

The Historical Roots of a Frontier Alcohol Culture: Alaska and Northern Canada

Mary Ehrlander

Abstract: Alcohol arrived in Alaska and northern Canada at various times beginning in the eighteenth century, by way of abusers of alcohol including traders, military personnel, whalers, miners, and finally construction workers as late as the mid-twentieth century. Likely influenced by newcomers, and perhaps owing to the tradition of feasting during times of plenty, Natives apparently adopted a binge or spree style of drinking soon after exposure. Colonial authorities and later national governments regulated trade in alcohol with Indigenous peoples, but these prohibitions were unevenly applied and widely flouted. In the frontier context, where outside authority was generally resented, drinking heavily and getting away with drinking affirmed courage, virility, and vigour, all valued personal attributes. Between the 1950s and 1970s, alcohol abuse and related harms, which had been limited and/or intermittent, became pervasive, owing to regular access to alcohol that coincided with economic development, settlement, and government provision of social services and transfer payments. In the early twenty-first century, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous northerners abuse alcohol at higher rates than their southern counterparts; however Indigenous Alaskans and Canadians experience strikingly higher levels of alcohol-related pathology, stemming from relatively high alcohol consumption rates, coupled with a binge or spree style of drinking. As northern communities face myriad alcohol-related problems, including high accidental death rates, sexual assaults, child abuse and neglect, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and extremely high suicide rates, an enduring frontier ethos fosters complacency and breeds resistance to alcohol regulations that would limit individual choices in order to reduce harms.

Introduction

Today many northerners view alcohol abuse as the most pressing social problem in the region. Alcohol abuse is not only a serious affliction by itself, but all too often it is also the common denominator for a wide range of chronic social ills, including sexual assault, child abuse and neglect, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, accidents, and suicide. While both Indigenous and non-

Indigenous northerners abuse alcohol at higher rates than their southern counterparts, Indigenous Alaskans and Canadians experience strikingly higher levels of alcohol-related pathology, stemming from relatively high alcohol consumption, coupled with a binge or spree style of drinking.

Alaska ranks sixth among the American states in binge drinking (defined as consuming five drinks or more on at least one occasion in the last month) and eighth in heavy drinking (defined in the U.S. as drinking two or more drinks daily for the past thirty days for men and one or more drinks daily for women).¹ In Canada's territories, rates of heavy drinking (defined as having five drinks or more on one occasion at least once a month in the last year), are nearly 50 percent above the national average.² While these comparative consumption rates may not appear to be far outside a healthy drinking range, alcohol related death and crime rates paint a stark picture of alcohol-related harm in the north.

Alaska's alcohol mortality rate, at 21 per 100,000 population, is three times the U.S. rate. Alcohol mortality among Caucasian Alaskans is nearly twice the U.S. rate, whereas that of Alaska Natives is nearly ten times the U.S. rate.³ In 2000, the Yukon's rate was six times the Canadian rate, and the Northwest Territories' rate, including Nunavut, was twice the national rate.⁴ Alaska's suicide rate is about twice the U.S. rate; the suicide rate among non-Native Alaskans is 53 percent above the U.S. rate, while that of Alaska Natives is 3.6 times the U.S. rate. The suicide rate for Alaska males is nearly four times that of females.⁵ The suicide rate among Nunavut Inuit in the years 1999–2003 was 200 per 100,000 for men and about 40 for women. Nunavut researcher Jack Hicks writes, "It is difficult to find words that adequately describe the amount of suicide-related pain and trauma that has been suffered in Inuit communities in recent years."⁶

Alcohol abuse is reflected in high violent-crime statistics throughout the North. Alaska's homicide rate for 2003–2005 was 5.9 per 100,000 population,⁷ just above the U.S. rate of 5.6 in 2005.⁸ The homicide rate for Alaska Natives was strikingly higher at 8.3, nearly twice that of Caucasians.⁹ Homicide rates in Canada's northern territories far exceed the national average. In 2008, the Yukon's rate was 9 per 100,000 population, Northwest Territory's rate was 7, and Nunavut's rate was 12.7, while the national rate was 1.8.¹⁰

Alaska has the highest rate of forcible rape in the U.S., more than twice the U.S. average.¹¹ Alaska's child sexual abuse rate is six times the national rate.¹² Alcohol is a contributing factor in the overwhelming majority of crimes in rural Alaska.¹³ In 2007, assaults were 3.7 times the Canadian national rate in the Yukon, 8.9 times the national rate in the N.W.T., and 8.5 times the

national rate in Nunavut. Sexual assault rates were three times higher in the Yukon, 7.6 times higher in the Northwest Territories (NWT), and 10.3 times higher than the national average in Nunavut.¹⁴ The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) report that most northern crime is fueled by alcohol.¹⁵

The roots of this alcohol affliction run deep. This article will analyze the historical spread of alcohol in the North and the development of a unique frontier drinking culture in Alaska and northern Canada. It was not simply alcohol's introduction in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that would cause such problems, but its introduction by chronic abusers of alcohol into a perilous physical environment where inhabitants were well acquainted with risk taking. Colonial authorities promulgated policies regulating the sale and trade of alcohol to Indigenous peoples, but these policies were largely unenforced, and westerners heedlessly sold and traded alcohol with Natives. Ease of access varied greatly from region to region, depending on the relative isolation of Indigenous communities, but generally when alcohol was available, the pattern of drinking was binge drinking—consuming all available alcohol quickly.

Recognizing the deleterious effects of alcohol abuse on Natives, Canadian and U.S. policy-makers attempted to restrict their access to alcohol. For extended periods, prohibition applied officially to all residents of Alaska and the Northwest Territories. In both Alaska and northern Canada, federal government agents enforced these and other laws, and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents viewed federal agents and federal regulations as illegitimate. Flouting alcohol and other federal laws became a matter of pride on the frontier; it represented resistance to outside/colonial authority.

In the twentieth century, economic development and growth of social and other government programs expanded the infrastructure, reduced remoteness, raised the living standard, and increased access to cash in the North. As the non-Native population increased, wives and children brought their taming influences, thus softening, but not eradicating, the frontier culture. While improved living conditions and health care increased life expectancy among Indigenous peoples, acculturative stress, along with increased physical and economic access to alcohol, contributed to a sharp rise in alcohol abuse and related pathology. Historic anti-authoritarian (from an Indigenous perspective, anti-colonial) sentiments continued to resonate in the North, and were coupled with other characteristics of the northern environment and culture, such as the rugged physical environment that posed risks and demanded physical stamina, and seasonal work that often was physically demanding and required workers (disproportionately young

males) to be away from domestic influences, all of which contributed to a risk-filled drinking style for Indigenous and non-Indigenous northerners alike.

Alcohol's Introduction to the North

Beginning in the 1600s, the French and English powers competed in the fur trade in what is now Canada, and powerful economic and political/religious incentives drove them to supply Native Americans with high quality alcohol.¹⁶ In 1670, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) received a charter from England's Charles II that gave it a monopoly in trade with Indians over a large, mostly northern, expanse called Rupert's Land, which was drained by waters flowing into Hudson Bay.¹⁷ Fierce competition among traders continued following the British conquest in 1763, with members of Aboriginal tribes playing important roles as middlemen and with extensive use of alcohol in gifting and in trade.¹⁸ In 1805, Alexander Mackenzie of the Montreal-based North West Company, wrote at Great Bear Lake: "Eleven Red Knives arrived with the Little Chief with provisions and peltrie—I gave them 6 quarts of mixt rum and one fathom of tobaccoe."¹⁹ Polar explorer John Franklin noted in the narrative of his journeys in 1819–1822 that the Chipewyan in the Great Bear Lake region would visit trading posts in the spring and that several days of intoxication typically followed, the hunters having received so much liquor. In 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company, its chief competitor, merged, ending the rivalry for Native trappers' loyalty. The HBC subsequently made some attempt to limit the use of alcohol in the fur trade, but given the expanse of the territory and the history of established practices, liquor continued to flow.²⁰

In Canada's eastern archipelago, from the mid-nineteenth century forward, whalers would overwinter in the region at Rankin Inlet or Cumberland Sound. Inuit from these regions would trade with the whalers for numerous western commodities, including liquor.²¹ Yet, for the most part, Indigenous peoples of what are now Canada's northern territories, particularly the Inuit, had not yet been exposed to alcohol by 1850.

In 1869, two years after Canada's Confederation, the national government purchased Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company. The government, based in Ottawa, Ontario, banned alcohol from the vast region, which was renamed the North-West Territories;²² however, the ban on liquor was widely flouted, especially later in the century as more whites migrated west. Whites could obtain permits to import liquor for their private consumption, and smuggling was common. "Long drunken binges were common," writes Canadian historian Craig Heron. In 1891, Ottawa repealed the prohibition in

the territories; the following year the territorial council allowed the licensing and regulating of saloons, as in the provinces.²³ In the meantime, under the *Indian Act* of 1876, Aboriginal Canadians had been denied access to alcohol throughout the dominion.²⁴

In Alaska, Russian fur traders taught eighteenth century Aleut and Koniag (in the Kodiak region in the Gulf of Alaska), and later other Alaska Natives, to make *kvass*, a drink brewed from grain, apples, or roots. The Russian government prohibited Russians from trading alcohol or operating stills, but they drank heavily, and the Russian-American Company generously supplied workers, some of whom were Alaska Natives or mixed-blood, with alcohol to win their loyalty. Alcohol abuse was so prevalent in the early days of the Russian-American Company's presence in Alaska that Count Nikolai Rezanov, the High Chamberlain of the Tsar, who first arrived in Sitka in 1805, described the American colonies as a "drunken republic."²⁵ Aleksandr Baranov, the chief manager of the company, drank heavily and by the time he left the colonies in 1818 he was accused of "ill management, drunkenness and dissoluteness."²⁶

