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# COMPARATIVE FRONTIER SOCIAL LIFE

## WESTERN SALOONS AND ARGENTINE PULPERIAS

RICHARD W. SLATTA

In sparsely populated cattle frontier regions of the nineteenth century, only a limited number of social institutions functioned. The ranch, as a central socioeconomic complex, took on added importance. Ranch owners often took upon themselves political and legal powers exercised by civic officials in more settled areas. In the cattle regions of the American West and the pampas of Argentina, taverns were important local institutions. A comparison of social activities in the western saloon and the Argentine pulpería—a combination country store and tavern—reveals strong similarities. As frontier institutions, they served analogous multiple functions, and their cowboy and gaucho patrons behaved according to the norms of similar “saloon cultures.”<sup>1</sup>

Beyond their intrinsic importance as frontier institutions, the saloon and the pulpería

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helped to shape many of the negative stereotypes of the cowboy and the gaucho, the itinerant cattle hunter and ranch hand of the pampas. It was in the saloons of western cow towns that eastern journalists formed their judgment of cowboys as wild and drunken. The *Cheyenne Daily Leader* described cowboys in 1882: “Morally, as a class, they are foul-mouthed, blasphemous, drunken, lecherous, utterly corrupt.” The newspaper found their behavior in town particularly reprehensible because there “liquor has the ascendancy over them.” Relatively comfortable taverns, rich with gossip and news, held considerably more attraction for eastern writers than did the hot dusty plains, so it is not surprising that writers spent more time in the saloon than in the saddle.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, European travelers on the pampa saw gauchos lounging, drinking, gambling, and fighting at pulperías. Outsiders formed equally unflattering estimates of the gaucho character. One mid-nineteenth-century visitor opined that “gambling is the moving spirit of existence and enjoyment in the real gaucho. Indeed the veritable camp gaucho is a sort of loafer, hanging about pulperías, looking out for gaucho-flats to fleece of whatever they have

about them, drinking cana and gin, now and then ripping up somebody with his knife after a dispute of the most insignificant nature.”<sup>4</sup>

By viewing cowboys and gauchos at rest and play, rather than at work in the saddle, many observers recorded biased conclusions about their character and way of life. For most cowhands of Argentina and the United States, idling and drinking at public houses represented only a small, if more highly visible, proportion of their lives. Like other elements of cowboy life, the time spent “hellin’ round town” became exaggerated and romanticized.

#### ORIGINS AND FUNCTIONS

Many aspects of tavern life in Argentina and the North American West were similar, including the origins of the institutions. Western saloons grew from urban roots in colonial America, where taverns and hotels provided both lodging and liquor. Such institutions served as important political and social meeting places during the colonial period. In 1788 the Hillsborough Convention voted that the capital of North Carolina had to be built within ten miles of a tavern located on Isaac Hunter’s plantation. As a result, Raleigh, in Wake County, was laid out as the state’s capital in 1792.<sup>4</sup>

The etymology of the word *saloon* includes the sense of an abode (German *saal*), a large room (French *salon*), or hall (Dutch *zaal*). The term, meant to conjure up images of a lavish French salon, came into general use in the United States during the 1840s. As the settlers moved westward, state laws changed by the 1830s and 1840s to permit the sale of alcohol without lodging facilities. Richard Erdoes identifies New Orleans, St. Louis, Chicago, and San Francisco as especially important in shaping the nature of the western saloon. At the cutting edge of the moving frontier, the saloon carried urban values and practices westward. It also served as a principal theater where western and eastern ideas and practices met, melded, and clashed.<sup>5</sup>

Argentine *pulperías* also first operated in

towns, where they sold liquor and incidentals. On the pampa, where vast distances separated towns, they served as way stations. Although the western saloon often shed the historic lodging function of the tavern, the rural *pulpería* added the services of posthouse for travelers. In his fine novel of gaucho life, *Don Segundo Sombra*, Ricardo Güiraldes describes a typical country tavern of the pampa:

It was a single building, rectangular-shaped; the taproom was an open room on the right with benches where we sat side by side like swallows on a wire. The storekeeper handed out the drinks through a heavy iron grating that caged him in with tiers of brightly labeled bottles, flasks, and jugs of every kind. Skin sacks of mate leaf, demijohns of liquor, different-shaped barrels, saddles, blankets, horse pads, lassos, covered the floor.<sup>6</sup>

Accommodations at these posthouses remained rudimentary throughout the nineteenth century. Guests could partake of a spartan meal and sleep on the floor amid hordes of ravenous insects and bold rats. Although similar to the businesses operating in Buenos Aires and other towns, rural *pulperías*—those frequented by gauchos—took on a different character. Gauchos, avoiding contact with civic and military officials whenever possible, preferred the remoteness of the rural public house. Families of the landed elite often owned the *pulperías* and operated them through managers as adjuncts to their ranching and mercantile interests. Although a few bottles of cheap French wines occasionally graced the shelves of these crude country stores, *pulperías* held few other accoutrements of urban or European civilization.<sup>7</sup>

