however, even Indians who converted to Christianity occasionally stumbled into intemperance.⁶³

Indians living in communities with missionaries also blamed themselves for alcohol-related maladies. They thought that members of their towns who were thirsty for rum threatened the economies of backcountry villages by concentrating their efforts on hunting instead of agriculture, since pelts, not corn, purchased liquor. Not coincidentally, Indians in these communities also overhunted indigenous furbearing animals, thereby endangering

the fur trade. Some men, village residents complained, spent so much time hunting that they neglected their crops, with devastating implications for the survival of their communities. "It is quite evident that there are now so few Indians, when they had been so numerous formerly," several Nanticokes told two Moravian missionaries visiting Onondaga, the meeting place of the Iroquois tribes in central New York, in July 1754. "The cause of this falling off is their use of too much rum. Let the Indians try to do without rum for but four years even, and they will be astonished at the increase of the population, and at the decrease of diseases and early death. All this is the result of rum drinking, which is also the primary cause of famine among them, caused by their not planting their crops at the proper time."⁶⁴

Although some Indians accepted responsibility for the troubles brought by drinking, others looked outward for the source of their distress. They decided to act on their beliefs by demanding that colonial officials end the liquor trade because of its disastrous effects on the economies of their villages. Time and again, Indians claimed that colonists had repudiated earlier agreements to stop the flow of alcohol into the hinterland. Charles Thomson recounted numerous Indian complaints about the alcohol trade, and he publicized his views in *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and Shawnee Indians from the British Interest*, printed in London in 1759. At a treaty council between leaders of the Mingo, Shawnee, and Conoy at Conestoga in 1722, the Indians, according to Thomson, urged Governor Keith of Pennsylvania to stop the trade. "At this Treaty the *Indians* complain of the Damage they receive by strong Liquor being brought among them," he wrote. "They say, 'The *Indians* could live contentedly and grow rich, if it were not for the Quantities of Rum that is suffered to come amongst them, contrary to what *William Penn* promised.'" At other sessions, Indians in Pennsylvania complained that traders brought little else but rum with them to trading sessions, instead of the goods, such as shot and powder, that the Indians needed. Many Indians sold their clothing for liquor, the Conestoga chief Tawenna noted at a meeting in Philadelphia in 1729, "'and are much impoverish'd thereby.'"⁶⁵

Indians throughout the hinterland joined the effort to stop the liquor trade. In August 1731, two Indian leaders, the Delaware sachem Sassoonan and the Iroquois Shickellamy, pleaded with Pennsylvania officials to stop rum sellers traveling to Indian villages because, as Sassoonan declared, "'tis to be feared by

means of Rum Quarrels may happen between them & Murther ensue, which may tend to dissolve that Union & loosen the Tye" between British colonists and Indians; to prevent problems, these Indians wanted rum to be available for sale only in colonial settlements.⁶⁶ Later, Indians became more strident in their requests. In the late 1760s and early 1770s, Sir William Johnson received reports or heard complaints from groups of Miami, Shawnee, Delaware, and Oneida who wanted the alcohol trade stopped.⁶⁷ "[I]t is You that Make the liquor," a Shawnee spokesman informed a colonial official at Fort Pitt in 1771, "and to you we must look to Stop it." The Indians wanted help immediately. "[I]f no Method can be fallen upon to prevent their bringing Rum into the Country, the Consequences must be dreadful; All the Western Nations fear it as well as us, and we all know well that it is in your great Men's Power to Stop it, and make us happy, if they thought it worth the Trouble."⁶⁸

Indians battled the liquor trade because the commerce could, on occasion, lead to profoundly destructive tensions within their communities; on occasion, it created trouble between men and women in backcountry villages. A group of Delaware Indians told Charles Beatty, who was traveling through the Ohio country in 1766 on an exploratory venture for the Presbyterian church, that they wanted to complain about the participation of Indian women in the trade. "[T]here are some that do at times hire some of our Squaws to goe to Bed with them & give them rum for it," they declared; "this thing is very Bad, & the Squaws again selling the Rum to our People make them Drunk." Although intercultural sexual relations were not new in the region, these Indians found the inclusion of rum in the relationship wholly inappropriate. "[W]e Beseech you," they concluded, "to advise our Brothers against this thing & do what you can to have it stopped."⁶⁹