The arrival of a French ship in 1790 likely marked the first exposure of the Tlingit of Southeast Alaska to alcohol. Later, British and American vessels in the waters surrounding Alaska engaged in "brisk trade" in distilled beverages with Alaska Natives, despite the Russian-American Company's prohibition. In 1832, because authorities were unable to prohibit smuggling, the Russian-American Company began selling liquor to Indians at Sitka, and the Hudson's Bay Company followed suit shortly thereafter. However, in 1842, owing to alcohol-related violence, including the murder of an HBC agent by intoxicated Indians, the Russian-American Company, and the HBC agreed to stop selling liquor to Natives. The ban slowed the flow into villages somewhat.²⁷

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in the Northwest Territories, where European settlers were overwhelmingly male and the work was strenuous, such as in lumbering, mining, and railway and road construction, abusive drinking was even more common than it was in the settled regions of Canada.²⁸ Heron writes that heavy bouts of work often ended in alcoholic binges. "Fur traders, for example turned all holidays on the calendar into prolonged drunken sprees;" with easy access to booze through the fur trade, "Aboriginal people frequently got drunk at the end of trading sessions or treaty negotiations."²⁹ Alcohol may have become associated with the Native tradition of feasting when food was plentiful or during celebrations, when people would gorge themselves on the abundant food, knowing that days, weeks, or months of hunger (or thirst) might follow.³⁰ While many

contemporaneous accounts relate the deleterious effects of abusive drinking on Aboriginal Canadians, alcohol consumption was mainly a trading post activity, and there were long periods of abstention between the drinking bouts. Furthermore, there were many Indians who abstained and tried to discourage the liquor trade,³¹ including chiefs.³²

One of the more notable episodes of Indian responses to alcohol abuse was the relocation of Tsimshian followers of Anglican missionary William Duncan from Port (Ft.) Simpson, an HBC post in western British Columbia, to one of their historic sites at (Old) Metlakatla. Following the discovery of gold in the Fraser Canyon region, Tsimshian in the Ft. Simpson region had increasingly adopted the destructive lifestyles of the Indian camps that were in regular contact with the boomtown of Victoria. After first broaching the topic in 1859, Duncan, in May 1862, led a small group of Tsimshian followers to form a new model Christian village at their historic site (Old) Metlakatla.³³

Heron writes that drinking has been a predominantly male experience throughout most of Canadian history; in colonial Canada “[d]runken revels [became] rituals of a rough-edged masculine identity.” Men “used the occasion to act out familiar male theatrics of swaggering, posturing, bragging, proclaiming, and often, fighting, usually to defend some sense of personal honour or group identity, especially ethnicity.”³⁴ In Alaska and northern Canada, too, Russian and Euro-American males introduced Indigenous peoples to alcohol in settings generally free of constraints set by their wives. Since the mid-twentieth century, as northern Indigenous people have experienced acculturative stress related to rapidly changing life ways, alcohol may also serve to relieve stress, affirm ethnic identity, and resist authority, especially given that western authorities long prohibited alcohol consumption among Natives.

1867—Canadian Confederation and Alaska’s Purchase

As legal authority transferred from Russian and British authorities to North American governments with Alaska’s purchase and Canada’s Confederation, these northern regions continued to be administered from distant national governments. These governments specifically denied Indigenous populations access to alcohol. In Canada, the British and later Canadian governments passed a series of acts aimed at assimilating Indigenous peoples. The *Gradual Civilization Act of 1857* aimed to remove legal distinctions between Indigenous and other Canadians. One requirement for citizenship was that Indians demonstrate “good moral character,” which implied sobriety. In 1867 the Dominion of Canada assumed responsibility for Indigenous peoples, and in

1868 and 1869 Parliament restricted liquor sales to Indians. The *Indian Act of 1876* was the most restrictive thus far regarding liquor regulation. Section 4 completely prohibited alcohol use among status Indians and others who followed “the Indian mode of life.” Per subsections 86–88, an Indian had to exhibit sobriety to be enfranchised.³⁵ The Indian Act eventually strengthened laxly-enforced HBC policies, and alcohol became less accessible, especially to northern Indians.³⁶ These special liquor laws at once protected, marginalized, and attempted to assimilate Indigenous Canadians. They may have encouraged Indians to drink furtively and quickly, so as not to be detected by law authorities.³⁷ No doubt success in defying authority contributed to the enjoyment of such occasions.

The *North West Territories Act* of 1875 prohibited the manufacture of liquor and its importation into the vast area, except with written permission from the lieutenant governor. In 1891, after years of complaints, the federal government in Ottawa allowed the Regina-based assembly that governed the organized, southern region of the Northwest Territories to legislate on liquor issues in the settled districts. Prohibition remained in effect in the northern districts.³⁸

In a similar fashion, following Alaska’s purchase in 1867, the U.S. government treated the district as “Indian Country” for liquor purposes, prohibiting liquor throughout.³⁹ From 1867 to 1899, the Treasury Department worked alternately with the Army and Navy to restrict the liquor trade in Alaska, while agents aboard two aging Revenue Marine Service vessels policed the shoreline. The 1868 *Customs Act* extended U.S. laws regarding customs, commerce, and navigation to Alaska and prohibited the importation or use of firearms and liquor.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, writes historian William Hunt, “Whalers, fishing vessels, foreign and American passenger ships and freighters, and Indian canoes conveyed liquor north from British Columbia or American ports with impunity.”⁴¹ By 1869 at least six saloons, a brewery, and a store selling wine and liquor operated in Sitka, the capital.⁴²

Army personnel, despite their duty to police for alcohol infractions, contributed to the problems of alcohol abuse. In 1869, special U.S. Indian agent Vincent Colyer reported that at Fort Tongass cases of champagne and port, and barrels of ale, rum, whiskey, and brandy had been off-loaded from a government vessel. The alcohol had been consigned “for the use of the officers of the post,” who numbered four. Colyer surmised that the alcohol was intended for trade with the adjacent Indian village. At Fort Wrangell, 900 gallons of pure ethanol, labeled as “coal oil,” were confiscated by the customs officer, who soon thereafter sold the alcohol back to the community

in an auction. Then the liquor was sold to all paying customers, including soldiers and Indians living near the fort.⁴³

In 1873, Congress prohibited the sale of liquor to Alaska Natives (extending an 1834 law prohibiting the sale of liquor to Indians) and banned distilleries. Yet, alcohol abuse continued among Natives and non-Natives, especially among U.S. soldiers.⁴⁴ Treasury Agent Henry Elliott wrote in 1875 that Natives' home brew or spirits kept them "intoxicated and stupefied for weeks, and even months, at a time"; with all forms of violence occurring.⁴⁵ Apparently, shortly after Alaska's purchase, U.S. military stationed at Sitka had taught Natives how to make "hootzenoo" or molasses rum. The distilled beverage, came to be known as "hootch" in reference to Kootznahoo Inlet on Admiralty Island, which was a popular distilling place. Treasury Agent William G. Morris wrote in 1876 of the effects of hootch on Alaska Natives. "This is about the most infernal decoction ever invented, producing intoxication, debauchery, insanity, and death. The smell is abominable and the taste atrocious."⁴⁶

The 1884 *Organic Act*, which established Alaska's civil government, prohibited liquor, except for medicinal, mechanical, and scientific purposes, "(i)nasmuch as all authorities agreed upon the debauching effects of liquor upon the Alaskan Indian," writes historian Jeannette Paddock Nichols.⁴⁷ Apparently the prohibition had negligible impact. Hunt writes that when salmon canneries opened in the 1880s, "workers joined in the liquor trade with sustained enthusiasm."⁴⁸

In the Aleutians, production and consumption of kvass since the Russian era had led to much violence and sometimes murder. In 1881, Captain Michael Healy of the *Rush*, alarmed at the problems resulting from kvass consumption, destroyed many barrels of the brew and tried to limit the sale of brown sugar, its main ingredient. Not everyone in the Aleutians was so occupied, however; Indian agent Vincent Colyer had visited Unalaska in 1869 and reported speaking with "many sober, steady men."⁴⁹

In Bristol Bay, to the north of the Aleutians on Alaska's southwest coast, whiskey traders arrived shortly after Alaska's purchase. Alcohol abuse increased with the establishment of canneries there in the 1890s. The Moravian mission at Carmel, near Nushagak, founded a temperance society in 1894-1895 and urged fishermen and other whites to assist them in restricting alcohol trade with Natives, to little or no avail. Further north, in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region, alcohol did not become widely available until the twentieth century. However, at St. Michael, the historical Russian post in Norton Sound, alcohol was well-known, and it became even more easily accessible in the American era.⁵⁰

The first reports of alcohol's presence in Alaska's far north appeared in the mid-nineteenth century when traders and later whalers brought brandy, rum, and whiskey to the Eskimos.⁵¹ In 1854, Captain Richard Collinson of the British Royal Navy learned that rum and brandy were highly prized trade items at Cape Prince of Wales on the Seward Peninsula. By 1867, at Kotzebue Sound, traders and whalers procured ivory, baleen, and fox pelts in exchange for whiskey, rum, and brandy. In 1880, Captain Calvin Hooper of the U.S. Revenue Cutter *Corwin* recorded observing the Eskimos at Cape Espenberg on Kotzebue Sound apparently suffering in poverty owing to their trading items of value for whiskey.⁵²

In the "General Notes" attached to his 1881 Report, Captain Hooper wrote despairingly of what he perceived to be the condition of the Inupiat. In contrast to the much improved standard of living of the Inuit of Greenland under Danish rule, he wrote that despite more than twelve years under American rule, "not one step has been taken looking towards the improvement of (the Inupiat's) condition. On the contrary, they are sinking each year lower and lower, being left entirely at the mercy of the whisky-seller. This is a great wrong, and unless remedied will prove a lasting disgrace to our country."⁵³

Ivan Petroff, Special Agent for the U.S. Census Bureau, who traversed much of Alaska during the summers of 1880 and 1881 to conduct the 1880 census, also wrote of the degradation of Natives on the northern coast owing to the illegal sales of liquor by whalers and traders.⁵⁴ He predicted a grim future for these Eskimos owing to alcohol abuse and extermination of whales "now being wantonly destroyed by thousands for ivory alone."⁵⁵ He reported that at other times, owing to "periods of wild intoxication," Eskimos would neglect to hunt or fish, leading to starvation.⁵⁶