In some ways, the *pulpería* resembled the road ranch (or *ranchito*) of the Great Plains. These way stations offered humble shelter to plains transients benighted between towns. A Cincinnati banker, James F. Meline, described a Nebraska road ranch in 1866 as “not a dwelling, nor a farm-house, nor a store, nor a

tavern, but all these, and more.” These rude structures often carried colorful, suggestive names, such as “Dirty Woman’s” and “Fort Wicked” in Colorado. An important historical footnote to the road ranches is that they showed that cattle could survive Great Plains winters. But unlike the pulpería, which supported local gauchos and transients, the road ranch catered almost entirely to passing migrants.<sup>7</sup>

Despite some differences, however, western saloons and Argentine pulperías both fulfilled a variety of functions. The public house in American history has operated as courtroom, church, political arena, barber shop, trading post, post office, and library, in addition to its usual services. Since cash flowed into taverns on the specie-short frontier, many saloon keepers took advantage of the lack of banks by making loans. One Denver tavern-owner, “Uncle Dick” Wootney, charged up to 20 percent interest per day. Saloons also provided a logical and convenient site for illicit activities, including prostitution, gambling, and fencing stolen goods.<sup>8</sup>

Pulperías, while not quite as varied in their functions as the whiskey mills of the American West, also provided a diverse set of services. The proprietors, or *pulperos*, sold liquor, basic necessities, and the gaucho’s favorite *vicios* (his vices of maté tea and tobacco). Pulperías also functioned as hiring halls. A rancher in need of hands for a roundup could count on finding unemployed and willing peons at the local pulpería. The seasonal nature of ranch work left gauchos without wage income for months at a time, so the pulpero often extended credit. Travel restrictions and internal passport requirements imposed on gauchos helped to secure the pulpero’s outlay. Some ranches issued tokens for payment of wages that circulated locally as currency at stores on the specie-short pampa. Thus the pulpería added banking functions to its other activities. Although the sale of liquor and incidentals brought in some income, the real profits of a pulpería came through its function as a trading post. Pulperos paid for hides, ostrich feathers,

and other “fruits of the countryside” and usually asked few questions about origin, brands, or ownership. Pulperías became important collection points for licit and illicit livestock produce—cattle and horse hides, tallow, and bones—that eventually reached merchant houses in Buenos Aires for shipment to European markets. Salted beef went to feed slaves in Brazil and Cuba.<sup>10</sup>

It would seem that gauchos had somewhat better access to illicit gains than did American cowboys. Rural pulperías, spread far across the pampa, operated beyond the pale of adequate policing. In addition, mobile stores (*pulperías volantes*), run by itinerant merchants, exchanged liquor and goods for hides and feathers—far from the watchful eye of the justice of the peace. The landed elite lobbied strenuously for repression of the traveling merchants. They charged that the itinerant traders encouraged drunkenness, disorder, and theft. Pulperías volantes also offered unwelcome competition for the *estanciero*’s own country store. Buenos Aires province banned the traveling traders in 1831; bans followed in Corrientes in 1833 and Santa Fe in 1836. None of the bans was successful, however, and the maligned, itinerant *mercachifles* continued their profitable, illicit activities.<sup>11</sup>

Because of the substantial market for illicit livestock produce, Argentine gauchos could earn a marginal living by cooperating with corrupt pulperos and ranchers in the contraband capitalism of the pampa. European fashion fads also created a demand for ostrich feathers, gathered by bands of gaucho ostrich hunters. Thus, gauchos had access to sources of income (albeit meager) that cowboys lacked. Unemployed cowboys on the drift might well butcher someone else’s beef (a “slow elk” or a “big antelope”) for a meal. And a mavericker could build a herd from the calves of other people’s animals. But, although rustling and poaching occurred in the American West, they were not on the same scale nor considered as acceptable as similar activities on the pampa.<sup>12</sup>

Thomas Noel identified a number of illegal business activities in the saloons of Denver.

Fencing stolen goods provided additional income to some tavern keepers. At Denver's more unscrupulous saloons, drunk customers were sometimes rolled for whatever remaining cash they possessed. Such activities did not decrease a saloon's attractiveness, however. As another observer has noted, "It is a curious historical fact that vile gambling joints peopled by knaves, sharpers, ropers and steerers have only served to heighten the excitement and increase their patronage."<sup>13</sup>

#### DRINKING, MACHISMO, AND VIOLENCE

Despite the multifunctional nature of barrooms, most patrons frequented them to drink and to gamble. Behavior in taverns in both the American West and Argentina seem to bear out partially David G. Mandelbaum's crosscultural observations about drinking. He found that drinking (a) tends to be a male activity; (b) is normally a social rather than a solitary pursuit; (c) occurs usually among peer groups and age cohorts; and (d) cements social solidarity and amity. Only on the last point did saloon and *pulpería* behavior differ markedly. Although amity could be the outcome of drinking, aggression and conflict were much more likely, particularly in the *pulpería*.<sup>14</sup>

