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## Armed Flapper Moonshiners and Crusading Women: Public Personas of Minnesota Women in the Early 20th Century

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Armed Flapper Moonshiners and Crusading Women:  
Public Personas of Minnesota Women in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**Introduction**

In 1873 and 1874, a phenomenon swept the country by storm. Good-natured, supposedly meek women were causing a ruckus in front of saloons in the form of reciting prayers or shouting names of men known to frequent them. This event was known as the Women's Crusade, and while one of the first well-documented instances was in Hillsboro, Ohio women in other cities, including St. Paul, Minnesota, took up the same rallying cry. Dio Lewis inspired the incident in Hillsboro, when he gave an impassioned speech to the women of the town; his speech describes his mother's marriage to his alcoholic father, along with the pain brought on their family by his father and his habits.<sup>1</sup> This incident in Hillsboro holds historical significance as it led to the formation of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. While society did not consider the women crusaders the most respectable women, they banded together to form a women's organization that remains respectable today by the standard of most of society.

In the 1920s and early 1930s, Prohibition was in full effect, or so history textbooks tell the story. Instead, the production and distribution of alcohol throughout the nation, in defiance of the law, plagued the country. While the law did not prevent consumption of alcohol, its temperance beginnings tell us that was the desired outcome of its enactment in 1920. Women

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Birgitta Anderson Bordin, *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 18.

were leaving their homes to stop the consumption of alcohol; however, many disagreed with the amendment that would only prevent its production and distribution; this vocalization of their own ideas allowed women to experience a sense of freedom of thought.<sup>2</sup> The culture of crime brought about by Prohibition allowed other women a chance to leave their homes and join the lucrative business of bootlegging or manufacturing alcohol. While their motivation for being in public vastly differs from that of the women who belonged to WCTU chapters, both groups left their homes to have a public voice different from their husbands'.<sup>3</sup> In Hampton, Minnesota, the Friermuth family, more notably its female members, were notorious for moonshining.<sup>4</sup> Their family was close, celebrating the return of its matriarch from jail in 1929 with a party; this behavior falls outside the socially acceptable behavior during the time period and was reported in Minneapolis newspapers at the time.<sup>5</sup>

Aside from women who were making illegal alcohol, St. Paul in the 1920s was home to many gangs. John Dillinger, a recognizable name amongst early-American mobsters, placed his gang in the area during the early 1930s. Men were not alone within these gangs, as women were amongst those who moved with them. These women are now known as “gun molls.” While the molls probably did not refer to themselves this way, the term comes from scholarship on the subject, as women would often cross socially acceptable gender boundaries in their attempts to survive in a capitalistic world.

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<sup>2</sup> Jed Dannenbaum, “The Origins of Temperance and Militancy among American Women,” *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Winter, 1981), 240.

<sup>3</sup> Holly Berkley Fletcher, *Gender and the American Temperance Movement of the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Routledge, 2016), 34.

<sup>4</sup> Moonshining in this case is the making of illegal alcohol. Moonshiners were those who manufactured the illegal alcohol and profited from it. Occasionally the people who were moonshiners were also responsible for the transport of the alcohol—and would have been referred to as bootleggers.

<sup>5</sup> “Rum Suspect Released Under \$1,000 Bail After Dry Raid Near Hastings.” *Minneapolis Daily Star*, August 23, 1924

The various ways in which these women attempted to survive in a world were all framed within their gender boundary. The women of the WCTU fell within the frame of their conscious choice to appear as respectable, middle-class white women. This mindset affected their choice of dress, their public appearance, and their dealings with funds for the organization. Women who participated in illegal activities (moonshining or involvement with gangs) had different motives which affected how they would survive in a world that frowned upon their livelihood; however, they both subconsciously operated within a gendered framework. Although gun molls operated within this gendered framework as well, their motives were much more about flying under the radar in society rather than how to make money and save their family—as may have been part of the motivation for the Friermuths. Gun molls were involved with gangsters, and while their partner often had another legal wife, the molls believed themselves to be in a marriage and would be incredibly loyal.<sup>6</sup> As part of the gang, the molls would often pose as a family with other gang members to avoid suspicion. While the motivation was not to save a family, their use of the family structure as a source of stability to move within the public demonstrates how important the family unit was within society in this era.

Women around the Twin Cities of Minnesota in the early twentieth century may have imagined their gender constraints to be remarkably different based on their station in life; however, their actions demonstrate remarkable similarities in public persona. Women who were members of the WCTU focused on their perception of respectability – from how they dressed, to their public actions, and even in how they raised money for funding.<sup>7</sup> While they did not outright state their motivations for such actions, the historiographic trend indicates this all stemmed from

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<sup>6</sup> Claire Bond Potter, "'I'll Go the Limit and Then Some': Gun Molls, Desire, and Danger in the 1930s," (*Feminist Studies* 21, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 41-66), 43.

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 9.

a desire to defend their families and home. Although women who engaged in illegal activities also found pressures to be respectable, it stemmed from an outwardly different motivation. A gendered reading of a newspaper article, which detailed the various arrests and misdeeds of the Friermuth family of Hampton, Minnesota, demonstrates this desire to be respectable.<sup>8</sup> Even though the family was very close, due to lack of sources we cannot say for certain their true motivation for investing in a moonshining business. It may simply have been to provide for their family and survive in the downtrodden economic time. While gun molls were first engaged in illegal activities due to their ties to gangsters, the operation of a gang as a family unit further reinforces the family as a center point within society. Despite these women not conforming to what society believed that a woman should, they still intuitively knew what type of behavior they could adopt to avoid suspicion.

In a world full of obstacles, the use of various tactics, seen by both women within the WCTU, along with their counterparts who participated in illegal activities allowed both groups to survive. First, this paper will examine the various ways that women found camaraderie, or at least a group mentality, outside of their homes. Next, this paper will explain the various motives behind the public personas of women in the WCTU and women who were manufacturing illegal alcohol. In addition, this section will look at the limited knowledge on how gun molls chose to portray themselves to reinforce ideas that the Friermuth sisters chose to appear outside the accepted range within normal society. Lastly, this paper will look at how both groups of women dealt with money.

Both groups of women, WCTU and those engaging in illegal activities, saw some sort of gendered framework surrounding their daily activities and had similar tactics to conform to it.

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<sup>8</sup> "Two Armed Flapper Moonshiners Are Jailed; Operated Giant Plant." *Minneapolis Daily Star*, August 15, 1924.