In the mid-1880s, zealous enforcement by Captain Healy of the *Corwin*, and later the *Bear*, for a time reduced the whiskey traffic in northern Alaska.⁵⁷ Sheldon Jackson wrote in 1889 that Captain Healy's vigilance had resulted in the pouring of "hundreds of barrels of vile liquors" into the sea, and declared that thanks to Captain Healy, traffic along the northwest coast had all but ceased. Perhaps Healy's own demons drove him to attempt to spare Alaska Natives his fate. Healy suffered from alcoholism himself and eventually was dismissed owing to alcohol-related suicidal depression.⁵⁸

Most missionaries condemned alcohol manufacture by their parishioners and the importation of whiskey into villages.⁵⁹ Whalers apparently resented attempts to interfere with their enterprise. In May 1892, missionary and teacher at Cape Prince of Wales, Ellen Kittridge (soon to be Lopp), noted in a letter to her sister Alice, "The whalers don't like us because missionaries teach the Natives not to drink ..."⁶⁰ The July 1897 issue of *The Eskimo Bulletin*,

published at Cape Prince of Wales by missionary Tom Lopp, reported that Elders in the region had described the winter of 1896-97 as unparalleled in "drunkenness, disorder and bloodshed. Liquor has been distilled in almost every house." Drunkenness had prevented hunting during optimal conditions, which resulted in times of near starvation. Moonshine reportedly was being produced in "all the large settlement(s) from St. Michaels to Pt. Barrow."⁶¹

Alcohol made its way into northwest Canada from the northwest by way of the Arctic Ocean, through the Mackenzie Delta, and over mountain passes from coastal southeast Alaska ("the panhandle"). Beginning in 1865 the Indians on the Mackenzie River and in 1890 the Inuit at the Delta participated actively in the brisk fur trade, especially from 1900 forward. The influx of manufactured goods and other western influences increased dramatically.⁶² British traders and missionaries arrived first in the Yukon in 1846 with the establishment of LaPierre's House on the Bell River in the far north. Between 1840 and 1890, the British traded at posts along the Yukon River. This marked the first contact that most Yukon Natives had with outsiders.⁶³

Leroy McQuesten, Arthur Harper, and Alfred Mayo arrived in the Yukon in 1873 and established a trading post named Ft. Reliance on the Yukon River close to the mouth of the Klondike River in Han territory. In 1880, prospectors began to arrive in the Yukon's interior, having trekked over the Tlingit-controlled Chilkoot trail from Dyea on the Alaska panhandle.⁶⁴ Trade goods, including whiskey, followed this trade route into the interior, reaching each successive interior tribal territory until they entered Han territory, in which the Fortymile and Klondike gold strikes occurred. A prospector travelling to Fortymile in 1894 passed the Tutchone village at Lake Laberge and photographed Stick Indians trading furs and dried meat for tobacco, whiskey, guns, and ammunition.⁶⁵ With major gold discoveries in 1886 at Fortymile and 1896 on the Klondike, prospectors would swarm into the interior, bringing plenty of whiskey with them.

Whalers introduced liquor to the Inuit on Hershel Island, north of the Yukon Territory, about 1890. Their presence on Hershel Island until 1907, when the baleen market collapsed, provided the first direct sustained contact between Western Arctic Canadian Inuit and whalers, although Alaska Inupiat who had migrated east had had contact with whalers earlier. Western Canadian Inuit had not been substantially affected by contact;⁶⁶ however, by 1909-1910, the Indigenous population in the region had been decimated, with only 260 remaining of a conservative estimate of 2500 at the mid-nineteenth century.⁶⁷ Primarily disease, but also alcohol abuse, contributed to the population decline;⁶⁸ it had reportedly led to numerous

murders among the Inupiat and Inuit of the region.⁶⁹ A missionary wrote of the drunkenness and debauchery at Herschel Island, "I do not think it extravagant to say that the scenes of riotous drunkenness and lust which this island has witnessed have probably rarely been surpassed."⁷⁰

Until the close of the nineteenth century, western contact and alcohol's influence had impacted mostly the coastal areas of Alaska and Canada's northeast and far northwest. Turn-of-the-century gold strikes in interior Yukon and Alaska would bring tens of thousands of prospectors into remote northern regions. These overwhelmingly male intruders would bring a torrent of western diseases, demands and enticements, leaving long-lasting and in some cases permanent impacts on the region's inhabitants.

The Gold Rush Era in Alaska and Northern Canada

As the twentieth century approached, prospectors, along with large quantities of liquor, beer, and abusive drinking habits, poured into Alaska and the Yukon. Gold was discovered in Sitka in 1872, in Juneau in 1880, at Fortymile in 1886, at Circle City in 1883, and in the Sunrise District of the Kenai Peninsula in 1895. The discovery of gold in the Klondike region of the Yukon in 1896 brought such a flood of gold seekers, that while the peak of the rush had passed by the summer of 1899, interior regions that had remained quite isolated until then would be forever transformed by the continuing presence of non-Natives. Enduring effects of the gold rush era included increased competition for country foods; reliance on trade goods, including alcohol; the establishment of (relatively) large permanent settlements in the Yukon;⁷¹ and regular exposure to western influences.

Miners were notorious for their drunken, often deadly, brawls. Skagway and Dyea were flooded with alcohol, and bars proliferated in Sitka. The boom town of Valdez was similarly affected.⁷² Nichols writes that during this time, freight on ships was more likely to be liquor than food,⁷³ contributing not only to drunkenness, but to periodic famine conditions.⁷⁴ Referring to the interior mining community of Circle City's heyday between 1893 and 1896, James Wickersham, a territorial judge from 1900 to 1907, wrote in his memoirs that despite the legal prohibition on liquor, "it was freely and openly sold over every bar, in every dance hall, and in every saloon."⁷⁵

Jurisdiction questions and conflicting policies contributed to confusion among government agencies, sent mixed messages to the public, and reduced prohibition's effectiveness in Alaska. Customs officials sometimes issued permits for importation, and governors sometimes issued licenses for manufacture and sale of alcohol, though it clearly was not for the medicinal,

mechanical, or scientific purposes allowed in the 1884 *Organic Act*. Some revenue collectors gave revenue stamps for \$25, along with receipts, and when violations of the law went to trial, juries considered these licenses.⁷⁶ In 1895, fifteen years after gold had been discovered in Juneau, twenty-seven saloons, “many of them brothels,” operated there. The men who managed the saloons/brothels reportedly relied on an organized system of bribery, intimidation, and other questionable means to defy the law.⁷⁷ Records show that in 1897, five breweries and 142 bars operated in Alaska, and according to Klondike historian Pierre Berton, “all doing a roaring business.”⁷⁸

In Alaska’s frontier environment, widespread alcohol abuse reflected and promoted disrespect for the law, especially alcohol law. Governor Alfred Swineford (1885–1889) consistently called for stricter enforcement of prohibition,⁷⁹ and Governor James Sheakley (1893–1897) bemoaned prohibition’s inconsistent enforcement, arguing that it fostered widespread disregard for the law and unwillingness to aid authorities in enforcement.⁸⁰ In 1898, a Juneau grand jury indicted several former and current customs officials for corruption, though none of the indictments led to successful prosecutions.⁸¹ Empathy with the accused was not the only reason people refused to testify against defendants. In 1897 in Wrangell, a whiskey dealer, offended by a witness’s testimony, drew his gun and shot him as he testified.⁸² Convictions by juries for alcohol violations were rare, and these usually involved Indians.⁸³

In *The Klondike Fever*, Berton presents starkly contrasting images of the political cultures and decorum on either side of the Alaska-Yukon border, with a striking absence of law and order on the American side. Though some accounts of “wild west” gold-rush-era Alaska surely are exaggerated, neither rule of law nor respect for the law were widely accepted values. On the other hand, while the frontier climate in the Yukon may have seemed tame compared to that in Alaska, drinking, gambling, prostitution, and generally raucous behaviour challenged the resources of law enforcement there, as well.

In the early 1890s, as increasing numbers of prospectors and traders entered and settled in the Yukon, Bishop William Bompas of the Church Missionary Society wrote twice to the federal government in Ottawa asking for regulation of the liquor traffic at Fortymile near the Alaska border.⁸⁴ In 1894, North West Mounted Police (NWMP) Inspector Charles Constantine arrived in the Yukon district to assess the situation. He estimated that controlling liquor consumption, gambling, and other infractions would require forty-five to fifty officers.⁸⁵ Five saloons were operating in the area and the liquor sold to whites was of acceptable quality, he reported, but

the Hoochinoo brewed by Indians “looked and tasted like pure alcohol.”⁸⁶ Bompas later wrote to Ottawa of his dismay regarding distilling among Indians and drunkenness among Indians and whites together, expressing fear of the use of firearms in such contexts.⁸⁷ In 1895, Inspector Constantine returned to the Fortymile area with twenty police officers and constructed Fort Constantine.⁸⁸

With the discovery of gold in the Klondike in 1896, and the word of the gold strike reaching Seattle and San Francisco in 1897, the rush was on. Gold seekers found their way to the Klondike through a number of routes, the three main ones beginning at the ports of Skagway and Dyea in Southeast Alaska and St. Michael near the mouth of the Yukon River in northwest Alaska. In Southeast Alaska, Chilkat, Chilkoot, and Tagish packers carried heavy loads over the White Pass from Skagway and over the Chilkoot Pass from Dyea. The arrival of a whiskey shipment would sometimes interrupt the packing business for a few days. For instance, a stamperder reported that in 1896, the captain of the steamer *Katie* arrived in Dyea, traded whiskey with the Tlingit near Dyea, and a “spree” followed, leaving none in the Tlingit village available to pack supplies for a week.⁸⁹