As sites of predominantly male activity, taverns provided a logical showcase for exhibitions of manliness or machismo. Lionel Tiger's notion of "male bonding" is faulty historically and biologically, but clearly "treating" or "buying drinks for the house" represented a means of temporarily uniting a group of drinking men. It was a gross breach of barroom etiquette to refuse a proffered drink, although in the United States one could sometimes get away with substituting coffee for liquor. Toasting, calls of "bottoms up," provided another communal activity that brought drinkers together in a brief shared moment. Recent research on alcoholism has shown a correlation between participation in masculine activities and problem drinking in the United States. The cultural links between "manliness"

and the consumption of alcohol appear to be pervasive and enduring.<sup>15</sup>

But the rosy glow induced by friendly social drinking often turned to the vivid red of violent anger. Saloons earned their widespread reputations as sites of fighting and death. The temporary bonds of communal drinking often gave way to contests of dominance, competition, and conflict. Rousing, furniture-smashing saloon fistfights ("dog fights") were largely creations of the Western movies. Real cowboys disdained fisticuffs. As one old-timer remarked, "If the Lord had intended me to fight like a dog, He'd a-give me longer teeth and claws." But a cowboy did not hesitate to fight with a knife and "manstopper" (gun). Some cattle country saloons became infamous. Violence at the original "Bucket of Blood" saloon, owned by Shorty Young in Havre, Montana, led cowboys to apply the term to any tough whiskey mill. Elliott West found similarly high levels of homicide in the saloons of Rocky Mountain mining towns.<sup>16</sup>

Argentine *pulperías* became justifiably famous for bloody knife fights. Gauchos skillfully wielded long, deadly swordlike knives (*facones*) well after firearms reached Argentina. One rancher of the pampas suggested in 1856 (with some exaggeration) that 99 percent of homicides, injuries, and disorders occurred at *pulperías*. Police and justice of the peace records are full of cases in which knife duels ended in the wounding or death of one combatant and the precipitous flight of the other to more remote areas of the frontier. Despite the fact that the traditional goal of gaucho knife duels was simply to mark an opponent's face, drunken fights often went far beyond the rituals of dueling.<sup>17</sup>

William B. Taylor remarked the same combination of machismo, drink, and violence in taverns and *pulquerías* of colonial Mexico. Arguments and contests of dominance often spawned fights. During the late colonial period in Mexico City, patrons battled one another in lower-class bars. In 1798, 45 percent of all arrests in the city were alcohol-related. In the Mexican countryside or capital, refusal of a

drink could be taken as a serious affront to manly honor and precipitate a fight. William and Claudia Madsen found the same potent forces of machismo, verbal duels, drinking, and aggression among mestizos in contemporary Mexico.<sup>18</sup>

Alcohol-related violence at one barroom helped seal the doom of the western saloon. In the Texas town of Richmond (just southwest of Houston) stood the nondescript Brahma Bull and Red Hot Bar. In 1889 drunken patrons violently beat a man named David Nation. The victim and his wife, Carry Nation, moved to Kansas thereafter. Her bar-smashing crusade in that state pushed ahead the ultimately successful drive for national Prohibition. In 1920 the Eighteenth Amendment went into effect, thereby killing the already ailing western saloon as an institution.<sup>19</sup>

Barroom violence did not stem from mere physiological changes induced by alcohol. Although alcohol impairs sensorimotor capabilities, it does not necessarily act as a disinhibiting agent, nor does it necessarily suspend moral judgment. Rather, social conventions influence drunken comportment, just as they do the behavior of sober persons. Mandelbaum points out that cultural expectations regulate emotional as well as physiological reactions to liquor. A link clearly exists between increased aggression and the consumption of alcohol. But even that relationship is not a matter of strict physiology. Men who drink distilled spirits show higher levels of aggression than those who consume beer. But so do men given a placebo who *think* that they are consuming a distilled beverage.<sup>20</sup>

Violence and lack of accountability for one's actions are part of a different set of "time-out" norms. In the case of the saloon culture, the "time-out" norms represent the values and behaviors of an exaggerated machismo. For example, the killing of a gaucho in a drunken duel was considered to be a *desgracia*—an unfortunate accident. In the eyes of his peers, the killer deserved sympathy, not blame. In a sense, alcohol was used as a convenient excuse

to escape the restrictive conventions of society and embrace other norms of the saloon culture. These norms, different from the conventions of proper society outside the tavern, shaped the actions of drinking men. Assertive and domineering machismo, verbal and physical aggression, and gambling with abandon were part of the saloon culture of both the North and South American frontier. Despite different cultural heritages, frontier barrooms of North and South America show marked similarities as theaters of excessive machismo.<sup>21</sup>