Through leaving their homes, women of the WCTU found solace in being able to talk to one another about day to day issues they had in common. Women who were making illegal alcohol also found new opportunities outside of what was socially acceptable for women to do in the early twentieth century. The public personas of women in the WCTU reflected them striving to be respectable and protect their families; whereas the public personas of the Friermuth women chose their appearance to make a statement – but their reason for making illegal alcohol could have been to keep their family afloat in a difficult time, financially speaking. Gun molls had different public personas based upon how they were acting in society and when they were trying to avoid suspicion.

During the early twentieth century, women who were members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and women engaged in illegal activities near the Twin Cities operated within a gendered framework. Evidence shows this through the women's chosen public personas and how society received those personas. Although the women's motivations were not consciously gender-based, both groups of women subconsciously conformed to their expected gender roles in similar ways.

### **Historiography**

The examination of woman's roles in temperance movements around the nation, as well as the effects women's movements had on domestic violence issues on the East Coast have both seen scholarly inspections previously; however, very few have examined women specifically during and prior to Prohibition in the Twin Cities. Specifically, there have not been many published works discussing the roles of women who were moonshining or involved with gangs during the Prohibition era in the Twin Cities. Further examination of these women is important as their roles within society can shed more light on how women's gender roles had evolved to

include more than just being the typical housewife. By saying, *the typical housewife*, I am referring to the fact that women supposedly still existed in their own domestic sphere, their only societal voice found through their husbands. The social expectation for women in the early twentieth century was for them to remain in the home, even after World War I had called for many of them to join the workforce to keep their families financially afloat. Women gave society's expectations little thought, as they soon became business owners, public speakers, and leaders of large organizations, such as the WCTU, whose focus was not only to stop alcohol abuse, but also to help the less fortunate members of society. The women who were part of gangs or who were manufacturing illegal alcohol during Prohibition were similar to women in temperance movements in that they felt they were conforming to society's view of what a woman should be through their "marriages" to their partners.

Historian Holly Berkley Fletcher examines how gender affected temperance movements in *Gender and the American Temperance Movement of the Nineteenth Century*, arguing that the gender "evolution" that supposedly occurred was more symbolic than real and more of a result of a perceived loss of manhood than a full evolution of woman's role in society.<sup>9</sup> Norman H. Clark mentioned this idea of the loss of a "self-made man" in *Deliver Us From Evil*, as he mentions this occurrence in which men lost their sense of purpose around the time of the Civil War, causing many of them to begin drinking heavily.<sup>10</sup> To examine this same idea, Fletcher looks specifically at the Woman's Christian Temperance Union on a national scale and discusses why there was a need for a separate women's organization, rather than just one national organization

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<sup>9</sup> Holly Berkley Fletcher, *Gender and the American Temperance Movement of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 13.

<sup>10</sup> Norman H. Clark. *Deliver Us from Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition*, (New York: Norton, 1976), 40.

for temperance in the nation. The main issue in 1853 was men's concern that women would bring suffrage into temperance debates, which caused them to disallow women at their National Temperance Conference that year.<sup>11</sup> In response, women formed their own conference in New York, which permitted them freedom to voice their own opinions which had been stifled in years past.<sup>12</sup> Fletcher also discusses middle-class white men in this book, and mentions how one of their motivations for temperance was the fear of becoming "enslaved" to drink, rather than acting as the enslavers.<sup>13</sup> This was occurring alongside their perceived loss of manhood, and was also threatening the traditional family dynamic of strong father and supportive mother. Fletcher's argument that women having more opportunity to discuss their rights as women, despite being married to drunkards, points to a phenomenon wherein women gained agency through accepting a call to encourage temperance.<sup>14</sup>

Ruth Birgitta Anderson Bordin argues that women could find autonomy through the WCTU in *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty*.<sup>15</sup> Bordin clarifies the idea of temperance as a "woman's issue" in the mid-1800s and onward as she examines the birth and eventual evolution of the WCTU.<sup>16</sup> Bordin analyzes the WCTU in-depth, as she looks at the intricacies of the group, such as how it would not allow men to vote or hold office within the organization, allowing them only to observe.<sup>17</sup> This choice to cut the men out of WCTU meetings demonstrates just how powerful women could become through leaving their homes in order to protect them. By cutting off men's access to their voting practices and bylaws, the

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<sup>11</sup> Fletcher, *Gender and the American Temperance Movement of the Nineteenth Century*, 54.

<sup>12</sup> Fletcher, *Gender and the American Temperance Movement of the Nineteenth Century*, 54.

<sup>13</sup> Fletcher, *Gender and the American Temperance Movement of the Nineteenth Century*, 28.

<sup>14</sup> Fletcher, *Gender and the American Temperance Movement of the Nineteenth Century*, 34.

<sup>15</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, xvi.

<sup>16</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 36.



women of the WCTU were asserting their strength as a standalone organization. Aside from cutting men out of meetings, women around the country wanted a louder voice as temperance entered political debates of the mid-1800s; however, their lack of voting rights became an instant issue, a threat to the safety of their home and children.<sup>18</sup> The goals of this organization perpetuated the protection of the home for which women were to endure within. The battle cry of the WCTU was still home protection, but at meetings, members of the WCTU were gaining a chance to find common problems and discuss opportunities to stop alcoholism. These discussions brought about the realization that a wife ought to have the right to a sober husband, which elevated temperance advocacy more than ever.<sup>19</sup> This motivation for temperance organizing and attaining autonomy outside the home shapes how I will argue that these women had more in common with women involved with gangs and with illegal activities during Prohibition.

During the Prohibition years, the WCTU was still around, although members' goals had already shifted away from temperance legislation after the 1870s, as they added other social problems to their long list of things to fix within society.<sup>20</sup> They were largely concerned with social issues such as child care and assisting the poor in the communities in which they were operating.<sup>21</sup> Although temperance remained a focus for the WCTU, members became less concerned with it as the movement itself lost momentum.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the union kept its main focus of temperance, but was able to expand its goals to encompass societal issues.

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<sup>18</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 162.

<sup>20</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 95.

<sup>21</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 98.

<sup>22</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 100.

