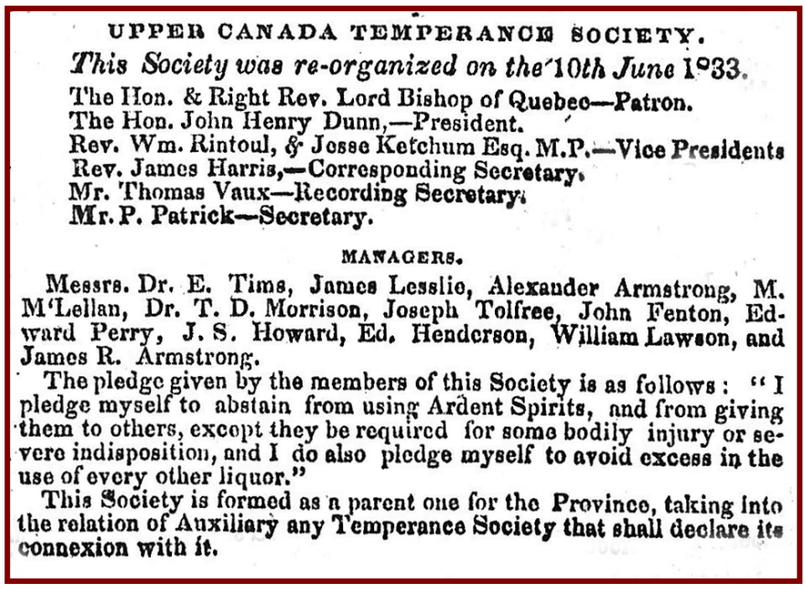
for January 20, 2008

Temperance



UPPER CANADA TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

This Society was re-organized on the 10th June 1833.

The Hon. & Right Rev. Lord Bishop of Quebec—Patron.
The Hon. John Henry Dunn,—President.
Rev. Wm. Rintoul, & Josse Ketchum Esq. M.P.—Vice Presidents
Rev. James Harris,—Corresponding Secretary.
Mr. Thomas Vaux—Recording Secretary.
Mr. P. Patrick—Secretary.

MANAGERS.

Messrs. Dr. E. Tims, James Lesslie, Alexander Armstrong, M. M'Lellan, Dr. T. D. Morrison, Joseph Tolfree, John Fenton, Edward Perry, J. S. Howard, Ed. Henderson, William Lawson, and James R. Armstrong.

The pledge given by the members of this Society is as follows: "I pledge myself to abstain from using Ardent Spirits, and from giving them to others, except they be required for some bodily injury or severe indisposition, and I do also pledge myself to avoid excess in the use of every other liquor."

This Society is formed as a parent one for the Province, taking into the relation of Auxiliary any Temperance Society that shall declare its connexion with it.

THE
TEMPERANCE ALMANAC
FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
1834;
CALCULATED GENERALLY FOR ALL PARTS OF THE
UNITED STATES AND CANADA:
CONTAINING, BESIDE THE USUAL ASTRONOMICAL CALCULATIONS, MANY VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS AND IMPORTANT STATEMENTS ON THE SUBJECT OF
TEMPERANCE.
PREPARED AND PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
The Executive Committee of the New-York State Temperance Society.
All the profits of the work, if any, are pledged to the gratuitous diffusion of temperance intelligence.

THE GENIUS OF TEMPERANCE DESTROYING THE HYDRA.

Published and sold by L. D. Dewey, 129 Nassau st., *New-York*, and by the *N. Y. State Temperance Society*, 19 Green st. *Albany*. —Also, sold by W. C. Little, O. Steele, Webster & Skinner, and Hoffman & White, *Albany*—Hoyt, Porter & Co. *Rochester, N. Y.*—and by booksellers generally, in all the states.
Hoffman & White, Printers, 71 State street, Albany.

Upper Canada Temperance Society 1833 **TPL** **Temperance Almanac TPL**

*I*n 1833, the Upper Canada Temperance Society was formed in York (soon to be Toronto) as an umbrella group for local temperance societies spread across the province, just at the time when Messrs. Worts and Gooderham had taken up residence and were on their way toward a future in distilling.

