Proposal for MCHC 2016 Conference

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Title: Challenging the "Devil:" Temperance Reform in Mid-Maryland from 1875-1891

Project Problem/Summary: Concern about alcohol consumption and abuse led to Puritan jeremiads and the ante-bellum American Temperance Society; the temperance movement slowly made inroads into the American culture. The Civil War, however, stopped the movement in its tracks. After the War, efforts were renewed to control, limit, or extirpate the availability and/or consumption of alcohol. Mid-Maryland, in a border state and wedged between the Appalachian Mountains and the Eastern Shore, was a crossroads of ideas which had an impact in the state, the region, and the nation. This paper will examine how the cities of Baltimore and Frederick, the two most significant urban areas in Mid-Maryland at that time, addressed temperance issues.

Project Findings/Implications: Examination of newspapers and letters reveals that the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union sought a series of social reforms, of which temperance was merely one. The Union had significant local chapters in Baltimore and Frederick; however, the cultural milieu of these cities would greatly influence the Union’s efforts which involved temperance reform. Temperance reform was more successful in Baltimore than Frederick in achieving its goal of prohibition of alcohol. Frederick, lacking the diversity and community support, lagged behind Baltimore in implementing temperance reforms.

Category: Paper Presentation (Individual)
Technology: PowerPoint, computer, projector, and screen
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