Historian Linda Gordon discusses the many reasons alcohol was viewed as a woman's problem in her examination of family violence based in Boston.<sup>23</sup> She argues that the response to women who were experiencing violence in their families changed from the nineteenth century as the reformers moved into the twentieth century, at least in technique.<sup>24</sup> For example, in the nineteenth century women either tried to "reform" their husband or sent their children away to protect them (through a technique called moral 'suasion'<sup>25</sup>), but by the twentieth century, the focus shifted to covering up wife-beating and attributing it to other problems besides alcohol.<sup>26</sup> Part of the reason for this shift in methodology stemmed from the switch in leadership of charitable organizations who were helping women in trouble, to a more "scientific" approach—and a larger focus upon child neglect rather than abuse.<sup>27</sup> Gordon later discusses how the breakdown of the family was perceived as a problem during the Progressive time period of the early 1900s by most people within society. Most notable is her discussion of how single mothers in Boston often found lucrative work in their own homes in the form of speakeasies<sup>28</sup> during Prohibition, reinforcing the notion that women gaining autonomy contributed to their ability to operate a business during the era of Prohibition in America.<sup>29</sup> These women chose to turn their homes into lucrative businesses, often to serve only a few people at a time, in order to keep their families from going homeless. Businesswomen were not the norm in the early twentieth century,

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<sup>23</sup> Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston 1880-1960* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1988).

<sup>24</sup> Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 21.

<sup>25</sup> This term involved the persuasiveness of women to convince their husbands to stop drinking and take up a livelihood of temperance rather than excessive drink to cope with the troubles of the late nineteenth century. It was a popular method of temperance organizations in the 1800s to promote this as a technique to curb the drunkenness problem.

<sup>26</sup> Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 21.

<sup>27</sup> Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> A speakeasy was a popular term coined during the Prohibition era to describe an establishment where alcohol still flowed and one could "speak easily." Often, these establishments were underground or in an otherwise hard to access building and would require visitors to know a password to enter the establishment.

<sup>29</sup> Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 97.

so the chance to raise money without being part of a traditional family unit, relying solely on a man for most of the income, was an attractive opportunity for single mothers and other women outside the normal realm of society.

Barbara Leslie Epstein's *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America* discusses the changes that occurred in women's roles in society through evangelistic conversion and involvement in the WCTU.<sup>30</sup> Epstein frames her argument in terms of female culture and its designs on power that women had or only perceived they had – living in the male-dominated society that they were.<sup>31</sup> By this she means that women were constrained by the concept of domesticity, or the idea that women belong solely in the home, always being respectable, and submitting to their husbands.<sup>32</sup> She focuses on this control and how it affected and influenced women's accomplishments in the nineteenth century, primarily on the WCTU and Midwestern middle-class women.<sup>33</sup> Her analysis of women's culture of the nineteenth century focuses heavily on religion and its influence on Protestant society. Her work interacts with Linda Gordon's and Ruth Bordin's to form a fuller picture of what life was like for women in the nineteenth century, specifically how even their roles as activists could fit within their gender role in society as middle-class white women. However, her book glosses over the contradiction of female drinkers, who existed while the Women's Crusade was sweeping the country, but were ignored in favor of the larger problem of intemperate men who threatened the sanctity of the family.

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<sup>30</sup> Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 9.

<sup>31</sup> Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity*, 9.

<sup>32</sup> Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity*, 99.

Catherine Gilbert Murdock's *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940* also provides a broader scope for analyzing women who drank. Her argument has a national focal point, but utilizes books on etiquette and cooking to discover what social customs were in existence during the Prohibition era.<sup>34</sup> She makes an intriguing comparison between the WCTU and the Women for National Prohibition Reform movement that erupted near the final years of Prohibition.<sup>35</sup> Her main point of evidence for families, particularly women, who were drinking at home during Prohibition stems from the etiquette books which still specified how maids were meant to serve alcohol to various visiting guests.<sup>36</sup> She discusses how women were gaining advancements through political voice, but were still facing advertisements and media messages that their only place was to remain in the home.<sup>37</sup> These messages may not have been actively followed by all women, but their prevalence in society points to a defined hierarchy, and the behavior of those women who followed the media messages fits with the idea that they internalized their role in society – even if they did not know, they had accepted it.

This fits with another source, by historian Claire Bond Potter, who discusses gangster “molls” who followed gang members and carried on a common-law marriage while they were engaging in illegal activities.<sup>38</sup> The women who engaged in illegal activities still perceived and internalized the messages of society that they had to be married, and, at least outwardly, appear like a normal woman in good standing on the street. The importance given to the sanctity of

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<sup>34</sup> Catherine Gilbert Murdock, *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 7.

<sup>35</sup> Murdock, *Domesticating Drink*, 149.

<sup>36</sup> Murdock, *Domesticating Drink*, 96.

<sup>37</sup> Murdock, *Domesticating Drink*, 167.

<sup>38</sup> Claire Bond Potter, “‘I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some’: Gun Molls, Desire, and Danger in the 1930s,” (*Feminist Studies* 21, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 41-66).

family followed women into the twentieth century and affected their gender relations not only with one another, but with men as well.

### **Crusading Women, or the start of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union**

Both women who found a group in the WCTU and women who were part of gangs as “gun molls” could find some sort of solace through leaving their homes and talking to one another about problems they previously believed only affected themselves. Through banding together in the Women’s Crusade of 1873 and 1874, many temperance advocates finally found a chance to speak their mind.<sup>39</sup> In fact, the WCTU founded its first organization in 1874 after the organizing of the Crusade in Cleveland, Ohio.<sup>40</sup> By organizing in front of saloons, these women could voice their opinion that the alcoholic establishments should close and were listened to. An issue of the *Minneapolis Daily Tribune* from 1874 depicts the public response to such displays. A group of women had petitioned a Mr. Medley in St. Paul to close his saloon, or they were going to pray in front of it.<sup>41</sup> The saloon keepers banded together to form a response asking the women to stop their practices as they were “worse” than the saloon keepers.<sup>42</sup> By calling the women “worse than” the saloon keepers, they were stating that the women had left the traditional bounds of society, and this was further threatening the stable organization of family—more than the operation of their own saloons were.<sup>43</sup>

Published in a column dedicated to the national temperance movement, this story even includes a hymn originally from Chicago which was meant to serve as a rallying call for the temperance minded citizens of Minneapolis. The publication of this story and others like it says

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<sup>39</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 18.

<sup>41</sup> “The Battle of the Bottles.” *The Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, March 1, 1874.

<sup>42</sup> “The Battle of the Bottles.”

<sup>43</sup> “The Battle of the Bottles.”

that although saloon owners may have believed these women were behaving outside of their typical sphere, newspaper publishers did not. The women who caused an uproar, using prayer to try and close saloons, found a chance to leave their homes to protect them and their children for the future.