More devastating still was the alcohol-related poverty that led some Indians to contemplate putting an end to the fur trade. When Pennsylvania trader and provincial negotiator Conrad Weiser traveled through the backcountry of the middle colonies in March 1737, he found Indians at Otsiningo battling the alcohol trade. He had been to the town of the Onondaga and Shawnee along the Susquehanna River twelve years earlier and now discovered that this village was experiencing hard times. In his journal, he noted that the Indians were "short of provisions" and that "their children looked like dead persons and suffered much from hunger." Local Indians then presented what must have been a devastating

omen. They told Weiser that they had difficulty finding game and that "the Lord and Creator of the world was resolved to destroy the Indians." They explained that one of their seers had "seen a vision of God," who declared that Indians killed game "for the sake of the skins, which you give for strong liquor and drown your senses, and kill one another, and carry on a dreadful debauchery. Therefore have I driven the wild animals out of the country, for they are mine. If you will do good and cease from your sins, I will bring them back; if not, I will destroy you from off the earth." The Indians, according to Weiser, believed the seer's story. "Time will show, said they, what is to happen to us," he wrote. "[R]um will kill us and leave the land clear for the Europeans without strife or purchase."⁷⁰ Contained within the vision was an unambiguous message. If Indians halted the fur trade, they would no longer suffer from the liquor trade; the hunters' sins could be erased and the community purged of its debauchery.

To many Indians, the social costs of the liquor trade were ubiquitous, especially the violence drinking caused. Colonists mistreated Indians when they were drunk, declared a group of Maine Indians in 1677. "[W]e love yo," their petition declared, "but when we are dronk you will take away our cot & throw us out of dore." Further, mean-spirited colonists sometimes gave Indians liquor "& wen we were drunk killed us."⁷¹ Dutch traveler Jaspas Danckaerts, journeying through New York near the end of the seventeenth century, encountered an Indian who explained, quite clearly, that although drinking weakened Indian communities, the fault lay entirely with those who sold alcohol to the Indians. The Indian, named Jasper, noted that divine spirits governed life on earth and punished those "who do evil and drink themselves drunk," yet he also freely admitted that he drank to excess and did not have to fear retribution. Asked by colonists why he drank, Jasper replied, "I had rather not, but my heart is so inclined that it causes me to do it, although I know it is wrong. The Christians taught it to us, and give us or sell us the drink, and drink themselves drunk." Apparently annoyed at his answer, the colonists responded that if they lived near the Indians, the Indians would never see them inebriated nor would they provide liquor to the Indians. "That," he replied, according to Danckaerts, "would be good."⁷²

In some important ways, Indian beliefs differed markedly from those of colonists. Indians did not share the view that drinking led to bacchanalian orgies, although some felt that drinking threat-

ened relations between men and women in Indian communities. Most Indians did not believe that liquor impeded their religious lives but some certainly thought that the trade did threaten their customary relations with the animals they hunted. Indians in eastern North America had many reasons to consume alcohol, and they did not believe their drunken comportment indicated, as some colonists apparently believed, that they were culturally inferior to colonists.

ALCOHOL AND COLONIALISM

For all their differences, the testimony of Indians and colonists agrees on one point: The alcohol that came from trade with colonists destabilized many Indian communities. Although it was not clear to early Americans, it now seems evident that the liquor trade promoted British imperial expansion in North America. While some colonists and Indians might have exaggerated the role played by alcohol in the decline of Indian populations, abundant evidence confirms that the liquor trade impoverished Indians and threatened their families. Since Indians throughout most of the colonial period had to cope with the continuing inroads of epidemic disease as well as colonists' seemingly insatiable hunger for land, alcohol apparently played a key role in the social decline and eventual disappearance of many villages. The desire to become intoxicated did not, in itself, force Indians into desperate circumstances, but the poverty caused by the liquor trade could have contributed to the decision of many Indians to sell their lands to colonists and migrate westward in search of greater opportunity.