Anglo-American cowboys carried the cultural baggage of a Protestant work ethic that revered and rewarded hard work and distrusted idleness. Nevertheless, Americans drank prodigiously during the colonial period. Rum and homemade whiskey were especially popular for slacking thirst in the eighteenth century. Drinking probably increased in the nineteenth century, and alcohol became one of the many targets of religiously motivated social reformers. Like sailors home from the sea, cowboys engaged in spree drinking when the rare opportunity presented itself. The end of a long trail drive or of the roundup and branding season provided two such opportunities. But drinking bouts were separated by long dry periods. Liquor was often unavailable outside of towns, and some ranchers insisted on sobriety on the ranch. Teddy Blue Abbott relates the story of one rancher who offered his foreman a hundred head of cattle to stay sober for a year. American social critics identified vagrancy, idleness, and tavern-going as vices associated with the "unworthy" poor. Although spree drinking was pardoned, if not entirely condoned, no working cowboy could afford (in monetary or social terms) to idle away his days at the saloon.<sup>22</sup>

The abstemious Spanish Roman Catholic heritage also condemned excessive drinking. The epithet of "drunkard" was an extreme insult. But ritualized drunkenness in connection with festivals was permissible. According to one foreign observer, "feast days are strictly kept by the gauchos in their own peculiar

way," which meant accompanied by much drinking. But the great number of Catholic feast days provided many more opportunities for acceptable drunkenness than the sparse Protestant religious calendar and the seasonal work schedule on the ranch. During his long dictatorship as governor of Buenos Aires province, Juan Manuel de Rosas issued decrees to eliminate some of the many holidays that provided excuses for drinking and idleness.<sup>23</sup>

One minor difference was in the types of beverages consumed. Gauchos drank fermented *cana* or gin at the *pulpería*. *Cana*, the favorite, was distilled from sugar-cane juice. The juice of palm trees could also be processed into an alcoholic drink. *Pulperos* also sold other beverages. One late nineteenth-century visitor to the pampa recalled a *pulpería* where "vermouth, absinthe, squarefaced gin, Carlon, and *vino seco* stand in a row, with a barrel of Brazilian *cana*, on the top of which the *pulpero* ostentatiously parades his pistol and his knife."<sup>24</sup>

Cowboys at western saloons favored whiskey—bourbon, rye, or corn—which they generically termed "bitters." Texas cowboys referred to whiskey as "Kansas sheep-dip" in honor of the cow towns where they quaffed drinks at the end of a trail drive. Near Utah, cowboys called very strong whiskey a "Brigham Young cocktail," because "one sip and you're a confirmed polygamist." Other colloquial names for liquor included tornado juice, coffin varnish, mountain dew, redeye, red ink, snake poison, and tanglefoot. Beer enjoyed great popularity toward the end of the nineteenth century as breweries moved into the West.<sup>25</sup>

Prices charged for beverages segregated western saloons by social class. Denver saloons charged from five to twenty-five cents for a mug of beer. Cowboys gathered at the cheap saloons, while cattlemen, buyers, and other businessmen gathered at fancier bars in hotels. Thus, saloons segregated the city's drinkers by social class. The physical layout of saloons could also separate customers by class. In addition, racial segregation excluded Chinese,

discriminated against Hispanics, and isolated blacks in separate establishments. In short, the same class and racial divisions that cut through frontier society also obtained in the western whiskey mills.<sup>26</sup>

#### THE GAMBLING SPIRIT

Balzac wrote that "the gambling passion lurks at the bottom of every heart." Ubiquitous throughout history, gambling seemed epidemic among cowboys and gauchos. Like heavy drinking, aversion to foot work, and *machismo*, it represented another element of cowboy culture. Tavern keepers were more than happy to host games of chance. Card games played in cattle frontiers traced their origins to Europe. Spain, perhaps the card-playing capital of medieval Europe, numbered many fanatical players. Soldiers, sailors, and even clerics played cards enthusiastically. *Canasta*, a variant of rummy, had many adherents. That popular game, and many others, traveled from Spain to Spanish America with the conquistadores.<sup>27</sup>

In Spanish America, regional favorites appeared. In Mexico, both men and women of all classes patronized *salas* or gambling halls. Women often worked as dealers. Spanish monte, played like short faro, reigned as the most popular card game of Mexico. In Argentina, William MacCann noted that at the *pulperías*, the gauchos' "chief amusement is card-playing, and they are confirmed gamblers." On the pampa, however, the most popular card game was *truco*. Played with a forty-card deck, it included a good bit of clever signaling, witty table talk, and verbal sparring. In some cases, players also sang verses back and forth as part of the game.<sup>28</sup>

The dandified Mississippi riverboat gambler is the most colorful representative of western gaming. But every saloon included a number of busy card tables. One Denver pioneer wrote in an 1859 letter that "there is more drinking and gambling here in one day than in Kansas City in six—in fact about one-half of the population do nothing else but drink whiskey and play cards." But by 1872