Beyond this, not all temperance women agreed upon the same measures to take to stop alcohol abuse. Within the temperance movement, there were strong advocates against a legal prohibition, like the law that would later go into effect. One of these advocates was Gail Hamilton. Hamilton was a prominent temperance advocate in the late 1800s, and one who staunchly opposed men having the higher ground in society. She was published nationwide in *The North American Review*<sup>44</sup> in 1885, discussing why Prohibition would only increase the drunkenness problem in America.<sup>45</sup> Per her claims, higher licenses were succeeding in preventing alcoholism, as the number of saloons under high taxes in Minnesota had significantly decreased – rather than in similar towns in Michigan, where more saloons existed under their attempt at prohibition rather than using higher taxes as a deterrent.<sup>46</sup> Hamilton’s arguments and publications point to a heightened acknowledgement of women’s voices being utilized to increase the likelihood of temperance.

In the *Woman’s Journal*, between the years of 1928 and 1930, there were at least four articles published on either side of the alcohol question.<sup>47</sup> These articles demonstrate that there was not a consensus between temperance women about how to best combat alcohol abuse – this

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<sup>44</sup> *The North American Review* was one of the first literary magazines in the United States and was distributed widely from 1815-1940, it was re-opened in the 1940s at Cornell College, in Iowa and is still running today.

<sup>45</sup> Gail Hamilton, “Prohibition in Practice,” *The North American Review* 141, no. 344 (1885): 34-46, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25118505>, 34.

<sup>46</sup> Hamilton, “Prohibition in Practice,” 38 and 39.

<sup>47</sup> The *Woman’s Journal* was an American women’s suffragist periodical that was published weekly and directed towards the middle-class section of American women who wanted to have more rights. Alongside debates concerning suffrage and the ballot, the periodical published poems and other literature pertaining to women.

remained true even after the Eighteenth Amendment had passed in 1920 and the debate was thought to be over. In “Speaking Against Prohibition,” Inez Hayes Irwin discusses her distaste for the Eighteenth Amendment and its pitfalls.<sup>48</sup> Her reasoning begins primarily with the fact that the people she knows who ignore the amendment are not doing so to become drunk, but rather that the amendment is hampering the social lives of Americans and their ability to interact with one another.<sup>49</sup> Her discussions on Prohibition’s enforcement possibilities bring great context to the situation, as the process of police enactment of the law was of concern prior to the amendment passing.<sup>50</sup>

In “If Not Prohibition, What?” Carrie Chapman Catt lays out her argument for why Prohibition should remain – namely, what would it be replaced with?<sup>51</sup> For her, as she has no desire to drink, and has enjoyed the 11 years the law has been in effect, there is no need to improve upon something that seems to be working—but she interacts with a Miss Tarrow who wrote earlier to say that a return to liquor licenses is necessary.<sup>52</sup> While she does not agree with that and affirms often that many people are like her and have no desire for the drink anyway, the fact that she is interacting with another woman about a current amendment and its repeal or staying power points to a shift in what periodicals would cover. Although the *Woman’s Journal* was distributed primarily to women, this does not discredit its importance. At this point in time, women’s literature was covering politics, and more than that, it was allowing women on either side of a political issue to comment and interact with one another.

### **The Gun Moll Code and Family Bonding**

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<sup>48</sup> Inez Haynes Irwin, “Speaking Against Prohibition,” (*Woman’s Journal* 13, no. 1 (1928): 10-11), 10.

<sup>49</sup> Irwin, “Speaking Against Prohibition,” 10.

<sup>50</sup> Irwin, “Speaking Against Prohibition,” 11.

<sup>51</sup> Carrie Chapman Catt, “If Not Prohibition, What?” (*The Woman’s Journal* XV, no. 7 (July 1930):6-7 and 30), 6.

<sup>52</sup> Catt, “If Not Prohibition, What?” 8.

Women who became involved with gang members in the Twin Cities during Prohibition followed a different sort of code that bonded them together. A “gun moll” was a woman who was involved with a gang, but who would likely not have described herself as a “moll” (a “moll” being most commonly a “sex worker or a resident of a disorderly house”—in addition, a “moll” was often a man masquerading as a woman)—and described in two words the complexity of gender roles that existed among such women who would change their identity at whim.<sup>53</sup> The gun molls had to be able to change their appearance with wigs or makeup to further avoid detection, and thus the changeability of the term was made more important. John Dillinger and his gang had at least three gun molls with them during their stay in St. Paul and the surrounding metro in the early 1930s, one of whom was Bessie Green.<sup>54</sup> Green may have found some camaraderie with the other molls as they had similar experiences with the gang and their romantic partners; however, there are no sources remaining that support the idea that these women might have helped each other out of any motive other than survival. While the women banded together out of survival for them and their men, the men and women often bonded in more traditional ways as well. Many times, the gangsters had other, legal wives that were not aware of their husband’s true identity or occupation – and the gun molls themselves would sometimes feign ignorance if they were caught and interrogated.<sup>55</sup> This did not deter the gun molls who believed they had a sort of marriage to their gangsters and would act as housewives in

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<sup>53</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 43. The combination of the terms gun and moll to form this term called into mind the rich history of the term “moll” and introduced the phallic symbolism of a gun. This term was coined as many gun molls did not fit within traditional gender boundaries—for example they were often described as wearing riding breeches rather than dresses (as dresses/skirts were the norm for a woman to wear up until the 1950s).

<sup>54</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 46.

<sup>55</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 43.



public – making sure to use only their smallest bills to purchase groceries to avoid suspicion, and by remaining in their homes the rest of the time.<sup>56</sup>

Despite having a public appearance of a traditional married woman, Bessie Green was anything but, as she was the manager of the infamous Alamo Nightclub (which contained a speakeasy) in White Bear Lake, MN – a venture she had started with Ray Moore, Green’s lover at the time.<sup>57</sup> Before establishing the Alamo, Green had worked at the Green Lantern while involved with “Dapper” Dan Hogan (the owner).<sup>58</sup> In 1928, after being hailed as a great mob boss of St. Paul, “Dapper” Dan was killed by a car bomb.<sup>59</sup> After Hogan’s death, Green was hired by his successor to take over the business operations of the Green Lantern.<sup>60</sup> One can assume that when Green took over after her lover’s death, she dipped a toe into the illegal bootlegging business to make some money for herself. This does not mean that she was defying society’s code for what a woman should be. The fact that she could make enough money through helping run a restaurant (which also had questionable speakeasy connections) and was then able to open a nightclub with another lover shows that Green clearly knew how to manipulate people and make sure she would have enough money to survive, even though she may have acted like a meek, quiet woman publicly.