Further, the liquor trade and Indian responses to it reinforced the cultural chasm separating the peoples of North America. To colonists, Indians' inability to control their drinking—to drink, that is, as colonists did—seemed a sign that Indians remained a people apart, perhaps forever inferior and savage. Although colonists often recognized the problems brought by liquor—as early as September 1673, the General Assembly of Rhode Island condemned the “abominable filthynes” of selling alcohol to Indians⁷³—colonial officials proved either unable or unwilling to halt the trade. Economic logic dictated that the trade continue lest the English receive fewer skins, a prospect even those intimately familiar with the costs of Indian drinking chose to avoid. Stopping this commerce, even if it was possible, would also have meant

repudiating a longstanding effort, dating to the sixteenth century, to turn Indians into trade partners.⁷⁴

Although alcohol contributed to the spread of the empire by weakening the social structure and economic basis of Indian communities, it simultaneously created resentment among Indians that gave them added determination to battle the expansion of colonial settlements. It is thus not surprising that Indian prophets who led revitalization movements in the late colonial period made temperance one of their primary goals.⁷⁵ It is also quite likely that whatever success these prophets enjoyed stemmed, at least in part, from earlier Indian efforts to resist the tide of colonization by battling the liquor trade.

Whatever the social costs of the alcohol trade, liquor remained a staple of Indian-colonist trade in the American hinterland. The commerce survived because it apparently was profitable to colonists involved in the business, and because it represented a valuable enterprise in the mercantile empire. Few, if any, colonists celebrated the troubles Indians experienced because of the liquor trade. But even when Indians made the social costs known, colonists too easily ascribed the Indians' sufferings to faults of the Indians themselves. In an age when many other Americans were working relentlessly to overthrow the imperial tyrant who, they believed, threatened their freedom, many Indians found the liquor trade, and the empire it represented, another kind of tyranny that threatened to destroy their world.

NOTES

1. This paper was originally presented at the Boston Area Seminar for Early American History at the Massachusetts Historical Society in February 1992. The author would like to thank the participants in that seminar for their comments. He particularly thanks Alan Taylor and Lisa Bitel for their comments.

2. Roland J. Lamarine, "Alcohol Abuse among Native Americans," *Journal of Community Health* 13 (1988), 143-55; Ronet Bachman, "The Social Causes of American Indian Homicide as Revealed by the Life Experiences of Thirty Offenders," *American Indian Quarterly* 15 (1991), 471, 484-87; Margaret M. Gallaher et al., "Pedestrian and Hypothermia Deaths among Native Americans in New Mexico," *JAMA* 267 (1992), 1345-48. See also Patricia Silk-Walker et al., "Alcoholism, Alcohol Abuse, and Health in American Indians and Alaska Natives," *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*, monograph no. 1 (1988), 65-67.

3. David Swanson et al., "Alcohol Abuse in a Population of Indian Children," *Diseases of the Nervous System* 32 (1971), 835-42; Duane Sherwin and

Beverly Mead, "Delirium Tremens in a Nine Year Old Child," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 132 (1975), 1210–12; L.P. Peterson et al., "Pregnancy Complications in Sioux Children," *Obstetrics and Gynecology* 64 (1984), 519–23; Albert DiNicola, "Might Excessive Maternal Alcohol Ingestion During Pregnancy Be a Risk Factor Associated with an Increased Likelihood of SIDS?" (letter) *Clinical Pediatrics* 24 (1985), 659. The most moving account of FAS is Michael Dorris's *The Broken Cord* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989).

4. Larry Burd et al., "'Montana Gin': Ingestion of Commercial Products Containing Denatured Alcohol among Native Americans," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 48 (1987), 388–89.