Kansas City, the "Cowboy Capital," offered a range of lavish establishments, including the Alhambra, Lady Gay, Alamo, and Lone Star. Gamblers enjoyed the hospitality of the Gold Room in Cheyenne and the Bull's Head in Abilene.<sup>29</sup>

Cowboys favored the simplicity and clarity of poker, especially draw and stud. The games of faro and monte also held favor with many gamblers. Cowboys distrusted complicated gambling machinery or fancy card games, just as they distrusted other artifacts of eastern culture. Many cowboys lost their hard-earned wages to more skillful gamblers at saloon tables. As one Montana cowboy recalled, "When I would get into a town I wanted to have a good time. I usually took a few drinks, and sometimes got into a game of poker, and generally left town 'broke.'" Cheating in many guises was commonplace. A "card mechanic" might "jump the cut" and deal himself an especially good hand. "Buying chips" came to mean jumping into a fight—evidence of the close relationship between gambling and fighting. Many ranchers prohibited gambling at the home place, so sprees in town came as a welcome relief. Cowboys also enjoyed poker games around a roundup campfire, if the roundup boss permitted it.<sup>30</sup>

For the gaucho, however, card playing provided only a small part of his gambling activity. As Thomas Hutchinson commented, gambling was the "life, soul, and very existence" of gauchos. As much as cards, gauchos enjoyed playing *taba*. In this ancestor of modern dice games, players throw the knuckle or anklebone (the *tali* or *astragali*) of cattle or horses. The outcome of the throw—heads or tails—determines the winner. As elsewhere in Latin America, cockfights drew large, boisterous crowds. In addition, gauchos participated in and bet on a number of contests on horseback. By sponsoring a horse race, ostrich hunt, or similar event, a pulpero could draw patrons from great distances on the pampa.<sup>31</sup>

#### PROSTITUTION

Drinking and gambling occupied most

patrons, but taverns also offered other activities to attract customers and to generate additional profits. Prostitution provided a natural adjunct to liquor sales. Erdoes notes that "Westerners divided women into two categories—good ones and bad ones." A Virginia City newspaperman, Alfred Doten, wrote a revealing journal entry in 1870 about a benefit ball held to aid Benito Juárez and the Mexico liberals: "The women were principally whores, altho there were some decent women among them." The sexual imbalance toward males in frontier regions dictated that most men, especially poor, working cowboys, socialized only with "bad ones." An Argentine commentator, Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, pointed out a similar circumstance on the pampa. Of women on the plains, "there were only two extremes, immured chastity and prostitution." The demands of ranch work, as well as powerful negative pressures from the landed elite, condemned most gauchos to enforced bachelorhood, or, at best, to serial concubinage. Some ranchers discouraged or even prohibited women from living on the ranch because they aroused jealous conflict between the men. Gauchos lived mobile lives to meet the requirements of ranch work and to escape military conscription. Barred effectively from land ownership, gauchos had few opportunities to set up a stable home life. Prostitutes were often their only means of female companionship.<sup>32</sup>

The "fallen angels," "soiled doves," or "calico queens" of the West graced most cow towns, despite city ordinances and the determined efforts of civic and religious reformers. Abilene, the notable exception, made a largely successful effort to exclude prostitutes in 1870. The term *red light district* supposedly originated in one of the foremost cow towns, Dodge City. As the *Rocky Mountain News* lamented in 1889, saloons "were the most fruitful source for breeding and feeding prostitution." Though some sanitized memoirs of life in the Old West discreetly omit this element of cowboy life, others are more forthright. Teddy Blue Abbott devotes an entire chapter of his memoirs to the



cowboy's relationship with prostitutes. Some, such as Cattle Annie, with her heart of gold, became legends in their own right. Besides prostitutes, saloons employed "hurdy-gurdy" girls who danced with patrons and brought them drinks—for a price.<sup>33</sup>

If the local population near a pulpería did not suffice to support resident prostitutes, an itinerant madam and her charges probably serviced the area. The arrival of such an entourage in a high-wheeled oxcart signaled the beginning of an impromptu fiesta that quickly drew gauchos from far and wide. Setting up small tents for the clients and women, the madam sold candles of varying lengths that measured the time allotted to each patron. Because of the lack of employment opportunities for women in the countryside, many moved to towns and worked as prostitutes. Most towns passed ordinances that regulated the business and required periodic health inspections. With a nod to social propriety, some municipalities prohibited solicitation on the street.<sup>34</sup>