As mentioned earlier, the women involved with these gangs often acted as normal housewives and believed in their non-legal marriages, which indicates an attempt on their part to fit within the sphere in which society said they should remain. Although these were not legal marriages by any means, as Claire Potter reminds us, the fact that these women constructed a

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<sup>56</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 43. And Johanneck 92.

<sup>57</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 47.

<sup>58</sup> Johanneck, *Twin Cities Prohibition*, 91.

<sup>59</sup> “Danny Hogan Slain; Victim of Auto Bomb,” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, December 5, 1928.

<sup>60</sup> Johanneck, *Twin Cities Prohibition*, 91.

realm of “normalcy” in their lives of crime tells us that they felt a large desire to fit within those typical confines of society—even though they did not in other ways.<sup>61</sup> Aside from this, gangs would often portray themselves as a family unit when out in public. Their motive for doing so was largely based upon necessity and safety, as putting on the façade of a family was the safest way for the gang to fly under the radar.<sup>62</sup> However, this did mean that women were still appearing normal if they moved within the realm of a family and spoke to one another as if they were truly married to their partners.<sup>63</sup> This motive for appearing normal and fitting into society, tying themselves to one another shows a vastly different reason from that seen in the women within the WCTU, who were finding community with one another. However, the fact that both groups of women sought to appear respectable demonstrates that they had more in common than one would think initially.

The question of how connected these women were to one another remains, but can be answered by looking at something referred to as the “Gun Moll’s Code.”<sup>64</sup> This was an unspoken agreement that all women involved with gangsters knew, which dictated whether they would give up their man or other members of the gang—and more commonly exactly what would happen to them if they went against it and gave up any member of the gang to the police.<sup>65</sup> In a different way than the members of the WCTU, gun molls were bonded to one another in solidarity of not ratting out one another or one another’s partner. While this was bonding the women out of necessity rather than choice, there remained the fact that they could have chosen to give up their partner and the gang had they decided that was a better route for them.

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<sup>61</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 43 and 44.

<sup>62</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 45.

<sup>63</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 44.

<sup>64</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 50.

<sup>65</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 50.

What was interesting about the gun molls was their tendency to blame their crime lives on their partners, many saying they committed crimes only because they loved their men.<sup>66</sup> While this may have been a cover story, it was also a reasoning as the women saw their men as an opportunity to leave their often dead-end jobs and acquire money – not caring whether the money was obtained legally or not.<sup>67</sup> Many women involved in gangs also formed alliances in semblance of families, as gangs would often pose as families to escape suspicion.<sup>68</sup> This did not mean that the women were as bonded to one another as they would have been had they met outside of the environment a gang created. While the Friermuths had blood relations and the WCTU women connections came through choosing to unite and voice their opinions, gun molls had to form a relationship with one another. However, this circumstance should not discredit the bonds that these women formed through protecting one another – as this was still a conscious choice even if the main motivation was to protect their partner rather than the other molls.

The Friermuths of Hampton, Minnesota are a good example of family ties leading to bonding experiences for women. In 1924, the family was operating a moonshining business from their farm. The *Minneapolis Daily Star* ran an article that mentions that two daughters of the Friermuths tribe (ages 15 and 20), along with their elder brother, George, were set free after posting their \$3,000 bail.<sup>69</sup> The family had to be doing well for itself to have raised that much money, and in an earlier article, it is mentioned that the husband of Susie Friermuth Doffing (age 20) “took the fall” for his wife, and how the Friermuth patriarch also did the same.<sup>70</sup> This points to a strong family dynamic, at least in protecting their money making business. The matriarch

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<sup>66</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 47.

<sup>67</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 49.

<sup>68</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 50.

<sup>69</sup> “Rum Suspect Released Under \$1,000 Bail After Dry Raid Near Hastings.” *Minneapolis Daily Star*, August 23, 1924

<sup>70</sup> “Two Armed Flapper Moonshiners Are Jailed; Operated Giant Plant.” *Minneapolis Daily Star*, August 15, 1924.

served 11 months in jail but was able to help free her children from jail when they needed her due to their moonshining money. The fact that a woman could have held this much money and the men would be loyal and willing to take the fall for their women points to strong ties as a family, along with a power dynamic that favors women. Additionally, it could point to men within these groups still trying to protect the public image of their family. While it was not normal to have any family member in jail, it would have been less out strange to have a husband or brother in jail for alcohol violations rather than a mother, wife, sister, or daughter.

Women who entered temperance organizations often found more solace in using a group voice, such as Crusading women, rather than being alone in their homes. Women who joined gangs found a chance to have a family (at least in structure) and fit into society's sphere while remaining outside of it. Both groups found a different role than merely doing what society deemed they should have and were better off in many ways thanks to this deviation from the norm.

### **Public Faces**

The various ways that WCTU women maintained their public face to be respectable can be easily traced through organization documents. From how they dressed to how they interacted with other organizations, these women were very concerned about appearing respectable. Photographs of members of the WCTU depict women wearing dresses with collars, appearing as though they were about to attend church or some other public function.<sup>71</sup> This demonstrates the importance of respectability to these women. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was important for women to have a particular look in photographs. The Friermuth

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<sup>71</sup> WCTU of Minnesota Records, box 4: Photographs: Undated and 1893-1974.

sisters and gun molls shattered this expectation, shocking the rest of society when they would wear breeches or overalls for photographs.

This belief that women had to look a certain way stems from the doctrine of spheres that populated the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which stated that women were to remain in the home, disallowing them from participating in the public sphere.<sup>72</sup> Women were not meant to have their own political opinions; rather they were merely meant to look respectable. In 1917, a group of WCTU women were photographed while protesting for Prohibition in Madison, Minnesota. The image shows 10 to 15 women, all in white dresses, holding signs advocating to keep the state pure, along with messages of white being the color of purity.<sup>73</sup> This photograph demonstrates the concern the women of the WCTU had with their perception as pure, respectable women within the public eye. Their signs literally dictate their doctrine of purity as important, and their dressing in white demonstrates their desire to connect personal appearance with the organization's motto of purity. The women of the WCTU continued wearing dresses into the twentieth century, which demonstrates the importance of the image they created.<sup>74</sup>

While all women wore dresses and looked like all respectable, upper-class women might, they were also voicing their political opinions in a manner that was not always acceptable. As seen with the Women's Crusaders in St. Paul and the response from the saloon owners, societies expectations for women had not changed – they were to keep their noses out of politics.<sup>75</sup> While many temperance men supported their female counterparts, this does not mean that men who were on the other side of the issue maintained the same standard. Men who did not want

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<sup>72</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 8.