5. Lynn J. Bennion and Ting-Kai Li, "Alcohol Metabolism in American Indians and Whites: Lack of Racial Differences in Metabolic Rate and Liver Alcohol Dehydrogenase," *New England Journal of Medicine* 294 (1976), 9–13; Carol Lujan, "Alcohol-Related Deaths of American Indians," *JAMA* 267 (1992), 1384; and Arthur W. K. Chan, "Racial Differences in Alcohol Sensitivity," *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 21 (1986), 93–104. These studies replace earlier ones that suggested racial differences did exist; for one of these studies, see D. Fenna et al., "Ethanol Metabolism in Various Racial Groups," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 105 (1971), 472–75.

6. Nancy O. Lurie, "The World's Oldest Ongoing Protest Demonstration: North American Indian Drinking Patterns," *Pacific Historical Review* 40 (1971), 311–22, and Craig MacAndrew and Robert B. Edgerton, *Drunken Comportment: A Social Explanation* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), esp. 100–164.

7. Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 44–45, 54, 65–66, 83, 87–88.

8. For historians' views on Indian drinking and its consequences among particular groups of Indians, see, for example, Colin Calloway, *The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600–1800: War, Migration, and the Survival of an Indian People* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 87; James Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 39–40, 98; Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500–1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 87–88; Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 63–64; Peter C. Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700–1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 60–64; Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), esp. 82–86; idem, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 115, 127–28, 131, 205, 207, 247, 264, 322–23, 333–35, 342; Eric Hinderaker, "The Creation of the American Frontier: Europeans and Indians in the Ohio River Valley, 1673–1800," (Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1991), 141–45, 324; Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 97–98, 126–29, 135, 274. For one historian's view of the impact of alcohol on a number of Indian groups, see James Axtell, "The English Colonial Impact on Indian Culture," in Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 257–59.

9. For New Spain, see William Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1979); and Michael C. Scardaville, "Alcohol Abuse and Tavern Reform in Late Colonial Mexico City," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60 (1980), 643–71. For New France, see William B. Munro, "The Brandy Parliament of 1678," *Canadian Historical Review* 2 (1921), 172–89; George F. G. Stanley, "The Indians and the Brandy Trade During the Ancien Régime," *Revue Historique de L'Amérique Française* 6 (1952–53), 489–505; André Vachon, "L'Eau-De-Vie Dans La Société Indienne," *Canadian Historical Association Report* (1960), 22–32; R. C. Dailey, "The Role of Alcohol among North American Indian Tribes as Reported in the Jesuit Relations," *Anthropologica* 10 (1968), 45–59; Alfred G. Bailey, *The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures, 1504–1700: A Study in Canadian Civilization* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 66–71; Cornelius Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), esp. 110–15. Even an analysis based on modern alcohol studies drew on the experiences of Indians in eastern Canada to make its points; see Jill R. Schumann, "The Diffusion of Alcohol: Through Membrane into Culture," in *Papers of the Thirteenth Algonquian Conference*, ed. William Cowan (Ottawa, ON: Carleton University, 1982), 37–45.

10. Dailey, "The Role of Alcohol among North American Indian Tribes," 49–50; Edmund S. Carpenter, "Alcohol in the Iroquois Dream Quest," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 116 (1959), 148–51; "The Narrative of Peter Pond," in *Five Fur Traders of the Northwest*, ed. Charles M. Gates (St. Paul (?), 1933), 35–36, 41; David Pietersz de Vries, "Short Historical and Journal Notes of Several Voyages Made in the Four Parts of the World, Namely Europe, Africa, Asia, and America" [1655] in *Historical Chronicles of New Amsterdam, Colonial New York and Early Long Island*, ed. Cornell Jaray, Empire State Historical Publications Series no. 35 (Port Washington, NY: Empire State Historical Publications, n.d.), 55–56; Thomas Butler to Sir William Johnson, 6 January 1757, in James Sullivan et al., eds., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 14 vols. (Albany, NY: The University of the State of New York, 1921–65), 2:664; J. R. Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, 10 vols. (Providence, RI: A. C. Greene and Brothers, 1856–65), 4:425–26.