Harry Ash, a bartender from Circle City, established the Northern Saloon (a tent) in Dawson, and in June 1897, his daily revenues were \$3,000. On the first night after his new improved log building saloon opened, sales were \$30,000.⁹⁰ In August 1897, after a police post was constructed at Dawson, Inspector Constantine wrote to NWMP headquarters that money, whiskey, prostitutes, and gamblers were so plentiful that he could fill the cells in both Dawson and Cudahy (near Fortymile) if he had the men and rations.⁹¹ The generally positive reputation of the NWMP notwithstanding, misbehaviour on the part of law enforcement personnel sometimes contributed to the Mounties’ work load. It happened that officers were dismissed for “conduct unbecoming,” such as being intoxicated on the job and visiting houses of “ill repute.”⁹²

Tension between the government in Ottawa and the government of the Northwest Territories, seated in Regina, over who had authority in the Yukon and, in particular, which government could collect revenue for liquor licenses, led to Ottawa’s establishing the Yukon Territory in 1898. The Northwest Territories had collected \$122,000 in fees for import permits for 61,000 gallons of liquor and had collected \$2,000 in fees from sixteen saloons and hotels in 1897-1898.⁹³ In 1898 an estimated 60,000 gallons were smuggled into Alaska from Canada.⁹⁴ Once the Skagway to Whitehorse railway was completed in 1899, liquor frequently was shipped to the Yukon labelled as groceries. From Whitehorse it moved to points downriver in the Yukon and

Alaska's interior. Once, 275 cases labelled groceries were found to contain liquor.⁹⁵

In the summer of 1898, Sam Steele replaced Constantine as head of the NWMP. He ruled Dawson with a firm hand, issuing law violators the dreaded "blue tickets," which ordered them out of the Yukon, or sentences of hard labour on the government woodpile. Having come to the conclusion that some vices were necessary evils, Steele allowed the saloons, gambling halls, dance halls, and prostitutes' quarters broad liberties, while standing firm against disorderly conduct, obscenity, or cheating.⁹⁶ However, with the arrival of increasing numbers of families in Dawson, Victorian mores triumphed despite local law enforcement officials' resistance to "outside standards." In 1901-02 liquor sales in dancehalls were prohibited and prostitutes were forced to move from Dawson across the river to Klondike City. By 1902, Dawson was said to resemble many other Canadian cities of comparable size.⁹⁷

At the turn of the century in Alaska, owing to prohibition's inefficacy, Governor John Brady lobbied Congress for a liquor license system. Others argued for licensing based on prohibition's unpopularity, the federal government's costly but fruitless prosecutions, and the revenues to be acquired from license sales. Federal officials' illegal activities contributed to the people's resentment of prohibition; officials stole from smugglers, sold seized liquor for their own profit, and used U.S. vessels to smuggle liquor themselves.⁹⁸

In 1899, owing to these circumstances, Congress authorized the sale of liquor in licensed saloons in Alaska, under a local option policy with U.S. district court judges overseeing the system. In 1900, shortly after gold was discovered there, Nome hosted about fifty saloons.⁹⁹ Wickersham wrote in his memoirs in 1938 that Nome's relatively orderly bars contributed to social stability in "that distant frontier mining camp, for they afforded idle men a warm and cheerful meeting place, which they needed, and gave them fair protection from sharpers who were not permitted to rob them in or about the saloons."¹⁰⁰

On the other hand, Wickersham's diary entries, written beginning in 1900, depict the many destructive effects of alcohol abuse in Alaska. He refers to a drunken, corrupt judge and marshal in Nome, a drunken U.S. Attorney (nevertheless, "the best lawyer in the Territory"), a wedding reception that was "one rousing glorious drunk," the *Bear's* Captain Tuttle who loved whiskey, a drunken Swede who set out to kill Wickersham to avenge his having committed the man to an asylum, the drunken mayor of Juneau, and Wickersham's own chronically drunk clerk. Wickersham's younger

brother Edgar's drinking problems caused both brothers embarrassment. In early 1903, Wickersham described residents of the newly founded gold rush town of Fairbanks as "a motley crowd too. Miners [experienced and inexperienced], gamblers, Indians {Negroes}, Japanese, dogs, prostitutes, music, drinking!"¹⁰¹ Heavy drinking wrought (and reflected) all forms of misery on the Alaska frontier. Wickersham's 28 December 1900 entry notes, "George Curtis, a mail carrier (on) Valdez route committed suicide last night in his cabin two doors west of our cabin. He seems to have been drinking for some days—so grew despondent and hanged himself."¹⁰²

In Alaska's northern interior, liquor followed miners and traders to sites of gold discoveries. Lt. John Cantwell of the U.S. Revenue Steamer *Nunivak* on the Yukon River¹⁰³ credited St. James Mission and especially the bishop, the Right Rev. P.T. Rowe, with shielding Natives from the "unscrupulous white men" who sold liquor near the army post and traded it with Indians.¹⁰⁴ Until recently, wrote Cantwell, in Rampart and Tanana, the only settlements where liquor currently was sold, "drunken orgies, in which white men and native women openly participated," occurred frequently during the winter.¹⁰⁵ He noted the challenges in patrolling the Yukon River effectively, especially with liquor coming in from the Yukon.¹⁰⁶

Two peaks of gold production occurred on the upper Koyukuk in Alaska's northern interior, the first from 1900 to 1903 and the second from 1908 to 1916. In 1900, Circle City hosted eleven saloons.¹⁰⁷ In 1902, Coldfoot, situated at the heart of the mining district, "boasted one gambling hole, two road-houses, two stores, seven saloons, and ten prostitutes," wrote Robert Marshall in *Arctic Village*.¹⁰⁸ By 1905, few of the miners and Indians who had traded at Fort Yukon, the former Hudson's Bay Company Post, remained; of those who stayed, the trader's daughter was said to have sold much whiskey to Indians.¹⁰⁹

The peak of the second boom in the upper Koyukuk region occurred in 1915 when over 300 non-Natives and about seventy-five Natives lived in the region. Marshall wrote that sixty tons of booze were shipped into the Koyukuk that year, or 400 pounds (including packaging) for every non-Native man, woman and child, he reckoned; of course some was consumed by Natives. "Some of the veterans of those days estimate that at least half of the money taken out of the ground went for booze and prostitutes," Marshall wrote. In 1916, with the depletion of the richest discoveries in the area, World War I employment opportunities Outside, and Alaska's "Bone Dry Law" in effect, the flow of whiskey into the region ebbed.¹¹⁰

After a hard-fought campaign, Alaska gained territorial status in 1912, which gave its residents home rule. In 1913 the territorial legislature

prohibited giving or selling liquor to Natives, a law that remained in effect until 1953.¹¹¹ Following a 1915 vote by Alaskans, Congress passed the “Bone Dry Law” banning the manufacture and sale of alcohol in Alaska,¹¹² the bill having been introduced by Alaska’s delegate to Congress, James Wickersham.

In both Canada and the United States, Protestant-based temperance movements, which began in the mid-nineteenth century in response to widespread abusive drinking, mostly by males, transformed attitudes regarding drinking in public; raucous drinking bouts became much less socially acceptable, particularly within the middle class. Heron writes, with regard to Canada, “Temperance ideology was woven into large parts of the new bourgeois culture of individualism and self-control among men and serene domesticity among women that was taking shape by the 1840s ... ‘Respectable’ people withdrew from the arenas of celebratory binges and regular public drinking” and drank in private. And law enforcement increasingly sought to remove drunken and disorderly people from the streets.¹¹³ The temperance movements in both countries peaked in short-lived nation-wide prohibitions in the early twentieth century. The restraining influences of the temperance movements were always less noticeable on the western and northern frontiers in Alaska and northern Canada, although as the permanent non-Native population grew, cultural influences from the south, including reformed attitudes about public drunkenness, would increasingly affect northern communities.

Reports from territorial liquor agents reveal widespread alcohol production and trafficking while the Bone Dry Law was in effect in Alaska. The law was enforced disproportionately against Alaska Natives,¹¹⁴ which did not go unnoticed. Agent Joseph Bourke reported that he sought to be even-handed, which he said resulted in increased cooperation from Natives. “In the past the Native could not understand why they were arrested for drinking while the White man drank unmolested. Now they see that both are treated alike so it makes it much easier to handle them.”¹¹⁵

Despite Agent Bourke’s evident dedication, his duties were impossible to perform in anything more than a spotty manner. Just one “regularly employed special officer” policed each of Alaska’s four judicial districts.¹¹⁶ Each district experienced distinct challenges: in the southeast, the large fishing fleet brought in liquor from Prince Rupert, while about 25 percent of the liquor sold in the region was moonshine. In south-central Alaska, smuggling and moonshine production were rampant, particularly in the mining district McCarthy. Anchorage had thirty to forty businesses that sold liquor, along with a “large and talented array” of well over 100 bootleggers,

according to Judge Ritchie.¹¹⁷ Bootlegging was even more pervasive in the northern regions of the territory; Tanana and Nome reportedly had the most bootleggers, followed by Fairbanks. Permissive attitudes toward bootlegging and alcohol consumption hampered prosecutors, despite ample evidence. Furthermore, some agents accepted bribes in return for lenient treatment. When a citizen complained about the (lack of) integrity of some of the enforcement agents, the governor was said to have replied, "You can't catch bootleggers with Sunday school teachers."¹¹⁸

If bootleggers or saloon keepers were thwarted in one region, they often went elsewhere to ply their trade. Historian William Hunt writes in *Distant Justice* that Ed ("Frozen Foot") Johnson sold the Arctic Saloon in Nome, owing to harassment by law enforcement, and moved to Juneau, where he built and operated a still at Funter Bay, selling booze to Juneau residents from 1917 to 1922, ignored by local law enforcement. After federal agents eventually arrested him, they accepted a bribe and let him escape. Other agents pursued him, seized his ingredients and burned his cabin, but he was never convicted.¹¹⁹

Prohibition was repealed in the United States in 1933, and in 1934 Alaska's Bone Dry Law was repealed for whites. In 1936 Congress applied the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 to Alaska, and government encouraged Alaska village councils to adopt ordinances prohibiting liquor possession.¹²⁰ Canada had adopted national prohibition as a war measure in 1918, but within just a few years, the provinces began to end prohibition within their domains. The Yukon was officially dry for only three years between 1918 and 1921, with a ban on public drinking until 1925, when beer could be sold by the glass.¹²¹ In 1952, the Yukon allowed wine and spirits to be sold on licensed premises.¹²² It was not until 1967 that Indians in the Yukon and Northwest Territories gained the same rights as other Canadians to purchase alcohol. By then, "alcohol abuse had become the serious problem that it is today for both natives and whites in the north" wrote anthropologist Julie Cruikshank in 1985.¹²³

Indeed, non-Native northerners do exhibit more problematic drinking than their southern counterparts, as evidenced by their high alcohol mortality rates noted above. Several conditions may explain the even greater alcohol abuse among Indigenous northerners. These include acculturative stress that accompanied rapid socio-economic change since the mid-twentieth century and the much greater transiency within the non-Native populations. Most migrants to the North, having been raised in environments without such recent tumultuous frontier histories, have fairly well-established, presumably more temperate, drinking norms before entering the North. On

the other hand, the frontier ethos endures in the North, and it draws some migrants, which perhaps contributes to its continuing influence.