#### DEMISE OF THE SALOON AND PULPERIA

As frontier institutions, the pulpería and the saloon were as vulnerable to the encroachments of "civilization" as other elements of frontier life. Along with the ranch, the tavern served essential social and economic functions in the absence of more specialized institutions. But as frontier regions became more settled, taverns, like their cowboy patrons, went into decline. The twin forces of regulation and specialization doomed the frontier saloon and pulpería by the early twentieth century. Modernizing elites in Argentina legislated away much of the gaucho's life, including favored equestrian games, ostrich hunts, and cock-fights. Other laws restricted the gaucho's movements or forced him into obligatory military service. With the taming of the gaucho population, the pulpería became a relic of the past. A few have been preserved as museum sites by traditionalist groups, but, as with other elements of gaucho life, the form,

not the substance, remains.<sup>35</sup>

Similar forces altered and eclipsed the western saloon. In the United States, municipal reform and temperance movements set about to uplift society. The Women's Christian Temperance Movement, founded in 1874, made the prohibition of liquor its avowed goal the following year. Led by the vigorous Frances E. Willard, the WCTU targeted local saloons and taverns for attack. Funded by churches and led by clergy, the Anti-Saloon League joined the WCTU in its fight in 1895. These groups and other reform movements coalesced in the Progressive era and gradually succeeded in altering American politics and in banning prostitution, gambling, and finally, with the coming of Prohibition, alcohol. The Eighteenth Amendment sounded the death knell for 177,790 saloons throughout the land in January 1920. Carry Nation gained revenge on the barroom brawlers of Richmond, Texas, who had beaten her husband many decades before. One old Arizona gambler complained bitterly in 1908 of the new "milkstop frontier": "The buttermilk boys have driven us into the ditch."<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the effects of Progressive reform and other social change, the growth of cities spawned new specialized services and institutions that supplanted the multifunctional saloon. As "civilization" overtook the frontier, saloons of the West and pulperías of the pampa lost both their clientele and their monopoly on services. While they lasted, they exhibited similar functions and similar saloon cultures. But in the twentieth century, both institutions became museum relics, symbols of a lost frontier past, frequented by soda-sipping tourists, not hard-drinking cowboys or gauchos.<sup>37</sup>

#### NOTES

I thank Michael Cummings for research assistance and the Tinker Foundation of New York for the fellowship support needed to complete this project.

1. Among recent general treatments of the western saloon are Richard Erdoes, *Saloons of the*

*Old West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969); Thomas J. Noel, *The City and the Saloon: Denver, 1858-1916* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982); Elliott West, *The Saloon of the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979); and Robert L. Brown, *Saloons of the American West* (Silverton, Colo.: Sundance Books, 1978). On the pulpería, see Jorge A. Bossio, *Historia de las pulperías* (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1972); and the less useful León Bouche', *Las pulperías: mojón civilizador* (Buenos Aires: San Telmo, 1970). Although differences exist between them, for stylistic variety I will use synonymously the terms *barroom*, *tavern*, *saloon*, and *public house*.

2. Quoted from issue of 3 October 1882, in Clifford P. Westermeier, ed., *Trailing the Cowboy: His Life and Lore as Told by Frontier Journalists* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1965), p. 50; Noel, *City and the Saloon*, p. 2. Erdoes notes that some journalists in the West had a whiskey allowance in addition to their wages, *Saloons*, p. 76.

3. Quote from Thomas J. Hutchinson, *Buenos Ayres and Argentine Gleanings* (London: Edward Stanford, 1865), p. 283. For other unflattering images of pulpería life, see Richard W. Slatta, "Pulperías and Contraband Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century Buenos Aires Province," *The Americas* 38 (January 1982): 352-56.

4. Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Roy Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (1954; reprint Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 259-60.

5. Erdoes, *Saloons*, p. 9; Noel, *City and the Saloon*, p. 1; Richard Maxwell Brown, "Saloon," in *The Reader's Encyclopedia of the American West*, ed. Howard R. Lamar (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1977), p. 1061; Walter W. Skeat, *A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (1882, 8th impression; reprint New York: Peregrine Books, 1980), p. 461.

6. Ricardo Guiraldes, *Don Segundo Sombra: Shadows on the Pampas*, trans. Harriet de Onis (New York: New American Library, 1966), p. 51.

7. Richard W. Slatta, *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), p. 70; Slatta, "Pulperías," pp. 360-61; Ricardo E. Rodríguez Molas, "Variaciones sobre la pulpería rioplatense," *Revista de la Universidad* 14 (May 1961): 139, 141. See also Rodríguez Molas, "La pulpería rioplatense en el siglo XVII: Ensayo de historia social y económica," *Universidad* 49 (1961): 99-134.

8. Richard A. Van Orman, *A Room for the Night: Hotels of the Old West* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1966), pp. 8, 14-17. Actually Fort Wicked took its name from its proprietor, Holon Godfrey, called "Old Wicked" by the

Cheyennes and Sioux because he was one of the few station keepers to withstand repeated Plains Indian attacks on the Overland Trail during the winter of 1865.