11. For one estimate, see Jack O. Waddell, "Malhiot's Journal: An Ethnohistoric Assessment of Chippewa Alcohol Behavior in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Ethnohistory* 32 (1985), esp. 251–64.

12. Arthur J. Ray and Donald B. Freeman, "Give Us Good Measure": *An Economic Analysis of Relations between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company before 1763* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 132–34. For early nineteenth century estimates, see J. C. Yerbury, *The Subarctic Indians and the Fur Trade, 1680–1860* (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 69.

13. George Morgan Letterbook, 1767–1768, p. 35, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. See also Account of Baynton, Wharton and Morgan, September 25, 1766: Goods sent to Edward Cole, Commissary for Indian Affairs of the Illinois &c., *Johnson Papers* 13, 400–404; and Baynton, Wharton & Morgan against the Crown, June 12, 1766, *Johnson Papers* 5: 248, 256.

14. Report of Indian Trade, *Johnson Papers* 12: 396–400.

15. A Scheme for Meeting Expenses of Trade, October 8, 1774, *Johnson Papers* 4: 559. For a lower estimate (of 30,000 gallons per year in 1770), see John J. McCusker, Jr., "The Rum Trade and the Balance of Payments of the Thirteen Continental Colonies, 1650–1775" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh,

1970), 502–504. The trade existed well beyond the borders of British America and French settlements in the St. Lawrence Valley; traders took liquor to the Sioux by the late seventeenth century and to the Wichita in the eighteenth century, and Indians in the Canadian West participated actively in the trade by the eighteenth century. See Gerald Mohatt, “The Sacred Water: The Quest for Personal Power through Drinking among the Teton Sioux” in *The Drinking Man*, ed. David C. McClelland et al. (New York: Free Press, 1972), 264; Wayne Morris, “The Wichita Exchange: Trade on Oklahoma’s Fur Frontier, 1719–1812,” *Great Plains Journal* 9 (1970), 80; Thomas F. Schlitz, “Brandy and Beaver Pelts: Assiniboine-European Trading Patterns, 1695–1805,” *Saskatchewan History* 37 (1984), 95–102; and Lawrence J. Burpee, ed., “The Journal of Anthony Hendry, 1754–55,” *Royal Society of Canada Proceedings and Transactions* 3d. ser., 1 (1907), 352, 354.

16. François Vachon de Belmont] “Belmont’s History of Brandy,” ed. Joseph Donnelly, *Mid-America* 34 (1952), 45.

17. [Belmont] “History of Brandy,” 47–49; elsewhere, Belmont noted that virtually every member of an Indian community became inebriated on occasion; see 53–57. Other missionaries shared Belmont’s belief that Indians drank only to get drunk; see, for example, Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, 1610–1791* 73 vols. (Cleveland, OH: Burrows Bros. Co., 1896–1901), 52:193.

18. [John Clayton] “The Aborigines of the Country,” in *The Reverend John Clayton, A Parson with a Scientific Mind: His Scientific Writings and Other Related Papers*, ed. Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1965), 37–38; see also “Another ‘Account of Virginia’ by the Reverend John Clayton,” ed. Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 76 (1968), 436.

19. See, for example, Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations* 22:243 and 46:105; and James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 65–67.

20. [Cotton Mather] *Sober Considerations, on a Growing Flood of Iniquity* (Boston: Nicholas Boone, 1708), 16.

21. Nicholas Denys, *The Description and Natural History of the Coasts of North America*, ed. William F. Ganong (Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society, 1908), 448–50; Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida* (1775; Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1962), 55.

22. William Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, The Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Chactaws* (1791; New Orleans, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1961), 214–15.

23. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 5 vols. (1855–61), 1:406–407.