The Mid-Twentieth Century

World War II brought myriad changes to the North, with thousands enlisting in the armed services and leaving home to serve throughout the world, and others serving as members of the Territorial Guard in Alaska and the Canadian Rangers in northern Canada. Major construction projects included the Northwest Staging Route, from Edmonton and Fairbanks, for ferrying planes to the USSR; and the Crimson Route, with its hub at Frobisher Bay (Iqaluit) for ferrying planes to Britain and the USSR; the Alaska Highway, which would aid in Alaska's defense; and the Canol Project, which was to transport oil from Norman Wells to Whitehorse and on to Alaska. Construction activity brought tens of thousands of outsiders into the North, job opportunities for Indigenous residents, and numerous aspects of western culture, all of which changed settlement patterns and social structures.¹²⁴ For many Indigenous people, these construction projects meant exposure to alcohol or easy and steady access to alcohol for the first time.

Anthropologist Julie Cruikshank, who has done extensive work in the Yukon, writes of the dramatic changes brought about by the 1942 construction of the Alaska Highway (also known as the Al-Can Highway) and their lasting effects including easy, regular access to alcohol, and the development of abusive patterns of drinking, particularly among young people: "Older natives overwhelmingly maintain that the highway brought alcohol abuse and an alarming amount of violence, grief and further social disruption." Cruikshank notes that RCMP records show a sharp increase in liquor related offenses between 1936 and 1948.¹²⁵

In Alaska, too, the highway brought overwhelming change. William Simeone relates in his ethnography of the Tanacross Athabaskans that Elders recalled that prior to World War II "only one or two men drank," and alcohol was confined (in that region of the interior) mostly to the mining camps on the Fortymile River. During the war, however, bars and liquor stores opened in nearby Tok, and subsequently the Alaska Highway "became a death trap for Native men who, after a night of drinking in Tok, tried to make it back to the village."¹²⁶ Native leaders had told anthropologist Walter Goldschmidt in 1946 when he visited Tanacross that they were concerned about the "moral effects of liquor and other urban delights upon their youth ..." from encroachment of whites into their domain.¹²⁷

World War II advanced civil rights in the U.S. and Canada. One of the effects in Canada was abolishment of distinctions between Indians and others with regard to alcohol. The injustices endured by Indigenous people and other minorities were all the more glaring in the context of the sacrifices so many had made in the war. During World War II, thousands of Aboriginal Canadians who entered the armed forces were permitted to drink legally, but after they returned to reserves, they again were prohibited from legally consuming alcohol.¹²⁸ Pressure mounted to revise the Indian Act regarding alcohol restrictions, and liberalization began in the early 1950s. Nationally, status Indians gained the right to consume alcohol in 1959 after Canada's Supreme Court, in the *Drybones* case, struck down the intoxication provisions of the Indian Act, holding that they violated Canada's Bill of Rights. In 1967, Indians in the Yukon and Northwest Territories gained the same rights to purchase alcohol as other Canadians.¹²⁹

Alaska's territorial legislature passed the *Non-Discrimination Act* of 1945, ending racial segregation largely as a result of pressure brought by Alaska Natives who had an enhanced appreciation of their constitutional rights as American citizens as a consequence of their participation in the armed forces, including the Territorial Guard.¹³⁰ In 1953 Congress repealed the national ban on selling liquor to Indians, while continuing to allow IRA councils in Alaska and the Tsimshian on the Annette Island Reserve to restrict alcohol. In 1957 the legislature provided for unincorporated (rural) localities to ban alcohol sales through majority votes of residents.¹³¹

In the 1950s and 1960s government's presence in the North came to transform northern Aboriginal life dramatically.¹³² Despite periodic intrusions by explorers, traders, and missionaries over the previous 300 or more years, most of the Inuit and Dene of northern Canada maintained their subsistence lifestyles relatively undisturbed by government, outsiders, and western culture.¹³³ In the 1950s, the potential for natural resource exploitation, particularly mineral and oil extraction, led the federal government to encourage Inuit to settle in permanent communities. Provision of housing, education, healthcare, and economic development to improve the Inuit's standard of living served as effective enticements.¹³⁴

The Cold War also brought dramatic change to Alaska and Canada's North. In the 1950s, construction of the Distant Early Warning radar system (DEW Line) of sixty-three stations from the Aleutians to Greenland, the U.S. Air Force's White Alice radio communications system in Alaska, and the expansion of military bases near Fairbanks and Anchorage brought an influx of outsiders to the North and employment opportunities, along with numerous aspects of western culture, to remote regions of Alaska and

northern Canada. In Canada, many Inuit and Indians settled close to the radar sites.¹³⁵ In *Across Time and Tundra: The Inuvialuit of the Western Arctic*, Ishmael Alunik relates his experiences working on the DEW Line at Shingle Point, near the Alaska border. Workers were invited to the DEW Line bars, sometimes along with their wives. In 1956, the liquor store in Aklavik opened. With a license, Inuit could purchase two bottles of liquor and a case of beer. "Most Inuit ... learned to drink from DEW Lines."¹³⁶ Kevin McMahon, in *Arctic Twilight: Reflections on the Destiny of Canada's Northern Land and People*, describes the long-term effects of DEW Line site work on individual lives and community life. Some families settled near the sites, while other husbands and fathers left their families for long periods of time to work at the sites.¹³⁷ These developments brought rapid socio-economic change with dramatic effects on Inuit culture, health, and well-being, including regular access to alcohol.

In the 1960s, John Honigmann observed in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, a town established in the mid-1950s, a frontier culture and drinking style that he posited had developed during 150 years of acculturation in the Mackenzie Delta area when traders, miners, missionaries, boarding schools, and police had arrived and claimed culturally superior standing. Frontier, anti-authoritarian behaviours that had entered the region during and following the Klondike Gold Rush era were well entrenched by 1940.¹³⁸ The frontier culture evolved as southern mainstream and contra-cultural values blended with Native norms in the context of a rugged environment. Natives ignored norms of legal marriage and respect for police and adopted abusive patterns of alcohol consumption, while adjusting to other southern norms, including rules related to government housing, welfare, and taking steady employment. "Heavy drinking on payday weekends and other social occasions ... is a conspicuous feature of Inuvik's frontier culture and contravenes mainline drinking norms,"¹³⁹ wrote Honigmann.¹⁴⁰ Many Native adults regularly shared alcohol with minors, and public drunkenness frequently resulted in arrests. Honigmann maintained that Natives consciously or unconsciously defied mainstream social norms through these frontier style drinking practices, adopting these behaviours as a "badge of cultural identity."¹⁴¹ These "contra-cultural" frontier values and behaviours exist across the Far North in anti-government sentiments in the early twenty-first century.

In 1961 anthropologist Donald Clairmont found that binge style drinking also prevailed in nearby Aklavik, a hamlet of 642 that was overwhelmingly Inuit and First Nations. With no alcohol outlets in Aklavik, Native residents would fly to Inuvik for several day drinking sprees or they would ask someone who was traveling to Inuvik to bring them liquor. "Readiness to

drink 'hard' (was) a criterion of acceptance as man," wrote Clairmont.¹⁴² Here, too, parents regularly purchased alcohol for their children, and they typically complained loudly when the RCMP arrested the children for underage drinking.¹⁴³

Ethnologists Helm and Lurie found what they termed anti-authority sentiments among the Dogrib Indians of Lac La Martre, between Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake in 1959, as well. Home brewing was common and men appeared to relish getting away with drunkenness in the presence of authorities.¹⁴⁴ Home brewing was also a common practice among young men in Snowdrift (now Łutselk'e), an Athabaskan village on Great Slave Lake, in the early 1960s. Drinking parties generally were male festivities; women usually left with their children in tow when "serious" drinking began. Virtually everyone seemed to condone drinking, though they said they deplored violence. Residents seldom openly objected to drunken behaviour, however. VanStone noted the widespread adherence to *the ethic of non-interference* at Snowdrift: "it should be emphasized (that) the whole idea of being critical of someone's behaviour or of gossiping runs counter to one of the cherished attitudes of the Snowdrift Indians, namely their general condemnation of people who tell them what to do. Above all, the Indians do not like a person who is bossy."¹⁴⁵ This ethic, which may inhibit the development of social norms proscribing alcohol abuse, has been observed by many anthropologists in Indigenous communities.¹⁴⁶

To the east, among the Copper Inuit of Holman Island, alcohol-related problems increased markedly in the late 1970s, within a decade of their beginning to abandon their traditional nomadic subsistence lifestyle and settling in government-built communities.¹⁴⁷ In less than twenty years, the lifestyle in the region became largely sedentary and was strongly influenced by western government programs, radio and television.¹⁴⁸ Residents exhibited the spree drinking pattern seen elsewhere in the North, though problems were less pervasive than elsewhere, as alcohol was not sold in Holman.¹⁴⁹