9. Erdoes, *Saloons*, p. 9; Noel, *City and the Saloon*, p. 14.

10. Richard W. Slatta, "Rural Criminality and Social Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Buenos Aires Province," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60 (August 1980): 453-61; Bossio, *Historia de las pulperías*, pp. 200-201; Miguel A. Lima, *El estanciero práctico: Manual completo de ganadería* (Buenos Aires: Río de la Plata, 1876), p. 233; Jonathan C. Brown, *A Socioeconomic History of Argentina, 1776-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 79, 142-43, 195; Slatta, *Gauchos*, p. 144.

11. Gastón Gori, *Vagos y mal entretenidos*, 2d ed. (Santa Fe: Colmegna, 1965), pp. 65-68; report by juez de paz of Las Flores, 31 December 1851, doc. 4, X 21-24, Archivo General de la Nación (Buenos Aires); *La Tribuna* (Buenos Aires, 13 December 1853), p. 2; 22 April 1854, p. 2; Buenos Aires Province, Comisión de Hacendados del Estado de Buenos Aires, *Antecedentes y fundamentos del proyecto de código rural* (Buenos Aires, 1864), pp. 69, 170; *La Union del Sud* (Chascomús, 25 August 1872), p. 3.

12. Slatta, *Gauchos*, pp. 87-88, 120-21; Joe B. Frantz and Julian Ernest Choate, Jr., *The American Cowboy: The Myth and the Reality* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), pp. 101-5; Douglas E. Branch, *The Cowboy and His Interpreters*, (1926; reprint New York: Cooper Square, 1961), pp. 116-17; Ramon F. Adams, *Western Words: A Dictionary of the American West*, rev. ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), pp. 19, 192, 288.

13. Noel, *City and the Saloon*, p. 90; quote from Darrell W. Bolen, "Gambling: Historical Highlights and Trends and Their Implications for Contemporary Society," in *Gambling and Society: Interdisciplinary Studies on the Subject of Gambling*, ed. William R. Eadington (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1976), p. 17.

14. David G. Mandelbaum, "Alcohol and Culture," in *Beliefs, Behaviors, and Alcoholic Beverages: A Cross-Cultural Survey*, ed. Mac Marshall (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979), p. 17.

15. See Lionel Tiger, *Men in Groups*, 2d ed. (New York: M. Moyars/Scribner, 1984); and the critique by Rae Lesser Blumberg, *Stratification: Socioeconomic and Sexual Inequality* (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1978), pp. 6-10; Noel, *City and the Saloon*, p. 91; Sherri Cavan, *Liquor License: An Ethnography of Bar Behavior* (Chicago: Aldine, 1966), p. 67; William B. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), p. 65; Robert J.

Glynn, et al., "Social Contexts and Motives for Drinking in Men," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 44 (November 1983): 1021-22.

16. Quote from Adams, *Western Words*, p. 96; see also pp. 39, 190; Frantz and Choate, *American Cowboy*, pp. 96-97; West, *Saloon*, pp. 19-21.

17. Buenos Aires Province, Comisión de Hacendados, *Antecedentes*, pp. 145, 151; letter from Mauricio Díaz, Bahía Blanca, 6 March 1850, juez de paz de Azul 9-4-4; reports of juez de crimen 1872, 38-4-313; Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires "Ricardo Levene" (La Plata); police reports of March, June, July 1852, Policía 1852, Archivo Histórico Municipal de Tandil (Tandil).

18. Taylor, *Drinking*, pp. 65-66, 156; Michael C. Scardaville, "Alcohol Abuse and Tavern Reform in Late Colonial Mexico City," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60 (November 1980): 644-45, 670-71; William Madsen and Claudia Madsen, "The Cultural Structure of Mexican Drinking Behavior," in *Beliefs, Behaviors, and Alcoholic Beverages: A Cross-Cultural Survey*, ed. Mac Marshall (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979), pp. 49-51. For another Latin American case, see William C. Sayres, "Ritual Drinking, Ethnic Status, and Inebriety in Rural Colombia," *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 17 (March 1956): 53-62.

19. Brown, "Saloon," p. 1062.

20. Craig MacAndrew and Robert Edgerton, *Drunken Comportment: A Social Explanation* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), pp. 36, 60, 165; Mandelbaum, "Alcohol and Culture," pp. 17-18; R. O. Pihl, Mark Smith, and Brian Farrell, "Alcohol and Aggression in Men: A Comparison of Brewed and Distilled Beverages," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 45 (May 1984): 278, 281.

21. MacAndrew and Edgerton, *Drunken Comportment*, pp. 82, 90-94, 171-73; Taylor, *Drinking*, p. 66; Slatta, *Gauchos*, p. 118.

22. Allan M. Winkler, "Drinking on the American Frontier," *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 29 (June 1968): 416; Laurence Ivan Seidman, *Once in the Saddle* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), p. 86; Charles W. Harris and Buck Rainey, eds., *The Cowboys: Six Shooters, Songs and Sex* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), p. 87; E. C. Abbott and Helena Huntington Smith, *We Pointed Them North* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), p. 52; Noel, *City and the Saloon*, pp. 30-31.

