mentions, qualify as a populist movement? Though Lause’s work appears in a footnote, Formisano refrains from engaging with it, leaving us to wonder what Formisano made of Lause’s claim that the NRA “demonstrates how a relatively small number of obscure working citizens acting at the right time in the right circumstances can contribute substantially to turning the course of a nation’s destiny” (126). Nonetheless, both works offer new directions in the early republic’s political history and illustrate the need for continued research.

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Reviewed by Ryan McIlhenny

Alcohol has been a close companion for many of America’s celebrated characters and most infamous scoundrels. Rarely, however, do we think about the ways in which the distribution and consumption of alcohol has shaped cultural and political identities within the context of American history, particularly during the reform movements of the nineteenth century. Scott Martin, chair of the history department at Bowling Green State University and winner of the 1996 Phi Alpha Theta Book Award for Killing Time: Leisure and Culture in Southwestern Pennsylvania, 1800–1850, and Izumi Ishii, who teaches at Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, have provided two important works that open up a discussion on this very issue.

According to Martin, the absence of a book-length history of temperance within the last three decades is symptomatic of the way scholars see the temperance movement in women’s history as an “abject failure.” Such neglect, however, restricts a proper understanding of class and
gender constructions in America during the long nineteenth century. Martin’s latest book, *Devil of the Domestic Sphere: Temperance, Gender, and Middle-Class Ideology, 1800–1860*, endeavors to correct such historical myopia, presenting the temperance movement as a prime mover in the creation of an American cultural identity. Temperance picked up speed around the time America experienced the social disruptions caused by the transition from an agrarian to a commerce-based economy. Battling the ways in which alcohol threatened product efficiency and family cohesion, reformers utilized revolutionary republican ideology that identified women as naturally endowed agents who could provide moral stability in an increasingly rootless society. The use of the female sex in this way helped to create a new type of woman. In the nineteenth-century mind, the principles of piety, prudence, and purity made up the very nature of the female character; such ideals were imbued in the emerging domestic sphere, a sphere that followed, writes Martin, “the dictates of the natural order” (5). For temperance advocates, the moral fiber of American nationalism was only as strong as the sober women who guarded the domestic sphere.

Martin relies heavily on popular temperance publications to tell his story, emphasizing the reality of how such provocative literature was often given a new sense of authority when reinforced by scientific discourse. His presentation of the medical writings of Charles D. Meigs, the “pioneer of American gynecology,” is perhaps the most interesting in this study. Meigs mixed popular literature and scientific discourse in order “to illustrate the ‘natural,’ physiologically determined qualities of female character: fidelity, obedience, and perseverance” (12). Perhaps inadvertently, Martin’s chapter on Meigs shows the deeper complexities of new cultural history, offering profound implications beyond the intent of the book—namely, the inability of so-called objectivist science to step outside the boundaries of its own cultural context.

The latter portions of the book address two significant dilemmas faced by temperance advocates. The first had to do with the problem of controlling the sale of liquor while concurrently upholding the sacrosanct realities of free market activity. To solve the problem, temperance advocates returned to republican political philosophy. The end goal of economic interaction among citizens was the general welfare of society. The term *individualism*, which went into common use in the nineteenth century, referred to the self-centeredness of greedy entrepreneurs. Alcohol quenched the dissolute thirst of individuals and did not contribute to
building a virtuous commonwealth. Although this did not arrest the flow of liquor, it nonetheless provided a rationale for banning illicit drink while preserving commercial capitalism.

The second issue revolves around the inherent contradiction of the ideal woman. Not only was she represented as a potential victim and savior, she was also a possible seducer, luring men to drink, which, in turn, opened the door to sexual impurity. Middle-class men in the movement felt a responsibility to monitor the latent sexuality among their female counterparts. This highlights a crucial theme running through Devil of the Domestic Sphere: the strand of misogyny endemic in temperance literature and gender ideology. Fearing that women’s roles in public led to a neglect of domestic duties, male reformers initiated legislation against alcohol. Beginning with the Maine Law of 1851, male reformers sought to wrest control of the movement from women in hopes that they would submissively return to their responsibilities in the private sphere. The Maine Law served as an important transition in the history of alcohol reform from moral suasion to political prohibition. Womanly moral suasion by the 1850s was slowly undermined by the “manly” political legislation to prohibit the sale and consumption of alcohol. Martin intimates that the prohibition movement seemed to be more male dominated than the temperance movement.