24. William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (1952; New York: Knopf, 1967), 205–206. On the threat Morton posed to the settlers of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, see Michael Zuckerman, “Pilgrims in the Wilderness: Community, Modernity, and the Maypole at Merry Mount,” *New England Quarterly* 50 (1977), 255–77.

25. Shurtleff, *Records of Massachusetts Bay* 1:106; 2:84–85, 258; 3:425–26; vol. 4, pt. 1, 201–202, and part 2, 297.

26. John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, ed. Hugh T. Lefler (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 18, 211–12, 232.

27. Samuel Danforth, *The Woful Effects of Drunkenness* (Boston: Samuel Gerrish, 1710), 10–11.
28. As quoted in White, *The Roots of Dependency*, 75, 85–86 (quotations at 85–86).
29. “Journal of David Taitt’s Travels from Pensacola, West Florida, to and through the Country of the Upper and the Lower Creeks, 1772,” in *Travels in the American Colonies*, ed. Newton D. Mereness (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916), 513–15, 525n., 553n., 555–56, 560; John Stewart to John Pownall, 24 August 1765, in *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 10 vols, ed. William Saunders (Raleigh, NC: 1886–90), 7:110.
30. See Denys, *Description and Natural History*, 450, and Merrell, *The Indians’ New World*, 39.
31. Thomas Bosworth to Mr. Elsinor, 23 December 1752, and Lachland McGillivray to Glen, 14 April 1754, in *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, May 21, 1750–August 7, 1754* [hereafter CRSC:Indian Affairs, 1750–1754], ed. William L. McDowell, Jr. (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Archives Department, 1958), 325, 502.
32. James Adair, *The History of the American Indians* (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1775), 224.
33. Louis B. Wright, ed., *The Prose Works of William Byrd of Westover* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 302–303.
34. As quoted in Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas’s People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia through Four Centuries* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 151, 127(quotations at 127).
35. Milton W. Hamilton, ed., “Guy Johnson’s Opinions of the American Indian,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* [hereafter PMHB] 77 (1953), 325–26.
36. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), 199.
37. For New Hampshire, see *Laws of New Hampshire . . . Volume One: Province Period* (Manchester, NH: The John B. Clarke Co., 1904), 117, 739–40, and *Acts and Laws of His Majesty’s Province of New Hampshire, in New England* (Portsmouth, NH: D. Fowle, 1761), 220. For Rhode Island, see Bartlett, *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantation* 1:274, 279, 307–308, 338, 413–14; 2:487–88, 500–503; 4:233, 425–26. For Connecticut, see J. H. Trumbull and C. J. Hoadly, eds., *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*, 15 vols. (Hartford, CT: Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co., 1850–90), 1:254–55, 263, 338, 354; 2:119; 3:94; 6:31–32; 7:472–73. For New York, see *Colonial Laws of New York from the Year 1664 to the Revolution*, 5 vols. (Albany, NY: J. B. Lyon, 1894–96), 1:657–58, 685–86, 740–41, 751, 755; 3:1096–98; 4:93. For New Jersey, see H. Clay Reed and George J. Miller, eds., *The Burlington Court Book: A Record of Quaker Jurisprudence in West New Jersey, 1680–1709* (Washington, DC: American Historical Association, 1944), 2, 3. For Pennsylvania, see J. T. Mitchell and Henry Flanders, eds., *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801* (Harrisburg, PA: C. M. Busch, 1896–1908), 2:168–70; 3:250, 310–13; 5:320–30; 6:283–93. For Maryland, see William Hand et al., eds., *Archives of Maryland* (Baltimore, MD: Maryland Historical Society, 1833–), 15:260; 22:511; 38:15–16, 69–70, 78–80, 84–86. For Virginia, see W. W. Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia*, 13 vols. (Richmond, VA: Samuel Pleasants, Jr., 1809–23), 3:468; 5:273; 7:117; 8:116. For South Carolina, see Thomas Cooper and D. J. McCord, eds., *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, 10 vols. (Columbia, SC: A. S. Johnston: 1836–41), 2:64–68, 309–16.