Fortunately for the new immigrants, attitudes toward both liquor and temperance were far from inhibiting. The very *City Directory* that carried the announcement for the Temperance Society also contained an advertisement for 39 Taverns and Inns (not to mention the many unadvertised drinking spots.) "So universal was the use of whiskey in Canada, and so regarded as an article of daily consumption, of which no one need be ashamed," wrote E. B. Shuttleworth that "a list of the citizens who purchased whiskey would be like that of a census, and, at the time of its publication would have invoked no more remark than if they had been buying tea."

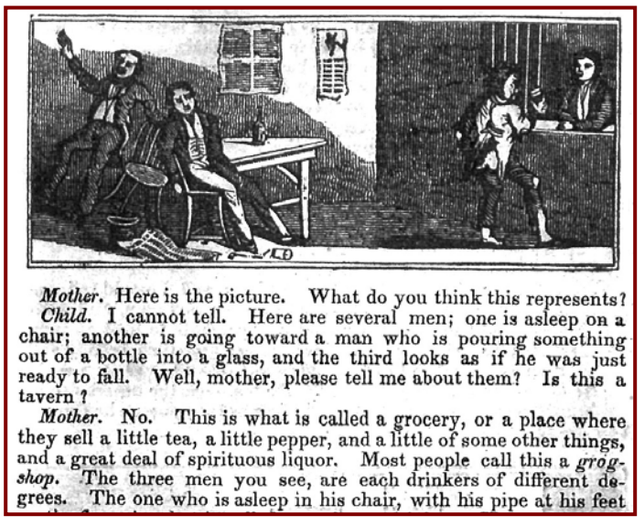
As for the temperance advocates, even they remained relatively tolerant, at least according to Shuttleworth's somewhat nostalgic view. Writing in the dry 1920s, during Ontario's period of prohibition, Shuttleworth commented, with a touch of envy, that the early supporters of temperance were "not of the stiff-necked and fanatical kind who try to dominate everybody, now-a-days, but of kinder and more reasonable natures." Perhaps.

To buttress his case, Shuttleworth pointed to the pledge taken by members of Temperance Societies, and published in the 1833-4 *City Directory*:

> I pledge myself to abstain from using Ardent Spirits, and from giving them to others, except they be required for some bodily injury or severe indisposition, and I do also pledge myself to avoid excess in the use of every other liquor.

There were loopholes. Pledge-takers promised to stay away from "Ardent Spirits" (with capital letters) … unless they were needed for medicinal purposes. And they promised to "avoid excess" in the use of every other liquor … such as the beer provided by such fine local brewmasters as Enoch Turner near the windmill and Joseph Bloor in Yorkville. They could get, well, moderately drunk on non-distilled products.

Of course, it's impossible to determine how many temperance advocates there were, how ardent they were, or even how "temperate." Certainly early publications on the topic were *not* as forgiving as Shuttleworth suggested. The **1834 Temperance Almanac** for the United States and Canada (published in New York) was filled with dire warnings and graphic illustrations.



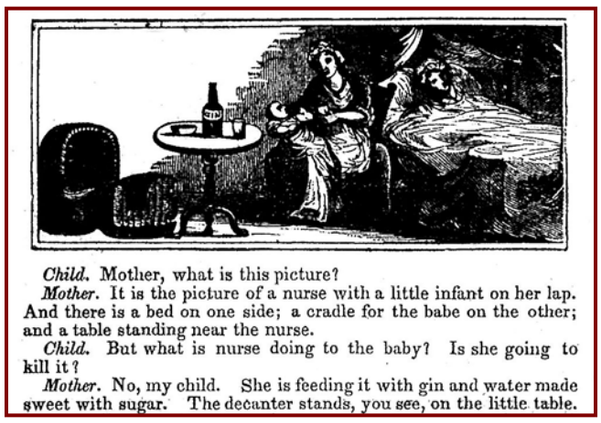
Mother. Here is the picture. What do you think this represents?
Child. I cannot tell. Here are several men; one is asleep on a chair; another is going toward a man who is pouring something out of a bottle into a glass, and the third looks as if he was just ready to fall. Well, mother, please tell me about them? Is this a tavern?
Mother. No. This is what is called a grocery, or a place where they sell a little tea, a little pepper, and a little of some other things, and a great deal of spirituous liquor. Most people call this a *grog-shop.* The three men you see, are each drinkers of different degrees. The one who is asleep in his chair, with his pipe at his feet