Complementing Martin’s discussion of the relationship between temperance and cultural identity, Izumi Ishii argues in his inaugural monograph, Bad Fruits of the Civilized Tree: Alcohol and the Sovereignty of the Cherokee Nation, a reworking of his 1999 dissertation from the University of Kentucky, that the efforts of the Cherokee Nation to counter the social and political devastation of the poisonous “fruits of the Civilized tree” (i.e., alcohol) worked to trace the boundaries of the nation’s political autonomy. Relying on William McLoughlin’s study of the “Cherokee renascence” between 1839 and 1880, Ishii boldly affirms that the history of temperance “reflects the history of the Cherokee people” (165).

According to a number of ethnohistorians, the preliminary encounters between European whites and Native Americans created, to use the words of Richard White, “expedient misunderstandings.” This is to put it mildly. From the perspective of Europeans, the demand for alcohol among the Cherokees during the colonial period, regardless of the item’s use value, instantly created the perennial stereotype of the drunken and unruly Indian who needed regulation by white authorities. Such a negative image, enduring well into the nineteenth century, kept whites from
believing that the Cherokees were capable of civilization and thus steered the course of removal in the 1830s. Yet by the second decade of the nineteenth century, the Cherokees conscientiously adopted many Euro–American “civilizing” practices, among them the regulation of alcohol by taxation, regulatory agencies, and encouraging moral suasion. The battle against alcohol was concurrently a battle against removal.

Regrettably, Cherokee cultural assimilation and the appeals to self-determination through temperance fell on deaf ears, despite the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in favor of Cherokee sovereignty in *Worcester v. Georgia*. When removal to the Oklahoma territory became a reality, many Cherokees turned to the bottle for comfort, thus reopening a market for unscrupulous whites to sell alcohol in the territory. The moral nadir that followed was not, however, the end of the story. In the wake of removal, Cherokees refused to abandon their aspirations for political autonomy, and, once again, control of alcohol played a leading role through the very active Cherokee Temperance Society, which established “auxiliaries in each district in the Nation” (103). As it extended throughout the Indian community, temperance activism offered a renewed “sense of national purpose” (109). Neither the massive influx of white settlers, railroad speculators, and newly emancipated African Americans into the Oklahoma territory nor the egregious disregard for native rights by federal, state, and territorial courts in the post-Civil War years dampened Cherokee efforts to assert national identity through their own regulatory actions.

Many Cherokees in the postbellum years became allies of the “first independent national female temperance organization,” the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Support agencies of the WCTU were set up throughout Indian land, and for a short time, the movement united Indian women with the “white-ribboners” of the WCTU. Given the flood of people, including ex-slaves and railroad speculators, encroaching on Indian lands, the federal government began preparing Oklahoma for statehood. The Nation was, once again, divided over the nearness of political dissolution, largely because the women of the WCTU made national identity and even statehood a secondary goal. A majority of women in the WCTU did not share with the Cherokees the urgency of native political independence, a less important concern than “securing prohibiting laws in a new state” (157). Consequently, Oklahoma statehood eclipsed Indian sovereignty and brought an end to the “Cherokee temperance movement” (164).
Both Martin and Ishii have certainly sharpened our understanding of temperance reform and the emergence of cultural and political status in nineteenth-century America, but even in much-needed studies like these, questions remain. Looking at Martin, readers may see it as strange to separate moral suasion from political legislation, when the former was rife with political overtones. The distinction between the two, while interesting, may seem forced. Likewise, a question may be raised as to whether or not the politics of gender and moral suasion continued through the prohibition years, which I assume was the case. Martin certainly piques the curiosity as to how gender ideology in America has changed in the wake of prohibition. I am sure that is a question to be answered by a twentieth-century scholar. In line with McLoughlin’s studies, Ishii has offered a tightly reasoned argument about alcohol and autonomy. But Ishii may have ended prematurely. Did the social and cultural makeup of temperance change after Oklahoma statehood? Other questions may include how the Cherokees contributed to the temperance movement on a broader, national scale or how ideologies concerning race and gender shaped the attitudes of white female reformers. Such criticisms, however, fall far short of making a dent in these two stories. Both works can be placed into the continually growing body of historical literature related to commodities and the construction of identity. These are must-reads.

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The Economy of Early America: Historical Perspectives and New Directions. Edited by Cathy Matson. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006. Pp. 380. Cloth, $55.00; Paper, $25.00.)

Reviewed by Jessica Lepler

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 21, 2001, two generations of historians gathered to consider “The Past and Future of Early American