For Georgia, see A. D. Candler, ed., *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, 26 vols. (Atlanta, GA: Franklin Printing and Publ. Co., 1904–1916), 18:223. For West Florida, see Robert B. Rea and Milo B. Howard, Jr., eds., *The Minutes, Journals and Acts of the General Assembly of British West Florida* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1979), 347 (disallowed), 381, 390. For Massachusetts, see note 25, above.

38. See, for example, Matthew Toole to Glen, 28 October 1752; Ludwock Grant to Glen, 8 February 1753; and Glen to Lt. Gov. Dinwiddie, 1 June 1754, in *CRSC: Indian Affairs, 1750–1754*, 359, 367, 526.

39. See the depositions relating to the death of Thomas Wright in a fight with drunken Indians initiated by the trader John Burt in *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 16 vols. (Harrisburg, PA: T. Fenn, 1838–53), 3:285–87.

40. The Indians' actions and the subsequent charges against the liquor seller, who claimed the Indians had stolen rum from him, are documented in James P. Baxter, ed., *Documentary History of the State of Maine* (Portland, ME: Collections of the Maine Historical Society 1900), second series, 6:413–20. Indians in Massachusetts, it should be noted, received harsh punishments if they were found inebriated; see Edwin Powers, *Crime and Punishment in Early Massachusetts, 1620–1692* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 379–80.

41. The story is documented in a series of complaints in the Conrad Weiser papers, dated 15 February 1750, Correspondence 1:25, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

42. *The American Magazine*, January 1740–41, p. 7, facsimile reprint (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937); for drunkenness and the murder of a colonist in New Hampshire in 1688, see Colin Calloway, ed., *Dawnland Encounters* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1990), 185–86.

43. "Rev. Gideon Hawley's Journey to Oghquago (Broome Co.) 1753," in *Documentary History of the State of New York*, 4 vols., ed. E. B. O'Callaghan (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons & Co., 1849–51), 3:1043–46.

44. See the instructions of the commissioners of the Indian trade to traders for 27 July 1711, 2 August 1711, and 3 August 1711, in *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Journals of the Commissioners of the Indian Trade, September 20, 1710–August 29, 1718*, ed. W. L. McDowell (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Archives Department, 1955), 11, 13–15.

45. Journal of Thomas Bosomworth, in *CRSC: Indian Affairs, 1750–1754*, 298.

46. Paul J. Lindholdt, ed., *John Josselyn, Colonial Traveler: A Critical Edition of Two Voyages to New-England* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1988), 99.

47. Wilbur R. Jacobs, ed., *The Appalachian Indian Frontier: The Edmund Atkin Report and Plan of 1755* (1954; Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 35–36, 45, 59.

48. See "The Opinions of George Croghan on the American Indian," *PMHB* 71 (1947), 159; Hamilton, "Guy Johnson's Opinions on the American Indian," 325. Colonial officials also tried to prevent any colonists from getting Indians drunk in order to purchase land from them; for one notorious case, see the response of Sir William Johnson to the attempt by George (Ury) Klock to purchase land from some Indians after getting them drunk in *Johnson Papers* 3:312–14, 338–41, 619–20; 4:53–56, 112–115.

49. Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 286; see also "Journal of David Taitt," 544.

50. Dunbar Rowland, ed., *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1763–1766: English Dominion* (Nashville, TN: Press of Brandon Printing Co., 1911), 1:219–20.