Debauchery at the local grocery-turned-grog shop

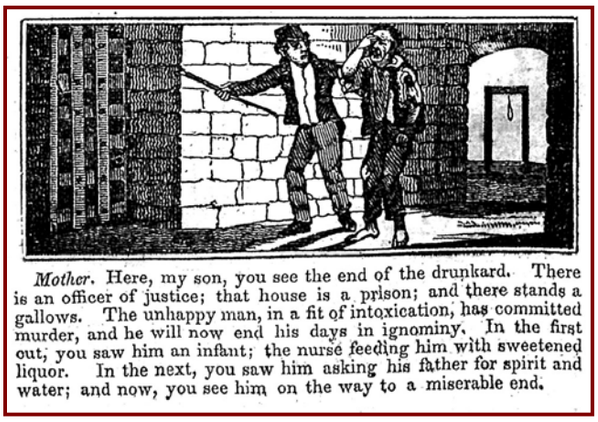
The imported almanac's cover features a classically draped female, "Genius of Temperance," slaying the many headed hydra of Intemperance. "February" states clearly that "*total abstinence*" is the goal. A dozen woodcuts illustrate a mother's cautionary tale about the evils of alcohol – a drunkard's progress from being nursed by his own mother with sugar-sweetened gin and water to committing murder and being hauled off to the gallows. She even waxes caustic at the so-called "temperate drinkers," who ended up in the gutter, and worse. Not subtle stuff.

It was in this environment that William Gooderham started his distillery in 1837. Among his earliest customers were King Street grocery-store owners, as well as some of the most prominent citizens of young Toronto. Although there's no evidence to suggest that Gooderham's early clients met the fate predicted by the 1834 Almanac, that publication's illustrations provide extremely rare glimpses into 1830s interiors – kitchens, living rooms, and nurseries; taverns at election time; and the shabby grocery-turned-grog shop reproduced here. No matter how extreme the message, the little woodcuts are a visual bonus.

Although temperance forces were obviously mobilizing in the early nineteenth century, their goals were different from those who later came to be known as "prohibitionists.' They advocated personal responsibility for reducing or eliminating the consumption of alcohol rather than government legislation outlawing it. Of course, that may simply have been because they hadn't thought of the more extreme, legislated solution. But they would.



Child. Mother, what is this picture?
Mother. It is the picture of a nurse with a little infant on her lap. And there is a bed on one side; a cradle for the babe on the other; and a table standing near the nurse.
Child. But what is nurse doing to the baby? Is she going to kill it?
Mother. No, my child. She is feeding it with gin and water made sweet with sugar. The decanter stands, you see, on the little table.



Mother. Here, my son, you see the end of the drunkard. There is an officer of justice; that house is a prison; and there stands a gallows. The unhappy man, in a fit of intoxication, has committed murder, and he will now end his days in ignominy. In the first out, you saw him an infant; the nurse feeding him with sweetened liquor. In the next, you saw him asking his father for spirit and water; and now, you see him on the way to a miserable end.

The drunk's progress: an illustrated morality tale in the 1834 *Temperance Almanac*
Unsubtle pressure for personal abstinence … but not for legislated prohibition

The advertisement for the Upper Canada Temperance Society appeared in the *1833-4 City Directory for York.* The 1834 wood-cut engravings appeared in the 1834 *Temperance Almanac … for the United States and Canada* at the Baldwin of the Toronto Public Library.

For more about temperance in Canada, see Graeme Decarie's article in the *Canadian Encyclopedia*, and Craig Heron's 2003 *Booze: A Distilled History*.

Please send your comments or questions to Manager of Heritage Services, Sally Gibson, sg@thedistillerydistrict.com.

For more about the history of the Distillery District, visit www.distilleryheritage.com