<sup>73</sup> WCTU Women Protesting in Madison, Minnesota. Ca. 1917. MNHS.

<http://collections.mnhs.org/cms/largerimage.php?irn=10292022&catirn=10672504&return=imagesonly=yes&q=WCTU>

<sup>74</sup> WCTU of MN Records, box 4.

<sup>75</sup> "The Battle of the Bottles."

Prohibition to become a reality were very vocal in their disapproval of any woman trying to enforce Prohibition or stop the flow of alcohol. Men who believed in Temperance were slightly better at listening to their female counterparts, at least in the Twin Cities.

In the Twin Cities, a prominent man supported the WCTU chapter in Minneapolis. A woman wrote to Governor J.A.A. Burnquist in August of 1920, asking that he appoint a woman to the delegates who were being sent to the Fifteenth International Conference Against Alcoholism in Washington, D.C.<sup>76</sup> This request was granted when Governor Burnquist wrote back in a month to say that a woman, Mrs. Della R. Mantigo of St. Paul, would indeed be appointed to the group of delegates that he was sending to the nation's capital.<sup>77</sup> This public support and allowance of a female delegate to an international conference indicates that the women of the WCTU were considered respectable enough to represent the Twin Cities, and demonstrates how, when political ideals aligned, support from a prominent male could be easily accessible.

There are many reasons that the women of the WCTU were more accepted by society than women engaged in illegal activities, as the WCTU had a reputation for having respectable goals. What went into forming this respectable persona involved much public work, but also a lot of work within the organization to foster a positive, driven environment. At meetings, the women would separate into groups within their organization and would report on how those groups were doing. Each woman had her opportunity to talk, and they tried to foster a community with one another so that all would feel welcome while doing their work.<sup>78</sup> The practice of allowing all women to speak and trying to encourage women to speak helped foster an environment where

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<sup>76</sup> Gubernatorial Papers of J.A.A. Burnquist, box 85, folder: Prohibition 1920, August 8, 1920.

<sup>77</sup> Gubernatorial Papers of J.A.A. Burnquist, box 85, folder: Prohibition 1920, September 9, 1920.

<sup>78</sup> Eva Jones Journal

these women could voice their opinions. While the WCTU held protestant beliefs, that did not mean its goals, as stated by Minnesota temperance advocate, Eva Jones, were solely based in religion.<sup>79</sup> Through helping labor and trade unions, the WCTU would gain a broader base of support for their future actions.<sup>80</sup> The WCTU was a true women's organization in its efforts to remain respectable while still giving women a voice.

In contrast, women who manufactured illegal alcohol often had a very different public image than their temperance counterparts. For example, Florence Friermuth (15) and her sister Susie Friermuth Doffing (20) were arrested in August of 1924 and their story was promptly printed on the front page of the *Minneapolis Daily Star*.<sup>81</sup> The women were reportedly caught just before reaching for either a revolver or double barreled shotgun, at what federal agents called "one of the biggest distilling plants seized since prohibition."<sup>82</sup> Included with this article is a photograph, in which both women are wearing overalls while surrounded by firearms and their alcohol plant machinery.<sup>83</sup> The choice to run this story and photograph on front page news of a Friday newspaper tells us one of two things: First, either the publisher enjoyed sensationalizing the story of women who dared to defy society's standards in an attempt to sell more newspapers or second, the publisher desired to send a warning to other women that this type of behavior should not be tolerated by anyone. Or maybe a bit of both went into the publishing of this.

Both options are interesting in what they could say about society at the time of this publication; however, as neither can be verified due to limited availability of sources which would allow us to ascertain the truth, what remains more interesting is the text within the article.

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<sup>79</sup> WCTU of MN Records, box 5: Eva Jones Journal 1908-1914, September 26, 1908.

<sup>80</sup> WCTU of MN Records, box 5: Eva Jones Journal, September 26, 1908.

<sup>81</sup> "Two Armed Flapper Moonshiners Are Jailed; Operated Giant Plant."

<sup>82</sup> "Two Armed Flapper Moonshiners Are Jailed; Operated Giant Plant."

<sup>83</sup> "Two Armed Flapper Moonshiners Are Jailed; Operated Giant Plant."

Allegedly, Florence told the federal men to call her and her sister “Jack and Jim for short.”<sup>84</sup> In addition to this, the women asked the men if they would be able to change into dresses before going to jail – though they ultimately decided to remain in their overalls.<sup>85</sup> This debate, and its publishing, reminds readers that these are two young women, and although they are defying the norms of society, they thought about fitting into it. While they were publicly defying what society stated a woman should be through their running their alcohol business and selling their product, they still felt some tug to be “normal.” Surmising this only comes from analyzing their comment about whether to change into a dress, which could have also been for a motivation aside from fitting the societal norm – protecting the family’s reputation, for example – or it could simply be an insert thought up by the writer of the article. However, if this was an actual thought they had before their arrests at the young ages of 15 and 20, it points to a larger theme in society, one where women had to wear dresses and look respectable to not break societal expectations – a trend that the women of the WCTU followed when forming their public image.

The *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* in 1929 holds further exploits of the Friermuth clan, which remain interesting tales of the time. Susie Friermuth Doffing, having survived her earlier arrest, appears in an article titled “Woman Arrested for Third Time” on an inner page of the Monday newspaper.<sup>86</sup> The article highlights not only Susie’s missteps with alcohol, but also those of her mother, Margaret Friermuth, who was arrested and served 11 months for liquor violations in 1927-28.<sup>87</sup> Margaret was apparently welcomed home with a large celebration from her stint in jail, despite the fact that it was for alcohol violations in the later years of Prohibition

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<sup>84</sup> “Two Armed Flapper Moonshiners Are Jailed; Operated Giant Plant.”

<sup>85</sup> “Two Armed Flapper Moonshiners Are Jailed; Operated Giant Plant.”

<sup>86</sup> “Woman Arrested for Third Time.” *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, May 20, 1929.