In Rankin Inlet (Kangiqiniq), on northwest Hudson Bay in Nunavut, alcohol was introduced in the late 1950s when a nickel mine was established there.¹⁵⁰ Residents tended to binge drink, and many alcohol-related problems developed, including assaults, accidents, house fires, and suicides.¹⁵¹ Frobisher Bay (Iqaluit, which became the capital of Nunavut,) in the 1960s and '70s exemplified the problems that developed in the context of rapid socio-economic change in the Canadian Arctic. Hugh Brody described Frobisher Bay during this time: "It has a black reputation for drunkenness, violence, and prostitution; northern Whites see it as a hotbed of iniquity and the embodiment of all that is wrong in northern development and

administration.”¹⁵² Brody suggested that cultural disruption and the loss of male status in conjunction with transition from a subsistence lifestyle contributed to alcohol-related violence. Stoicism was expected of Inuit men; but when they consumed alcohol, their repressed anxieties and resentments tended to explode in violence against their wives. Brody predicted an increase in alcohol abuse and domestic violence if the deterioration in men’s status in the family and community continued.¹⁵³

Writing in the early 1970s, Graham Rowley, noted archaeologist with much experience in the Arctic, described the despair wrought by drunkenness and domestic abuse in the Canadian Arctic: “Many settlements in the north have very grave inter-related social problems in drunkenness, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, unemployment and underemployment, and abject poverty.” These problems were worst in the larger settlements such as Frobisher Bay and Inuvik, where alcohol was easily accessible and where there were significant white populations. On the other hand, in the smaller hamlets that offered little of interest to youth who had been exposed to the western world in school, juvenile delinquency and despondency were “sure to follow unless there are satisfying outlets to absorb their energies and imaginations,” wrote Rowley.¹⁵⁴ Both Brody’s and Rowley’s remarks were prescient. In the early twenty-first century, alcohol abuse and myriad forms of violence pervaded Nunavut and other northern regions, the most crushing of which is extraordinarily high suicide rates of young men.

In Alaska, similar developments were unfolding since statehood in 1959, after which unincorporated Native villages could no longer ban liquor sales and possession, and village councils had difficulty responding to alcohol-related offenses. As Stephen Conn explains, since the *Indian Reorganization Act* of the 1930s, village councils had translated community consensus into law, as opposed to creating and imposing law.¹⁵⁵ This consensus had dissipated with the inundation of socio-economic change from the mid-twentieth century forward. During and following World War II, Alaska’s transportation and communications systems improved, reducing the isolation of rural villages, and in the 1960s anti-poverty programs brought cash in the form of transfer payments into rural Alaska. The 1971 *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act* (ANCSA) allowed for construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, both of which expanded wage-labour opportunities and contributed to unprecedented quantities of alcohol and an explosion of alcohol-related problems in Native communities.¹⁵⁶ In the face of such overwhelming social and economic change, the consensus on local prohibition established decades earlier, with the support of missionary-teachers and Indian agents, no longer prevailed,

especially among young people, and village councils found their influence as reinforcers of established social norms dissolving.¹⁵⁷

In 1988, a Pulitzer Prize winning series in the *Anchorage Daily News*, “A People in Peril,”¹⁵⁸ exposed the devastating consequences of alcohol abuse in rural Alaska. Alaska’s alcohol consumption rates, binge and heavy drinking rates, and alcohol mortality were among the highest in the nation. Alaska Natives experienced much higher rates of alcohol abuse and related harms than non-Natives. Some villages had experienced rashes of suicides among their youth. Alaska’s Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) rate was thought to be among the highest in the world.¹⁵⁹ Rural Alaska was in the midst of a catastrophe.

In response to requests from village leaders, in 1980, the Alaska legislature had extended the *local option law* that since 1937 had allowed municipalities to ban alcohol sales, to allow municipalities and unincorporated villages to ban the sale, importation, and possession of alcohol by majority votes in the communities. In the 1980s and 1990s nearly 100 villages held local option elections, almost always applying greater restrictions.¹⁶⁰ These policies have reduced alcohol-related harms in rural Alaska,¹⁶¹ yet alcohol abuse and related social ills continue to wreak havoc in Alaska communities.

In the early twenty-first century, Alaska villages continue to revisit their local option policies; four western Alaska villages did so in October 2009.¹⁶² In Bethel, the largest village, which serves as a hub for southwest Alaska villages, after several local businesses applied for liquor licenses following the October vote to end Bethel’s ban on sales, residents were so alarmed at the prospect of increased alcohol abuse that they reversed that vote in an advisory vote to the city council just three months later.¹⁶³ These events illustrate the difficulties in mitigating historically rooted alcohol problems, particularly in a culture that prizes individual freedom. As of October 2009, seventeen Alaska villages banned sale, seventy-five banned sale and importation, and thirty-three banned possession as well. Seven villages had community-owned liquor stores.¹⁶⁴

Northern Canadian communities also have a variety of policy options available to them to restrict access to alcohol, and as is the case in Alaska, they revisit these policies from time to time. Nowhere in Nunavut are off-premise sales allowed for individuals in their own communities. Several communities allow importation from retail outlets in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, or elsewhere in Canada. Numerous hamlets prohibit importation.¹⁶⁵ Several municipalities in the Northwest Territories have retail outlets and bars. Ten communities are restricted in a variety of ways, and six communities are

dry.¹⁶⁶ In the Yukon, only Old Crow, a Vuntut Gwitch'in village far above the Arctic Circle, is dry; that is, sale, importation, and possession are all illegal, based on council policy. Most rural communities that do not have a retail outlet have on-premise establishments, which are also licensed for off-premise sales during restricted hours.¹⁶⁷

None of these northern Canada or Alaska measures is highly effective in keeping alcohol out of dry communities or eliminating alcohol-related harms. As noted above, numerous studies have shown that alcohol restrictions have reduced alcohol-related harms.¹⁶⁸ However, insufficient law enforcement and lack of social cohesion and willingness to establish unambiguous proscriptive norms limit the policies' effectiveness. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous northerners tend to bristle at the notion of restricting individuals' freedom of action.

Conclusion—A Northern Frontier Drinking Culture

Alcohol arrived in Alaska and northern Canada at various times over a period of centuries, by way of abusers of alcohol, including traders, military personnel, whalers, miners, and finally construction workers. By most accounts, soon after exposure, Natives adopted a binge or spree style of drinking, apparently influenced by those who introduced them to alcohol and perhaps owing to the tradition of feasting during times of plenty. The frontier context, including a physically challenging environment and resentment of outside authority, promoted risky drinking practices to prove one's stamina, and/or to evade or defy the law. Thus drinking heavily and getting away with drinking affirmed courage, virility, and vigour, all valued traits on the frontier. Though Alaska and northern Canada are hardly the frontiers they once were, this frontier mentality persists and can be seen in the popularity of rugged sports and other pursuits such as snowmobiling, dog sled races, white-water rafting, flying small private planes, and big game hunting, as well as in resentment of (especially outside) government authority.

A variety of other theories in addition to the historical forces presented here attempt to explain the high levels of alcohol abuse among Aboriginal North Americans. These theories generally fall within the structural (historical and present marginalization of Natives), socio-cultural (response to cultural and personal trauma, socio-cultural norms), psychological (including exposure to abusive drinking patterns by those who introduced Native Americans to alcohol), and biological (a genetic predisposition) frameworks. Harvard sociologist Robert Merton's classic essay "Social Structure and Anomie" suggests that marginalized groups may respond to their restricted access to society's widely accepted aspirations by adopting anti-social, self-

destructive behaviours or through anomie.¹⁶⁹ Others, including Smart and Ogborne¹⁷⁰ and Saggors and Gray,¹⁷¹ have applied this structural theory to explain abusive drinking among North American and other Aboriginal peoples. Others have identified *intergenerational trauma*, a term coined in the mid 1980s by American scholar Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart,¹⁷² to describe what happens to ethnic groups that are traumatized over a long period of time, as a contributing factor to widespread alcohol abuse. Mancall cites the high death rates among Aboriginal North Americans around the time of contact as a source of upheaval with multi-generational effects,¹⁷³ and many, including Wadden¹⁷⁴ and the Law Commission of Canada's report *Restoring Dignity: Responding to Child Abuse in Canadian Institutions*,¹⁷⁵ have identified residential schools as a source of intergenerational trauma.

MacAndrew and Edgerton posit that societies' alcohol-related norms determine socially accepted consumption patterns and alcohol-related behaviours.¹⁷⁶ Several, including Brant,¹⁷⁷ Saggors and Gray,¹⁷⁸ Whitehood and Hayes¹⁷⁹ and Conn¹⁸⁰ have identified the *ethic of non-interference* as a fundamental social norm that inhibits Native North Americans from holding one another accountable for alcohol-related behaviours and from establishing healthy norms and enforcing them through social pressure. As for biological theories, Marja Korhonen, a counselling psychologist with the National Aboriginal Health Organization in Ottawa, writes, "it is likely that there may be a variety of genes, biological characteristics, and complex indirect interactions that, in combination with other circumstances, may lead to alcohol dependence in a specific individual. All researchers emphasize that biological factors alone do not fully explain addiction."¹⁸¹

This article's emphasis on the unique historical events and forces in Alaska and northern Canada in analyzing the region's current challenges with alcohol abuse is not meant to reject any of the above explanations or theories. On the contrary, theories built on conditions and values common to Indigenous people throughout the world offer insight regarding the disproportionate alcohol pathology among Indigenous northerners. However, the aim of this endeavour is to demonstrate the significance of frontier conditions and a frontier mentality in shaping and perpetuating a high risk drinking pattern in northern Canada and Alaska. The Far North has always been a marginal environment where life itself has been precarious; Indigenous northerners have taken the perils presented by the natural environment in stride for millennia. This "extreme" characteristic of the North contributed to its allure for traders and other adventurers who migrated here to make a living, and it continues to draw migrants to the North, though "newcomers" to the North tend to have developed their drinking patterns in the context of more

temperate norms, which may at least partially explain their intermediate rates of alcohol pathology.

Until the 1950s to 1970s, the disruptions to traditional northern Aboriginal life from outside influences, including alcohol, tended to be limited and/or intermittent, which mitigated the harm of the predominant binge or spree-drinking pattern of consumption. However, since the mid-twentieth century, economic development and social programs have disrupted traditional culture and life ways, while greatly increasing physical and economic access to alcohol. Today, as alcohol abuse and related social ills ravage northern communities, a frontier ethos lulls northerners into complacency regarding the risks and harms, and stirs them into resistance to regulations that limit individual choices.