51. Johnson to Abercromby, 17 May 1758, *Johnson Papers* 9: 905–906.
52. Johnson to the Lords of Trade, October 1764, in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols., ed. E. B. O’Callaghan and Berthold Fernow (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons, Printers, 1856–87), 7:665.
53. *Journal of Indian Affairs*, 25 February 1767, *Johnson Papers* 12: 273–75.
54. See White, *The Middle Ground*, 335.
55. For a single report detailing some of these problems, though with some exaggeration, see Daniel Claus to Sir William Johnson, 8 July 1772, *Johnson Papers* 12:971–72. Consumption of alcohol increased the risk of hypothermia; see Gallaher et al., “Pedestrian and Hypothermia Deaths,” 1346–47.
56. See Axtell, “The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America,” in *The European and the Indian*, 39–86.
57. Johnson to the Lords of Trade, October 1764, 7:665.
58. *The Speech of a Creek-Indian, against the Immoderate Use of Spirituous Liquors* (London: Printed for R. Griffiths, 1754), 11.
59. Thomas Budd, *Good Order Established in Pennsylvania & New-Jersey in America* (Philadelphia: 1685), 29.
60. “Colonel Chicken’s Journal to the Cherokees,” in *Travels in the American Colonies*, 171.
61. “Mr. Occom’s Address to His Indian Brethren,” (n. p., 1772 [Evans 4236a]); Occom’s broadside is reprinted in William Sturtevant, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 4, *History of Indian-White Relations*, vol. ed. Wilcomb Washburn (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1988), 434. For Occom’s own drinking history, see the obviously outdated, but still somewhat useful in its presentation of documentary evidence, W. DeLoss Love, *Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1899), 162–68. Occom’s sensitivity to his own drinking, and to gossip about it, indicated the stigma he associated with drunkenness; see David Murray, *Forked Tongues: Speech, Writing and Representation in North American Indian Texts* (London: Pinter, 1991), 53–54.
62. Occom, *A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul*, 3d. ed. (New London, CT: T. Green, 1772), esp. 21–23. The ninth edition was published in Boston in 1774.
63. See James D. McCallum, ed., *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Publications, 1932), 45–46, 61–62, 259–60.
64. William Beauchamp, ed., *Moravian Journals Relating to Central New York, 1745–1766* (Syracuse, NY: Dehler Press, 1916), 199–200.
65. [Charles Thomson] *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delawares and Shawanese Indians from the British Interest, and the Measures Taken for Recovering Their Friendship* (1759; St. Clair Shores, MI: Scholarly Press, 1970), 11, 13, 24, 31–32, 74–76. For Tawenna’s speech, see *Pennsylvania Col. Recs.*, 3:363.
66. Colonists agreed with the Indians and on 20 August issued a proclamation banning the sale of liquor to Indians “in the Woods”; see *Pennsylvania Col. Recs.*, 3:404–12.
67. *Johnson Papers* 4:557–58; 7:348–49; 10:69, 73; 12:635.
68. Speech of the Shawnees, July 1771, *Johnson Papers* 12:914–15.
69. “Journal of Beatty’s Trip to the Ohio Country in 1766,” in *Journals of Charles Beatty, 1762–1769*, ed. Guy S. Klett, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962), 67. On this and other sexual relations in the region, see White, *The Middle Ground*, 60–75, 214–15, 334.

70. "Narrative of a Journey, Made in the Year 1737, by Conrad Weiser, Indian Agent and Provincial Interpreter, from Tulpehocken in the Province of Pennsylvania to Onondaga," trans. H. H. Muhlenberg, *Pennsylvania Historical Society Collections* 1 (Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania Historical Society, 1853), 17.

71. Moses & Indians W. H. & G. recd by Mrs Hamond, July 1, [16]77, in Baxter, ed., *Documentary History of Maine*, 2d ser., 6:178–79.

72. Jaspas Danckaerts, *Journal of a Voyage to New York in 1679–1680*, in *Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society* 1 (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Gregg Press, 1867), 149–50.

73. Bartlett, *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island*, 2:500.

74. The English were not alone in their early desire to establish trade with Indians; see Axtell, "At the Water's Edge: Trading in the Sixteenth Century," in Axtell, *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 144–81.

75. John Heckewelder, *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations who once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States*, ed. William C. Reichel (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1881), 293–94; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (1969; New York: Knopf, 1972), 278; Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 31–33, 126.