<sup>87</sup> “Woman Arrested for Third Time.”



in Minnesota.<sup>88</sup> This hints at a family that most likely went against social norms. However, the hiding of this story on the inner pages of a paper seem to intimate at some change over time. In 1924, with the arrest of the two daughters and their photograph, they were worthy of the front page, but by the time Susie was 25, she was no longer worthy of appearing on the front page. The mention of her mother's infraction also seems to say that the daughter was obviously flawed from bad parenting, another comment keeping with doctrine from the nineteenth century regarding a mother's duty to protect her home and children through fighting against intemperance. After all, even into the early twentieth century, women were still protectors of the home whose largest enemy was alcohol abuse – as if their husband became addicted, he would become the biggest threat to her home life.<sup>89</sup>

The public faces of temperance women and women who were manufacturing illegal alcohol during Prohibition needed to maintain a certain balance. Where women in the WCTU were focused on visibility (at the international conference) and on how to present themselves when they were visible, the women of the Friermuth family had a different opinion on how they were to be perceived. The newspaper photograph depicts the Friermuth sisters in overalls and standing in front of alcohol while armed. This demonstrates a clear departure from societal norms of the era, even though this photograph would likely have come from the family collection and would not have been the arrest photo. Also, their family chose to celebrate the infraction of their mother by welcoming her home with a party after her release from jail, which points to a marked difference from how the WCTU chose to present its work and life in the public eye. Another possible explanation for the party, since it was most likely a family party and not open to the public, would be their closeness, the family simply happy for the return of its matriarch.

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<sup>88</sup> "Woman Arrested for Third Time."

<sup>89</sup> Bordin, *Woman and Temperance*, 8.

While journalists noticed the party, its private nature speaks to a close family dynamic. This was a strong mark of society in the early twentieth century and reinforces how important the family could be as a social unit. A small farming community was able to notice the celebration a family held for the return of one of its lost members.

## **Money**

The way that the WCTU raised money and kept it vastly differs than women who were involved even tangentially to the moonshining operations found during Prohibition. In the early 1900s, Eva Jones recorded some proposed plans for how the WCTU would raise money. As expected, their methods to raise money were more respectable, as she details a rummage sale that occurred, raising \$60 which the organization then distributed to benefit its members.<sup>90</sup> She mentions that \$10 went to literature and the rest went to supplying “Union Signal”<sup>91</sup> to allow members of the group to read each issue together.<sup>92</sup>

A general constitution for the WCTU chapter of Duluth, Minnesota in 1880 stated that there was to be a \$1 per year fee for each member of the group.<sup>93</sup> This membership fee was required to help pay off the costs of renting space and running the organization to continue the temperance movement.<sup>94</sup> There is no mention of how the women were expected to get this dollar; but one could guess that it came out of the family money, as most of the women were not likely to be working or to have much money of their own.

The fact that these women were handling money for a female-driven organization says something about the group’s goals. With their large focus on their public perception of

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<sup>90</sup> WCTU of MN Records, box 5: Eva Jones Journal, October 10, 1908.

<sup>91</sup> “Union Signal” was the official newspaper for the WCTU (Bordin 90)

<sup>92</sup> WCTU of MN Records, box 5: Eva Jones Journal, October 10, 1908.

<sup>93</sup> WCTU of MN Records, box 5: folder: WCTU Duluth Chapter 1880-1882, Constitution of 1880.

<sup>94</sup> WCTU of MN Records: box 5, Duluth Constitution.

respectability , as can be seen in the photographs the WCTU chose to take, they would have needed money for printing pamphlets and other papers that they would hand out and go over at meetings.<sup>95</sup> This money likely would have only been handled by women as they would not typically allow men to participate in actual Union activities; although in the sources available there is no mention of whether they called in reinforcements in the distribution of finances. There is, however, mention of women who were to distribute the funds amongst the organization, which could mean that only members of the WCTU were handling this money, or simply that they decided where it ultimately ended up but did not handle it solely by themselves.<sup>96</sup>

Women who had a hand in moonshining had a very different reality to face in terms of finances available to them. These were women who benefitted either from their own moonshining or from their lover's. Margaret Friermuth and her family clearly benefitted from their alcohol manufacturing endeavor, as when her daughters, Susie and Florence, and their brother, George, were all arrested with a cumulative bail of \$3,000, they were bailed out with seemingly no trouble.<sup>97</sup> A sum this large would raise eyebrows even today if the family in question only owned a farm in a small rural town, but back in 1924 it would have shocked most people. What is surprising about this sum of money is that it was readily available.

Furthermore, in the earlier article discussing the sisters' arrest, it mentions that the men of the family had probably "taken the fall" for their partners.<sup>98</sup> This tells us that the men were in control by stepping aside to protect the women from notoriety, or it could point to a family of businesswomen who knew how to get their partners to serve the time needed so that they could

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<sup>95</sup> WCTU of MN Records: box 5, Eva Jones Journal, September 26, 1908.

<sup>96</sup> WCTU of MN Records: box 5, Eva Jones Journal

<sup>97</sup> "Rum Suspect Released Under \$1,000 Bail After Dry Raid Near Hastings."

<sup>98</sup> "Two Armed Flapper Moonshiners Are Jailed; Operated Giant Plant."

further grow their operation.<sup>99</sup> In 1924 we have an instance of two young Minnesota women who had enough access and autonomy to run a successful moonshining business. Although they were far from the societal norm, it is interesting to see two young women, who today would be called entrepreneurs, succeeding as much as they did.

Bessie Green was another woman who did well for herself during Prohibition.<sup>100</sup> Green had been connected to a couple different men in her life, but the most notable was Dan Hogan, “the godfather of the St. Paul Irish mob,” who also owned a restaurant and speakeasy called Hogan’s Green Lantern – the same establishment as mentioned previously.<sup>101</sup> This relationship is notable because following Hogan’s death by a car bomb, Bessie was brought on by Hogan’s successor to run the business operations of the Green Lantern.<sup>102</sup> The fact that a man trusted a woman to run his business in the late 1920s is another shift in societal dynamics. Most often the man would remain in charge of his own restaurant and issues contained there-in, while the paramour was supposed to simply help customers and act as a mild woman. Green’s recognized knowledge with money must have contributed to her receiving the restaurant business upon Hogan’s death; it is worth mentioning that this would have again granted her more autonomy than she would have had if she remained at home.

Although Green did use small bills when purchasing groceries, and otherwise living her life in 1934, she certainly had access to much more money.<sup>103</sup> Part of the reason she had access to so much money was another business venture she embarked upon. In 1930, Green, along with

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<sup>99</sup> “Two Armed Flapper Moonshiners Are Jailed; Operated Giant Plant.”

<sup>100</sup> Johanneck, *Twin Cities Prohibition*, 91.

<sup>101</sup> Johanneck, *Twin Cities Prohibition*, 91.

<sup>102</sup> Johanneck, *Twin Cities Prohibition*, 91.