23. Taylor, *Drinking*, p. 41; Thomas J. Hutchinson, *The Paraná* (London: Edward Stanford, 1868), p. 89; quotation from Nathaniel Holmes Bishop, *The Pampas and the Andes: A Thousand Miles' Walk across South America*, 11th ed. (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1883), pp. 98-99.

24. William MacCann, *Two Thousand Miles'*

*Ride through the Argentine Provinces* (London: Smith, Elder, 1853), vol. 2: 282, 285. Quotation from Robert B. Cunningham Graham, "La Pulpería," in *The South American Sketches of R.B. Cunningham Graham*, ed. John Walker (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1978), p. 63.

25. Erdoes, *Saloons*, pp. 25-26; David Dary, *Cowboy Culture: A Saga of Five Centuries* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), p. 211; quote from Adams, *Western Words*, p. 34; see also pp. 178-79.

26. Noel, *City and the Saloon*, pp. 23-29; Dary, *Cowboy Culture*, p. 211.

27. Balzac quoted in Bolen, "Gambling," p. 12; J. Philip Jones, *Gambling Yesterday and Today: A Complete History* (Newton Abbot, England: David and Charles, 1973), pp. 13-14, 64, 84. For a critique of various theories of gambling, see Tomás M. Martínez, *The Gambling Scene: Why People Gamble* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1983), pp. 108-31.

28. Robert K. De Arment, *Knights of the Green Cloth: The Saga of the Frontier Gamblers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), pp. 227-9; MacCann, *Two Thousand Miles' Ride*, vol. 2: 47; Slatta, "Pulperías," p. 352; Jorge Paez, *Del truquiflor a la rayuela: Panorama de los juegos y entretenimientos argentinos* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de America Latina, 1971), pp. 35-40.

29. Quoted in De Arment, *Knights*, p. 41; see also pp. 75-85; Brown, "Saloon," p. 1062.

30. Dary, *Cowboy Culture*, p. 214; William H. Forbis, *The Cowboys* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1973), pp. 82, 170; quote from Roderick Craig, *Ranching with Lords and Commons* (1903; reprint, New York: AMS, 1971), pp. 89-90, 97; Adams, *Western Words*, pp. 48, 55, 167, 231.

31. Bolen, "Gambling," p. 16; Hutchinson, *The Paraná*, p. 91; Madaline Wallis Nichols, *The Gaucho: Cattle Hunter, Cavalryman, Ideal of Romance* (1942; reprint, New York: Gordian Press, 1968), p. 14; Tinker, *Horsemen*, p. 24; Paez, *Truquiflor*, pp. 40-46.

32. Erdoes, *Saloons*, p. 182; Doten quoted in George M. Blackburn and Sherman L. Richards, "The Prostitutes and Gamblers of Virginia City, Nevada: 1870," *Pacific Historical Review* 48 (May 1979): 241; Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, *X-Ray of the Pampa*, trans. Alain Swietlicki, Spanish ed., 1933 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), p. 205. On the barriers to gaucho family life, see Slatta, *Gauchos*, pp. 58-60.

33. *Rocky Mountain News*, 23 July 1889, quoted in Noel, *City and the Saloon*, p. 86; Adams, *Western Words*, p. 51; Erdoes, *Saloons*, p. 189; Abbott, *We Pointed Them North*, p. 108; Paul F. Sharp, *Whoop-Up Country: The Canadian-American West, 1865-1885* (Helena: Historical Society of Montana, 1960), p. 174; Dary, *Cowboy Culture*, p. 217. See also

Marion S. Goldman, *Gold Diggers and Silver Miners: Prostitution and Social Life on the Comstock Lode* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981).

34. Slatta, *Gauchos*, pp. 66-67; Edward Laroque Tinker, *The Horsemen of the Americas and the Literature They Inspired*, (1952; reprint Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), p. 27; Bossio, *Historia de las pulperías*, p. 61.

35. Slatta, *Gauchos*, pp. 114-15; 138-40. One of the most famous pulpería museums is "La Blanqueada," at the Ricardo Güiraldes Park in San Antonio de Areco, Buenos Aires Province. Güiraldes made the site famous in his novel *Don Segundo Sombra*.

36. Quoted in De Arment, *Knights*, pp. 392-93;

Herbert Asbury, *The Great Illusion: An Informal History of Prohibition* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1950), pp. 86-87, 94-95; Richard W. Howland and Joe W. Howland, "200 Years of Drinking in the United States: Evolution of the Disease Concept," in *Drinking: Alcohol in American Society—Issues and Current Research*, ed. John A. Ewing and Beatrice A. Rouse (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1978), pp. 49-50.

37. Perry Duis, *The Saloon: Public Drinking in Chicago and Boston, 1880-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), pp. 293-97; Bossio, *Historia de las pulperías*, pp. 248-50.