Author

Mary F. Ehrlander is associate professor of history and co-director of Northern Studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Notes

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13. Scott Goldsmith, Jane Angvik, Lance Howe, Alexandra Hill, and Linda Leask, with assistance from Brian Saylor and David Marshall, *Status of Alaska Natives 2004 Report, Section Two Social & Cultural Issues & The Alcohol Crisis* (Anchorage: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 2004): II:16, accessed 12 February 2006, available from http://www.alaskool.org/resources/anc2/ANC2_Sec2.html, Internet.
14. Statistics Canada, "Crimes by Offences, Province and Territory," accessed 11 July 2009, available from <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/101/cst01/legal04c-eng.htm> (for Yukon) and <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/101/cst01/Legal04d-eng.htm>, Internet (for NWT and Nunavut). Note: I could not find 2008 rates.
15. Nancy MacDonald, "Northern Blight: Canada's Real Violent-Crime Hot Spot is Three Tiny Cities in the North," *MacLean's* 122, no. 10/11 (23 March 2009), accessed 29 June 2009, available from <http://www2.macleans.ca/2009/03/26/northern-blight/>, Internet.
16. John Hamer and Jack Steinbring, "Introduction," in *Alcohol and Native Peoples of the North*, eds. John Hamer and Jack Steinbring (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), 5-6.
17. Royal Charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, available from <http://www.hbc.com/hbcheritage/collections/archival/charter/charter.asp>, Internet.
18. Sherry Saggors and Dennis Gray, *Dealing with Alcohol: Indigenous Usage in Australia, New Zealand and Canada* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 46.

19. Keith J. Crowe, *A History of the Original People of Northern Canada* (Montreal: Arctic Institute of North America and McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974), 74.
20. Hamer and Steinbring, 31; Crowe, 81.
21. Morris Zaslow, *The Opening of the Canadian North 1870–1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971), 249–251.
22. Craig Heron, *Booze: A Distilled History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003), 135.
23. Heron, 163.
24. Heron, 135. The Supreme Court ruled in the 1939 *Re Eskimo* case that constitutionally Inuit were classified as Indians. In 1951 Parliament amended the Indian Act to exclude Inuit.
25. Fortuine, 106, 281–282.
26. Robert Fortuine, *Chills and Fever: Health and Disease in the Early History of Alaska* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1992), 279–281.
27. Fortuine, 282–284.
28. Reginald Smart and Alan C. Ogborne, *Northern Spirits: A Social History of Alcohol in Canada* (Toronto: Addiction Research Foundation, 1996), 10–12.
29. Heron, 41–43.
30. Hamer and Steinbring, 13. Aboriginal Canadian Brian Maracle suggests that exposure to alcohol by abusers of alcohol, coupled with the Aboriginal tradition of feasting during harvest season, may have contributed to the prevalence of binge drinking among Aboriginal Canadians historically and currently. (Maracle, 75). Maracle is a non-status Indian (3).
31. James B. Waldram, D. Ann Herring, and T. Kue Young, *Aboriginal Health in Canada: Historical, Cultural and Epidemiological Perspectives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 138–139.
32. Smart and Ogborne, 102; Waldram, Herring and Young, 139.
33. Jean Usher, "The Long Slumbering Offspring of Adam: The Evangelical Approach to the Tsimshian," in *Pilot Not Commander: Essays in Memory of Diamond Jenness*, eds. Pat and Jim Lotz (Ottawa: Saint Paul University, 1971), 57–58. Following a dispute with Church authorities in Old Metlakatla, Duncan and his followers relocated to the present Metlakatla on Annette Island in southeastern Alaska. Metlakatla is the only Indian reservation in Alaska.
34. Heron, 42.
35. Canada, Statutes of Canada, 1876, *Indian Act of 1876, Chap. 18: An Act to amend and consolidate the laws respecting Indians*, accessed 1 July 2009, available from <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/205/301/ic/cdc/aboriginaldocs/stat/html/1876ap12.htm>, Internet.
36. Waldram, Herring, and Young, 139–140.
37. Brian Maracle, *Crazywater: Native Voices on Addiction and Recovery* (Ontario: Penguin Books, 1994), 44–45. Such proscriptions lasted for generations for

Indigenous people, whereas national prohibition was in effect for much shorter time periods in Canada and Alaska and therefore would have had less lasting effects on drinking styles of non-Indigenous people. On the other hand, Protestant based temperance movements in North America and Scandinavia arguably have contributed to ambivalent attitudes towards alcohol that endure today, with widespread moralistic attitudes toward alcohol consumption (Room 1989).

38. Zaslów, 95.
39. Jeanette Paddock Nichols, *Alaska: A History of its Administration, Exploitation, and Industrial Development During its First Half Century Under the Rule of the United States* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1924), 80.
40. Fortuine, 286–287.
41. Senate, *Customs Act of 1868*: An act to extend the laws of the United States relating to customs, commerce, and navigation over the territory ceded in the United States by Russia, to establish a collection district therein, and for other purposes, 40th Cong., 2nd sess., 1868, accessed 14 November 2009, available from http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/cdmg21&CISOPTR=2280&REC=7, Internet.
42. William Hunt, *Distant Justice: Policing the Alaskan Frontier* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 28–29.
43. Fortuine, 285.
44. Fortuine, 285–286.
45. Fortuine, 286–287.
46. Hunt, 10.
47. Hunt, 10.
48. Nichols, 80.
49. Hunt, 29.
50. Fortuine, 291.
51. Fortuine, 291–293. Stephen Conn, *No Need For Gold: Alcohol Control Laws and the Alaska Native Population: From the Russians through the Early Years of Statehood* (Anchorage: University of Alaska School of Justice, 1986), 12. The term *Eskimo* continues to be used in Alaska, including among Yup'ik and Inupiat themselves, and though some prefer to be called Yup'ik or Inupiat, *Eskimo* is generally not considered pejorative. In Canada the term has been discontinued in favour of "Inuit."
52. Calvin L. Hooper, *Report of the cruise of the U.S. Revenue Steamer Thomas Corwin in the Arctic Ocean, 1881* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1884), 25, accessed 12 November 2009, available from <http://ia311032.us.archive.org/1/items/reportofcruiseof02unit/reportofcruiseof02unit.pdf>, Internet.
53. Hooper, 1884, 113.
54. Ivan Petroff, *Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska, Tenth Census 1880* (Washington, DC, 1884), 2, accessed 15 November 2009, available

from <http://ia341329.us.archive.org/1/items/reportonpopulati00petruoft/reportonpopulati00petruoft.pdf>, Internet.

55. Petroff, 45.
56. Petroff, 74.
57. Michael Healy, *Report of the cruise of the Revenue Marine Steamer Corwin in the Arctic Ocean in the year 1885* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1887), 19, accessed 12 November 2009, available from <http://www.archive.org/stream/reportcruiserev00servgoog>, Internet.
58. Fortune, 295.
59. Fortune, 192.
60. Kathleen Lopp Smith and Verbeck Smith, *Ice Window: Letters from a Bering Strait Village: 1892–1902* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2001), 20.
61. “Distilling a ‘Home Industry’: 200 Gallons of Molasses Made into Rum,” *The Eskimo Bulletin*, III (July 1987).
62. John Honigmann, “Mackenzie Delta Frontier Culture,” in *Pilot Not Commander: Essays in Memory of Diamond Jenness*, eds. Pat and Jim Lotz (Ottawa: Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, Saint Paul University, 1971), 189.
63. Charlene Porsild, *Gamblers and Dreamers: Women, Men, and Community in the Klondike* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 27.
64. Porsild, 29–30.
65. Porsild, 42.
66. Peter Usher, “The Canadian Western Arctic: A Century of Change,” in *Pilot Not Commander: Essays in Memory of Diamond Jenness*, eds. Pat and Jim Lotz (Ottawa: Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, Saint Paul University, 1971), 172–173.
67. P. Usher, 171, 175.
68. Honigmann, 1971, 188.
69. P. Usher, 175; Crowe, 110.
70. Zaslów, 258–259.
71. Porsild, 45.
72. Fortune, 290.
73. Nichols, 145.
74. Hunt, 32.
75. Terrence Cole, ed., *Old Yukon: Tales trails, and Trials: Memoirs of Judge James Wickersham* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2009), 42.
76. Nichols, 106–108.
77. Hunt, 30–31.
78. Berton, 160.
79. Nichols, 93.
80. Nichols, 96–97.

81. Hunt, 31.
82. Pierre Berton, *The Klondike Fever: The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1960), 229.
83. Fortune, 290.
84. NA, MG 30 E55, vol. 4, Constantine Papers, Constantine to the Commissioner, 5 January 1896 and Constantine to Ogilvie, 19 November 1896, cited in Porsild, 48–49.
85. Zaslow, 99.
86. Jim Wallace, *Forty Mile to Bonanza: The North-West Mounted Police in the Klondike Gold Rush* (Calgary: Bunker to Bunker Publishing, 2000), 10.
87. Porsild, 48.
88. Zaslow, 99.
89. Porsild, 40–41.
90. Berton, 91.
91. Wallace, 44.
92. Wallace, 155, 158, 171, 209.
93. Zaslow, 109; Wallace, 71.
94. Nichols, 160.
95. Wallace, 175–176.
96. Berton, 320–321.
97. Zaslow, 136–137.
98. Nichols, 160–162.
99. Fortune, 297.
100. Cole, 127.
101. James Wickersham, *Diary*, 20 April 1903, accessed 13 November 2009, available from http://library.state.ak.us/hist/hist_docs/wickersham/ASL-MS0107-diary005-1903.pdf, Internet. (emphasis in original)
102. Wickersham, *Diary*, 28 December 1900.
103. J.C. Cantwell, *Report on the Operations of the U.S. Revenue Steamer Nunivak on the Yukon River Station, Alaska, 1899–1901* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902), 80, accessed 12 November 2009, available from <http://www.archive.org/stream/reportofoperat00unit#page/80/mode/2up/>, Internet.
104. Cantwell, 149.
105. Cantwell, 178–179.
106. Cantwell, 184–185.
107. Wickersham, *Diary*, 13 September 1900.
108. Robert Marshall, *Arctic Village: A 1930s Portrait of Wiseman, Alaska* (Fairbanks, University of Alaska Press, 1991), 37–39.
109. Wickersham, *Diary*, 22 September 1905.
110. Marshall, 42–43.