<sup>103</sup> Elizabeth Johanneck, *Twin Cities Prohibition*, (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2011) Accessed January 21, 2018, <https://library.biblioboard.com>, 92.

her then lover Ray Moore, decided to buy the Alamo Nightclub in White Bear Lake, MN.<sup>104</sup> This was a known hangout during Prohibition for alcohol and was frequented by prominent gangsters at the time.<sup>105</sup> Here again, we have an example of Bessie Green's prominence within a society that did not come by money honestly, but that would have much money on hand at any time. Bessie herself would be arrested with \$1,000 on her person, and police would later find another \$4,000 stashed away in her living space.<sup>106</sup> Aside from her entanglement with various gangsters in St. Paul in the late 1920s and early 1930s, her ability to have \$5,000 in cash at the time of her arrest points not only to the fact that working against Prohibition was a lucrative business to be in, but also that Green knew how to handle money.

### **Conclusion**

Women who were involved with gangsters or manufacturing illegal alcohol, along with women who were a part of the WCTU in Minnesota reinforced the gender role society had constructed for them – even if this did not hold true when forming their public images. What is remarkable about these different manifestations of personas is that many of the tactics used by these women were similar. This transpired because of the gendered framework in which both groups of women were living. Women who were moonshining reinforced this role through how they chose to portray themselves in public; however, often the Friermuth sisters and family did go against the socially accepted doctrine of the time.<sup>107</sup>

Through wearing overalls and telling the federal officers to refer to them as “Jack and Jim,” the two girls defied stereotypical female dress and etiquette.<sup>108</sup> These two young women

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<sup>104</sup> Johanneck, *Twin Cities Prohibition*, 91.

<sup>105</sup> Johanneck, *Twin Cities Prohibition*, 91.

<sup>106</sup> Potter, “I’ll Go the Limit and Then Some,” 51.

<sup>107</sup> “Two Armed Flapper Moonshiners Are Jailed; Operated Giant Plant.”

<sup>108</sup> “Two Armed Flapper Moonshiners Are Jailed; Operated Giant Plant.”

took the chance to be photographed in apparel that was not a dress, and with it appearing as though they took on a larger role in the moonshining business than their male counterparts, we can see a clear departure from the woman's "sphere" that they were expected to occupy. In addition, their access to and handling of large sums of money greatly differed from how women in the WCTU chose to use their funds to help their public perception. The Friermuth family was an outlier, as there are not any other notorious families who ran a moonshine operation as prominently featured in the Twin Cities newspapers; however, the gender dynamics that their daughters and other family members portrayed offers a glimpse at just how strong gender expectations were within society.

Bessie Green, and her story of being a "gun moll," also defies societal norms in that she had a large hand in running a business and her ability to handle large sums of money, which she kept hidden to avoid suspicion.<sup>109</sup> The group mentality of the molls, while motivated more by survival than companionship, also sheds light on a different way that women would reach out to groups trying to find belonging outside of their homes. The family identity that was created by gangs to remain undetected gives us another instance in which societal expectations were ingrained people, even when they were thought to be operating outside the bounds of normal society; while gangs operated as a family since it was the easiest cover to avoid suspicion, we are still given the context that the family was seen as an important factor in society.<sup>110</sup> Aside from this, the gun molls acted as if they were in a committed relationship to their partner, and would not give him up – choosing to feign ignorance of the gangster in order to protect him and the gang rather than revealing the information they held.<sup>111</sup> Bessie Green was successful enough to

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<sup>109</sup> Johanneck, *Twin Cities Prohibition*, 91.

<sup>110</sup> Potter, "I'll Go the Limit and Then Some," 43.

<sup>111</sup> Potter, "I'll Go the Limit and Then Some," 43.

have \$5,000 on her person, and avoid arrest long enough to save that amount up – however, as other sources mentioned, she used small bills at the grocery store<sup>112</sup> and still did the shopping, one can infer that she felt some necessity to comply with a norm of society.

Women in the WCTU wanted to appear respectable and garner a more respectable image for themselves. They did this through dressing appropriately, usually in dresses that would be appropriate for church, when photographed.<sup>113</sup> In addition to looking the part, these women also acted respectably and went through official channels in attempts to get their voices heard in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as their request that Governor Burnquist send a woman delegate to an international conference against alcoholism.<sup>114</sup> This bold choice to get their voice heard, also fell within social norms, as they asked permission of a male leader in their community; however, his support of their request is notable for its remark on the culture of drinking found in St. Paul. The WCTU's members were often the source of the organization's funds; one chapter in St. Paul held a rummage sale, but this fundraiser illustrates the respectability they now desired, rather than continuing to follow their earlier crusading methods.<sup>115</sup> Despite many WCTU women falling outside the social norm of the gender role they were assigned, they still worked very hard to conform to that very gender role and fit into society in a way that would be respectable and not subversive.

The perceptions of both groups of women diverged greatly because of their differing motives, but thus both did end up reinforcing some gender stereotypes. The women who were a part of the WCTU worked very hard to ensure that, although they were leaving their homes and being vocal in public, they were not going so far against what a woman was supposed to be that

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<sup>112</sup> Potter, "I'll Go the Limit and Then Some," 43.

<sup>113</sup> WCTU of Minnesota Records, box 4: Photographs: Undated and 1893-1974.

<sup>114</sup> Gubernatorial Papers of J.A.A. Burnquist, box 85, folder: Prohibition 1920, August 8, 1920.

<sup>115</sup> WCTU of MN Records, box 5: Eva Jones Journal, September 26, 1908.

their opposition could discredit them. Through their organization's charitable work, the WCTU women sought acceptance and respect within society. The women who ran moonshine operations thought that they might want to fall within society's boundaries – as shown by their questioning of the attire they were wearing for their newspaper photograph – but ultimately, they chose to stand out in the newspaper. However, their debate still indicates that they were conforming to society's expectations for them in appearance. Gun molls also reinforced the idea that the role of woman included family and marriage. Thus, all three groups reinforced the socially expected roles of woman in society in some form, even if they were not trying to. The gendered framework in which they lived shaped their actions, whether they were conscious of their conformity or not.



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### Summary of Changes Made: And Response to Comments

- Re-worked entire introduction to better fit the argument
- Re-worked thesis statement after presentation to better fit within introduction argument and overall argument
- Fixed definition and use of “bootlegger” rather than “moonshiner” throughout paper and added definition
- Fixed grammatical and wording errors throughout
- Re-worked Conclusion to better fit with Introduction and overarching argument
- Added information where necessary according to previous comments from Dr. Smith and Dr. Perelman