111. Conn, 17.
112. Conn, 24.
113. Heron, 373–374.
114. Conn, 26–28.
115. Joseph A. Bourke, *Report to Governor Thomas Riggs, Jr., 30 June 1919*, in General Correspondence of the Alaska Territorial Governor 1909-1958, microfilm collection 77, reel 66, University of Alaska Fairbanks Archives, originals in State of Alaska Archives in Juneau.
116. Thomas Riggs, Jr., Governor of the Territory of Alaska, letter to the United States Secretary of the Interior, 30 September 1919, microfilm collection 77, reel 66, University of Alaska Fairbanks Archives.
117. Ron Lauteret, “You can’t catch bootleggers with Sunday school teachers,” *Alaska Journal* 11(1981): 41–43.
118. Lauteret, 45–46
119. Hunt, 225–227.
120. Conn, 29.
121. Heron, 270.
122. Heron, 320.
123. Julie Cruikshank, “The Gravel Magnet: Some Social Impacts of the Alaska Highway on Yukon Indians,” 7, in *The Alaska Highway: Papers of the 40th Anniversary Symposium*, ed. K. Coates (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985), 172–187, accessed 17 February 2010, available from http://jukebox.uaf.edu/ak_highway, Internet.
124. See “Guardian of the North,” chapter in Claus-M. Naske and Herman E. Slotnick, *Alaska: A History of the 49th State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987) for an informative discussion of the impacts of World War II and the Cold War in Alaska.
125. Cruikshank, 7.
126. William Simeone, *Rifles, Blankets, and Beads: Identity, History, and the Northern Athapaskan Potlatch* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 42.
127. W. Goldschmidt, “Delimitation of Possessory Rights of the Villages of Tetlin, Tanacross and Northway Interior Alaska,” unpublished report for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1946, cited in Simeone, 43.
128. Maracle, 45.
129. Cruikshank, 7.
130. See “The Beam in Thine Own Eye,” 130–140, in Muktuk Marston, *Men of the Tundra: Alaska Eskimos at War* (New York: October House, Inc., 1972) for Marston’s account of the dramatic events in Nome that led to Governor Ernest Gruening’s proposal of the bill that ended segregation in Alaska.

131. Matthew Berman and Teresa Hull, "Community Control of Alcohol in Alaska," *Alaska Review of Social and Economic Conditions*, XXXI (Anchorage: University of Alaska Anchorage Institute of Social and Economic Research, April 1997), 3.
132. P. Usher, 181.
133. The Hudson's Bay Company had extended their trading monopoly across the Arctic in the early twentieth century, establishing trading posts at Cape Wolstenholme in Nunavik in 1909, and in what is now Nunavut, at Lake Harbour in 1911, Chesterfield in 1912, Cape Dorset in 1913, and Frobisher Bay in 1914. The fur trade peaked in the 1920s and crashed in 1930, owing to over trapping, legislation to protect wildlife, and falling prices owing to market surpluses, both in the context of the Depression (Bonesteel, 4).
134. Sarah Bonesteel, *Canada's Relationship with Inuit: A History of Policy and Program Development* (Ottawa: Public History, Inc. for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2006), vi.
135. Crowe, 181.
136. Ishmael Alunik, Eddie D. Kolausok and David Morrison, *Across Time and Tundra: The Inuvialuit of the Western Arctic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 156.
137. Kevin McMahon, *Arctic Twilight: Reflections on the Destiny of Canada's Northern Land and People* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1988).
138. Honigmann, 1971, 189-190.
139. Honigmann, "Perspectives on Alcohol Behavior," in *Alcohol and Native Peoples of the North*, eds. John Hamer and Jack Steinbring (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980), 276.
140. It should be noted that the pattern of binge drinking is well entrenched on Indian reserves in Canada and on many reservations in the United States. Heron suggests that poverty and legal constraints encouraged Aboriginal peoples to binge drink when alcohol was accessible and notes that some anthropologists attribute this pattern to Indigenous people's desire to defy paternalistic white expectations (331). Thus the spree drinking pattern so common among Aboriginal North Americans is not unique to the northern "frontier" context.
141. Honigmann, 1980, 277.
142. Donald Clairmont, *Notes on the Drinking Behaviour of the Eskimos and Indians in the Aklavik Area: A Preliminary Report* (Ottawa: Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, 1962), 9.
143. Clairmont, 11.
144. As noted above, in late 1959, it had become legal for status Indians to consume alcohol, but at Lac La Marte, people were not yet aware of the change in law.
145. VanStone, 39.
146. For instance, Whitehood and Hayes (1998) list the ethic of non interference as a cultural barrier to establishing healthy community norms; and Sagers and

- Gray (1998) write that the ethic limits abstainers' ability to have a stronger moral influence on community members.
147. Richard G. Condon, *Inuit Youth: Growth and Change in the Canadian Arctic* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1978), 27–29.
 148. Condon 30–31.
 149. Condon, 177–178.
 150. Alooook Ipellie, "No one wants to talk about Alcoholism: It's like a taboo," *Inuit Today*, 7, no. 5 (July-Dec. 1978): 37.
 151. Ipellie, 22.
 152. Hugh Brody, *The People's Land: Eskimos and Whites in the Eastern Arctic* (Ontario: Penguin Books, 1975), 188.
 153. Brody, 196–198.
 154. Graham W. Rowley, "The Canadian Eskimo Today," *Polar Record* 16, no 101 (1972): 203.
 155. Conn, 73–75.
 156. Berman and Hull, 1.
 157. Conn, 76–77.
 158. Weaver, Howard, ed., "A People in Peril," *Anchorage Daily News*, 1988, special reprint, originally published January 10–20, 1988.
 159. *Alaska's Greatest Hidden Tax: The Negative Consequences of Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse and Dependence* (Juneau: State of Alaska Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, February 2000), 6.
 160. Berman and Hull, 1–2.
 161. Berman, Hull and May.
 162. Kyle Hopkins, "Voters in Bethel and Kotzebue favor relaxing liquor laws," *Anchorage Daily News*, 7 October 2009, accessed 9 October 2009, available from <http://www.adn.com/news/alaska/rural/story/965398.html>, Internet.
 163. Hopkins, "Bethel residents firmly oppose sale of alcohol in city," *Anchorage Daily News*, 21 January 2010, accessed 27 February 2010, available from <http://www.adn.com/2010/01/20/1102694/advisory-vote-shows-majority-in.html>, Internet.
 164. Alaska Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, *Schedule of Local Option Communities*, accessed 21 November 2009, available from <http://www.dps.state.ak.us/ABC/docs/localopt.pdf>, Internet.
 165. Jim Bell, "GN repatriates liquor," *Nunatsiaq News* 28 January 2005, accessed 6 October 2009 from http://www.nunatsiaqnews.com/archives/50128/news/nunavut/50128_01.html, Internet.
 166. Unrestricted communities are: Aklavik, Colville Lake, Enterprise, Fort Providence, Fort Resolution, Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, Jean Marie River, Kakisa, Sachs Harbour, Trout River, Tuktoyaktuk, Wrigley, Ulukhaktok and Yellowknife. Restricted communities are: BehchokòDeline, Dettah, Fort Good

- Hope, Fort Liard, Fort McPherson, Fort Simpson, Norman Wells, Paulatuk and Tulita. Dry hamlets are: Gamètì, Lutsel'Ke, Nahanni Butte, Tsiigehtchic, Wekweètì, and Whatì (NWT *Liquor Commission Annual Report 2007-2008*).
167. Virginia Labelle, Vice-President, Yukon Liquor Corporation, personal telephone communication, 24 September 2009.
 168. Berman, Hull and May; Smart; Darryl S. Wood, "Alcohol and Violence in Nunavut: A Comparison of Wet and Dry Communities," presentation at the Canada Research Showcase, Washington State University, Pullman, WA, 26 March 2008, accessed 30 June 2009 from <http://www.darrylwood.com/NunavutAlcoholViolence.pdf>, Internet; John D. O'Neil, "Community Control over Health Problems: Alcohol Prohibition in a Canadian Inuit Village," *Circumpolar Health* 84 (1984): 340–343.
 169. Robert K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," *American Sociological Review* 3 (October 1938): 672–682.
 170. Smart and Ogborne, 1998.
 171. Saggors and Gray 1998.
 172. Brave Heart, Maria Y.H. "The Historical Trauma Response Among Natives and its Relationship with Substance Abuse: A Lakota Illustration," in *Healing and Mental Health for Native Americans: Speaking in Red*, eds. E. Nebelkopf & M. Phillips (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2004), 7–18.
 173. Peter Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).
 174. Marie Wadden, *Where the Pavement Ends: Canada's Aboriginal Recovery Movement and the Urgent Need for Reconciliation* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2008).
 175. Law Commission of Canada, *Restoring Dignity: Responding to Child Abuse in Canadian Institutions* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 2000), accessed 14 November 2009, available from http://dalspace1.library.dal.ca/dspace/bitstream/handle/10222/10277/Restoring_Dignity_Report_EN.pdf?sequence=1, Internet.
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 177. Clare Brant, "Native Ethics and Rules of Behaviour," *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 35 (August 1990): 534–539.
 178. Saggors and Gray, 1998.
 179. Paul C. Whitehead and Michael J. Hayes, *The Insanity of Alcohol: Social Problems in Canadian First Nations Communities* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1998).
 180. Conn, 1986.
 181. Marja Korhonen, *Alcohol Problems and Approaches: Theories, Evidence and Northern Practice* (Ottawa: National Aboriginal Health Organization, June 2004), 8.

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